

ILWU will negotiate its master contract with the Pacific Maritime Association. If they lose, you can bet the PMA will take notice and hit hard. Most importantly to note is that grain accounts for 30% of the ILWU health and welfare package. If you lose a third of your bargaining power and your traditional jurisdiction on port property, what are you left with? Either no ILWU, or a union that would resemble nothing like what it once was. There would be little or no collective power up and down the west coast, and no way to fight for social justice or defend the working class, just as the ILWU has done for so long, in its entrenched and strategic position at the gates of international commerce.

Longshoremen have traditionally been a rough and tough bunch, but they always make sure to educate their members on the importance of history, unity and the power of collective bargaining. People now days forget or have not been taught their own history, they forget what it means to cross a picket, and become a scab the rest of their life. For 30 years or more we have been sliding downhill, while some would argue unions have outlived their time. The reality is unions are the last defense when the imperfect system of checks and balances within our government fails to serve the interests of the workers.

The class struggle never really goes away. Right now the rich and the ruling class are attempting to deal a blow that labor might never recover from. The ILWU has always been the vanguard of labor everywhere. Today, the ILWU's value of "An Injury To One, Is An Injury To All," couldn't be any more pertinent for all organizations. So please, if you believe in a better future for the 99% of us that work for a living, do what you can to support ILWU Local 21.

"The most important word in the language of the working class is solidarity"
-Harry Bridges

In Solidarity,
Kyle Mackey
Secretary/Treasurer Cowlitz-Wahkiakum Central Labor Council
ILWU Local 21 Member