Yet, another example of thinking like the bosses is what happened to the Office Clerical Unit strikes in LA/LB. We organized these workers into our clerk locals and Local 10’s call a special Caucus to organize a plan of action against EGT.

If there was a “secret plan” by the union tops, no one ever saw it implemented. As one president of a small Northwest local said, “I’ve never seen such secret negotiations like this before.” Another old-timer familiar with grain negotiations said: “We get no information or misinformation. This is worse than Peavey.”

The reading of President McEllrath’s letter of Jan. 3 was left to the union workers to decide. That’s their right. And it’s all longshore workers’ right to see it because it affects the way we do our job.

In 1988, two Court decisions directly affected the outcome of this Longview struggle. The Coast Labor Relations Committee meeting minutes of March 3, 1988 concerned our jurisdictional in Pittsburg, California. New cranes were being used at the USS-PASSCO steel facility and ILWU wanted to make sure they were ILWU crane operators. We shut down all ports in Northern California using our contractual right to a stop work meeting and marched 12,000-strong on the plant along with our Warehouse and Marine Divisions and other workers. The Joint CLREC agreed that we had a contractual right (Sec. 12) to hold a stop work meeting and to protest. We successfully defended our jurisdiction.

As Caucus action we used the stop work meeting provi- sion again in 1999 so close all ports on the Coast and partici- pate in a march of 25,000 where we demanded freedom for black political prisoner Mumia Abu-Jamal. When we need to shut it down there’s more than one way to flex our muscle.

Second, an ominous arbitration (C-8-88) regarding a no-torius PMA official from the Columbia River Area by the name of Leal Suntid who wanted to register as a long- shoreman. The arbitrator ruled in his favor and we’re suffer- ing the consequences of that decision today as this former PMA hondo now sitting as ILWU Coast Committee member from the Northwest makes decisions in favor of the em- ployer (EGT and TWIC). EGT was his responsibility from the beginning two years ago. Longview should’ve been a clear cut victory. Malignant mass actions by longshoremen, backed up by other unions and Occupy showed our power. Unlike the USS-PASSCO beef, the ILWU tops never used our power when it was so desperately needed.

Here’s the proof:

1) The first mistake was not to support the construction uni- on who were picketing against the use of non-union la- bor to build the new EGT terminal 2 years ago. Interna- tional officers were asleep at the switch, a “no show” from the beginning. No job actions on the Coast, as promised by these officers, were organized against the ships of STX Pan Ocean, one of the companies that owns EGT.

2) Funds for Local 21’s picketing were not forthcoming from the International unless they twined the “top down” legalistic line, even as temperatures dipped below freezing. This sounded much like how then-ILA President Bowers treated the Charleston longshoremen in their struggle 12 years ago. So, Local 10 invited Lo- cal 21 officers to our union meetings and donated $10,000 so they could afford more picket signs, tents and propane gas for heat in the freezing weather. Presi-

dent Coffman spoke at the Local 10 membership meeting in November to thank the Local for its solidarity and dona- tions.

3) The democratic will of the membership of the Long- shore Division was not heard. The International and Coast Committee denied Local 21 President Dan Coffman’s call for a dual area meeting of Northwest lo- cals and Local 10’s call a special Caucus to organize a plan of action against EGT.

4) If there was a “secret plan” by the union tops, no one ever saw it implemented. As one president of a small Northwest local said, “I’ve never seen such secret negotiations like this before.” Another old-timer familiar with grain negotiations said: “We get no information or misinformation. This is worse than Peavey.”

5) The reading of President McEllrath’s letter of Jan. 3 was the excuse given by ILWU bureaucrats for disrupting the Portland and Seattle solidarity meetings of Jan. 5 and 6. But his letter only cursorily called for a protest against the scab ship. Its main purpose was to bow to NLRB’s anti-union-busting in the U.S. in decades. It was a class war were drawn. On the workers’ side was the ILWU, organized labor and their allies in the Occupy move- ment organizing caravans to converge from the San Fran- cisco Bay Area, Seattle and Portland. On the other side of the barricades were EGT, the police, the Coast Guard, the scalps in Operating Engineers 701, the courts and the state.

Governor Chris Gregoire stepped in, fearful of a repeat of the September 8 action when longshore workers from North- west ports marched on the scab EGT facility. They were exer- cising their First Amendment rights, protesting the police attack on ILWU International President McEllrath and hundreds of picketing longshoremen the previous day who had blocked a grain train. Cargo hooks were left hanging in the ports of Seat-
tle, Portland and Tacoma while longshoremen took care of union business in the port of Longview. That’s the power of the ILWU, to shut down global shipping! Just before the ship’s arrival when we were ready for action ILWU negotiators should’ve demanded the standard Northwest Grain-handlers’ Agreement.

On Feb. 6, the grain ship Full Sources was escorted down the Columbia River to the EGT dock by armed Coast Guard cutters and helicopters. The ILWU struggle had galvanized enthusiastic support from working people around the country and even internationally. So, on Jan. 23, Governor Gregoire brokered a deal between EGT and ILU on legal issues around hiring and the union hiring hall. The rank and file approved it the next day, though they never saw what they had voted on. In fact, that agreement explicitly abandoned the legal requirement that EGT use union labor. Were the ranks shocked at that? Union tops claimed it gave them authorization to negotiate a contract. To date a contract has not been ratified by ILU Local 21 members. Few longshore workers have even seen the contract. So we’re making it available at www.transportworkers.org. You and your partner should read it.

Credit for getting the grain giant to the bargaining table goes to the rank and file of Local 21 Longview whose militant actions stopped grain trains, briefly occupied the EGT facility and highlighted solidarity rallies. The union was hit with fines and legal fees at every turn, but fought back. The militant 36,000-strong Nov. 2 Oakland port shut down organized by Occupy Oakland fruited the ILWU bureaucrats and EGT. It was called to protest the brutal police crackdown on the Occupiers encampment, in which Iraq war vet, Scott Olsen, was nearly killed, and in solidarity with the Longview struggle. It was supported by the ranks of Local 21 and Local 10. None of the ILU tops had organized militant mass job actions before. They should be organizing job actions against STX Pan Ocean ships and port shut downs protesting EGT union-busting. Instead Occupy activists took to the streets, substituting themselves for the union, but inspiring ILWU longshoremen to take action. That’s what had the union tops running scared.

Perhaps, even more important was the Dec. 12 coastwise action called by the Occupy Wall Street movement. Despite attempts by President McGlenn, Coast Committeeman Sundet and some local ILWU presidents who dis-puted the need to cross Occupy picket lines, local ILWU officers who dis-puted the need to cross Occupy picket lines, longshore- men honored Occupy picket lines in Seattle, Portland, Longview and Oakland. In the best tradition of the ILWU’s proud record, it was a defiant rank and file, the Local 10-initiated call for caravans to “meet” the ship, supported by Labor Councils in California and Washington. The ILWU “meet the ship” actions like bona fide picket lines have to stand by on health and safety, union meetings and Bloody Thursday, the contract agrees that management will do our work on the ship or on the dock! NO WAY! Negotiators did not demand union tugs do the ship docking or union construction workers do the work at EGT. Illegally-manned boats had solidly refused to dock any scab grain ships during the dispute, forcing EGT to order tug boats from the Gulf of Mexico.

At EGT the select pool of hatchtenders are required to work 12 hours shifts. (All 12 hrs. with a one hour break and shifts can be extended to 13 hours to finish a vessel. EGT can work you 6 hours before a meal, then back to work for another 6 hours.)

Another example is the port truckers who sporadically have organized strikes to seek union recognition. They’re fighting the same maritime employers we have. It’s our obligation to support these low paid mostly immigrant workers in their fight to unionize. If they choose to affiliate with ILWU so be it. It’s the same job trusting. Port employers have been able to assess against our union for job actions or so-called “il-legal work stoppages” is denial of PGP. Every ILWU president from Harry Bridges on has opposed Taft-Hartley. McGlenn is the first to embrace it. This danger opens the door to more serious attacks.

The control room will be run by management, not ILU. This is the key to grain cargo loading. It’s like being on a ship dock job on a ship but not the crane operator job.

During work stoppages like bona fide picket lines the contract agrees that management should honor the ILWU’s ‘meet the ship’ agreements. Our rule is simple: ILWU members honored the ILWU picket lines in Seattle, Portland, Longview and Oakland. In the best tradition of the ILWU’s proud record, it was a defiant rank and file. The Local 10-initiated call for caravans to “meet” the ship, supported by Labor Councils in California and Washington.

The EGT CONTRACT:

**THE EGT CONTRACT: WHAT WE GOT AND WHAT WE LOST**

- We got waterfront jurisdiction for longshore both on the ship and shoreside, but none for ship clerks. Why not? Clerks Local 40 had been picketing from day one. Operating Engineers Local 701 scabs were supposedly given the boot, but some non-ILWU mechanics and a clean up crew have been in EGT doing our work.

- It bypasses the union hiring hall dispatch procedure by allowing EGT to hire a select pool of workers. Our contract negotiations is key to standardization of the grain export industry on the West Coast, particularly with respect to labor costs.

- The ILWU’s newspaper, The Dispatcher, has called this a “significant victory”. But the editor Craig Merrilkes called the 2010 Borton lockout settlement a “victory” with scabs still in the mine, something not described here.

- The ILWU contract with EGT is key to standardization of the grain export industry on the West Coast, particularly with respect to labor costs.

- At EGT the select pool of hatchtenders are required to work 12 hours shifts. (All 12 hrs. with a one hour break and shifts can be extended to 13 hours to finish a vessel.

- EGT should be helping the truckers organize into a union. Let’s fight together against the port bosses! Make the waterfront 100% union! Same struggle same fight!