



Trumka Champions Fight for Jobs

By Jim McKay
USW Communications

With newly organized Los Angeles car wash workers at his side, AFL-CIO President Richard Trumka told delegates Wednesday that labor is done playing defense in the fight for jobs.

“We don’t have to settle for 9 percent unemployment, stagnant wages, benefit give-backs, record inequality and destruction of our middle-class way of life,” Trumka said. “This is America. We can do better. We have to do better.”

Trumka opened his speech by recognizing car wash workers who just won representation with USW Local 675 as part of an ongoing campaign to organize the hand car-wash industry in Los Angeles, where workers, often immigrants, are routinely underpaid and abused.

Fighting for the jobs that we must have to restart the nation’s economy will be another tough fight - a struggle Trumka said we cannot afford to lose.

The AFL-CIO, he said, will unveil this fall a sustained jobs campaign with a National Week of Action. The federation is planning some 450 nationwide events where middle-class Americans will demand politicians create jobs and restore the economy. An online petition will urge political leaders to act with urgency.

“We’re going to shift the national debate away from deficits and toward good jobs and workers’ rights,” he said.

The future of working people and the essence of our American democracy is on the line, Trumka said, adding that we can only win the fight if we hold together.

“We need to stand together for a future where every single worker has the fundamental right to be treated with dignity, to



put in a hard, honest day’s work and be rewarded fairly for it, to have the health care and retirement security and the opportunity to see our children a little better off than we are.

“That’s the world we want, the world we deserve.”

Georgetti: Labor Must Win Class War

Workers in the United States and Canada are in a class war declared by big business and we’re losing, Ken Georgetti, president of the Canadian Labour Congress, told delegates. “It is a war that we must win if the labor movement is to survive,” he said.

“Why this war has been declared is simple – and it goes



well beyond the usual reasons of simple corporate greed,” Georgetti said. “This is a diversionary war. It’s a tactic to confuse us, divide us and then to conquer us.”

When the right wing factions tell us our countries are

broke, they are lying, Georgetti said. “Our countries aren’t broke; it’s simply that the rich are breaking us.”

The problem lies on Wall Street not Main Street, he said.

“Tell me, do you remember when Steelworkers crashed the stock market, or when we took billions in bonuses, killed millions of jobs, trashed the world economy and at the same time paid no taxes? I don’t”

Just 400 rich Americans own as much combined wealth as 155 million Americans, half of the country, while the top 1 percent of Canadians got one third of all that nation’s income gains from 1997 to 2007.

“In Canada, as in the United States, those responsible for the economic crisis are trying to blame the victims,” Georgetti added.

“We can’t as a society, especially as a labor movement, tell our kids that they don’t deserve the same standard of living that we have enjoyed for ourselves.

“What kind of a world would that be if we accepted such a terrible notion? And yet that is what big business and right-wing governments are telling us. I say nonsense to them.

“We have to Stand Up, Fight Back and when we do, we will change our countries for the better.”

No. 1 Challenge: Jobs... Not Deficit

By Gary Hubbard
USW Public Affairs

Jobs, not reducing the national debt, is the greatest challenge America faces today, U.S. Sen. Bernie Sanders told delegates in a rousing, boisterous podium address.

“Creating the millions of new jobs that we desperately need is not only vitally important to the economy but will be the means by which we reduce the deficit over the long term,” said Sanders (I-Vt.), who noted that the 9 percent official unemployment rate jumps to 16 percent when those who are underemployed are counted.

“New jobs mean more government revenue, which makes a lot more sense than having to spend billions on unemployment compensation, food stamps and other programs needed during a severe recession.”

Sanders’ vision includes rebuilding the nation’s crumbling infrastructure, transforming the energy system and rewriting trade policy so that American products – not jobs – are our number one export.

“We need jobs that pay decent wages, jobs in the U.S. – not jobs in China,” he declared.

Sanders, who said the USW members he addressed “give inspiration and hope,” received repeated standing ovations. His vigorous opposition to efforts to cut Social Security, Medicare, and Medicaid benefits brought the biggest crowd response.

“Social Security has not contributed a nickel to the deficit, it



has a \$2.6 trillion surplus, and it can pay out every benefit owed to every eligible American for the next 25 years.” Sanders was adamant that it must not be cut.

He declared, “Instead of balancing the budget on the backs of working families, the elderly, the children, the sick, and the most vulnerable, it is time to ask the wealthiest people and most profitable corporations in this county to pay their fair share.”

Herbert Calls for Economic Justice

By Barbara White Stack
USW Communications

Delegates and guests jumped to their feet Wednesday as author Bob Herbert urged them to take to the streets, seize control of their democracy and demand jobs.

“You need to march. You need to protest. You need to badger the media to pay more attention to the unemployed and the young people of America whose futures are being so cruelly curtailed,” said Herbert, a former columnist at The New York

Times and author of *Promises Betrayed*.

Herbert described the current financial crisis as a betrayal of working people by both the privileged rich and corrupted politicians and said workers can reverse this course.

“Make your personal stand against injustice,” he urged the crowd to cheers and a standing ovation.

America has lost its way, he said. In the post-World War II era, employment was growing and millions moved into the economic mainstream. The future was brighter for the next generation.

Now, however, he said the United States fails to enforce trade law and ships jobs overseas. It allowed unregulated financiers to crash the economy, then bailed them out, but ignored the plight of the unemployed.

Herbert told the story of Rahn Harper, a 32-year-old GE branch manager from Ohio who was forced to sell his blood to support his wife and 4-year-old child after being downsized.

“You should not have to give blood to feed your family,” Herbert said.

“The United States is in terrible trouble because we turned our backs on working people.”

Workers, unions, families must raise their voices, rally, write letters, engage neighbors, challenge politicians who campaign as friends of labor then turn their backs on working men and women.

“The important thing is not to give up, not to lose faith, and never forget the tremendous power that is in your hands,” he said.



Obama Addresses Convention by Video

“Hello Steelworkers. I want to thank your President, Leo Gerard, and all of you who are fighting the good fight so hard for working families.

Now I know the work you do is never easy, and it doesn't help when the economy makes it harder for working families like yours to put food on the table and pay the bills on time.

But as tough as things are, we know what it's going to take to get America moving again.

And we know it's going to depend on helping working Americans like you feel like you are moving forward.

That's why with your help we've added more than 2 million private sector jobs over the last 17 months.

We've brought the auto industry back from brink, saving thousands of manufacturing jobs in the process.

We passed a recovery act that made record investments in clean energy and included strong buy American provisions.

And we've worked with you to

boost manufacturing here at home and make sure other countries are honoring our trade laws.

Along with my Secretary of Labor, Hilda Solis, herself the daughter of a union member, we've restored balance to a government that was often tilted against working people.

And over the last two years, I've stood with you to fight back against the assaults on unions and protect and enforce the laws that give workers a voice.

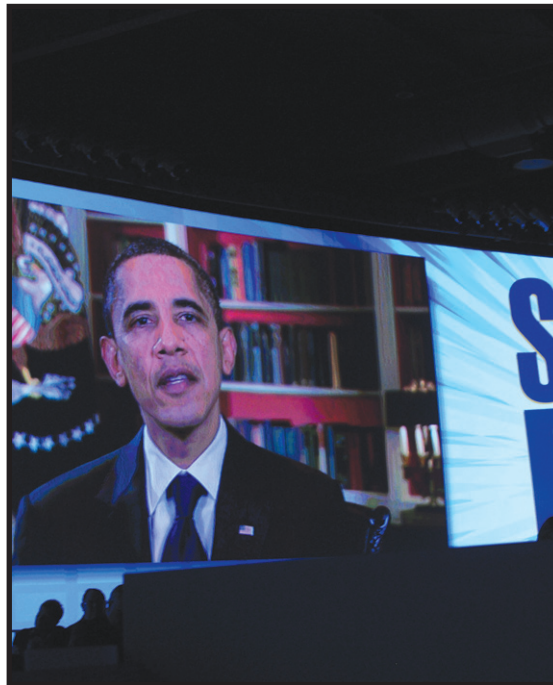
So we've got a lot done, but we haven't done enough.

And I won't be satisfied until every American who wants a good job can find one and every family can enjoy a sense of security and every worker who wants to join a union can do so.

I know that with the help of the Steelworkers we can come back stronger than before.

And I promise that if you stand with me, I will always stand with you.

Thank you. God bless you and God bless the United States of America.”



Steelworkers Celebrate NDP Victory



“Steelworkers have no better friend than the New Democratic Party and the New Democratic Party has no better friend than the United Steelworkers,” declared Ken Neumann, National Director for Canada.

“Jack!... Jack!... Jack!...” rang through the convention hall as part of a stirring video celebrating this year's historic election victory in Canada of the pro-labor New Democratic Party.

Jack Layton, who is currently battling cancer, has led the NDP for the last eight years, and has dramatically increased the party's influence and political muscle. From 13 elected Members of Parliament, Jack has brought the NDP to 103 elected MPs. As a result, the NDP is now Canada's Official Opposition, an historic achievement for a real labor party.

As the video shows, this achievement came after a hard-fought campaign where the NDP ran on leadership for jobs, pensions and fairness for working families.

Fifty years ago Steelworkers co-founded the New Democratic Party. Since then, the USW has worked closely with the NDP and helped elect thousands of NDP candidates and form NDP governments in five of the 10 Canadian provinces.

As a real labor party, the NDP has a proud history of battling globalization, enacting provincial anti-scab legislation, securing employment insurance and originating the Canada Pension Plan. And most impressive of all, the NDP brought all Canadians universal public health care.

Neumann pledged in front of the Convention that the USW will continue to work hand-in-hand with the party and its interim leader, Nycole Turmel, and will make sure the next election makes history with the first NDP government in Canada.

Wellstone Award Highlights Final Day

Delegates will wrap up the final business of the 2011 Constitutional Convention today and head home with energy to fight back and build a better tomorrow for workers in the United States and Canada.

"It's the fighting spirit of working people that breathes real life into a true democracy," International President Leo W. Gerard told some 3,000 delegates and guests.

"Unless we leave this place and demand of our sisters and brothers that they stand up and fight back, who will?" he said. "The union movement and our allies need to mount a major assault for workers, no matter how large or small our numbers might be, no matter how great the danger that we might not win."

The USW will award its prestigious Paul Wellstone Award to commentator Ed Schultz and actor and activist Danny Glover, chairman of Trans-Africa, a non-profit global justice organization focusing on conditions in Africa, the Caribbean and Latin America.

The award is named for former U.S. Sen. Paul Wellstone,

D-Minn., who tragically died in a 2002 plane crash with his wife, Sheila, daughter Marcia and three campaign aides.

It honors those who exemplify Wellstone's commitment to public service and the well-being of Steelworkers and their families as well as those who commit themselves to advancing labor and human rights here at home and around the world.

Wellstone was a tireless champion of affordable health care, raising the minimum wage and strengthening the agencies that oversee the health and safety of workers on the job. He was a fierce advocate for a fair global trading system that recognized labor rights, human rights and environmental protection.

Also in the morning, delegates will pose for a panoramic photograph in the convention hall at the MGM Grand hotel.

Delegates will hear final reports from the resolutions and credentials committees as well as a speech from Canadian Yvon Godin of the New Democratic Party.

The convention will officially end with delegates standing together and singing "Solidarity Forever," the labor movement anthem.

Delegates Pass Eight Resolutions

#8 Steelworkers Organization of Active Retirees (SOAR)

Denise Edwards, an active SOAR member in Pennsylvania, told delegates the resolution would help retirees build chapters and fight back against what she called "criminal attacks" on Social Security, Medicare and Medicaid.

"We will not tolerate one more attack on our retirees whether they are Steelworker retirees or our next door neighbors," she said.

9 Collective Bargaining

Ken Gomeringer, president of Local 4-898, rose to support this resolution, saying that when Valero wanted to shut down his refinery, it was saved through collective bargaining that forced the corporation to sell to a company that will resume operations Sept. 1.

Richard Bruce, president of Local 8599, whose members work for a school district in Fontana, Calif., said his members were protected by strong language recommended by the International.

10 Building Power at the Bargaining Table

This resolution commits the USW to continue to use the Building Power program developed by the Strategic Campaigns department to escalate campaign activity, build community outreach and work with unions around the world to increase labor's bargaining leverage with multinational employers.

11 International Trade

Jess Myers, chairman of the bargaining committee for Local 903 in Indiana, was among the members speaking in favor of this resolution. He said trade laws must be enforced to ensure the corporation he works for, Dana, does not move jobs overseas.

Jim Wetzel, president of Local 715, said the union's work on international trade has been crucial to the BFGoodrich tire plant where he works in Indiana. He said after the USW won

its Section 421 trade case, resulting in tariffs on imported tires, BFGoodrich invested \$150 million and hired 200 people.

12 Organizing the Unorganized

This resolution commits the USW to increasing its profile as a growing union that helps working people change their lives for the better by unionizing.

It says the USW will continue to organize in core industries and build organizing capacity in the public, education and non-profit sectors and in private service sector industries.

13 Political Activism

Gene Magruder, political action chairman for Local 8888 representing workers at the Newport News Shipyard in Virginia, said political action is essential because right-wingers and their wealthy backers have a state-by-state plan "to annihilate union rights."

#14 Rapid Response and Legislative Activism

Luis "Tito" Morales, president of Local 8249 in St. Thomas in the Virgin Islands, told his fellow delegates that he supported this resolution because workers must be politically active during these times when state governments are cutting public workers.

He said with the help of the International, his union and others have taken the territorial government to court to prevent pay cuts for government workers that violate their contract. "We are gonna kick ass," he assured the delegates.

#20 Workers Helping Workers

Scott Ruston, president of Local 7656 in Saskatchewan, Canada, explained why this resolution, supporting the work of the Steelworkers Humanity Fund, is so important.

He told the delegates that the fund sent him to Cuba, where he learned that the country has an 18-year plan to ensure its people thrive.

"Without traveling and learning what's happening in other countries, we can't make what's here better," he said.