



THE DISPATCHER

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Solidarity, sacrifice remembered at 81st Anniversary of Bloody Thursday

Thousands of ILWU members, their families, community supporters and elected officials gathered at parks, cemeteries and union halls up and down the West Coast to mark the 81st anniversary of Bloody Thursday and pay respects to those who sacrificed their lives in 1934 in order to build the ILWU.

Southern California

Southern California's Bloody Thursday tradition in the Harbor Area involved up to 2,000 ILWU members, friends and family.

Morning for martyrs

The first – and some say most important part of the day – began with a morning assembly at Gardena's Roosevelt Memorial Park

where ILWU members gathered to honor the first two martyrs killed in the bloody 1934 struggles that gave birth to the union.

First Blood of 1934

Dickie Parker and John Knudsen were both buried at Roosevelt Park after being shot, along with five other union members, by company-employed goons shortly after midnight on May 15, 1934 at Berth 145 in Wilmington. The first deadly confrontation on the docks that year between strikers and strike-breakers involved the employer's use of armed private guards. Dickie Parker died on the way to the hospital while John Knudsen lingered for weeks before dying of his wounds. Public response to the killing of both men was impressive, with an estimated 8,000 lining the streets from San Pedro to Gardena to witness the procession of cars that stretched six miles. Law enforcement

warned of a riot following the funeral, but because both events were peaceful, public support increased for the union cause.

Reflections

Eighty-one years later at a few minutes after 10am, Local 13's Angel Blanco called together 50 participants – most of whom arrived in dozens of tricked-out classic cars and scores of motorcycles from the Longshoremen's Motorcycle Club. They gathered quietly at the graveside of Dickie Parker, offering prayers and reflections.

"The picnic later this afternoon is great, but this event is the most important part of the day for me and everyone here," said Blanco.

The service started with a beautiful solo rendition of the national anthem following a soulful benediction and prayer.

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Postmaster: Send address changes to The Dispatcher, 1188 Franklin St., San Francisco, CA 94109-6800.



LETTERS TO THE DISPATCHER

Dear Editor,

The ILWU Federated Auxiliaries would like to thank all of our brothers and sisters who helped make our Quilt Raffle a success. We raised \$8000.00 for the Federated Travel Fund.

We are happy to announce that the quilt was won by Rosemary Paetz, a member of Auxiliary 35 in Tacoma. The drawing of the ticket took place on July 5, 2015 (Bloody Thursday) in North Bend (Coos Bay), Oregon.

Again, a big THANK YOU to all of you that supported us.

Judy Rowley
ILWU Fed. Auxiliary Treasurer
Wofford Heights, CA



Send your letters to the editor to: *The Dispatcher*, 1188 Franklin St., San Francisco, CA 94109-6800 or email to editor@ilwu.org

TRANSITIONS

NEW PENSIONERS:

Local 8: Daniel J. Connors;
Local 10: Samuel N. Johnson Jr;
Local 12: Clifford D. Gumm;
Local 13: Ralph L. Davis; Eugene Cazares; Gregory A. Arias; John R. Cervantes; Fred A. Sardisco; Genaro Barrios; Mark R. Lagrand; Bobby R. Dickerson; Albert R. Gamerao; **Local 19:** Robert R. Rinaldi; Michael S. Rivera;
Local 23: Peter R. Hayes;
Local 26: Floyd J. Mitchell;
Local 34: Oswaldo M. Mendoza; Robert L. Garitano; **Local 40:** James A. Draper; Randall K. Free;
Local 52: Michael F. Russo;
Local 63: Derek M. Salkeld; Rozario Bacica; Norma J. Camacho; Larry St. Marie; Ruth Maness; Albert O. Glover; Margaret L. Amador; **Local 75:** Marie K. Gianopoulos; **Local 94:** Angel J. Chairez;

DECEASED PENSIONERS:

Local 8: Harold O. Odden; Wallace Embury; James C. Welch;
Local 13: Martin Nuno; Edward M. Minjarez Jr; Peter Smoljan; Stanley G. Maness; Earl S. Sears; Odell Blair; **Local 19:** Richard J. Nelson; Bud H. Johnson; **Local 21:** Clinton T. Reese; Dennis L. Staudinger; **Local 34:** Anthony V. Mc Clain; **Local 52:** Joseph K. Rice;
Local 54: Hector V. Aguirre;
Local 63: Estell R. Parks; **Local 63:** Jean R. Donnelly; Albert Rea;
Local 94: Marcus K. Johnson;
DECEASED SURVIVORS:
Local 8: Marcella M. Pearson; Roberta J. Johnson; **Local 10:** Mamie L. Hill; Audrey Grant; Virginia Rudy; Barbara Bischoff; Gaila P. Murphy; **Local 13:** Rachel A. Juarez; **Local 19:** Patricia A. Swanson; **Local 34:** Opal R. Greco; **Local 40:** Marlene M. Johnson; **Local 63:** Patty J. Coleman; Anna I. La Febre; **Local 92:** Florence E. Cramer;

2015 Pacific Coast Pensioners Association Convention

September 5-9, 2015
San Francisco, California

Holiday Inn Hotel • Golden Gateway
1500 Van Ness Avenue

ROOM RATES
\$170.00 per night (singles/doubles)
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General Fax 1-415.776.7155

This year's featured speaker and guest is Jhon Jairo Castro Balanta, President of the Buenaventura Port Workers Union in Colombia. "Congress passed the Colombia Free Trade Agreement despite the fact that Colombia is one of the most deadly places to be a labor leader", said PCPA President Rich Austin. "The Labor Action Plan that President Obama and Colombian President Santos signed in 2011 promised enforcement of labor standards. As with every other phony free trade agreement gimmick, it failed to deliver. Colombia remains a dangerous country for union members. Jhon will fill us in on the current situation there."

Also speaking at the event at the convention will be Congresswoman Barbara Lee (D-CA 13).

The Convention won't be all business. The Host Committee has range of enjoyable activities planned, including a banquet and dancing. In addition, drummer extraordinaire John Fisher and his group will perform. John is a member of the Bay Area Pensioners.

"Pensioners, plan on attending. You'll have a great time and you'll have the opportunity to renew old acquaintances and make new friends".

ILWU
Local 46

The Walkcoast

Saturday, August 22, 2015

The Port
OF Hueneme
Oxnard Harbor District

Bar-B-Q & Fun
for the family



Alex's Lemonade Stand
FOUNDATION FOR CHILDHOOD CANCER



Lunch 12pm - 2pm
Kids under 8 years of age eat Free

Starting at 10:00 A.M.

✦ **Dorill Wright Pavilion Parking Lot**
Return Shuttle Service provided back to the Pavilion

Walking to

✦ **The Historical Lighthouse** (Approx. 1.5 miles)

✦ **A \$30 Minimum donation. T-shirt, lunch and plenty of lemonade**

To register or donate visit our website
www.ilwuwalkthecoast.org

ID # E1134083

Find on the right, Alex's Lemonade Stand Foundation click make a donation and choose Port Hueneme for your walk and support Fill out completely and we'll see you there.

To register by phone call the Port of Hueneme at (805) 488-3677



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Film & discussion expose conspiracy in 1981 assassination of ILWU leaders

Thirty-five years ago, the brutal murder of ILWU Local 37 officials Silme Domingo and Gene Viernes sent shock waves through Seattle and the international labor movement. Supporters spent decades gathering evidence of a high-level conspiracy that involved former dictator Ferdinand Marcos of the Philippines – and exposed complicity by U.S. officials who backed his bloody regime.

Family members, friends and community supporters gathered in San Francisco on July 17 at ILWU Local 34 to screen a new documentary film about the slain ILWU leaders who led a reform campaign against corruption in Local 37 that represented a predominantly Filipino immigrant workforce employed in Alaskan salmon canneries.

The film, “One Generation’s Time: The Legacy of Silme Domingo & Gene Viernes,” was produced by Shannon Gee. The 1-hour documentary explains how the pair of union activists were also active in the Union of Democratic Filipinos, known as the “KDP,” a left-wing political organization that supported improvements for immigrant Filipino workers and the over-

throw of the Marcos dictatorship. The KDP’s goals spurred hostility from the Marcos regime and from thugs who preyed on union members in ILWU Local 37.

When Viernes and Domingo were gunned down in the union hall on June 1, 1981, the murders were initially reported as isolated acts of violence, and two shooters with gang connections were convicted. But friends and family were convinced there was more to the story, and organized the Committee for Justice for Domingo and Viernes (CJDV) which eventually confirmed that Philippine President Ferdinand Marcos had ordered the murders. A civil lawsuit eventually returned a \$15 million jury verdict against Marcos.

In 1989, a federal jury agreed with the CJDV, and found Marcos guilty of the murders in 1989. Two years later, former Local 37 president and Marcos supporter Constantine “Tony” Baruso, was found guilty of first-degree murder in the death of Viernes.

In 2011, the Inlandboatmen’s Union, Region 37, created an annual scholarship to honor the memory of Domingo and Viernes by assisting students at the University of Washington’s Harry Bridges Center for Labor Studies.



Exposing the truth: IBU Secretary-Treasurer Terri Mast and Seattle City Council staffer Cindy Domingo led a discussion at ILWU Local 34 on July 17, following the screening of a 1-hour documentary film about murder of Mast’s husband and Domingo’s brother. In 1981, assassins for Philippine dictator Ferdinand Marcos murdered ILWU Local 37 leaders Silme Domingo and Gene Viernes in Seattle because of their political views and organizing to end the Philippine dictatorship and efforts to end immigrant exploitation in the U.S. and elsewhere.

Following the film, a discussion was led by Terri Mast, Silme Domingo’s widow and Secretary-Treasurer of the Inlandboatmen’s Union. Joining her was Domingo’s sister, Cindy, who serves as Chief of Staff to Seattle Councilmember Larry Gossett.

“The film has been shown many times on Seattle public television,” said Mast, “and soon copies of the DVD will be more available for the public.” Anyone wishing to see the film online can do so at www.seattlechannel.org/CommunityStories?videoid=x21162

History and legacy of Bloody Thursday

The following remarks on the history of Bloody Thursday were presented by ILWU pensioner and former ILWU Librarian Gene Vrana at the Local 10 hall in San Francisco.

Greetings & good morning brothers & sisters: my name is Gene Vrana. I am an ILWU pensioner, and it is a privilege to be here to participate in this 81st anniversary observance of Bloody Thursday.

These silhouettes on the sidewalk remind us of Howard Sperry and Nicholas Bordoise—two of the seven men who were killed during the 1934 strike: ordinary workers—victims of police violence, martyrs to the cause of a new rank and file unionism, heroes to generations of workers. They were two of dozens shot by the police in San Francisco on July 5, 1934. Several—like Howard Sperry—were shot in the back when employers and elected officials used every means necessary to smash the strike, open the port, and rid the city of strikers in the name of anti-communism.

Sperry was 49, and a longshoreman—Nicholas Bordoise, age 43, was a union restaurant cook.

The 1934 strike arose from a new kind of rank and file unionism dedicated to unity and solidarity—“unity” (meaning to become one), and “solidarity” (meaning to stand with others in common cause).

As formulated by the rank and file in 1934, the cause was: union recognition, a hiring hall without corruption or discrimination, jurisdiction

over all longshore work, 6-hour day, and a coastwise contract.

Victory required unparalleled unity, discipline, & solidarity across geographical, political, and organizational boundaries. It meant overcoming barriers of race, occupation, and ideology that had divided and weakened maritime unions before 1933.

The employers rejected the union demands out of hand denouncing them as communist-inspired and the strike began on May 9, 1934.

Violent skirmishes flared along the Pacific Coast from the beginning—and then came the tragedy of Bloody Thursday: by nightfall on July 5, 2,000 armed national guardsmen patrolled the Embarcadero under the protection of machine gun emplacements—a lethal showdown that eventually led the union leadership to accept arbitration so that they could literally live to fight another day.

But first, on July 9 there was a massive, silent funeral procession of 50,000 up Market Street—a powerful and moving tribute to the fallen workers that helped win widespread sympathy for the waterfront workers and galvanized the city’s unions into a four-day general strike in support of the maritime strikers and against police violence.

The general strike lasted from July 16-19 and was matched by day after day of police violence and

vigilante attacks against the maritime unions and their allies—over 500 were arrested—no doubt helping the conservative union leaders in charge of the general strike committee to waffle and eventually capitulate and call off the strike.

On July 31 the longshoremen returned to work and accepted federal arbitration by President Roosevelt’s National Longshore Board.

The arbitration award was issued October 12. Miraculously, the union’s major demands were won at the arbitration table.

Over the next decade, the 1934 alliance between longshore and seafaring unions, solidified in 1935 as the Maritime Federation of the Pacific, eventually made good on the pledge to secure comparable benefits for the maritime workers who had stood solid with longshore workers.

By 1948, ILWU ship clerks and foremen also achieved coastwise contracts with the strength derived from the extraordinary solidarity in the maritime and longshore strikes of 1936, 1946 and 1948—and in turn helped further solidify the union’s coastwise unity.

A few years later, at the 1953 ILWU convention, the generation of 1934—now aging and looking to pass the torch of militant democratic unionism to a new generation—sought to distill the lessons of 1934 for the pres-

ent and future members of the union—and called them the “Ten Guiding Principles of the ILWU”—unity and solidarity and discipline were at the heart of each principle, which continue to guide the union; briefly, they are:

- Unity of the membership.
- Labor unity.
- No discrimination.
- Help any worker in distress.
- Put aside internal differences to advance the common cause.
- Industry-wide bargaining.
- Organize the unorganized.
- International solidarity.
- Economic justice.
- End jurisdictional raiding by unions.

Today, we cannot afford to waver as we stand in solidarity with workers here and around the world—because the political and corporate forces that ordered the guns and tear gas and mayhem in 1934 stand ready to again use any means necessary to unravel worker’s rights and collective bargaining in the name of anti-terrorism—legislation is being readied in Congress to do just that. Unity & discipline must always be our objective, and solidarity our signpost—for it will be by our actions today & tomorrow that we will honor those who fell on July 5, 1934.

Solidarity, sacrifice remembered at 81st Anniversary of Bloody Thursday

continued from page 1

Local 13 President Bobby Olvera, Jr., noted that the remains of more than 100 charter longshore union members are found in the surrounding graves at Roosevelt Memorial Park, making it “hallowed ground.” He thanked Local 65 brothers from the Port Police for attending and providing their motorcycle escort for the car caravan that followed the service. He concluded by reminding everyone that sacrifices made this year by longshore workers struggling for a new contract cannot be forgotten – because they are part of a larger struggle by one generation after another – beginning with the ultimate sacrifice made by Dickie Parker and John Knudsen in 1934.

Poetry

Pensioner Jerry Brady read his Bloody Thursday poem that brought tears to the eyes of some, followed by Pensioner and former International President Dave Arian who reminded the group that today’s ceremony had been dropped for decades before being restored during the 1980’s.

Procession

At 10:30, engines roared to life in the classics, cruisers, hot-rods and Harleys that slowly pulled out of the Memorial Park behind a symbolic hearse provided by All Soul’s Mortuary in Long Beach. The mock funeral procession made its way through a ten-mile trek south to San Pedro, passing along the waterfront and going up 7th Street through downtown before arriving at Peck Park where hundreds of family members were already gathered for the Bloody Thursday picnic.

Local 13 member Bobby Rodriguez and his wife Liz brought up the rear of the caravan, So Cal style, in their tastefully lowered, very cherry 1937 Chevy Master Deluxe, part of the Solo Riders Car Club.

“We come every year!” they said.

Picnic with a purpose

Union members arriving at the park could hear it was happening from blocks away, thanks to the excellent live music provided by three local bands that are connected through family or friends to the ILWU.

The band “Jamin’ Mood” opened the event, followed by a mid-day performance from the group “Low-Key,” and ended with DW-3 who closed out the event before heading to Miami for a big gig there. Dancing increased during the afternoon as the crowd increased.

A wide-range of food and drinks were available at no cost to members and families that included hot dogs, hamburgers, tacos and burritos. But the BBQ pits seemed to generate the most heat between cooks and patrons, with notable contributions from the Longshoremen’s Motorcycle Club and Heavy-Hitters softball team, with Nacho Sanchez and Shakey Namahoe from the Hitters especially proud of their tri-tip. Local 13’s team of Johnny and Manuel Amaro grilled hundreds of jalapeno peppers that went into their burritos and were cooled with icy agua frescas.

Kids had a blast

Much of the picnic festivities focused on entertainment for kids – which gave grown-ups a chance to relax and socialize while their children played safely on a dizzying assortment of activities that included several bounce houses, slides, basketball, two video-game arcade trucks and face painting.

Pensioner & Auxiliary presence

The Southern California Pensioners Group had a booth with tables, chairs, food and goodies available for dozens who dropped-by. The always-active ILWU Federated Auxiliary Local 8 ladies worked the crowd, selling raffle tickets for a local benefit.

Just a dash of politics

An impressive roster of politicians attended the picnic to mingle, shake hands and provide mercifully short greetings. Introduced by Local 13 President Bobby Olvera, Jr., the elected officials paid their respects to the union’s bloody beginnings and expressed support for the union’s recent battle for the new longshore contract. Attendees included Congress members Janice Hahn and Alan Lowenthal, State Treasurer John Chiang, State Senator Isadore Hall, ILWU-endorsed State Senate candi-



Photo by Arch Chaney

Ponies were popular: Tacoma’s lakeside picnic to honor Bloody Thursday featured activities for families and the younger set, including popular pony rides.

date Warren Furutani, State Senator Ricardo Lara (represented by staffer Cory Allen), Los Angeles City Councilmember Joe Buscaino (represented by staffer Gabby Medina), Long Beach City Councilmember Roberto Uranga, Long Beach City Prosecutor Doug Haubert, Assemblymember Mike Gipson (represented by staffer Chris Wilson) and Long Beach School Board member Felton Williams.

Olvera also introduced several ILWU union officials who attended the event from out of state, including Local 8 member Jim Daw from Portland who serves on the ILWU International Executive Board, Local 23 President Dean McGrath from Tacoma, Local 8 member and Coast Committeeman Leal Sundet and Local 19 President Cameron Williams from Seattle. Longtime Local 13 member and retiring Coast Committeeman Ray Ortiz Jr., was also recognized and thanked for his many years of service.

Planning for success

“We planned to handle up to 2,000 guests and came pretty close,” said Jose Olivaras who chaired the Bloody Thursday Committee that included Steve Linares, Melon Cesar, Nacho Enriques and Paul Zuanich – plus a team of 120 volunteers that included more than a dozen volunteers from the Beacon House Association of San Pedro.

“We started putting this together three months ago, and it all came together in a good way, thanks to everyone’s hard work,” said Olivaras.

Bay Area

Scores of ILWU members, pensioners and their families gathered at the Local 10 hall in San Francisco for the traditional Bloody Thursday memorial serviced sponsored by the Bay Area Longshoremen’s Memorial Association (BALMA) and Locals 10, 34, 75 and 91.

ILWU member Scott Barton performed taps once again to honor the waterfront strikers who were killed in 1934. Talented singer Aaliyah Washington-Purry, who has also performed at previous Bloody Thursday memorials, sang the National Anthem again this year. Local 10 President Melvin Mackay welcomed everyone

to the Local 10 hall and reminded them that the wages and working conditions enjoyed by ILWU members today were built on the sacrifices of those who fought and died in 1934 – and the generations of longshore workers who continued that struggle.

Local 10 pensioner Lawrence Thibeaux served as the master of ceremonies for the event. Following Melvin Mackay’s speech, ILWU historian Harvey Schwartz recounted the failed strikes at West Coast ports in 1916 and 1919 that faltered because of the disunity that prevailed until 1934. ILWU pensioner and former ILWU Librarian Gene Vrana gave a concise history of the 1934 strike, its impact and legacy (see page 3 for an excerpt of Vrana’s speech).

Other speakers at the event included BALMA Treasurer Mike Villegiante, Local 34 President Sean Farley, former Local 10 Presidents Cleophas Williams and Joe Lucas, and ILWU Pensioner George Romero.

Farley’s address highlighted recent legislation being pushed by Republican Senator John Thune that would greatly expand the Taft-Hartley provision of the National Labor Relations Act by empowering state governors to intervene in strikes or worker “slow downs” at the nations ports. Farley said this was a serious and historic threat to the ILWU’s strength and would weaken the ability of port workers to fight for fair wages and safe working conditions.

After the memorial, Local 10 hosted a full day of activities in their hall including a catered lunch of pizza and pasta, live music and dancing, and plenty of activities for kids that included a magic show, face painting, balloon art and caricature drawings.

Puget Sound picnic with a purpose

Puget Sound ILWU families celebrated Bloody Thursday on July 5th at the Vasa Park & Resort along the shores of beautiful Lake Sammamish. The all-day gathering at was located just 8 miles away from Seattle, but the cool waters and beautiful forest seemed a world apart from the hustle and bustle of the city and docks.



Photo by Arch Chaney

Service with a smile: Local 23 member Warren Van Wattering was one of dozens who volunteered to make Tacoma’s picnic a success on July 5th.

Good turnout

An estimated 700 union members and family participated in the July 5 event that combined an important ceremony that remembered the union's past – while providing some serious entertainment and relaxation opportunities for hard-working family members and kids.

Great food

The food was plentiful and delicious, with barbequed ribs, brisket, chicken, hot dogs and hamburgers – along with grilled tofu that was said to be surprisingly tasty.

Important ceremony

To honor Bloody Thursday, Local 19 pensioners John Fisher and Carl Woeck led a ceremony recognizing each of the seven union martyrs who were killed during the 1934 west coast maritime strike that established the foundation for today's ILWU. After Fisher and Woeck struck the bell 7 times to honor the 1934 martyrs, they struck the bell again for each ILWU member and pensioner who had passed during the previous year.

Awesome fun and games

A nearby boat ramp allowed some members to bring their own boats, but most of the action focused on shore side activities. A waterslide was provided especially for the picnic and proved to be among the most popular amusements, but there was stiff competition from the bouncy house and airbrush face and arm-painting booth. Some drove their classic cars to the event and put them proudly on display. There were no speeches from politicians – although Local 19's own John Persak, who's running for Seattle City Council, was welcomed and made the rounds. A local sound ordinance ruled-out a live band, but Local 19 member Leith Jasinowski-Kahl brought his banjo and played some classic union songs.

Generous volunteers

The successful event required many volunteers who generously gave their time to help 700 participants enjoy a special day. The volunteer team included: Mike Callahan, Dusty Crabtree, Sarah Esch, Warren Fairbanks with kids Jeremy & Anna, John Fisher, Mary Fuller, Cosette Hill, Mike Hurlock, Leith Jasinowski-Kahl, Scott Martinez, Dan Philo, Max Proctor, Alice Thacker, Randy Wilber, Charlie Wilbert and Carl Woeck.

"The volunteers were fantastic and made a great day possible for hundreds of hard-working families to relax and celebrate an important date in union history," said Local 19 Executive Board member and Trustee Justin Hirsch who helped coordinate the event.

Tacoma picnics at the lake

Local 23 members in Tacoma honored Bloody Thursday with their traditional picnic held at beautiful Spanaway Lake Park, located 15 miles south of Tacoma on 135 acres of forested shoreline.

An estimated 600 family members participated at this year's event that featured a barbeque lunch where hundreds and dogs and burgers were served. Special attractions provided for children were a big hit, especially the inflatable bounce toys that included a pirate ship. Pony rides were popular with the younger ones, and a local artist painted dozens of faces and arms for both children and adults.

The event was planned and executed by a hard-working team that included Trustees Eric Sowers, Art Jackson, Kyle Copeland, Perry Smith and Dan Witker. Volunteers included Jeff Clowers and Dave Barker who headed the kids' games with help from many others. As usual, Local 23 Pensioners were generous about volunteering their time to make the event a success.



Honoring martyrs: Each summer, ILWU Canada members and labor allies gather to honor the men who fought and died on June 18, 1935, at the Ballantyne Pier. In addition to the June 18th memorial, a picnic honoring pensioners was held on July 16. Local 514 Pensioner President Gary Green says a fundraising effort is underway to secure a bench at the park next to the monument. Standing (L-R) are: pensioner Mike Marino, Joey Hartman of the Vancouver District Labour Council, Lori Mayhew of the New Westminster District Labour Council and Dan Kask of ILWU Local 502.

Battle of Ballantyne

The struggle by Canadian longshore workers to establish their union in the 1930's followed a similar path to the one taken by dockworkers down south.

Early efforts to create a west coast waterfront union in Canada were defeated, following a failed strike in 1923, when employers crushed a union affiliated with the International Longshoremen's Association (ILA), and replaced it with a weaker company-influenced union called the Vancouver and District Waterfront Workers' Association (VDWWA). Despite the VDWWA's "yellow" origins, workers pushed the group to confront employers and organized employees at every West Coast port in Canada. Employers responded by provoking a strike in 1935 that began with a lock-out of 50 dockworkers at the Powell River. When workers on the Vancouver docks refused to unload the Powell River ships loaded by scabs, a regional strike spread throughout the region, including Seattle where dockworkers refused to handle any scab loads from Canada.

Weeks after the lockout started, 1000 dockworkers and supporters marched on June 18 through the streets of Vancouver toward the Ballantyne Pier where non-union workers were unloading ships. Hundreds of armed policemen confronted marchers at the pier, attacking with weapons and with horses ridden by Canadian Mounties. The VDWWA union hall was hit with tear gas that injured women's auxiliary members inside who had set up a first aid station. The three-hour battle resulted in many injuries including one worker being shot while fleeing the police. Support for the strike dwindled in the weeks and months after the fighting ended.

Dockers succeeded two years later in 1937 by forming their own independent union that replaced the company-influenced VDWWA and gave rise to Canada's International Longshore and Warehouse Union (ILWU). Numerous struggles and strike in the years that followed built a strong union that won better pay and working conditions for Canadian dockers on the West Coast.



Local 34 President Sean Farley (top photo) and Local 10 Pensioner Lawrence Thibeaux (bottom photo) at the Bloody Thursday memorial event in San Francisco.



Photo by John Sardegna



Portland picnic: Amidst a sweltering July 5th, ILWU members in Portland, OR attended their annual Bloody Thursday Event at Oaks Park. After the laying of a wreath in the Willamette River and a tearful rendition of "Taps," food was served and kids young and old took to the amusement park's rides. Camaraderie, fellowship and solidarity permeated the air as members hunted the park for a cool drink and some shade.

ILWU supports Sakuma workers

A diverse delegation of ILWU leaders joined hundreds of community supporters who marched to support workers at the Sakuma Brothers berry farm on July 11. The effort was organized to help a two-year struggle by Sakuma farmworkers against one of Washington State's largest berry growers who is refusing to recognize the workers' independent union: Familias Unidas por la Justicia (Families United for Justice).

Walking for justice

ILWU leaders from Locals 9 and 19 in Seattle, and Local 25 in Anacortes, joined forces with ILWU Pensioners, Puget Sound District Council members, and members of the Inlandboatmen's Union (IBU). They met in the morning near Interstate 5 in the Skagit Valley then marched along a side road that passed through miles of lush berry fields, before arriving at Sakuma's processing facility and labor camp.

Signs of struggle

As marchers arrived at the complex, they could see that Sakuma's retail "farm stand" and "u-pick" operation were both closed because of growing community opposition to the company's anti-worker stance. Sakuma even tried giving away their berries for free at one point, but local opposition has made the company's PR gimmicks ineffective.

Skagit Valley is ground zero

Sakuma's operation in the beautiful Skagit Valley is located just an hour north of Seattle. The valley's mild temperatures are perfect for growing strawberries, blueberries, raspberries and blackberries. An astonishing 3 million pounds of raspberries are grown there annually and each berry must be carefully harvested by skilled hands.

Berry farming is big business

During the past 85 years, Sakuma has grown from a small family farm to a large corporate enterprise that includes a processing plant, controlled storage, commercial nursery and retail operation. The corporation is no longer being managed by the family, confirmed by the hiring of a new CEO last March. Sakuma sells fresh berries to supermarkets and warehouse stores like Costco through the giant Driscoll brand. They also provide berries used in Häagen-Dazs ice cream and other high-profile products.

Strikes past and present

Sakuma workers are all immigrants from southern Mexico, most of whom speak indigenous languages like Mixteco and Triqui. Two years ago they organized a strike against Sakuma over poor pay and working conditions. Another strike occurred this June when Sakuma berry pickers walked off the job during the first two days of the blueberry harvest. A factor in the recent strike was management's scheme to isolate union supporters by dividing the workforce into small groups with different start times. Despite the com-

pany's divide-and-conquer tactics, nearly 200 workers expressed support for last month's work stoppage.

"This was a reprisal action against the union," said Benito Lopez a member of the executive committee of Familias Unidas por la Justicia. "They wanted to separate us into groups of 10 people, and have each group begin at different times, 15 minutes apart, but we stuck together and walked out of the field in unity against another unjust labor practice. On top of the low wages, now we have to put up with these practices."

Breaking laws, paying fines

Despite Sakuma's insistence that they are an exceptional employer, the company has been caught red-handed cheating workers. In 2013, Sakuma agreed to pay an \$850,000 settlement for cheating workers out of pay by denying breaks and refusing to pay for hours worked. The cheated an estimated 1,200 farmworkers who will benefit from a lawsuit that the company agreed to settle instead of facing a judge or jury.

Using visas to bust unions

One tactic used by Sakuma and other growers to keep labor costs low and unions out of the fields is the recruitment of guest workers from Mexico. In 2013, Sakuma hired 70 temporary workers from Mexico using the Federal H2A guest worker visa program – claiming that they faced a "labor shortage."

"Free market" farce

Employers who claim they're suffering from labor shortages can use the H2-A visa program to avoid raising wages to attract local workers – a flagrant violation of "free market" principles that politicians often adore and companies frequently employ to argue against unions. Immigrant workers with H2-A visas are easily exploited because employers can quickly return a complaining worker back to Mexico. Even workers who don't complain can only stay in the U.S. for less than a year, must remain at the same employer, and must immediately return home after their work is finished.

Ski resorts & call centers

Employer abuse of the guest worker visa system is widespread in the agriculture industry but not limited to field work. The hospitality industry is increasing using a similar visa program to hire poor eastern Europeans for "temporary" work in ski resorts and summer lodges. Abuse of guest worker visas has been sanctioned by both Democrats and Republicans in Congress and the White House, and a report by the Southern Poverty Law Center called it "Close to Slavery."

High-tech hijinks

The hi-tech industry has successfully used a similar visa scam, known as the H1-B program, to secure scientists, engineers and programmers at low-wages, displacing domestic workers. Employers justify their use of the program by making false claims of an alleged "shortage" of high-tech workers. Employers have even used temporary immigrants to replace domestic workers at call centers and customer service operations – all to avoid raising wages or improving conditions.



Supporting Sakuma Farmworkers: ILWU leaders at the July 11 march and rally included: (L-R) Local 9 member Michael Kube, Local 9 Business Agent Mike Pavelic, IBU Secretary-Treasurer Terri Mast, Local 19 President Cameron Williams, and Local 19 Executive Board member and Trustee Justin Hirsch.

Photo by David Bacon

Public pressure helps

In 2014, Sakuma Farms requested 438 new visas for the year, alleging that it faced a labor shortage. At the same time, it sent strikers letters saying they'd been fired. After workers signed letters saying they were available to work, exposing Sakuma's lies, the company withdrew its application as pressure mounted on the U.S. Department of Labor to turn down Sakuma's request.

Trending in wrong direction

Photojournalist David Bacon has spent time meeting and interviewing workers, and notes that a decade ago, there were few H-2A workers in Washington State. But by 2013, the U.S. Department of Labor had certified 6,251 applications – a number he says doubled since 2011.

"The irony is that one group of immigrant workers, recruited by growers using the H2-A visa program, are being pitted against another group of recent immigrants from Mexico who have been hired by Sakuma for years," said Bacon.

Community support

Rosalinda Guillén, who directs a local group called "Community2Community" in Bellingham, agrees. "The H-2A program limits what's possible for all workers," she says. The community-based group is advocating for farm

worker rights as part of a just, sustainable food system.

Boycott Driscoll & Häagen-Dazs

Supporters are now calling for a boycott of all berries marketed under the Driscoll's label. Driscoll's is the largest berry marketing operation in the world, that sells to thousands of supermarkets and warehouse stores, including Costco. Driscoll's markets Sakuma's blueberries, and Familias Unidas por la Justicia charges that it is equally responsible with Sakuma for denying workers fair wages and the right to negotiate a union contract. Sakuma also sells strawberries used in Häagen-Dazs ice cream.

ILWU support

The struggle by Sakuma farm workers was discussed at the ILWU's 36th International Convention in June. The issue was explained by Rich Austin, President of the Pacific Coast Pensioners Association. Delegates learned of Sakuma's many abuses, and they took action by unanimously adopting a resolution to support workers and a boycott:

"RESOLVED: that the ILWU calls upon other labor organizations and legislators and congressional delegations to support a boycott of Sakuma Brothers Farms, Haagen-Dazs, and Driscoll's Berries until the demands of Familias Unidas Por La Justicia are met."

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Hard camp conditions: Filemon Piñeda, his wife Francisca Mendoza, and their children lived in a cabin in the labor camp at Sakuma Farms during the picking season. Piñeda is vice-president of Familias Unidas por la Justicia.

Photo by David Bacon

ILWU apoya a los trabajadores de Sakuma

El 11 de julio una delegación de diversos líderes de ILWU se unió a cientos de simpatizantes de la comunidad en una marcha de apoyo para los trabajadores de la granja de moras de Sakuma Brothers. Los trabajadores agrícolas llevan dos años luchando contra dicha empresa, la productora de moras más grande del estado de Washington, ya que esta se ha negado a reconocer el sindicato independiente de los trabajadores, a saber, Familias Unidas por la Justicia (“Families United for Justice”).

Caminata por la justicia

Los dirigentes de los Locales 9 y 19 de ILWU de Seattle, y del Local 25 de Anacortes, unieron fuerzas con los Jubilados de ILWU, miembros del Consejo del Distrito de Puget Sound y del Sindicato de Barqueros de Aguas Internas (IBU). Se reunieron por la mañana cerca de la Carretera Interestatal 5 en Skagit Valley, luego marcharon por la orilla de la carretera que bordea los campos de moras, los cuales se extienden por varias millas, para finalmente llegar a la planta procesadora y campamento de trabajadores de Sakuma.

Señales de lucha

Al llegar los manifestantes al complejo, observaron que la “frutería” y la operación de “autocosecha” de Sakuma estaban cerrados, puesto que había una creciente oposición de la comunidad a su actitud anti trabajador. Sakuma incluso trató de regalar sus moras en un momento dado, pero la oposición local impidió que dieran resultados sus truquillos de relaciones públicas.

Skagit Valley es la zona cero

La empresa de Sakuma se ubica en el bonito valle de Skagit, justo una hora al norte de Seattle. Las temperaturas templadas del valle son perfectas para el cultivo de fresas, arándanos, frambuesas y zarzamoras. Asombra que 3 millones de libras de frambuesas sean cultivadas anualmente allí y que cada mora tenga que ser cosechada individualmente con mano de obra calificada.

El cultivo de moras es un gran negocio

Durante los últimos 85 años, Sakuma ha crecido de una pequeña granja familiar a una gran corporación que incluye la planta procesadora, almacenaje a temperatura controlada, vivero comercial y un establecimiento de venta al menudeo. La corporación ya no es administrada por la familia, lo cual quedó en evidencia por la contratación de un nuevo Director General en marzo. Sakuma vende moras frescas a supermercados y tiendas-almacén como Costco con la marca Driscoll. También provee las moras que se usan en los helados Häagen-Dazs y otros productos de renombre.

Huelgas previas y actuales

Todos los trabajadores de Sakuma son inmigrantes del sur de México, la mayoría de los cuales hablan idiomas indígenas como el mixteco y triqui. Hace dos años organizaron una huelga contra Sakuma debido a los bajos salarios y malas condiciones de trabajo. Otra huelga estalló este junio cuando los piscadores de moras de Sakuma hicieron un paro laboral durante los primeros dos días de la cosecha del arándano azul. Un factor en la huelga reciente fue la jugarreta de la compañía de aislar a los que apoyaban al sindicato dividiendo a la fuerza laboral en grupos pequeños con diferentes turnos de trabajo. A pesar de las tácticas de “divide y vencerás” casi 200 trabajadores expresaron su apoyo por el paro laboral en el mes pasado.

“Esta fue una represalia contra la unión,” dijo Benito López, un miembro del comité directivo de Familias Unidas por la Justicia. “Ellos querían separarnos en grupos de 10 personas, y que cada grupo empezara su turno 15 minutos después del anterior, pero nos mantuvimos unidos y abandonamos los campos para protestar otra práctica laboral injusta. Además de los bajos salarios, ahora tenemos que aguantar estas prácticas.”

Violación de las leyes y pago de multas

A pesar de que Sakuma insiste en que es un empleador excepcional, se le descubrió defraudando a los trabajadores con las manos en la masa. En el 2013, Sakuma se comprometió a pagar \$850,000 a los trabajadores como ajuste



Photo by David Bacon

La siguiente generación. En el cerco a la entrada del campamento de trabajadores, los niños de algunos huelguistas imitan a sus padres y amigos. Agarran un letrero, se paran en el cerco y empiezan a corear y gritar: ¿Qué queremos? ¡Justicia! ¿Cuándo la queremos? ¡Ahora!

de cuentas por haberles negado los descansos y no pagarles todas las horas trabajadas. La compañía defraudó a unos 1,200 trabajadores agrícolas que serán los beneficiarios de la demanda judicial que la compañía acordó resolver extrajudicialmente en lugar de someterse a un juez o jurado.

El uso de visas para atacar al sindicato

Una táctica usada por Sakuma y otros agricultores para deprimir los costos de la mano de obra e impedir que los sindicatos representen a los trabajadores, fue la importación de braceros de México. En 2013, Sakuma contrató 70 trabajadores eventuales de México usando el programa federal de visas H2-A para trabajadores huéspedes – arguyendo que la compañía sufría una “escasez de trabajadores.”

La farsa del “libre mercado”

Los empleadores que dicen tener una escasez de mano de obra pueden usar el programa de visas H2-A para evitar el aumento salarial que se requiere para atraer a los trabajadores locales – lo cual es una violación descarada de los principios del “libre mercado” que los políticos adoran y en los que se basan las empresas a menudo para oponerse a los sindicatos. Los trabajadores inmigrantes con visas H2-A pueden ser explotados fácilmente porque los empleadores pueden devolver rápidamente a México a cualquier trabajador que se queje. Incluso los trabajadores que no se quejan sólo pueden quedarse en E.U. por menos de un año, deben permanecer con el mismo empleador y regresar inmediatamente a país de origen cuando termine su empleo.

Servicio telefónico de atención al cliente y centros de esquí

El abuso del sistema de visas para braceros por los empleadores es común en el sector agrícola pero no sólo en los campos de cultivo. En el sector de la hotelería y gastronomía se usa cada vez más un programa de visas similar para contratar europeos orientales pobres para trabajos “temporales” en centros vacacionales de esquí y lugares de verano. El abuso de visas de braceros ha sido sancionado tanto por los Demócratas como Republicanos en el Congreso y por la Casa Blanca, a pesar de que en un informe del Centro Legal del Sur Con-

tra la Pobreza (“Southern Poverty Law Center”) se le ha llamado un programa “cercano a la esclavitud.”

Atropellos para la alta tecnología

El sector de alta tecnología ha sabido aprovecharse también de una visa similar, conocido como el programa H1-B, para conseguir científicos, ingenieros y programadores a bajos salarios, desplazando mientras tanto a trabajadores nacionales. Los empleadores justifican su uso de este programa con reclamaciones falsas de que hay “escasez” de trabajadores calificados en materia de alta tecnología. Los empleadores incluso han substituido a los trabajadores nacionales con trabajadores inmigrantes para dar atención al cliente, incluso telefónicamente – todo con el fin de evitar el mejoramiento de los salarios o de las condiciones de trabajo.

Ayuda la presión del público

En 2014, Sakuma Farms solicitó 438 visas nuevas para ese año, alegando que le esperaba una escasez de mano de obra. Al mismo tiempo, envió cartas a los huelguistas avisándoles que quedaban despedidos. Después de que los trabajadores firmaron cartas afirmando que estaban disponibles para trabajar, y dejando en evidencia las mentiras de Sakuma, la Compañía retiró su solicitud al mismo tiempo que se ejercía una creciente presión sobre el Departamento Federal de Trabajo para que se negara la petición de Sakuma.

Nadando contra la corriente

El reportero gráfico David Bacon se ha dedicado a reunirse con y entrevistar a los trabajadores y hace notar que hace una década había pocos trabajadores en el estado de Washington con visas H-2A. En cambio, para 2013 el Departamento Federal de Trabajo había certificado 6,251 solicitudes – una cifra, que según él, se ha doblado desde 2011.

“La ironía es que un grupo de trabajadores inmigrantes, reclutados por los agricultores usando el programa de visas H2-A, ha sido enfrentado a otro grupo de inmigrantes recientes de México que Sakuma ha empleado por años,” declara Bacon.

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Photo by David Bacon

¡A las barricadas! Los huelguistas montaron una barrera en el camino que lleva al campamento de trabajadores.

ILWU supports Sakuma workers

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Next steps

The day before the march, ILWU leaders joined other supporters for strategy discussions with union leaders from Familias Unidas por la Justicia. Other union leaders from Washington State, California and Mexico also attended the meeting. Washington State Labor Council President Jeff Johnson marched with workers and supporters the following day.

“This is an important campaign that crosses borders to unite the common concerns of workers,” said Austin, noting that berry workers in Mexico’s Baja California have also been striking – and that those berries are also sold by Driscoll. “It’s not an easy fight, but the important fights are never easy,” he said. “Solidarity and unity are the best weapons we have to fight injustice and capitalist greed.”



Photo by David Bacon

Women and children sat in the Sakuma labor camp, and refused to go into the fields and start picking during the strike. One woman nursed her baby. Many workers come from indigenous villages in Mexico where native languages are spoken instead of Spanish.

ILWU apoya a los trabajadores de Sakuma

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Apoyo de la comunidad

Rosalinda Guillén, que dirige un grupo local llamado “Community 2 Community” (De Comunidad a Comunidad) en Bellingham, concuerda. “El programa H-2A limita las posibilidades a todos los trabajadores,” dice ella. Este grupo de la comunidad aboga por los derechos de los trabajadores agrícolas como parte de un sistema alimenticio sostenible y justo.

Boicoteo de las marcas Driscoll y Häagen-Dazs

Los simpatizantes ahora piden que se haga un boicot de todas las moras comercializadas con la marca Driscoll, que es el servicio de mercadeo de moras más grande del mundo, ya que vende el producto a miles de supermercados y tiendas-almacén, como Costco. Driscoll comercializa los arándanos de Sakuma y Familias Unidas por la Justicia considera que Driscoll es tan responsable como Sakuma de negarle a los trabajadores un salario justo y el derecho de negociar un contrato colectivo de trabajo. Sakuma también vende las fresas que se usan en los helados de Häagen-Dazs.

Apoyo de ILWU

La lucha de los trabajadores agrícolas de Sakuma fue tratada en la 36a. Convención Internacional de ILWU en junio. El asunto fue presentado por Rich Austin, Presidente de la Asociación de Pensionados de la Costa del Pacífico. Los delegados se enteraron de los numerosos abusos de Sakuma y toma-

ron acción, aprobando unánimemente una resolución sobre el boicot y de apoyo para los trabajadores.

“RESUELVA: que ILWU pide a otras organizaciones laborales y legisladores y delegaciones de congresistas que apoyen el boicot de Sakuma Brothers Farms, Haagen Dazs y Driscoll Berries hasta que se cumplan las demandas de Familias Unidas por la Justicia.”

Los siguientes pasos

El día antes de la marcha, los dirigentes de ILWU se juntaron con otros simpatizantes para hablar de estrategias con dirigentes sindicales de Familias Unidas por la Justicia. Otros dirigentes sindicales del estado de Washington, California y México también asistieron a la junta. El presidente del Consejo Laboral del Estado de Washington, Jeff Johnson, marchó con los trabajadores y los simpatizantes al día siguiente.

“Esta es una campaña importante que cruza fronteras para unir a los trabajadores que luchan por lo mismo,” dijo Austin, señalando que los trabajadores de la mora en Baja California en México también se han puesto en huelga – y que esas moras también son vendidas por Driscoll. “No es fácil la lucha, pero las luchas importantes nunca son fáciles,” dijo él. “La solidaridad y la unidad son las mejores armas que tenemos para luchar contra la injusticia y la avaricia de los capitalistas.”

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