Georgia-Pacific workers rally for justice in Portland warehouses

On the cold afternoon of December 4th, fourth generation Georgia-Pacific (G-P) employee Travis McKinney raised his voice above the frigid wind as he stood with close to one hundred of his co-workers, union allies and community supporters in front of the office at the company’s largest distribution center for paper products in Portland, Oregon.

He described to an outraged crowd, management’s cold-blooded refusal to allow him to tend to his daughter’s health: “When I had to take my daughter to the hospital to be diagnosed, the company told me I had to stay and work overtime instead.” Travis was eventually able to get medical help for his daughter – despite G-P’s lack of support – and found that she was autistic.

Doug Stilwell, another G-P employee, spoke at the rally about management’s constant pressure to speed up forklift operations. “There is no safety… ever since they put this computer system in here [to automatically direct workers when to move loads], we’re all taking shortcuts trying to get this stuff down, pushing their paper out. It’s wrong,” said Stilwell.

Earlier in the year, production employee Cyrie Bellici had her leg severely injured and almost ripped off due to a common practice – condoned by management – that allowed cargo loads to be manually directed on the distribution center floor.

As members of the Inlandboatmen’s Union of the Pacific, ILWU’s Marine Division, Travis, Doug and Cyrie are part of a group of almost 80 G-P workers who have been fighting for safe jobs, healthy families and retirement security and bargaining for a fair collective bargaining agreement since February 2010.

IBU President Alan Coté pointed out “safety is more than a page in a manual, and there is no safety culture in here as far as I’m concerned—just a greed culture.”

Leaders from other unions whose members work at G-P in other locations, joined IBU members in denouncing G-P’s reckless approach of putting corporate profits before workers’ health.

Greg Pallesen, Vice-President of the Association of Western Pulp and Paper Workers (AWPPW), said ‘they don’t care about anything other than profit. ‘Safety First’ is a line of you-know-what.” Bill Kerr, Recording Secretary of United Steelworkers (USW) Local 1097, concurred: “They will preach ‘Safety First,’ and I honestly believe its ‘Production First.’”

After dozens of members and supporters picketed the company last May, subsequent months saw G-P repeatedly attempting to gut key protections and force drastic concessions on members.

continued on page 7
Dear Editor,

We are the children of Frank F. Marinkovich, Sr. – Frank, Jr. and Jean Marie. We are honored for this opportunity to pay tribute to his memory, and to acknowledge the essential role of the ILWU which enabled him to provide so well for his family over the many years. The Book of Proverbs in the Bible states that a good man leaves an inheritance, a legacy, to his children’s children. Our dear dad was such a man. It was through him with the help of the union that his legacy lives on. Indeed, his wife, children and grandchildren all call him blessed.

Our dad loved God, his family, baseball, the ILWU, his community and his country. He played ball with great skill and passion earlier in life; similarly, when he joined the union, he enthusiastically committed himself. He was a proud brother for sixty years who never retired from working.

For him and for us as a family, the union has been and continues to be a tremendous blessing. He dedicated himself to sending us to private (parochial) school, and then on to the best universities. In so doing, he set us up for life with a great education. Frank, Jr. went to medical school and earned his Doctor of Medicine degree. Jean Marie went to graduate school and earned her Doctor of Philosophy degree in science and engineering. Growing up, we also enjoyed good vacations, a nice home and good medical coverage. All of these benefits were made possible through his hard work and the action of the ILWU. During his recent illness and subsequent passing, the union again stepped up. Dad’s health insurance covered his medical bills. Also, our mother receives great benefits and continued support from the union. This is what our dad fought for as a brother of the union. To be sure, there occurred several strikes along the way, but we think he would say that it was worth it.

We, as his family, encourage the current members of this great union not to become complacent, to continue to fight to keep the union strong and unified, and to keep those hard-earned benefits that have been won by its previous members, such as Frank F. Marinkovich, Sr. That is what dad would have wanted.

Jean Bear

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

ILWU helps raise $25,000 for Miller’s Children’s Hospital: ILWU’s Tri-Party Golf Tournament held last year raised $25,000 for Miller Children’s Hospital (Long Beach) and $2,100 for Arnie’s Army Battles Prostate Cancer. Sponsors of the tournament included ILWU Locals 13, 63 and 94. Other help came from locals 92 and 142, ILWU Coast Longshore Division, Southern California Pensioners Club, the ILWU Credit Union and several Harbor Area businesses. Pictured in the photo are: Front row, L-R: Jim Normandin, for Miller Children’s Hospital; Lou Loveridge, SoCal Pensioners; Mondo Porras, Local 13 Sec. Treas.; Middle row, L-R: Bobby Olera Jr., Vice President Local 13; Danny Miranda, President, Local 94; John Dadich, Tournament Co-Chair; Joe Cortez, President,Local 13; Jerry Garretson, President, SoCal Pensioners; Michele Aragon, Tournament Co-Chair; Roger Dillon, Vice President, Local 63; Back row, L-R: Mike Trudel, Sec. Treas. Local 94; Gary Alexander, Tournament Co-chair; Mark Gargas, Tournament Chairman; Peter Peyton, President, Local 63; Rich Dines, Tournament Co-Chair; Not pictured: Alex Banday, Tournament Co-Chair; Jim, “Red” McGovern, Tournament Co-Chair.

New ILWU website launched! Stop by our newly designed website. Expanded content, YouTube Videos, Photo galleries www.ilwu.org Submit your photos, stories and feedback on the new site to editor@ilwu.org

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ILWU’s holiday spirit is recession-proof

Year after year, ILWU members, Auxiliaries and pensioners assist families who are struggling through hard times, especially during the holiday season. With the prolonged recession that has hurt so many workers these past few years, the help that ILWU members gave their communities was especially valuable. ILWU members organized toy drives, worked in hospitality kitchens and much more to ensure that struggling workers and their families were not left out this holiday season. Thanks to all of the ILWU members who volunteered their time and donated money to those in need.

On December 20th, ILWU Local 13’s Lisa Tonson organized this year’s toy drive. Fifteen hundred area kids benefited from generous donations from Southern California ILWU members.

On Saturday, December 18th Local 23 held their annual holiday toy drive giveaway at their hall in Fife. Members donated over $20,000 to purchase toys and clothing for children in need this season and the gifts rapidly filled the union hall. Enough was raised so that members could donate two toys to each child. Over 400 children from nine different selected organizations were helped. Organizations who are receiving help from ILWU Local 23 members are:

- Pierce County Aids Foundation
- St. Leo’s Food Connection
- Children’s Home Society
- The Hospitality Kitchen
- South Sound Recovery Services
- Lions for Kids House (children’s clothing bank)
- Local women’s shelters
- Local schools

Representative from the nine local organizations, assisted by local #23 volunteers, were on hand to “shop” through our collection of donated toys, children’s clothing and bicycles for each child. In addition to the toy drive, members also donated $200 gift cards to low-income children at local schools, as a reward for achievement in the classroom.

Local 19 members contributed throughout the year $11,000 which was used to buy gifts this holiday season for kids at the following charities:

- Children’s Hospital
- Tree House
- Teen Feed
- Cobb group home

They also had a giving tree set-up in the hall for several local families. Members could pull a gift tag from the giving tree to fulfill the family’s needs. Through the gift tree, Local 19 members donated an additional $2,000.

For the 5th year in a row, members and pensioners from locals Local 4, 40 and 92 filled the Local 4 dispatch hall in Vancouver with dozens of shiny new bikes. The Children’s Home Society and Children’s Justice Center distributed the gifts to families in the area after the bikes were purchased and assembled by active and retired longshore workers. Members of the international Association of Fire Fighters donated helmets that were provided with the bikes.

Auxiliary Local 11 members in Vancouver organized a Children’s Christmas Party at the Local 4 hall that treated dozens of children to an afternoon of face-painting, cookie decorating, holiday decorating, and visiting Santa. Emmy Bishop and other volunteers did a fantastic job, according to Local 4 Dispatcher Troy Olson.

Southern California ILWU members’ generosity benefited 1,500 local children.

Help for harbor-area kids: Toy drive coordinator Lisa Tonson of Local 13 with a union Santa Clause. Tonson’s work every year on the holiday toy drive and Thanksgiving basket giveaway has been invaluable. According to one volunteer, “Christmas doesn’t happen in San Pedro without these two.” (Photo by Robin Doyno)

Bayer workers help the laid off: ILWU Local 6 members working at the Bayer production facility in Berkeley, CA donated enough money to purchase gifts for children from families who were hit by layoffs in August, 2010. Bayer demanded the layoffs despite record sales and billions in profit.

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Breaking the lockout in Boron

One of the largest mining companies in the world – Rio Tinto – tried to take out ILWU Local 30 last year in Boron, CA but the company folded in the face of an impressive show of solidarity at home and abroad. Rio Tinto had reason to be confident after forcing nasty concessions on other union miners in the U.S. and around the world. The 570 families in Boron won their 15-week struggle thanks to support from the ILWU family, labor unions in Southern California and solidarity from union members around the world. Small businesses, neighbors and church leaders provided vital support at home in the high desert communities. Local 30 members won a six-year agreement that phased out a defined benefit pension plan but preserved essential rights on the job along with guaranteed raises and a $5,000 bonus.

“The 30 members deserve the credit for sticking together and fighting for the best agreement we could get from a company that wanted to destroy our union, explained Local 30 President Dave Liebengood. “We didn’t get everything we wanted, and we had to make some compromises, but most workers felt that the final contract was a real victory for us.”

The agreement with Rio Tinto was reached with help from ILWU International President Bob McElfeith, Vice President Ray Familathe, and Secretary Treasurer Willie Adams. Local 30 President Dave Liebengood and the rank and file Negotiating Committee asked the ILWU International officers to assist them during the final week of intensive negotiations.

The victory against Rio Tinto could not have happened without the support from labor unions in Southern California who donated more than $50,000 in food to help families survive. Other money – more than $100,000 – was raised by ILWU Locals, the International, and other union groups to help Local 30 members keep their health insurance, pay mortgages, rent, car payments and utility bills.

Member Kim Evans expressed the views of many. “When we first got locked out I thought there was no way in heck we would win this. But we had so many people that showed up out here. I grew up out here, but for other people it’s a shock to see our tiny desert town that looks like it would blow away. The Teamster trucks brought us $30,000 worth of groceries and then another $20,000, so we had a food bank.”

Besides paying for many of the groceries, members of the United Food and Commercial Workers Union (UFCW) in Southern California also delivered hundreds of Easter Baskets to families. Members at UFCW Local 8 in Sacramento donated 3,500 pounds of chicken. Members of ILWU Local 17 in Sacramento collected enough donations to buy and deliver 2,000 pounds of rice.

Local 30 members took on and defeated one of the largest mining companies in the world with the help and solidarity of labor unions and other community groups.

Rite Aid campaign makes progress

Rite Aid workers in the Lancaster distribution facility made important progress during 2010 as they continued their five-year fight for a fair contract. During the past year, a network of Rite Aid employees around the country was formed, known as the “Coalition of Rite Aid Unions.” Workers in Lancaster also built stronger ties with two powerful national activist networks that decided to join the fight, each with a track record of getting results: United Students Against Sweatshops and Jobs with Justice.

Inside the giant distribution center in Lancaster, unity was strengthened among rank-and-file workers by deepening support among those who had previously been skeptical of what could be accomplished with a union – and by taking action inside the plant to show unity. At the negotiating table, the pace quickened as Rite Aid officials agreed to important contract provisions. One of the key roadblocks to a first contract emerged in late 2010: a scheme by Rite Aid to overcharge employees for health insurance. Like many employers, Rite Aid is trying to shift health care costs onto employees and their families. The issue has catalyzed Rite Aid workers to fight back with more actions and unity in Lancaster.

Rite Aid workers ended 2010 on a high note with an impressive “National Day of Action” that was organized on December 15th. The event brought together hundreds of Rite Aid workers and retirees, representing dozens of community groups, student organizations, church groups and unions at 40 actions across the United States.

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Coast Committee stands with Latin American dockworkers

In 2010, the Coast Longshore Division increased its solidarity efforts and support of dockworkers in Latin America. These workers have faced assaults from governments and corporate forces who – with the support of the United States government – seek to destroy the dockworkers’ unions and roll back social gains they have won. The Coast Committee stood firmly behind dockworkers in Costa Rica and Peru who are facing fierce attacks from their governments and corporate forces who are trying to privatize ports at the expense of workers’ wages, health and safety.

The Coast Committee took actions in support of dockworkers in the Costa Rican ports of Limón and Moin after the democratically elected leadership of their union, SINTRAJAP, was illegally ousted by the Costa Rican government and replaced by a employer-run board of union directors. The sham union board then quickly signed a privatization agreement in exchange for a $137 million privatization agreement made by their sham replacements.

The Coast Committee also stood behind Peruvian dockworkers at the Port of Callao in their struggle with terminal operator DP World. DP World is refusing to negotiate with Callao’s longshore union, known as SUTRAMPOPC. Instead of hiring registered longshoremen, DP World has been replacing registered union members with workers off the street, a violation of Peruvian law. Rather than enforce the law, the government of Peru has taken a hard line against the union.

U.S. election results strengthen anti-union forces

The November 2010 elections were a setback for workers across the country. In Congress, a new crop of anti-union forces now control a majority of votes in the House of Representatives and with it, the power to push their anti-worker, corporate agenda. Anti-union politicians are using the Wall Street-caused recession to launch an assault on public-sector workers – blaming them for massive state and federal deficits – while simultaneously pushing tax cuts for the super wealthy that fuel the growing deficits. A new wave of anti-immigrant legislation seeks to overturn the 14th Amendment that assures due process and equal protection against race state laws that once allowed segregation and denial of basic civil rights including the right to vote.

The West Coast was a notable exception to the right-wing anti-union wave that swept across the country. Californians voted to reject and tax cuts for the super wealthy that fuel the growing deficits. A new wave of anti-immigrant legislation seeks to overturn the 14th Amendment that assures due process and equal protection against race state laws that once allowed segregation and denial of basic civil rights including the right to vote.

Without enforcement of the federal laws to protect them, Callao’s longshore workers agreed to return to work, but have drawn international attention to their plight. In June, a lifelong union advocate who was elected to Peru’s Congress, Luis Negreiros, met with Coast Committee member Ray Ortiz, Jr. and Leal Sundet in San Francisco to update them on the situation in Callao.

With attention in Callao and across Latin America is a corporate drive, backed in full support by the United States Government, to extract a profit at any cost, and that means workers pay the price,” said Coast Committee member Leal Sundet. “The tool of the trade is loan shark lending by the World Bank and the IMF with terms that are designed to dismantle social contracts to allow looting of the country’s resources by foreign corporations through privatization.”

ILWU President Robert McEllrath wrote a letter to Peru’s President expressing concern over the government’s inaction. McEllrath called on the government to demand that DP World comply the labor rights contained in the International Labor Organization Declaration. The Coast Committee also sponsored the SUTRAMPOPC General Secretary to attend a Global Terminal Seminar in Long Beach to tell the union’s story, but he was denied a visa by the US Department of State under the dubious claim that he has insufficient ties to motivate his return to his home in Peru.

Congresswoman Laura Richardson with Local 13 member Sal Pardo.
Rite Aid workers, union activists and community supporters mobilized for a national “Day of Action” on December 15th to focus attention on the company’s disrespect for workers’ rights. Rite Aid workers in Lancaster, CA, Philadelphia, PA and Cleveland, OH are fighting for fair contracts with decent health benefits. The actions were organized by the International Longshore and Warehouse Union (ILWU), the United Food and Commercial Workers (UFCW), the AFL-CIO, Jobs with Justice (JwJ) and United Students Against Sweatshops (USAS).

In total, Day of Action participants organized more than 40 store actions in 13 states and the District of Columbia. On the West Coast, ILWU members joined many of the actions including those in California at San Pedro, Wilmington, Los Angeles, San Diego, Oakland and West Sacramento. There were seven actions in Oregon and Washington, including Portland, Eugene, Seattle, Aberdeen, Longview, Seattle, and Vancouver. Participants included high school students, long-time union members, retirees and other community activists.

Twelve local Jobs with Justice coalitions helped organized actions and eight events were sponsored by affiliates of United Students Against Sweatshops, UFCW Local 880 held a big rally in downtown Cleveland. Workers at Rite Aid’s Lancaster, CA distribution center had a lunchtime rally in their cafeteria where they educated co-workers about the company’s healthcare proposal and sent a strong message to Rite Aid that workers won’t roll over for Rite Aid’s health insurance rip-off.

The Coalition of Rite Aid Workers was formed to support employees at Rite Aid stores and distribution centers who are fighting to change the company’s culture of corporate greed. The National Day of Action was the Coalition’s biggest effort to date.

Several elected officials came out to support the Rite Aid workers. In Oakland, mayoral-elect Jean Quan attended a rally outside of a Rite Aid store in downtown Oakland. Quan talked about her long history of support for workers and pledged her solidarity and support with the Rite Aid workers in Lancaster and around the nation.

In Cleveland, State Senator Michael Skindell, State Representative Mike Foley and Cleveland Councilwoman Donna Brady delivered a letter in support of Rite Aid workers to a local store.

Readers of the Dispatch are already familiar with the stonewalling tactics used by Rite Aid executives against the 500 workers at the South- west distribution facility in Lancaster, CA and the attempt by the company to gouge employees by “marking-up” the cost of health insurance 28 times over the increases charged by insurers. The struggle for a fair contract and decent health benefits is not just limited to Southern California. Rite Aid workers across the United States are being targeted while executives’ pay continues to rise. For example, while CEO John Standley recently doubled his own compensation, Rite Aid has:

- Proposing onerous health insurance hikes for workers in Northern Ohio, which may force them to strike.
- Closing a unionized distribution center in Rome, NY and going non-union, leaving 400 employees without work.
- In Pennsylvania, thousands of Rite Aid workers are trying to reach a fair settlement.

Rite Aid workers across the country are coming together to take a stand against this culture of greed. Here are just two of the many demonstrations that took place on the Day of Action:

More than 70 UFCW Local 1776 members gathered in downtown Philadelphia to leaflet the public about how Rite Aid is shortchanging employees and communities out of good jobs that support working families.

In Oakland, ILWU members joined more than 30 demonstrators who protested outside a Rite Aid store near City Hall. Demonstrators were treated to a live performance from a team of professional actors who portrayed Scrooge, Marley’s ghost and Rite Aid CEO John Standley. All three later joined the picket line.

ILWU Internationals Ray Familathe and Terry McCombs delivered letters to the store manager. Each letter stated.

“Most Americans are fed up with the way that corporate greed is wrecking America,” the letter said. “Rite Aid is becoming an example of what’s wrong with our country—when it could be an example of a well-managed company that treats its workers with respect,” the letter stated.

The Coalition of Rite Aid Workers and its supporters will continue to work with Rite Aid employees and our community, student and labor allies to ensure Rite Aid workers and their families get the fair wages and benefits and the respect they deserve.
ILWU opposes Korea-United States Free Trade Agreement

Later this month, President Obama is expected to send the Korea-United States Free Trade Agreement to Congress for ratification. Business leaders are hailing the move as step towards greater bi-partisanship, which these days means Democrats stepping across the aisle to join Republicans in their efforts to further enrich business interests at the expense of workers.

In December, ILWU President Robert McElrath sent a letter to then-House Speaker Nancy Pelosi expressing the ILWU’s opposition the South Korean trade agreement. Despite potential increases in cargo movement benefiting dockworkers, the ILWU opposes the proposed Korea-United States trade agreement because it continues failed trade policy and is harmful to workers, consumers, and the environment in both South Korea and the United States.

Here is the full text of President McElrath’s letter:

Dear Madame Speaker:

President Obama has reached a trade agreement with South Korea. That agreement must now be submitted for Congressional ratification. We anticipate that the President will aggressively shepherd this pact through Congress.

The International Longshore and Warehouse Union (ILWU) represents approximately 14,000 full time dockworkers and 14,000 part time dockworkers on the West Coast of the United States in Hawaii and Alaska. Our members are in the business of moving cargo. By all accounts, the Korea-United States Free Trade Agreement (KORUS FTA) will increase trade between South Korea and the United States, which will result in an increase in cargo movement between the two countries. An increase in cargo movement is good for dockworkers. However, this fact alone is insufficient to overcome the vast deficiencies of the KORUS FTA.

The KORUS FTA will cost jobs, lower environmental, labor, food and product quality standards, and empower corporations from the United States and South Korea to challenge public interests in both countries. The labor standards provision of the agreement only provides that each country enforce its own laws to adhere to the core labor standards. In light of the United States and South Korea’s long history of ignoring basic rights to unionize, workers must be empowered to negotiate their own basic rights to unionize. The United States and South Korea’s laws and enforcement in this area are completely inadequate and must be amended prior to the implementation of the agreement.

Labor supported President Obama and numerous other democratic candidates two years ago. In exchange for this support, we were promised a return to policies and practices that maintain, restore, and strengthen the middle class and working people across the United States. For two years, we have watched campaign promises be broken, one after the other, on this relentless march down the road of business as usual. Now, despite his campaign promise that he would only support trade agreements that “put workers first”, the President is pushing a trade agreement, the largest since the NAFTA debacle, that undeniably puts workers in South Korea and the United States in jeopardy.

On December 10, 2010, the International Executive Board of the ILWU voted unanimously to oppose the KORUS FTA. The ILWU will not support trade policy that exacerbates inequities, awards special rights to foreign investors, allows banks to practice the same disastrous policies that resulted in the current economic downturn, opens domestic environmental laws to foreign challenge, increases the international labor costs, and undermines labor rights. We urge Congress to support the Trade Reform, Accountability, Development and Employment (TRADE) Act, which outlines a way forward to a new trade and globalization agenda that would be better for labor, the environment, the economy, consumers, and our trade partners.

If my letter serves but one purpose, let it be to communicate this basic message: we have had it. Today, we join the growing chorus of labor unions who oppose the KORUS FTA. We also ask that our representatives in the Democratic Party stand up, dispel meaningless oration, and remind us, with action, what the Democratic Party stands for because we have forgotten.

The Democratic Party needs to reject the KORUS FTA and stop taking its base for granted.

Sincerely,

Robert McElrath

Georgia-Pacific workers rally for justice in Portland warehouses

But when management tried to intimidate workers in October with a supposedly “final” offer to eliminate members’ pension, render health benefits unavailable and slant attendance rules such that more members would likely be disciplined and/or discharged, the company got a rude awakening. Every single member voted down the contract offer, slamming corporate managers with an unequivocal message that’s none of their business.

The AWPPW, USW Local 1097 and ILWU Local 26 with members who also do warehouse work at Georgia-Pacific and ILWU Local 6 in the Bay Area. Several of these sister unions are also currently bargaining with the company, while IBU members will likely head back to the negotiating table on March 3rd.

A spirited group of IBU members working inside the warehouse came out to join the action during their break, standing shoulder-to-shoulder with sisters and brothers from other unions and community groups.

After Doug thanked everyone for coming together in support, Travis sounded a note of resolve that struck a chord among the picketing crowd.

“I want respect. I’ve earned it. We’ve earned it!” explained Denny Scott of the Carpenters’ Industrial Council, which represents around 20,000 workers across the country including G-P workers in plants throughout the Southeastern United States. Similar pledges of solidarity were made from the AWPPW, USW Local 1097, the Oregon AFL-CIO and ILWU Local 6 and ILWU Local 26 with members who do warehouse work at Georgia-Pacific in the Bay Area. Several of these sister unions are also currently bargaining with the company, while IBU members will likely head back to the negotiating table on March 3rd.

Robert McElrath

Making history: Local 10 President Richard Mead speaking before Oakland Mayor Jean Quan’s inauguration. ILWU volunteers were instrumental in helping Quan win a major upset against establishment candidate Don Perata in the November election. Quan singled out ILWU members for their contribution to her election. Quan is the first ever Asian-American to be elected as Mayor of Oakland.
Nate Thornton, ILWU retiree, brigadista, internationalist, 1915-2011

Nate Thornton, ILWU retiree, brigadista, and worker’s rights advocate, passed away quietly on January 2, but his life was anything but quiet. His political activism spanned seven decades and he was one of the last living survivors of the International Brigades. The International Brigades were military units made up of anti-fascist volunteers from different countries, who traveled to Spain to defend the Second Spanish Republic against the fascist forces led by General Francisco Franco in the Spanish Civil War between 1936 and 1939. The volunteers from the US are referred to as the Abraham Lincoln Brigades. In Spain, the volunteers were known as brigadistas.

Nate’s politics were shaped by his experience as a youth in the Great Depression and the labor struggles of the 20s and 30s. Those struggles eventually led him, and thousands of others of his generation who saw so many workers suffering, to join the Communist Youth League. His father, Mark, joined the Communist Party at the same time. In 1937, both Nate and his father enlisted in the Lincoln Brigades to fight fascism where they served as ambulance and truck drivers.

Despite the fascist victory in Spain, Thornton remained a self-declared internationalist. “I am an international,” Thornton said in his biographical pamphlet published in 2010. “I believe in the international rule of the working class that the people of the world should get together and decide that there are going to be no classes in this society. We work and we decide when we are going to quit working. We decide collectively. And everything of importance will be decided collectively.”

However, he remained embarrassed about the treatment Brigade members received from the US government, which refused to take a stand against Franco’s fascist forces in the Spanish Civil War. “They didn’t make friends with us,” Thornton is quoted as saying in a 2009 article in the Eastbay Citizen. “Once this is all done, the capitalists are going to have to do the same thing.”

Thornton remained politically active throughout his life. He supported the struggles of the United Farm Workers in the 60s and 70s and the struggle against right-wing Latin American military personnel by the US government at Ft. Bragg, CA.

Although Thornton did not expect to see a more equitable world in his lifetime, his optimism for the future remained firm. “Once this is all done, the capitalists are going to have to go back to work with a picked and patched like the rest us,” Thornton said. “That’s what they don’t like. That’s what they don’t want.”

Nate Thornton is survived by his wife, Corine, who continues the fight for a better world.

TRANSITIONS

NEW PENSIONERS:
Local 8: Rodney F. Barnes; Local 10: Jack Heyman; James T. Walker; Tommie J. Silas; George Williams Jr.; Local 13: Richard W. Madariga; Ronello S. Garcia; Ronnie L. Barber; Alfred L. Carrasco; Joseph Ferrara; Local 19: David P. Bradford; Charles H. Yeoman; Local 29: Jesus Postigo; Local 32: Rick J. Hoekendorf; Local 34: Jessie J. Hawkins; Wesley S. Gouveia; Local 50: David R. Smith; Local 54: Bruce W. Erlandson; Local 51: David R. Smith; Local 54: Bruce W. Erlandson; Local 63: Henry J. Falkenstein; Brian Van Mulligen; Lisa A. Nation; Rose Mary D. Ponce; Johnny G. Vines; Calvin V. Thomas; Marjorie L. Bellhouse; Pamela Bergstrom; Local 91: Howard E. Oliver; Juan Pineda; Local 94: Hector Durazo; Local 98: Brian L. Wellinger

DECEASED:
Local 8: Glen A. Parks (Marcy); Robert L. Jones; Ralph D. Beamish

(Doris); Local 10: Francisco Mallia; Eugene Myles; Edward M. Checkow; Stanley R. Kolpak; Local 13: Bert Tufele (Vaillii); Vincent Medina (Emma); Anthony Solioni (Rose Marie); Local 19: John Kezele; Francis H. Bell (Gwen); Lloyd Holloman; Local 21: James M. Monahan (Jacqueline); Jerry D. Malone; Local 24: Walter O. Hendrickson; Local 26: Frank D. Rodriguez; Local 40: Robert Finkle; Local 50: Delbert L. Grond; Local 54: Bradley Sells; Local 94: James H. Adams; Local 98: Joe A. Ross Jr.

DECEASED SURVIVORS:
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