



# THE DISPATCHER

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## THE INSIDE NEWS

### LETTERS TO DISPATCHER 2

Harry Bridges on meeting attendance 2

Articulo en español 6

Latest "free trade" farce: the "TPP" 7

### TRANSITIONS 8

### ILWU BOOKS & VIDEO 8



Giving is a holiday tradition for ILWU members  
page 4



**Military repression at port:** The Honduran military occupied Puerto Cortés on the country's Caribbean coast where union workers have been seeking justice since ICTSI took over the nation's newly-privatized container port.

# Murder, death threats and violent thugs accompany ICTSI into Central America

International Container Terminal Services Incorporated (ICTSI) – the rogue employer responsible for flagrant contract violations at the Port of Portland – is now expanding operations in Central America where murder, military repression, death threats and anti-union attacks are accompanying the firm's expansion.

#### Labor leader attacked

The family of Honduran dockworker union leader, Victor Crespo, became the latest assassination target on January 27 when an armed assailant murdered Crespo's father and injured his mother by running them over with a stolen truck in an attack outside the

family home. Other Crespo family members narrowly escaped death and injury. Victor Crespo and his family have faced death threats because of his efforts to help workers at Puerto Cortés, a newly privatized operation container terminal that was recently taken-over by ICTSI.

#### Thugs & threats

An October 2013 article in *The Dispatcher* explained how members of the Honduran labor union (SGTM) encountered violent thugs, military forces and death threats after seeking union rights for workers. ICTSI secured a lucrative 30-year contract last February to operate the port through their OPC subsidiary. The company expects volumes could reach 600,000 containers, shipped to and from Honduras and neighboring countries.

#### Brush with death squads

By last September, SGTM General Secretary Victor Crespo had made no progress reaching a contract but he did begin receiving death threats. He narrowly escaped an assassination attempt by armed thugs who broke into his home during the early morning hours. The attack was foiled at the last minute by concerned neighbors who sounded the alarm, allowing Crespo to slip away with his life. After the foiled attack, Crespo received critical help from the International Transport Workers Federation (ITF), who made arrangements to try and protect him from the death squads.

#### ICTSI's privatization play

ICTSI is a player in the growing effort to privatize formerly-public ports

*continued on page 3*

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# LETTERS TO THE DISPATCHER

*Dear Editor,*

Your coverage of the recent ILWU Longshore Division conference on "History and Traditions" was outstanding! I was especially pleased that you referred to the solidarity shown by all Longshore members who boycotted a mandatory vote – required by the Taft-Hartley Act – on the employers' last offer during the 1948 strike. That negotiation eventually led to the demise of the old Waterfront Employers Association, and for the moment at least, a less confrontational environment between the employers and the ILWU. But most importantly, it shows the strength of hanging in there together!

The accompanying *Dispatcher* article on "meeting attendance" by former ILWU Vice President J.R. Robertson was also well timed. When I started on the waterfront in 1949, there was little problem, if any, with getting quorums at two meetings a month in the Wilmington/San Pedro area. Of course we didn't have many benefits at that time, which later negotiations obtained. The main subject at the meetings back then related to "pork chop" issues. As I recall, we only had up to three weeks of vacation – and only if one made the hours and was eligible. But there was talk of future pensions and health and dental care.

Has our union now advanced to the point of having unparalleled benefits and wages, so that members are no longer as hungry as we were in those days? I hope members realize that these benefits are not written in stone and are subject to negotiations. It behooves everyone to attend the meetings and help our union move forward. Complacency and failure to attend union meetings will undermine our rank and file control. Let's hang in there together so our rank and file will be well-informed, and we can win a good contract!

In Solidarity,

**Tony "chuchu" Salcido, Local 13 Pensioner  
San Pedro, CA**

*Dear Editor,*

I highly recommend that all ILWU members read the recent article "Death of Nelson Mandela recalls decades of ILWU support for anti-apartheid struggle," which appeared in the December 2013 issue of *The Dispatcher*.

The article is in depth, very informative, and really underscores the ILWU's rank and file tradition of supporting community picket lines. This piece provides a concrete example of how to build international workers solidarity and demonstrates how working class solidarity can make real change.

Two corrections should be noted. The Nelson Mandela Freedom Award was presented to Mrs. Robinson. South African Consul-General, the Honorable Cyril S. Ndaba, also presented a Nelson Mandela Freedom Award for the ILWU to the

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

## CORRECTIONS:

Two corrections for last month's report on the "Longshore History & Traditions Conference." Local 94 President Danny Miranda did not make a presentation at the Conference and Safety Committee Chair Tim Podue's presentation was accompanied by Local 8 President Jeff Smith, not Local 63 member Adrian Diaz.

## Harry Bridges on meeting attendance

[The following excerpt from Harry Bridges' column "On the Beam" originally appeared in November 13, 1964 issue of *The Dispatcher*. It is reprinted here at the request of the Executive Board of the Pacific Coast Pensioners Association.]

**T**he ILWU has always led in having large rank and file turnouts at union meetings. For one thing we developed a policy of having regular stop work meetings—so there was no excuse for local members not to turn up. Many of our locals—usually longshore—still follow the stop-work practice. But even stop-work meetings often don't pull a quorum. And even if there is a quorum, a majority of members are often not present.

It is fair to say that non-attendance at union meetings contributes

as much to anti-labor principles as so-called "right-to-work" laws. Such laws legalize the idea that the worker on the job does not need to be a member of a union. Those who do not participate in union business also help these phony laws by weakening the union's ability to protect the job, the wages, welfare benefits, safety and security that goes with a strong, militant union.

Responsibility and duty to attend meetings goes hand in hand with the right to belong to a union. It goes with jobs. It is the most important privilege in a democracy—especially if you expect to have a voice in running your affairs.

No one can deny that there haven't been changes in ways that unions operate as compared to 20-30 years ago. Part of the change is the result of the new methods—"automation"—the addition of so many of the fringe benefits, health insurance, pensions and etc.,. Once the primary function of union leadership was negotiating wages and conditions and settling beefs. Now union leadership means administering a variety of funds and very complicated contracts. This is all the more reason the rank and file should attend meetings, participate and keep tight control over their union.

The rank and file should understand the best way to help union officers gain dictatorial powers, to indulge in political shenanigans and racketeering, and even get rich from union leadership is to stay away from union meetings.

An officer should have to attend union meetings. Nothing has been invented yet to substitute for working rank and file meetings, with officers present, and when asked, be forced to stand up, answer questions, and, if need be, called to account for what they've done or are doing or haven't done!

— Harry Bridges

officers of Local 10. These awards were presented at the Leo Robinson Memorial Services on March 23, 2013, at the ILWU Local 10 Hiring Hall.

**Clarence Thomas, Local 10,  
Coordinator, Leo Robinson Memorial Services  
Oakland, CA**

*Dear Editor,*

How much is enough? When will the labor movement finally fight back against the decades-long attack it has thus far barely weathered?

It seems the suits and ties ensconced in right coast citadels of labor are content relying on politicians for relief. How has that worked for America's laboring class? By banking on legislative help, the honchos are free to damn recalcitrant lawmakers in public, but they just do it for show. In private they sip bourbon and enjoy brunch together.

If we believe our own rhetoric – and there is no reason not to – the working class has been losing ground for the past four decades while the wealthy have grown wealthier. Of the 35 richest nations on Earth, the US rates second in childhood poverty at 23.1 percent. Among industrialized nations, only Romania's numbers are more dismal – at 25.5 percent. In 1970, one-third of America's workforce belonged to unions. And childhood poverty was 40 percent lower than it is today. The correlation is clear: union members make better wages. Better wages fight poverty. When union membership goes down, poverty increases.

Many of us belong to community organizations, churches, labor caucuses, political parties, etc. We must challenge others to take action against the plutocratic corporatism that has wrested our democracy from us. If pie-cards nestled down in their cushy offices are unwilling to call their members to action, we must go around them. If we do not, poverty will grow, especially amongst children, and shame will thereafter be our reward.

I'll close with this caveat: over the years I have been involved in a number of pro-worker "skirmishes." Most happened while I was a member of the ILWU. I am proud of that heritage. There were too many times, however, when the ILWU took the lead, only to find we were alone. We discovered that labor-faking heads of go-along-to-get-along craft unions had instructed their ranks to "keep pumpin." Don't count on too much help from them in the months ahead. Our allies are fellow workers and the unemployed. Forging bonds with them will take us a long way. And to do so is to put our Ten Guiding Principles into practice.

**Rich Austin, Local 32 (retired), President, PCPA  
Mt. Vernon, WA**

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# Murder, death threats and violent thugs accompany ICTSI into Central America

continued from page 1

in the developing world. Privatization efforts across the globe are being aided by the World Bank, wealthy investors, and “free trade” agreements that undermine public ownership and ease private takeovers. Countries wishing to invest and improve their public ports quickly discover that access to investment capital is difficult to secure – but easy to get if government officials agree to privatize. When public assets are sold to private owners, workers and their unions are usually left behind. The new private employers promote “yellow” or “company” unions that don’t challenge the new owners and prevent workers from creating democratic trade unions.

## Super profits for privatizers

Outside investors and terminal operators stand to make fortunes when ports and other public assets are privatized. Investors who make these deals spend time courting officials in countries they target – often with support and assistance from the U.S. State and Commerce Departments – and they are usually willing and expected to share some of their windfall profits with local politicians, business leaders, police and military officials who facilitate the privatization process.

## Who wants to be a billionaire?

The privatization frenzy that took place in Mexico during the 1990’s serves as an example – and powerful motivator – for those wishing to make similar fortunes today in countries like Honduras. When Mexico’s public-owned telephone system and other public assets were sold to private investors as part of the “reforms” surrounding the NAFTA free trade agreement, it created new millionaires and billionaires, including one of the world’s richest men – Carlos Slim – who now commands a fortune worth \$72 billion dollars, putting him on par with Microsoft tycoon Bill Gates.

## Layoffs & lower pay for workers

When ICTSI was celebrating their new deal giving them 30-year control over Puerto Cortés, the Honduran state-owned port operator (Empresa Nacional Portuaria or “ENP”) began dismissing hundreds of public port workers without advance notice. Reaction to the terminations angered other port workers

and union members across the country who responded with solidarity actions, marches and strikes. In December 2013, the government sent armed troops to threaten port workers who declared they would resist the intimidation until the nation’s president or officials agreed to help their union secure jobs at ICTSI.

## Military confronts workers

As *The Dispatcher* was going to press in January, armed forces continued to occupy Puerto Cortés.

ITF’s Honduran affiliate that represents public port workers, Sindicatos de Trabajadores de la Empresa Nacional Portuaria (SITRAENP) has been promised by the government to expect more productive negotiations with ENP, the nation’s public port agency. Victor Crespo and SGTM union members have also heard from Honduran government officials that ICTSI made a similar commitment to meaningful negotiations with their union. But neither union has been able to secure a fair contract and the sincerity of negotiations remains in doubt.

## U.S. military involvement

Honduras has been heavily influenced during the past century by U.S. corporations, military forces, CIA operatives and State Department officials. Puerto Cortés, now run by ICTSI, was originally built to serve U.S. banana corporations, including the United Fruit Company (branded as “Chaquita”) that controlled Honduras for nearly a century, giving rise to the term “Banana Republic.” The U.S. installed several right-wing, anti-union governments and engaged in a massive military build-up during Ronald Reagan’s secret and illegal war during the 1980’s that was waged against pro-union rebels in neighboring Nicaragua and El Salvador.

## Massacre feared possible

The ITF is concerned that the Honduran government’s latest military intervention at Puerto Cortés and their refusal to address worker concerns could result in a massacre, and has called for solidarity actions worldwide to protect workers in case negotiations fail. On December 4, 2013, the ITF sent a letter to Honduran President Porfirio Lobo, protesting the violation of port workers’ rights and urging him to help facilitate a prompt and fair settlement. Following the assassina-



**Killed for belonging to a union family:** Victor Manuel Crespo Puerto, elderly father of port worker union leader Victor Crespo, was assassinated on February 27 outside his home in Honduras. Crespo’s mother was injured in the attack that followed a series of death threats which arrived after Crespo advocated for union workers at the container facility controlled by ICTSI.

tion of Crespo’s father, the ITF took other diplomatic and solidarity initiatives to help.

## Similar conflicts in Costa Rica

*Dispatcher* readers may recall a similar struggle by dockworkers in Costa Rica that also involved privatization (see articles in March, June and August of 2010). Costa Rica’s public ports of Limón and Moin were privatization targets, following a \$72 million loan from the World Bank to “modernize” both sites. When the SINTRAJAP dockworkers union refused to go along, the government ordered police to break into the union headquarters at 4:30 am on May 28, 2010, and take over the building. When the union continued to resist, the government orchestrated a sham election in January 2011 to replace the democratically-elected union leadership with a new team of government puppets. Costa Rica’s Constitutional Court later reversed the government’s illegal ouster of SINTRAJAP union officials in August of 2011.

The ILWU supported SINTRAJAP with letters from International President McEllrath to President Obama and encouraged 25 members of Congress to express concerns to Secretary of State Hillary Clinton. The ILWU hosted a SINTRAJAP delegation at the April, 2010 Longshore Caucus in Long Beach, and placed several full-page advertisements in major Costa Rican newspapers to educate citizens about the undemocratic actions taken by their government leaders.

Resistance by SINTRAJAP workers and international solidarity put government officials on the defensive; by mid-2011 press reports noted the government had “back-tracked” on the privatization scheme which had been put “on hold indefinitely.”

However, as of 2014, the project appears to be moving forward after the government quickly granted a monopoly container concession to APM, which is slated to begin operations in three years, which will doom the public port.

## Activist murdered

Port workers and their union leaders continue to receive threats – and worse – from those advocating Costa Rica’s privatization scheme. Last year, a former union leader was murdered after he actively opposed the new private terminal location because it would destroy a sea turtle sanctuary. Police have not arrested or charged anyone for the crime.

## ICTSI moves into El Salvador

In December of 2013, El Salvador’s port authority (CEPA) announced they had pre-selected ICTSI and three other companies to submit bids in April, 2014 for a 30-year private concession agreement to manage the country’s newest port of La Unión on the Pacific coast. The modern, multi-use container terminal was just completed in 2009. The public agency initially operated the port with four, second-hand rubber-tire gantry cranes that cost \$4.4 million, and planned to purchase more equipment to boost capacity to 300,000 containers a year. The privatization plan asks ICTSI and other bidders to invest \$30 million in the first ten years of operations, enabling the terminal to handle 1 million containers a year.

## Bloody history

El Salvador is the smallest, most densely populated and a highly industrialized country in Central America. During the 1980’s, the nation was torn apart by a bitter civil war that killed 75,000 residents, sparked by inequality between a handful of wealthy elites (backed by the U.S. military) who controlled the government and business, while the vast majority of Salvadorians lived then and now, in poverty. El Salvador has one of the world’s highest murder rates, a distinction they share with Honduras.

“Corporations that privatize often act like modern-day pirates who attack workers and communities for profit,” said ILWU International Vice President Ray Familathe. “Companies like ICTSI have an agenda of plunder and profit that seems to spawn violence and repression. That has to be challenged in Central America, Portland or wherever they try to take advantage.”



**Honduran military backed by US:** Honduras’ military has been heavily influenced and financed by the United States in order to protect foreign corporations and the domestic political establishment. Millions of dollars were secretly spent in Honduras during the 1980’s to fund Ronald Reagan’s illegal war against pro-labor rebels in El Salvador and Nicaragua.



Photo by Michele Meese

Santa took time out from his Christmas preparations to stop by the Kids Christmas Party in Southern California



Photo by Michele Meese

The SoCal Children's Christmas Party was enjoyed by both kids and Ninja Turtles.



Photo by Michele Meese

From left to right: SoCal Holiday Committee Chair, Lisa Tonson, her great-niece Juju and niece Amanda Sipes.



Photo by Michele Meese

From left to right: SoCal Holiday Events Committee members Zoila Avendano, Katy Witkowski and Victoria Rodriguez.

## Giving is a holiday tradition for ILWU members

Year after year, up and down the coast, ILWU members, pensioners and auxiliary clubs organize toy drives and donate their time and money to local charity groups who are helping to brighten the holiday for those who have fallen on tough times. Thousands of families along the coast had a happier Christmas because of the generosity of ILWU members and their spirit of solidarity.

### Southern California 'Feed the Community Day' and Children's Christmas Party

On November 25 and 26 Southern California ILWU members and their families distributed 1,500 Thanksgiving baskets to families in need. "We had volunteers from every ILWU local in Southern California, as well as pensioners and Auxiliary 8 members. Local 26 members provided the security and Local 65 Port Police provided traffic control," said Lisa Tonson, Chariman for the Holiday Events Committee

Then in December, the 2013 Southern California ILWU Children's Christmas Party helped approximately 3,000 kids have a happy holiday season. Over 100 volunteers helped to make this year's event possible. The committee reached out to local non-profits to identify families in the area who may be in need of some assistance.

Volunteers began preparations in the early morning of December 16. ILWU volunteers set out rows of toys

and sports equipment. By 9am the hall was filled with Christmas music and children and their families began filing into the ILWU Memorial Hall. Children were allowed to pick a toy of their choice and were treated to cookies, punch, face painting and a visit from Santa.

Locals 13, 26, 63, 94, the Federated Auxiliary 8, Southern California Pensioners, Longshoremen Memorial Association and the Local 63 Memorial Association all made this year's holiday party possible. The Holiday Events Committee works year round to plan and organize the annual charity events.

### Bay Area toy drive

Local 10 hosted a Christmas Party that helped a multitude of families and hundreds of children celebrate the holidays. There were generous servings of food, sweet treats, face-painters, caricature portraits, and balloon artists. Santa Claus was the most popular attraction, with children lining up to tell him their Christmas wishes. A large team of volunteers made the event possible, coordinated by Frank Cresci, and Chris Christensen of the Bay Area Longshoreman's Memorial Association (BALMA).

Toys for Tots donations were gathered at Local 10's hall during the month of December. The success of the event was made possible by the many contributions from the members of Local 10, 34, 75, 91 and Bay Area Pensioners. Beth Susim coordinated the Toy Drive again this year which raised several thousand dollars to purchase toys that were used to brighten the holidays for Bay Area families.

"This was a fantastic job by ILWU members. Every year we ask members to step up and they did once again. Thanks to the generosity of Local 10, 34 and 91," Cressi said.

Local 10 and BALMA also donated money and toiletries to Toolworks Working Essentials, a non-profit that helps people with disabilities and those who have fallen on hard times achieve independence. Local 10 members donated several boxes of toothpaste, tooth brushes, shampoo, deodorant which will be distributed to women's shelters and homeless shelters serving veterans and others in the Bay Area in need.

Local 34 Marine Clerks 2014 Toy and Bike Drive was a great success. Toys and bikes were donated to the San Francisco and Oakland Salvation Army Children's Toy Drive. Many thanks go out to Lea Brocchini, Lance Brocchini, Julie Fisher, John Fisher, Allen Fung, Dave Hill, Ed Kachmarik, Craig Lauderdale, Julie Mavromatis, Jacqueline Peralta, Deborah Sedasey, and Jacqueline Singleton for their donations and support.

### Local 19's Christmas for Kids

Thanks to the generous contributions from Local 19 members, the 2013 Christmas for Kids committee raised nearly \$10,000 to benefit several area charities and families. This year, \$5,342 was donated to Teen Feed, a program that helps street kids. Donations included backpacks filled with toiletries, sleeping bags, money for bus passes and turkeys for their annual Christmas dinner party.

In addition, \$2,011 was donated to the Harborview Hospital burn unit and once again Santa (played by Local 19 member

Robert MacDonald) went to the hospital and gave gifts to the kids in the burn unit.

A \$6,000 donation was made to TreeHouse, an organization that helps foster kids. Steve Wintermute and Carol Brogdon went to the KIRO radio telethon for Tree House and challenged others to donate and match Local 19's donation. By the end of the hour a total of \$22,000 was raised for Treehouse.

In addition to the charity organizations, the Christmas for Kids committee donated \$1,500 in food and toys to three families from the community. The Local 19 Christmas for Kids committee members and volunteers included: Carol Brogdon, Jeannine Lofton, Robert MacDonald, and Steve Wintermute.

### Tacoma Toy Drive

During the 2013 Local 23 Toy Drive in Tacoma, members donated \$28,089 which helped over 650 local children in need who were able to choose two presents a piece. Charities Director, Dragan Butorac, and the toy drive committee of Mandy Peterson, Amy James, Kim Boesflug, Dana Braach and Holly Hulscher, did most of the toy shopping at a local union store for the gifts. Local 98 also donated \$1,000 toward the drive.

Local 23 also donated \$200 gift cards to grade school students in need who try hard in school. Local 23 members Dragan Butorac and Dana Braach delivered gift cards to all 161 grade schools Pierce County which totaled \$32,200.

Together with the toy drive donations (\$28,089) and gift card donations to local schools (\$32,200) the generous contributions of Local 23 members totaled \$62,689.



Local 21 members in Longview filled a car trailer with toys during the 2013 toy drive.



San Francisco firefighters with the help of ILWU volunteers picked up the toys at the Local 10 hall and delivered them to struggling families.



Victoria Johnson, Christopher Christensen, Frank Cressi, Beth Susim and Valerie Butler whose hard work made the Local 10 toy drive a success.



Local 23 members raised \$62,689 in for the 2013 Toy Drive and gift card donations.



Local 23 members and pensioners in Tacoma volunteer at at the St Leo's Food Connection year round. They also help prepare and serve special holiday meals during Christmas and Thanksgiving



In addition to a successful toy drive, Local 29 members also collected over 500 pounds of food for a food bank that helps families throughout San Diego County.

Local 23 members also donated \$12,000 dollars to the Food Connection food bank during the holiday season. Volunteers from Local 23 helped with both Christmas and Thanksgiving dinners that fed over 400 at each setting. Local 23 members volunteer there throughout the year. Once every month they prepare lunches that feed around 300 people a day. They also bring in monthly in donations of toiletries and clothing for the homeless of Tacoma. "Our volunteers are grateful for the opportunity for to help serve our community," said Local 23 member Byron Baydo.

#### Portland

Locals 8, 40 and 92 joined forces with the Local 8 Federal Credit Union to collect bikes and toys for two local charities. One set of donated gifts went to the "Toy N Joy Makers," an organiza-

tion with a 95-year history that works with Portland Firefighters to help children in the community. The other group of toys were contributed to the Northwest Oregon Labor Council, who sponsored a luncheon for families in need and allowed them to choose gifts contributed by ILWU and other union members. The drive could not have happened without the work of Don Mehner, Chris Scheffel, Bill Underwood Sr, Mattew Forman, and the credit union staff.

#### San Diego food drive

Local 29 members in San Diego participated in a successful toy and food drive. They collected over 500 pounds of food for the Jacobs and Cushman San Diego Food Bank that helps 320,000 people every month. The toy and food drives were organized by Henry Dominguez, Cameron Pate and Priscilla Perry.



ILWU Local 502 showed their Christmas spirit with their annual drive for the Surrey Food Bank. The Union donated over 1000 pounds of food and \$4,000 in cash. The generosity of everyone in the local continues to serve the community on many fronts. The food and cash was the result of individual donations. (Photo: Dave Hopkinson, Rocky Thompson (Day BA), Carly Tabin and Grant Tabin).

# Con la muerte de Nelson Mandela recordamos el apoyo de ILWU a la lucha contra el apartheid



**Protesta contra el apartheid:** Delegados de la Convención General de 1984 se unieron a los estudiantes en el plantel de UC Berkeley para protestar las leyes racistas del apartheid en Sud África.

Nelson Mandela, el primer presidente negro de Sud África, ganador del Premio Nobel de la Paz, antiguo prisionero político y líder del Congreso Nacional Africano que se convirtió en símbolo mundial de la lucha contra el apartheid murió el 5 de diciembre a los 95 años de edad. El presidente electo del Local 10 y miembro de la Mesa Ejecutiva Internacional, Melvin MacKay, asistió al funeral en Sud África a nombre de ILWU.

“Un personaje como Nelson Mandela se da sólo una vez en la vida. El simbolizó para todo el mundo los derechos humanos y la lucha por la justicia social. Guió a Sud África por el sendero de la democracia. Por él, el mundo es un mejor lugar. Se le extrañará,” dijo MacKay.

## Huelga contra Nedlloyd Kimberly

Los afiliados del Local 10 de ILWU enfocaron la atención nacional en la lucha contra el apartheid en 1984 cuando se rehusaron a descargar el cargamento sudafricano del barco holandés, Nedlloyd Kimberly, en el muelle 80 de San Francisco. Aunque descargaron lo demás, el cargamento “sangriento” de acero, refacciones automotrices y vinos sudafricanos permaneció en la bodega por 10 días mientras los simpatizantes de la comunidad realizaron manifestaciones a diario afuera en protesta del régimen racista de Sud África. En su punto crítico participaron unos 700 manifestantes. Los empleadores trataron de buscar otro puerto en la costa del Pacífico que aceptara el barco, pero debido a la solidaridad de otros locales de ILWU, ningún puerto estuvo dispuesto a descargar el Nedlloyd Kimberly. Los apuntadores portuarios del Local 34 jugaron también un papel crítico en la acción, ya que fueron ellos los que identificaron el cargamento sudafricano. Este finalmente fue descargado el decimoprimer día bajo amenaza de mandamiento judicial y multas contra el Local 10 y algunos afiliados en particular.

“Cincuenta por ciento de los afiliados eran negros,” dijo el jubilado del Local 10, Lawrence Thibeaux, quien era en ese entonces el representante

sindical. “Al seguir descargando el cargamento, estábamos ayudando a ese gobierno para que continuara su programa de apartheid.”

La contribución de los afiliados de ILWU a la lucha contra el apartheid fue reconocida por Mandela cuando pronunció su discurso en el Coliseo de Oakland en 1990 poco después de ser liberado de la prisión. “El ILWU se puso a la vanguardia contra el apartheid en la zona de la Bahía,” dijo Mandela a la multitud que llenó el coliseo ese día.

## El papel de los sindicatos

Peter Cole, un profesor de historia de la Universidad Occidental de Illinois, es uno de los pocos escritores que han realizado el importante papel que jugaron los sindicatos en el movimiento mundial para poner fin al apartheid sudafricano. “Que yo sepa, ningún otro sindicato estadounidense hizo paros laborales en apoyo de la lucha contra el apartheid; ILWU fue de los pocos sindicatos en todo el mundo que lo hizo,” dijo Cole. “La documentación histórica indica que los otros que hicieron huelgas contra el apartheid también fueron estibadores pero del Sindicato Portuario de Nueva Zelanda (MUNZ) y el de Australia.”

## ILWU apoyó por mucho tiempo la lucha contra el apartheid

La huelga contra Nedlloyd Kimberly fue el resultado de un gran trabajo de organización del Comité de Apoyo a la Liberación de Sud África (SALSC) del Local 10. El comité de base compuesto de trabajadores blancos y negros fue formado en 1976 cuando el Local 10 aprobó una resolución impulsada por el afiliado Leo Robinson, después del levantamiento estudiantil de Soweto y la consiguiente represión brutal por parte de la policía sudafricana.

Es probable que SALSC haya sido el primer grupo contra el apartheid formado por una organización gremial. Crearon conciencia y dieron apoyo material a Sud África y otras luchas de liberación en todo el subcontinente, incluso en Mozambique, Namibia y Rodesia (Zimbabue). En los años 70 y 80, Robinson junto con Larry Wright, que también era miembro de SALSC, pasaron la película documental, *Last Grave at Dimbaza*, a lo largo de la costa, lo cual estableció las bases para

la acción tomada contra el barco Nedlloyd Kimberly. Después de proyectar la película ante 400 afiliados del Local 10 en 1984, Robinson propuso se autorizara un boicot del cargamento sudafricano en la siguiente nave de la línea Nedlloyd que llegara.

Robinson fue reconocido por el gobierno de Sud África después de morir en enero de 2013. Ebrahim Rassol, el embajador de Sud África en Estados Unidos, presentó el Premio Humanitario Nelson Mandela a la viuda de Robinson, la Sra. Johnnie Bell Robinson, en la asamblea de afiliados del Local 10 en marzo de 2013 en la que se le reconoció a Robinson por su liderazgo del movimiento contra el apartheid en la zona de la Bahía.

## Décadas de oposición

La huelga contra Nedlloyd Kimberly en 1984 fue parte de una larga tradición de ILWU, ya que los trabajadores habían usado su poder laboral en los puertos para luchar por la justicia social tanto en el país como en otros países. En 1935, los trabajadores portuarios del Local 10 se negaron a cargar el metal que se enviaba para alimentar a la maquinaria bélica del fascismo en Italia y el Japón. En los años 70, los afiliados del Local 10 se negaron a cargar pertrechos militares hechos en EU que se enviaban al dictador chileno Augusto Pinochet.

El periódico *El Despachador* de ILWU empezó a exponer el apartheid en sus páginas en 1948, el año en que el Partido Nacional Sudafricano instituyó formalmente el sistema de apartheid. Se amplió el reportaje por dicho periódico en los años 50 y 60 cuando empezó a intensificarse la lucha contra el apartheid. Un artículo de fondo de *El Despachador* en 1960 hizo comparaciones entre el sistema de separación de razas en Sud África y la discriminación a la Jim Crow en el sur de Estados Unidos. Dicho artículo también señaló las coincidencias entre la represión brutal de los movimientos en pro de la justicia social por las fuerzas policiales en ambos países.

También en 1960 el Cónclave de Estibadores respaldaron un boicot del cargamento sudafricano. En esa resolución se expusieron los motivos del boicot por el Local 10 de un barco que llevaba cargamento sudafricano en 1962. Los activistas contra el apartheid llevaron a cabo el piqueteo en el Muelle 19 en San Francisco, protestando contra el barco holandés Raki que llevaba henequén, café y asbesto de Sud África. Mas de 100 afiliados del Local 10 respetaron las líneas de piquete de la comunidad y pasó sin descargarse el barco todo un día y una noche. En 1963 *El Despachador* publicó una carta del Secretario General en funciones del Congreso de Gremios Sudafricanos, John Gaetswete, agradeciendo a los afiliados de ILWU su solidaridad en la lucha contra el apartheid.

En los años 70 y 80, se aprobó en la convención general de ILWU varias resoluciones contra el apartheid y la injusticia racial en todo el sur de África. Otras resoluciones criticaron la actitud conformista de EU hacia el régimen del

apartheid en Sud África. En 1976, el Local 10, el 13, la Mesa Ejecutiva Internacional y el Consejo del Distrito del Sur de California apoyaron un boicot de todo cargamento sudafricano y rodeciano y en 1977 el Local 6 estableció un Comité de Apoyo para Sud África.

Desde 1978, ILWU empezó a desinvertir los fondos de pensiones de las empresas que tenían relaciones comerciales con Sud África. Como dichos fondos eran administrados conjuntamente con los empleadores, los activistas de ILWU tuvieron que convencer a los empleadores a que adoptaran tal política.

La presidenta del Local 26, Luisa Grataz recordó que a principios de los años 80 los almacenistas de ILWU que trabajaban en Thrifty en el sur de California descubrieron que la tienda estaba vendiendo camisetas de franela hechas en Sud África. “Hablamos con la empresa cuando descubrimos esto y les dijimos que no queríamos manejar estas mercancías sudafricanas. Hay que reconocer que Thrifty sacó el producto de sus tiendas y almacenes y lo discontinuó.”

En abril de 1985, el entonces Presidente Internacional de ILWU Jimmy Herman, Secretario Tesorero Internacional Curtis McClain, Presidente del Local 6 Al Lannon y Patrullero de IBU Charlie Clarke fueron arrestados por hacer resistencia civil junto con otros activistas laborales cuando estos ocuparon las oficinas de South African Airways. Durante la convención general de ILWU en 1985, Harry Bridges se unió a los delegados de la convención en una gran manifestación contra el apartheid en el plantel de la UC Berkeley.

“El activismo de los afiliados de base de ILWU durante décadas es un ejemplo maravilloso del poder que tienen las personas ordinarias para que se haga justicia en el mundo,” dijo el profesor Cole. “Pocos historiadores han investigado hasta el momento el papel importante que los trabajadores y sindicatos norteamericanos han jugado en la lucha mundial contra el apartheid. Afortunadamente los sudafricanos – incluso el mismo Nelson Mandela – entendió muy bien lo importante que era el poder de la clase trabajadora para su causa. Por ejemplo, Mandela agradeció a ILWU por su boicot en 1984 del Nedlloyd Kimberly. Como otro ejemplo, el embajador sudafricano ante EU rindió homenaje a Leo Robinson póstumamente. Espero que ILWU continúe tomando posiciones de acuerdo con sus principios cuando sea necesario. ¡Y no hay duda que sí será necesario!”

“Tanto Harry Bridges como Nelson Mandela entendieron que la lucha en defensa de los trabajadores y los derechos civiles era la misma lucha,” dijo Melvin Mackay. “Que los afiliados de ILWU usaron su poder en los muelles para apoyar la lucha por la libertad en Sud África es un reflejo de las mejores tradiciones de este sindicato: la solidaridad, igualdad racial, internacionalismo y poder de la clase trabajadora.”

# Latest “free trade” farce: the “TPP”

Corporate America is clear about what they want from Congress: lower taxes, less regulation and weaker unions. Now all three goals have been combined into one piece of legislation – a “free trade” agreement, known as the Trans-Pacific Partnership (TPP) – involving the U.S., Malaysia, Vietnam and 10 other Pacific Rim nations.

## Lip-service for labor

As with previous “free trade” deals – the NAFTA with Mexico, CAFTA with Central America and CFTA with Colombia – the TPP was drafted in secret by corporate lobbyists. While each agreement includes some token language about protecting labor and environmental concerns, these provisions are weak and often provide little more than lip service. The focus of “free trade” deals remains the creation of new rules that protect big business – at the expense of citizens who are left with fewer tools to hold them accountable.

## Expanding corporate rights

The agreements protect and extend corporate rights. For example, under the TPP, corporations are allowed to sue governments if they don't like labor, environment or social regulations – bypassing state and federal courts in favor of secret arbitration tribunals. Another example concerns patents for expensive drugs, which the US lengthened to 20 years because of a free trade agreement signed by the Clinton administration in 1994. The additional years of patent protections were eagerly sought by pharmaceutical industry lobbyists in order to secure billions in additional profits – at the expense of consumers who were denied access to low-cost generics. Even the tobacco industry is using free trade deals that lower barriers to cigarette imports into developing nations, causing smoking rates and disease to increase.

## Business vs. democracy

Former Congressional staffer Gordon Lafer recalls a sobering experience that he had in 2010 with Assistant U.S. Trade Representative Barbara Weisel, who was responsible for negotiating the TPP. Lafer was the Senior Policy Adviser for the U.S. House of Representatives' Committee on Education and Labor – the top congressional staffer responsible for upholding labor standards in international trade treaties. But he was shocked when Weisel told him that the administration “had no position” on excluding non-democratic countries from trade deals. When Lafer asked how the White House planned to deal with undemocratic countries like Vietnam where children as young as 14 are forced to work 12-hour days; where there is no right to free speech, no right to protest, no right to strike, and no freedom to form unions. “Oh, you can have labor rights without democracy,” Weisel insisted. But when asked to name a single country where that happens, she was unable to provide any example.

## Worker rights matter

Lafer says the one thing that non-democratic regimes can never tolerate is independent workers' organizations. “That's why trade unionists were the first ones marched through the gates of Dachau,” he says. “One reason why business invests in Vietnam and China is not simply that wages are low, but that the absence of democratic rights promises to lock in cheap labor for years to come.” He noted that when worker pressure – including thousands of illegal strikes – increased pressure on Chinese officials to revise the nation's labor law in 2008, Apple, Hewlett-Packard, and other members of the U.S.-China Business Council lobbied successfully to limit the expansion of Chinese workers' rights.

## Popular opposition

Polls consistently show that Americans oppose “free trade” agreements, beginning with NAFTA, which resulted in hundreds of thousands of jobs being lost to low-wage maquiladora factories. NAFTA also sparked millions of Mexicans to migrate north in search of work after their rural economies were destroyed by cheap corn imports that put millions of farmers out of work.

## Politicians are wobbling

Popular opposition to free trade deals like the TPP have forced politicians in both parties to choose between standing with citizens concerned about free trade – or lining up with corporate lobbyists who control vast sums of campaign cash. Some prominent liberals, like former House Speaker Nancy Pelosi, voted for NAFTA along with other key Democrats who joined a majority of Republicans to pass the measure in 1993. At that time, Democrats were urged and sometimes threatened by the Clinton administration and corporate sponsors with retaliation if they failed to support free trade. Today, there's a similar problem with politicians wobbling on free trade, such as Representative Rick Larson in Washington State's 2nd District, who criticized NAFTA when he ran for office in 2000. Now, Larson and several other New Democrat Coalition members from Washington State are refusing to sign a letter endorsed by 151 Democratic colleagues who oppose efforts to “fast track” the TPP free trade deal, according to Rich Austin, President of the Pacific Coast Pensioners Association.

## Fast Track = Congressional cop-out

“Fast-track authority” is a legislative loophole, pushed by corporations and their friends in Congress who want to avoid the political heat that comes with a vigorous public debate of “free trade” agreements in Congress. If the “fast track” rule is adopted, it would ban Congress from debating or amending the TPP. The same tactic was used 20 years ago by corporations to avoid debating NAFTA in Congress. If “fast track” is approved, it will limit Congress to a simple “yes” or “no” vote on a “take-it-or-leave-it” basis, with no changes allowed.



“Free trade” agreements like the TPP and NAFTA are strongly opposed by most Americans.

## Obama backflips on free trade

When Obama ran for office in 2008, he campaigned against NAFTA, saying it was “devastating” and calling it a “big mistake.” But after winning office, he became a cheerleader for corporate free trade deals, including the TPP.

“We shouldn't worry about the morality of politicians – because we'll always be disappointed – but we should be worried about the growth of corporate power in our society,” says Rich Austin, who's been educating members and the community about the TPP and corporate free trade on his weekly radio program that airs every Tuesday at 4:30 PM on KSVR 91.7 FM, from Skagit Valley Community College in Washington State. Archived programs can be accessed at [www.skagitdemocrats.org/?page\\_id=246](http://www.skagitdemocrats.org/?page_id=246)

“We need to keep pushing to hold politicians accountable,” says Austin. “And it requires getting more educated and turning up the heat. Corporate America has a plan for the working class in this country, and we'll keep losing until we challenge their rules.”

More information about supporting the campaign against Fast Track and the TPP, visit [www.exposethepp.org](http://www.exposethepp.org) or contact your ILWU District Council.

EDITOR'S NOTE: Gordon Lafer's report, referenced in this story, was originally published by Project Syndicate [www.project-syndicate.org/commentary/gordon-lafer-calls-attention-to-the-frighteningly-anti-democratic-implications-of-the-trans-pacific-partnership](http://www.project-syndicate.org/commentary/gordon-lafer-calls-attention-to-the-frighteningly-anti-democratic-implications-of-the-trans-pacific-partnership)

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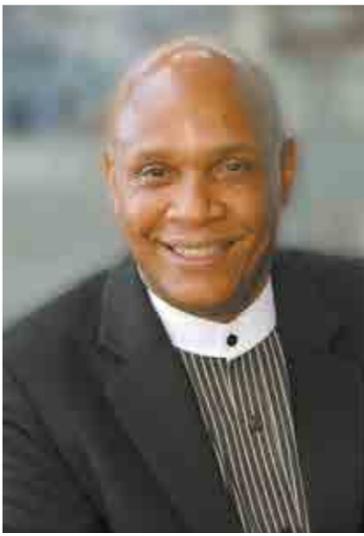


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## San Francisco's Port Commission has a new Vice President

ILWU International Secretary-Treasurer Willie Adams will serve a two-year term as Vice President with Port Commission President and former San Francisco Supervisor, Leslie Katz. Issues facing the Commission include controversial plans

to build a new waterfront stadium for the Warriors basketball team and a high-rise luxury condo and commercial development near San Francisco's historic Ferry Building. "I'm looking forward to tackling these challenges and doing what's best for San Francisco citizens and their historic waterfront," said Adams.

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