



INTERNATIONAL LONGSHORE & WAREHOUSE UNION CANADA

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The BULLETIN

Juneteenth Shutdown – June 19, 2020

June 16, 2020

Dear Officers and the Rank and File of ILWU Canada,

In recent weeks, we have seen worldwide protests against racism and hatred. The ILWU has a proud history of defending the rights and dignity of people and lifting those up that need to be lifted in their time of need. The ILWU International has issued a statement that Longshore workers will be taking the day shift off on June 19th to bring awareness to the day called Juneteenth.

'Juneteenth' refers to June 19, 1865, when federal orders freed all enslaved people in Texas, one of the most remote and resistant of the Confederate states. Though the Emancipation Proclamation formally ended slavery more than two-and-a-half years prior, the freedom it declared was far from immediate. In fact, we still see in the United States systemic racism built into all levels of life to this day, and this must end!

Racism and division are weapons used by those in power to keep the working class down. A divided class is a class that can never rise and bring true prosperity to us all. That is why ILWU Canada Longshore division will be taking part in this coast-wide shut down on Juneteenth. Canada's hands are not clean either, in the past or the present. We also had slavery, there was the internment of Japanese Canadians, the incident of the Komagata Maru and the residential schools. In present day we have the missing and murdered indigenous women and girls (MMIWG) and we see systemic racism in Canadian society. This Union, OUR Union, has been a part of many movements throughout its lifetime to help end hatred and racism. Whether it was ending apartheid in South Africa or working with Martin Luther King Jr. in the 60s the ILWU stood in solidarity.

Our history against racism goes back to the creation of our Union, when Harry Bridges went to black churches and promised black workers a place in our Union if they do not scab on us during work stoppages. This was an incredible act of solidarity by black workers, who were discriminated against in every walk of life, and who still chose to stand beside Longshore workers rather than take jobs they would otherwise be excluded from based on their race.

On June 19, 2020, ILWU Canada Longshore in solidarity with the anti-racism movement and Guiding Principle #3, will be shutting down for the 0800 shift.

"Workers are indivisible. There can be no discrimination because of race, color, creed, national origin, religious or political belief, sex, gender identity, or sexual orientation. Any division among the workers can help no one but the employers. Worker-against-worker discrimination is suicide. Discrimination is a weapon of the boss. Its entire history is proof that it has served no other purpose than to pit workers against one another, to their own destruction."

On behalf of Officers
In Strength and Solidarity
Rob Ashton
President