



Struggle-La-Lucha.org

# **ILWU pensioners expressed their support and solidarity with Palestinians**

written by Clarence Thomas

September 29, 2025

The International Longshore and Warehouse Union (ILWU) Pacific Coast Pensioners Association (PCPA) recently held its 56th convention at the Westin Airport Hotel in San Francisco, from Sept. 14 to 17. Delegates from West Coast ports, including Alaska and Vancouver, British Columbia, were in attendance.

During the proceedings, Brother William “Bill” Proctor, delegate from Local 19 of Seattle, introduced the following motion: “That the PCPA donate \$5,000 to the World Central Kitchen designated for Relief of Palestinian Women and Children.” The motion passed unanimously with delegates from the Pacific Northwest, Northern and Southern California speaking in support of the motion.

Unlike many of the younger, active members who are unfamiliar with the ILWU’s long history of concern and support for the Palestinian struggle for self-determination, the pensioners were part of forging that history.

The political and social consciousness of the Palestinian struggle is attributable to

Local 10's activism regarding the anti-apartheid solidarity actions in not working South African cargo, and observing community pickets against vessels carrying South African cargo.

In the 1980s, members of Local 10, such as Leo Robinson, were drawing a comparative analysis between the apartheid treatment of Black South Africans and Israeli apartheid treatment of Palestinians.

Bill Proctor started his longshore career in Local 10 in the 1960s, before transferring to the Port of Seattle in the 1980s. While a member in Local 10, Bill was quite active in the apartheid activities of the local. He was also one of the founding members of the Southern Africa Liberation Support Committee, organized by Local 10.

As the world is witnessing the Israeli genocide of Palestinians in Gaza, labor must understand that "Peace is Union Business!" It has to take strategic action wherever it can to stop and resist the genocide. Solidarity is not an empty slogan.

Clarence Thomas, Executive Board PCPA

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A guiding principle of the International Longshore and Warehouse Union is: “The basic aspirations and desires of the workers throughout the world are the same. Workers are workers the world over. International solidarity, particularly among maritime workers, is essential to their protection and a guarantee of reserve economic power in times of strife.” In this 2013 photo of South African Consul-General Cyril Ndaba, James Curtis Local 10, Ambassador Ebrahim Rasool, Clarence Thomas, Delores Lemon-Thomas and Chris Silvera IBT, the Nelson Mandela award is presented to ILWU Local 10 as “A symbol of the enduring gratitude of South Africa. ... for without the leadership of ILWU rank-and-file member Leo Robinson, the end of apartheid may not have come as quickly in South Africa. Nelson Mandela would not have been freed as early.” More recently, at the 39th International Convention, Cris Cain, National Secretary of the 30,000-member Construction, Forestry and Maritime Employees Union (CFMEU) of Australia, declared: “Peace is union

business.” Photo: Malaika H. Kambon

