

PROPOSED PROGRAM OF ACTION TO SAVE HAWAII'S AGRICULTURE

Today, more than ever, Hawaii's agricultural workers are caught in a desperate fight for their very survival. One after another we are watching as plantations, mills and canneries close down operations and lay off workers. In some areas, like Molokai, the entire economic foundation and land use of the community will be destroyed leaving the residents helpless and at the mercy of the landowners and developers.

These rip-offs, where companies close down operations and move, lock, stock and barrel to another country, is commonly called Runaway Shops. It is a major problem we face in Hawaii and we must deal with it one way or another.

Who is to Blame?

Why are these agricultural operations closing down? There is one main reason...PROFIT! For just as plantations are closing down in Hawaii these very same companies are opening new operations in foreign countries. And who are these companies? They are companies like Dole and Del Monte! The difference between wages of three and four dollars paid to Hawaii workers and the mere cents paid to foreign workers means tremendous profits for the Big 5 and Del Monte.

And as plantations are being shut down and workers thrown out of work, what will happen to the land? Take a look around Hawaii today. Agricultural and rural lands are being rezoned for tourist, high income housing and urban use. Most of us cannot even afford these high-priced homes without borrowing huge loans. These developments do not meet the needs of the working people who already live in these affected communities. Instead, the developments serve private interests which have the backing of government officials. To name a few, private interests such as Amfac, Castle and Cooke, Alexander and Baldwin, Dillingham, and other large landowners and developers, who'll reap thousands of dollars from real estate development and speculation.

The Labor Community Alliance asserts that there is no common interest between the workers and bosses. The big companies are only interested in making profits (profits are their best friends) by using the workers as a class of producers to obtain tremendous wealth. In spite of the important role that workers play, they have absolutely no say about the fate of their economy and the future of their lives. The big companies alone make the basic economic decisions which rule our lives. As long as they hold such power over our lives, we can expect more unemployment, higher prices, more evictions, bad developments and corrupt politicians who survive on our tax dollars, but who serve the interest of the ruling class.

What is the Solution?

How can workers have a say on how their economy is run and the future of their lives? To us, the only logical answer is that the workers must have some form of control and ownership of their workplaces. Only by these means would we really have any kind of democratic means of controlling the economy and the development of Hawaii. The type of democracy we have now where we vote every two to four years, does not give us the chance to decide on really important issues, such as various kinds of industries, developments and housing.

With workers controlling the workplaces, we would not need non-working supervisors and managers. We could discuss and decide work methods and rules according to what benefits us and production, rather than be subjected to following rules and regulations handed down by the management. Such rules only serve management while subjecting us to all sorts of inconveniences and unfairness. But of course, if private profit is eliminated, we would all have more money in our pockets and would not have to struggle all our lives just to take care of the minimal needs of our families.

What Do We Do Now?

Understanding the need for such worker's ownership and control and the actual achievement of such a goal are two different things. We realize that it will take a long and arduous struggle to bring about such goals. Yet in the meantime we will must fight and not allow the big businessmen to trample upon our interests and rights.

Hawaii's agricultural workers have a proud and militant history of struggle to learn from. It took hard and brave fighting to organize a union, get better wages, better working conditions and basic civil rights. We have had to fight to get what we have now, and if we are going to make things better, we are just going to have to keep fighting.

But how do we deal with the present situation in agriculture? Are we going to sit and watch the sugar and pine industries run away and leave us in a wake of problems? Or are we going to organize ourselves and our friends to wage a mighty fight to turn this harmful situation into one where our needs and interests are taken care of? To stop runaway shops it will also take a good fight. WE SAY FIGHT! We fought before and we can fight now!

We put forward the following Programme of Action to save Hawaii's agricultural workers and land from the greed of the bosses and private profiteers!

1) BUILD A BROAD WORKERS MOVEMENT TO FIGHT RUNAWAY SHOPS AND
SAVE AGRICULTURE

We see this struggle as being crucial to all workers and people of our Islands. The outcome of this fight will determine much about our future economy and history. We can continue to let the same few rule and push us around, or we can stand up and make the workers, who are the producers and the majority, the decision makers of our society. To do this, we need to unite all who can be united, workers in agriculture, workers in other industries, community people in welfare and housing struggles, students and anyone else who agrees with our program in whole or in part.

2) WORKERS MUST DECIDE THE FUTURE OF AGRICULTURE IN HAWAII

No matter what happens, if sugar and pine stay, or if they leave and are replaced by diversified agriculture or other types of industries the basic point is that the workers of Hawaii must decide. Not the bosses!

3) KEEP OUR LAND IN AGRICULTURE PRODUCTION

The present trend in our economy is to transform land from agricultural use to tourist and other high income housing and profit-making developments. The results being, the loss of the productive use of our prime agricultural lands, we are forced into lower paying jobs, and the whole communities are being evicted to make way for spreading developments they cannot afford to live in. In order to preserve our communities, keep jobs and save our lands, we say KEEP OUR LANDS IN AGRICULTURAL USE!

4) WORK TOWARDS AGRICULTURAL SELF-SUFFICIENCY

Why do we have to import most of our basic agricultural foods? We do not have to. We have enough land in Hawaii to take care of our people and still sell to others. Expanding agriculture to a point of self-sufficiency would provide more jobs as well as provide for the basic food needs of all of Hawaii's people.

5) SUPPORT THE FIGHTS FOR FREEDOM AND NATIONAL INDEPENDENCE BEING
FOUGHT BY ASIAN AND PACIFIC PEOPLES

We know that when business goes abroad and leaves Hawaii, they do so because they can make more profits from the labor of foreign workers. Similar to Hawaii many years ago where the Big 5 brought Asian workers to slave on the plantations, the same thing is happening to foreign workers in foreign countries. For example, Dole and Del Monte operates in Mindanao, Philippines, where Dole controls 19,200 acres of pine land and Del Monte controls 17,492 acres of land. The people there are fighting for their independence, and if they win, Dole and Del Monte will be kicked out. We also know that the Green Berets and other U.S. military forces are involved in putting down these freedom fighters to protect Dole and Del Monte's interests. We both face common enemies and should support each other's fight.