

IMPROVE EDUCATION
PROTECT THE ENVIRONMENT
ADDRESS INFRASTRUCTURE CHALLENGES
ADOPT SUSTAINABLE ECONOMIC STRATEGIES
MEET HUMAN NEEDS & PRESERVE LOCAL CULTURE

FOCUS OUR
MAUI ISLANDS
NUI OUR FUTURE

Own it!

Labor in Maui Nui

ILWU leader Pedro de la Cruz on Lanai during 1951 pineapple strike.

The end of World War II brought dramatic social, political, and economic change to Hawaii.

Among the factors driving the change was the growing power of the labor union, which began organizing in Hawaii in the late 1930s. Led by the International Longshore Workers Union, the labor movement organized tens of thousands of dock workers and predominantly Asian farm laborers. Through negotiations and major strikes in 1946, 1949, and 1958, the unions succeeded in abolishing the so-called perquisite system, where plantation owners supplied their workers with such basic necessities as housing, medical care, and, in some instances, food, but paid them very low wages.

Organized labor has won valuable benefits for working people in Hawaii and is responsible for a blooming middle class in what was once a plantation society where power and wealth were held by a few. That social structure is long gone, and the majority of today's workers have little or no memory of the inequities of the past. In fact, for today's young workers, unions represent the establishment, a circumstance their grandparents would likely find difficult to fathom. And although labor unions nationally have watched their political clout diminish along with their membership, Hawaii's organized labor is still a force to be reckoned with.

The United States continues to show the highest labour productivity levels...and the gap between the U.S. and most developed economies continues to widen. ~International Labour Organization 2007 www.ilo.org/trends



“Without
labor
nothing
prosper.”

~Sophocles
Greek Playwright
496-406 BC



FOCUS MAUI NUI is a community-driven vision for the future of our islands, spearheaded by Maui Economic Development Board, Inc., a nonprofit organization dedicated to the economic well-being of Maui County. VISIT www.focusmauinui.com or CALL 808.270.6801