

Rally Cry: Statement of Solidarity for Assi Market Workers

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UCLA Students' Picket and Rally at Assi Market in Los Angeles, Koreatown

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I did the unthinkable. I shopped at Assi because that's normally what our family would do. Whether it be Assi, Plaza Market, or Hanaam Chain, we go to Korean Markets to buy our produce and go grocery shopping.

I didn't know about the Assi Market boycott. I didn't know about the harassment and the discrimination faced by the immigrant workers. I didn't know that workers would routinely get fired for asking for overtime pay. I didn't know that these Korean owners were abusing and oppressing Latino/a and Korean immigrants. I was ignorant until I took Asian American Studies 116: Social Movements and Labor Studies.

We learned about immigrant workers' struggles. We saw the injustice and greed of corporate exploitation. We understood that it was wrong to support a system that takes advantage of its employees and that did not provide a living wage. We realized that we could make a difference when we tried and united. We advocated a grassroots collective movement elucidated by the late Philip Vera Cruz. We became part of the process to combat inequality. We organized and mobilized student support by working with KIWA Korean Immigrant Workers' Advocates. Ultimately, we have the power to change things

and students while we do gain experience from working with the community, the greatest gain should be for the workers.

We will not be kept from our dreams, aspirations and goals. We wish to give a voice to silent members of our communities. We want to empower people so that they can empower themselves. We anticipate making a difference in building a just and humane world for everyone as much as humanly possible. We do see life as active agents in our communities.

Please allow me to introduce fellow active agent workers Tacha Contreras and Oscar Deleon from LASA, Latin American Student Association.