ILWU ends blockade of Salvadoran coffee

SAN FRANCISCO—The ILWU March 20 ended its West Coast blockad of coffee shipments from El Salvador. The action coincides with the lifting of the coffee boycott called by Neighbor-to-Neighbor, a 60,000-member grass roots and lobbying organization. "We believe their action will encourage the advancement of peace in El Salvador. The coffee boycott played a major role toward ending civil war in El Salvador," said ILWU International Vice-President Emeritus Jim Herman. "As we implement new peace accords, we will encourage the Salvadoran government and the FMLN to resolve the conflict peacefully. Since December, 1989, Salvadoran coffee bean shipments bound for West Coast ports have been met with picket lines established by Neighbor-to-Neighbor. ILWU longshoremen refused to cross the picket lines to unload the coffee. The boycott was triggered by the October 1989, bombing of the Salvadoran trade union federation FENASTRAS. The murder of six Jesuit priests, their housekeeper and her daughter at the University of Central America, and other atrocities committed by government-sponsored "death squads." "In Filomeno Mata, 1989, the ILWU International Executive Board endorsed the boycott as a means to apply economic pressure on both the government and El Salvador’s landed elite. We commend and support the efforts of the Salvadoran government and the FMLN to resolve the conflict peacefully." "We are very concerned by continued human rights abuses, particularly the recent assassination of Nazario de Jesus Gracias of the Federation of Independent Associations of El Salvador," Arian said. "If such attacks continue, or if implementation of the accords breaks down, we will renew the boycott and any other lawful efforts necessary to promote peace, economic justice and democracy."

Tough times, tough decisions stressed at Local 6 convention

OAKLAND—From gavel to gavel, the 47th Annual Convention of ILWU warehouse Local 6 was a demonstration of union democracy at its best.

Representing nearly 5,000 members in Northern California, 189 rank-and-file delegates tackled tough issues head on, affirming in the process the Local’s collective will to solidify its base, expand its ranks, and secure its future.

Presenting the Officers Report, Local 6 President Jim Ryder posed the question: "Are we capable of making the changes necessary to carry our organization into the next century as a strong and vital force, or are we content to live on our reputation while our membership declines in basic industries?"

"We are fortunate that we have the democratic structure to make our own choices," Ryder continued. "However, our democracy requires that we not continue on page 3

Gunmen arrested at ICTF

LOS ANGELES—Los Angeles police Sunday, March 23 arrested two gunmen who allegedly threatened ILWU members engaged in informational leafletting at the Southern Pacific intermodal container transfer facility (ICTF) near Los Angeles-Long Beach Harbor.

Shortly before 8:30 p.m. Local 13 Allied Division members Bobby Martinez and Johnny Salas, both wearing union jackets, were accosted by two unidentified men at a store near the ICTF. Martinez and Salas were on break when the two strangers confronted them and began interrogating them about who they were and what they were doing. Within minutes, one of the strangers pulled a gun and took aim.

Martinez and Salas jumped in their car and sped back to the ICTF. The gunmen were in hot pursuit. Allied Division business agent Ray Familaithe and Los Angeles police, who had been called to investigate another incident, were outside the facility when Martinez and Salas rushed in.

"Bobby and Johnny pulled up and started yelling: ‘They have a gun!’" Familaithe said. "When the police officer got out and turned his flashlight on the driver of the car, the driver tried to get away. The officer went after him, then two more units turned the corner. Three plain-clothed officers surrounded the car within a few hundred yards. They found a .357 Magnum."

The gunmen were arrested, booked and jailed.

WEEKEND OF VIOLENCE

The incident ended a weekend of violence and threats against the union’s informational picketing. As reported in previous issues of The Dispatcher, the ILWU is contesting Southern Pacific’s February 11 lockout of 350 Allied Division members; SP has replaced them with other workers. Union members have maintained a 24-hour presence outside the ICTF ever since, distributing literature to truckers entering the facility.

On Friday, March 6, ILWU member Ralph Aguilar was the victim of a hit-and-run. An SP van transporting replacement workers coming off shift collided with the International Longshoremen’s and Warehousemen’s Union

Women’s History Month

See Pages 4-5
President's Report

Dock Jobs in Jeopardy
BY DAVID ARIAN  ILWU International President
In 1989, International Officers of the ILWU and the ILA directed the unions' respective legislative representatives to draft legislation specifically aimed at protecting longshore work in the United States. The result was the Immigration Act of 1990. Since then, the Bush Administration has been working to make it as difficult as possible for American longshoremen to do their work. Here's how they get away with it:

- The "reciprocity exception" exempts foreign crews from the law under certain circumstances.

- The "safety and environmental" exception permits foreign crews to handle certain "dangerous" or "hazardous" cargoes.

- The "prevailing practice" exception applies in ports where the local collective bargaining agreement allows foreign crews to do the work.

- The "practice" exception applies in ports where a union contract covers less than 30 percent of the workforce.

In a nutshell, the new law has done everything it can to undermine this critical law. The ILWU longshore division is financing efforts to secure this work for our members. We've got a lot of support. The ILA is with us, and we're reaching out to other unions as well. Several members of Congress are outraged by these developments, and they've agreed to take appropriate action. Other senators and house representatives are receiving protest letters from ILWU District Councils. We know we've got a battle on our hands, but—for the sake of everything American longshoremen have fought for in the last 50 years—we can give it no less than 100 percent.
Local 6 Convention: ‘Organize and Educate’

Macadamia nut workers prepare for bargaining

HONOLULU—Negotiating committee representatives over 800 ILWU Local 142 members employed in the macadamia nut industry caucused in January in preparation for bargaining.

The committees will be negotiating with four companies located on the islands of Hawaii and Maui. The industry is dominated by C. Brewer, which owns all of the four companies under the ILWU contract. Local 142 members at Brewer's Olokele Sugar are growing the facility. He had been cruising up the curb of the sidewalk, and revved his motor threateningly.

"I immediately notified the port police," Familiar said. "I told them the situation is volatile. Our members had not been repeatedly threatened and verbally abused since we started leafleting, and now we had a security guard chasing them. I was concerned about acts of violence. The sergeant said he would come out personally, talk to SP about the harassment, and take a report."

"If Safeway gets away with this, the larger community of humankind down to business"

Onto the gun

On a motion by Council member Joseph Salas, the following resolution was adopted and approved:

"The ILWU is determined to keep up the pressure. Until the dispute is resolved, Familiar said, "We will continue to exercise our constitutional rights to inform the public about what SP has done and is doing."

"We're out there seven days a week, 24 hours a day, and we won't give up. We're not going to let anyone intimidate us."
By LINDSAY McLAUGHLIN
ILIWU Washington Representative

The Civil Rights Act of 1991 has fallen egregiously short of its mission. Originally intended to correct gross injustices caused by rulings of the Reaganesque Supreme Court, this landmark legislation restricts the majority of the population—women—from seeking full redress against workplace discrimination.

To its credit, the Civil Rights Act took a step forward by including, for the first time, the rights of women in a major civil rights bill. But, bowing to the interests of employers, legislators compromised these rights considerably. The law failed to limit the damage women can collect in discrimination lawsuits—no matter how blatant the violation, no matter how severe its impact.

The compromise, which also affects older, minority- and disabled-covered workers, establishes a four-tier system of caps on the amount of damages that can be awarded. A maximum of $50,000 can be paid in the first tier, for an injury from $50,000 for businesses with 100 workers or less, to $300,000 for businesses with more than 500 workers. Half of all US working women would be covered under the lowest tier.

FAIRNESS THE ISSUE

Congress and President Bush have an opportunity to correct this injustice by amending the Equal Rights Amendment, HR 3975, in the House of Representatives and S 2062 in the Senate. Simply, this legislation would remove the caps and allow the courts to determine damages. This legislation would ensure that women, the disabled, and religious minorities would be treated the same as others who are discriminated against.

Basic fairness under the law is the only real issue this legislation addresses.

Please write to your senators and representatives to urge their support. Let them know that a compromise which sanctions unequal treatment is not only unacceptable but contrary to the principle of "justice for all."


Pay gap between women and men gets worse with age

WASHINGTON—A recent analysis by the U.S. Census Bureau shows that the "pay gap" between women and men widens with age and at all education levels.

For instance, the average woman with a four-year college degree earns about the same salary as a man with high-school diploma. At every level, in fact, women make less money than men with the same education.

Like almost everything else, the pay gap gets worse with age. A college-educated woman 18-24 years old makes about 92 cents for every dollar earned by a man of the same age and education. By the time she reaches retirement age, she earns about half the salary of her male counterpart. The gap is just as wide between white men and males who didn't attend college.

In 1931 she became Southern California secretary of the International Labor Defense. Elaine became active in radical politics in the 1930s. In 1933, she became the first Riveter. In 1934, she became Southern California secretary of the Internal Labor Defense, which provided legal aid to labor organizations and political prisoners.

She was a warm, humorous and caring person. She was irreplaceable.

LABOR DEFENSE

Born in New York on September 4, 1896, the daughter of Russian revolutionaries, Elaine became active in radical politics in the 1930s. In 1933, she became Southern California secretary of the International Labor Defense, which provided legal aid to labor organizations and political prisoners.

In 1934, Elaine and Karl married in San Francisco where she again worked with the ILD. While Karl went to work on the San Francisco waterfront, Elaine focused the ILD’s resources on the legal defense of those arrested during the 1934 West Coast maritime strike and the San Francisco General Strike. She was the only woman on the longshore strike committee.

Elaine Black Yoneda

Elaine Black Yoneda—veteran labor, civil rights and peace activist—was a remarkable woman whom many in the ILWU came to know and love. A long-time member of the Communist Party, she made no apologies for her politics, nor had she any reason to.

"She was truly a unique individual," said ILWU International President Jim Herman upon Elaine’s death in May, 1988. "She had an amazing record of service and commitment to the ILWU and to the cause of social justice and peace. With all that, she was a warm, humorous and caring person. She was irreplaceable."

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Elaine was also active in organizing the campaign to free Mooney and Sacco, the Scottsboro defense, in defending lette-

...trix strikers in the Salinas area in 1934, and in many other campaigns. The ILWU newspaper, "USA Today," ran a 10-page story in June 1988. The story of Elaine Black Yoneda is chronicled in The Red Angel by Vivian McGuckin Raineri. "Elaine never let up," the author concludes. "She lived a long, active life, and in all the work she had breathed for people's rights and a better world.

Elaine Black Yoneda, 90, of San Francisco, was the ILWU's 'Red Angel.'

Effective July of this year the Non-traditional Employment for Women Act amends the federally funded pro-

grams to increase the amount of women training for non-traditional jobs. A workforce comprised of less than 25 percent women is considered "non-

traditional."

Women have done well in existing JTPA programs, going from ground zero to jobs that pay as much as $6 an hour," said Elsie Varotanie, director of the US Labor Department's Women's Bureau. "But in view of changing tech-

The ILWU is the only labor organization to concentrate its efforts exclusively on the needs of women workers. It is proud of this position and must be properly trained. The new act establishes a four-year demonstration project in which $1.5 million in job training act funds will be earmarked annually for six states to introduce specific training for women.

Spearheading the lobbying and co-ordination for the project were the National Commission on Working Women, the National Tradeswomen's Association and the National Displaced Homemakers Network.

There are about 57 non-profit, non-traditional skills training programs around the country, but no state has a comprehensive statewide system for train-

ment," said Cindy Marano, executive di-

ator of Wider Opportunities. "The law is not only to serve women to move women out of clerical work, but it is designed to get women into existing "men's work.""
The Federated Auxiliaries

Union Maids of the ILWU

By JOAN FOX

Historian, ILWU Federated Auxiliaries

The "ladies auxiliaries" of the ILWU were first organized by spouses of striking longshoremen during the 1934 west coast longshore strike. Whether carrying picket signs, or cooking and serving food for the strikers, the women were an invaluable component in the strike's success.

Many of the women met for the first time on the picket lines and established friendships that blossomed into enduring marriages that blossomed into lifelong friendships during the ILWU's strike history. Why? Because when the strike ended, locals were granted charters by their respective international unions, and members held elections for leadership. A total of 42 charters have been granted since the 1934 west coast longshore strike.

By 1939, there were 13 auxiliaries in the United States. In 1940, providing the umbrella for the locals and the union, the ILWU was formed, and auxiliaries soon became aware of how beneficial they were, and called upon them to help organize. Auxiliary members further their education. As the auxiliaries continued to organize, district councils were chartered and the locals were first organized by spouses of ILWU members, sons and grandchildren of ILWU organizers, active members, and political activists.

Additionally, the auxiliaries were instrumental in organizing petition drives and promoting boycotts of a number of "hot" products, such as grapes, lettuce, Salvadoran coffee, and the Pacific Coast Pensioners' conventions.

STALWART ALLIES

Throughout their history, the auxiliaries have remained stalwart allies in the challenges confronting the ILWU and organized labor. During the twenty-year period the US government attempted to deport ILWU International President Harry Bridges, auxiliary members raised funds for his defense and wrote letters to President Franklin Roosevelt on his behalf. The auxiliaries were also active in the defense of Tom Mooney and Ethel Rosenburg, and many labor and political activists.

The Murder of a Grandmother

Fannie Mooney Sellins was already known as a garment workers' leader when she took an assignment as a miners' organizer in the bloody coalfields of West Virginia. An effective organizer, she quickly made herself unpopular with the authorities; she was charged with "fomenting riot and insubordination." It took a pardon from President Woodrow Wilson to get her out of jail after six months.

After four tough years in West Virginia, Sellins moved to New Kensington, Pa., where she joined the UMWA's efforts to organize the miners of the Allegheny Valley — then known as "Black Valley" because of the employers' violent opposition to union organization. She became popular among miners and their families — which made her a marked woman.

Miners employed by Allegheny Steel's coal company struck for higher wages and better conditions in July 1919. The company continued operations with strikebreakers; at the company's request, the sheriff stationed a dozen deputies, armed with revolvers, clubs and riot guns, in what is now Natrona Heights, Pa.

There had already been an arrest on Aug. 26 when Sellins arrived on the picket line. She tried to calm the mostly women and children present when the deputies clubbed, then shot to death an unarmed, 60-year-old miner named Joe Starzeleski. As Sellins urged the women to take cover, she was struck by a rifle butt, then shot at point blank range. As she lay dying, the guards pumped three more bullets into her body. Sellins was 47 years old, a grandmother and the mother of a youth killed in France, fighting in a war "to make the world safe for democracy."

It took four years to bring the deputies to trial; a Pittsburgh court found them not guilty. Her killer became captain of the shop police in an Allegheny Valley steel mill.

Coors Beer, GE products, Farrah slacks and many more.

FUNDRAISERS EXTRAORDINAIRE

To help defray costs, auxiliary members raise funds through bake sales, bazaars, rummage sales, raffles and luncheons. They also make donations throughout the year to worthy causes, including the disabled, senior centers, battered women, food banks and many others.

Whatever the activity, auxiliary members are high-profile, driving home the message of union solidarity. They participate in Labor Day parades in their home towns, with drill teams, banners and floats. They organize children's Christmas parties, local picnics, and Bloody Thursday celebrations. They assist luncheons and meetings of ILWU pension clubs. They work side-by-side with their spouses in carrying out the programs and traditions of the ILWU.

This report is barely the tip of the iceberg of the auxiliaries' successes and accomplishments to which auxiliary members have contributed. Whether in the past, by those who are long gone, or in the present, they leave a legacy for future generations to carry on — "Union Maids" of the ILWU.
Eddie Lapa, president of Local 142, and his administrative assistants, an organization which aims to search for scholarships so that children of Local 10 members could further their "collegiate" education. Trustees of the fund interpret "children of members" to include children of deceased and retired members. "Collegiate" is applicable to study at a 4-year college next fall, or already at a college at such a school and planning to continue, may wish to apply. Address all applications to Norm Leonard, 1188 Franklin Street, Suite 201, San Francisco, CA 94109. Information about the award should include the following:

• Name, address and ILWU registration number.
• Name, birthdate and social security number of your son or daughter who is planning to enter or continue a 4-year college next fall. If more than one child plans to enter or continue college, include this information.
• The name and address of the college where he/she has been admitted; or, if not yet accepted, where he/she expects to attend.

Upon receipt of your letter Norm Leonard will reply to your son or daughter giving him/her all information needed for making a formal application.

Scholarship guide ready

The APL-CIO Department of Education announces the publication of its 1992 AFL-CIO Guide to Union-Sponsored Scholarships, Awards and Financial Aid. This Guide lists approximately 3,000 scholarships worth nearly $3 million that are offered directly by individual unions, state federations and the central bodies. The Guide aids union members, their dependents and students in search of financial assistance to cover the cost of attending colleges and other post-secondary institutions, including two- and four-year colleges and universities, graduate schools, culinary schools, and technical, nursing and professional training, technical, nursing schools and so on.

Since the publication of the guide are available without charge for union members only.

The Guide includes information about 3,000 scholarships, 1000 awards, 100 fellowships and 1000 grants, and provides detailed information about requirements and criteria for each program. The guide is available in print and online, and can be obtained by visiting the AFL-CIO website or contacting the AFL-CIO Publications and Materials Office, 815 Sixteenth St., NW, Room 209, Washington, D.C. 20006. For more information, or to obtain a copy of the guide, please call 1-800-358-4887 or visit the AFL-CIO website at www.aflcio.org.
Northern Calif. district council hosts May Day Cruise on the Bay

SAN FRANCISCO—All union members, families and friends are welcome to the Northern California District Council’s second annual fundraiser “May Day Cruise on the Bay” aboard the Red & White Fleet.

This dinner-dancing cruise is scheduled for Saturday, May 2, 1992. Boarding time is 7:30 p.m. The boat leaves Pier 43-1/2 at 8 p.m.

Don’t miss this fun event featuring dancing, food, and raffles for valuable prizes, all of which benefit union causes, and unionists of the year awards.

Tickets are $35 per person. Ticket sales locations are at: Locals 2, 6, 10, 34, 54, 96 & 11; San Francisco; Local 14, Eureka; Locals 17 & 18, West Sacramento; Local 54, Stockton.

Make checks payable to ILWU Local 6, 235 Ninth Street, San Francisco, California 94103. For ticket information call Flo Williams at (415) 632-7326 or Bertha Miller at (510) 632-1830.

May is medical, dental choice month

SAN FRANCISCO—Active and retired longshore families in the ports where members have a choice can change medical plans during the open enrollment period May 1 to May 31, 1992. The change will be effective July 1, 1992. In San Francisco, Los Angeles and Portland/Vancouver, active and retired longshoremen may change dental plans during the month of May.

MEDICAL CHOICE

The medical plan choice is between the Kaiser Foundation Health Plan and the CHI Plan for Southern California Locals 13, 26, 30, 33 and 94; Northern California Locals 10, 38, 94 and 98; and Oregon—Columbia River Locals 4, 8, 40 and 92. In the Washington area, the choices for Locals 19, 24, 25, 47, 52 and 53 are the Group Health Cooperative and the Cooperative Plan.

DENTAL PLANS

For Los Angeles locals, dental choice is between the Delta Dental Plan and the Doctors Saki, Simms, Simon & Sugiyama group plan. For San Francisco locals, dental choice is between the Delta Dental Plan and Naismith group plan. For Portland/Vancouver locals, dental choice is between Blue Cross of Oregon-Denta-Care, Oregon Kaiser Dental Plan and Delta Dental Plan.

Information on the dental and medical plans and forms to change plans can be obtained at the locals and the Benefit Plans office.

All enrollment cards must be completed and submitted to the Benefit Plans office by May 31 in order for the change to be effective July 1.

Get Up To $2,000
In Two Simple Steps

The following paperback books are now available from the ILWU Library at substantial savings to members and friends of the ILWU:

The Big Strike by Mike Quinn: a new edition of the classic account of the 1934 strike. Price: $5.50 at the Library.


Local 29 parties down in new hall

SAN DIEGO—Over 100 ILWU members and guests joined in a spirited celebration January 24 of ILWU longshore Local 29’s new union hall.

The timing was perfect. Delegates in town for the coast-wide longshore divisional meeting took a time-out to enjoy the festivities, which featured a bountiful buffet supper and a lively mariachi band.

A delegation of longshoremen from Ensenada, Mexico, were also on hand. Good food, good music, good company—good going, Local 29!
When George Bush talks about "a thousand points of light," he most assuredly doesn't have people like Linda Palacios and Zeke Ruelas in mind.

Yet Linda and Zeke are the personification of volunteerism in the pursuit of a greater good. Hard-working, dedicated, firm in their beliefs, they can count themselves among the best and the brightest in the labor movement.

Linda and Zeke are rank-and-file ILWU longshore division members in Southern California. She's a member of longshore Local 13; he comes out of foremen's Local 94. They share a common goal with uncommon commitment: to organize the unorganized.

They got their chance in January when they were recruited by the AFL-CIO to assist an organizing drive spearheaded by the United Food & Commercial Workers (UFCW) in North Carolina. The target: workers employed at two Townsend Co. chicken processing plants in Pittsboro and Silver City.

**DONATED TIME**

Linda and Zeke had three qualifications, at least, the AFL-CIO needed for the job: they had both just completed training at the federation's Organizing Institute in Northern California; they were willing to donate over three weeks of their own time; and they both speak Spanish. The workers they were asked to organize are 65 percent Spanish-speaking immigrants from Guatemala, Nicaragua, El Salvador, and Mexico.

"I've wanted to do something like this for 20 years," said Linda, who used to do volunteer work for the Farm Workers before joining the ILWU. She was intrigued by the UFCW's organizing campaign, especially after reading about the tragic fire at the Imperial Foods chicken plant in Hamlet, North Carolina; 25 workers, trapped behind doors locked by their bosses, died in the inferno; several more were injured.

"What happened there just wasn't right," Linda said.

Zeke added, "They were worried that some of our organizing objectives." Linda said. "It's a very rural area, with no lighting, so it was hard to find our way around. We were cautious. We heard that the Grand Dragon of the Ku Klux Klan lived in the area. But that didn't deter us from our organizing objectives."

There were tactical advantages, Zeke pointed out: "Most of the Spanish-speaking workers lived basically in a barrio, trailer parks mostly, right next door to each other. We were able to go pretty much house-to-house." 

**LEGAL SLAVERY**

As Linda and Zeke made one-to-one contact, the horrors of daily work life at Townsend began to unfold. "It opened my eyes about what's really going on in the world," Linda said. "Slavery still exists in the United States."

North Carolina is one of 21 so-called "right to work" states with regressive laws designed to hamstring unions. Located in the South and the Farm Belt, these states are notorious for poverty-level wages, unwholesome and unsafe working conditions, and lackadaisical enforcement of state worker protection laws.

Despite the cruel lessons learned from the Imperial Foods fire, Townsend end of line workers continue to keep their back doors locked. What goes on behind those doors is even worse.

Wages are $6 an hour; the bosses demand—and get—a lot for their money. Each employee working a conveyer belt is expected to process 90 chickens per minute, 40,000 per day.

The jobs range from offloading chickens from trucks, to slaughtering them, plucking them, sectioning them, deboning them and packaging them. Workers routinely suffer from back, arm and back pain as a result of doing the same job hour after hour, day after day. Workers who seek treatment for back pain are usually sent to a company nurse who gives them aspirin and tells them to go back to work.

**CRIME & PUNISHMENT**

The line is divided into hot and cold sections, with temperatures running from freezing to up in the high nineties. Supervisors have been known to switch a complaining worker, in the middle of the shift, from one section to the other as a form of punishment.

Townsend's disciplinary policy visits cruel retribution for the slightest misstep by a worker. One "occurrence" of an infraction results in reduced pay for a week. Seven occurrences mean automatic termination. Some of the rules are written; many are manufactured on the spot.

"The supervisors just do what they feel like at the time," said Zeke. "A worker could stretch for a second, and if two chickens went down the line, that's it. One worker got in trouble for traditional duties with no other reason because he was having pains in his hands. When the supervisor found out, he put him on a more difficult job, even though others have traded jobs with no problem.

Job assignments are not only used as discipline. Linda reported that at least one supervisor makes workers pay $50 "under the table" for a particular job. Another supervisor, Zeke said, accepted "sexual favors" from women who want to be moved into easier work. Both Linda and Zeke confirm that sexual harassment is a major problem at Townsend.

**TIME IN, TIME OUT**

Workers are subjected to one indignity after the other; they're belittled, humiliated, spied on, and even chased down while they're using the toilet. Although state law mandates a minimum of two ten-minute breaks, Townsend only allocates 5 to 7 minutes.

"It's not enough time to go to the bathroom," said Linda. "A lot of people end up urinating at their positions."

By the end of the day, the line workers are soaked, and the busload of waste and food is cash in the bank for the company. Workers can be held at their jobs 15 in, said Linda. They're being paid goodwill, and no additional time. And quitting time is a guessing game. "Workers come in at the same time, but they never know when they're going to leave," said Zeke. "The supervisors say it will be 4:30 p.m., then 5, then 6. Workers can't plan anything— even picking up their kids from the babysitter. Townsend doesn't pay them overtime, either."

At home, the workers live in abject poverty. Basics such as hot water and electricity are expensive and hard to come by in this rural area. It isn't uncommon to find eight or nine people crammed into one small, cramped trailer.

By the end of the day, many workers are in excruciating pain, they're hands so overworked from repetitive movement that they can barely tie their shoes or lift a pencil.

"Sometimes it was difficult to talk to people after work," said Zeke. "They're so tired, all they can do is get home, eat dinner and go to sleep. It's sad." Generally, however, workers were receptive to union organizers. "Without even knowing us, they invited us in. In fact, they were friendly and hospitable."

"One evening, I went to a home to meet with about 4 or 5 workers. One of the men played guitar—nice, soft songs—while we were talking. We talked about the union; we talked about their lives. I really got to know them."

"I met many of them were afraid," Zeke added. "They were worried that they'd be fired for supporting the union."

Management gave every indication that would be the case. Spanish-speaking workers suspected of being pro-union were either isolated, harassed, or traded duties with another because they want to be moved into easier work.

"They were willing to donate over three weeks of their own time; and they both speak Spanish. The workers they were asked to organize are 65 percent Spanish-speaking immigrants from Guatemala, Nicaragua, El Salvador, and Mexico."

"I've wanted to do something like this for 20 years," said Linda, who used to do volunteer work for the Farm Workers before joining the ILWU. She was intrigued by the UFCW's organizing campaign, especially after reading about the tragic fire at the Imperial Foods chicken plant in Hamlet, North Carolina; 25 workers, trapped behind doors locked by their bosses, died in the inferno; several more were injured.

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Zeke added, "They were worried that some of our organizing objectives." Linda said. "It's a very rural area, with no lighting, so it was hard to find our way around. We were cautious. We heard that the Grand Dragon of the Ku Klux Klan lived in the area. But that didn't deter us from our organizing objectives."

There were tactical advantages, Zeke pointed out: "Most of the Spanish-speaking workers lived basically in a barrio, trailer parks mostly, right next door to each other. We were able to go pretty much house-to-house." 

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