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Historic Agreement with ILA, Teamsters

By James Spinosa

ILWU International President

In front of the representatives of the entire American labor movement the International Longshore and Warehouse Union, the International Longshoremen's Association and the International Brotherhood of Teamsters signed an historic agreement with the AFL-CIO Convention in Las Vegas Dec. 4. The document commits us to unity among ourselves and to justice for all workers who toil in our nation's ports. We pledged mutual aid and support for each other's jurisdictions in the face of continuing onslaughts from the employers and for the right of the most exploited workers on the waterfront—the port truck drivers—to organize to secure their future. While the action we took that day is vital, it is not new. Our unions have a long history—our jurisdictions are adjacent and we regularly hand over cargo back and forth to each other. Sometimes our jurisdictions overlap and collide, and we have had our conflicts. Other times we have cooperated and coordinated our efforts, and those times we have both done much better.

For example, Teamster and ILWU warehouse locals in Northern California have together negotiated Master Contracts with an employer group since the 1950s. We have used our combined clout to win better agreements and kept the employers from whipping us together against each other.

Back in 1958 our legendary leaders, ILWU President Harry Bridges and ILA President James Hoffa, along with the leadership of the ILA, saw changes happening at the ports and the foresight to know they had to figure out together how to respond. Mechanization and automation were changing how cargo was handled on the docks, and the old work rules and jurisdictional divisions could not address those changes. By 1960 those discussions led to the Teamsters and the ILWU setting up a joint committee to study those changes, to come to agreement on how to divide the work and to resolve any disputes over it. This resulted in a Memorandum of Understanding that was appended to the ILWU's collective bargaining agreement with our employers in 1961, defining our jurisdiction and theirs.

Now further technological innovations on the docks and changes in the way cargo is moved make it necessary for all of us to address those changes. The unions have a strong grip on the transportation system in this country. Together we are formidable foes. And together we intend to use our combined clout to win better agreements and keep the employers from using our conflicts against us.

By 1990 those discussions led to the Teamsters and the ILWU setting up a joint committee to study those changes, to come to agreement on how to divide the work and to resolve any disputes over it. This resulted in a Memorandum of Understanding that was appended to the ILWU's collective bargaining agreement with our employers in 1961, defining our jurisdiction and theirs.

Finally, the agreement commits the ILWU and the ILA to support the Teamsters' campaign to organize port truck drivers, the lowest paid and most exploited workers on the waterfront. In the ILWU tradition of solidarity we will help bring justice for these workers and make our ports 100 percent union.

These are challenging times for American workers and their unions. But they are particularly challenging times for those working on the waterfront.

Congress is considering a bill that would screen port workers and ban some of them from working on the docks like it did back in the McCarthy period. The employers are using the recession and the war as an excuse to attack our union protections and have threatened government intervention in the ILWU's upcoming contract negotiations. This is the time when transportation unions have to stick together to protect our place on the docks.

But we are responding to the challenge with the strongest weapon workers have—solidarity. Together our three unions have a strong grip on the transportation system in this country. Together we are formidable foes. And together we intend to win!
TOURISM CRISIS SLAMS HAWAII

The post-9/11 crisis sweeping like a hurricane through the world tourism industry has pummeled Hawaii with particular force. To help ease the impact, Local 142 has drawn on the bonds among its members, its roots in the community and its contract administration and negotiating skills. Still, the forecast for the union and the state remains cloudy.

"September 11 was a severe blow—not as bad as 1945-49, when the military shut down, but the worst blow for tourism ever," said Dr. Lawrence Boyd, a labor economist at the University of Hawaii's Center for Labor Education and Research (CLEAR). "Over the next year, two years, the situation will improve, but until about September 2000 we'll be dealing with a bad period."

Tourism employs some 207 million people worldwide, according to the International Labor Organization (ILO). Some 8.8 million people could lose their jobs before the current crisis resolves, the organization estimates—1.1 million in the U.S.

In Hawaii, around 13,000 workers have filed unemployment insurance since Sept. 11, when the attacks sent business diving for the bottom. As many as 6,000 of them worked in hotels. "We have people who've been laid off for the first time," said ILWU Local 142 Social Services Coordinator Joanne Kealoha.

More than 30 hotels have seen theirITHER say: The lost hours can also bring loss of health insurance, because employers tie coverage to steady-time or part-time employment.

The more than 20 ILWU-represented hotels, like others in the state, have seen sharp drops in occupancy. Fourteen were less than 60 percent full in November, and three fell below 40 percent, according to reports at Local 142's Executive Committee meeting Dec. 2-3.

Tourism accounts for more than a fourth of Hawaii's economy, so the whole island's labor force is hit. "When tourism becomes slow, other industries will be affected," said Art Medeiros, unit chair at the Westin Maui Resort and Spa. "People can't buy goods. Local 142 has two bakeries, Holsum and Love's, and the order is down. The local grocer, an ILWU shop all over the state. If people can't afford food, that's affected too. If orders drop for shipping, it could affect longshore. Maui Pine depends on flights to send out—there—that was a problem in the first two weeks. It's a rippling effect throughout the islands."

Some laid-off hotel workers were being held two or three jobs, and have pulled through by relying on their other work. Some draw unemployment insurance. Even workers who are not working a few hours can collect unemployment in Hawaii. The state allows them to collect the difference between their wages and the maximum unemployment benefit.

In addition to passing a raft of worker-assistance bills, the Hawaii legislature quickly passed a bill to allow employers to defer wage increases, Galdones said. In return, employers would still be considered full-time workers even if they worked fewer than 30 hours a week. The measure became law Sept. 16 to conclude the rank and file for the victory in the Charleston Five case and to thank them for taking the leadership role campaign.

"You need to modify the meaning of the word 'solidarity'" the Cal Fed's Pulaski told the Local 10 members. Local 10 was the first to respond to the Charleston longshore workers picketing, sending money to their legal defense fund and two of its officers out to South Carolina within weeks of the police riot and the felony indictments of the Charleston Five. Local 10 invited Charleston ILA Local 1422 President Ken Kelly to address the Longshore-Caucus which was set up as their own. Through the nearly two-year campaign to drop the charges, Local 10 members led the Northern California defense committee and its many efforts to broaden the support of the Charleston Five.

San Francisco Labor Council Secretary-Treasurer Walter Johnson (above), as well as California Labor Federation Secretary-Treasurer Art Pulaski and Alameda County Central Labor Council Labor Council-Treasurer Judy Goff, came to Honolulu Oct. 3 for an emergency meeting in special session in late October. Local 1422 President Ken Kelly, also participated from San Francisco. The meeting in special session met.

"This is not to say we're going to affect the employers," Medeiros said. "People were just happy to have jobs."

"The downturn is likely to hurt negotiations for a while," said CLEAR's Boyd. "Unions will have to negotiate in a miserable climate with thousands out of work," he said.

"This is not to say the employers will go on a union-busting binge, but it will be difficult to get any gains," he said.

Management at the Mauna Lani Bay Hotel asked for a 20 percent across-the-board wage cut in late September, sweetened by a status freeze and continued medical benefits for laid-off workers, said unit chair Richard Kanuho. So far the membership has resisted concessions.

The Westin Maui was headed into negotiations on a re-negotiator before 9-11. "We settled without an increase," Medeiros said. "People were just happy to have jobs."

The downturn is likely to hurt negotiations for a while," said CLEAR's Boyd. "Unions will have to negotiate in a miserable climate with thousands out of work," he said.

"This is not to say the employers will go on a union-busting binge, but it will be difficult to get any gains," he said.

"Everyone is waiting to see the difference between last quarter and this one," Medeiros said. "This will affect our per capita, too. Some people think it won't matter, to them. I say, 'Hello, wake up, this is going to affect you.'"

Though the typical holiday-season tourist rush will bring some people back to work, the rest of the union's need goes the message that Hawaii is hurting.

"Hawaii is in bad need of some help," he said. "Go to Hawaii and see, if it's safe, it's beautiful—go take a vaca- tion over there."

—Marcy Ren

ILWU CANADA WOMEN ORGANIZE

The newly formed ILWU Canada Women's Committee held its first meet-and-greet with the local 517 at a conference in Canada Sept. 2-10 at the Maritime Labour Centre (MLC) in Vancouver. All ILWU and RWU-BC women currently in the maritime/seafarer field, including temps and retirees, were invited to attend. More than 40 people turned out for the meet and greet, an exceptionally successful event for an inaugural audience for an event.

The gathering featured a variety of guest speakers. President of ILWU Canada, president of ILWU Canada, served as MC and introduced the first speaker, Jane Staatsch from the BC Federation of Labour. Staatsch outlined some of the issues facing women workers, including many important women's issues the BCFL is currently dealing with. Dowton Mitchell, president of foremen's Local 514, encouraged more women to get involved in union political studies, organizing efforts, and collective bargaining, and stressed the value of women taking active roles in unions.

Staatsch opened the meeting with some personal insights into her experiences as a union officer and discussive why she chose to be part of her local's leadership. She talked about vari- ous changes and improvements she had noted, and emphasized the importance of women rising to top positions in their respective locals.

Trenton Thew, ILWU-BC's keynote speaker was Kelly Miner, a representative from RWDSU (Retail Wholesale, Department Store, Clothing & Allied Workers of Canada). Miner told the assem- bly about the trials and troubles of forming a Women's Committee in the RWDSU. Though a certain amount of difficulty is inevitable, she said, it was well worth the effort.

Various union notables also attended, including Local 517's First Vice President Alameda County Central Labor Council Secretary-Treasurer Judy Goff, who related her experiences as a union officer and discussed why she chose to be part of her local's leadership. She talked about vari- ous changes and improvements she had noted, and emphasized the importance of women rising to top positions in their respective locals.

The ILWU Canada Women's Committee is working toward gaining official committee status for the upcoming ILWU Canada convention in March 2002. You can visit its web site at: www-ilwu-canada.org. A brochure outlining the committee's objectives and future planning will be available for interested union members.

The committee would like to extend its invitation to RWDSU-BC women and RWU-BC women who would like to attend committee meetings, which are held every month at the MLC. Seating is limited, so please contact Shirley Jaco (at 604) 254-8414 if you would like to attend or if you have issues to discuss with the committee.

The ILWU Canada Women's Committee can be contacted by e-mail at: ilwuwomen@ilwu.ca.
Bush’s ‘economic stimulus’ package
Unions organize to stop the gravy train for the rich

By By Marcy Reim

First, the bad news. The biggest layoffs in more than two decades were caused by pushouts close to a million people out of work since Sept. 11, according to the Bureau of Labor Statistics. Workers in nearly every sector are feeling the fallout—and big businesses and rich people are lining up for government-subsidized tax cuts and upper-income families make up almost 90 percent of the economic stimulus package passed by the U.S. House of Representatives. The measure would stiff workers, speed up the transfer of wealth from the poor to the rich—and do little to push-start the economy.

The Republican answer to any problem is, ‘Cut taxes and give benefits to the rich,’ said Guy Fujimura, Secretary-Treasurer of ILWU Local 143, who himself is hard-hit by layoffs. "It’s an ideological approach to government. They’re using 9-11 to push what they were trying to push before.

Now, the good news. This gravy train can be stopped. Senate Democrats are working with union pressure, are maintaining that any economic stimulus package must address the problem of the 9-11 pushouts. Senate Majority Leader Tom Daschle (D-SD) wanted to bring all sides to the table to work out a deal—leaders from both parties in both houses plus representatives from Bush administration. Those talks have stuttered. At Dispatcher press time, no one knew where the money on a bill coming out this year.

‘Labor has defined the agenda for workers and asked Congress to provide effective stimulus by getting money in the pockets of laid-off workers,’ said Oregon AFL-CIO President Tim Nesbitt.

But only about 10 percent of the spending in the Republican plan goes to worker assistance, according to the Center on Budget and Policy Priorities. The plan’s extensions of unemployment benefits won’t be able to get money in the pockets of laid-off workers, according to economist Guy Fujimura, Secretary-Treasurer of ILWU Local 143. "They’re using 9-11 to push what they were trying to push before.

Unemployment benefits would fall 3.17% short of basic needs for a single-parent family with two children.

“The House Republican leadership has chosen to provide massive tax cuts for special interests and the wealthy, while leaving the meager entitles for the newly laid-off. I was able to look at the newly laid-off worker,” the ILWU Hawaii Region Executive Director declared in a resolution passed unanimously and forwarded to Congress.

The Republican package contains four main tax cuts: a reduction in the capital gains tax, a quicker reduction on the upper-income tax rate from 28 percent to 25 percent, a change in depreciation rules, and repeal of corporate alternative minimum tax.

The alternative minimum enacted during the Reagan years, ensures that all corporations pay at least a little something, no matter how good their accountants are at finding loopholes. The bill passed, in the House, with an amendment that includes not only a repeal, but a rebate of all the planned tax cuts for the wealthiest. Bush proposed billions from uncapped tax rebates if the ‘stimulus’ bill passed by the House becomes law, is the source of $45.7 million in contributions to federal campaigns since 1991,” according to a joint study by CTJ, Public Campaign and the Institute on Taxation and Economic Policy.

By Brian Davidson

ILWU Legislative Assistant

In one of the most cunning, anti-worker displays of the new year, Democratic Leader Richard Gephardt (D-MO) gave the closing speeches for their respective sides. Hastert unashamedly used the flag and the war on terrorism to make his case.

The tough ‘no’ should underwrite the president at the worst possible time—the eyes of the world are watching this vote,” Hastert said.

Gephardt related a moving story about how unionism is affected by Fast Track. "I was in Puebla, Mexico recently and I met with people in a Fast Track authorizing plant, in one of whose large factories at the time workers can’t get benefits, and workers who change jobs frequently, have large settlements in pay or just got a job have a hard time, he said. “The workers with the most experience are the market is least pro- "teded,” Wenger said.

Benefit levels also fall far below what would be necessary to provide for a family’s basic needs. EPI calculated that on a national average, unemployment benefits would fall 3.17% short of basic needs for a single-parent family with two children.

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The tiny Emirate of Qatar at the end of the Arabian peninsula rose out of the Persian Gulf to a quarter of the way around the Earth from Seattle, the site of the disastrous 1999 WTO meetings. It Earth from Seattle, the site of the Gulf, nearly half way around the planet, and that was the just the idea for the Fourth Ministerial meeting of the World Trade Organization held Nov. 9-14.

While you can still get a beer in the foreign sector of Doha, Qatar's capital, elections and democracy aren't allowed. Qatar shut protestors out by allowing only people with WTO credentials in. But protests still occurred, with the help of a few credentials that included the International Confederation of Free Trade Unions, representing 125 million people who have no voice in the WTO. The WTO agreement, fast-tracked through Congress in 1994, allows foreign corporations to file claims against sovereign nations and their laws might harm their profits. Those claims are decided by a secret three-judge panel behind closed doors. A government loses the decision, its laws must be repealed or changed, or the offending country will face serious trade sanctions. The U.S. has agreed to this infringement on its sovereignty.

When the Qatar meeting ended with trade representatives still at each others' throats, they had no police riots to blame, no tear gas to worry about, and no report back that they had to lock themselves in a room to draft a final 10-page statement that reflected more their fractionalness than their agreements.

Still, much had been done. The Bush regime put U.S. anti-dumping laws on the chopping block, despite resolutions to the contrary passed Nov. 7 by the Republican-controlled House of Representatives with a 324-98 vote. The United Steelworkers oppose foreign companies' ability to steel seamstress' wages at any less than cost. Last month the second largest U.S. steel producer, Bethlehem, filed for bankruptcy. If it goes down, 15,000 jobs will be lost, as well as 45,000 more that depend on its suppliers. In Bethlehem is the 26th steelmaker to go bankrupt since 1988, the other 25 companies laid off 27,000 jobs, half of those in 2001.

During the 2000 campaign Al Gore promised not to sign trade agreements that didn't support the environment and labor rights. Bush said he would not link trade to "non-trade" issues. Clinton's attempt to include labor standards in the Seattle WTO round was one cause of its collapse. Developing countries in Doha again opposed labor and environmental standards and got no opposition from the USWA past President George Becker, who marched with the ILWU in Seattle and jetted into Qatar. The AFL-CIO unionists selected as observers. He and the union's legislative director Dave Rinefelter, report back from Doha.

"The apparent goal of the WTO is to eliminate forever the idea that trade and labor rights can or should be linked," Becker said in a field report. "The ICFTU and some governments like South Africa are fighting hard to protect those rights. Clearly the one country that could make the difference—the U.S.—is sitting on the sidelines."

Labor and human rights advocates made much of the WTO meeting gallery when they pulled out tickets that had the mouth of a labor and the lack of a public voice in the WTO. Third World unionists were demonstrat-

ing for labor rights in their countries, while their rulers on the floor opposed labor rights. Mauve Bartow, on the Council of Canadians. In the suit is Bill Jordan, General Secretary of the ICFTU.

While the rulers of their third world countries opposed labor standards, they got little in return. One small victory came at the expense of drug companies. Current WTO rules call for all countries to pay for all drug companies huge licensing fees, making it impossible for the U.S. in the future developing countries will be able to avoid patents during health emergencies. However, the deal leaves intact intellectual property rights that require developing countries to pay royalties for seeds and medicinal herbs that often originate in those same countries.

Developing countries opposed expanding "investor rights" deals allowing foreign corporations to over turn local laws and privatise public services. Elimination of "tariff and non-tariff barriers to environmental goods and services" appeared in Article 31 of the final statement at the last minute and many ministers had no idea where it came from. That opens the way to privatize water resources and strike down local envi ronmental laws.

U.S. trade representatives hope to improve investor rights in exchange for ending U.S. farm subsidies, bypassing Congress' power to write law. U.S. farmers complained about Europe's direct export subsi dues, but got nowhere.

The U.S. Constitution gives Congress the power to write trade rules as all of the above sought and got "fast-track" authority to negotiate treaties and run through Congress with limited debate and no amendments. (See fast-track story on page 4)

The Constitution took another beating last month when the Supreme Court refused to hear an appeal of a steelworkers' suit against NAFTA. The USWA sued and lost two years ago in the appeals court, claim ing NAFTA was unconstitutional because it hadn't been passed by a two-thirds vote as a treaty in the Senate. NAFTA was fast tracked through Congress in 1993.

China became the seven-ten-phant at the tent in when it was wel comed into the WTO. China itself. In many ways it was the WTO that joined China. With extreme low wages, Chinese are demanding better workers' rights and the environment, China's conditions could mean the end of the world's standard. Its manufacturing base has grown huge with American investments as the U.S. rapidly de-industrializes. Increasing imports from China will drive domestic industry out of business or produce huge surpluses for China.

"China's entry into the WTO will have the workers concerned about competition, a need to export to the world. That's a violation of workers' rights," said G. Rajasekaran, Secretary-General of the International Confederation of Free Trade Unions.

The Convention also reiterated the appeal of a steelworkers' suit against NAFTA. The USWA sued and lost two years ago in the appeals court, claiming NAFTA was unconstitutional because it hadn't been passed by a two-thirds vote as a treaty in the Senate. NAFTA was fast tracked through Congress in 1993.

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"China's entry into the WTO has even the employers concerned about competitive advantage, pollution, violation of workers' rights," said G. Rajasekaran, Secretary-General of the International Confederation of Free Trade Unions. "Basic labor standards are now at risk in many developing countries."

**AFL-CIO Convention stresses organizing, political action**

The AFL-CIO held its 24th Biennial Convention in Las Vegas Dec. 3-6 to map its plans for the union movement's future, focusing on strategies for organizing and political action. The convention is in ways a governing body of the AFL CIO, with nearly 1,000 democratically elected delegates representing its 13 million working people of its 66 affiliated unions.

In his keynote address, AFL-CIO President John Sweeney said the Bush was involved in two wars—the war on terrorism and the war on American workers. He blasted Bush, Congress and their corporate allies for their callous attitude toward workers—who were the victims of the terrorist attacks and the heroes in the aftermath—by denying them extended unemployment insurance and help keeping their health benefits while seeking and getting bailouts and tax cuts for corpora

ations. "At a time when workers are being laid off by the hundreds of thousands and families are mourning loved ones and sending others into combat, corporate America is on the prowl of more profits," he said.

The Convention denounced Bush's economic stimulus package and a tax giveaway to the rich and demanded a variety of changes for working families including aid to the manufacturing, fair trade instead of free trade, extended benefits and expanded health care for the jobs, and an all-out effort to bring down unemployment.

"Weeyenne promised labor would fight back against Republican lawmakers who wanted to change in next year's elections and in future organizing. Let us change the face of politics by electing thousands of union members to office, and change the course of government and expand our political and legislative and political counterattack in our history," Sweeney said.

"The AFL-CIO is ready. Let us join this by pumping more money into organizing and continuing to encourage affiliate unions to put 30 percent of their budgets into organizing. (The ILWU has been doing this since its 1997 International Convention.) The object is to increase organized labor's numbers, their density and their influence on the job and at the ballot box. Organizing is an A-number-one priority for the union movement and that hasn't changed," Sweeney said.

The AFL-CIO will also concentrate its political operations on 53 key seats in the 2002 election and maximize union voter turnout, which at 26 percent of the electorate in the 2000 election was double their propor tion of the population. All endorsed candidates will have to be born of union issues and support the right for the right to organize will be a lit erature list for them. Union leaders said that President Bush's present high popularity should not affect next year's election and would not change the federation's efforts to educate members about issues and comparison of stands by various candidates.

The Convention also reiterated the stand it took two years ago, strongly supporting comprehensive immigration reform. That includes legalizing undocumented workers and a crackdown on employers who hire undocumented workers, while using competition from undocumented workers to drive down wages and further exploiting them.

In the Convention's most electrifying speech, Jesse Jackson urged the labor movement to "fight for civil rights to the streets."

"It's time to march again. It's time to fight back. It's time to take the offensive," Jackson declared, further linking civil rights, the right to organize and the battle against terror ism. "We must fight terrorism wherever it manifests itself. Denying the worker the right to organize is a form of economic terrorism." At the ILWU President Jim Spinosa, Teamsters President James Hoffa and International Longshorem en's Association President John Bowers signed an historic agreement, acknowledging each others' jurisdictions and committing the three unions to cooperation in the future. The Teamsters agreed to organize the 50,000 port truck drivers across the country. The Convention also recognized the Teamsters Union. Five and IILA Local 1422 President Dan Coughlin, who ran an energetic campaign, received a standing ovation. The current officers of the AFL CIO include President Linda Chavez-Thompson and Secretary-Treasurer Richard Trumka were all reelected to another term.

—compiled from reports by Press Association Inc. .
PRINCE RUPERT PORT WORKERS GET SECONDOFF A FIRST CONTRACT

For the first time in its history, The Evergreen State College (TESC) in Olympia, Wash., ratified a first contract Nov. 26 for the second time in six months. The deal they approved by an 88 percent majority even more validates the hard-fought battle last spring.

So odd? Like many campuses, TESC contracts out its food services. When the 50-plus Evergreen food service workers began organizing more than a year ago, Fine Host held the contract. The workers won ILWU representation in June, 2000 in a determined campaign stoked by solid community support. Though Fine Host had a contract at Everett, it agreed to bargain with the newly organized workers. The contract was ratified in early June and clearly established the union's position on campus.

When Bon Appetit came in as the new contractor, it knew it was dealing with a union shop, negotiating team member Jeramy Edwards said. "Bon Appetit recognized us voluntarily," Edwards said. "They're very image-conscious and like to see themselves as socially progressive."

But Bon Appetit quickly lost its halo with the Evergreen workers by re-mandating the way the food service ran, disrupting schedules and job assignments.

Most people in jobs they didn't have the skills to do well," negotiating team member Dori Horovitz said. "And that's the typical Bon Appetit contract." The most senior workers experienced a sense of being taken for granted.

In a public meeting before TESC accepted its bid to run the food service, Bon Appetit mentioned it paid less than $8.75 per hour. The team made the company stick to its boast.

New hires will start at $8 an hour in most jobs, $9 for the more skilled. Before they went union, the Evergreen Food Service workers earned an average of $7.28 per hour. "It's been tumultuous since then," Horovitz said. "They're learning the contract, and we're learning how to interpret it." When people return from the holiday breaks, the more experienced unit members have not been told how to launch steward training and contract education.

The Evergreen workers will belong to warehouse, retail and Allied Local 5 in Portland, Oregon and have a representative on Local 5's executive board, but Bon Appetit quickly lost its halo with the Evergreen workers by re-mandating the way the food service ran, disrupting schedules and job assignments.

The company's blunder proved the union's gain. "A lot of the people who were the most restless or hostile before are some of the most pro-unions now," Horovitz said.

Negotiations began Oct. 17 with workers and community supporters on alert, but no mobilizations were needed. The two sides took care of business in just three sessions. "The company was really frank with us," Edwards said. "It was smoother than the first time, because they were more professional," he said.

The union team made seniority, job security and a grievance procedure its top priorities, Edwards said. The new contract retains a strong grievance procedure and just-cause language. The workers wanted senior-ity-unit-wide, and Bon Appetit went at it by jobs and categories. As a compromise, they set up four broad categories of workers and will figure seniority in each. The most senior workers get preference in scheduling, transfers, promotions, layoff and recall. The last two make a big difference, as the workforce expands and contracts with summer conferences and school-year breaks.

Bon Appetit came in with a harsh, two-page no-strike clause. The team bargained it down to simple no-strike, no-lockout language. The company wanted to exclude students and part-timers from the unit. Many of the workers are students, including team members Edwards and Horovitz. That proposal died. In fact, part-timers will get a small benefit for the first time under this contract—the employer will pay for parking or bus passes.

The workers wrestled vacation accrual rates back up to the level they'd negotiated with Fine Host, and membership dues were reinstated.

In a public meeting before TESC accepted its bid to run the food service, Bon Appetit mentioned it paid less than $8.75 per hour. The team made the company stick to its boast.

New hires will start at $8 an hour in most jobs, $9 for the more skilled. Before they went union, the Evergreen Food Service workers earned an average of $7.28 per hour. "It's been tumultuous since then," Horovitz said. "They're learning the contract, and we're learning how to interpret it." When people return from the holiday breaks, the more experienced unit members have not been told how to launch steward training and contract education.

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After the leader of their union was shot down at the gate into the plant where they worked, Edgar Paez and his coworkers at the Coca Cola bottling plant in Carea, Colombia tried for four years to get the country's courts to bring the people responsible to justice. Instead, some of the workers themselves wound up behind bars, while they watched the real murderers go free.

If Colombian courts and the Colombian government are incapable or unwilling to ensure justice, they reasoned, why not reach out for the country for help? Since Coca Cola is a huge transnational corporation, based in Atlanta, Georgia, why not use the U.S. courts instead? And who better to help the Colombians than a huge U.S. company than a powerful U.S. union?

But the suit charges that plant managers responsible for what happened, but that Coke benefited from it. Workers believed him because he had a history of participating with the paramilitaries. Paez said not only were the plant's managers responsible for what happened, but that Coke benefited from it.

The Florida case charges that at 8:30 a.m. Dec 5, 1996 a rightwing paramilitary squad of the United Self Defense Forces (AUC) shot up at the gate into the Coke bottling plant. Isidro Segundo Gil, a member of the union's security board, went out to see what they wanted. The parap opened fire on him, and he dropped to the ground. Gil's son, who was also a paramilitary, then shot after he was assassinated, paramilitaries kidnapped another leader of the union, who managed to escape nonetheless, and fled to Bogota. At 8 p.m. that same day, they broke into the union's offices, destroyed the equipment there and burned a large house containing the union's records.

The next day the heavily-armed guards went to the bottling plant, called the workers together and gave them until 4 p.m. to resign from the union. Those who didn't resign, the same thing would happen to them that happened to Gil—they would be killed," recalled Paez, who visited the U.S. in November to ask union members here to support the suit.

Coca Cola spokesperson Rafael Fernandez asserts that the company has a code of conduct requiring paramilitaries to carry out the task of destroying the union. Workers also believe him because he had a history of participating with the paramilitaries. Coca Cola's code of conduct does not exist, and they are not responsible for what happened.

The assassinations were not the first nor the last among union leaders in Colombian Coke plants. In 1994 two other union activists, Jose David and Luis Granado, were also murdered in Carea, and at that time as well, paramilitaries demanded workers quit the union. In 1989 Jose Avelino Chicano was killed in the Pasto plant. This year, again during negotiations, a union leader at the Bucaramanga plant, Oscar Dario Soto Polo, was murdered. When the union denounced the killings, the intimidation of workers and the attacks on their rights, the plant's chief of security, Jose Aloisio Aponte, charged its leaders with terrorism and rebellion. Five were arrested and jailed for six months.

At the Barrancabermeja plant grab 合同, was scrawled on the wall: "Get Out Galvos From Coca Cola, Signed AUC." Juan Carlos Galvis is the president of the plant's union. "Many times workers have been kidnapped by paramilitaries, and told that if they continued their union activities, they also would be killed," Paez charged. "One of our biggest problems in Colombia is that social protest in general is being criminalized.

According to another Colombian unionist, Samuel Morales of the Unified Confederation of Workers (CUT), the country's largest union federation, "transnational corporations are the ones who actually define many economic, and even political, policies which affect us. In many ways, they are virtually the governments of the states in which they operate. And in our country it's become a crime to stand out forcefully against them. They get cheap labor by weakening unions and getting rid of long term workers, and they're able to expand their areas of operation."
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