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UPW-CIO

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FREE

CONVENTION BRINGS ABOUT SWEEPING CHANGES

Sweatshop At Pacific Bakery

Union Moves in . . .

The Pacific Bakery "scandal" will go down in Local 713's history as one of its most dramatic accomplishments. The successful conclusion of the case will also remove a shameful stain from the record of Panama Canal employee relations.

About five weeks ago a group of employees came into the La Boca office and related to Union officials a horrifying and incredible tale of cruel and inhumane treatment of the Pacific Bakery employees by the manager, Carl Kollman. The employees stated that the atmosphere and working conditions in the bakery were more like a concentration camp than a Canal Zone operation. The manager cursed the employees on many occasions using abusive and profane language of the most insulting nature. Female employees were not immune to this treatment and actually appeared to be the most frequent victims. One of the employees complained that he had been physically abused by the Manager and was pushed and shoved around like a little boy.

No Overtime

The employees stated that they had put in considerable amounts of overtime—as much as 20 or 30 hours per month—but received no overtime pay for the entire month. When they inquired as to the amount of sick and rest leave they had to their credit, they were rudely turned away. They experienced untold difficulties in obtaining leave and one employee had worked there for three years without receiving a single day's leave although he had applied for it on several occasions.

The bakery was run like a sweatshop and the employees were required to work a six-and-three-quarter-hour stretch without so much as a fifteen-minute lunch period or any rest period. The Manager nicely told them they could have a whole hour off for lunch if they wanted it—but it would have to be on their own time after they stopped work in the afternoon.

Insulting Sign

One day he posted a sign on the wall saying: "There are people around here who smell, and if you don't know who it is, I'll put your name on a B. O. roll." The employees, of course, ripped off the insulting trash and kept it for the record. He later complained that there were some sneaks around who did underhanded work like removing his signs from the wall.

Our New President



PASCUAL AMPUDIA

If all the foul play of the Manager were included in this article, it would provide enough material for a small-sized book. Suffice it to say, that these grievances and many more were swiftly brought to the attention of the Clubhouse Director by Clarence Small, Local Organizer, and Joseph Sachs, International Representative.

Union Victory

From then on things happened fast. Several meetings were held with the employees at which various officials were present, including R.G. Taylor, Clubhouse Director, W.H. Crooks, M.E. Walker, assistants and representatives from the Executive Secretary's office. The officials were visibly impressed by the stories and facts they heard from the lips of the employees. A series of significant changes and improvements came as a direct result of these meetings and negotiations.

In answer to the Union's request, not one, but two bulletin boards have been installed for the posting of C.Z. regulations and literature. The first C.Z. bulletin posted was the one banning the use of harsh and abusive language to employees. The employees were given a fifteen-minute lunch period. Everyone will be informed at his request of the amount of sick and rest leave due him, and a procedure has

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Succeeding Francisco Arauz as President of Local 713, UPW-CIO, is Pascual Ampudia, "El Gran Luchador" (The Great Fighter), in whose veins flows the blood of the courageous Panamanian Carib Indians with a mixture of that of the Spanish Conquistadores.

President Ampudia began working for the Panama Canal in 1906 and survived the trying construction period and the economic pressure of the maintenance era but emerged with a keen desire to aid in improving the lot of his fellow workers. He was a founder and First Vice-President of the Union of Canal Zone Employees which functioned on the Atlantic Side of the Isthmus, amalgamated with the Canal Zone Workers' Union, and finally was absorbed by local 713.

When Len Goldsmith set up the provisional administration of Local 713, Ampudia was elected Chief Steward, subsequently advanced to the Vice-Chairmanship of the Cristobal Chapter, and became a member of the Local Executive Board.

Although President but a month, the striking personality of Ampudia has begun to pay off. This imposing bronze figure, with silver streaked, unruly hair and an infectious smile, has revealed native intelligence beyond the ordinary and has been well received by the numerous meetings he has addressed.

Richardson and Weinstein in Stirring Speeches

Mayor of Panama Attends

The Second Annual Isthmian Convention of Local 713, UPW-CIO, held on November 8th and 9th at the La Boca Clubhouse was colorful, impressive, and productive of much sane planning for the coming year.

In attendance as special guests were Thomas Richardson, International Vice-President, Robert Weinstein, Director of Organization, Don Mauricio Diaz, Mayor of Panama City, and Mrs. B. M. Thorbourne who delivered the invocation on the final day.

The hall was gaily decorated with flags, banners, bunting, and palms, but the center of attraction was the stage which had as background four large charcoal sketches of Phillip Murray, Abram Flaxer, Thomas Richardson, and Robert Weinstein.

Arauz Opens Convention

The first session was opened by President Francisco Arauz, at 10 a.m. After the invocation by Brother John Watkis of Gamboa, Sister Virginia King led in the singing of the national anthems of Panama and the United States. President Arauz then made a strong plea for unity and expressed his willingness to continue serving the Local. He lauded former Regional Director Cheresch for his important role in the founding of the Local.

Second Vice-President, Alfonso Alexis named and the Convention approved the personnel of the following committees: Credentials, Rules, Education, Resolutions, Publicity, and Constitution. President Arauz then introduced Mauricio Diaz, Mayor of Panama City, who gave a short talk in which he commended the members for their strong Union and expressed the hope that greater victories may be gained during the new year.

Greetings From Governor of Panama

After the reading of greetings from Governor Velasco of the Province of Panama, the report of the Credentials Committee followed and the fireworks started when the Rules Committee presented its recommendations. A verbal explosion popped off on the roll call vote the inclusion of which was successfully blocked by the small chapters.

Report of Regional Director

Max Brodsky, Regional Director, gave his report in which he described the gains of the Union and the important part the International played in support of the Local. He reviewed the crisis brought about by internal dissension with the resultant slump in dues payments; pictured the strenuous battles ahead; and outlined the productive paths to be followed in order that the Local may enjoy its fullest growth.

Aston Parchment, Director of Education, delivered the report of the Education Committee. This report recommended an extensive educational and recreational program that will bring the spirit of true trade unionism

to every member and surround the local with a wealth of cultural, educational, and recreational activities.

Vice-President Richardson Speaks

After greeting the assembly he mentioned that the delegates were present to try to solve many depressing internal, legislative, and economic problems now confronting the Union. He declared, "I think that the responsibility which rests upon your shoulders is an extremely great one for it will be you who will have to go to the rank and file members of this Union to tell them whether or not you have put this Union on a foundation which will allow it to protect the interests of the rank and file dues paying members in the next period of time."

He briefly reviewed the history of Local 713, from the appearance of Len Goldsmith, throughout the directorships of Edward Cheresch and Jack Strobel up to his (Richardson's) first visit on the Isthmus in April of this year. He deplored the fact that many recommendations made during his first visit were never carried out with the result that the attention of the leaders was centered on the clash of personalities and not on the full protection of the interests of the members.

He struck at the insinuations that the International and its representatives were not always considerate of the welfare of Local 713. He said, "I want to tell you that your International Union has one interest. We are on nobody's side. The only side that we are on is the side of the Union—the rank and filers of the Union."

Vice-President Richardson touched on the bills now pending in Congress and on the awakened interest of powerful U.S. organizations in the welfare of the "silver" workers. He gave notice of the fine gesture of Paul Robeson in giving a series of six concerts, portions of the proceeds of which will be diverted to Local 713 to be used for scholarships.

In concluding he said, "I think your Union has to come forward with a great demonstration of unity that will keep no doubts in the mind of anyone that this Union means business. It has to operate efficiently. It has got to change from operating at a deficit each month. . . . We are

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