

BASSO

Bay Area Strikers' Solidarity Organization

"An Injury to One is an Injury to All"

Recently, a grocery worker from L.A. spoke at a public forum held by BASSO. He described what's been happening in the stores since the strike ended. Here's what he had to say:

"Leaving by the Doves"—A Southern California Grocery Striker Speaks

The Two-Tier Scam.	"Everybody that's a GM [General Merchandise] clerk a wrapper or box boy, they were told that they would be no part of the two-tier system. And this applies to a lot of them. Because what happened is if you have a box boy who's promoted to the bakery, he would get 40 hours no matter what, every week, because he's only getting \$7 an hour. And anything that's left over goes to the regular people. And you're seeing this happen in all the stores."
Top pay: minimum hours.	"It will come down to all the regular people, who are making top pay, will be eventually working just minimum hours, 24 hours a week. And all the other hours will be absorbed by the GM."
What happens once you sign the contract?	"Since we've gone back in, they're pushing people out by intimidation, or firing or transferring. They're finding issues to get rid of the high-end people. And now, with the 85ers* - they're supposed to have a cap of 15% of the total hours. They're not following that. They're going on a basis of, 'you know what? File a grievance if you want; that takes time.'"
No job security.	"I'll tell you right now you're seeing journeymen and people who wanted to make this job a career leaving by the doves. Because they see the writing on the wall."
No pension, no hours.	"If you accept this two-tier program, then you might as well call it a career, because your pension won't be there and the hours won't be there."
More hours for new hires only.	"The ratio for the new hires is supposed to be 3-1 for working on Sundays the first year, 2-1 the second year and the third year they don't have to use any journeymen. All the hours will be absorbed by the new people."
Question your contract!!!	"So, you people (in the Bay Area) need to question your contract. One thing that bothers me is that we were given the contract and asked to vote on it the same day. And if you get a contract, what happens? I take it home and read it and take it home to my family and discuss it. But we got a contract and had to vote on it the first day."
Employers don't care.	"I will predict that 50-70% of the employees who are working there right now will be gone in three years. The bottom line is that employers don't care. They feel that if WalMart can run with WalMart people with no health care with no experience, and still make millions of dollars, we can do it too. So, it's either put up or shut up now."
Your jobs are on the line.	"So that's the crux of the two tier system."

*85ers are workers who qualify for full retirement under the Rule of 85—having 30 years with the company and 55 years of age.

We can stop these attacks!

Organizing for a fight is the only way we can counter these attacks. BASSO wants to help you build this fight. We believe it is necessary to learn from the struggles of the recent and more distant past and to change the approach of the unions. Already in Southern California, some of the former strikers are saying that any future strike against the grocery chains must be done on a national level.

For more information, call us at: (510) 655-5764 or e-mail us at: Javsacs@yahoo.com

The UFCW leadership is organizing labor/community support for its struggle against the stores here in the Bay Area. However, BASSO believes that in order to be effective they need to hold regular meetings of all supporters to get workers fully involved and to broaden the base of this struggle.