

punished for saying a few words in Spanish to a friend in the kitchen. The owner and department head are Chinese so Cantonese is not punished but other languages are. Workers who speak out or try to defend others are especially targeted. False accusations of theft and assault are used to drive people out of work. The Metropolitan is an abusive sweatshop.

We have a union in the hotel but you would hardly know it. The leaders of H.E.R.E. Local 75 have not challenged our employer in any serious way and we have no confidence in them. A collective agreement was signed two years ago but we had no real input into it and have yet to see a copy of the final agreement.

We hardly ever see our union reps. Grievances are not filed or followed up on. We took up a petition a couple of years ago for the union rep to be replaced. Forty of us signed it in my department alone but the Local President never even acknowledged the petition. Some of those who have tried to speak out have been victimized by the employer with the assistance of the union. Tony was fired and his arbitration was sabotaged. The witness he most needed to speak on his behalf was not called by the union lawyer. Carlos was elected as a steward but the president removed him from his position. The union leaders wanted to get rid of them as much as the hotel did.

For some of us in the hotel it was clear that nothing would change until we took action. 56 of us are now part of the rank-and-file Metropolitan Hotel Workers Committee. We have organized several actions with the support of community allies.

When one of our members demanded to know of the union president why he was not being properly represented, he was told, "If you need help, go to OCAP". Our committee recently held a very disappointing meeting with the president and it is clear that the present leadership has no interest in seriously fighting our employer. Our committee has won some concessions already, however. Grievances among workers have been resolved due to our pressure. We are going

to step up our actions in the workplace, and, with the support of allies like OCAP, will mobilize outside as well. Recently, 300 bookings at the hotel were cancelled because of our work. We intend to now demand that high profile customers like the Human Rights Commission stop using the hotel. With the help of friends at York University, we are pressing Henry Wu to be kicked off the York Foundation Board.

The company and union bureaucracy are now working together to try and stop us. The union rep and hotel manager just called together the shop stewards in the hotel to jointly attack OCAP for supporting our committee. They are now circulating a letter within the workplace that demands that OCAP stay away from the hotel. Workers are being threatened and bullied into signing the letter, but despite this, many are refusing to co-operate. Of course, we will not take seriously names on a letter that are obtained by threats, but this does show how bad our management is and how corrupt the union leaders are.

People on the committee are also being targeted. When I am called into work now, they take care to isolate me from other workers. **NONE OF THESE INTIMIDATION TACTICS ARE GOING TO STOP US!**

We are being approached by workers in other hotels and hope many others will follow our lead. We are non anti-union but intend to take back our union from the bureaucracy that presently controls it.

ACROSS TORONTO AND CANADA, IMMIGRANT WOMEN FACE EXPLOITATION AND ABUSE. AT THE METROPOLITAN, WE ARE ORGANIZING TO FIGHT BACK. PLEASE SUPPORT OUR STRUGGLE FOR JUSTICE.

<http://www.metropolitanhotelsworkers.org/>