

# Warehouse bosses' Christmas gift: illegal retaliation against immigrant union members

Source URL: <http://www.iww.org/en/node/3120>

Created Dec 28 2006 - 4:31pm

**Brooklyn, New York** – On January 2nd 2007 at 5:00AM workers from the Food Industry and Allied Workers Union (Industrial Workers of the World, I.U. 460/640) and supporters will bring in the New Year with a march and picket line.

This week owners from four different warehouses illegally threatened to call immigration or terminate union workers due to their immigration status in clear retaliation for the workers' union activities. Tuesday's march and picket will target Amersino Marketing Group, 161 Gardner Ave, Brooklyn, NY.



Over the last year and half, food distribution warehouse workers in northern Brooklyn and Queens have organized a union with the IWW. The campaign has met with resounding success: workers have organized in five different warehouses, several of which have been certified in National Labor Relations Board (NLRB) elections, they have forced their bosses towards full compliance with wage and hour laws, and they have won several major wage and hour violation cases while still other complaints totaling more than \$100,000 have been filed with the Department of Labor.

Thanks to the efforts of the Food Industry and Allied Workers Union, workers have witnessed an increasing number of bosses abide by minimum wage and overtime laws across the food distribution industry. As a result of their successes, workers have met escalating employer opposition. While this week's coordinated threats by warehouse owners regarding workers' immigration status may be their trump card, it represents only the latest in a series of unsavory maneuvers designed to hamper the union drive.

Last year, Amersino owner Yu Q "Henry" Wang, who has robbed workers out of hundreds of thousands of dollars in wages, responded to workers exercising their lawful right to organize by threatening workers, deceitfully rigging an NLRB union election, and firing union leaders.

Lester Wen, owner of the restaurant wholesaler EZ-Supply, refused to bargain in good faith after workers won an NLRB union election almost a year ago. In response, the union has put pressure on EZ-Supply by targeting its customers – restaurants in park slope, the upper west side and the village – and convincing them to switch to other companies. At the end of November, the union and Mr. Wen's lawyer reached a tentative agreement on a landmark contract, with workers winning wage increases, a grievance procedure, paid time off and much more (<http://www.iww.org/en/node/3052> [1]). On December 26, 2006, in a shockingly crass maneuver, Lester "the Grinch" Wen and his lackeys reneged on the agreement reached in negotiations and illegally threatened workers regarding their immigration status. In response, workers walked off the job in a wildcat strike and only returned after the union assured them that legal action would be taken.

The IWW Food Industry and allied Workers Union calls on the owners of EZ-Supply, Amersino, Handyfat, and Top City Produce to cease its anti-union activities, reinstate fired workers, and to negotiate contract with the union in good faith. The legal institutions in NYC must act immediately to

secure the rights of workers to organize and protect workers from the unlawful retaliatory activities of employers in the food industry.

**Source URL:** <http://www.iww.org/en/node/3120>