



Comité Fronterizo de Obrer@s CFO

**For the labor rights and all human
rights of the maquiladora workers**



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Spanish Version

Alcoa Workers' Main Areas of Concern Presented to Management, and Current Situation for Plants

February 2005

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* Refusal to give wage increases	Macoelmex y Arneses
* Unattainable evaluations	Macoelmex y Arneses
* Rumors about lay offs and re-hiring;laid-off workers not getting legal severances	Macoelmex
* \$500 pesos bonus every 3 months	Arneses
* Reduction of hours for night shift	Arneses

Macoelmex and Arneses' plants relocation to Honduras

Production lines from Arneses Plant #1 and Plant #2 are moving to Honduras. Managers and workers from Ciudad Acuña and Piedras Negras have been sent to Honduras to train AFL's employees. In Piedras Negras, movement in all plants and information from different sources bring evidence that Plant #1 will relocate, while the current emptying of "Plant Warehouse" signals it is being shut down. Supplies formerly provided by the warehouse to the other Macoelmex plants are now being shipped from Ciudad Acuña.

All employees deserve being treated with respect. AFL should tell them the truth in a timely and respectful way. Until today, the management continues with the practice of allowing the spreading of rumors and half-truths.

In Arneses, zero wage increase, and new hires have no increases during all their first year. In Piedras Negras, the Honduras threat is utilized to refuse giving an increase while the CTM union acts even more undemocratically

It is contrasting that while in Puebla, under the pressure of a strike that started yesterday, Alcoa is increasing its offer everyday (yesterday it was 5.14% of direct wage increase), but in Arneses the workers were told not to expect any raise. In addition to that, the new hires were used to being given increases after three months, six months and one year. That tradition has ended. New hires are earning approximately \$460 pesos during their entire first year, and might continue to do so forever.

Meanwhile, in Piedras Negras there's no word on the increase, but the managers told the union (according to a minute from a meeting): "there shouldn't be any thinking of a raise because we are under a cost reduction." Besides, union consultation with the rank and file worsened. The undemocratic CTM union has no interest in getting input from its membership. Line representatives to the contract negotiations shrunk from almost 90 in January 2004 to barely five people this year.

Unattainable Evaluations

In Arneses, workers are being told that no evaluations will be conducted all year. In Macoelmex, evaluations are almost unattainable. Workers understand that they must have zero missed days to be able to get the required points that would allow them to expect an evaluation. There are workers that have seen no increase in their bonus in three years. To further complicate things, supervisors grant permissions on a discretionary fashion.

Rumors that Alcoa would fire en masse only to rehire using a 30-day contract system. Lay offs without legal severance payments

In Macoelmex, it has been rumored that AFL will layoff workers en masse only to rehire through monthly contracts. Many workers have been dismissed recently, but apparently several of those who do not know their rights have received severance payments that do not meet the legal requirements. Curiously, workers who have suggested to be laid off with the right severance amount are not laid off! Other workers with sick leaves have been told that when they go back to work their severance checks will be ready for them to take them.

Perfect attendance bonus, from \$500 pesos every month to \$1,500 every three months

This new change would affect the workers. Currently, if a worker has two delays of more than five minutes a month, he/she loses the chance to get that bonus. Under the new system, three delays will be the maximum allowed in three months. With more than three delays, one personal leave, or one missed day, a worker will not only lose \$500, but \$1,500 pesos. The net result is that fewer workers will be able to get the bonuses. The new system will start this month and will include March and April, the bonuses scheduled to be given on May 6.

In Arneses Plant #4 manager Gustavo Valdés announced the new system in a meeting last Thursday January 20. At that meeting the workers were not allowed to raise questions, but were told that in case of having concerns, they should go to Human Resources on Monday and on an individual base. In Piedras Negras, tolerance for getting the weekly bonus is being reduced even more.

Reduction of work hours at Arneses night shift

Apparently, on January 24 a change for the night shift started to be implemented. The previous schedule from 5:00 p.m. to 2:30 a.m. changed to 5:00 p.m. to 1:54 a.m. That means 36 minutes less every day. Before, the workers obtained 3.13 more hours every week as compensation for the night shift. Now the workers will stop receiving approximately \$100 pesos every week. Their wages will reduce. It seems that also in Piedras Negras two hours of compensation were eliminated for the night shift workers.

Current Situation and Projections for the Alcoa plants

Based on information from Alcoa, the current situation includes the following facts and projections:

- Some production lines from Plant #1 (Harnesses), Monterrey and Torreón lost investment to the AFL plant in Honduras. In order to reduce costs and keep clients, it was decided to do a harness program there where wire was beginning to be made and now also harnesses.

- The Macoelmex warehouse did not move to Honduras, but instead was consolidated with another in Acuña.
- There have not been complete plant closures. Regarding more production lines from Macoelmex Plant #1 and harnesses from Plants #1 and #2 moving to Honduras, the company has responded by saying "we don't know". Nothing has been finalized and several scenarios still exist. But it is for sure that there will be further labor shifts. Some jobs will move to Honduras and others will come to Mexico.
- AFL will grow in the second half of 2005. In Torreón it could generate up to 900 more jobs, and in Acuña 300.
- In Harnesses it has been confirmed a 0% wage increase, and a change in the perfect attendance bonus from one to three months.
- There will not be any more mass lay-offs in any of the plants only to later rehire.

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Mexico-U.S Border Program
of the American Friends Service Committee (AFSC)



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