



How AMFA is Changing the Industry

By: Clacy Griswold, International Representative for the Teamsters Airline Division

More and more airlines are expressing their desire to send their aircraft out of the country for maintenance work. Airlines with labor contracts are mostly prohibited from further international outsourcing, but one labor organization, the Aircraft

Mechanics Fraternal Association, has been single-handedly changing the industry by granting international outsourcing agreements at the carriers they represent. This is an erosion of the craft and class, and has led to a big decrease in the safety and security of our nation's aircraft.

It started with Alaska Airlines when that carrier shut down all heavy maintenance and transferred much of that work to El Salvador.

At Northwest Airlines, AMFA was unable to prevent that carrier from its decision to send its entire fleet of 747's to China for maintenance. Since the failed strike, even more aircraft are now outsourced out of the country.

Next in line was United Airlines, where the AMFA made agreement with the carrier to allow Boeing 747 and 777 aircraft heavy maintenance visits out of the country. The company subsequently took advantage of this arrangement and began sending C-checks out of the country as well.

Southwest Airlines (SWA) has now asked AMFA for permission to send four lines of maintenance to El Salvador, to be transferred from domestic OSV's. Incomprehensibly, but with no surprise, the AMFA is negotiating with that carrier to give them permission. According to their negotiations update (which is on the AMFA web site) they are willing to give this up in order to keep existing work (already contractually protected), and to gain a union position that will work with maintenance planning. They are attempting to manipulate their membership by making the gains sound better than the losses.

For this minimal gain, they continue to shape the industry by making international outsourcing a viable and financially lucrative option for carriers.

The AMFA is well aware that maintenance performed in El Salvador is of substandard quality, yet they seek to craft an agreement to send aircraft there anyway. In April of 2005, AMFA's attorney, Lee Seham was quoted: "If 'pencil-whipping' happens in the USA, you can imagine what happens in the context of authoritarian regimes where a growing share of aircraft maintenance is being performed," Seham said. "You cannot pretend that a Chinese aircraft technician, or one in El Salvador, for that matter, has any choice but to do what he is told." (See: <http://www.citypages.com/databank/26/1272/article13199.asp>)

The Teamsters had created the SWA mechanics' agreement from scratch. Much of SWA maintenance was already farmed out when the Teamsters became certified as the mechanics' representative. The language that was developed maintained the work that was already in house, and prevented work from being moved to an international location. Some of the outsourced work was even brought in house. It is interesting to note that the AMFA did not change a word of that language when the contract became amendable and instead opted for an extension. They are now, in fact, considering another company offered extension in lieu of going into Section 6 negotiations.

The Teamsters have not allowed an increase in international outsourcing at the carriers they represent. The international outsourcing that does exist at Teamster represented carriers was already in place when they became the representative. At Continental Airlines, approximately 20% of the work and 400 jobs have been brought back in house, the furlough list has been exhausted, and new mechanics have been hired!

The Teamsters Aviation Mechanics Coalition has taken on the fight against international outsourcing, and has made the commitment to fight it at all levels of the union, from top to bottom. This is something that will benefit the entire industry. However, the AMFA is a big obstacle to this fight as they are taking the industry down the path of ever increasing international outsourcing. This is one of the major reasons why the AMFA needs to be replaced at United Airlines. When it comes time to vote, vote Teamsters to help save your jobs and your industry.

The Teamsters Aviation Mechanics Coalition has taken on the fight against international outsourcing, and has made the commitment to fight it at all levels of the union, from top to bottom. This is something that will benefit the entire industry.



Actions Speak Louder Than Words—AMFA!

By: Rob Rendler, UAL mechanic, San Francisco

we mechanics find ourselves with a choice: Do we choose AMFA or the Teamsters? Let's look at just a little history of how mechanics have fared thus far.

Remember: Actions speak louder than words. Everything UAL has done has had a willful disregard for us as mechanics and employees of UAL, Inc. Remember the EFLOP—where managers and above received bonuses in the tens of thousands, while we sacrificed and were only offered a 3 percent mid term wage adjustment.

July 2003: AMFA is certified as OUR representative. UAL is still in bankruptcy and needs approximately 180 million dollars in annual savings from the AMFA-represented employees. Simultaneously, UAL is crafting THE financial plan; Gershwin 1,2,3,4,5,6,7,8... which puts a cap on AMFA mechanics at about 5,600. (Advantage: United)

Bankruptcy and the pension termination: UAL, Inc. could not possibly survive with such a large pension burden? In fact, annual payments were around \$500 million. So after a very soft travel market in 1999-2000 and the 9/11 tragedies, United closed down the Indy & Oakland maintenance centers. They also stopped making payments to the pension plan that were required by law under the Employee Retirement Income Security Act (ERISA), knowing that the Pension Benefit Guaranty Corporation (PBGC) would have to step in and assume the pension liability at UAL. (Advantage: United)

777 & 747 HMV's are allowed to leave the United States for the first time! This will have a negative long-term impact on us. (AMFA negotiated; Advantage: United)

Utility and Computer Techs wiped out! Entire classifications are gone. Again, it's about cost savings. (AMFA negotiated; Advantage: United)

PW2000/4000 piece parts farmed out to Chromalloy Pratt & Whitney. I was Jet Shop Area Rep at the time that the PW4000 deal was made and AMFA was included. I was trying to assure that no one in the unprotected areas would be involuntarily laid off. But there was no strategy and no fight from above in AMFA. (Advantage: United)

Greg Hall/AMFA Local 9 preached the core competencies we would concentrate on: Engines, Components & Line

Maintenance, but where's OV? OV is stuck at the three C-checks called out for in the CBA.

The Transport Workers Union (TWU) and American Airlines seem to have an unprecedented union/management partnership. Their members still have their pensions. Remember, actions speak louder than words. Sorry Local 9 leadership; you can talk about us being an MRO all you want but that doesn't make it so; if it walks like a duck and quacks like a duck, it's a duck.

Blending begins at LAX, ORD, etc. AMFA National says it's "a local issue"? Former ALR Dave Frizzel goes to LAX to investigate, but that's it. What happened to the grievance? (Advantage: United)

In early 2006, UAL signed a contract with Panasonic for in-flight entertainment (**more blending**).

Local 9 President Joe Prisco implies in his report that unions that stand rigid and don't adapt become extinct, further implying that we must allow the takeover of the base. Our CBA covers sales/leasebacks, BUT UAL and NewCo must have a different plan since we are being primed for a vote from both sides... collective good, more LEAN leads at SFO?

Prisco tries to make a point, implying in his report that ALPA & ILWU did not stand rigid, but were receptive to change at their respective time of industry change. In ALPA's case, the battle was two-man versus three-man crews. At the time, in the seventies, ALPA lobbied the FAA hard to reject the two-man flight deck as unsafe, and because of this the 737 was put through unprecedented testing by the FAA to certify a two-man cockpit (Delta just got their pilots to agree to a two-man DC-9 flight deck). ALPA even picketed in Washington D.C. over this issue. They were looking out for their members, not corporate interests.

ALPA negotiated a LOA with UAL, Inc. in March 2007, getting back for their members some of what was lost in bankruptcy. AMFA at the same period was negotiating its own LOA with UAL—not to get back for its members, BUT to give back. The "apprentice technician" (AMST) that would top out at \$18.00/hr, is a C-scale.

It seems AMFA is listening to UAL's woes since UAL only has 5 billion in the bank! AMFA feels compelled to help by creating a whole new class of cheap labor, and unlike the original apprentice language, these so-called apprentices will never see mechanics' scale, nor does UAL want them to. Why would anyone even entertain this idea?

Haven't WE helped enough? Wasn't LEAN supposed to be the silver bullet to get customers knocking down our doors with work? AMFA's mantra of Stability, Trust & Cooperation must have fallen on deaf ears.

Remember: Actions speak louder than words. AMFA will tell us that we're lucky to have jobs.

It's time for a change... it's time for the TEAMSTERS!

Dedicated Mechanics Working Together to Protect Our Jobs

By: Dominick Chierico,
13-year UAL Building Maintenance Mechanic, Newark, NJ



My name is Dominick Chierico. I am a Building Maintenance Mechanic at EWR (Newark Liberty Airport in Newark, NJ) and have been with United for 13 years this coming July. I have successfully completed training to enable me to hold a universal recovery license for refrigeration and a black seal license to operate and repair boilers. I love my job and I want to keep it.

Our Building Maintenance Department at EWR works to maintain a 30-year-old plus conveyor system, jet ways and various building maintenance responsibilities, some as simple as changing a light bulb to a full-blown construction project of building an office. Our job includes rough construction, studs, electrical, dry wall, door openings, cove base molding, taping and spackling joints, painting and carpeting and installing ceiling tracks and tiles. We do our work in a timely and professional manner. We are all qualified to do the work United has hired us to do.

United has lost sight of the fact that we are there to help the company be successful. The money spent on outside contractors that are hired by United would be better spent on hiring more building maintenance mechanics. Once a contractor is finished with what they were hired to do, United then pays building maintenance to clean up all the problems the contractors have created. This could take months of work to complete and our everyday work suffers. Another problem is when we start the cleanup process it costs United more to pay for the same material all over again. No one inspects what the outside contractors do or holds them accountable. When we do the work in-house, we hold ourselves accountable for the work and United does not have to worry because we are the company.

I am always looking for ways to take on additional work. One way is repairing other airline jet ways and conveyor systems. For example, during the 2007 Thanksgiving holiday rush, the Air Canada jet way broke down on Wednesday evening just before the start of the holiday weekend. Air Canada's contractor told them that they wouldn't be out to fix the jet way before Thursday (Thanksgiving Day) and when they came out would have to charge them the holiday rate. My lead and I spoke with the Air Canada representative and offered to repair it immediately. He spoke with his station manager who approved for us to move forward with the repair. As a result, the Air Canada jet way was repaired within the hour at a normal rate, not the holiday rate. Our only connection to

Air Canada is that their jet ways are in our terminal. The building maintenance staff works really hard to make sure United stays successful.

When I started at EWR on April 21, 1995, there were 21 mechanics, and now we have 11. United management refuses to put on additional mechanics that they recognize we need. Through their own admission, as they have told us on numerous occasions, we cannot handle the work we already have. I would like to see the Teamsters come in and rectify this problem.

I think with the clout and professional negotiators the Teamsters have, we can prove to United that we are an asset to the company.

AMFA has made claims of protecting our work in building maintenance. I've read the contract and the only language I see is language protecting our work in the hubs only, not in the line stations. **It seems to me that the only thing AMFA accomplished here is giving United the wiggle room to contract out the work in line stations.** So I guess I'm paying AMFA union dues to protect someone else's job, but not my own. It is time for change. The possibility does exist that we at the line stations could be on the outside looking in while the hub stations maintain their jobs and know where their next paycheck is coming from.

With the Teamsters, I see us all working together for equal representation, in both the hubs and the line stations. I see the Teamsters negotiating a well-rounded contract which will find an even ground on wages and **JOB SECURITY**. We can all stand together and fight United's mission to contract out everything we do, which is destroying the company and our family's livelihoods in the process. From what I have seen, if you prove to United they can do without staff, even for a minute, they will move quickly to do without staff on a permanent basis. We have stood behind United when the airline was in financial trouble. We have taken pay cuts so the airline could stay afloat. So now it is time for United to stand behind us and realize we are an invaluable asset to the company.

I would like to finish up with the fact that there is going to be an election for representation. **It is our duty to vote.** The last thing we need in this time of change is to give United the upper hand. We need to show solidarity and get out and vote. This is the most important thing we need to do to secure our future at United.