

ELECTED UNOPPOSED



From right to left: Cdes. Vincent Cabrera (President); Mario Als (Dep. President); Don Devenish (1st Vice President); Natasha Edwards (2nd Vice President); Trevor Johnson (General Secretary); Denise Britton Peters (Dep. General Secretary) and Sonja Noray (Asst. General Secretary)



TRUSTEES: From left: Cdes. Charmaine Alleyne; Deborah Barrow-Frederick and Jason Brown (seated)

Cde. Hayden Bruce, Supervisor of Elections reported to the General Council meeting on Thursday 25th September, 2014 that at the close of Nominations for the Election of Central Executive Committee Members for the 2014- 2018 term on Friday 12th September, 2014, the following officers were elected unopposed:

- PRESIDENT - Cde. Vincent Cabrera
- GENERAL SECRETARY - Cde. Trevor Johnson
- DEPUTY PRESIDENT - Cde. Mario Als
- 1st VICE PRESIDENT - Cde. Don Devenish
- 2nd VICE PRESIDENT - Cde. Natasha Edwards
- DEPUTY GENERAL SECRETARY - Cde. Denise Britton-Peters
- ASSISTANT GENERAL SECRETARY - Cde. Sonja Noray

Having accepted the Report, the General Council then unanimously appointed Cdes. Jason Brown (BIGWU Office), Charmaine Alleyne (PALiG) and Deborah Barrow-Frederick (Central Bank) as Trustees in

accordance with Rule 11 of our constitution. For the very first time in our history, there is an equal number of men and women on the Central Executive Committee. The democracy of our union allowed the membership to directly decide who are their leaders including who is the President and who is to manage our finances. This is but one step in ensuring that the union is firmly in the hands of the membership.

This democratic process will now be followed by another exercise in democracy—the 6TH BIENNIAL CONFERENCE OF DELEGATES. This will be held on Saturday 25th October, 2014 and Sunday 26th October, 2014. The Biennial Conference is made up of the General Council and delegates from each branch of the Union elected on the basis of one (1) delegate for every fifty (50) members or part thereof. The Biennial Conference of Delegates is the supreme authority of the Union. Its functions are:

- to determine the policies of the Union ;
- to receive and consider reports on the activities and the audited accounts of the Union for the preceding years,
- to consider and direct the General Council to address the budget and

activities of the Union for the ensuing year,

- to consider and determine such other matters as may be brought before it, including resolutions from the Branches, the Central Executive or the General Council, and if and when required, to amend the Rules of the Union.

The Conference of Delegates will discuss: the report from the General Secretary which includes reports on Education and Research; Grievances/Trade Disputes; Negotiations; Organising New Members; Women's Activities; Youth Activities and Audited Accounts

These two great exercises in democracy show clearly that the workers collectively have the power not only to directly elect their leaders but also to determine Union Policy. Now that's Democracy. It is consistent with the meaning of the two Greek words from which it came: (demos)—people and (kratis) – power/ rule meaning rule by the people. In our union, the workers don't just vote for leaders, they govern their organisation through their participation in their Branches, General Council and Biennial Conference.

BIGWU PRESIDENT HONOURED



BIGWU President, Vincent Cabrera receiving the CLR James Award for his contribution to Labour

BIGWU congratulates our President, Cde. Vincent Cabrera, who was honoured with the CLR James Award by the Cipriani College of Labour and Co-operative Studies at its Fourth Annual Labour Day Awards Ceremony on Sunday 29th June, 2014. Master of Ceremonies, Ian Daniel highlighted to the audience our President's embodiment of the spirit of Labour Day and his contribution to the historic struggle of workers for social justice with these words:

" Vincent has held many vital leadership positions in the Labour Movement. He continues to serve as the President of BIGWU. He has been the General Secretary of the

National Trade Union Centre and a founding member of the Joint Trade Union Movement. He has represented the country at the Annual Conferences of the International Labour Organisation (ILO) in Geneva.

Vincent has also been a member of the Registration, Recognition and Certification Board, a member of the National AIDS Coordinating Committee, a member of the Standing Tripartite Committee and a member of the Industrial Relations Advisory Committee. Vincent also served as a member of the ILO 144 Tripartite Committee. He has served on state boards such as FCB, Exim Bank, National Broadcasting Network

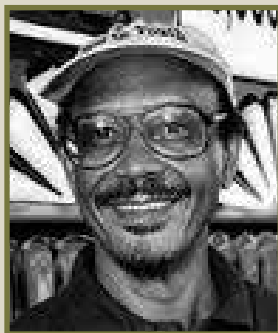
and the Management Development Centre.

Since 1970, Vincent has been a political activist. He was a member of the left wing February 18th Movement, a founding member of the UNITED LABOUR FRONT (ULF), a Temporary Senator and now he is the Chairperson of the Movement for Social Justice (MSJ).

In 2009, he received a Bachelor of Arts Degree in Labour Studies from the Cipriani College of Labour and Cooperative Studies where he serves as a member of the part-time academic faculty."

MICHAEL ALS GETS CHACONIA SILVER MEDAL (posthumously)

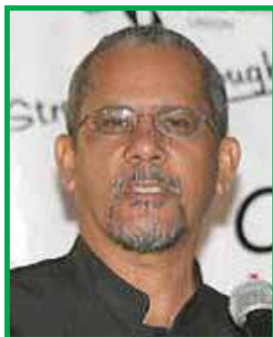
Founding father of BIGWU, Cde. Michael Als was awarded (posthumously) our country's Chaconia Silver Medal for Community Service. Cde. Als, who was founder and Union President from 1974 to 1986, was more than a Trade Union Leader. He was also a political activist, Senator, poet and author. He was a community activist and the Founder and Projects Director of the Toco Foundation,



His Daughter Keisha Als receives the award from His Excellency, President Carmona

Overview of Negotiations

by Mario Als, Deputy President



Since our last Report in the LABOUR INSIGHT earlier this year, we are pleased to provide an update on the state of negotiations at our various branches.

The union is now in the midst of some 33 negotiations at various stages while preparing proposals for another 13 Collective Agreements.

ing, parties have agreed to explore other providers of a worker pension plan existing on the parameters of a 10 % monthly contribution of the worker's salary (1/3 by the worker and 2/3 by the employer) with the plan being retroactive to the employment date of the organization's current longest serving worker.

NEGOTIATIONS SETTLED

• Aero Services Credit Union

A first Collective Agreement has been settled with the workers getting a 17% salary increase.

• Textel Credit Union Co-Operative Society Limited 01:07:13 – 30:06:16

Salaries were increased by 10% following consolidation of 50% of the previous COLA of \$200.00. A new COLA of \$175.00, \$200.00 and \$225.00 was agreed for each successive year. Workers also benefit from a performance incentive of approximately 1% on their anniversary date. There was a slight improvement in qualification for the highest tier of vacation. Workers will now also receive a severance package upon retirement.

• Teachers' Credit Union Co-Operative Society Limited 01:01:11 – 31:12:13

These negotiations were resolved in April 2014 and revised salaries averaging 13 per cent and COLA of \$200.00 per month applied as of May, 2014.

• Coates Brothers 01:01:13 - 31:12:15

Features included a 15% increase in salary plus COLA of \$300.00 and improvements to the long service award.

• Republic Bank Limited Bargaining Unit 3 01:06:12 – 31:05:15

Salaries have been increased by 13% after the consolidation of Cola plus a new Cola of \$150 per month and improvements in Travelling Allowances, Subsistence and Uniforms.

• Port Employees Credit Union Co-Operative Society Limited 01:06:12 – 31:05:15

The Agreement for this period has been settled in principle. After the consolidation of COLA a 15% increase evenly spread over the three year period will be applied with a new COLA of \$140.00 in year 1 and 2 and \$150.00 in the final year. The subsistence payment has increased from \$32.00 to \$42.00 and payments via the severance formula have increased by ¼ month salary on each level/tier. The delay in signing is due to the inability to effect the newly agreed clause of Pensions due to the removal (CUNA) of the provider. Notwithstand-

NEGOTIATIONS TO BEGIN

- **Transcorp Credit Union Co-Operative Society Limited**
- **Eastern Commercial Lands (Trading as Tru Valu Limited Bargaining Unit # 4 – Monthly Paid Supervisors)**
- **Solid Waste Management Company Limited (SWM-COL) - This is for a first Collective Agreement**

B-LATERAL NEGOTIATIONS IN PROGRESS

Negotiations for nineteen (19) Bargaining Units are currently in progress. Of this amount, two (2) are for a first Collective Agreement.

- **Agricola Credit Union Co-Operative Society Limited**
- **City of Port of Spain Credit Union Co-Operative Society Limited**—Discussions have begun to engage a Salary Comparator Exercise to bring salaries at COPOS more in line with the market.
- **Export Import Bank of Trinidad and Tobago**
- **First Caribbean International Bank Limited - This is for a first Collective Agreement**
- **Fire Services Credit Union Co-Operative Society Limited**
- **New India Assurance Company Limited**
- **Public Services Credit Union Co-Operative Society Limited**
- **Republic Bank Limited Bargaining Units 1 And 2**
- **Rhand Credit Union Co-Operative Society Limited**
- **SFCCU Credit Union Co-Operative Society Limited**
- **Trinidad and Tobago Building and Loan Association**—This is for a first Collective Agreement
- **Usine Ste Madeleine Credit Union Co-Operative Society Limited**
- **Smith Robertson and Company Limited**
- **Environmental Management Authority - This is for a first Collective Agreement**
- **CCN TV6**
- **Daily News Limited**
- **Repsol E&P Limited**

PROPOSALS BEING PREPARED

Proposals are being prepared for thirteen (13) Collective Agreements as follows:

- **BGWU Credit Union Co-operative Society Limited**
- **Deposit Insurance Corporation**
- **Eastern Credit Union Co-operative Society Limited**
 - Clerical
 - Supervisory
 - Managerial
- **SECU Credit Union Co-operative Society Limited**
- **Tru Valu Supermarket Limited Weekly Paid Bargaining Unit**
- **Trinidad Express Newspapers Limited**
- **Guardian Media Limited**
- **Institute of Chartered Accountants of Trinidad and Tobago (ICATT)** - This is for a first Collective Agreement.
- **Trinidad And Tobago Cancer Society**
- **National Trade Union Centre**
- **Trinidad And Tobago Unified Teachers Association**

NEGOTIATIONS AT THE MINISTRY OF LABOUR

The union is currently handling four (4) negotiations at the Ministry. These are as follows:

- **Public Services Association**
- **Trinidad and Tobago Police Service Social and Welfare Association 01:06:11 – 31:05:14**

After one conciliation meeting at the Ministry the Employer submitted counter proposals for the first time which included a salary increase of 0/0/0

- **Agostini Insurance Brokers Limited**
- **Progressive Credit Union Co-operative Society Limited**

NEGOTIATIONS BEFORE THE INDUSTRIAL COURT

Eight (8) negotiations are being pursued at the Industrial Court. These are as follows:

- **Business Development Corporation / Export TT Company Limited**
- **First Citizens Bank Limited**

Negotiations commenced in August 2012 and a number of non-cost items have been settled. Outstanding are the cost items and in the main salaries and COLA. During the course of negotiations a salaries comparison was carried out which showed that grades 5 to 7 were far below the market between \$1,000.00 to \$1,500.00..

• **AIC Securities**

The Company has decided to reduce the level of its operations with most of its former portfolio now being performed by JMMB. Two employees will be kept on for some time before the entire company is wound up. The union and the employer have entered into talks aimed at settlement of a severance package.

• **Trinidad and Tobago Mortgage Finance Company Limited.**



Cde. Catherine Robinson, Branch President, TTMF: We are informed that the management was willing to give the workers a 15% increase but the Minister of Finance said no.

• **La Horquetta Regional Complex**

• **Cipriani College of Labour & Cooperative Studies**

01:01:08 – 31:12:10

All matters have been settled with the exception of salary increases. The Union has based its position on the existence of research done by the Union and a compensation survey done by the employer to argue for a twenty three percent increase for the workers of what is a tertiary level educational institute. The employer had held steadfastly to a five percent salary offer and has now advanced a nine percent offer to the Union.



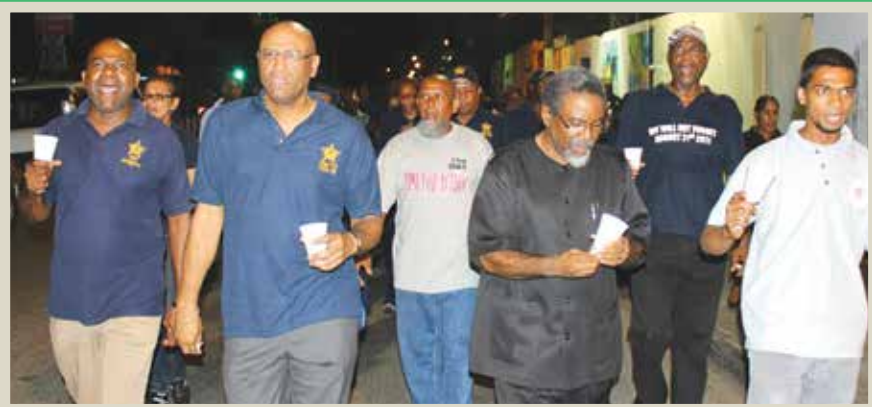
Cde. Darren Antoine, Branch Officer: Workers in the Cipriani Labour College of all places are badly underpaid when compared to other Tertiary Institutions

• **Export Centres Company Limited**

Recognition was granted at ECCL in September 2009 and negotiations were in conciliation at the Court as at time of preparation of this report. ECCL is a State Enterprise, salaries are low and the turnover of CEO's high, causing repeated interruptions in a negotiations already challenged by the strictures of line Ministry / IMC guidelines.

• **St. Jude's School For Girls**

HIGHLIGHTS OF RECENT EVENTS



“Jericho” March - June 27th 2014 - For seven times, trade unionists, activists and concerned citizens of Trinidad and Tobago walked around the Office of the Prime Minister, St. Clair.

They demanded good governance and better leadership. They denounced the Retiring Allowances (Legislative Service) (Amendment) and the Judges’ Salaries and Pensions (Amendment) Bill.



BIGWU officers join with thousands in JTUM's national march – “Take a stand for T&T”



RBC workers picket RBC HeadQuarters, St. Clair, to protest against retrenchment and stalling the union's claim for Recognition



CLICO AND BAIC workers demand decent separation packages



Mother's Day Raffle Winner Marilyn Rodney of FC branch receives her Samsung 50" Smart TV from Branch President Cde. Hayden Bruce



General Secretary, Cde. Trevor Johnson (R) chairs a UNI Finance Committee meeting in Paraguay



Workers of the Teachers' Credit Union protested for their backpay outside the Centre of Excellence, Macoya where the Credit Union was holding its Annual General Meeting.

ONE MOVEMENT ... ONE STRUGGLE



Said Iqbal, head of the Confederation of Indonesian Trade Unions, speaks in front of workers during rally demanding an increase in salaries at Pulogadung Industrial Estate in Jakarta.



T&TEC San F'do Workers Protest Suspensions of 30 Workers



MTS Workers Demand Job Security



Immigration officers concerned over unsafe and unhealthy working environment

BIGWU IN FYZABAD ON LABOUR DAY



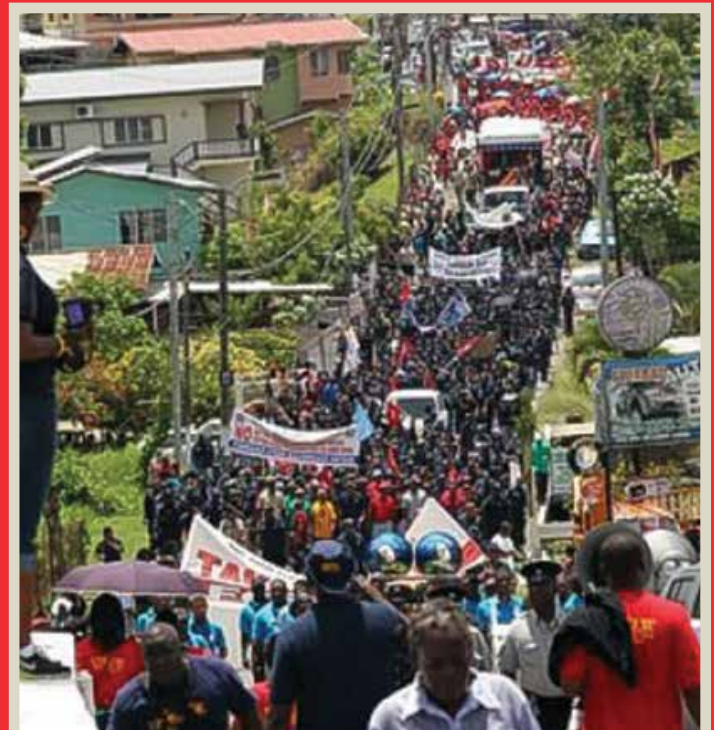
This is the class that fought against British Colonialism and for Independence and The right to vote in 1937- The Working Class



Cde. Melissa Aguilera, SWMCOL Branch: Next year we bringing more people and we own rhythm section



Cde. Natalie Rodriguez, T&T POSTAL UNION: Pleased with the turnout of postal workers



This is the movement that has improved the standard of living of workers and their families

HARSH AND OPPRESSIVE

Harsh, oppressive and contrary to the principles of good industrial relations! That's how the Industrial Court described the dismissal of Janelle Jones who was dismissed orally by Trinidad Style Limited in February 2011 in the eighth (8) month of her pregnancy.

BIGWU Labour Relations Officer, Cde. Dionyse Fernandes, successfully argued before

the Court that the worker was forced to train an OJT, after which the employer had indicated that they had no further use for the worker since the OJT could now perform the job.

The Court found that the workers' dismissal was related to her pregnancy and awarded the worker the sum of one hundred thousand dollars (\$100,000.00).

LABOUR INSIGHT agrees with all our readers who are incensed by such an outrageous breach of the Maternity Protection Act. Do you know that there are thousands and thousands of workers like Janelle Jones, who are not represented by any trade union and whose rights and labour are daily abused at the workplace. You can help them by getting them to join the union. Let us organize the unorganized

MORE NEW BARGAINING UNITS



Leaders of the Joint Trade Union Movement picket the Recognition Board

Notwithstanding the long delays at the Registration, Recognition and Certification Board, we continue to grow as we have won four more Bargaining Units. These are:

- Aero Services Credit Union
- Environmental Management Authority (EMA)
- Ansa McAl Group Employees Credit Union.
- Institute of Chartered Accountants.

However, the Union still has thirteen (13) applications for Recognition that are yet to be determined by the Recognition Board. These are as follows:

- ALGICO Supervisors (now Pan-American Life) (October 2009). Clarification meeting held, awaiting further meeting as a result of new structure.

- ASCO (January 2010) Clarification meetings held. Awaiting board to determine bargaining units.
- British American Supervisors. (30th November 2012.) Waiting on board to determine bargaining units.
- RBC (presently at clarification stage). The President has assumed full responsibility for this claim.
- Occupational Safety and Health Authority. (June 2011). Waiting for the establishment of bargaining units.
- Trinidad Hotels. (June 2013). Waiting for the establishment of bargaining units
- Seafood Industry Development Company. (June 2013). Clarification meeting held.

- National Entrepreneurship Development Company. (NEDCO). (June 2013). Clarification meeting held February 2014.
- Unemployment Relief Programme Managers - Claim submitted May 2011.
- Seamen & Waterfront Workers Trade Union (SWWTU) (July 2013). Issue has arisen about whether or not recognition issued to NUGFW covers workers. Decision pending if to continue claim.
- Kenson Production Services Limited. (September 2013).
- Lab Medica Services Limited. (March 2013).
- Fire Services Association Of Trinidad & Tobago (Second Division) (22nd May 2014)

The Minister of Labour had promised to amend the IRA so as to expedite this process. After four (4) years, he has done nothing. But overnight they can amend the Constitution to stay in power, overnight they can pass legislation to make their pensions higher than their final salary; overnight was Section 34. It is clear for all to see that workers would have to rely on themselves to bring about laws that are in their interest. In fact, readers are asked to note well Rule 2(b) of the Union's Constitution which mandates us to:

"promote and to protect the interests and welfare of its members, by representation for fair remuneration and other employment conditions, that would ensure an adequate standard of living befitting the dignity of the human person and commensurate with the levels of responsibility and all other conditions relevant to the progressive interests of workers in general and its members in particular"

SECRET TRADE DEAL PUTS PUBLIC SERVICES AT RISK AROUND THE WORLD

DO YOU KNOW ABOUT THE TRADES IN SERVICES AGREEMENT (TISA)?

DO YOU KNOW THAT A GROUP OF 50 COUNTRIES (representing a 70% share of the world's trade in services) ARE SECRETLY NEGOTIATING THE TISA?

According to Public Services International General Secretary Rosa Pavanelli, Sharan Burrow, ITUC General Secretary, UNI Global Union and the European Trade Union Confederation, **this deal will open up a wide range of public services to be sold permanently for private profit.**

- This massive trade deal will permanently privatise public health care, child care, postal, broadcasting, water, power, transport and other services. Where private service delivery has failed, governments can never return these services to public hands.
- The TISA will also restrict a government's right to regulate stronger standards in the public's interest. For

example, it will affect environmental regulations.

- The TISA will specifically limit the ability of governments to regulate the financial services industry at exactly the time when the global economy is still recovering from a crisis caused by financial deregulation.
- "This agreement is all about making it easier for corporations to make profits. The aim of public services should not be to make profits for large multinational corporations.

The TISA negotiations include Australia, Canada, Chile, Chinese Taipei, Colombia, Costa Rica, European Union (28

Member States), Hong Kong, Iceland, Israel, Japan, Mexico, New Zealand, Norway, Pakistan, Republic of Korea, Switzerland, and the United States

BIGWU supports the call of the international trade union community for a reversal of the Trade in Services Agreement which will pauperise the working people while fattening the pockets of the super wealthy.



Anti-TISA Demo in Geneva



Our Union does more than pursue workers' grievances. We do more than negotiate salary increases for workers. We look after the mental and social well being of workers too! On the occasion of International Youth Day, our Youth Committee held a Seminar on Thursday 28th August, 2014 on "MENTAL HEALTH AND YOUTH".

Young Branch Officers were trained on how to treat young workers who suffer from various mental health problems such as anxiety disorder, stress and depression etc. They were also taught the use of therapeutic laughter. LABOUR INSIGHT congratulates the Youth Committee on this important initiative in preparing these Branch Officers to provide help to young workers at the workplace.



Believe it or not! Therapeutic Laughter can ensure good mental health.

COURT AWARDS \$1M; \$2m

The union continues its tradition of winning a large percentage of its cases that are referred to the Industrial Court. This includes significant judgments on the rights

of workers and in some cases the highest award for damages (\$2,050,000.00; \$1.1m; \$1,083,024.00)

The Industrial Court, has awarded \$1,083,024.00 to Charles Branche, former Manager of Sport Services at the Sport Company of Trinidad and Tobago. He was unfairly dismissed which casted a cloud of suspicion over the worker.

In another judgment, a worker from Royal Bank who was also unfairly dismissed after 10 years of faithful service was awarded \$1.1m with an upward adjustment to the worker's pension.

In addition, two (2) workers who were dismissed because of their age by Repsol E&P T&T were awarded \$2,050,000.00.