

**Ally to Win:
Black Community Leaders and
SEIU's L.A. Security Unionization Campaign¹**

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In January 2008, more than four thousand security officers in Los Angeles ratified a union contract providing for a 40 percent pay raise over five years, as well as health benefits and job security (SEIU SOULA 2008). This was a milestone in the Service Employees International Union's (SEIU) national campaign to organize the security industry.

SEIU cultivated black community support for security unionization in Los Angeles by building relationships with independently powerful black community leaders that had their own institutional interest in high profile mobilization of black workers, and sharing campaign decision making power with them.² I argue that, as part of a comprehensive campaign strategy, this alliance provided the SEIU with a crucial source of leverage to win union recognition and a first contract for Los Angeles's predominantly black office building security officers. This chapter analyzes the trajectory of the multiyear campaign and explores its broader implications, with a particular focus on how nonwork (in this case, race-based) identities can provide vital leverage for organizing low-wage service sector workers.³

Like the janitorial industry, which SEIU successfully

organized in Los Angeles and elsewhere in the 1980s and 1990s, the security industry relies on subcontractors from whom building owners purchase services. As in its earlier janitorial organizing campaigns, the union targeted key real estate interests as well as the security firms themselves, recognizing that the building owners would be the real decision-makers regarding unionization. Indeed, that the union already had long-established relationships with those building owners in Los Angeles through its janitorial work was a potential advantage in the later effort to organize the security officers. But when SEIU first launched its L.A. security campaign in 2002, the employers were far from receptive. Workers who wore a union button, or who attended a union meeting, were regularly threatened or transferred. Some contractors gave workers preemptive raises, while others invited independent security officers' unions to approach their workers in an effort to circumvent the SEIU drive.⁴

Moreover, there were some striking differences between janitors and security officers that posed special challenges for the security organizing effort. Jono Shaffer, the SEIU staffer who led both the L.A. Justice for Janitors (JfJ) campaign and the subsequent security officers drive, explained that when the JfJ effort began in the late 1980s, the union had a core group of already unionized janitors on which to draw. "Most of our work on the janitorial side involved uniting relatively small, strategic numbers of non-union workers with large numbers of union members in a common industry-wide fight," he recalled. "We

couldn't do that on the security campaign, because we didn't have union members to surround the security officers with. And if we pulled the janitors out, they didn't look like security officers.⁵

According to a 2006 study commissioned by SEIU, most security officers employed in L.A.'s major office buildings had little training and, prior to unionization, were paid an average of \$8.50/hour. Turnover rates were high, with median job tenure of less than a year. Almost 70 percent of the workers in these buildings were black (LAANE 2006).⁶ And because security is a 24/7 industry with rolling shifts and no large physical concentrations of workers, union organizing is especially challenging. Security officers are under constant surveillance and therefore easy for antiunion supervisors to monitor; they typically work in isolation - stationed far apart, and assigned breaks at different times - with little opportunity for on-the-job interaction.

To meet these challenges, SEIU deployed its signature comprehensive campaign approach perfected in previous organizing drives. As in the earlier JfJ organizing, SEIU adopted an industrywide strategy, simultaneously targeting the five security contractors that comprised 80 percent of the market in large commercial L.A. real estate (Securitas; Allied Barton; Guard Systems; Universal Protective Services; and American Commercial Security Services). All of these firms except the L.A. - based Guard Systems were already unionized with SEIU in northern California. Early on, these five contractors all signed

prerecognition agreements pledging to recognize the union if the other contractors and the building owners agreed.

The security campaign relied on the close coordination of strategic research, community alliance building, public relations, and worker organizing to gain leverage on the building owners. The research uncovered building owners' vulnerabilities, the community allies attacked those vulnerabilities, the union's public relations staff secured news coverage, security officers participated in actions, and thousands of them signed unionization cards. As Shaffer explained:

In order for workers to win improvements we have to understand . . . "What do they [the building owners] care about?" not "What do we care about?" And that's a paradigm shift for most of us because we spend our time listening to workers and what they care about, probably not what's going to get the attention of the other side. So what the research team does is know that, find that out, live inside their heads. And then that helps us choose what to do. And operationally, we've always, as part of our approach, had research, community, and communications run as a very integrated team. . . . It's not like research is off in a separate place, doing its corporate campaign by itself. . . . There's a steer and drive separation, which is some people pull the string back and let the arrow go, and the other people figure out where it should be aimed.⁷

Given the composition of the security workforce, SEIU believed that building an alliance with black community leaders could prove pivotal to this multifaceted organizing effort. But this presented a challenge in its own right, thanks in part to longstanding mistrust of the SEIU janitors' union in the black community, which was rooted in the history of ethnic succession in the building services industry. As black community leaders

often pointed out, until the 1970s, most L.A. janitors had been black. In those days many were also SEIU members, earning good pay and benefits. But as the building service industry was restructured in the 1970s and 1980s, the union lost power and black workers were replaced by a low-wage nonunion immigrant workforce. In the 1990s, SEIU's JfJ campaign restored unionism to the janitorial sector, but by then the workforce was largely Latino. In the union's ranks, recent immigrants from Mexico and Central America, many of them undocumented, had replaced black janitors.

Many black leaders were troubled by this history. For example, Reverend Norman S. Johnson, pastor of the First New Christian Church, and former executive director of the L.A. Southern Christian Leadership Conference (SCLC), who played a key role in the security campaign, recalled in an interview:

I've heard stories over and over again of, at one time, being a janitor was a good paying job with benefits, protections, and so forth. I understand that [Supervisor] Yvonne Braithwaite Burke's father, he was a janitor, worked as a janitor, and was able to feed his family, educate his children, and all of that. But that was undermined with the influx of Latino workers. And so . . . African Americans pretty much felt that they had been pushed to the periphery in the labor movement.⁸

This was not only a statement about the past but a concern about the future. Would SEIU prove to be a trustworthy partner? Some community leaders blamed the deunionization of black janitors on employers but still blamed the union for failing to defend black jobs. Reverend Eric Lee, who succeeded Johnson as head of the L.A. SCLC, put it this way:

It was fundamentally the corporate strategy of undermining

working class people by bringing in another [group of] low-wage working class people to break the union. And the union got caught with their pants down on that. They did not respond effectively with that.⁹

This time around, many community leaders asked, would SEIU do what was required to protect the interests of black workers?

Beyond these historically rooted tensions, to win the support of black community leaders for the security organizing drive, the SEIU needed to persuade them that the fruits of a successful campaign would be genuinely shared, rather than simply being reaped by the union. The SEIU stood to gain a new membership base, accompanied by new dues revenue as well as increased economic and political clout. But what would black community leaders get in exchange for their support for the security organizing drive? Finding a way to offer them some tangible institutional advantage was critical, especially in view of the chronic resource shortages black community institutions face.

Forging the Alliance

From the inception of the L.A. security campaign, SEIU aimed to draw deep and sustained participation from black community leaders. In the initial campaign proposal he developed in 1996, Jono Shaffer suggested that the union seek to "create a community identity" for the unionization campaign. He wrote:
[Security] is the only private sector growth industry in Los Angeles which employs a large percentage of African American workers. The campaign will provide SEIU . . . the opportunity of opening untapped areas of community and political support. . . . We have often backed into this piece as an afterthought. I think that we need to build it

in as a core component from the outset this time. (Shaffer 1996)

In early 2002, the union hired Lola Smallwood Cuevas to conduct preliminary research for the campaign. A black woman with roots in Oakland, and a former journalist at the Chicago Tribune, Smallwood Cuevas returned to California looking for a more activist role in the community. After a stint in campaign research, she was put in charge of community and political outreach. Drawing on SEIU Local 1877's existing relationships in South Los Angeles, she talked with people at AGENDA (Action for Grassroots Empowerment and Neighborhood Development Alternatives), Association of Community Organizations for Reform Now (ACORN), and the Community Coalition about how to build support for the security unionization campaign in the black community. All three of these organizations had a long history of engagement in grassroots organizing and direct action, have strong ties to labor, and were ready to help fight the building owners from the start. Drawing on these initial discussions, the union held a town hall meeting in the summer of 2002 to launch the campaign in the black community, with the goal of involving black elected officials and getting broader input on strategy.

There wasn't much community turnout for that first meeting at Ward AME Church, but the field organizers for the campaign had already identified several black and Latino security officers who could speak eloquently about their problems in the workplace. The many prominent black elected officials who were represented at the meeting all endorsed the campaign and

promised to support any legislative initiatives the union thought might be helpful.¹⁰ Building on this foundation, the union worked to build broader interest and support in the black community. A key breakthrough came when Smallwood Cuevas met Reverend Norman S. Johnson, at that time executive director of the L.A. SCLC. It soon became clear that Johnson had the stature and influence in the black community that the union sought.

Crucially, the interest was mutual. Not only did Johnson personally have a history of supporting the 2002 L.A. school bus drivers' strike and other labor struggles. But in 2002 the SCLC of Los Angeles was lacking a direct action program, and Johnson - its newly appointed executive director - was seeking ways to strengthen the organization in keeping with the legacy of its founder, Martin Luther King, Jr. There was a direct labor movement connection here: King had died in Memphis supporting a black sanitation workers strike, and Reverend James Lawson who organized that historic campaign, was the president of the L.A. SCLC Board that had hired Johnson.¹¹ The SEIU campaign to organize black security officers in Los Angeles offered a perfect vehicle for Johnson to advance SCLC's social justice agenda.

As Johnson got more involved, the reputation of the union campaign in the black community improved. "Lola's relationship with Norman Johnson" was crucial, Jayson Pope, then an SEIU security campaign organizer, recalled.¹² "Norman could say 'trust them on this thing.'"¹³ Pastors of the large black churches in South LA have great stature and visibility as black community

leaders. Through their congregations, they influence grassroots conversation in the community, and when they take a political stand, their positions are widely reported in the newspapers and noticed by politicians. Reverend Johnson soon recruited other influential black pastors to the security campaign, including Reverend "Chip" Murray, pastor of the five-thousand-member First AME Church, Pastor Norman Copeland of Ward AME, as well as the community action liaison at Ward - Reverend Joe Oliver.

Ministers of dozens of other black churches also endorsed the campaign and encouraged their congregations to get involved. The SCLC also helped move the campaign forward politically. For example, in the middle of a discussion with Smallwood Cuevas, Jim Franklin, Norman Johnson's assistant director at SCLC, called U.S. congresswoman Maxine Waters's cell phone and on the spot set up a meeting with her for the union.

In January 2003, the union cosponsored SCLC's annual "King Week" and jointly organized a series of actions to advance security officer unionization in celebration of Martin Luther King's birthday. The week's event's emphasized that most of the security officers were black - with more than half living in South Los Angeles - and framed the plight of security officers as an issue that affected the entire black community. Several black security officers spoke at these events about their plight, and the week culminated in the annual Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. Birthday Dinner at the downtown L.A. Biltmore Hotel, with Cornell West as the keynote speaker. Reverend Johnson later recalled SCLC's decision to make the security campaign the

central focus of this main annual event:

This is the Southern Christian Leadership Conference, and in my mind, we were doing what Dr. King would do. . . . This is not just about security officers. When you look at the fact that an overwhelming majority of them are African American, these are the working poor, they live in our communities. These are the folk that have children, that go to these schools, they are in these neighborhoods. What it is doing . . . is impoverishing . . . South LA. And so we have a community interest in this.¹⁴

The King Week activities received wide coverage in the L.A. black press (Los Angeles Bay Observer 2003; Pleasant 2003).

Following King Week, with SCLC support, the campaign held clergy breakfasts with key pastors in South Los Angeles and organized their next big action - Security Sunday - for May 15, 2003. That day involved simultaneous events at twenty large black churches in South Los Angeles, at each of which rank-and-file security officers spoke to their congregations about working conditions in the industry. Their personal stories helped draw new community support. Jono Shaffer cites the example of Larry Walker, a black security officer in his sixties, dignified, with graying hair, and always dressed sharply.

There is Larry Walker, speaking to a group of pastors, describing how until this campaign came along, he did not have self respect. He felt invisible. And this campaign helped him stand up straight in his post, feel good about who he was. I remember Joe Oliver, one of the pastors from the early days of the campaign, taking his glasses off and wiping his eyes.¹⁵

On Security Sunday, fifteen hundred parishioners from the twenty churches, almost all black, signed petitions addressed to the owners of the buildings where the security officers worked

demanding that they recognize the union and sit down to negotiate with the workers.

Around this time, Reverend Johnson began conversations with Miguel Contreras, then head of the L.A. County Federation of Labor, about how to reshape the black community's relationship with organized labor. "Miguel did not want the labor movement of Southern California to be a Latino movement. He wanted it to be a people movement," Johnson recalls. "He was sensitive that it was important that you had African American leadership, that you focused on African American issues within the labor movement."¹⁶ A number of black ministers, including reverends Johnson, Lawson, Murray, and Copeland, already had lent their support to organized labor when called on, participating in the Immigrant Workers Freedom Ride, and a variety of other efforts. But there was no attempt to consistently coordinate black community involvement with labor until the ministers brought together by the security campaign formed a group called the Clergy Labor Coalition, whose purpose was to coordinate the interests of the black community with the interests of organized labor in Los Angeles.

As the campaign progressed, security officer Larry Walker became ill and died. He had no health insurance and virtually no money. Many clergy as well as members of the black community remembered seeing Walker speak on behalf of unionization, and his death made the purpose of the campaign real for many people. Here was a security officer who had lost his life, and who might well have lived longer if the wealthy owners of the building he

protected had provided their workers with health insurance.

In early 2003, shortly after King Week, Smallwood Cuevas and Pope had a lunch meeting with Reverend James Lawson. The meeting had a tremendous impact on them and helped shape the overall strategy for the security officers' campaign. Lawson was a civil rights legend. After going to prison as a conscientious objector during the Korean War, he had traveled to India to study Gandhi's philosophy of nonviolence. He was later recruited by Martin Luther King to help organize the Civil Rights movement in Memphis, where he recruited and trained many of the future leaders of the movement, wrote the founding statement for the Student Nonviolent Coordinating Committee (SNCC), helped lead the shift of black activists toward labor rights, and helped organize the sanitation workers' strike in Memphis where King gave his famous "Mountaintop" speech and then was assassinated (Hargrove 2000). As Pope recalled, "Lawson was the granddaddy who is mentoring two younger African American folks about how to do this. So it wasn't really a business meeting that we were having. It was, you know, 'Shed some wisdom upon us!'"¹⁷ Lawson argued that denying the predominantly black security officers the right to unionize was not only a violation of their civil rights, as the union had already claimed, but that it was a racist act, and should be named as such.

From the beginning, Shaffer had argued that the security campaign had the potential to attract widespread support from the black community. But Smallwood Cuevas, working as the union's community liaison, was more skeptical. She doubted black

community leaders would ever see unionization as their own issue. After the meeting with Lawson, however, her opinion changed. Lawson provided a new perspective on the struggle: it was not simply a unionization campaign but addressed the larger historical oppression of blacks. It was not just about workers being treated unfairly but addressed the legacy of slavery and discrimination against black workers.

Plantation Capitalism

On December 10, 2003, the campaign held its first street action. A thousand protestors marched from the union offices through downtown Los Angeles. Leading the march, reverends Jesse Jackson and James Lawson, along with U.S. congresswoman Maxine Waters, soon-to-be mayor Antonio Villaraigosa, SEIU local 1877 president Mike Garcia, City Councilman Mark Ridley-Thomas, and several state assembly members carried a banner emblazoned "Security Officers United: Good Jobs for L.A." They were followed by representatives of AGENDA, Community Coalition, ACORN, SAY Yes to Children Network, the NAACP, SCLC, the Bus Riders Union, several churches including Ward AME and ASCENSION Lutheran Church, and janitors from SEIU local 1877, all in high spirits (Nguyen 2003; SEIU 2003).

The march was a turning point in the campaign, which now focused public attention on key building owners. The press release for the march identified Arden Realty, C.B. Richard Ellis, Cushman and Wakefield, Douglas Emmett, and Maguire Properties as targets and quoted Reverend Lawson saying, "By

continuing to pay poverty wages and provide few benefits, these companies are disrespecting and exploiting a workforce that is largely African-American. . . . These companies are perpetuating a cycle of economic violence against the African American community in Los Angeles" (SEIU Security 2003).

When the marchers arrived at the offices of Maguire Properties, several of the top executives came out into the street, including Senior Vice President Dan Gifford. Lawson then asked Gifford why Maguire Properties was trying to prevent security officers from unionizing, and Gifford replied that they were not doing so. Lawson said that he would follow up and arrange a meeting. Afterward, Smallwood Cuevas helped Lawson draft a letter to Robert Maguire, chairman and CEO of Maguire Properties, mentioning his conversation with Gifford, and expressing concern about the company's treatment of security officers, and his interference with the unionization effort.

Several months passed before Maguire replied to Lawson in a lengthy letter dated May 24, 2004. He defended his position as a liberal supporter of workers' rights, recalling his past support for the janitors' union. Maguire also noted that he had recently raised the pay of the security officers in his employ to a level 30 percent above that of other downtown office buildings, providing full individual health benefits as well. He started that, as a result, turnover among security officers in his buildings was very low. However, the letter also made clear that Maguire strongly opposed the unionization of the security officers by SEIU. He argued that, especially in the post-9/11

era, having janitors and security officers in the same union was a threat to security. And he cited the National Labor Relations Act's section 9(b)(3), noting

The law recognizes that there is a conflict of interest when a union represents both guard employees and non-guard employees. It has been the national labor law for over 50 years that the National Labor Relations Board will not conduct an election or certify a union in a guard unit if it also represents non-guard employees. SEIU already represents our janitorial employees. They know that they have no right to represent both janitorial and guard employees.¹⁸ (Maguire 2004; see also Kaplan 2004)

It was true that Maguire had a record of supporting worker rights. In particular, he had supported L.A. janitors' efforts to win family health insurance and wage increases. In Los Angeles County, Maguire was the only building owner never to hire nonunion janitors. Maguire even attended SEIU's contract ratification vote at the end of the 2000 janitorial strike, personally congratulating the workers on their ability to stay united and win a dramatic victory. He was the only building owner to attend. In fact, SEIU initially held back from focusing on Maguire, hopeful that he would support unionization. But when Maguire explicitly opposed the security campaign, the rest of the real estate industry followed, and SEIU and the community leaders agreed they had to fight back. Mike Garcia, president of SEIU Local 1877, rallied the janitors, most of them Latino, to the defense of the mostly black security officers. The union put its relationship with Maguire on the line, making it clear that just because Maguire had been a "friend" of the janitors, they would not sit idly by while he opposed security unionization.

The campaign turned all guns on Maguire.

On June 3, 2004, SEIU activists and their community allies staged a rally at the downtown Biltmore hotel outside a Maguire shareholders meeting. Spokesperson Peggy Moretti reiterated Maguire's position that the company "does not oppose unions or the unionization of security officers. Our issue is we believe it is a conflict to have guard employees and non-guard employees governed by one union." The union and its allies countered that this was a violation of civil rights. Why couldn't the predominantly black security officers choose which union they wanted to belong to? Thus Reverend Louis Chase of Hamilton United Methodist Church said, "Security officers have spoken, and they want to join SEIU. Maguire Properties is trying to deny them their human and civil rights to join the union of their choice. . . . Maguire Properties is turning its back on these working people from our communities" (City News Service 2004).

Meanwhile, Lawson was working on a response to the letter he received from Maguire. In his August 4, 2004, reply, he first articulated the "plantation capitalism" argument that would later become an important frame for the union's larger campaign. He charged that Maguire was denying the civil rights of the officers to join the union of their choice and thus perpetuating racism:

While we have much respect and admiration for Maguire Properties' contribution to the struggle of janitors, we are deeply disturbed that you now choose to oppose the efforts of private security officers, a largely African American workforce. You may not realize this, but by denying security officers their rights, you are continuing to support an economic system that is a vestige of 250

years of slavery in this country, which we call plantation capitalism. (Lawson et al. 2004)

Lawson explained that by allowing engineers, janitors, and other nonblack workers in his buildings to join the union of their choice while denying predominantly black security officers that right, Maguire was perpetuating the black economic marginalization. Lawson acknowledged the wage and benefit improvements that security officers in Maguire's buildings had received, but pointed out that these improvements had come only after the unionization campaign was in motion. Further, the letter noted that notwithstanding Section 9(b)(3), SEIU already represented more than twenty-two thousand security officers nationwide - more than any other union - and that none had used NLRB election processes. Along with Lawson, three other prominent L.A. black clergy - Reverend Cecil Murray of First AME Church, Reverend William M. Campbell of Mt. Gilead Baptist Church, and Reverend Norman D. Copeland of Ward AME - signed the letter.

The New Guard

Even as the union began to focus its campaign strategy more explicitly on the issue of racism, the campaign's staffing was in flux. In the fall of 2004, after helping Lawson draft his August 4 "plantation capitalism" letter to Maguire, Smallwood Cuevas left the SEIU. Shortly afterward, Norman Johnson left the SCLC to return to full-time pastoral work, and the Clergy Labor Coalition ceased to function. The fledgling institutional

alliance had lost two of its pillars. Despite these losses, the union did its best to keep the pressure on Maguire, turning for assistance to the Los Angeles Alliance for a New Economy (LAANE) and Clergy and Laity United for Economic Justice (CLUE).

Two new members of the black clergy were enlisted (with financial support from SEIU) to assist the security drive at this juncture: Reverend William Smart through LAANE, and Reverend Jarvis Johnson through CLUE. Both were committed to advancing the union cause and provided a visible black presence to the campaign, but they were far less effective than Johnson and the SCLC had been. The union staged a series of actions targeting Maguire in late 2004 and early 2005, but these were modest in scale and received little media coverage (SEIU Local 1877 2005a, 2004a, 2004b).

Then the union appointed Jayson Pope to take over the community liaison position Smallwood Cuevas had previously held. Pope, a former student activist at the University of Wisconsin, Madison, had been recruited to the campaign as an organizer, had proved himself in the field, and already had relationships with Reverend Lawson and many other key community leaders. Pope had a strong commitment to the black community and was received well.

Reverend Lee later recalled:

Jayson was great because Jayson, although he represented the union, he really had a heart for the community. . . . It was more than a job to Jayson. . . . The union has to find people who are committed to the community first, and then through the union and the resources of the union, leverage that commitment for advancing the cause of the union with the community.¹⁹

SEIU Local 1877 President Mike Garcia personally met with key black community allies to assure them that the union was genuinely committed to addressing their concerns and that Pope would be charged with following up. Pope recalls that with this endorsement,

It was easy for me to walk in because . . . they had cleared it with Mike, and then I walked in, and they liked me. And quickly I became family. I was giving them information about how to do this effectively, about how to build some power with SEIU to make sure that the community was respected. . . . Those folks had to believe that not on paper, not in theory, but that they were truly being respected. . . . that there was a long-term commitment from labor to participate in community events, irregardless of if it helped the union. That's what ultimately built this trust. . . . There has to be the look in each others' eyes and say, "Are you serious about this?"²⁰

At the same time, in a fortuitous turn of events, a younger "New Guard" of black community leaders stepped forward to support the campaign. One key player was Pastor Lewis Logan II, of AME Bethel Church in South Central Los Angeles. Logan grew up in an activist family in Baltimore, listening not only to the speeches of Martin Luther King, but also the revolutionary visions of black liberation propounded by Malcolm X, Stokely Carmichael, and Huey P. Newton. His mother was a minister and he himself had entered the ministry at age seventeen. As a student and minister in training, he had been involved in community organizing, antiapartheid work, and the black liberation movement. Soon after he became lead pastor at the old and influential Bethel AME in 2005, the church began to emerge as a vibrant new community center for South Los Angeles.²¹ Logan was

eager to establish his church as a nexus for social justice organizing in the black community, and the security unionization campaign provided a perfect vehicle. When Jarvis Johnson left Los Angeles a few months later, Logan was recruited by CLUE to take his place. Logan's church soon became a key hub for the security campaign, and the union began holding regular community strategy sessions there.²²

Reverend Eric Lee, who replaced Johnson as the head of L.A. SCLC in April 2005, also became involved in the campaign during this period. Lee had a B.A. in economics and political science from UC Berkeley and had worked for more than twenty years in the finance industry, notably as the founding manager of the U.S. Bank branch in L.A.'s Crenshaw district, and branch manager for the black-owned OneUnited Bank. Strongly committed to the union cause, Lee continued SCLC's involvement in the security campaign.²³

Targeting Maguire (and Thomas)

On the anniversary of Martin Luther King's death, April 4, 2005, Lawson led a rally and civil disobedience action involving black clergy, union representatives, security officers, and other activists held on the steps of Maguire's company headquarters. The action targeted Maguire as well as Thomas Properties, a smaller company that had endorsed Maguire's opposition to "mixed" unions of janitors and security officers and also had a building nearby. The protest was endorsed by the National Executive Board of the NAACP, which stated that it

would "stand with officers who are fighting for a better life for themselves and their families," adding that "if security companies provided officers with raises and benefits, hundreds of millions of dollars would flow into our nation's communities of color and poor neighborhoods" (SEIU 2005b).

Carrying pictures of security officers on placards, the protestors marched to the corner of Fifth and Flower streets, and proceeded into the intersection between Maguire's largest building and Thomas's building and sat down, completely blocking traffic. Police reinforcements arrived and the police ordered protestors to disperse. When they refused, the police physically removed black clergy and community members from the intersection, arresting thirteen protestors (City News Source 2005; SEIU 2005b).

Days later, the campaign had its first real breakthrough. Thomas Properties had not initially been a major target of the campaign - it owned only two buildings. But when James A. Thomas wrote to SCLC in June 2004 stating that, like Maguire, he opposed having security officers in a mixed union with the janitors in his buildings, the union began to target his company along with Maguire. The key point of leverage with Thomas was California State Teachers' Retirement System (CalSTRS), which had invested approximately \$270 million in a joint venture with Thomas Properties to purchase Arco Towers, a prime 2.7 million square foot, fifty-two-story office complex in downtown Los Angeles.²⁴ CalSTRS was a union pension fund with a responsible contractor policy (originally developed partly due to SEIU

efforts) that called for union neutrality.

A few days after the civil disobedience and arrests of black community leaders, drawing on SEIU's longstanding relationships with key CalSTRS trustees, Shaffer arranged for a delegation of union representatives and black community allies to speak at the CalSTRS board meeting in Sacramento. Terence Long, the security campaign's communications director, equipped CalSTRS staff with documentation of the economic injustices Thomas was imposing on security officers and the black community generally, and why he was not a responsible investment manager. The day before the board meeting, CalSTRS's CEO Jack Ehnes spoke with Thomas to discuss the matter.

Late that night, Thomas became the first downtown building owner to formally agree to neutrality in the SEIU bid to unionize security officers. Just hours before the community and union delegation was scheduled to speak to the CalSTRS board, Thomas faxed Ehnes a letter agreeing to follow the CalSTRS fund policy and stating that his company "is neutral on whether the guards organize or not" (Chan 2005). This was an important victory for the campaign, demonstrating the efficacy of applying intense focused pressure on one target at a time. As Terence Long recalled, "The Thomas victory . . . made folks realize that there is a way to get to these guys."²⁵

Energized by this breakthrough, the campaign intensified its mobilization against Maguire. On June 7, 2005, a coalition of black organizations, including the NAACP and the SCLC, announced their support for the security officers' effort to

join SEIU, and explicitly charged Maguire with racism. The SEIU press release quoted Reverend James Lawson as follows:

Maguire Properties is in effect practicing a policy of institutionalized racism by denying security officers their civil rights and freedom to form a union of their choice with SEIU. The mostly-Latino janitors that do work for Maguire Properties have the union of their choice. The predominately Anglo operating engineers that do work for Maguire Properties have the union of their choice. Only the disproportionately African American private security officers that protect Maguire Properties are still struggling to raise standards by forming a union of their choice. (SEIU 2005a)

Reverend "Chip" Murray, pastor of the influential First AME Church, led a protest outside Maguire's shareholders' meeting, and security officers Willie Hunter, Troy Hammond, and Joe Matthews wore white tape over their mouths and carried signs reading "Maguire Properties: Stop Silencing Security Officers" (SEIU Security 2005).

The spirited participation of black community leaders and the explicit charge of racism lent powerful moral authority to the campaign. But in addition to moral authority, as the Thomas victory had shown, direct pressure was essential to force individual owners to agree to neutrality. As the union's research team scanned Maguire's vulnerabilities, they discovered an opportunity in Australia. It turned out that in the spring of 2005, as part of an effort to raise capital for his investments in downtown Los Angeles, Maguire was in discussions with some Australian investment managers over a possible partnership. SEIU researcher Bahar Tolou recalled: "We knew they were going to look for a [joint venture] partner and we knew they were

starting to look at Australia. So we figured this is their highest priority. . . . This is where we should focus all our energy."²⁶

As part of its national security organizing campaign, SEIU was in the process of establishing relationships with unions around the world that represent or are seeking to organize the multinational contractors that dominate the global security industry. In Australia, the Liquor, Hospitality, and Miscellaneous Union (LHMU) was partnering with SEIU to organize security officers who work for Securicor Wackenhut. Thus LHMU had a vested interest in supporting the L.A. security organizing campaign. Its communications director, Andrew Casey, became very involved in planning the Australia actions.

In June 2005, the union put together a report targeted to potential investors in Maguire Properties entitled "Risks for Maguire Properties Inc. Investors." It called attention to the labor situation in Los Angeles, quoting Lawson's threat that "we will escalate our attempts until we bring your business to a grinding halt." The union withheld the report for a while, taking out ads in both Australian newspapers and in the L.A. Business Journal announcing that the report was coming out in the hopes that this might lead Maguire to discuss the possibility of neutrality. But he did not call. By mid-July, Maguire had signed confidentiality agreements with seven possible investment groups and was expected to close a deal in three weeks. So on July 13, SEIU posted the report (Capital Stewardship Program 2005) online and placed a full page ad in

the Australian Financial Review listing the web address.

When Maguire still didn't call, Andrew Casey approached Australian journalist Paddy Manning. Manning was a business writer, but had progressive sympathies and also thought that the Australian public was interested in understanding the growth of Australian investment in the United States. Manning interviewed James Lawson, and wrote an article for the financial section of Australian - a major newspaper - that took up the civil rights frame of the SEIU campaign, under the headline ran "US trust's

'slave' fight snarls MacBank, Deutsche." The article began:

A former colleague of the revered civil rights leader Martin Luther King has attacked US developer Maguire Properties for violating the human rights of mostly black security guards at its office buildings, just as the developer negotiates a \$US1.1 billion (\$1.45 billion [Australian]) deal with two Australian property trust rivals. The attack escalates a long-running labour dispute into a race issue, and could jeopardize Maguire's proposed sale of the office portfolio into a joint venture with one of two rival Australian property trusts, Macquarie Office Trust and DB RREEF Trust. Executives from Macquarie Bank and Deutsche Bank, who run the two trusts, will be visiting the US this week to research the deal which was expected to be closed within weeks. Civil rights leader Reverend James Lawson, president of the Southern Christian Leadership Conference of Greater Los Angeles - an organization co-founded by King - said Maguire was perpetuating "the economic ideology of slavery" by denying hundreds of security guards their right to freedom of speech and to make a living wage. "The company refuses to allow the workers to have freedom of speech in the workplace - the freedom to talk about their situation and how they can improve it" said Mr Lawson. Mr Lawson said the guards were mostly black men and "as a pastor, and colleague of the late Dr King, it makes me suspicious." . . . SCLC and the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People have passed identical resolutions supporting the SEIU campaign. (Manning 2005c, 27)

When the article came out, Australian elected officials

began calling Maguire and his potential investors to express concern. Soon, Lawson was being interviewed on Australian talk radio about Maguire's racism. Meanwhile, back in Los Angeles, black community leaders and security officers were holding protests outside Maguire's offices timed to coincide with visits from potential Australian investors. The protestors held signs saying "Stop Racist Policies." Maguire's "race problem" in California gave his Australian investors pause, and they threatened to pull out of the deal. Faced with this pressure, Maguire finally called SEIU to discuss security unionization.

In the latter half of 2005, as the discussions with Maguire proceeded, black community leaders and the union continued small-scale mobilizations to keep the pressure on (Bihm 2005; Herrera 2005; SEIU Local 1877 2005b). But on January 6, 2006, Maguire closed its joint venture deal with the Australian Macquarie Office Trust, and then discussions with the union slowed down (Business Wire 2006).

In response, the union and its community allies again turned up the heat. On February 28, 2006, they staged a large march and protest outside Maguire's headquarters. A delegation of black clergy entered Maguire's offices to deliver a letter (Griffin 2006; Lindo 2006). Peggy Moretti, Maguire public relations officer, met with the clergy members, indicating that Maguire Properties did support the security officers' right to organize. The clergy asked her to put it in writing. She said that she would, but first they would have to talk with Maguire, and that he was on a plane at the moment. The delegation said

that they were not leaving until they got a public affirmation from her, and then asked her to come outside and tell the crowd rallying outside that Maguire Properties supported the security officers' right to organize. Reverend Logan later recalled:

We are going to come extending the olive branch first, and then next is the sickle. . . . I think we must have in some way, by the grace of God, appealed to [Peggy Morreti]. . . . She excused herself for a moment. I believe she probably did some type of preliminary checking around to make sure it would be ok to make the statement.²⁷

Moretti returned and accompanied the clergy downstairs to address the crowd. She took the megaphone and announced, "We're not the problem. We encourage our security officers to organize with whatever union they want to."

Nevertheless, Maguire continued to drag his feet. The black community leaders and the union, frustrated, laid plans for a large rally against Maguire for April 4, 2006, the anniversary of Martin Luther King's assassination, and the one-year anniversary of the sit-in led by Reverend Lawson that helped precipitate the neutrality agreement from Thomas. Los Angeles mayor Villaraigosa became involved, calling Maguire to try to work out a neutrality agreement for the security officers. The mayor asked the community leaders and the union to hold off on the protest, so instead of targeting Maguire's building, the campaign relocated the event to Grand Avenue downtown, where protesters blocked traffic in the pouring rain in another act of civil disobedience. Almost twenty were arrested (George 2006). A few days later, the Los Angeles Times carried a human interest story on the plight of security officers by columnist Steve

Lopez (2006).

Finally, on April 11, 2006, Maguire and SEIU held a press conference with Mayor Antonio Villaraigosa, announcing that they had reached an agreement to allow security officers to unionize. Maguire hugged security officers, shook hands with black community leaders Reverend Logan, Chimbuko Tembo, and Tim Wolf, among others, and pledged to support neutrality. In a face-saving gesture, the deal included a provision that the security officers in SEIU would be in a separate local from the janitors.²⁸ Maguire Properties and SEIU also announced that they would split the \$250,000 annual cost to launch a three-year training program for Maguire's three hundred security officers (Marroquin 2006; Orlov 2006). Mayor Villaraigosa called on other building owners to follow Maguire's example: "We're calling on our city's real estate industry to join us in our effort to upgrade security in buildings across the city and improve working conditions for our city's hard working private security officers" (SEIU Security 2006).

The Road to Recognition

The union and its community partners hoped that the Building Owners and Managers Association (BOMA), the main building owners' trade group, would follow Maguire in agreeing to neutrality. But this proved overly optimistic. Eric Lee recalls: "We thought that after Maguire things would come a little bit quicker, but they were holding out. BOMA, God, they were holding out tooth and nail. They were not giving ground on

this thing."²⁹ So the campaign once again escalated.

On June 19, 2006, the union launched a card-signing "blitz" to intensify pressure on BOMA. By bringing in outside staff from around the country, SEIU hoped to expand the organizing drive to six hundred commercial real estate buildings guarded by approximately six thousand security officers. Visiting organizers were sent by unions and community allies (especially ACORN) in New York, Chicago, Philadelphia, Seattle, San Francisco, Boston, and around the country. SEIU International president Andy Stern also flew into LA to participate (Mathews 2006b). The idea was to get as many cards signed as possible. At the same time, the publicity for the blitz reiterated the racial framing of the campaign. The SEIU's press release quoted Reverend Logan: "Freedom can't wait. We need good jobs for black workers, not wealthy corporate landlords throwing crumbs to our community. With the full force and commitment from the black community and labor working together, we can turn these jobs around" (SEIU 2006).

The blitz's official launch was held at Bethel AME Church, where Pastor Logan and Reverend Lee spoke, emphasizing that the unionization campaign was a continuation of Martin Luther King's legacy. At the end of the week, community groups from South Los Angeles, including the NAACP, SCLC, elected leaders, and hundreds of black security officers, marched to BOMA headquarters (Stand for Security 2006b). The reverends Lee and Logan attempted to deliver a letter to BOMA's executive director, which was eventually accepted by a BOMA staffer. At

this event, Lee stated that the building management companies were "robbing millions of dollars from the communities of South Los Angeles every year, and that must end right now." He continued, "Ten thousand officers throughout Los Angeles County are paid approximately \$6 an hour less than janitors. When you add that up, the 10,000 officers times \$6 an hour times eight hours a day, you're talking about \$500,000 a day being pulled out of our community" (Mikulan 2006).

After Maguire signed the neutrality agreement, the union was confident of victory, and campaign participants began talking about who would head the new local union. This soon became a point of heated conflict between the union and its community allies over the course of the campaign, reflecting their distinct institutional interests. Whereas SEIU wanted the union headed by a leader with sufficient experience and loyalty to fluidly integrate the future security officers' local into the International, black community leaders wanted it to be someone they could count on to address the broader concerns of black workers. Minimally, they insisted that the union appoint a black person as interim president.

The matter came to a head in a conversation between Shaffer and Eric Lee, when Lee told Shaffer "the community is not going to accept anyone other than an African American to lead this union." According to Lee, Shaffer responded, "We don't have anybody qualified."³⁰ According to Shaffer, "finding leadership which reflected the membership" was always an explicit priority for the union and his comment to Lee was misconstrued.³¹ In any

event, Lee took immediate offense and followed up with other black community leaders participating in the campaign. They quickly developed a consensus that the union would have to agree to hire a black interim president of the union, and with their input, or they would all pull out of the campaign. As Pastor Logan recalled:

We insisted that . . . no reflection on Jono, great guy, but you cannot lead this union. And you cannot be the puppet master. Because it would certainly de-legitimate this whole process . . . I would not have been able to stay with the effort. And Minister Tony wouldn't have been able to stay with it. Reverend Eric Lee wouldn't have been able to stay with it. With us pulling back, we would not have had any real support from . . . the African American faith community. It would have been an abandonment of that whole effort.³²

To address this crisis, Stephen Lerner, then director of SEIU's Property Services Division, flew out to join Shaffer for a meeting with the community allies at the SCLC offices in South Los Angeles. When the union officials arrived, the allies charged Shaffer with racism and threatened to withdraw their support from the campaign if the union did not agree to include them in the process of hiring the interim president, negotiating the contract, and overseeing the new local.

Even in the heat of this conflict, Reverend Lee and Pastor Logan continued to passionately support the security campaign. But when it did not appear that the union was taking their concerns seriously, they did not hesitate to air their doubts publicly. At this point their longstanding mistrust of SEIU, rooted in the history of ethnic succession in the janitorial industry, resurfaced. As Lee told the Washington Post, "Some

say, 'Why should we do this?' because of what happened to the hotel workers and the janitors." And Logan added, "Our group is planning to come together once a quarter after there is a union to make sure the same percentage of African American security officers who were part of the union at the beginning are still there later" (Geis 2006).

The crisis was resolved, however, when the union and the black community leaders developed an agreement establishing formal principles for "a positive, strategic, long-lasting and efficient alliance." The agreement noted that the campaign is not only for security officer unionization, but also includes "an effort to uplift the African American community in Los Angeles." Moreover, the agreement established a role for black community leaders in contract negotiations; in contract monitoring; in hiring local union leadership; and most immediately, in the search for the interim president (SEIU Security and Stand for Security 2006).

With this matter resolved, the union made a final push for recognition. The blitz had shaken up the contractors and building owners, and attracted widespread media coverage. But, Shaffer recalled, "even though the blitz really pushed things along . . . it wasn't focused enough to force the compression necessary to win."³³ So the union launched a campaign to "Stop BOMA Discrimination," using tactics similar to those that had won the neutrality agreement from Maguire. The union created a glossy pamphlet charging BOMA with racial discrimination. Above photos of segregated water fountains - one for "SECURITY

OFFICERS ONLY" and the other for "ENGINEERS, JANITORS, PARKING ATTENDANTS ONLY," it stated, "Primarily Latino Janitors and parking attendants, largely Anglo operating engineers and other workers in the city's tallest buildings have formed unions to improve their lives and their jobs. Only security officers, the majority of whom are African American, are being denied their civil right and freedom by corporate landlords to form a union of their choice" (Stand for Security 2006c).

Well aware of how Maguire had fared resisting a similar charge from the union, BOMA now came to the table to discuss a neutrality agreement. Yet, in what Shaffer saw as a delaying tactic, they still insisted that all buildings under 150,000 square feet be excluded from the neutrality agreement. From the union's perspective, the proposal was unacceptable because there were so many security officers working in those smaller building, especially those between 75,000 and 150,000 square feet.

Early in the campaign, Arden Realty, the second largest downtown building owner downtown, had been a key organizing target. Arden CEO Richard Ziman was active in the L.A. Democratic Party but had always resisted unionization. With significant holdings in the 75,000 - 150,000 square foot range, Arden Realty now reemerged as a focus, and the campaign sought to apply further pressure to Ziman.

On September 14, 2006, reverends Lee and Logan attended the annual Mayoral Housing Summit, at which the topic was affordable housing, with Ziman as a featured speaker. The entrance fee was

\$350 per person. Reverend Logan paid for the two of them to enter. The auditorium was packed with hundreds of professionals. "We are holding these signs," Lee recalled, "and you can see every one of them is looking and reading these signs [which say] 'Racism and discrimination by Arden Company.'" ³⁴ Ushers came and tried to persuade the reverends to leave, but they had paid the entrance fee, and they refused. In the questions and answer period, Reverend Lee raised his hand. He began by engaging the panelists' arguments about affordable housing, and then asked how Ziman could credibly advance an ethical commitment to provide affordable housing when security officers working in buildings owned by Arden Realty can't afford to pay even the lowest rents and often "have to make a decision between paying the electric bill and buying groceries." Some members in the audience broke into applause. When the moderator tried to pass over the question, Lee raised his voice and said, "Excuse me, this is not a funny or a light hearted situation, and I expect an answer to the question." Members of the audience clapped more vigorously (see L.A. Business Council 2006a, 2006b).

The following week, a rally attended by three hundred clergy, security officers, union representatives, and other supporters rallied in West Los Angeles in front of Arden Realty headquarters, located at a major intersection. At the peak of the afternoon rush hour they marched into the intersection, Smallwood Cuevas recalled, "They sat down in the intersection at 5 o'clock in the afternoon with all the busses and the UCLA traffic . . . it was crazy." ³⁵ An hour later, the police began

arresting the protesters and loading them on busses. Reverend Lee, Reverend Logan, and sixteen others were arrested and spent most of the night in jail before the union was able to bail them out (Lee, interview; Los Angeles Times 2006; Shaffer, interview; Stand for Security 2006a).

In May 2006, General Electric Company purchased Arden Realty in a \$4.8 billion deal, the largest real estate transaction in southern California history (Christoffersen 2005; Vincent 2007). Despite the pressure on Ziman and Arden's new CEO Joaquin de Monet, Arden had not come to the table (Lee 2006; Monet 2006a, 2006b). So the black community leaders and the union decided to target GE directly. In October, they sent a delegation to the company's "stakeholder" meeting in New York, a forum for community members to raise concerns. The delegation included reverends Lee and Logan, two other local black ministers, and Jayson Pope. They didn't make much headway in New York, so the group drove to GE corporate headquarters in nearby Fairfield, Connecticut. "We went in and were very nice to the front desk person," Pope recalled. "And then we just kind of went into a conference room."³⁶ The person the delegation had spoken with in New York was put on a speaker phone and was very upset. Eric Lee recalled the attitude:

I mean, you are talking about community leaders, and we know their mindset when we walked in there: Here are the senior VPs from probably one of the largest corporations in the world. And you got people who are coming from struggling community based organizations, black folks. Their mindset was paternalistic, was somewhat arrogant, condescending.³⁷

William Conaty, the senior vice president of Human Resources, walked in to the room and said, "This is very unprofessional that you guys just storm in here." Pope replied, "Well, we think it is very unprofessional that you are treating black workers like this."

With Maguire and Thomas having already agreed to neutrality, the black community leadership mobilized, the union's ongoing "Stop BOMA Discrimination" campaign, and with the pressure on GE/Arden, BOMA finally agreed to neutrality for all commercial properties over seventy-five thousand square feet. On November 15, 2006, after a campaign of almost five years, the building owners agreed in principle to card-check neutrality, which meant they would not fight unionization and would recognize the SEIU if a majority of employees signed cards (Vincent and Mathews 2006).

Although the building owners held the real power, the security officers were employed directly by the security contractors, and so they too had to be party to the neutrality agreement. In December 2006, a month after the building owners conceded, the five largest security contractors that employ 80 percent of the security officers that work in L.A. office buildings over seventy-five thousand square feet signed a formal neutrality agreement. They agreed to allow SEIU to solicit union authorization cards from their employees, and that they would recognize the union and negotiate a contract if a majority signed cards. Five months later, on May 20, 2007, after a second blitz to collect union authorization cards, the contractors

recognized SEIU's new local - Security Officers United Los Angeles (SOULA) 2006 - and began contract negotiations (SEIU SOULA 2007).

With reverends Lee and Logan on the hiring committee, the union appointed Faith Culbreath, a black SEIU leader who had worked for the union's Property Services division in Washington, D.C., and Detroit, as SOULA's interim president. Culbreath in turn appointed Pastor Logan to the contract negotiating committee as a community liaison. Culbreath was welcomed to Los Angeles in an all-star reception at the offices of the Sentinel, Los Angeles's leading black newspaper (Miller 2007).

The final victory came on January 26, 2008, when more than four thousand security officers ratified their first union contract. It provided a 40 percent increase in wages and benefits over the five-year contract term, as well as medical insurance and job security (Guzmán 2008; Khalil 2008; Los Angeles Times 2008; SEIU SOULA 2008).

Black Community Power and Security Officer Unionization

SEIU's strategy of tapping black community power was crucial to its success in pressuring building owners and ultimately winning unionization. This is not to suggest that SEIU would necessarily have failed without the support of black community leaders. To the contrary, given their resources, commitment, and track record, SEIU may have found other ways to win security unionization in Los Angeles as they did in other cities where community support was less prevalent. But in Los

Angeles, the union relationship with black community leaders was central to the campaign, and de facto provided the crucial leverage for victory.

Three aspects of the union's approach are especially noteworthy. First, SEIU hired "bridge builders" who understood and were respected by both the union and black community institutions. Second, SEIU understood the need to share power with black community leaders and demonstrated its willingness to do so. Third, and perhaps most important, the union built ties to influential black community leaders with their own institutional interest in mobilizing to address the plight of black workers.

At first, the union garnered some support from black elected officials, but with minimal participation from black community leaders. This changed when "bridge builder" Lola Smallwood Cuevas recognized SCLC's potential institutional interest in the campaign. The security campaign helped reinvigorate SCLC by advancing black worker organizing in the tradition of Martin Luther King, as reverends Lawson and Johnson laid the foundation for wider black community support. SCLC leaders established the Clergy Labor Coalition, and Lawson crafted the "plantation capitalism" argument that defined the fight for unionization as a fight against racism. Later Jayson Pope assumed the "bridge builder" role and the community base for the campaign shifted to Bethel AME Church and Pastor Logan. The security organizing drive helped Logan establish his social justice ministry, while Reverend Eric Lee, the new CEO of SCLC,

also developed an institutional interest in the campaign.

The community allies were concerned from the outset about whether SEIU had a genuine long-term commitment to addressing the broader interests of black workers. The issue crystallized in the demand by black community allies for direct participation in selecting a black interim president for the security officers' local and for a role in the contract negotiations. The union responded by placing Pastor Logan and Reverend Lee on the presidential search committee, appointing Faith Culbreath as the interim president, and seating Logan on the contract negotiations committee as a community liaison.

For vulnerable low-wage workers, external sources of power are often needed to win unionization. In the L.A. security officers' campaign, SEIU's alliances with black community leaders were crucial to winning the neutrality agreements that led to union recognition, and later to a union contract. At key strategic junctures, black community allies applied compelling moral pressure - charging building owners with racism for denying predominantly black security officers the right to join the union of their choice. Although the union's research and pressure tactics played a critical role, the protests of black leaders were also essential to the campaign's success.

In the case of Thomas, the first L.A. building owner to agree to neutrality, the threat of losing investment from CalSTRS was key. But the protests outside his building and the prospect of public charges of racism by community leaders at the CalSTRS board meeting made that threat palpable. Similarly,

threatening Maguire's \$1.1 billion loan from Australia required research by the SEIU team and support from Australian unions. But Maguire only agreed to neutrality when the union's black community allies publicly charged him with racism. And again, only the "Stop BOMA Discrimination" mobilization and the pressure on key building owners such as Richard Ziman led BOMA to agree to neutrality.

When workers share an identity outside the workplace, and independent institutions are organized around those identities, unions can partner with the leaders of those institutions to advance unionization. But such coalitions can be fragile. As it seeks to expand the security campaign into additional sectors of the burgeoning security industry, both in Los Angeles and nationally, black community support should not be taken for granted. Maintaining it will require ongoing bridge building and an organic commitment to maintaining the alliance with independently powerful black community leaders. The relationship must not devolve into what Frege, Heery, and Turner (2004) call a "vanguard" coalition, in which union allies are weak and subordinate to the union. Weak community allies could never have provided the external leverage necessary to win unionization in L.A. security. The L.A. security officers' campaign illustrates both the challenges involved in such coalition-building efforts and their future promise.

¹ Thanks to Trish Albert, Lola Smallwood Cuevas, Faith Culbreath, Norman Johnson, Eric Lee, Lewis Logan, Terence Long, Jayson

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² I use the terms black and African American interchangeably. By "black community leaders" I mean the leaders of institutions and organizations that represent themselves as serving the common interests of black people, and whose legitimacy is widely recognized.

³ My sources include interviews with key participants in the campaign, participant observation at key stages of the organizing effort, journalistic accounts, as well as documents obtained from campaign participants. Factual information on the campaign included below is from the interviews, unless otherwise indicated.

⁴ One such union (established with the help of a well-known antiunion consultant) won recognition at seven L.A. buildings in the early stages of the SEIU security campaign.

⁵ Jono Shaffer, interview by author, March 28, 2007. For details on the L.A. janitors' campaign, see Waldinger et al. (1998).

⁶ The 2000 U.S. Census (PUMS) shows that L.A. County has about 27,000 security guards, of whom 34% are black, but the SEIU campaign that this chapter documents focused on just one industry segment, namely prime office building security, which employs a much higher proportion of black workers.

⁷ Shaffer, interview.

⁸ Norman S. Johnson, interview by author, September 18, 2007. Burke's father had been an SEIU member, and Supervisor Burke herself was the first recipient of the SEIU scholarship.

⁹ Eric Lee, interview (with Lola Smallwood Cuevas) by author, May 21, 2007.

¹⁰ The meeting was attended by representatives from AGENDA and ACORN; Karen Bass, then of the Community Coalition (and now speaker of the California State Assembly); Mark Ridley-Thomas, former L.A. City Council member (and now a state senator); L.A. City Council members Jack Weiss and Jan Perry; and Martin Ludlow, who was then planning a successful run for L.A. City Council. Yvonne Burke, then chair of the L.A. County Board of Supervisors, and Herb Wesson, then speaker of the State Assembly, both sent staff to the meeting.

¹¹ Lawson was also chair of Clergy and Laity United for Economic Justice (CLUE) with strong ties to Los Angeles labor.

¹² Jayson Pope, interview by author, August 29, 2007.

¹³ Ibid., September 24, 2007.

¹⁴ Johnson, interview.

¹⁵ Shaffer, interview.

¹⁶ Johnson, interview.

¹⁷ Pope, interview, August 29, 2007.

¹⁸ Original text was boldfaced and underlined for emphasis.

¹⁹ Lee, interview.

²⁰ Pope, interview.

²¹ See <http://bethelamela.org/pastor.htm>

²² Minister Tony Muhammed of the Nation of Islam, Jonathan Jackson of ACORN, Roselle Flowers from CLUE, Maulana Karenga of Organization Us, Reverend William Campbell of the Los Angeles Council of Churches, Anthony Thigpenn of Agenda, Rev. Brenda Lamothe from First AME, Thembekila Coleman-Smart, and Danny Tabor - a community organizer and now Inglewood City councilman - all participated frequently in strategy meetings at Logan's Bethel AME Church.

²³ Lee biographical details from <http://www.sclclosangeles.org/revlee.htm>

²⁴ CalSTRS owned 64% of the joint venture (Business Wire 2003; Fulman 2003; Shaffer, interview). For October 2004 SEIU defeat of Thomas tax break in city council, see Nash 2004; Shaffer, interview).

²⁵ Terence Long, interview by author, May 22, 2007.

²⁶ Bahar Tolou, interview by author, March 28, 2007. See Capital Stewardship Program 2005; Manning 2005a, 2005b, 2005c.

²⁷ Lewis Logan, interview by author, September 12, 2007.

28 According to Shaffer, SEIU was willing to create a separate local for the security officers from the start. See also Helfand 2006; Maguire Properties 2006; Moretti 2006.

29 Lee, interview.

30 Ibid.

31 Jono Shaffer, personal email to author, September 25, 2008.

32 Logan, interview.

33 Shaffer, interview.

34 Lee, interview.

35 Lola Smallwood Cuevas, interview (with Eric Lee) by author, May 21, 2007.

36 Pope, interview, August 29, 2007.

37 Lee, interview.