

WHAT IF THE afa HAD WON?

How would we have fared if we had succumbed to the afa when it first began trying to organize us in 1992?

Negotiations

Sources we've checked believe odds are about three to one that it would have taken about two years to negotiate an agreement at that time. That may sound bizarre because:

- It took comparatively tiny airlines like Midway (**24 months**), Westair (**30 months**), Pennsylvania (**30.5 months**), American International Airways (**31 months**), Sun Country (**33 months**), ASA (33.5 months), CCAir (**34 months**), American Trans Air (**39 months**), ATA (**40 months**), Tower (**52.5 months**), and Horizon (**57.5 months**) to negotiate initial agreements.
- The afa would undoubtedly have plopped its 307 page quagmire of an agreement with United on the table and demanded an agreement like it.
- Delta would not have felt compelled to agree to an onerous agreement just because other carriers had.
- Delta - previously able to pay us substantially more because it had not had to contend with the bitterness, divisiveness, carping and obstruction inherent in dealing with a union - would undoubtedly have bargained hard to offset its increased costs.

Wouldn't these factors have prolonged negotiations? Yes, were it not for others.

1. The afa lacked ability to force Delta to agree to its demands. With no strike fund and a meager net worth of about \$1.5 million, it could not have afforded to strike. Its only other option was its trumpeted CHAOS (i.e. wildcat strikes under an assumed name). Delta could easily have thwarted that the same way USAir did in 2000, namely by announcing that rather than have pax irritated, inconvenienced and alienated by hit and run job actions, it would shut down entirely if the afa employed CHAOS tactics. That may sound like it would have been risky for Delta, but it really wouldn't have. To succeed, the afa desperately needed support from ALPA, but pilots weren't about to sacrifice their substantial pay checks by striking to enable the afa to get even more money for best paid F/As in the industry.
2. The afa had always been ridiculed because Delta provided substantially better compensation than it had been able to negotiate. Once we had been organized, it would have been politically untenable for the afa to have allowed our advantage to continue. If it had been able to negotiate better compensation at other carriers, it would have. Consequently its only practical alternative would have been to at least begin to reduce the pay gap in negotiations.
3. The afa itself had nothing to gain financially by prolonging negotiations. Unlike most other unions that calculate dues based upon compensation, afa dues are fixed so the newest and lowest paid F/A pays as much as experienced F/As earning twice what they are.
4. The afa's policy manual states "**...every reasonable effort shall be made to achieve and maintain the following: - check-off of dues, initiation fees and assessments, together with agency shop or union ship clauses or their equivalent.**" "Reasonable effort" is a thundering understatement. Unions will cede virtually anything to obtain agreements requiring all employees to join and for companies to collect dues, fees, fines and assessments for them. Why? Because it is extremely difficult for unions to survive without forcing employees to join – and having to collect their dues every month from every member would be time consuming and constantly remind members of how much they are paying for representation they often abhor.

Note: The US Supreme Court has ruled that employees have a right to resign from unions, but they still have to pay the portion of dues used for collective bargaining. In reality, this means they pay virtually the same amount of dues because unions cook their books to disguise things like organizing, publicity, political contributions (i.e. bribes) as collective bargain expenses.

With no effective way to pressure Delta, with a need to narrow the compensation gap, with a desperate need to obtain Union Security and Check-off agreements, and an intense desire to begin collecting dues, fees, fines and assessments, the afa would have been very likely to settle on terms favorable to Delta. When? As soon as practical and politically tenable – probably in about two years.

Dues

Accordingly, we would have had to start paying dues in 1994, and **by now we'd have to cough up an average of over SEVEN THOUSAND, FIVE HUNDRED DOLLARS in dues, fees, fines and assessments. As a group we'd have had to fork over about ONE HUNDRED AND TWENTY MILLION DOLLARS (\$120,000,000).** As enormous as that amount is, **it's probably considerably much less than 10% of what we'd have lost in pay and benefits based upon the afa's performance elsewhere during the last 15 years.**

Compensation

After getting laughed at for maintaining that Delta management *“is holding down standards at Delta and thereby throughout the industry”* Pat Friend finally had to admit that ***“Delta has always kept its pay and benefits equal to or a little higher than the union carriers.”*** Even that was hurricane strength spin, as illustrated in an excerpt from *Vicious e-Truths* #1 and by a June 6, 2001 Reuters report:

“In *Vicious Truths* #73 we pointed out that we make 15% more than US Airways F/As and 18 1/2% more than United F/As for 75 hour months and 18 ½% and 21 ½% more respectively for 85 hour months. Care to know our source? It was the afa's slick but ditzzy brochure “Our time...who controls what it's worth?”

“American Airlines has said it is offering an industry-leading contract, but the union has said the proposed base pay falls short of what Delta Air Lines pays its flight attendants...” How far short? Union president John Ward last week said differences remain on salary, minimum pay and health and life insurance, with a gap of about **\$200 million.** [emphasis added]

How is that for a “little” more? And, how did we poor souls fare without being “protected” by an afa contract?

- We missed out on the afa's “industry leading” ten year agreement at United that called for NO increases whatsoever for the first four years and only industry average raises thereafter.
- We missed the opportunity to go four years without raises from 1996 to 2000 while the afa failed to reach agreement with USAir.
- We missed having the afa protect our jobs – like it did for Aloha and ATA F/As in particular.

And to think, we could have had that “quality” of representation for a mere

ONE HUNDRED AND TWENTY MILLION DOLLARS!

We need the afa like angels need Satan.