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The National Labor Relations Board (NLRB) has filed a lawsuit against Starbucks, alleging that the coffee chain unlawfully refused to rehire 33 workers during the reorganization of three downtown Seattle stores including its flagship store at Pike Place Market. The NLRB claims that Starbucks' decision to create a "Heritage District" and require 73 employees to reapply for their positions was a retaliatory response to unionization efforts at one of the stores. By not rehiring 16 of the 22 workers from that store, the NLRB argues that Starbucks sent a message discouraging unionization at the other two locations.

The NLRB's petition aims to secure an injunction preventing Starbucks from terminating or disciplining workers based on their union activities. It also seeks to compel the company to offer reinstatement, along with back pay and benefits, to the 33 individuals who were not rehired. Starbucks defended its actions, stating that employees at the stores in question can pursue unionization through a supervised election facilitated by the NLRB. The company believes that the proposed remedies suggested by the agency conflict with the interests of its employees and the experience it strives to provide to customers.

This legal action against Starbucks comes amid recent tension between the company and employees. The alleged retaliation by Starbucks is a concrete example of the class struggle in which the company is aiming to maximize its profits by undermining any unionization campaigns using any available actions, legal or not. Under capitalism there is no fair balance between classes, the capitalist class makes their profits through the exploitation of labor and the immiseration of the working class and any attempts to organize and unionize the workers to improve their working conditions will be challenged. It is imperative that the workers organize under the basis of Marxism-Leninism to pursue the collective class interests of the workers in this class struggle.

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