

ALTERNATIVES TO CONCESSIONS

Nearly 20 countries have bailed out their industries, only two have demanded concessions from workers – the US and Canada. The governments are insisting, but we have the right to refuse, it is our job to resist and not to assist the government and the corporations in using this crisis as an excuse to erode the rights of workers.

Buyouts and bailouts appear to be solutions, but they are short termed. Buyouts are designed to cull the higher seniority workers and replace them with 2nd tier, lower paid workers. Bailouts are traditionally “make the richer, richer schemes”. These stimulus packages have not been constructed to help the economy.

So what are the alternative solutions? Here are just a few:

- 1) We need to distance ourselves from the ideal that we must only bailout the Big 3; this is elitist, unfavourable with other workers and will not stimulate the economy. We need to resolve the crisis with social restructuring.
- 2) We need to recognize that the economic crisis is not the result of workers' wages and benefits and the problem will not be resolved in concessionary bargaining. We need to organize and mobilize the membership against the government and corporate demands. Why hasn't our leadership done so? Because the CAW does not want to sacrifice its relationship with the corporations, the reality is that we have a corporate friendly union and Magna's “Framework of Fairness” was the tell tale of things to come.
- 3) We need to deprivatize the industries which contribute to this economic crisis for which we all depend on, nationalize auto and transportation, oil, natural gas, hydro electricity, steel making, tool and die, pharmaceuticals, banking, infrastructure building and construction, and so on. Does this sound scary, it shouldn't, many of these industries were nationalized in the past, and this makes for a viable economy which will improve the lives of people. We already have nationalized and state owned corporations; our health care, lotteries, beer and liquor stores. Many economies in the world have returned to social restructuring.
- 4) We need to demand transparency for the terms and conditions for any tax payer initiative. We need to demand these corporations put up their property for collateral for any subsidization. These corporations are given subsidies, free land and tax breaks and they still continue to invest billions in Mexico and Brazil.
- 5) We need to challenge all the auto companies to produce different kinds of cars and transportation equipment, regulating the market and producers to address overcapacity.

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