

COMMON SENSE

EASTER 2009

FIGHT THE GOOD FIGHT

UAW CONTINUES SLIDE TOWARDS FREE WORK!

"We could work for free and it wouldn't make any difference", said Ron Gettelfinger forgetfully as he speeded his way towards us working for free. Forduaw Veep Bob King, or King Bob as he is now known by the Rads at KC Local 249 appeared there to level Gettelfinger's confusion with the rabble, causing this noteworthy, common sense statement to a friend, by CS Editor (The Great) Santino Scalici: Jim,

I've been going over the question you asked: "What would it look like if we voted it (concessions) down?" The short answer is that it would look like the UAW has finally had enough and that it is turning it's back on dog-eat-dog competition and making the long, hard and sober walk back to solidarity. Jobs are worth defending, breaks are worth defending, COLA is worth defending, health care for retirees is worth defending, ETAP is worth defending. We were told by King Bob's staffers that GM was demanding much deeper concessions and Gettelfinger walked out and picked Ford. This was a pragmatic, not a principled move. GM was feeling froggy and went for the whole enchilada. It got greedy. Ron knew that such dramatic and draconian cuts would immediately organize and galvanize an apathetic membership, and maybe even leadership and in Ron's eyes such a move would be unacceptable as it would guarantee the ratification would



UAW Porkchopper Bob King who just got a non-adversarial raise to \$135,000 (plus expenses) doing his best to ignore KC CS Editor Santino Scalici's questions about the UAW's push for \$14hr. for us. Porkchops for them. Beans & rice for us. We've seen this before right? We are presently waiting for Bob's promised call for our interview so we can ask him if he plans to WAKE UP! We want to ask if his bodyguard's on \$14hr. too.

fail by a 90/10 margin. Now, Ford still wants the exact same cuts, but is willing, for the sake of its long-term plan of CREATING A THIRD-WORLD INDUSTRIAL BASE RIGHT HERE IN THE UNITED STATES, to secure these concessions in a more graduated fashion. Remember the old anecdote of a frog in boiling water? If you throw a frog into boiling water, it will simply jump out. That scenario is unacceptable and that is why Ron walked out. If you put the frog in warm water, steadily increasing the temperature over time, it will adjust, crank the heat a little more

later, and it will adjust, crank the heat a bit more until it is finally FROG LEGS. You get my point?

From one frog to another, I say fuck these assholes... I ain't getting cooked. I actually am getting cooked, but I didn't vote for it.

So what would it have looked like? In the eyes of corporate America and their lieutenants, and the public they control, it would look like a suicide. To right thinking and moral citizens that feel that jobs, working conditions, wage and benefit packages that are able to sustain the modern human family with dignity and justice, it would

look like a victory.

Perhaps for King Bob and his cronies, the fight is over. To wit:

Speaking to an automotive conference in Detroit, Bob King, the UAW's vice president for organizing, said: *"We have made a conscious choice to put aside the adversarial approach. We believe adversarial relationships drive manufacturing jobs out of the country."*

Putting aside the adversarial approach? Really? When my friends are vomiting, crying, and gobbling large quantities of benzodiazepine all because of Ford's adversarial approach





Would we have the image problem we have if we were the spearhead in getting every man, woman and child cradle to grave health coverage? Every office worker, secretary, fireman, police officer, politician, autoworker, steelworker, Quik Trip clerk, nurses, doctors, unemployed, black and white, would have to say,

“The United Auto Workers got me health care!”

- The Great Santino

Lincoln freed the slaves, Ford’s bringing them back!

against workers? Bob wants us to cooperate with these ass-holes? Ford ain't confused. It knows its role. Do you remember that banner that hung outside a window at the Winchester Plant during the sitdown in Kansas City? "Lincoln freed the slaves and Ford's bringing 'em back!" Uhhhh... Do you think Ford has changed its position? You know it hasn't. I know it hasn't. Bob King knows it hasn't. The girl puking her guts up in the D-37 bathroom filled with piss, shit, mice and cockroaches knows it hasn't.

Here's my question. What is the UAW's strategy for defending current UAW members and organizing new ones? Will it be black jack dealers, student teachers, nurse's assistants and writers or will it be Toyota workers in Georgetown?

When will this end? Is the market morally qualified to dictate our purpose as a labor organization?

Why do we have contracts?

Will the UAW ever say no to a "breach of contract?"

We already have \$14 agreed to for 20% of new hires. Will the UAW explain how a mom or dad takes care of their family on that wage?

How much break does the UAW feel we are entitled to?

How much effort will the UAW make in 2009 in passing HR 676, a national health care plan for all Americans as authored by a former UAW organizer and Detroit Congressman John Conyers?

So you know, Jimmy. I love the OLD-UAW. Not only did the OLD-UAW fight for its members,

but it fought tooth and nail for ALL AMERICANS. Would we have the image problem we have if we were the spearhead in getting every man, woman and child cradle to grave health coverage? Every office worker, secretary, fireman, police officer, politician, autoworker, steelworker, Quik Trip clerk, nurses, doctors, unemployed, black and white, would have to say, "The United Auto Workers got me health care!"

What about that?

The NEW-UAW created in the image of the corporations, is a bag of shit. I think you are a great union man and you represent the greatest possibility of the OLD-UAW's fighting traditions. Let's go!

In Solidarity,
Tino

Start A Workplace Paper Now!

If you are interested in fighting The Good Fight for Solidarity, no matter where you work, NOTHING is more important than conversing with your coworkers.

Sure, we're a little down but in spite of nonsense unions peddling dog-eat-dog, a crooked government and crumbing economy, we still have each other.

Most people do their best to make work livable through deep friendships and mutual support.

Most people are pretty good and prove it every day by the wonderful things they do for each other.

Why not start a monthly single-page flyer at your factory or office?

Imagine what the good you can do by simply circulating Santino and Gary Walowicz common sense and talking with friends about it!

Talk it up for each other and help spread the message through workplace newsletters! Send us a copy!

The fight against concessions isn't over!

The UAW said the Ford contract was ratified by 59 per cent to 41 per cent. In Dearborn Truck, we voted down the contract by 64 per cent. 698-No to 394-Yes.

I think it is important to recognize what we did here because the fight against concessions isn't over.

Before we voted, EVERYBODY was telling us that autoworkers had to take concessions.

But despite what EVERYBODY told us, we took a stand, we voted "No!"

Despite the media saying we had no other choice;
Despite all the politicians demanding that we give up our standard of living;
Despite the International Union sending people into our plant every day;
Despite those in the local union who pushed a Yes vote;
Despite all the scare tactics;
Despite all the pressure;
We voted "No!"

And we weren't alone.

At least 9 other locals or units that I know of voted down the contract. Several of them voted it down by a big margin, like we did here in DTP.

Most of the places where there were big "No" votes, it was because some people in those plants organized and said what many workers were thinking about the concessions – "this is wrong!"

I know we all wish that we could just be left alone, come to work, do our jobs, get paid, go home and take care of our families.

But the companies are not going to leave us alone. I believe they are going to be coming back for more concessions, again and again, until we are able to stop them.

We have to build on what we did this time to get ready for next time.

Ford workers, auto workers and other ordinary working people together have the power to stop these greedy corporate bosses from taking what we have worked for. Workers have done it in the past. And we have the power to do it now.

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Bargaining Committeeman

Dearborn Truck Plant

March 10, 2009 Local 600 UAW

Mondragon and the Crisis

COMMON SENSE

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We all know how American businesses are handling the crises: layoffs and bailouts, if they can get them. But how about the Mondragón Cooperative in Spain? Does it not face the same pressures? According to the *Financial Times*, one of the world's most respected business magazines, the Cooperative is taking another approach:

Fagor is a workers' co-operative, one of dozens that dot the valleys of Spain's hilly northern Basque country. Most belong to the world's biggest group of co-operatives, the Mondragón Corporation. It is Spain's seventh-largest industrial group, with interests ranging from super-markets and finance to white goods and car parts. It accounts for 4% of GDP in the Basque country, a region of 2million people. All this has made Mondragón a model for co-operatives from California to Queensland. How will co-ops, with their ideals of equity and democracy, cope in the recession?

Problems may be shared with competitors, but solutions are not. A workers' co-op has its hands tied. It cannot make members redundant or, in Mondragón's case, sell companies or divisions. Losses in one unit are covered by the others. "It can be painful at times, when you are earning, to give to the rest," Mr Zabala admits. Lossmaking co-ops can be closed, but members must be re-employed within a 50km (30-mile) radius. That may sound like a nightmare for managers battling recession. But co-ops also have their advantages. Lay-offs, short hours and wage cuts can be achieved without strikes, and agreements are reached faster than in companies that must negotiate with unions and government bodies under Spanish labour law.

Of course, Mondragón has seen this before. In the 80's, when unemployment in the Spain reached 27% and businesses were closing all over, they managed to survive with only a 0.6% unemployment rate, and only had to close three of the 103 cooperatives that made up the corporation at that time. And the three they closed were coops that had started just as the troubles began, and never reached profitability.

What distinguishes the cooperative approach from the corporate one is the notion of shared responsibility, which means shared gains *and* shared pains. In the United States, we have socialized the pains, and privatized the gains. Workers are also the owners, and they are able to make difficult decisions in a way that our corporations cannot. But then, there is very little difference, socially, between the highest and lowest in the company. The top pay is limited to eight times what the lowest worker makes (giving management a real incentive to keep the lowest pay relatively high). Compare that with the 300-500 times times the average wage an American CEO typically "earns."

Everybody can claim to have a good system in good times, but it is the times of trouble that really test theories. In the crises of the 80's, Mondragón passed with flying colors. The American banks restricted lending and sought bailouts; The Cooperative Bank (*Caja Laboral*) extended credit and took an active role in rescuing cooperatives in trouble. They went through the crises together, and survived it together. History is repeating itself, I suspect, only this time Capitalism may not be able to bail itself out.

*The Elite's Dick
Gephardt (before he
dicks you) Group's
Harley Shaiken said
these are the toughest
of times for UAW
Porkchoppers!
Really?
Who were those guys
facing down machine
guns in Flint and
getting shotgunned in
their Detroit kitchens?
Who were those women
saving the Sitdowners
from tear gas? Who
was that marching in
Selma? Who fought for
full employment
demanding good jobs
for the Poor?
What the hell
happened to Harley?
Dick Gephardt.*

Michelle Mauder

Is heading up a worker buyout of the Big 3 and asked the UAW to consider an ESOP plan developed by Kent State and the Center for Economic & Social Justice. <http://www.cesj.org/>

Michelle is a former UAW Chrysler worker who organized an attempt to buy Chrysler a year and a half ago.

The UAW ignored the effort.

The UAW, per form, has not condescended to give Michelle the courtesy of an answer on the current proposal either. Why not we ask?

She is presently in Washington, D.C. lobbying for congressional support.

A CS report on Michelle's DC success, direction and response (if any) from the UAW will appear next CS. Could worker ownership of the American auto industry perform better than the present leadership?

Of course.

Michelle's email: michele@mauder.com