

# DON'T BE FOOLED

On March 5th, 2009 the CAW distributed a leaflet, CAW - Auto Bargaining Update ( <http://www.local707caw.ca/CAW%202009%20Letter.pdf> ) in the Ford Oakville Assembly Complex. I can only assume the leaflet was circulated auto sector wide as it is endorsed by the CAW/Big Three Master Bargaining Committee and CAW local union and workplace leadership in the auto sector.

The language used in their leaflet is distorted and misleading. Their purpose is to convince the membership to approve concessions.

As follows:

1) "Governments are insisting that we give things up and who want to use non-union transplants in the US as the new standard for auto wages, benefits and pensions."

So what, it is our union leadership that has voted to reopen the contract and make concessions. The government can insist, it is our union's job to resist. We do not have to accept concessions. Why not compare us to workers in Mexico and Brazil also?

2) "Companies, who are in a financial mess, on the verge of bankruptcy and who, left to their own preferences would further reduce their operations in Canada."

Do not mislead people on bankruptcy, it is Chapter 11 bankruptcy protection or Chapter 7 receivership. A company still operates under Chapter 11. A judge can order companies to reopen contracts but a judge cannot order workers to make concessions. A company can operate for 10 - 15 years under Chapter 11, all the while their assets are protected. Many companies restructure under bankruptcy protection. Keep in mind, this is not the same option for Ford, the Ford family voting shares would be under scrutiny of a bankruptcy judge and may not survive.

Do not mislead people on what preferences the company would make, there will be layoffs, lost jobs and plant closures in Canada regardless of concessions. We have a responsibility to protect those workers affected. Would the Big 3 empower the UAW by having all of its plants in the US? Would the Big 3 have any customers having all of its plants in Mexico and Brazil?

3) "The UAW who has been forced to make more concessions as part of the US loan agreements."

No one has been forced. The UAW members have a right to vote and are in the process of ratifying these concessions. They have a right to reject these amendments and as of today three FORD UAW locals have indeed rejected the contract. If anyone is doing the forcing it's our leadership.

4) "...we will come out of these forced negotiations holding on to as much as possible. While we are forced to give things up, to suspend some past gains, we will resist cutting our base wage rates .... and we will resist forcing an unfair burden onto laid off workers, retirees or future hires."

Again, we are not being forced, our leadership voted for this. If concessions pass, it is not a suspension of gains, it is a loss we will be unlikely to ever gain back. By ratifying concessions we are not resisting anything, but we are assisting the corporations who are using this global crisis, which they caused, as an excuse to drive workers down. Benefits are as valuable as wages.

5) "We are in uncertain times. The next 3-5 years will be hard. Without a major effort on our part they will be harder ... we will stick together and look out for each other because that is what we do best. And together we will change these desperate times into more promising ones."

These are not uncertain times, we know there is a global economic crisis which may turn into global chaos if people are driven down further. Things will be hard for autoworkers if these concessions pass, things are hard for us now. We don't yet know what the CAW is negotiating away but if we use the UAW amendments as a model we know they will have a devastating effect on workers. The Big 3 won't be asking for nickels and dimes.

Their leaflet is using fearmongering and rhetoric to convince the membership to accept concessions. **DON'T BE FOOLED BY SEMANTICS.** Our leadership has a responsibility to communicate with the membership in clear and precise language. It was irresponsible for all the Locals' leadership throughout the auto sector to allow that leaflet to circulate on the shop floor. That was intimidation, not communication. That was not a bargaining update, it gave no details on what they want us to give back, it just wants to secure an approval vote.

In solidarity with autoworkers, no concessions

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<http://www.facebook.com/profile.php?id=1371653594>

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<http://www.facebook.com/topic.php?uid=54416746848&topic=10823>

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