

Live Bait & Ammo #141: In the Rubble of UAW Negotiations

The arrogance of the UAW Concession Caucus exceeds their customers' most sinister expectations. But perhaps, we the victims should chide our own silence in the midst of historical revelation.

Let's talk facts, not speculation.

In 2003 UAW members at GM voted to give Delphi UAW members a two tier wage. Now, by virtue of a letter of intent pg 104 of the white book or pg 66 of the Pdf available at: http://www.soldiersofsolidarity.com/files/RELATEDNEWSANDREPORTS09/UAW-GM_2009_Modifications.pdf.pdf the Con Caucus wants to kick us down the stairs again. Two tiers, three tiers, "flex" workers —cordially defined as trained replacement workers—, and whatever other modifications the company deems necessary to implement indentured servitude is the Con Caucus treason of the day.

But let's step back and take a longer view.

Twenty years ago the IUE had 40,000 members working at GM. They went from two to three to multiple tiers over the years, each time with the promise that concessions would save jobs and keep plants open. In 2010 the IUE has zero members working at GM and 800 at Delphi.

One fact stands true in the rubble of UAW negotiations: the International UAW is in violation of Article 19 Section 3 of the UAW Constitution available at: <http://www.uaw.org/constitution/article19.cfm> which states that no officer has the right to enter into negotiations without the consent of the membership.

UAW members at GM ratified an "Addendum" in May 2009 but Delphi workers were not included in that vote. In regard to the prospective purchase of the five "keep sites" on Page 103 of the "Addendum" or page 65 of the Pdf available at: http://www.soldiersofsolidarity.com/files/RELATEDNEWSANDREPORTS09/UAW-GM_2009_Modifications.pdf.pdf it states unequivocally that GM will honor the 2007 Delphi-UAW agreement including all the Local Union agreements and all other related MOUs.

A letter of intent to negotiate concessions with a third party at a future date is worth less than a hand gesture in a court of law. It may express an attitude but it doesn't constitute a binding contract or guarantee a result. In short, it's no more enforceable than GM's commitment to invest a billion dollars in new business with Delphi in 2003, or other product allocations which GM promised but never materialized.

Finalization of the sale of the five "keep sites" occurred two months after the ratification of the "Addendum" by GM-UAW members, and the letter of intent to negotiate with the "keep sites" has no legally binding affect on the 2007 UAW-Delphi agreement. The power of ratification resides with the workers not the Cons currently in charge of the UAW.

The severance package is a part of the 2007 Delphi-UAW agreement and is legally binding. Members in their right minds would not voluntarily deprive themselves of an enhanced severance package especially under threat of a plant closure. Severance has nothing to do with competitiveness because it is only paid out in the event of a closing, i.e., when the competition is over. Keep the plant open and you never pay severance. The same goes for SUB pay. Members do not have any interest in reducing SUB pay which is only paid in the event of layoff.

How can a union mouth the word solidarity when it proposes that union members should cut the throats of fellow members' SUB pay or severance? The current administration of the UAW International Concession Caucus is the most disgraceful of any this writer has seen in over 30 years. Case in point: the Cons tell members of the union that they must achieve a rating of 93% on the "scorecard" in order to be eligible for new work. But members aren't allowed to see the scorecard. Well, we have a scorecard for the Cons running the UAW, too. There isn't a percentage low enough to tabulate their failing grade, but there's a chamber in hell with their names.

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