

September 3, 2010

Urgent Appeal - Monday Sept. 6th deadline!

Brothers and sisters,

Members of L. 23, UAW at a GM Stamping Plant in Indianapolis, In. need your help. We are circulating the attached letter of support for signatures of present or former UAW office holders. If you are such a person and would like to sign, please contact us immediately: Teresa Barber - T_Barb@comcast.net, or Wendy Thompson h. 313-892-7974, c. 313-215-7672. If you know others in this category who might like to sign, please circulate the statement to them.

The leaflet of support will be circulated to Local 23 members ON TUESDAY, Sept. 7th. PLEASE CONTACT US BEFORE THEN. It will also be submitted to the Indy Star as a letter to the Editor and circulated in the community. Local 23 members have been under the gun ever since they voted overwhelmingly that they didn't want to re-open the contract and cut their wages in half. GM wants to sell the plant and a new owner doesn't want to honor the successor clause of the contract. Now they are threatening to close the plant, but GM needs the parts and the contract says they can't outsource the work.

Shockingly, the International negotiated concessions behind the backs of the Local Bargaining Committee. At a meeting of almost the entire membership, the International was told there would be no vote or consideration of the illegally negotiated proposal.

This was not the end of it. The small little known company wanting to buy the plant J. D. Norman Industries put a full page ad in the Indy Star slamming the workers. Then they held a meeting inviting sympathetic workers and started circulating a petition calling for a re-vote. It is illegal for a company to try to go around the duly elected Local Bargaining Committee and try to bargain directly with individual members!

Thank you for your support!

Wendy

If they succeed here, the wage cuts will spread to other GM plants in a new round in the race to the bottom. Please help us with this support effort. Thanks!

Wendy

To our Local 23 UAW Sisters and Brothers

Greetings and Solidarity,

We are writing to express our deep respect and admiration for your acts of solidarity and courage in the face of tremendous pressure. We applaud Local 23's bargaining chair and committee for their strength.

As former (and current) Local Union Presidents, Shop Chairs and other elected representatives, we have witnessed the incessant drumbeat for concession after concession. None of us have ever thought that concessions were the answer to the problems faced by the auto industry, or any industry for that matter. We knew that labor costs were only about 8-10% of the cost of a vehicle. If we worked for free, the industry would have continued to have problems.

Workers and their unions struggled throughout the 1900's to *raise* the standard of living for working people – to create a comfortable life for themselves and their children. We fought for our fair share of the pie and thereby created the "American Dream" - a life where people were permitted vacations, health care and safe jobs. These jobs helped bring about a "middle class" existence for working people and the ability to send our kids to college. Before the union movement, workers did not have respect and dignity on the job or a decent standard of living. Children of workers rarely went to college. We earned these things through struggle.

Still, workers have given up pay and benefits over the last 20+ years, in an effort to try and help their employers. But it has never been enough. Now we see everything we struggled for being taken away. The "Dream" is being dismantled before our very eyes. But where is the "equality of sacrifice"?

If the situation is so dire, why aren't those in power leading by example? Are GM execs willing to take a 50% pay cut? Is JD Norman saying he and his managers will take a 50% cut in pay if they buy the plant? The answer is obvious to us. No, they're not. They want you to. What we have seen in the last 40 years is a growing disparity between the rich and the rest of us. Those at the top cannot continue to get wealthier unless the rest of us give up more. And that is what they want us to do.

That is why we stand in solidarity with you in this struggle. A line must be drawn. If you give in, it will be used to whipsaw other plants especially GM Stamping Plants into taking equal or greater concessions. Suppliers and other businesses will pressure their employees to take cuts in the never-ending "race to the bottom." If you stand strong, it will help everyone.

It appears to us that you have made your wishes clear. In our democratic union, the wishes of the majority must be respected. You have our deepest respect.

In Solidarity