

30 YEARS OF CONCESSION EXPERIENCE

In 2004 we negotiated buyouts to save 4300 jobs; we are now hovering around 2800 members. In 2008 we offered 120 buyouts to create 75 Premier jobs. Do you see where "concessions are an investment in our future" is heading? There is no doubt the plant will still be here in 2020, the question is who will be doing our work? If we continue to endorse the competitive advantage argument, we will be told to sell Material Handling, Pre-delivery, Paint, Body, Skilled Trades; and any production job can be sold.

The 2009 ratification has left us in the battle for our lives; our jobs and our pensions are at serious risk. As buyouts are taken our workforce will be transferred over to lower waged, outsourced, insourced and temporary part time workers, TPT's. These workers will have little or no benefits, no pension or job security, we have driven them down and in future they will be pitted and voting against us. How can we protect ourselves if we did not protect them? This generation of workers will also not be able to sustain our social EI and CPP benefits, which means the further decline of our economy.

Workers in Oakville are at a competitive disadvantage, we work in a factory in a multi-million dollar neighbourhood we can't afford to live in, so we commute which is not only costly but adds to the wear and tear on our tired bodies and deeply affects our personal lives. We're alienated from ourselves and other workers who are also a part of building a car, such as the steelworkers and as they lost their jobs we didn't discuss how this would affect us. We need a place to gather and talk about our issues and we need to assemble as a whole to be properly informed. All autoworkers at all plants were told vote no and their plant will close.

We cannot fight the fight after we have lost the battle. We need to organize the shop floor, give our members the in-plant language at ratification, educate ourselves on fear mongering, bankruptcy frauds and when we've been conned about economic crisis before such as in 1993, and we need to stand united with other unions in our fight for labour laws, EI and pension protection legislation.

We also need to stop blaming others for our demise, it is not the UAW, Chrysler/Fiat (or whatever it's calling itself these days), GM, non-unionized or the governments' fault, it is our own fault because we didn't fight back, we, the Ford unit CAW, sold our jobs and took concessions; we have met the enemy and he is us.

To rebuild, we have to be led by workers who put workers first, we are the experts on our issues. If we continue with those who unanimously support concessions we will be driven down more. Leaders have to be visionaries, they have to make it clear to the membership how the concessions help the company drive us down and shut us out of our jobs, and make it easier for the company to leave if that is their goal.

I have a university education in Philosophy, Labour Studies and Political Science, which merely means I've done my research on the driving down of autoworkers in the global economy. I've got 30 years of concessions experience, being downsized out of a job, lost pension years, been the contract worker, for me this is history repeating itself and this is why I have been so outspoken against concessions. I didn't set out in life to be a labour activist, it was because no one was speaking for us that I had no choice but to speak up, and I will not be silenced.

We cannot afford this leadership any longer. It's costing us our jobs and gambling with our pensions.

VOTE LINDSAY HINSHELWOOD VICE PRESIDENT