

SEPTEMBER 27, 2009

NUMMI/Toyota Workers and Friends:

Only YOU can save NUMMI workers' jobs!

Organize NOW to occupy and take control of the plant!

Extended version of flyer distributed to UAW union members employed at NUMMI plant in Fremont, California, which is scheduled to be closed down in March 2010. This flyer was distributed on Sunday, September 27, 2009 outside the union hall before a meeting of the UAW local to which the plant's unionized workers belong.

Greetings to the workers of NUMMI from your supporters in Oakland, New York, Japan, Latin America, South Africa, and New Zealand! The news of your struggle to stop Toyota from closing the NUMMI factory has spread to your fellow workers far and wide, and they stand in firm solidarity with you in your battle to keep your plant open, save your jobs, and preserve your communities.

One thing is clear: You cannot achieve your goals by relying on politicians – Democrats or Republicans – to bail you out. Governor Schwarzenegger recently cut state workers' salaries by 15%, and has slashed the budgets for schools, parks, and other services working people rely on. President Obama has managed to get Congress to spend billions of dollars to benefit Wall Street and the stockholders of the auto companies, and to fund the oil wars in Iraq, Afghanistan, and Pakistan. But Obama will **never** deliver on health care reform, the Employee Free Choice Act (also known as EFCA or the card check law, which will make it easier for workers to organize unions), or any of the other changes he promised during his campaign. Anything the workers achieve will be through massive class struggles against Obama! Down with Obama and his Republicrat regime! The ugly truth is that our country is controlled by the rich and powerful, and operated in the interests of the big corporations they own. They are the only ones who will get bailed out by the government when they are in trouble. The rest of us have to rely on working class solidarity and militant class struggle actions.

As for Toyota, it has shown that despite its official corporate slogan of “mutual trust between labor and management,” it is no friend to its employees, even in Japan. In 2006, Japanese Toyota workers were so dissatisfied with the company's treatment of the workforce, especially long-term temporary workers who did the same jobs as permanent workers for half the pay, and who were not eligible to join the union, that they felt compelled to organize an entirely new union, ATU, in order to give workers a real voice. As a spokesperson for the new union reported, “All the Toyota group companies are putting pressures on workers to increase their global competitiveness while spreading out the cost cutting schemes at a breakneck pace. As a result, [the] majority of the workers suffer from low wages and long working hours while being forced to work under extremely harsh working conditions where health hazards or mental problems are not uncommon and even ‘overwork death’ is widely observed.” (<http://www.labornet.org/news/0306/horizu.htm>). More recently, on August 26, 2009, Toyota announced that it will “suspend production at one of two lines at a factory in [Japan] from Spring of next year until the second half of 2011, lowering its overall capacity by 220,000 vehicles.” (<http://www.manufacturing.net/News-Toyota-Scales-Back-Production-In-Japan-082609.aspx>). Toyota's announcement did not give any indication regarding the fate of the workers while the factory is half shut down. So much for “mutual trust between labor and management”!

You also cannot count on your union leaders to mount an effective campaign in your defense. Again, the truth here is ugly. The UAW leadership long ago abandoned class struggle militancy for business unionism. All the union bureaucrats know how to do is beg politicians and corporations for crumbs. When the US government bailed out GM, the Obama administration and GM's failed leadership cut a deal with the UAW that amounted to a vicious attack on the company's diminished workforce. When it comes down to a real battle, their idea of how to resolve it is to sell out the membership by agreeing to let the auto companies cut the workers' pay and benefits and institute mass layoffs. As the GM bankruptcy shows, these tactics do not save companies in the long run. They lead only to a dead end for rank and file workers.

What are the tactics that **will** work? We can learn a valuable lesson from the militant mass actions of the 1930s. In the heyday of the UAW, auto workers marched in mass picket lines and occupied factories with sit-down strikes. These successful actions included the six-week factory occupations at the Flint Chevrolet and Fisher Body plants in 1937, and

the “Battle of the Overpass” at the Ford Motor Company’s Rouge Complex later that same year. The workers’ efforts were backed by heroic acts of solidarity on the part of tens of thousands of other union members, together with their families and communities. These are the **only** tactics that have been proven to win major gains for workers. Indeed, the high standard of living that auto workers enjoyed in the 1950s and 1960s could not have been achieved without these actions.

And this is not just history. The same types of mass, militant, rank-and-file worker actions are still being used successfully today by workers in France, the French Caribbean, and Latin America. In the US, millions of Latino workers, supported by the ILWU, organized a massive general strike of immigrant workers on May Day in 2006 and 2007, closing hundreds of businesses nationwide, and stopping port traffic all along the West Coast. More recently, workers at Republic Windows and Doors in Chicago and the Stella D’oro bakery plant in New York have shown the effectiveness of plant occupations and strikes.

Where does that leave the NUMMI workers of today, and their supporters? The threatened closure of the NUMMI plant in March 2010 is still months away. That gives us the gift of time to organize an **effective** battle to stop it! But we must start acting **soon** in order to be ready when the time comes. Many workers employed by Toyota and other auto companies, in Japan, the US, and around the world, are or soon will be facing the same kinds of attacks – plant closures, layoffs, speedups, and wage and benefit cutbacks. A militant struggle by the NUMMI workers would set an example for these workers, and inspire solidarity actions in other plants and even in other industries.

What is the next step? Workers must **organize factory committees** to coordinate an **occupation of the NUMMI plant** before it closes! We can have no faith in the sell-out leadership of the UAW; only a revitalized democratic rank and file movement can lead us out of the crisis! An emergency conference of representatives of rank and file workers from different areas of the plant must be convened to **elect rank-and-file, democratically run mobilization committees** to plan and organize the struggle for occupation.

Working class communities around the factory, and the Bay Area labor movement, must be mobilized in advance to **defend the occupation**. Workers will need to prepare for self-defense against the reaction of the state! The community can also help by organizing solidarity kitchens to feed the workers and their families during the occupation; raising funds to help keep workers from losing their homes; and providing other emergency assistance. Our brother and sister Toyota workers in Japan and elsewhere can also help if we call on them for solidarity and support, and even coordinate joint actions if the circumstances are right.

What should we fight for? Toyota says it intends to abandon the NUMMI plant because it claims it cannot make a profit there. If this is true, then Toyota should have no problem turning the plant over to the workers to run. **NUMMI must be controlled and operated by its workers, without compensation to GM or Toyota!** Let the workers’ committees, accountable to and recallable instantly by all the workers in the plant, decide what is the best use for the plant and equipment. **Open the books** to give workers full access to all financial information about their company! Workers must take control of any government “bailout” funds used to shore up the company. **Not a single worker should be laid off.** All work should be shared among all those who can work, without loss of pay.

But only **workers’ control** can make this happen. A workers’ takeover of the NUMMI plant could set the stage for a movement toward **workers’ control**. But all forms of workers control cannot remain isolated. They must be defended by **a workers’ government**. When workers elsewhere see the NUMMI workers take the reins of their union and their factory into their own hands, they can be inspired to believe that they too can take control of their workplaces. Ultimately, workers **can band together to bring down the capitalist system** – which uses their labor and the natural resources that belong to all of us to generate profit for an elite few – and the bosses’ government, which subordinates human rights and environmental protection to corporate profit and Wall Street greed. Only the workers, acting together as a mighty political force, can fight capitalism and the power of the rich.

Hundreds of thousands of California state workers are under the ax of the capitalist state. A massive one day general strike shut down the state universities on September 24. That was a good start, but we need more than one day of strikes. We need to start preparing for massive assemblies of state workers, students, teachers, dock workers (ILWU), and all industrial workers, including NUMMI workers, with the support of the working class communities, to prepare a rank-and-file general strike to shut down the state of California. Down with the bureaucrats of the UAW and the rest of the union leadership that stand in the way of massive actions by the workers! Only the mighty strength of a united working class can fight the capitalist/imperialist system. Only a workers’ government can ultimately save the jobs of

Toyota/NUMMI workers by taking over all the industries, the banks, and the financial institutions without compensation. Only a workers' government, run by the workers, can and will be organized to produce goods and services for human needs, not for profit.

Down with Toyota's plans for mass layoffs and closure of the NUMMI plant!

Jobs for all! Spread the work via a 30-hour work week at full pay!

Down with the UAW leaders' "Buy American" chauvinism!

For international workers' unity and solidarity against American imperialism and chauvinism!

Expel the parasitic union bureaucracy and replace it with an elected and recallable committee of militant rank-and-file workers!

Break with Obama! Defeat American imperialism and its troops in Iraq, Afghanistan, and everywhere in the world!

For workers' solidarity between Japanese and American workers against all attacks by Toyota and the auto industry!

For workers' control over the auto plants in the US and Japan and the rest of the world!

For expropriation without compensation of Toyota plants and the entire auto industry!

Expropriate the banks and financial Institutions without compensation and put them under workers' control!

For workers' governments in the US and Japan to carry out these tasks!

For international workers' solidarity and worldwide socialism as the only effective means to end attacks by multinational corporations and global capitalism on workers, their families, and the environment!