

S.O.S. BULLETIN

Voices of the UAW Rank and File

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JUSTICE DENIED AT LAKE ORION!

Despite Bob King's public promotion of workers' rights, UAW enforcers have again kicked democracy down the stairs and thrown the UAW Constitution out the window.

On November 7 UAW Local 5960 member Nick Waun attempted to exercise his Constitutional right to make motions at a membership meeting. The Local Union president in the presence of two UAW International enforcement officers refused to allow the motions to be voted on and ignored the majority's call to over-rule the chair and let the motions be considered.

While Bob King wraps himself in the flag of righteousness, tyranny rules the union he leads.

Brother Nick and fellow UAW members are appealing the UAW's Concession Caucus decision to implement a two tier contract that cut 40% of the workforce's wages in half — without proper authorization and without a membership vote!

Heed the warning. This isn't a local issue, it has national implications.

In the November-December issue of *Solidarity* magazine, Bob King wrote: *"If we raise the total fixed costs of our union employers above the nonunion competition, then indirectly we will be helping the most anti-union employers win in the marketplace. It would be against our members' interests for the UAW to adopt a strategy that penalizes unionized companies while letting nonunion companies off the hook."*

Five months prior to the UAW Bargaining Convention, King announces in *Solidarity* magazine his strategy to drive wages and benefits down to nonunion standards. Ten months prior to the expiration of contracts at GM, Ford, and Chrysler, King demonstrates at Lake Orion that he will not allow his authority to be subject to a vote of the membership or to the requirements of the UAW Constitution.

King knows full well that labor constitutes less than 10% of the average vehicle selling price, yet he is determined to drive down UAW wages to nonunion standards in order to help the companies make higher profits. He frames his argument as an organizing strategy.

Does he actually believe that nonunion workers will flock into the pockets of UAW organizers once our wages and benefits are no higher than nonunion workers?

Work for less is not an organizing slogan

King's strategy to *"win in the marketplace"* in order to organize new members is befuddled corpo-speak. Yes, everything looks different when you stand on your head, but if we lower our wages, benefits, and working conditions to nonunion standards, what incentive would anyone have to join a union? King got his brain washed at the Mulally laundromat. We should hang him out to dry.

Maintaining union scale means that GM, Ford, and Chrysler-Fiat will have to accept slightly smaller profits or trim the fat off the waste bulging over their desks. American auto executives make twice as much as their German and Japanese competitors.

In his article in *Solidarity* magazine, King compared himself to Walter Reuther. But Reuther raised standards for all workers. King wants to level the playing field by lowering standards.

Break the trend and raise the benchmark

In 2011, GM and Chrysler workers will be told that their contract is in the hands of an arbitrator so they can't vote it down – a contract virtually guaranteed to reduce their wages, pensions, and benefits. So how will King dupe Ford workers into accepting his stupefying organizing strategy — that is, smaller paychecks for all?

Whipsawing. And contracts without any ratification.

The national contract at Ford will likely have provisions stating that if a local wants new work, it will have to negotiate an “innovative Competitive Operating Agreement”. Ford may now have a superior contract, but the Concession Caucus is determined to dismantle it, local by local, until we are all Delphied and Axled down.

If the travesty at Lake Orion UAW Local 5960 is allowed to stand, it will become the standard. How many other contracts will be implemented without the members' consent?

Ford-UAW members can begin to break the trend and raise the benchmark for the real UAW, and open the way for the rest of us to join in.

We Will not Stand Down

On October 16th, an original Sit-Downer, Olen Hamm, stood in Solidarity with over 250 UAW brothers and sisters, at the End Two Tier/Lake Orion Solidarity Rally in front of Solidarity House in downtown Detroit. We hope to stand for the next generation just as Olen and the other Sit-Downers did for us. We will not dictate half wages to our children. We will not back off and we will not stand down.

Our union has become something we don't recognize. At the rally, when Olen Hamm was asked what he thought about Solidarity House, he replied, “I don't know them”. We understand completely. We don't know them either. But we do know how a real union walks and talks.

Democracy, equality, and solidarity means members vote on all contracts, means equal pay for equal work, and an end to double tiers, double talk, and other divisive tactics that pit worker against worker and local against local in a competitive race to the bottom.

Olen Hamm didn't recognize the people behind the gates at Solidarity House, but he recognized us as brothers and sisters in an honest struggle for workers' rights and justice. We will not stand down.

<p>This bulletin is put out in the interests of informing workers and renewing the fighting power of organized labor. Please send your comments and your on-the-job, on-scene reports to: soldiersofsolidarity@yahoo.com.</p>
