

## There has to be some accountability by the leadership

When this global economic crisis started to peak in the Fall of 2008, why did organized labour not organize and mobilize against the government demands for bailouts? Then was the time to be protecting the rights of workers and demanding a social democracy for Canadians. After all, building a car is a social act, it does not begin or end with the CAW workers, but involves everyone from miners, steelworkers, rubber workers, glass workers, medical and fire personnel, office workers, etc ... all the way down to the farmers.

Sadly, the CAW rushed back to the bargaining table, although since then it has admitted master bargaining will not resolve this conflict, but continues to expect it's members to concede to pattern bargaining. After GM has accepted additional concessions the threat of bankruptcy seems ever more possible, and Chrysler has outright threatened to pull out of Canada if more concessions are not given. So what did another round of concessions achieve other than to open the door for more? Layoffs, job losses and plant closures were expected prior to concessions and these concessions will only guarantee more redundancies.

The workers are not stakeholders in these corporations, they do not reap the profits, they are merely workers who sell their labour for an hourly wage and produce the wealth for the corporations. After nearly a decade of concessions the workers are struggling, and there will always be the "we'll lose our jobs" threat. These companies have reduced their workforce by more than half and still produce the same amount of vehicles. For every lost job on those assembly lines accounts for job losses in every industry it relates to.

Ford has retired 40% of it's debt and will only be too happy to allow the CAW to make concessions for them, it too wants more than the GM pattern. Would it not have been wiser for the CAW leadership to encourage the Ford unit to break the pattern and defend the gains workers have made to protect them in hard times? Would this not have given hope to those workers who have made concessions that they could one day make those gains back?

Chrysler has recently further offended its workers with a threatening letter, and a symbolic burning of that letter by angry assembly line workers is a sheer indication they have had enough of the bullying and threats, possibly inciting a rejection of any concessions asked for. Ford workers showed resistance in the Spring of 2008, and that resistance has spread throughout all the Ford plants in Ontario.

Without some profound - and radical - demands, we won't be able to protect jobs or create new ones. Harping about trade policy won't solve it. Workers must resist further concessions. **NO CONCESSIONS.**

Master Bargaining will not resolve the economic crisis and this will affect us for years to come, the solution is political. We need to address the economy to provide jobs so people will have spending power and we need to accept that the Big 3 will dissipate and ask ourselves "where do we go from here and what do we do?". If organized labour does not do this, who will? Who will save jobs, not just ours, if we don't save our own?

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