

No "equality"—we make the sacrifice! Did You Really Expect It Back Without A Fight?

When you give away the farm do you think the one you gave it to will just hand it back? Sorry, but that's not the way that corporate greed works.

The Equality Of Sacrifice Grievance (EOSG) was a way for Vice President Bob King to show that he was fighting for us. Instead of filing a grievance to show his outrage King and Gettlefinger could have changed from yes men to no men.

The way to halt the "Inequality" would have been to say no to every request made by Ford Executive management until equality was restored. Brothers & Sisters, Bob's "toughness" was just for show. The EOSG was a way to get members to have something to hold on to in the face of another pathetic contract.

It was an argument I'm proud to say Local 551 & 588 didn't fall for. The evil thing about the EOSG is it would have served to divide us. Our members that have suffered the most from the 2007 agreement, LTS and Entry Level members, would have been left out of this settlement. Equality of Sacrifice must start within our own membership!

We've made concessions in exchange for "job security" in contracts going back to the mid 1980's. Those "job security" agreements did not save the 1.2 million UAW members lost between 1980 and 2010.

The concession express really kicked into high gear with the 2007 agreement. That's when divide and conquer became the theme of negotiations. The 2007 agreement brought us the VEBA (for retiree health care), COLA diversion to help pay for retiree health care, LTS language, and the Two Tier System of pay and benefits. These served to divide new hires from seniority employees and retirees from active.

We must overcome this division!

The Company is powerful. They hold our livelihoods over our heads. Collectively we are more powerful. It is through our collective efforts that their products and profits are built. In order to get what we want, we must be willing to withhold those profits.

We must prepare ourselves. Union leaders are fond of telling us that the Company doesn't give us anything, it is the Union that secured your benefits. That begs the questions: Who? When? And how?

Let's consider pensions for example. Under Walter Reuther's

leadership, as International President of the UAW, Chrysler went on strike for 104 days in 1950 to win pension benefits for all autoworkers. Reuther was the leader of this effort, but autoworkers and their families paid the price. They stuck together in Solidarity and trust in one another.

Let that sink in!

In 1950 Chrysler workers walked off their jobs and closed the plants for 104 days to convince the Company that they deserved a retirement. They suffered with less in pay but were rewarded with security in their "golden years".

Fast forward to 2011. Our Union Leadership NEGOTIATED AWAY, FOR NEW HIRES, WHAT TOOK A 104 DAY STRIKE TO ACHIEVE! That's obviously not all that was negotiated away. COLA was eliminated (this was another benefit achieved and retained through long strikes), and new hires earn much less in pay and benefits.

In 2009 the Union brought us a second round of give backs that would have removed the 20% cap on 2nd tier (This would have made new hires 2nd tier forever!) & given up our right to strike. We soundly rejected that modification! That rejection also set Ford workers up for a slightly better contract than GM and Chrysler got.

Everything we've gained in pay and benefits were achieved through a strike or the threat of a strike. How can anyone believe that once given away we would not have to fight to get them back again. No grievance is going to reverse the harm that has been inflicted on workers in the UAW by bad management and representation.

Prepare For The Fight!

The next contract negotiations are in 2015. Rest assured that the Company will want more concessions. Each and every one of us must face the fact that we will have to go on strike in 2015 if we expect to get COLA back, end two tier pay and benefits or get our first wage increase since 2005.

Start Now! If it's available get strike protection on your mortgage and car payment. If necessary downsize in preparation for several weeks without wages other than strike benefits. Save money in an account that can be accessed in emergency.

We must be willing to vote down unsatisfactory agreements. When you consider Equality of Sacrifice, supervisors did not have a vote on the pay and benefits they

had to give up. We did have a vote. You want someone to blame for the loss of pay and benefits in the 2007 and 2011 agreements along with the 2009 modification? Realize that while the company demanded them and the union pressured us to accept them, it is the autoworkers who voted to let them get away with it! If you voted to give it away you can't expect to get it back in a grievance.

In The Meantime

We have petitions circulating demanding that the contract be reopened to restore our concessions. The Companies requested concessions when they were in trouble. We conceded. Now that the Companies are back to profitability we want to be made whole again! Sign or circulate a petition.

We can form strike preparation committees. These can be official or unofficial. Either way we must prepare for a fight if we want these concessions to stop or reverse.

Election Reform

We must find a way to hold our International Union Officers more accountable to the membership. The current procedure for electing the International Executive Board is democracy through intimidation.

The delegates we elect to the Constitutional Convention vote on the International Executive Board. It is rare for there to be an opposition candidate in this process. When there is, the election is by a roll call vote, meaning in order to cast a vote against the administration candidate you must go to the microphone and announce to the entire convention who you are voting for. This results in incredible pressure to vote the "right way".

We need a new way to elect our International Leaders! We all need to have a vote for our International Executive Board. We need to promote an Amendment to the UAW Constitution to give all of us this right.

This will require passing the Amendment at multiple local unions in the run up to the 2014 Convention and electing Delegates that we know are committed to this basic tenant of democracy. If it's not part of their platform don't vote for them!

If you are interested in helping with the petition or preparation for 2015 contact me at the hall or by email at shouldieson@comcast.net

**In Solidarity,
Scott Houldieson**