

#1 - Workers' Fight group from the Ford Dagenham plant in Britain, near London.

///

Hi to everyone on the Soldiers of Solidarity website!

This is the **Workers' Fight** group from the Ford Dagenham plant in Britain, near London. We thought you might be interested in hearing about the latest misdoings of the "World Company" on our side of the Atlantic. Especially because these antics look strikingly similar to those you have already experienced in the US, from what we've heard and from what we can see on your website.

///

1st November 2011

PAY OFFER: THE NUMBERS ONLY CONCEAL THE KNIFE

AGAINST THE DEATH OF OUR PENSION SCHEME!!

Ford hides its real plans for our pension scheme in the middle pages. Among other things, it wants to close it to new starts from Jan 2013. This means fewer and fewer of us contributing to a scheme supporting more and more pensioners!

Where companies have got away with doing this, they went on to use the scheme's depletion as a pretext to cut pensions for all. Ford must be expected to do that. That's also why they entice us to retire early, with a slightly higher lump sum (the 20% increase on commutation rate)! They know that if we're all retired and safely out of the plants, we can't fight against them killing our pension scheme! That's what happened to the current pensioners with the move from RPI to CPI. They could only have relied on us to fight against the resulting pension cut.

AGAINST THE 2-TIER WORKFORCE!!

Ford hides its other main weapon against us in the last line under "other items" on the back page: the gradual replacement of all of us with cheaper workers on very reduced benefits! There, we see that from 1 April 2012 there will be a "distinct standard grade for new employees"!

In the union officials' full version of the offer, Ford spelt this out: a grade 2 would get a standard £11.36/hr! At around £3/hour less than those doing the same job today! This is the "2-tier" workforce Ford introduced at Basildon and Visteon plants - and in its US plants in 2007, where newer workers now get only 1/2 the "first tier" workers' rate. With "2-tier" Ford can have a low-cost workforce and save the trouble of "outsourcing" - and it can drive a wedge into our ranks to divide us. Can we let them get away with it?

AGAINST THE THREAT OF OPERATIONAL FLEXIBILITY!

Ford hides another part of its agenda under "other items": "operating flexibility" for DS&TO and Daventry - to be decided at local level, but conditional on national agreement - and without saying what it means. As if we didn't know that a national agreement is no protection! In other words, voting for this "operating flexibility" now, is giving Ford a blank cheque to start the throat-cutting of S&TO and Daventry! The answer is: we can't allow it!

AGAINST THESE STRINGS, OUR INTERESTS =THOSE OF TOMORROW'S NEW STARTS!

The 6% and inflation plus 0.25% in year 2, is obviously meant to blind us. Except that this is just 0.4% above inflation, since RPI is 5.6%. And we know that RPI is a huge underestimate, judging from our bills (18-20% on energy bills, not to mention petrol!). So we could and should reject this offer on the pay rise alone!

Of course we can't endorse Ford's attack on tomorrow's new starts. Otherwise, when Ford tries to cut our pension scheme, or kill it, in future pay offers, when the majority of workmates are already on lower pay

rates and not in the pension scheme - because we allowed Ford to get away with it - what is likely to happen? Will they say no, after we let them down today? Voting yes to this offer would be digging our own graves! And that's what Ford hopes we'll do, so it can usher in an era of yet higher profits for its super-rich shareholders! This, Ford wants to do by destroying our futures, immediately, and by starting now to replace the existing workforce, while ending all the conditions we fought so hard for, over the last 30-40 years.

Ford tells us "the union recommends" its pay offer. We shall wait to hear this for ourselves in the mass meetings! Let the officials explain themselves! And since, unlike with the move from CPI to RPI, this time we can and should have a say, let's tell them and Ford what WE think!

This pay offer is not "just another pay offer", it is more like a declaration of war. The first step to preserving our future and the future of the whole workforce, is to refuse it. There is only one answer : we vote - NO! Then we will have to prepare to fight the company across all plants, all of us together.

In solidarity, **Workers' Fight**

contact@w-fight.org