

GM worker from upstate New York - "Management and the union have been squeezing more and more out of the workers"

10 July 1998

To the Editor:

I have just read the article from DS from Syracuse. I agree with him totally. The UAW has crossed the line and is trying to serve both the corporation and the membership. As I stated before, the Massena, N.Y. plant is a prime example of that. We have what is called a living agreement. It is our local agreement. It is open at both ends (supposedly). We and management can change things in it as long as we give the other side two weeks notice. That was one of the foundations of our team concept back in 1985. Guess what? So many changes have been made in the agreement since 1985 without the membership's knowledge that it now looks like Swiss cheese. Management dictates and the shop committee goes right along with it and doesn't have the decency to bring it to the membership. You only find out about the changes, which aren't written down anywhere, when something directly impacts you and you call your committeeman. My understanding has always been that the agreements were in black and white and written down. Not so at the Massena plant.

For the last few years at the plant, management and the union have been squeezing more and more out of the workers, pitting some teams against each other (divide and you shall conquer). I have watched it happen and there is nothing I can do to stop it. We now have some brothers turning in their brothers to the union and management on petty matters (but it might just help them get a soft job up front...). It is sad. I believe what is happening in Mexico is happening right here in Massena.

The work ethic up here has been instilled since birth. You give 150 percent to whatever you do. You, the sons and daughters, represent the family name and you must not bring shame on it by not doing your job,

whatever it is. This is the class of employee that GM has up here. The problem is that we are honest people up here, and don't like to be lied to, and that is exactly what GM and the UAW have been doing to us in the last few years. It is taking its toll. It no longer feels good to go to work and make a quality part when you see things wrong with it and get the satisfaction of sitting down and discussing it and correcting it with management. The days of togetherness that we once had are gone.

GM management, Wall Street and other large corporations will dictate to us and to the country just exactly what the American worker will do. Our economy will be based on what best suits the big corporations. My fervent hope is that the American worker will someday say WE HAVE HAD ENOUGH !!!!!. We will work with you to cooperate America, but give us a voice in deciding how to make a quality part and what is good for the business and what isn't. Don't take our dignity away and make us turn against our own. We, the American work force, are willing to work in harmony with you to save our jobs, if you only will give us a chance and be honest with us. The ingenuity of the American work force is an untapped resource of wealth. Use it. It is there for the taking in your factories. Bottom line: GM, you just might gain more of a market share and bring jobs home for future generations.

Thank you once again for letting me speak my mind.

MJR

9 July 1998

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