

Letter on the UAW from a former US auto worker

9 December 2005

The following letter on the role of the United Auto Workers union was written in response to the article, "US auto workers union launches sham 'war' against Delphi"

I am a former GM employee whose pension was spun off in 1999 when GM shed its parts plants to form Delphi. For nearly 20 years, I worked at a parts plant in Central New York, until 1993. Myself and many other UAW members around the country learned that our plants would be closed as a result of the company's restructuring plan. This announcement was made in 1992 just before the Christmas holidays.

I've followed your coverage of Delphi's bankruptcy and all other articles in WSWS concerning autoworker issues. Based upon my personal experience as a former union member, I believe that your charges concerning the fake sincerity of the UAW bureaucracy are right on target. I feel that the outrage coming from Solidarity House about Delphi's demands is nothing more than a tactic to divert the anger of the rank and file away from the union's role in this whole debacle and to save face as a so-called champion of workers.

I feel that the UAW has been deceiving its members for years, ever since it entered into its collaborative relationship with the automakers. The terms and conditions surrounding my plant closing is just one such example. Workers had absolutely no voice in deciding their fate. We were told that if we had 10 years of service and were at least 48 years of age we would be eligible to retire. All others were forced to relocate to other GM facilities. Those who did not comply were placed on a leave of absence without any safety net to buffer the loss of employment. No severance package was offered, which has now placed my pension in jeopardy. The UAW did not do anything tangible to assist us even though we were funneled through the GM-UAW Training Center for help. We

received some state aid, but nothing more. The local paper touted the arrangement as a WIN-WIN situation, but many of the workers involved did not feel that way.

Looking back and following events that have happened subsequently within the auto industry, I am convinced that the UAW is more concerned about its role as an arm of management and the money it receives from the automakers for its services in doing so, via joint funds.

DS

1 December 2005



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