

Letters on the General Motors contract

3 October 2007

The following is a selection of letters sent to the World Socialist Web Site on coverage of the strike at General Motors and the contract agreed by GM and the United Auto Workers bureaucracy.

On “UAW local presidents ratify historic betrayal of US auto workers”

All articles stating how the UAW is pulling the wool over the GM workers’ eyes are so true. I asked my union rep if there was going to be any written info on contract details to look over before an information meeting, which is set up for September 30, so we could have questions ready. His reply was, “No you’ll be able to ask anything about the info we give you on Sunday.” And we vote Wednesday! I had to transfer from Saginaw Delphi to Flint Metal Fab in order to keep my status toward my retirement, and this place is just going about a different way to have lower wages. I have been a firm believer that anything you obtained in an earlier agreement should not be given up. Going to Flint I lost \$1.00 that they gave up to help the company then. Nothing will be enough, and car prices will never go down.

I just wish I could get these articles to every UAW member before they vote.

YB

Saginaw, Michigan, USA

29 September 2007

Is it time to organize the middle class workers of America?

BM

29 September 2007

The rubber stamp acceptance of all the local UAW presidents of the latest sellout says volumes about the authoritarian structure of the union and its toadyism to both GM and Gettelfinger. Why has there been no establishment of a rank-and file democratic committee system within the plants to review UAW decisions and practices and oppose those that hurt the workers? Has GM made a deal with the UAW brass to fire dissident

workers when they oppose corporate/UAW collusion? If so, the workers can carry out wildcat strikes in response or sit-down strikes to halt production. It’s a real shame that workers have not grasped the opportunity to set up this oversight system in the past. It could have saved many jobs and kept hard-won privileges.

Another area where such an independent structure would have been vital is in creating inter-union solidarity committees such as automaker workers with truck drivers and railroad workers. A vital strike at GM would bring out workers at Ford, Chrysler and the truck drivers and railroad workers. No cars could be produced or moved from one location to another. This would greatly strengthen the strike and help build soviets.

SH

29 September 2007

The so-called elite want it all and they will get it. The world is not run by capitalism; it is being run on the doctrine of barbarism by the greatest criminals the world has ever seen.

GD

Newcastle upon Tyne, United Kingdom

30 September 2007

On “UAW-GM deal means more plant closings”

UAW official Dale Bingley was right, though grammatically weird, when he said, “It’s historic for the way things are in the country now.” Indeed, the UAW agreement is ratcheting up the pace of sellouts in this country. Paired with their willingness to lie to the workers about what is being signed “on their behalf,” we are witness to an historic betrayal. Any organization willing to take such actions is clearly not on the side of the workers. I’d listen as they start in on the old “be realistic” line—the only realistic thing to do is to break with them and form a political party of the working class.

CMS

Portland, Oregon, USA

2 October 2007

On “Total surrender by US auto union”

Fantastic article! I wish it could be placed in every UAW member’s hand *before* the vote is taken to accept or reject this contract. I wonder if this contract would be accepted if there was no buying of votes—also known as a signing bonus. A few \$\$ signs are all this younger generation sees. They could care less about tomorrow. They don’t realize or don’t care what was ‘fought’ for by the older generation so they may be where they are now with the best pay, benefits, and working conditions imaginable. We all know what the outcome will be, but maybe a few will see this article and see the light.

BM

27 September 2007

Reading your accurate analysis of the UAW’s part in yet another sellout of its members is depressing. The only bright spot is your hope that the people organize and elect a socialist party in the future.

LL

27 September 2007

A good and timely response to a critical event. One suggestion: in the future in such cases use “worker owned enterprise” instead of “public enterprise.”

RR

27 September 2007

On “General Motors strikers in Michigan speak to WSWS”

The UAW worker says, “There is not a man in this world that is worth that kind of money. It’s plain old robbery.” She hit the nail on the head. As Bill Van Auken said in your other youtube upload, it is not health care, pensions and a decent wage that we can’t afford, but the rich who subordinate every burning social question to how to maintain their right to exploit, with no regard to the misery they cause worldwide.

As you also said in your statement on the WSWS, “The strike puts to rest all talk about the end of the class struggle in the US.” Too long has this mantra been chanted time and time again by the corporate media and more damagingly by the assortment of petty bourgeois leftists worldwide who relish in their portrayal of the US as a monolith, thus dashing any hope of class solidarity that cuts across borders. This of course leaves the coast clear for them to cut deals with

imperialism behind the back of the international working class. I therefore applaud your appeal for solidarity with workers across borders with respect to this strike.

Finally, I would like to express a few thoughts with respect to the tactic of utilising sites such as youtube, and generally the interactive functionality that the Internet now offers. Without a doubt the Internet has given a major advantage to the struggle of the working class by effectively democratising the flow of information. Never since Gutenberg invented the printing press has the exchange of ideas been so closely associated with the expansion of the productive forces.

This however brings new challenges for the workers’ movement as to how best to use technologies such as the Internet. For a start, the movement requires a better theoretical understanding of this medium, which has become so advanced that any further intervention inside it can no longer be carried out empirically. Furthermore, ruling elites across the globe fear this democratisation that the Internet brings and are no doubt anxious to bring it under their total control, with the private owners of web sites all too happy to provide their services in this respect—e.g., Google censoring search results in China as a condition of doing business there. Any attack on the Internet is an attack on the fabric of society itself. Hence, defence of this medium will, I believe, be an integral task for the movement in the future.

JR

25 September 2007



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