

# Letters on the Indianapolis rank-and-file committee

23 September 2010

*These letters were sent to workers in Indianapolis who have formed the Indianapolis GM Stamping Rank-and file Committee to fight against attempts by General Motors, JD Norman, and the UAW to force through a 50 percent wage cut. We encourage workers to send letters of solidarity to indygmworkers@gmail.com, and to send copies to the World Socialist Web Site. (See, "Support the Indianapolis GM workers!")*

Dear Brothers and Sisters,

I am writing to extend my heartfelt support to you in your struggle with GM, the UAW and JD Norman, and to commend you for forming a rank-and-file committee independent of the treacherous UAW.

I am a CAW (Canadian Auto Workers) member so I understand why you have decided to do the courageous and right thing—the only alternative—by taking matters into your own hands. The CAW has done worse than nothing for us. Concessions contracts, two-tier pay structures, contracting out, backroom deals with the company, layoffs—this is what the CAW has done or helped the company to do to my former co-workers and their families. Many jobs were lost, including my own, because of their actions or inaction. The unions no longer represent the workers. The UAW is a full partner with GM and JD Norman.

You are an inspiration. Many, many of your brothers and sisters are watching closely, and coming to realize that what you are doing is what workers must do to defend their livelihoods throughout the nation if not throughout the world.

I am spreading your story to people I know, but if there is anything more I can do to help you, let me know.

Doug H  
British Columbia, Canada

\*\*\*

Brothers and sisters of the GM Stamping Rank-and-file Committee,

I write to you as a worker, but above all as a human being. I don't know any of you, and you don't know me. But your statement of rejection of UAW back-dealings has resounded profoundly with me. I would like to assure you that a determined stand and level of consciousness you've displayed in the paper will undoubtedly win you support of broad layers of workers. I eagerly await any update on your situation here in Japan. I firmly believe that your example will be followed like an avalanche if you keep your unity and clarity of mission.

I have read somewhere that what one is as a human being can be defined best by finding what is one ready to fight and to die for. Where is that line in the sand that makes one say "no more", and stand ground. I see you have found this line, and I congratulate you. I wish you the strength to stand united in this knowledge and shine as an example on others around you who are definitely close to their own line in the sand as well and will respond.

To the day when workers all over will stand in solidarity, undivided and

knowing their friends from their enemies. Just like your committee is now!

You are not alone! We are watching! Keep the fight!

Lux  
Japan  
\*\*\*

I work as a substitute teacher for the Los Angeles Unified School District, and am currently a member of UTLA. My union, like yours, has flat sold out the membership and has left it to the individual creativity of the membership/workers to dig themselves out of the hole the capitalists have dug for us all. I must do hours of balloon figure-making for families and kids to survive.

I stand in solidarity with you in this quintessential class battle. It will not be the last. The cruelty and illogic of this deformed economy will continue to be purposefully overlooked by major commentators for the best reasons: The monsters that created this deathtrap pay their wages.

Solidarity forever,  
Stuart C  
California, USA  
\*\*\*

Every time I go into the store the prices are a little higher on many goods. For example, about 7 or 8 years ago I used to buy a 20 ounce soda at a convenience store for \$1.09. Today that same soda is \$1.49. A pack of generic fudge grahams that were \$1.00 at the beginning of the millennium are \$1.39 today. The cost of a new tire has increased by about 30 percent over the same time frame. My rent is about 20 percent higher and increases yearly. My electric bill is 40 percent higher. Almost everywhere the prices are rising consistently and insidiously. Yet, instead of unions rallying workers everywhere in the demand for automatic cost of living increases, they are demanding workers take massive wage cuts. When I was a member of the UAW back in 1979, we had cost of living increases as part of our contract. The UAW/GM attack on workers wages is also the effective demand that workers totally succumb to the ravages of continual inflation.

The utter bankruptcy of liberalism can be seen on every front. The unions do not advance the interests of the workers they ostensibly represent. The liberal anti-war organizations cannot prevent imperialist war, nor stop it once it has begun. The ACLU cannot protect the Bill of Rights. The environmental groups cannot prevent environmental catastrophes nor slow the march towards a climate-change Hell. The "liberal" Democrats come to power and do nothing but continue and, in fact, escalate the hated right-wing agenda of its predecessor. Liberalism is dead everywhere. The only way forward for the working class, for humanity, is socialism.

I fully support the efforts of the Indianapolis GM workers in their fight against the UAW and GM. They are fighting a battle in the war that all workers must fight against the capitalist system.

Brian M  
Florida, USA

\*\*\*

Fellow workers,

My dad was a union man, a steelworker, who stayed with his company until his retirement in the late 80s. At his funeral service in 2007—he was 84 when he died there were several of his co-workers in attendance. So I know that union workers have a deep loyalty to one another. I can't remember how many times he told me over the years how much the union had done to give us our solid, middle-class way of life and how important it was for working men and woman to support their union. However, when the union lets you down then it's your loyalty to one another as workers and your commitment to the ideals of fairness and just compensation that will win the day. I admire what you're doing up there and, if he were still alive, so would my father. Good luck to you and thank you for fighting for what's left of the American Dream.

In solidarity,  
Robert M  
Florida, USA

\*\*\*

I am totally in support of their labor movement. These guys are getting screwed!

Joanne M  
Illinois, USA  
\*\*\*

I am sending my words of support for your fight against the total injustice of the UAW demand for a 50 percent wage cut from the workers. A demand for any wage cut at all is fundamentally unjust given the conditions workers now have to live under, simply given the now rapidly rising cost of living alone. But to think that the workers union is facilitating such injustice with a demand of this kind is reprehensible.

Stand together and don't give in to these tactics that are nothing more than a throwback from a feudal era we are supposed to have left behind several hundred years ago. 'Kia kaha' from New Zealand. Stand tall, forever strong.

Gerard  
New Zealand

\*\*\*

I believe that you all are the union builders of this century. When we look back at the strikes, the violence in the 20th Century to help the workers, you are doing the same for us now. Thank you for your efforts. Be strong. It's not going to be easy. But in the end, this is really the only way we will prevail. You have a whole lot of workers in this country and all over the world that are behind you. I'm an old lady. But I wish I could be there to stand with you.

Patricia G  
\*\*\*

Just a short note to let you know that there are a growing number of students and workers out here that see your struggle as one that will be remembered by history. We join with you in solidarity! Keep up the fight! Know your enemies: The two corporate parties of the ruling elite, Wall Street bankers, the UAW, and management. Know your friends: students, and working people all over the US and the world who, daily, see the social gains of the past, got by bloody struggles, being wrenched out of their honest hands while Wall Street celebrates record profits and spreads with their thieves hands absurd bonuses to their cronies. The struggle for

genuine democracy has begun. Be proud that it begins with you.

We are with you Indianapolis!

RJC

New Jersey, USA

\*\*\*

You have my solidarity. My family works at Cornell and are in the UAW. I forwarded a few e-mails about this to those family members. We'll see what happens.

Good luck,

Ian S

\*\*\*

Hi,

I, too, am a UAW-represented worker with a deep distrust for the UAW. I am sickened by what I read in your leaflet knowing full well that we may be next. I have a suggestion but don't know how feasible it is for you to attempt. It sounds as though the issue is fear that the counts will be fraudulent. I believe this has been going on for years. Why not hand deliver the ballots to the address they are to be delivered to and have someone display each and every ballot to a video camera while reading it out loud and tallying as you go along? The camera of a TV news station would get you the most bang for your buck and national exposure of the UAW. God bless you and good luck. I pray that you succeed.

Sincerely,

Diane D

\*\*\*

Your courageous stand is an inspiration to workers throughout the world. Please know that you have my complete support in your struggle against an exploitative corporation and your own so-called "union."

Your actions are a beacon of light in a dark world. Together we can bring about the fundamental change that is needed to correct injustice and bring true democracy to all peoples.

Know that you are loved and respected by people you've never even met or heard of. Know that you are not alone.

In solidarity,

Ernie M

California, USA

\*\*\*

I think that as far as drawing the lines and showing the rest of the working class(worldwide) how to defend themselves and launch their own set of offensives, you guys truly are drawing the blueprint. The end of the wars, the end of poverty and exploitation itself, begins with you guys. Don't give up, this is by far the most important thing American workers have done in a very long time.

In arms,

Nick V

Virginia, USA

\*\*\*

I wish to thank you for your courageous stand against the UAW. I have read your statement and support you completely. The actions of the UAW against the workers at GM are a repudiation of all of the struggles of past generations who fought and sacrificed to make the lives of future generations secure and to uphold the dignity of labor.

My grandparents were immigrants and worked at Willy's Jeep in Toledo, Ohio, as did several of my uncles. They were able to make a good life for themselves and their families. Now, a young person just starting out will have no chance to do the same if the UAW has its way.

All of us who work for a paycheck applaud your actions and wish you well.

Carolyn Z

California, USA

\*\*\*

I strongly support the actions you have taken in defense of your rights and those of all workers against not only GM, but also against the gangsters at the UAW. You have made the great leap in realizing that your interests can only be prosecuted by turning to the strongest social force on the planet: the international working class. As you carry out your struggle, nowhere will you find more steadfast allies and leaders than in the Socialist Equality Party. While every other political tendency imaginable will attempt to steer you back into the safe channels of the unions and the Democratic party, the SEP will consistently support your independent mobilization and initiative, spread word of your actions to your class brothers worldwide, and provide invaluable historical perspective. Decades ago, the SEP observed, documented and explained the type of union treachery you now confront. I urge you to study the SEP's program and history, and I pledge to spread the news of your courage as widely as is possible.

With greatest respect,

Ed H  
Virginia, USA

\*\*\*

Thank you for taking on a leadership role in breaking through the quiet despair under which workers have been forced by their union leaderships. As a teacher in New York, I have seen the union negotiate away not only the gains teachers have made but the conditions of the education of the youth. I hope we can build support for you, especially by winning workers to a unity with a political program of socialism putting the right to decent jobs and wages above the predatory profit system.

Harvey  
New York, USA

\*\*\*

Dear Brothers and Sisters in the struggle,

Thank you for your clear actions which demonstrate how we workers need to fight against the union bureaucracies and boss class. They are now one in beating up us workers to increase the profits of the super rich owners and stock holders.

The union I belong to, SEIU, is no different in the level of its corruption, gangsterism against members, and cronyism with management. The union bureaucracies, no matter where they exist worldwide, have become putrid companies, thriving on opportunism and are, with no doubt as evidenced by their actions, traitors to our class. We need to break with them once and for all and form our own worker committees that will act as our voice and force our will upon our class enemies instead of submitting to the continued decline in our living standards and democratic rights. This fight must take international dimensions because our class enemy is global, not just local. This must happen, not just at a few plants or factories, but in every workplace. This will happen as your example of courage and audacity spreads to the working people of the world.

You will find that your example will do wonders in educating other workers about what it is we need to do to put an end to the tyranny of capitalism and the class traitors who thrive as the police-force at the workplace. The first steps are being taken by fighters like you!

No more concessions! No more wage cuts! Down with the labor fakers!

In Solidarity and admiration,  
Gene

California, USA

\*\*\*

Local 23 is fighting not just for your jobs. You know this. You're on the front lines of the battle for all of our jobs, and you deserve our support in your efforts.

Both political parties are tied to the bosses and bankster frauds. The GM bureaucracy has sold out to the bosses as well, as you well know. I

suggest reading *The New Class* for a theoretical explanation as to why.

All of our jobs are under attack. The bosses won't stop until the whole world is third world. A united workforce around the world is the only way to stop them, and Local 23 is showing the way.

Thanks for the good work!

Rex

\*\*\*

Hi, I am Edward, and I wish to extend my 100 percent moral support to you! What the elite are doing to you and all of us is so outrageous that we all need to stand together and fight this corporate fascism. Thanks so much for your display of courage and integrity, you are an exemplar for working people everywhere!

Thanks so much,

Edward

\*\*\*

I have been following your struggle at the GM Metal Fab plant on the WSWs, and I admire your bravery and your commitment to fairness. This morning on Michigan Radio (local NPR affiliate) I heard about a story in which a worker at a Lansing, Michigan assembly plant has worked as a "2-tier", which as I understand it is what JD Norman wants to impose there. This worker's mother also worked at the plant, and you could hear the pain in her voice when she described the situation. She makes roughly \$30; he makes roughly \$15. The unfairness of it is obvious, but in her case, you could tell it was very personal for her, as seeing her own child suffer this kind of exploitation was a daily reality. She said she felt bad at times for giving him a referral to work at the plant.

In my own experience, my father grew up in Flint, Michigan in its heyday as a GM town. During that period, one could work in the plants and have a life in which a middle class existence was enabled due to the solidarity of the workers (not, as they would have you believe, that we were the only nation making cars due to WWII—they wanted to pay workers less then as they do now).

Here in Michigan, the devastation from wage cutting and job destruction is visible everywhere. You ask yourself, "how long is this going to go on?" "Where does it all end?" and mostly, "What is wrong with people wanting to be fairly compensated for the value their work creates." I know a lot of forces are conspiring (like your own union) against you, and this will be an uphill battle, but its one that needs to be won, and I respect you all tremendously for your courage.

Sincerely,

Mike T

Michigan, USA



To contact the WSWs and the  
Socialist Equality Party visit:

**[wsws.org/contact](https://wsws.org/contact)**