

Letters on the Indianapolis rank-and-file committee

5 October 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. Previous letters were published September 23, September 25, September 28, and September 30. 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 comrades of the Indianapolis GM Stamping Rank and File Committee,

I am writing to express my support for the righteous and brave stand taken by your Committee. I am a teacher in Australia and a longtime member of the Union. For many years our conditions, compensation and job security have been eroded with the compliance of those supposedly representing us. Now the Union functions as force to ensure employer demands are facilitated and to contain members concerns and rising anger to maintain their own positions within a decaying system.

I have been involved in numerous campaigns and a devastating lock-out and worked within the structure of the union movement—to suffer concessions by stealth, betrayals and sell-outs. The question of leadership of the working class has come to a sharp focus especially now as capitalism is in a political and economic crisis with dire consequences. Independent organisation is critical and your Rank and File Committee's "A letter to all auto workers" of September 15, 2010 is a clarion call to all workers.

The fight is more than just a struggle against the Union or the employers, it is against the State and the whole decayed system of capitalism. Your committee is an example to all workers showing independent action is possible and essential and your actions strengthen workers all over the world.

The need for a strong program will be a requisite for your struggle to protect yourselves and to overcome the pitfalls that will confront you and all workers... I encourage you to work closely with the Socialist Equality Party (and the ICFI) as well as calling on support from all sections of auto workers. This will assist you in many ways, not the least, so that the lessons of history can be assimilated and give direction to ensure the fulfillment of your your leaflet's closing urgent plea and promise:

"... If we know we are not alone in this we know we are strong. It is our responsibility to our children and their children ... They will know history as it has happened and will know that we had a

voice in this to prevent them from living a life of struggle. We must not let them down. This fight was fought years ago, and we as adults are proud of our predecessors for fighting the fight. Now it's our turn to be looked upon the same in our future."

History is being made,
Comradely regards,
Ollie

Melbourne, Australia
30 September 2010

Brothers and sisters of the stamping rank-and-file committee,

I was very happy to learn that you took a principled stand and voted down the shameful "proposal" the way you did. This clearly exposes blatant lies of the "vocal minority" type! You should also know that they lie to you when they say there is no alternative to closing the plant, or that you do not have any support in the population at large. I don't know the specific situation in your city, but want to believe that every honest and thinking worker must by now see things for what they are and that you will get the solidarity and support needed to defend your, and by extension, everyone's right to work and living wage!

Even here in somewhat xenophobic Japan things are slowly changing. Just this week, Monday to Thursday, mainstream television featured "understand Marx's *Capital* in a week" special. When you consider the network's position, it was done in a coolheaded way, making some bold comparisons of 19th century depression cycles with today's situation and drawing some uneasy predictions for the future. More and more people begin to see through the "individual responsibility" mantra, for no matter how hard you might be trying, the problem is systematic in nature and demands collective solution.

I believe in you and your struggle. I believe that you might be the beginning of this collective solution. While I am sorry I am not able to provide any material help to you at this point, I want to assure you that I'm more than ready to stand the line when our turn comes here, and it just might prove to be much sooner than some may think!

In solidarity, "middle class" worker that is seeing his status constantly declining!

Lux
Tokyo, Japan
30 September 2010

Hi brother workers,

I would like to express my full support in your courageous stand against the well-heeled bosses and their two-faced stooges that inhabit the trade unions globally. I am now an older worker who previously worked for British Leyland Cars on the production line until they sacked 600 of us. The Vehicle Builders Union, after some grandstanding and the usual huffing and puffing rhetoric against the bosses, completely sold us out.

What then followed after changing industries was one betrayal after another by the trade unions. My worst experience is the trade union officials leading (or sabotaging) a strike for 5 weeks, wearing down resistance and breaking us financially before offering up a longer working week: Their method was so crude and filthy.

It is hard to recall any decisive victory in any country by the trade unions over the last 30 years. Even at their best under boom conditions they only ever achieved a few small crumbs off the bosses table, a rich banquet table at that. Just as capitalism has failed workers, so too, has the trade union perspective.

From what I have read on the *World Socialist Web Site* whilst following your struggle I noticed "Young auto workers born in 1990 are paid less than half of what their parents were once paid for doing the same work." Now this year young auto workers (and older workers) are being asked to accept a 50 percent pay cut. This is part of a relentless drive to cut wages, eliminate jobs, and gut social spending. Next year there will be new demands for further sacrifice. None of these attacks are possible without the treacherous collaboration of the trade unions! The very people entrusted to look after workers pension funds.

Consider this, if millions of workers at present and in the near future will lose their homes (some 9 million is one forecast) then what would a 50 percent pay cut for workers across the US mean? Those unable to pay their bills on time are treated with inhuman brutality. The growing social distress can be prevented only through workers uniting their struggles, building an international party that fights for workers power and socialist policies. I send you my wholehearted support and warmest greetings.

John C
New South Wales, Australia
30 September 2010

Dear union brothers and sisters,

You are being forcefully attacked by your employer, your union and your government. The rank and file committee you have formed is a concrete form of defiance against these attacks and will serve you well in your struggle. You are not alone. I work in the telecom industry and have witnessed attacks from our employer in various forms such as layoffs and contracting out. Our union has made deals behind our backs, such as temporary specialized jobs that are protected from layoff and union members being denied avenues to arbitration.

Our struggle is, more than ever, a class war. A war being waged by those who are profiting immensely by a capitalist system designed to serve them. We need a system designed to serve

working people and the interests of society as a whole.

It is really shameful that so many attacks are being leveled at you. I am amazed and encouraged by your strong stand in the face of these terrible circumstances. You have gained so much more already in caring for each other and fighting for respect and justice for all workers. I sincerely thank you all.

Stay strong,

Jason L
British Columbia, Canada
2 October 2010

The Indianapolis rank-and-file committee deserves our applause and support. Since Republic Doors and Windows there has been nothing as radical, at least in the recent past. The plethora of support letters for the Committee from around the world is a good sign of inter-worker solidarity; however the lack of any similar action as a result of this example for others is worrying. There seems even no attempt to learn by the experience of other workers to fight back by forming independent organisations such as strike committees. Will the workers in Indianapolis be left to fight by themselves, as happened in so many worker upsurges, that led to a defeat after defeat? Surely not!

Mirek
New South Wales, Australia
3 October 2010

Dear brothers and sisters,

As an experienced militant-socialist in many struggles of the working class for the last 50 years it now apparent to me that you have reached a new stage in your struggle. The opposite of what the trade union leaders want in the UAW is for you is to broaden your struggle to wider layers in the working class. The union leaders are attempting to isolate you, but you now have to isolate them by taking up a principled fight for a socialist program.

International solidarity.
Rod R
Melbourne, Australia
30 September 2010



To contact the WSWs and the
Socialist Equality Party visit:

wsws.org/contact