What UAW President Rory Gamble is really thankful for this Thanksgiving

Jerry White, Tom Hall
26 November 2020

Few, if any, workers will read the trite and clichéd Thanksgiving message from United Auto Workers President Rory Gamble, published Wednesday on the UAW's web site. But it is worth mentioning for its sheer hypocrisy.

"[2020] has been a year that has brought so much sickness with COVID-19, so much social upheaval and unrest and a presidential election that has only underscored the deep divides in how our nation is to go forward," Gamble says. But despite everything, the UAW president declares, "I am seeing that there are still blessings out there that need counting."

Gamble himself is directly responsible for "so much sickness" among autoworkers. He and his fellow union bureaucrats have spent the entire year fighting to keep workers on the job even as the virus has spread uncontrolled in the auto plants. Even though another major outbreak is now underway, he and the companies are concealing this fact from the workforce, even though they know exactly who has gotten sick and who has died.

Gamble has the deaths of dozens of autoworkers stretching back to March on his hands. The fact that now, on top of everything, he pretends to lead autoworkers in Thanksgiving prayer only adds insult to literal injury.

"About this virus," Gamble adds, "I want to say here that my heart goes out to each and every one of our members, and everyone who has lost loved ones and suffered economic hardship due to this virus." Gamble declares that he and the UAW International Executive Board (IEB) have spent months working with "the companies to do everything in our power to keep all of us safe during this worldwide pandemic," adding, "So, we go on, shoulder to shoulder." Given the lack of social distancing in the plants, Gamble perhaps lets on more than he intended.

Gamble then engages in outright lies by claiming that "it was the UAW, through the COVID-19 task force with the Big 3, that demanded a production shutdown in March to keep our members safe. We have worked tirelessly to keep our members healthy and safe during the pandemic and I pledge to you that we will continue to do so…"

Gamble has the nerve to take credit for something that rank-and-file autoworkers did themselves, by carrying out wildcat strikes in open rebellion against the UAW. But after the walkouts, the UAW and the corporate media tried immediately to rewrite history to claim it was the union that led the way.

The words "working tirelessly" and the "UAW" do not belong in the same sentence. The comfortable and corrupt careerists who make up the UAW bureaucracy have never worked tirelessly for anything, unless it has to do with suppressing the resistance of workers and imposing management's dictates.

For example, before the pandemic began the UAW was "working tirelessly" to conceal its massive levels of corruption in the face of a federal corruption probe that had already exposed two of Gamble's predecessors as union president and more than a dozen others.

Gamble's claim to be restoring the "trust" of autoworkers in the union through pathetic "reforms" such as "enhancing independent accounting oversight," establishing an "Ethics officer" and "Ethics Ombudsman" and setting up a "confidential Ethics Hotline" is belied by the fact that he himself is dirty. In January, he was reported to be under investigation for accepting hundreds of thousands of dollars in kickbacks. Curiously, Gamble leaves off of his list of "blessings" the fact that he has not been indicted.

If Gamble were telling the truth, his Thanksgiving

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letter would go something like this:

As I sit down to a holiday feast, I want to acknowledge the sacrifices we have forced workers to make in order to churn out huge profits for the auto companies and to line our own pockets. We know exactly how many workers have gotten sick and died as a result of our working with management to keep production going, but we aren't going to tell you.

Thanks to the worthless COVID-19 measures we cooked up with the companies, autoworkers right now are having to choose between working and risking infection, or staying at home and risking financial destitution. We also know there are an awful lot of you lining up for free food today. That's a shame, but that's why we give to the United Way.

Here at Solidarity House we have had to tighten our belts as well (a difficult task even under ordinary circumstances!). For example, this winter we are having to forgo our normal months-long junkets to Palm Springs, with steak dinners, fine liquor and endless rounds of golf, paid for with workers' dues money.

This year has been nerve-wracking for us at the union. We know we're sitting on a powder keg. We, together with the whole capitalist system, are becoming more and more discredited and socialism is becoming more popular with workers. Worst of all, the World Socialist Web Site *is not only being read by tens of thousands of autoworkers, but they are helping workers to organize opposition inside the plants by forming rank-and-file safety committees.*

Regardless, I want to take the time to count my blessings. First of all, I am thankful that I am not sitting in jail like the last two presidents, Gary Jones and Dennis Williams, and that I can still pull in a salary of more than $200,000 per year. While over a dozen of my fellow bureaucrats have been indicted and the FBI has reportedly been investigating me for receiving kickbacks of my own, I'm thankful that the US government has not put us under trusteeship yet.

I am thankful that Biden got elected. We know Joe from the Obama administration, when we received billions of dollars in corporate stock in return for "saving" the auto industry by cutting wages for new-hires in half. Of course, we loved it when Trump blamed "foreign" workers in China and Mexico for cuts to wages and jobs that we helped to implement—the same old divide and conquer trick we've played for decades. But we know Biden will pursue the same policies as Trump, while bringing in the unions as junior partners.

Finally, I am very thankful that workers have not yet revolted against us again like they did in March. You guys have to stay at work to pay off the multi-trillion-dollar bailout of Wall Street that Congress passed. Why should a few dead workers get in the way of keeping the economy flowing?

So, let me wish each and every member of the UAW a healthy and happy holiday (although, in truth, I couldn't care less, and if some of the retirees catch COVID and die, so much the better, so we don't have to keep paying them from the Retiree Medical Benefits Trust). And, above all, don't read the World Socialist Web Site.

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