

Faurecia Gladstone parts workers in Indiana support Chicago teachers

Faurecia Gladstone Rank-and-File Safety Committee
8 February 2021

The Rank-and-File Safety Committee at the Faurecia Gladstone plant was formed last August to fight the spread of the coronavirus and defend whistleblowers at the auto parts factory.

We have been fighting the coronavirus pandemic for the past year. Here at Faurecia and throughout the country, autoworkers have been forced to learn the hard way that the companies only pretend to operate safely. Their real concern is maximum production for maximum profit without a care for our safety. They cover up the infections and deaths, and the unions are nothing but their partners in crime.

The same thing has been happening to teachers everywhere. President Biden says the schools can be opened safely, which is a bald-faced lie. When a school is open, the virus spreads among the students, the teachers and staff and throughout the community.

Now in Chicago the teachers have taken a stand against returning to contaminated classrooms. They want to teach remotely. Their basic demand is safety for themselves, their students and the community. They have taken a stand to protect human life before corporate profits.

In March, we watched the government hand over trillions of dollars to bail out the biggest corporations. Ever since the pandemic profiteers have been gorging themselves on Wall Street, where share values have shot up to record highs because the Fed has promised to buy whatever they have to sell.

If you want a glaring contrast, look at our factory. When we have to quarantine, whether we have COVID-19 or not, we get next to nothing, just short-term disability for a couple hundred dollars a week, if that. The company says it's our problem and takes no responsibility for exposing us to this deadly disease.

During the pandemic, we had an explosion at our

plant where a worker with decades of experience was almost burned to death. Many people on the shop floor on multiple occasions had warned the plant administrator, Ruth Means, that they smelled propane. Every time her response was the same, "I'll send somebody to take a look at it." But nothing was done. Our co-worker Sheila Skaggs was maimed and almost killed.

The company is indifferent to our lives and welfare. And just like the spread of the pandemic, now they are covering it up. Immediately and before any investigation, Means called a contractor to remove all the evidence from the site. We demand a full investigation and public accounting of the causes of the explosion and of the perpetrators of the cover-up.

Mehring Books, the publishing arm of the Socialist Equality Party (US), is proud to announce the publication in epub format of Volume 1 of *COVID, Capitalism, and Class War: A Social and Political Chronology of the Pandemic*, a compilation of the *World Socialist Web Site's* coverage of this global crisis.

We have watched local businesses close down because they couldn't get any help from the government. We have friends that lost their jobs and then lost their homes that they worked all their lives to pay off. But the big finance companies are making a killing in foreclosures because of the pandemic. Unlimited relief for Wall Street profiteers and nothing for the working class.

How many more workers and their loved ones have to suffer and die? Isn't it time we said, "Enough!" That is why we support the Chicago teachers. The Democratic Party Mayor of Chicago Lori Lightfoot and the head of the Chicago Public Schools Janice Jackson are working night and main with the Biden administration to force

the teachers back to work. Biden and many members of his administration have made it very plain that the teachers and their students and communities are to be sacrificed to keep workers on the job and profits flowing to sustain the inflated values on the stock market.

We believe those funds should be put to use to protect the lives of the working class, not the billions accrued by the pandemic profiteers. Brothers and sisters, if you agree with us, please, reach out to us today and join the Gladstone Rank-and-File Safety Committee. If you have friends and co-workers at the Faurecia South Plant in Columbus or if you have contacts at our sister plants in Fort Wayne and Louisville, ask them to join as well.

We are part of a network of rank-and-file safety committees uniting educators, autoworkers, logistics workers and all sections of the working class from coast to coast to prepare a political general strike to repudiate the profiteers and put a stop to the pandemic. All schools and universities must be shut down, along with non-essential businesses, and all those who are financially impacted must be fully compensated. The fortunes hoarded by pandemic profiteers will have to be confiscated to guarantee workers' livelihoods and full funding for first-rate online learning facilities for every student.



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