

THE WHOLE TRUTH!

by Shawn Fain, UAW Local 1166, Skilled Trade Committeeman

Fellow Union Members,

We are one day away from the most monumental ratification vote since 1979. Due to the recent letter that was put out by 7 members of the National Negotiating Committee, titled “The Bare Truth”, (BARE is exactly what it is), I thought I would respond with my own letter titled “The Whole Truth”!

In the third and fourth paragraphs of this [Bare Truth] letter it is stated that, “misinformation was given credibility to one single member of the negotiating committee and that during crucial moments during negotiations he had no strategy or solutions”, it further states that “good local union representatives didn’t truly understand the provisions of the agreement or chose to take the easy way out and protect their own politics by being anti-ratification.” HOW DARE THEY MAKE SUCH SHALLOW STATEMENTS!

In 1959, Walter Reuther said, “The real test of friendship and solidarity is not where one stands when the weather is fair and the sun is shining, but rather where he stands at a time of storm and stress.” Bill Parker and the “good local union reps.”, as we were called, are NOT TAKING THE EASY WAY OUT! The only people taking the EASY WAY OUT are the members of the national negotiating team who flip flopped like fish when they initially all voted against this agreement.

As I stated in an earlier letter, Bill Parker was the only man to stand by his convictions all the way through, he is a man of unmatched INTEGRITY! The only way the International seems to respond to anyone who questions or disagrees with them is to lash out and then start labeling them DISSIDENTS or OUTSIDERS. We need leaders not followers. Remember the old saying, “if everyone is thinking the same, then someone isn’t thinking!” John F. Kennedy once stated, “Without debate, without criticism, no administration and no country can succeed—and no republic can survive.”

What strategy or solution is needed to stand against 2 tier wages, other than the FACT that an agreement of this type will cause division and ultimately lower the standard of living for the current full time employees? In the BARE TRUTH it is stated that “not a single existing seniority member will ever be placed on entry level rates.” As you know, at Delphi, their seniority members weren’t placed on entry level rates, but they did eventually lose \$10- \$12 per hour. How do we organize a Toyota or Honda factory when they are paying their workers \$25 per hour and they see us paying some workers \$28 and others \$14?

What strategy or solution is needed to secure future product for our respective plants? Contract time is the time when all locals can stand together and fight together for a more secure future. Look at our brothers and sisters at KTP. They have won the Harbour Award for being the most productive plant for both front and rear wheel drive transmissions. Now they have been repaid, not by being rewarded new product in their plant (which is becoming a ghost town) but by getting a “joint venture” with Getrag in another county. In recent times every plant that entered into a joint venture eventually led to the plant being completely taken over by the joint partner, examples are: New Castle/Metaldyne, Huntsville/Siemens, Magna/New Venture Gear and the biggest farce of all Daimler/Chrysler.

I am sick and tired of reading and hearing that we “the workers” are to blame and always pay the price for what ails the company. Change is inevitable, if you are not changing, then you are not living. Unfortunately the only thing the company wants to change is our pay and work practices,

refusing to change the way they do business. We all know, no matter what plant we work at, or which corporation you work for, MISMANAGEMENT and bad business practices are costing this corporation billions. As long as the corporation restricts the plants to buying products through “approved” vendors, our wages will not matter.

It is ridiculous that I, Joe Nobody, can buy supplies cheaper than a multibillion dollar corporation. Meanwhile, we sit back and watch the company pay executives millions in salary and bonuses, their excuse is, they have to pay these salaries and bonuses to attract “top talent”. Well, the same argument applies for why they should pay our workers the wages they do, we are the best at what we do in our respective jobs, if they want top talent, they should pay us top wages. How many managers even have a clue as to what it takes to make our machinery run? The company is claiming it is not efficient to pay non-core workers full pay. It is not efficient to pay \$250,000 for a machine that I, Joe Nobody can buy for \$230,000. It is not efficient to outsource work to vendors and paying 3 to 5 times the cost of performing the work in-house with our own workers.

Einstein once said, “Insanity is doing the same thing again and again and expecting different results.” Closing/selling plants and eliminating jobs has not solved the problems for the past 20 years and it will not solve the problems for the future! But this is how this company operates corporate wide every day! Efficiency is the politically correct word for “speedup”. As we have witnessed the past few years, the company has been laying off, buying out or retiring our workers and then not replacing them. The end result is the company piles more work on those who remain, while also expecting and encouraging the remaining workers to cross lines of demarcation. How many fatalities will we have to witness before this practice ceases?

The hour of desperation is upon us. We are down to 45,000 employees left here at Chrysler, 75,000 at GM, and around 30,000 at Ford, we used to be 1.5 million strong. We have reached the threshold, it’s time to draw the line and fight like hell for what remains or do we continue down this path of picking us off plant by plant, member by member? I encourage each of you to attend the meeting tomorrow, listen to what the leadership at all levels has to say, and then,

MAKE AN INFORMED DECISION WHEN YOU VOTE!

IN SOLIDARITY,

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