

Live Bait & Ammo #106: Beat the Competition Game

The partnership of union and management is essentially adulterous. No one is faithful to a prostitute.

The Concession Caucus sold the soul of unionism —equal pay for equal work— for a song and dance about commitment: a commitment to future investment.

Now, everybody wants a piece of the action.

Why not?

It's cheaper than a whisper in the ear.

The demand for wage and benefit cuts at American Axle proves that concessions only set the benchmark lower. The competition always wants more.

If the conflict at American Axle was only about concessions, the UAW would have a tentative agreement. Over and over, the Con Caucus has shown a willingness to make workers sacrifice for management's glory. But American Axle wants more.

American Axle not only wants wage and benefit cuts, they want to close plants and cut jobs. Why not? The Con Caucus agreed to allow GM, Ford, and Chrysler to cut jobs and close plants on top of wage and benefit reductions. Why should profitability make any difference?

Workers don't share in the success of their employers. They aren't partners in the business. They aren't even associates when it comes to profits.

American Axle is profitable and has always been profitable. But restructuring is not just about the money, it's about control. It's about union busting.

American Axle wants to move production to non union plants in the US. Concessions won't stop the move. If a company threatens to close a plant unless workers make concessions, they are going to close the plant anyway. They simply want concessions to cover the shipping and handling. This isn't a guess. Look around. It happens over and over.

Competitive concession making is a bankrupt policy. The only legitimate union solution is organizing.

We can't wait for the Con Caucus to negotiate a backseat "neutrality agreement". Rank and file members should go to their fellow workers in American Axle's non union plants and encourage them to join the competition for higher wages.

The real competition for union members isn't other workers, it's management. Our real partners aren't bosses. Our real partners are union and non union workers alike. We need to talk with our non union peers as equals and promote our common interests: better jobs, better wages, better benefits, and more respect. Organizing defeats concession bargaining.

If workers organize with workers across the line, they can beat the competition game and win collective bargaining agreements that benefit all workers equally.

Don't wait for the Cons to cut a lousy deal. Organize to win.

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