

Live Bait & Ammo # 79

Before the end of the year temps will dominate the workforce at Delphi. They make \$14 per hour, they receive no benefits, and despite the fact they pay union dues, they have no rights or privileges except one: they will be eligible to vote on the contract.

Gettelfinger delivered. He gave Miller everything he asked for — a degraded workforce without a battle.

In regard to Delphi Gettelfinger told reporters on July 17, "I think the attrition package got them where they need to be, and they act like nothing has changed."

He sold the cattle and now he's surprised Miller wants the ranch house and the horses?

Gettelfinger gives his corporate partners everything they want. Then he acts surprised they want more? What did he expect? Where is the business sense his corporate partners extol as the Finger's finest quality? If he's such a good business man, why doesn't he profit from his deals? Where's the pay off? What have we gained? A pat on the back for rolling over?

Gettelfinger insinuated there may yet be a strike at Delphi. Wagoner and Miller are certainly snickering. How do you organize workers who have no status in the company or the union? How do you convince them to strike when the local leadership and most of the members jumped ship? The Good Old Boys weren't willing to fight. Now they expect temps to put themselves at the tip of the spear?

The Local 2151 Executive Board recommends holding an "Open House". They intend to invite the temps to come to the union hall two hours before their shift begins so they can eat snacks with the "leadership" and get a free t-shirt. The plan reminds me of that song Woody Guthrie sang about a soup so thin you could read a newspaper through it.

The silver platter which carried the severed head of our aspirations was polished back in April 2004 when the UAW International completed negotiations on a two

tier supplement for Delphi: \$14 per hour, no COLA, no pension, and squat for benefits.

The International did not permit members of the affected Local Unions to vote on the two tier supplement. I appealed the decision to the PRB.

For those of you who are unfamiliar with the acronym, the Public Review Board is a pantomime of “Justice Delayed” performed by puppets who with great humility describe themselves as “distinguished”. Members of the PRB are selected and compensated for their services by the accused, the UAW International Executive Board. At every Constitutional Convention a representative of the PRB testifies that they have never uncovered any corruption in the UAW.

On June 28, 2006 the Detroit News reported that a federal jury found Donny Douglas, a UAW International rep, and Jay Campbell, a Local shop chairman, guilty of “conspiracy to break labor laws and to extort favors from GM.” The civil suit against the two men was dismissed because time limits were exhausted by plaintiffs, members of UAW Local 594, who sought internal union remedies including an appeal to the PRB. The judge inferred they should have known better.

In Amsterdam shop windows take the lechery out of prostitution. In the UAW the Public Review Board renders the treachery of pimps shop window legitimate.

An appeal to the PRB is an exercise in futility but I couldn’t resist the word play. My repartee with the wits in Sold-our-dignity House supplied a trove of certifiable quotes. For example, in defense of two tier wages the International asserted the “future hire group is a null class.”

Mind you, this is not satire. I have documentation from PRB Case No. 1504 to prove that the International defended their decision to deprive us of the right to vote on the grounds that the “future hire group is a null class.” The designation is literally beneath contempt.

The segregation of future union members into a “null class” is a harrowing prediction of the future of the union. The Preamble of the UAW Constitution avows in part that “the ideals and hopes of the workers who come under the jurisdiction of the [UAW]” are exemplified by the statement “that all men are

created equal” and that within the union “lies the hope of the worker in advancing society toward the ultimate goal of social and economic justice.”

Where is the hope of a new hire in advancing toward the goal of social and economic justice if the union relegates him or her to second class citizenship? New hires, the workers who embody the future of the union, have been disenfranchised in advance.

What can the Local 2151 E-Board tell new hires at the “Open House”? The ship is sinking? Our life boats are secured? Sorry there weren’t enough to go around? Good luck, mates?

The future of current union members and retirees is inextricably bound with the future of new members. Our common interests are inseparable. It is our duty to prepare the way for the next generation just as the way was prepared for us. New hires should be treated with respect not contempt. New hires aren’t a “null class”, they are our friends and children.

Two tier isn’t a collective bargaining strategy, it’s a symptom of social decadence.

Article Two of the UAW Constitution states that our purpose is: (1) “To improve working conditions, create a uniform system of shorter hours, higher wages, health care and pensions; to maintain and protect the interests of workers under the jurisdiction of this International Union.”

(2) “To unite in one organization, regardless of religion, race, creed, color, sex, political affiliation or nationality, age, disability, marital status or sexual orientation, all employees under the jurisdiction of this International Union.”

Two tier puts these principles in the shredder. Two tier impacts all active, retired, and future members. If new hires are classified as a “null class”, then one day they will in turn classify senior members and retirees as a “null class”. The term is an existential coffin for the union.

The introduction of temps into Delphi and GM is a sign of things to come. The contract is temporarily suspended for a certain class of workers. The Concession

Caucus is bending over backwards to help their corporate partners emulate the Toyota system of permanent temps which is, for all intents and purposes, a two tier wage scale.

Gettelfinger is backpedalling to the future.

Two tier creates an unequal system of wages, health care, and pensions. The two tier system is wholesale discrimination against an entire class of people. Two tier severs the solidarity between generations. Two tier will destroy the union. Is that the plan?

The Concession Caucus not only accepts management's unilateral "right to manage," they administer the degradation of the working class, because they do not believe workers have any value other than that dictated by the bosses. Gettelfinger and Wagoner's world view is one and the same.

In Gettelfinger's address to the UAW Constitutional Convention he described the challenges we face as insurmountable. His outrage was muted. His attitude resigned. He skirted confrontation with management and stuck to the party line: cooperation.

The Concession Caucus always reverts to the same solution. They tell workers who to vote for, namely, Democrats. They encourage workers to put all their hopes in the ballot box rather than direct confrontation at the point of production. The bait and switch diverts attention from the CC's conviction that workers must sacrifice for the greater good which they assert is "The Partnership" between company bosses, union bosses, and the Democratic Party.

The Partnership is pilfering the accrued vested benefits of retirees. The Partnership is slashing wages and benefits. The Partnership is undermining working conditions including the eight hour day, equal pay for equal work, and the integrity of a union contract defined by rules that give workers dignity.

Worst of all, The Partnership is degrading an entire class of workers by designating them temporary. How can we organize workers who have no status in the company, the union, or the political system? Active workers, temp workers, retirees, and the unemployed share a vital common interest. None of us have

status in The Partnership. We are all temps. We are all disenfranchised. We have become immigrants in the land where we were born.

Let's get together and plot our counter offensive.

Soldiers of Solidarity are meeting in Flint

Saturday July 22

One p.m.

Wallis Restaurant

1341 South Center Road

Burton, Michigan 48509.

sos, shotwell