

## Live Bait & Ammo #45

A flyer circulated in certain GM plants accused UAW members who opposed the national contract of being "misleading and even reckless". The accusation is not so much a case of the pot calling the kettle black as it is the travesty of a rapist calling the victim a whore.

Enumerating misleading statements in the Highlights (from a two cent COLA diversion purported "to secure pension improvements" diverted instead to shareholders; to the elimination of Traditional Blue Cross; to the ballyhooed claim of GM's billion dollar investment in Delphi which was later scoffed at as "a mirage" by snickering investors; etc etc....) is like kicking a lemon that a shady dealer convinced you was only driven to church. Don't scuff your shoes kicking the vehicle, put your boots to the misleading dealer who sold you the rotten bill of goods.

This contract was not about beating the competition, it was about busting the union. It was not about nickels and dimes, it was about power and control. We were fleeced of at least 50,000 jobs. Our union was divided into tiers, subdivided into factions, and contracted out to the lowest bidder.

No sooner had the deal gone down than Ford announced a billion dollar investment in Mexico, the Mercedes plant in Alabama denied any card check neutrality deal with the UAW, and GM admitted the billion bucks promised to Delphi had already been "in the pipeline" which is business-speak for "up your butt, schmuck".

We were snookered. Gettelfinger & Co. delivered a contract that would have made George Bush proud: relief for the rich and wage cuts for new hires; more power for bosses and job cuts for union members.

The contract struck a blow to union democracy as well. UAW members at Delphi and Visteon will get stuck with a two tier wage and benefit structure but they will not be permitted to vote on the "Supplement."

Art.19 Sec.4 of the UAW Constitution: "National agreements and the supplements thereof shall be ratified by the Local Unions involved." But the Rollover Caucus has never shown much regard for the UAW Constitution.

Two tier is a controversial issue. The International reduced the risk of rejection by combining the vote of Delphi and GM (also Visteon and Ford). The International justified the combined vote on the assertion that the Delphi contract "mirrors in all respects, the 2003-2007 UAW-GM National Agreement." Two tier is a major distortion in the "mirror" and a backward reflection of our union as a "social movement."

The combined vote amounted to a gerrymander that effectively disenfranchised members at Delphi who were outnumbered by GM almost four to one. "No" votes at Delphi were easily overruled by misled GM workers. Consequently, Delphi workers who opposed the contract knew that their votes would not count.

Most members at GM were unaware that the two separate votes were combined. Nor were they informed that Delphi workers would not be permitted to vote on the two tier supplement. As a result, they did not realize that by ratifying their own contract they would be stabbing their brothers and sisters in the back. UAW members who informed GM workers what would happen to Delphi were accused of "misleading" behavior by rollover flunkies pandering for International appointments.

The Misleaders claimed this contract is a "product of the times" and "That is why we must become more active politically.....to change the economic and political priorities in this country"

Democracy is the Misleaders' answer to everything except International appointments. Nepotism is the guiding light on that stage. Three of Owen Bieber's sons have International appointments. Gifted children are such a blessing.

As a product of the times, loss of market share is a ringer not a reason for concessions. GM makes more cars than they did twenty years ago with half the workforce. Fewer jobs will not win more market share, but the Rollover Caucus swapped so many jobs in these negotiations the corpos eagerly slapped down three thousand smackers for every swinging turkey neck.

Misleaders blame unfair labor laws and a government that serves corporate interests for their failure to organize and bargain in solidarity. The porkchoppers should look in the mirror.

Who wants to join a union that brags about its partnership with the bosses? Who wants to support a union that degrades new hires and refers to the legacy of retirees as a burdensome cost? Who wants to fight for a union that denies members the right to vote on supplements of the contract that will shatter solidarity forever? Who wants to be loyal to leaders who don't defend equality? How can we organize workers with anti union policies?

The success of the Labor Movement in the 30's and the Civil Rights Movement in the 60's wasn't won by elections, it was won by confrontation and direct action. If you want to organize, fight the boss, win grievances, stop trading jobs for wages, and start treating all workers as equals, not tiers to be stepped on. Gettelfinger has abandoned grass roots organizing because he's more comfortable with the bosses. He trades confrontation for neutrality and solidarity for wages rewarded in a descending scale of competitive disparity. Company-union partnership is not an organizing strategy, it's the counsel of traitors.

The Misleaders wrote: "Attendance, Work Rules, and Classifications: These provisions can only be changed at the Local level and we are holding strong to protect our members in these areas."

Who's behind the wheel of this reckless disinformation vehicle, this Hummer of spin? The Rollover Caucus pits Local against Local in cutthroat competition to concede on work rules that retirees fought long and hard to win. The rules that make jobs humane and the distribution of work fair will be tossed to the hogs.

Does any Local imagine they won't be dragged down? If you want new products you must compete with concessions. There is no "protection" when the Rollover Caucus bulldozes Locals into dog eat dog anti union competition.

Contract Highlights of the International Staff Council, the union that represents UAW International staff to their employers, the UAW International staff, (that's

right they bargain with themselves) does not have any language on work rules or absenteeism. Nice work if you can get it.

After two tier is established at Delphi and Visteon, I predict, the suppliers will set up shop in departments leased to them by GM or Ford assembly plants. Modules will be outsourced to these on-site maquiladoras and second tier UAW members will deliver finished products direct to the assembly line just in time. Welcome to Yellowstone, and be sure to thank the Misleaders on your way out the door.

Ford and GM Locals will have no bitch to pitch as they ratified the agreement to establish a two tier wage and invest a billion bucks with the second tier labor brokers. Where did they think the promised "new work" was going to come from? Increased market share?

Lastly, the Misleaders actually had the audacity to claim this contract gives us job security. The Rollover Caucus has never enforced Secure Employment Levels. GM and Delphi owe us tens of thousands of jobs but there has never been an effort to honor that obligation. Instead the Corps will eliminate tens of thousands of jobs with the blessing of the Misleaders. We don't get job security, we get bribed to sign contracts, we get paid to sit in job banks, we get joint funded appointees, and with two tier we give bosses incentive to fire us.

Members of UAW Local 2151 voted the national contract down two to one. We filed appeals against the decisions to combine the ratification vote and deny our right to vote on the two tier "Supplement". It's better to fight back than to take it lying down. It's a matter of self respect.

UAW members, Rod Underhill and Dan Smith, felt betrayed by the two tier supplement and "the deceitful and under handed way in which the ratification process was handled." They mailed their 25 year UAW rings (a gift from Local 2151) to Ron Gettelfinger with a letter.

"We had anticipated for years wearing these rings with pride. They are symbols of achievement not unlike a college diploma or a journeyman's card. They cannot be bought. It is our hope that they will be reminders to you that honesty, integrity, and respect are still as important to us who work on the shop floor today as when our Union was first formed. If you do not want them for this purpose, feel free to

give them to someone else. They are brand new, and have never been worn, so there is no dirt or grime from being on a worker's hand. If you don't know anyone else who would like to have them, then throw them away, as we would be ashamed to wear them unless we were convinced that the Union was returning to the values which until now, have always made us proud to be members of the United Auto Workers."

A ring is a universal symbol of a sacred bond. Dan and Rod made a heartfelt gesture, full of hurt and shame, anger and dignity. Will the Finger care? I doubt it. But some workers are showing the grit a real union is made of. We will fight back.

stay solid,

UAW Local 2151