

Live Bait & Ammo # 68

Miller's deadline for the UAW is the same day as the FBI and SEC deadline for Delphi.

If execs don't agree to testify, they will be charged with fraud and conspiracy March 31.

The Concession Caucus is doing its best to keep the rank & file suppressed. But best laid plans blow up in their faces. News that all but four Delphi plants will be closed or consolidated sparked an upsurge in work to rule and direct retaliation. The leak was intended to quell dissent and discourage No Concession delegates. Trouble is, some workers don't get depressed or discouraged when they see the Chicken Dance. They get even.

"They'll get what they deserve," is the phrase I heard repeated.

"When is the strike vote? I'm ready now."

Workers who were sitting on the fence jumped down.

"Give us respect or expect our vengeance."

Our communities — Coopersville, Flint, Adrian, Moraine, Saginaw, Anderson, Milwaukee, Athens, Kettering, Columbus, Dayton, Sandusky, Youngstown, Warren, Wichita Falls — need jobs not buy outs. Our children need work that is worthwhile, not wage cuts. We need a union that will fight for workers' rights, not concessions and phony partnerships.

Rank & file members are challenging union reps to lead the fight or get out of the way. Local Concession Caucus officials are forced to take positions they'd rather avoid — the moment of truth. One local union president ruled that motions for full disclosure of contract changes, adequate time to deliberate before ratification, and a strike vote were "Out of order." When he was asked on what grounds, he said, "Higher Authority." When he was asked whether he meant God or himself he said, "The International dictates these matters."

Dictate is the right word. According to “Higher Authority” the buy-off does not require ratification. It requires the approval of Judge Drain. The Concession Caucus is using the buy-off to delete job security language and import temp workers into GM and Delphi. The buy-off slices and dices solidarity.

The temps are a “bridge” to two tier at GM. It’s the Toyota model. Toyota denies they have two tier, but they employ permanent temps for low wages and no benefits. They work them until they hurt them, throw them out the door, then hire more. The temp “bridge” in the buy-off deal has neither time limits nor restrictions. But the more important question is: why should we help a company that wants to destroy us? Why should we approve scabs? How does the buy-off save jobs, pensions, benefits, wages? The Concession Caucus is decimating the union.

Let’s be perfectly clear. We are in negotiations with a hostile employer. Workers who retire and then return to train temps and new hires are no better than scabs.

A contract’s value is determined by enforcement, not paper and ink. In the 2003 contract GM promised \$1 billion in new business with Delphi. The work never materialized. Instead Delphi’s content per GM vehicle declined. Likewise Delphi committed to “allocate new product awards....to UAW represented facilities and make sufficient capital investments at those sites to allow them to be competitive, improve product quality, improve operational effectiveness and be viable for the long term.”

We’re not virgins. The buy-off isn’t worth the paper it’s printed on if there aren’t enough jobs left to support it, or a union that is determined to enforce it.

If you think Delphi’s latest proposal is atrocious, you should see the two tier supplement the Concession Caucus brokered in 2004. The supplement sets the rate at \$14 per hour, no COLA for four years, no pension, and exorbitant increases in out-of-pocket health care costs.

The supplement like the buy-off was never ratified. The Concession Caucus implemented it unilaterally. In 2011 when the supplement expires new hires will acquire majority leverage at which time the pay back comes due. Our first order of business should be to scrap the two tier supplement. Equal pay for equal work means security in retirement. Don’t turn your back on future members. Vote NO

until all workers are treated equally. Let that be our legacy. Solidarity with the members we leave behind isn't idealism, it's prudence.

Hopefully, Miller will pull the trigger March 31 and set strike preparations in motion. The intensity of work to rule will spike, anger will be channeled, and Wagoner will be put on notice. When Wagoner's job is on the line negotiations will begin in earnest. If your plant is on the chopping block like mine, you have nothing to lose by fighting back. Give them just what they deserve. There's no legitimate reason to reward criminal negligence and punish honest labor.

(sos, shotwell)