

Live Bait & Ammo # 70

Steve Miller gave a speech at the Detroit Economic Club. While soldiers of solidarity were picketing outside in the worst possible weather—cold wind and rain—I was inside breaking bread with the non working class. I had the easy job. The real work as always was on the pavement, the shop floor, the point of production where profit meets loss and workers confront the boss—in this case, the police.

The police wouldn't let the pickets cross the street. My wife, Sheila, crossed the street intending to hand fliers to the money changers as they left the Temple. The police stopped her.

“Excuse me, what are you doing.”

“I'm going to pass out fliers.”

“Aren't you with that group over there?”

“Yes.”

“You can't be on this side of the street.”

“I believe I do have the right to be on this side of the street and to pass out fliers.”

“No, you don't. We're warning you, go back across the street.”

Eleanore Eveleth, a representative of the Lawyers Guild arrived. She challenged the police.

“By what law are you denying their first amendment rights?”

“I don’t know,” the police said.

Two lawyers were called to the scene. The right of protesters to picket on public sidewalks was established. All the protesters had the right to cross the street and picket on the sidewalk in front of the Masonic Temple. SOS compromised. Three women, Sheila, Juanita Cadman, and Diane Feeley crossed the street and distributed fliers to people as they left. Women rule when they work to rule.

Meanwhile in Flint there was a mini sitdown. On Friday a supervisor informed Claudia Perkins that she was laid off.

“No, I’m not.”

“Don’t come into work Monday.”

“You must be out of your mind. I will be here Monday.”

Then Claudia called her Bargaining Chair.

“Are you aware my seniority rights are being violated?”

He admitted he was aware but insisted he didn’t know what to do because the International hadn’t returned his call.

“Do you know how to write a grievance? Because I know how to sign one. I will hit the clock on Monday.”

Even the most sluggish of leaders can recognize a train that isn't going to stop. He asked Claudia if she could get some people to join her.

On Monday forty-five workers who'd been laid off hit the clock and refused to leave.

Labor Relations told them they were trespassing. They refused to leave. Security wasn't in the mood to mix it up and the police, if they were called, never arrived. A UAW International rep finally showed up and convinced management to agree to reimburse everyone for lost pay and return them to work the following Monday. Workers rule when they work to rule.

Reporters keep asking me if there is going to be a wildcat strike. I always say the same thing; a wild cat strike is a spontaneous reaction to a precipitating event. I can't predict such a thing but the ground is fertile because the corporations are threatening people and union reps have failed to articulate a clear plan of action.

In Coopersville, MI after the plant manager announced the plant was closing about a hundred workers walked out a half hour early.

In Peoria, IL thirty workers shut down the shaft line and walked into Labor Relations to settle matters on their own terms.

The pressure is mounting.

Every union member especially those at GM should support Delphi workers. No matter where you work, bankruptcy is coming to your doorstep. When bankruptcy knocks on the door, you better be prepared to answer that knock with one word—SOLIDARITY. If you don't, bankruptcy, the new business plan, is going to knock your

lights out. This is not a battle one can retreat or retire from. Miller's gang intends to take it all.

(sos, shotwell)