

They show you a fox, to make you run to the wolf

UAW President Ron Gettlefinger says Ford is losing money, and the whole auto industry is in trouble. He says that since Ford can't survive without concessions, we need to make sacrifices other than base wages, healthcare, and retiree security. Although painful, this will hopefully prevent plant closings and get us new products, keeping Ford in business, and jobs in the US.

UAW 249 President Jeff Wright said all the local presidents and chairpersons in the Ford system unanimously agreed to these concessions. He thinks these give-backs are a "bitter pill" for us, considering the way management has been treating us inside the plant. A "NO" vote would lead to bankruptcy, and a judge would impose far worse concessions on the workers. Wright says we must stay cool, and keep the emotions in check; and that it would be irresponsible and self-defeating to "join the chorus" and say NO. You would have to go home and tell your spouse that you helped cause the second great Depression, because you got emotional and angry.

These concessions are:

1. Work schedule changes at the drop of a hat.
2. Loss of the 8-hour overtime.
3. Sixteen percent reduction in break time. (8 min. per day at zero "base wage")
4. Loss of COLA.
5. Loss of Christmas bonus.
6. Loss of performance bonus (profit sharing).
7. No paper paychecks.
8. Loss of Easter Monday holiday.
9. Downgraded SUB pay for those with less than 20 years.
10. Very downgraded SUB for new workers. (Another sellout of youth)
11. Loss of skilled trade jobs.
12. No pay in lieu of vacation.
13. Required physicals, and required healthcare (Invasion of privacy).
14. Transfers: One, take it or leave it.
15. Reduced VEBA cash. (And start raising premiums and co-pays)

But what are these leaders assuming? If you give in to your adversaries, they will be nice to you? I think it is common sense that the auto companies will come back for more concessions. Isn't that what they have done in the past? We let them break our contract in 2006: we gave back \$1 an hour, and let retiree security slip by \$700 per year. Then they came back with a whopping 50% wage cut in the 2007 contract. Now, we have lost the job bank, ETAP educational funds, and dependent scholarship funds, all without a vote of the members. I would have to question Gettlefinger's leadership at this point. What if we give Ford everything it wants, and then they go bankrupt? There is really no logic to **concession bargaining**, because you can always help the company a little more by making more sacrifices. Why don't we work for \$7 an hour and not take any breaks at all? Would this bring millions of jobs into the US, and revive the whole economy? These leaders are assuming that we auto-workers are powerless. To put it bluntly, they are saying that they will not lead us.

We do not have to give these concessions to Ford. We have a labor contract until 2011. Can a bankruptcy judge run these auto plants with prison labor or army troops? That judge will have to change the whole social system and the working class. **Our job is to vote "NO" on concessions, and start building a labor organization that goes to bat for those who need help.** Our job is to build something up for the next generation instead of selling them out.

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