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LOCAL 23 SHOWS WHAT SOLIDARITY LOOKS LIKE!

Just in time for the UAW's huff-and-puff parade in Detroit on August 28, UAW Local 23 in Indianapolis, Indiana has come forward to show us how rank and file solidarity can *enforce* workers' rights and justice, on the spot.

The UAW's Concession Train got derailed in Indianapolis, Indiana. On Sunday August 15, 2010 a full house (at least 325 members according to the workers' clicker) told the UAW International they weren't going to take it anymore.

Local 23 had passed a motion at a membership meeting last May which affirmed their conviction as union members that it was wise to uphold solidarity and adhere to the UAW Constitution. Article 19 Section 6 obligates the UAW International Executive Board to protect UAW Locals against "*infringement by Local Unions with inferior agreements in workplaces doing similar work...*". In other words, prohibit scab shops or locals that break the master agreement.

Local 23 said in no uncertain terms: We are union. Union to the core.

Local 23 passed a motion denying any UAW official permission to negotiate an inferior agreement which would set Local 23 in direct competition with other unions.

We all, especially UAW members at stamping plants, owe them a salute.

Article 19 Section 3 forbids any UAW official from negotiating with an employer "*without first obtaining the approval of the Local Union.*"

Local 23 nailed their union credentials to the Constitutional wall with one motion.

Dirty Deals and Dirty Dealing

Despite the fact that Local 23 denied permission to negotiate concessions, the UAW International went behind their backs and negotiated with an anti-union company, J.D. Norman Industries, for a contract that would in effect make Local 23 a bunch of scabs.

The "Highlights" concealed more than they revealed but members of UAW Local 23 didn't need an oracle from Delphi to tell them it was a dirty deal. The Indianapolis Metal Fabrication plant has 1.2 million sq. feet of exploitable space. If the workers had agreed to cut their pay in half, GM and their partners in the UAW Concession Caucus would have been pounding on the doors of every stamping plant in the country demanding King's perversion of "pattern bargaining" — equal concessions.

Throw The Bums Out!

Within hours of the announcement that an information meeting was set up for Sunday and a ratification vote for Monday, a letter entitled "Throw the Traitors out of the Union Hall" hit the floor.

The shopfloor letter declared "the highest authority in the UAW is WE THE MEMBERS." "Throw the traitors out of the Union Hall. Shout them down and throw them out."

The International had not only invited cops to the meeting, they had brought them inside the Union Hall. The members demanded that all the police leave the hall. The police left.

The chaplain then began the meeting with a prayer entreating the Lord to guide the membership to stand together and do God's will for the good of His people.

The Local Union president tried to introduce the International reps but as soon as he said the word "International" the room exploded with boos.

One member smiled and said, "I guess we know what God's will is."

UAW International rep, Mike Grimes, took the stage. Workers shouted, "Traitor! Traitor!" As the room quieted down, Grimes explained how important he was.

Workers responded with shouts, "Go home! Get out! This isn't your house!"

Grimes tried to explain what the workers were "facing" but they told him "Cut your own pay!" They shouted, "No means NO!", and "We don't need no explanation!", and "The members aren't stupid!"

The Local Union president tried to quiet the members but he was shouted down. A few members attempted to get the chair to recognize them from the floor. Shouts of "Point of Order" from the floor were heard but the chair refused to recognize the fundamental point of order which was: the meeting was illegal because it violated both the Local Union By-Laws and the UAW Constitution.

Finally Grimes yelled, "Are there any members who want to hear this information?"

A resounding "NO!" exploded from the crowd.

"Go home! Hit the road! Get out! Go! Go! Go!" reverberated from the floor of the hall. Reporters outside could hear the reaction loud and clear and reported it in the Indianapolis Star. [<http://dailyme.com/story/2010081600001316/local-23-shouts-gm-plan-opposition.html>]

When the UAW International reps walked out, all the members stood up and cheered. [<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=owUjzuVLY-s>]

Local Heroes

When UAW Local 23 Bargaining Chair Greg Clark took the podium he got a standing ovation. He stood by the membership from start to finish. Clark stood strong against the pressure of the UAW International, the Governor of Indiana, and the Chamber of Commerce. Rank & file members stood with him. The entire shop committee united with the members. Strong and proud and union through and through.

For the record, Greg Clark recited the Local Union By-Laws and the UAW Constitution Articles that were violated by the International, before the meeting adjourned.

UAW Local 23 showed us all that rank & file members are the highest authority in the union. They showed us how members can control their own meetings. They showed us that true solidarity works.

This bulletin is put out in the interests of informing workers and renewing the fighting power of organized labor. Please send your comments and your on-the-job, on-scene reports to:
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