

Reject UAW-GM-Norman blackmail! Organize now to stop wage cut and plant closure!

*Statement of the Socialist Equality Party
29 August 2010*

Local 23 workers should emphatically reject the latest attempt by the UAW, GM and Justin Norman to impose a 50 percent wage cut. Today's meeting is the result of a three-way conspiracy against the rank and file.

It underscores the fact that the UAW will stop at nothing to trample on the democratic will of the workers and push through the sale of the plant on the basis of poverty-level wages. The bureaucrats like Regional Director Davison have a direct financial stake in boosting the profit of the auto bosses by driving down the wages and conditions of the workers.

It is preposterous for Norman to pose as a savior of workers. The 34-year-old ex-stockbroker is the latest in a long line of fast buck artists and asset strippers trying to cash in from destroying workers' wages, pensions and working conditions. Today he demands a 50 percent wage cut, tomorrow Norman or some other owner will say even lower wages are needed to "stay competitive" and "save" the plant. When that happens the UAW, the media, the politicians will all say \$10 or \$8 an hour "is better than zero."

The very fact of today's meeting is a warning to the workers: the owners and the union are moving ahead aggressively to pressure workers and blackmail them into accepting the pay cut. They are doing this by pitting high seniority workers against low; regular workers against temporary. GM is doing its part by beginning to move machinery out of the plant and lay off workers.

The workers must respond now. Allowing the plant to close is not an alternative. That will further devastate the city and the region, undermine the

wages and conditions of upcoming generations and set a precedent that will be followed at plants across the country.

The real alternative is a fight to unite all the workers in the plant against both the wage cut and the plant closure. This must be prepared now with the election of a rank-and-file committee of action—completely independent of the UAW—to lay the groundwork for the occupation of the factory and the mobilization of auto workers and the working class as a whole in Indianapolis, Indiana and across the country.

The committee will have the task of organizing meetings with all sections of workers at the plant and making contact with auto plants throughout the Midwest. Such independent organization and action is critical. So long as the UAW controls the actions of the rank and file, defeat is inevitable.

There is no question that such a fighting initiative by workers here will evoke a powerful response both in the US and around the world. Workers are angry and frustrated and are looking for a lead in the fight against the return to Depression conditions. Indianapolis workers should fight to unite with every section of workers and young people—in the factories, offices, schools and universities—to defend the right to a job, a secure income, quality education, housing and health care.

Alongside mass industrial action, it is necessary to adopt a new political strategy. The role of the Obama administration's Auto Task Force in imposing a 50 percent wage cut on new-hires makes it clear that auto workers face a political struggle. The treachery of the UAW is inseparable from its support for Obama and the Democratic

Party and its opposition to the independent political organization of the working class.

The union's support for the corporate-controlled two-party system is bound up with its defense of the profit system itself. The conditions and living standards of workers in the US and internationally are being ruthlessly driven down as a result of the failure of the capitalist system. The defense of jobs, wages, working conditions, pensions and health care is incompatible with a system based

on private ownership of industry and the banks for the personal enrichment of a super-wealthy elite.

Workers need to revive the militant class-struggle traditions that originally built the UAW, before it was transformed into an instrument of the auto bosses and the government, but on a new basis—the fight for a socialist program, including the nationalization of the auto corporations under the democratic control of the working population.

Contact the Socialist Equality Party: SEP@socialistequality.com

Read the World Socialist Web Site | [wsws.org](http://www.wsws.org)