

International Information Letter

GM-PSA-FCA

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Dear colleagues and friends!

In the Corona pandemic interacting with the world economic and financial crisis and the environmental crisis, we auto workers are challenged not only to defend our jobs, but to unleash the workers offensive against the rightward evolution of governments and the excesses of the whole crisis chaos of capitalist systems! The Corona pandemic and the world economic crisis are mutually reinforcing. Worldwide there is an accelerated tendency towards a total social crisis of the imperialist world system. In some countries the overall social crisis has already begun, like in USA, Belarus, Brazil, Peru, Lebanon or Israel connected with progressive mass struggles and protests, where workers are often in the front. In the U.S., sharp social polarization has already been evident for months, with mass struggles against racism, protests against Donald Trump's disastrous crisis management in the Corona crisis and against his attempts not to recognize his ouster as president. Protesters have not backed down even from the deployment of the National Guard. The situation was initially defused when Biden assumed the presidency. On the other hand, there is a fascist tendency that should not be underestimated. In countries such as Belarus, Lebanon, France, Brazil, Israel, Poland or Thailand, we are witnessing progressive mass struggles....

Overall, automobile production has plummeted this year from nearly 80 million worldwide in 2017 to about 62 million. In Europe, 27 percent fewer vehicles were registered through October 2020 than last year. PSA lost an above-average 34.2 percent, Opel/Vauxhall 45.5 percent and FCA Group 30.8 percent. In Brazil, sales fell by 31 percent, in India by 25 percent, while China is recovering faster and is only ten percent below last year's sales. The internecine battle for world market leadership is thus intensifying. The workers' struggle has flared up against all attempts to shift the burden of the crisis onto us workers and our families. Everywhere production was restarted in the spring after the closure due to the Corona pandemic, but often temporary workers were laid off and only lower quantities were produced.

Based on your reports, we have to say that the situation of workers has continued to deteriorate dramatically. Hundreds of thousands had already lost their jobs before the Corona pandemic, and tens of thousands have joined them. In many countries, especially in Europe, Corona infections are at record levels in November and December. The bourgeois crisis management blames the cause of the dramatic development primarily on the ordinary population, democratic rights and freedoms continue to be massively restricted, but there are no reports of chains of infection in industry, where workers continue to work closely together. Workers are campaigning for better health protection with testing in

factories, equalization of shift changes, reduction of cycle times and more breaks, full wage continuation during quarantine, information for the workforce, and so on. In this situation, we are challenged to prepare and organize the joint struggle across national and corporate borders!

What is the situation in the individual countries?

In Talegaon (India), GM has sold the production plant to Great Wall, but without the workers. They plan to stop producing cars at the end of 2020 and gradually lay off the workers. A similar thing happened in Thailand. The workers in Talegaon are fighting for their jobs with their union General Motors India Union and we have supported them with information and solidarity to the best of our ability at all times since we met in South Africa. The international solidarity for the fight of the Indian colleagues is important until the last day!

A worldwide highlight was the general strike in India at the end of November, in which at least 250 million workers and employees participated. It was directed against the Modi government's attacks on labor laws and basic workers' and trade union rights, and against its failure in the Corona pandemic.

In Korea, GM Bupyeong (Incheon) workers are in struggle for higher wages and the International Coordination Group of the International Automobile Workers Coordination sent a message of solidarity.

In the U.S., workers at FCA's Sterling Heights and Jefferson North (Detroit) plants walked off the job in July for better health protections in the Corona pandemic. In the presidential election, Donald Trump lost a majority in the auto workers' state of Michigan and several others. The big cities did not vote for Trump in the plurality and the big cities are made up of a majority of the working class. That the fascist Donald Trump was voted out is a great success of the workers', women's and people's movement in the U.S.! But also Biden stands for a politics hostile to the masses.

In Germany, the reformist tactics of the "future contracts" are openly failing in various corporations, including Daimler, VW and Opel. Workers were promised to forgo layoffs if they gave up part of their wages in return. This was then sold as a "job guarantee." The class-struggle colleagues have always rejected such blackmail contracts. First, we do not pay with loss of wages for being allowed to continue to be exploited. And second, each of these contracts has the clause that it loses its validity in times of crisis. Daimler, MAN and Opel are now threatening compulsory redundancies on the basis of such contracts.

Even under Corona conditions, the colleagues of these corporations are taking up the fight for every job, as for example in Rüsselsheim with a trade union day of action with a car parade with demo radio on November 24 with 1,500 cars and more than 3,000 participants against the attacks on the workforce. The Kaiserslautern and Bochum plants also participated with their families.

In Eisenach, the second shift was largely suspended. The workforce held militant break meetings and also a motorcade on the day of action.

In Bochum, the focus is on the fight against systematic bullying and the extension of working hours.

It is time to take up the fight for the 30-hour week with full wage compensation against attempts to extend working hours or to shorten working hours without

full wage compensation. Both would mean wage cuts, which we cannot accept under any circumstances.

From Bogota (Colombia) we received a report on the dramatic situation of the GM workers and their unions. With the approval of the Ministry of Labor, over 100 workers have been laid off, including sick and injured workers. The vigil of the dismissed injured workers and their organization ASOTRECOL has now lasted over 9 years or 3400 days. They oppose GM's practice of repeatedly firing injured workers over decades in exchange for hiring young and healthy workers. At the plant, workers and their unions have not been able to prevent the loss of some wage components in this situation.

We are also told from Gliwice (Poland) that the situation of the workers has never been so bad. Colleagues are being blackmailed to go to France to work, others have been transferred to the Tychy engine plant and about 700 have lost their jobs. Colleagues are not due to return to Gliwice until August 2022.

The environmental crisis continues to worsen dramatically with melting polar ice, drought and flooding. The conversion of transport to zero emissions must be accelerated! Here, our colleagues in the U.S. are very active in making the switch. But we also realize that saving human living conditions on Earth requires a system-changing struggle.

The crisis chaos of the capitalist system requires thinking beyond that system. We agreed at our 2nd International Automobile Workers Conference in South Africa in February that we do not accept anti-communist prohibitions on thinking. We should also exchange more about this and your reports and experiences with this in the factories are very valuable! We call on you to use the homepage of the IAC more for the exchange of experiences and also to report us regularly about your experiences, not only when there are attacks or struggles, but also about the work for the preparation of struggles and how you have spread and used our decided struggle program so far.

We wish you and all of us a nice and relaxing Christmas holidays and a happy new year 2021.

Stay healthy! With solidarity greetings,

Frank, Fritz an Verena