

RESIST GERRY'S RATE CUTTING!

The owners of Gerry have found another trick to cut the workers wages. They are combining the jobs and then "retiming" them in order to cut the rates. The Gerry capitalists have always been notorious for cutting the workers wages by cutting piece rates, but they have especially stepped up this practice since the workers received their wage increase with the new contract. By cutting the piece rates the Gerry capitalists are coldly planning to increase their profits by sweating more work out of the workers for less wages.

Side by side with its attack on the workers wages the company and its flunkys carry out a propoganda campaign to slander the workers, divide them, and stifle their resistance to the wage cutting. When the workers object to the ridiculous new rates the supervisors and time study people say "The rate is fair. So and so can make it why can't you?" Usually it is not even true that "so and so" can make it. But even so, that is not the issue. The issue is that with the new rates the company is increasing the exploitation of all the workers even the fastest, so that now each must work harder and faster for less than before. In fact even without cutting the rates the workers wages are being reduced every week by inflation while the articles they sew sell for more and more every week. The company is taking the workers coming and going. The workers then are doubly just to fight against the rate cuts.

Another trick the company uses to divide the workers is the dirty method of circulating gossip and slander against the workers who stand up to resist the rate cutting. When a worker refuses to speed up for a time study or fights a new rate, the next thing you hear is the supervisor circulating gossip that that worker is "lazy", "petty", "greedy", etc. These terms, however, apply not to the workers but to the owners of the company. The workers do all the work and produce everything that goes out the door. They receive only a small part of what they produce in wages while the rest goes to owners who do none of the work but merely get richer and richer off the workers labor. It is not the workers who are the petty, greedy parasites but the capitalists. The reason the company and the supervisors spread such vicious slanders against the militant workers is to isolate them from the other workers so that the spirit of resistance does not spread. The gossip spread against the militant workers only helps the company carry out its program of increasing its profits by driving all the workers harder and faster for less wages.

How are the workers to defend themselves against the attacks on their wages, their conditions and their dignity? The union officials tell the workers to file grievances but the workers see that filing grievances has no effect. The company also realizes this. It knows that as long as the workers do no more than file grievances individually it can cut rates as it pleases. Grievances are just pieces of paper which it throws in the basket. It is only when the workers stick together and take action themselves that the company has trouble cutting the wages. This is precisely the kind of trouble the workers should make for the company.

The company carries out constant campaigns to intimidate the workers and isolate the militants. Why shouldn't the workers fight the company's lies and slanders and carry out their own campaign to denounce the company and isolate its flunkys. The workers should hold the supervisors and time study people accountable for helping the company cut the wages and for spreading slanders against the workers. Those people who do the dirty work of the rich against the honest working people should have no peace. The workers should also discuss among themselves and decide on ways in which they can stick together to resist the rate cuts on the spot.

Gerry's program of cutting the rates is not an isolated incident but part of the program of the big capitalists to make the workers pay for the current economic crisis of the capitalist system. This program of the rich is being spearheaded by the Carter administration with its campaign of wage controls which Carter claims is intended to fight inflation but which is really intended to cut the workers wages. The sewing industry capitalists are so notorious for their wage cutting that the Carter Administration has held them up as a model for the capitalists in other industries. Carter's #2 "inflation fighter" Barry Bosworth has put out a pamphlet where he shows how drastically the sewing industry capitalists have cut the workers wages. 30 years ago sewers made almost as much as auto workers but today they make barely more than the minimum wage. At the same time over the last ten years each sewing industry worker has been forced to work 40% faster. This is the kind of wage cutting and speed up the rich and their government want to impose on the whole working class.

The capitalists are preparing even bigger attacks on the workers. The workers must step up their resistance struggle against the capitalists and prepare for mass revolutionary struggles to make the rich pay for the crises they have created and to overthrow the dictatorship of the rich altogether.

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