

Marxist-Leninist Party of Germany - MLPD

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International Information of the MLPD from 11 December 2012

Against the Closure of Opel/GM in Bochum Germany - A First „Warning“ of the Workforce ... - For a company-wide struggle for each and every job at the cost of GM profits!

At a turbulent company meeting on 10 December 2012 at Opel/General Motors in Bochum, Germany, Mr. Sedran, member of the board of directors of the company, announced in a cowardly and inhuman manner the decision to **shut down the plant in Bochum with more than 3200 employees in 2016**. His attempts to explain this decision were repeatedly interrupted tumultuously by calls: „*We don't believe a single word!*“ Before the discussion could start he disappeared behind the curtain surrounded by bodyguards. When the head of the shop stewards tried to take him to task he was knocked down and choked. There were private security forces in the entire hall; uniformed police stood in the foyer. That shows that the Opel/GM management has **changed its tactics** with regard to the Bochum workforce which are tried in struggle.

With the now openly announced plans to shut down the plant in 2016, all **hopes for a solution through negotiations without struggle have failed**. For years the workers were given the runaround by bourgeois politicians and the reformist trade union leadership with these illusions. Especially the tactics of giving up wages have completely failed.

The closure of the Bochum plant is **an issue of nationwide importance**. Only a few hours later Chancellor Merkel gave a statement of regret, but also of acceptance. With this **open plant closure a core of crisis-dampening policies in Germany has also failed** and a workforce which is internationally known to be especially militant is being attacked and challenged to a showdown. The closure of Opel Bochum would break taboos – it would be the first closure of car plant in Germany. **They should not be allowed to get away with this!**

For years the management of General Motors did not succeed in pushing through plans for a plant closure. The fact that the management of GM is now proceeding rigorously and putting its cards on the table is no coincidence. In the deepest world economic and financial crisis, continuing since 2008, a new slump is on the horizon. **It must be assumed that this is only the beginning**. It is not a problem of Opel, but a problem of the crises in capitalism! **The societal alternative can only be genuine socialism!**

There was also an extensive discussion about the struggle over the Bochum plant at the turbulent factory meeting. Workers called out: „*You won't be getting a single car from us!*“ or: „*We have nothing more to lose.*“

On this day the assembly lines stood still. While GM-management maintains that its procedure was without alternative, the media immediately tolled the death-knell. The reformist leadership of the works council warned against „taking blind action“.

Already on Monday first Monday demonstrations declared their solidarity. The MLPD immediately took on the task of supporting and promoting the struggle of the Opel workers as a central task.

On Tuesday morning the worker's newspaper „Blitz“ („Lightning“) issued a call „*Declaration of war by GM/Opel requires a clear answer: Strike now!*“ On Tuesday, 11 December 2012, about **two hundred workers** of the **early shift** set a clear **signal**: They organized an independent strike of more than two hours, marched through the plant and organized a first rally. Afterwards workers took up work again for the time being with their heads raised high, taking pride in this first warning. In the following days further activities are being planned and there is an intensive discussion among the workforce about the proposal for an **unlimited, independent strike until the plans for closing the plant are cleared out of the way**.

The Opel workers at Bochum already set an international signal in October 2004 with their independent strike of seven days. It ushered in **the transition to the working-class offensive on a broad front**. Its power came through the combination of strike, factory occupation and blockades of the gates. It was initiated and led by a class-militant tendency in the workforce, with Marxist-Leninists at the core. It reached its climax at the international day of struggle of the workers of the Opel plants on 19 October 2004. 100 000 people participated at 15 locations in nine countries. „*The European automobile workers triumphed over the petty-bourgeois reformist policy of preserving particular locations of production; they did not want to be objects of the rivalry of the international monopolies. The Europe-wide day of strike at Opel/GM marked the climax to date of the joint cross-border action of the international industrial proletariat against the international monopolies.*“ (Dawn of the international socialist revolution“, p. 399)

There can be only one answer to the threats of closure: struggle for each and every job at the cost of the profits of General Motors! **Through vile blackmailing Opel is trying to play off the workers of the different plants against each other.** A **company-wide struggle** must be waged against the closure of the plant, as well as against the plans for closure and lay-offs at GM in Sao José dos Campos in Brazil, at PSA Aulnay in France or at the Korean GM plant Gunsan.

Long live international working-class unity!

Please send **solidarity resolutions** to:

Works Council Opel Bochum: info@wir-gemeinsam.en

Works Council List “Offensive” Bochum: Annegret.gaertner@de.opel.com

Trade union shop steward leadership: dirk.gruetzner@de.gm.com

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