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International Information of the MLPD

Intensified Struggle over the two directions at Opel Bochum: Strike instead of Capitulation

(documented article from the Red Flag news (www.rf-news.de) from 21 May 2013)

On 21 May, from 11.55 a.m. until about 4.30 p.m., Opel workers at Bochum from the early and late shift gathered at Gate 1. During this time work was also stopped and production came to a standstill in the entire plant. Today's Tuesday was marked by intense discussions over the two directions: struggle or capitulation! The direction of strike, like in 2004, is the only language that the GM executive board understands. The direction of illusions, such as in the arbitration committee, the runaround tactics or toothless „question and answer hours“ with plant manager Gellrich, are the direction of capitulation.

1500 colleagues of the early shift and 800 to 900 of the late shift participated, more than the number who took part lately in the information events. Plant manager Manfred Gellrich refused to come and speak to the workforce. Supposedly because of the attending press. The colleagues were very amused about this: „*Otherwise he prefers speaking to the press rather than speaking with the workforce.*“ And: „*We are staying here!*“

Even before the meeting began, the majority of the early shift was self-confident and militant. „*This has to take longer this time*“ was often to be heard. In the vote of the meeting of the early shift about 60 percent of the workers voted not to take up work again until their demands are met: no plant closure, continuation of car production in three shifts at Bochum, no renunciation/cuts in wages, struggle for each and every job! There was only one abstention and not a single dissenting vote! After four-and-a-half hours of partly controversial discussions the debate was adjourned until Tuesday, 28 May.

Many speakers took a clear position for the decision for a resolute struggle of the Opel workers, among them the works council member Annegret Gärtner-Leymann from the list „Offensive“ and the deputy head of the shop stewards Steffen Reichelt.

The democratic decision was defamed by the deputy leader of the works council Murat Yaman, who even tore the microphone away from a militant speaker and then claimed that he had been attacked! He spoke against the clear vote of the workforce, attacked the vote and tried to gain points with plump anticommunism (the resolute stand for working-class interests was supposedly „party politics“). He spurned the decision of the workers in an undemocratic and disrespectful manner. A number of speakers firmly repudiated that.

After it became clear that company management was not daring to go to the gathering of the Opel workers, the head of the works council Rainer Eienkel suggested to end the meeting at about 3 p.m. But only about 50 colleagues did that. Other works council members then tried to talk down the situation and make the workers insecure. They were countered by many speakers! In a penetrating manner it was oriented to next Monday's meeting of the arbitration committee. But the arbitration committee is totally on the line of

capitulation: it deals only with the question of how Opel Bochum will be phased out!
There is nothing at all that can be agreed on!
At about 4.30 p.m. the meeting broke up. The head of the works council Einenkel announced that the workforce will be informed again on Tuesday, 28 May. The intense discussion continues!