

Week of  
October 7,  
2019

# THE SPARK



## Their Fight Is Our Fight!

For three weeks, Ford workers from the Rouge in Dearborn, Michigan, have been joining GM picket lines in Romulus. Chrysler workers from Warren and Sterling Heights added themselves to GM lines at Hamtramck Assembly and Warren Transmission. Workers laid off by companies producing parts for GM went up to the Flint plants. So did hospital workers. Workers from other industries in Arlington, Texas, and Kansas City, Kansas, came to help at GM assembly plants in those cities.

No matter where else they worked, they came to GM plants with this thought in mind: ***“Their fight is our fight.”***

And, truly, it is. GM workers are fighting for a contract that will set the pattern – first for Ford and Chrysler workers, then for the rest of the auto industry, then for workers in almost every heavy industry – and a great many others. What happens in auto ripples throughout the economy.

How much stronger our fight would be if all the workers concerned were fully part of it – not just reinforcing the GM lines, not just coming down to give a hand out of solidarity, but joining in as full partners in the fight.

Look what GM workers by themselves have done in just three weeks. They refused to cave in, facing a daily campaign denigrating their union. They ignored headlines like this one in the *Detroit News*, *“A strike that shouldn’t have happened.”* When reporters tried to get them to say they were tired of the strike, many replied, like this Flint worker did: *“I may be tired, I may be short on money, but I’m here for as long as it takes.”*

With their decision to keep on with the fight, GM workers encouraged other workers. No one made the others come down to the lines – they did it because they wanted to be part of the fight.

GM strikers are only part of one company, in only one industry. Yet, even in three weeks, they had an impact on the economy. You can bet that the moneyed class behind GM management has noticed that – just like they

noticed other workers joining in. The last thing they want is a strike that spreads.

How much bigger the impact would be if GM workers and Ford workers and Chrysler workers and parts company workers were part of one united fight. Remember, those parts company workers were once part of GM, Ford or Chrysler. The companies “spun them off.” That divided us, weakened us and let everyone’s wages be lowered.

How much faster our demands will be recognized when we join in common fights that span many industries.

All of us have as much reason to fight as GM workers have. GM is not the only company that schemed to get workers to give up concessions to “save the company.” Throughout the economy, profits soared, dividends soared, executive incomes soared – while workers fell further behind. All of us know people who can’t get a decent paying, permanent job. Almost all of us have wages that don’t keep up with inflation. Almost all of us skip needed medical appointments because we are short of money. Almost all of us go to work in jobs that take more energy out of us every day than what we replenish when we finally fall asleep at night.

We all have a reason to fight.

Most workers in this country have never been on a strike. Most of the workers at GM had never been on strike before either. But a lot has changed in a few weeks.

It’s true that labor law prohibits us from fighting all at the same time as one class. But labor law divides us, weakening us. Finally, it serves only our class enemies.

We’ve been obeying this prohibition for a long time. And where has it gotten us?

We have the force as a powerful class to get back what we’ve given up – and to do much more than that. We have the strength to tear up the greedy demands of profit, the strength to shape a new society that will answer human need.