

Victory to the Republic Window and Door Workers!

A Fight Back! Editorial



"The whole world is watching."

Working people across the country are holding up newspaper photos and declaring, "Did you see this!" Like us, they are rooting for the Chicago workers waging a militant fight-back in the midst of the economic crisis. 260 union members are occupying their factory, owned by the Republic of Windows and Doors on Goose Island in Chicago. The workers were fired last Friday, two weeks before the holidays. Now the workers dare to set an example to millions of others. Instead of going to the unemployment lines with their heads down and pockets empty they are fighting back.

"Bank of America got bailed out! We got sold out!"

Working people are proud of the members of United Electrical workers Local 1110 for refusing to be put out on the streets with nothing. In solidarity with millions of other low income and unemployed workers, the Republic workers are saying "We're not going to take it anymore! We demand justice!" The workers are demanding payment of the \$1 million

owed them by the bosses while the factory sits with tens of millions of dollars of products and machinery. The main target of the workers' wrath however, is the big shots at Bank of America. We call upon unions and militants everywhere to protest your local branch of Bank of America! Bank of America managers are swimming in \$25 billion of the American taxpayers' bailout but cannot bring it upon themselves to make a loan to keep the factory doors open. Main Street pays for Wall Street, while Wall Street decides for Main Street. The system is upside down. We say, "Make the rich pay!" The workers at Republic Window's need their jobs back.

A history of class struggle and unity

The Republic workers are not new to the class struggle. Many have been on the job for 12 or more years - one for 34 years! Many are Mexican and Latino immigrants who came to escape poverty, moving north like three generations of African-American workers from the South. The spirit with which the Republic workers fight reminds one of history-makers like Chicago's Haymarket Martyrs of the 1880's who led the working class, many of whom were immigrants in the fight for the eight-hour day. One cannot but help see the relationship between today's militant struggle, uniting workers of all nationalities, and the recent mega-marches for immigrants' rights demanding equality for all.

Solidarity! Build a fighting workers' movement

We salute the example and leadership of these brave union workers and their local union leaders. They are truly leading the way towards a fighting workers' movement. Through their sacrifice and suffering, they will prove what a class struggle union can accomplish. They already have experience. Until a few years ago, the Republic workers were under the thumb of a mafia-type union until they organized themselves, breaking free and finding a real union to work with - UE. Bank managers, bosses and some politicians and union officials underestimate the workers and the solidarity they have built. To get the Republic workers their pay, and to keep their jobs in Chicago, we need solidarity. Solidarity means protesting the Bank of America. Solidarity means organizing your union to send money and plan for similar fight-backs. Solidarity means building a fighting workers movement that says, "Make the rich pay! Workers did not create this crisis!"

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