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Europe / carworkers

Declaration of the European Car Workers' Conference

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A European car workers' conference, held in Amsterdam on 28-29 May, 2011, brought together activists from Poland, Italy, Spain, France, Sweden, Russia and the United States, working in the following enterprises: FIAT Italy and Poland, Ford France and Spain, Opel Poland, Renault France and Spain, PSA, Volvo-Trucks, Seat and Volkswagen. It adopted the following statement.

Engaged in trade-union and political struggles, we measured the extent of the coordinated attacks conducted by the car industry employers against the workers. Everywhere in Europe, we are experiencing the same offensives against jobs, working conditions and wages. The employer practice of blackmailing through the use of referendums - which seek to make workers accept the revision of collective agreements won in previous decades – is spreading.

The policy of FIAT may well prefigure the policy of all employers in the car industry. In their determination to contest rights that had previously been won, the employers' offensives have had as their primary target the unions which directly contest their policy, but it is today extending to the whole body of labour legislation and to all trade-union organizations.

The capitalist globalization of the car industry organizes the production of cars on all continents, following only the dictates of the maximization of profits. Against this policy and the nationalist poison which divides workers against each other, international solidarity is more than ever on the agenda. The workers' movement today is not facing up to the employers' attacks as it should. It is urgent to build common struggles.

The road from resistance to offensive struggles has to involve exchanging information, the sharing of experiences of struggle by workers in the car industry and the development of initiatives of solidarity. We have decided to set up a permanent information network, open to all those currents and activists who refuse to accompany the crisis of the car industry employers. We call for convergence with the already existing initiatives that are going in the same direction.

This meeting was held as the gatherings of the "indignant ones" in the cities of the Spanish state encountered police repression. We affirm our total solidarity with these mobilizations. The resistance of car workers must be linked to all the movements in Europe that challenge the established order, the precariousness and the crisis which capitalism imposes on us.

Amsterdam, May 29, 2011

Signatures: Boguslaw Zietek (president of WZZ "Sierpien 80", the "August 80" Free trade union, Poland), Franciszek Gierot (WZZ "Sierpien 80", FIAT Auto Poland Car), Zbigniew Pietras (WZZ "Sierpień 80", General Motors Manufacturing Poland – Opel, Poland), Adriano Alessandria (FIOM-CGIL union delegate, Lear Corporation - Grugliasco, Italy), Pasquale Loiacono (FIOM-CGIL union delegate for the body shop Mirafiori, Turin, Italy), Federación de Sindicatos de la Industria Metalúrgica (Trade-Union Federation of the metal Industry) FESIM-CGT (Spanish state), Sindicato de Trabajadores del Metal-Confederación Intersindical (STM-Confederación Intersindical, Union of Metalworkers - Inter-Union Confederation, Spanish state), Gunnar Pettersson (IF Metall Volvo Trucks, Umea, Sweden), Gilles Cazin (CGT militant at Renault Cléon, member of the NPA, France), Didier Laforêts (CGT militant at Renault Cléon, member of the NPA, France), Dianne Feeley (Autoworkers' Caravan, United States), Olga Masson (Interregional Trade Union of Car Workers, Russia), Philippe Poutou (CGT militant at Ford Blanquefort, member of the NPA, France).