



“Taking a Stand!” – an event co-sponsored by the Michigan Coalition for Human Rights and the Autoworker Caravan honoring the UAW Flint Sit-down Strike of 1937 was held at UAW Local 909, home of Powertrain transmission plant workers in Warren, MI, one of the recently “unallocated” GM

plants. The event included the first showing of raw video footage of a fiery speech by UAW leader Victor Reuther at the 50th anniversary celebration of the Sit-down strike in Flint, MI in 1987.

The event was organized and chaired by MCHR Board Member, Autoworker Caravan co-founder, and former UAW 909 President and Chairman, Frank Hammer. Speakers included UAW 909 President Ghana Goodwin Dye, GM autoworker Sean Crawford and retirees Martha Grevatt (FCA) and Wendy Thompson (American Axle). Musician Steve Jones led attendees, numbering about 35, in labor songs; Jim Rehberg of the Wobbly Kitchen provided food. Several short videos were shown, including a solidarity statement by fired, injured GM workers in Bogota, Colombia from their protest tent encampment. \$135 was raised in donations and forwarded to the injured workers association, ASOTRECOL. The event was followed by spirited discussion. It was live streamed by the news crew for StatusCoup.com, who also conducted interviews.

[0:15:00](#) - Ghana Goodwin Dye, Pres, UAW Local 909

[0:19:45](#) - Steve Jones, folk and labor singer

[0:24:35](#) - Frank Hammer, former Pres and Chairman, UAW 909

[0:34:20](#) - William Bryce, labor educator, introducing two videos:

[0:40:50](#) - “Molly Mouthpiece,” (video) 1987 Flint Sit-down theatrical performance

[0:43:30](#) – “Victor Reuther speaks” (video) 50th anniversary UAW Flint Sit-down

[1:03:00](#) - intro – Martha Grevatt

[1:05:00](#) – Martha Grevatt, retired member & Trustee UAW 869, FCA Stamping

[1:19:50](#) – intro – Sean Crawford & sign “I Support GM Workers Worldwide”

[1:21:00](#) – Sean Crawford, member, UAW 22, GM Detroit Hamtramck Assembly

[1:29:00](#) – “An Injury to One is an Injury to All” (video - Portuguese subtitles)

[1:33:00](#) – intro – Wendy Thompson - S. Crawford “No More Tiers” tees

[1:37:30](#) – Wendy Thompson, former Pres. UAW 235

[1:47:10](#) – collection for Colombian GM workers (ASOTRECOL)

[1:48:40](#) – Jim Rehberg, Wobbly Kitchen

[1:50:20](#) – discussion (video ends [2:06:00](#))

Thanks to Status Coup for 18 min documentary of the event:

“Corporate Media Won't Show You: The People Vs General Motors”

<https://youtu.be/bzVSEdHVAMM>

Remarks by Frank Hammer

"Taking a Stand!"

Honoring the victorious UAW Flint Sit-Down Strike - Feb 11, 1937

Good afternoon, my name is Frank Hammer. This event is very personal to me. I worked at the plant across the street for twenty years from 1975 to 1995 and had the honor of representing 3,500-4,000 workers both as Chairman and President of this local. This is my home.

I want to thank everyone who is here. We scheduled this event so that workers from across the street could come over at the end of their shift, and some have, which I am very happy about. I want to mention that [musician] Steve Jones is the real deal; he joined us two years ago in a drive in treacherous weather for a commemoration of another UAW sit-down in solidarity with Honeywell South Bend UAW Local 9 members facing their own 8-9 month long lock out.

Our event today is being livestreamed, thanks to statuscoup.com

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=NbaAzXyeWAO>

As our event was getting planned, it grew legs. With livestream, workers in Brazil are watching. You can see the Brazilians' banner [in the Local 909 Hall]: "Stop GM Plant Closures." Four Brazilians flew from their country to be part of our demonstration at the Detroit auto show. The brothers are from the union, "ConLutas." They are watching today.



Ford workers are watching today from Kentucky as part of their "Solidarity Sundays." Workers in Oshawa are seeing it too. They, like us at the Warren plant, are facing

imminent closure. They will be holding their own event within a couple of weeks. Graduate employees at NYU (GSOC UAW Local 2110) are, as we speak, demonstrating in front of the GM building in Manhattan in solidarity with GM workers.

You can learn more about the January demo at the Detroit auto show in the Metro Times, which reported on it. An estimated 300 demonstrated to stop plant closures, and to convert the plants as part of the Green New Deal, and keep the electric car to retain jobs. [copies available at the lit table]

<https://www.metrotimes.com/detroit/backlash-against-general-motors-is-helping-plant-the-seeds-for-a-green-revolution/Content?oid=19745072>

I hope the take away from today is that we have a major battle on our hands. That's why we were demonstrating. Are we going to let GM close the Warren plant without a fight? Or Detroit Hamtramck assembly? or Brownstown? and so on. Are we going

to put up a struggle, and declare this a travesty - for the sake of jobs, community, and union? – if the plant closes, the Local 909 building will close, we'll no longer have a union "node" here like we've had for many years, and that's what's at stake.

I'm hoping that there are two take-aways from today's event: We're doing this in an international way, and - if we are going to be engaged in a fight, we better know who we are. If we don't know who we are, you can't fight. When I say, "know ourselves," I'm talking *collectively*. Most of us don't know enough about our own history as a union. That's why it is important to revisit the sit-down strike and the people who waged that fight. Many of them were radicals, socialists and communists who led that struggle. Over the years, they were essentially banished from the UAW. You don't hear them today except for here and there. This is part of our history. It could not have been done without a radical vision of what could be, and that's how we got our UAW.

Regarding internationalism, we have a 23-second video of GM workers in Colombia who the MCHR and AWC are supporting that also face a massive layoff. They were injured in the plant, hundreds of them, and General Motors' practice was: we're going to fire these workers and find ways to deny them workers' comp. They were literally kicked under the bus. This struggle has been very inspiring for us and important to GM workers everywhere. They created a video for us and did it in English so you'll enjoy seeing it to declare solidarity with autoworkers in Detroit and Canada. The photos and footage were taken at the tent encampment in front of the US embassy which has now been going over 7 years. There are people in the room who have been to Bogota and met with them personally on more than one occasion.

[viewing of the video] <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=3FugWOPjiYs>

Post-event Interview, Frank Hammer:

"General Motors Retiree: DEMOCRATS Are Weakening Unions"
<https://bit.ly/2tPdGTV>