

CNH workers are fighting a giant

written by Stephen Millies

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Solidarity rally with strikers of UAW Local 180 rally in Racine, Wisconsin, June 17.

Since May 2, some 1,100 workers have been on strike against CNH Industrial in Racine, Wisconsin, and Burlington, Iowa. These members of the United Auto Workers are up against Italy's richest family, the Agnellis who control Fiat.

With sales last year of \$31 billion, CNH had profits of \$1.1 billion. But instead of

genuine bargaining, the CEO of CNH, Scott Wine, has offered wage increases that are below the rate of inflation.

That's demanding a wage cut from the UAW members while Wine pulls down a \$9.2 million yearly salary. He also got a \$22 million signing bonus.

The letters CNH stand for "Case" and "New Holland." Both J.I. Case, based in Racine, and New Holland, which started out in New Holland, Pennsylvania, were some of the best-known makers of construction and farm equipment.

Corporate wheeling and dealing—which at times included J.I. Case being owned by Tenneco and Ford buying New Holland—finally resulted in CNH Industrial being formed in 2012. With headquarters in Britain, the Agnelli-controlled outfit has 67 factories around the world.

All this financial skullduggery hasn't been any good for workers. Case's now closed lakefront plant in Racine used to employ more than 3,000 workers. Its current plant in Mount Pleasant, near Racine, employs around 500.

While the ownership has changed, being anti-labor is part of CNH's DNA. J.I. Case President Leon Clausen tried to break UAW Local 180 during a 444-day strike that lasted from December 1945 until March 1947.

Clausen said that "when these men have been out long enough and their families get hungry enough, the strike will end." Seventy-five years later, CNH CEO Wine has hired strikebreakers to steal the jobs of the women and men on the picket lines.

But the strikers belonging to Local 807 in Burlington and Local 180 in Racine refuse to surrender despite having their medical and dental health insurance cut off.

CNH is also fighting workers at its tractor plant in Basildon, Britain. The British union Unite has a series of one-day strikes lasting until August to force the company

to negotiate.

This writer remembers the president of UAW Local 180 writing a check to bail out strikers during the 1977 Racine teachers' strike. That's the solidarity that the CNH strikers need today.

Both Locals 180 and 807 are collecting nonperishable food and personal items for the strikers and their families. Checks and gift cards can be mailed to the following addresses:

UAW Local 180
3323 Kearney Ave.
Racine, WI 53403
(Please write checks to "UAW Local 180")

UAW Local 807
P.O. Box 1094
Burlington, Iowa 52601
(Please write checks to "UAW Local 807")

Victory to the workers!

The writer is a retired member of the American Train Dispatchers Association.



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