



GLOBAL UNION ALLIANCE AT IBM

On IBM's 100th birthday, workers ask company to respect their rights

To mark IBM's 100th birthday, IBM union members produced a happy birthday video (www.imfmetal.org/IBMunions) in which they tell the company it should treat its workers better in its next century.

IBM unions from around the world have come together to form the IBM Global Union Alliance through the International Metalworkers' Federation, European Metalworkers' Federation and UNI Global Union to demand that the company respect worker and trade union rights wherever it operates.

On June 14, IBM unions around the world will be uniting in common action to call on the company to recognize the vital role played by IBMers in the company's success and to respect their rights as workers.

In the U.S., IBM employees and members of Alliance@IBM CWA Local 1701 will wear black and blue to call attention to job cuts and deteriorating work conditions.

Despite its early history of valuing its workforce, IBM has recently taken to systematically denying employees' their basic rights.

Wherever it can, IBM fights the right of employees to choose to join a union. It has also denied employees in some countries pay raises that keep pace with increases in the cost of living.

Tom Midgley, President of the Alliance@IBM CWA Local 1701, the organizing campaign at the company, stated: "In the U.S., job cuts are constant. IBM hides that fact, as well as the numbers of jobs cut,

from other employees, communities, elected officials and the media. IBM is off-shoring work at a record pace and sending loyal IBMers to the unemployment line. The more than 15,000 ex-employees terminated in the past few years and the thousands more fearing future job loss and declining working conditions will not have the spirit of celebration IBM executives are hoping for.”

Last year, global unions sent IBM CEO Sam Palmisano a letter alerting him to management’s violations of the labor code in Bulgaria when it threatened workers who tried to form a union and refused to recognize the union as it is legally obligated to do. The global unions asked him to intervene. To date no reply has been received.

Now the global unions have again written to Palmisano, reminding him that working conditions at IBM vary greatly depending in the world. We also are asking him to meet with us to discuss how to improve the company's performance on worker rights. While IBM is in the top league in many international business rankings, it ranks near the bottom of the list when it comes to working conditions. This must change as IBM enters its second century of operations.

IBM employees and their unions today celebrate the contributions made by employees to the company's success and call upon IBM to reciprocate by fully recognizing the basic rights of its workforce.

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