

start taking apart collective agreements piecemeal, starting with retirees' benefits as a first step because they appear as an easy target without recourse to withholding their capacity to work.

The imperialist view separates workers' productive years when working with their years in retirement. The anti-social line does not see workers' lives as a single whole from birth to passing away. Once retired, the imperialists argue, workers hold no further value for the monopolies and should be cast adrift from fellow members of the working class still working. It is the classic tactic of divide and rule, except it does not work if the working class refuses to be divided.

The struggle of the Pacific Blue Cross workers flies in the face of the imperialists who think they can act with impunity in attacking the rights of workers. The resistance of the Pacific Blue Cross workers is significant in terms of defending the unity and rights of all working people in the immediate sense and for the future, the struggle signals a desire and need to organize for a new direction for the economy and society where the imperialists are deprived of their power to divide and rule and control the lives of working people.

***Defend the Dignity of All Workers Both Working and Retired!
Support the Just Struggle of the Pacific Blue Cross Workers, Local 1816!***



Blue Cross/Blue Shield Restructuring in the U.S.: A Hint of Things to Come?

As Pacific Blue Cross (PBC) employers were demanding concessions from the union negotiating team, the PBC CEO Jan Grude was reporting that the company's financial health "has never been better." The new PBC CEO comes from the U.S. giving rise to a view that the model the CEO is pushing on the company and its employees is based on the Blue Cross/Blue Shield model in the U.S.

The U.S. version of health insurance manages services similar to Medicare in Canada. Blue Cross/Blue Shield was officially non-profit until 1994, when it changed its rules to allow its licensees to be for-profit corporations. Since then, public trading of stock ownership in the company and massive profits have been reported. The Health Care Service Corporation, the parent company of Blue Cross/Blue Shield in some states, reports corporate profit nearly doubled to \$1.09 billion in 2010, followed by four successive years of billion-dollar profits. These private corporate profits in the health care insurance sector come at the expense of the collective agreements, working conditions, and retiree benefits of the workers who provide the service. At Pacific Blue Cross in Canada, workers and retirees face the same imperialist anti-social agenda of the rich against workers and retirees.



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