

Join the fight!

Contact the Socialist
Equality Party

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A program of action

The Socialist Equality Party calls for auto workers to set up rank-and-file committees, independent of the pro-company UAW and big business politicians, to defend their interests.

These committees should demand:

- **Abolish the two-tier wage system!**

A house divided against itself cannot stand. Unite all workers—first and second tier, temporary and contract workers, assembly and parts workers—to guarantee secure good-paying jobs for all.

- **For a 30 percent wage increase and the restoration of cost of living!**

No layoffs and plant closures! A good-paying and secure job with full health care and pension benefits is a social right, not a privilege. Job security for every worker is a fundamental necessity of life in modern society.

- **End the Alternative Work Schedule!**

The AWS disrupts family life and undermines workers' health. Overtime pay after eight hours and weekends must be restored. Shorten the workday with no loss in pay in order to hire more workers.

- **For workers' control over production!**

Abolish the labor-management committees the UAW runs on behalf of the auto bosses and establish genuine workers' democratic control over work conditions, line speed and health and safety.

- **Put the auto industry under public ownership!**

Corporate executives and Wall Street parasites can no longer be allowed to hold the needs of workers and society as a whole hostage to their selfish demands for more money. The auto industry, built by the labor of generations of working people, should be nationalized under the democratic control of the working class in order to guarantee decent jobs and working conditions and safe, reliable and affordable transportation for the public.

- **For the international unity of the working class!**

Reject the nationalist "Buy American" campaigns of the UAW and unite with our brothers and sisters in Europe, Asia, Latin America and around the world in a common fight against the global auto giants.

- **Break with the Democrats and Republicans!**

To wage a struggle against the auto bosses and the Wall Street banks, workers must break with the two parties of big business and build a mass political party to fight against inequality, war, police brutality and other attacks on democratic rights. The capitalist government must be replaced with a government of the workers, by the workers and for the workers.

WORLD SOCIALIST WEB SITE

Autoworker Newsletter



Ford workers at the Sterling Axle plant

Vote "no" on UAW-Ford sellout contract!

The United Auto Workers is seeking to rush through a new contract on Ford workers and wrap up its months-long campaign to break the resistance of 140,000 US autoworkers and impose contracts dictated by the auto executives and Wall Street.

The UAW is organizing votes at locals throughout the country beginning Thursday, only days after self-serving "highlights" and well over 1,000 pages of the contract itself were posted online.

Ford workers should reject this contract on principle. It is impossible for workers to make an informed vote without at least two weeks to study the full contract and organize meetings of the rank-and-file, independent of the UAW, to review and debate its provisions.

The main aim of the Ford contract is the same as the deals at Fiat Chrysler and GM: to establish a permanently lower wage and benefit rate for all autoworkers. This will be done by expanding the number of second-tier workers and driving out higher-paid, tier-one workers through layoffs, speed-ups and early retirement schemes.

All limits on the percentage of second-tier workers have been removed, with these workers now renamed "in-progression." This means that thousands of second-tier workers who were to be transferred to the first-tier wage will now be permanently stuck in the lower wage and benefit scale.

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Vote “no” on UAW-Ford sellout contract!

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It will take eight years for “in progression” workers to reach top wage, a meaningless promise since the contract runs just four years. The scheme is modeled after the “grow-in” policy of the Canadian Auto Workers (now Unifor), which began with three years in 2008, and was expanded to six years and then 10 years in subsequent contracts. As with the Canadian workers, second-tier workers will continue to receive substandard health care and pension benefits.

Far from eliminating the two-tier system, the contracts at all three companies give the auto bosses free rein to expand third-, fourth- and fifth-tiers of temporary and contract workers. At Ford, workers at Sterling Axle, Rawsonville Powertrain and the Woodhaven Hot-Metal Forming Facility will get at least \$7 an hour less than other tier-two workers in the name of ensuring a “competitive wage structure” at these plants.

Meanwhile, the insulting 1.5 percent annual wage increases for traditional workers will leave them with a two-decade decline in real wages of 25 percent by 2019.

The “transformative” character of the contracts goes beyond wages. After dumping their retiree health care benefits into a UAW-controlled trust, which promptly slashed medical coverage for hundreds of thousands of retirees and their dependents, the new agreement will slash the coverage of current workers, or force them to pay deductibles. This has been worked out in conjunction with the Obama administration, which wants to shift the cost of health care from the employers to the backs of workers who are already making barely subsistence wages.

The auto companies are already reaping record profits and a staggering 10+ percent profit margin in the US after the deals in 2007, 2009 and 2011, which reduced per-vehicle costs by more than half. However, the money-mad specu-

lators on Wall Street want even more, and the UAW, which owns a substantial portion of the automakers’ stocks, has been more than eager to comply.

The *WSWS Autoworker Newsletter* calls on Ford workers to deliver a powerful “no” vote. However, the experience of the past two months has made clear that this by itself is not enough. The fight to defend the interests of autoworkers requires new organizations and a new political strategy to defeat the joint conspiracy by the auto companies, the UAW and the two parties of big business.

At every stage of the contract struggle, the UAW has kept information from workers and lied to them, using threats and economic blackmail to beat back rank-and-file workers. UAW officials have unabashedly spouted the company line, insisting that the corporations have nothing more to give and that if workers press for any improvements then the companies will simply shut their factories and move to Mexico and other low-wage countries.

After workers resoundingly rejected the first UAW-FCA deal, the UAW hired a public relations firm to sell its lies to workers, while during ratification votes it made workers run the gauntlet of local union functionaries who denounced them as “greedy” and “stupid” if they were planning to vote against the deal. As for the final vote counts, the UAW is more than ready to rig them to get the “right” result.

The vote is being pushed through at Ford even before the resolution of the vote by 53,000 workers on a similar agreement at GM, where the deal was rejected by nearly 60 percent of skilled trades workers. The UAW is claiming that the contract passed overall with a narrow majority of 55 percent of all workers, but the union’s own bylaws require it to be approved by both production and skilled trades workers.

It is impossible for autoworkers to express their interests within and through this organization, which is a corporate-

labor syndicate and a police force.

Autoworkers are in struggle not just against Ford and the Big Three, but the entire economic and political system, which enriches the few at the expense of the many. The allies of workers are not the big business politicians, like President Obama and the Democrats, who, just like the Republicans, want to turn the US into a cheap labor haven.

The allies of Ford workers are the autoworkers, steelworkers, telecom workers, postal workers, teachers and other workers around the country who face the same struggle. Their allies are their class brothers and sisters in Mexico, Canada, Italy and around the world who are facing the same attacks by the global corporations and banks.

The *WSWS Autoworker Newsletter* calls on Ford workers to move immediately to elect rank-and-file committees, independent from the UAW, to take the conduct of the struggle out of their hands. A rejection of the contract should be followed by an appeal to GM and Fiat Chrysler workers to reopen the struggle; John Deere workers laboring under a contract whose provisions they don’t even know; and to the entire working class seeking a way forward in the fight against inequality and the relentless assault on jobs and wages.

We urge Ford workers to contact the *WSWS Autoworker Newsletter* to take up this fight.

**Join the fight to
build rank-and-file
committees:**

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