

# Build rank-and-file committees to prepare the fight for jobs and wages!

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*This statement is being distributed to auto workers in Michigan and throughout the Midwest. To build a rank-and-file committee at your factory or workplace, contact us today through this webform or by calling (313)409-8083.*

It is little more than three months before the expiration of the UAW contracts with Fiat-Chrysler, GM and Ford. Autoworkers need to prepare now for a fight to abolish the hated two-tier wage system and win the right to a secure and decent-paying job for all workers, young and old.

In every factory, rank-and-file workers should elect committees to formulate their demands and prepare for a national strike of all 139,000 autoworkers in September.

In carrying out this fight, workers face a determined enemy in the UAW, which is nothing more than a tool of the auto bosses. While UAW officials have said they want to “bridge the gap” in wages between first and second tier workers, in reality they are already holding behind-the-scenes discussions to add a new subclass of autoworkers who will be paid between \$10 and \$15 an hour.

Any talk of a strike from the UAW is a fraud. If the UAW called a strike, it would only be to let off steam as it did during the two-day and six-hour “Hollywood strikes” at GM and Chrysler in 2007, which were followed by a sellout that sanctioned the expansion of two-tier wages.

The Socialist Equality Party rejects the efforts of the UAW to blackmail workers into paying dues to an organization that does not defend them. New organizations must be built that are democratically controlled by rank-and-file workers and committed to defend the social rights of the working class, not the profits of the corporations.

We propose that the committees be organized around the following demands:

**\* 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 substantial 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.

**\* Nationalize the auto industry!** 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.

The UAW will not carry out a fight. It is controlled by corporate stooges, corrupt beyond all measure, who are awash in cash they have received to do the bidding of their paymasters. The union, like the AFL-CIO as a whole, is tied politically to the Democratic Party and absolutely committed to the profit interests of the auto companies.

For decades, the UAW has claimed that endless sacrifices to boost the profits and competitiveness of the companies would be rewarded with “shared prosperity.”

What is the reality?

GM, Ford and FCA have made \$73 billion in profits since the last four-year contract was signed and nearly \$2 billion in the first quarter of 2015. Far from reinvesting this money in upgrades to create safer and better working conditions, let alone improving the wages and benefits of the workers, the auto execs have spent billions on dividend payments and stock buybacks for rich shareholders.

After wealthy investors demanded it, General Motors is spending \$10 billion of its \$25 billion cash hoard on dividends and stock buybacks this year. **This is enough to give each of its 48,400 hourly workers a \$206,611 bonus!**

Autoworkers, like the working class as a whole, face a political struggle against the entire state—the organized representative of the corporate and financial elite. During the 2009 bankruptcy restructuring, the Obama administration essentially handed GM and Chrysler to Wall Street. As a condition for the bailout, the White House demanded the halving of wages for new hires, the end of the eight-hour day and the elimination of cost of living increases.

Now, workers at Warren Truck and Jefferson North Assembly produce 3,600 Ram pickups and Jeeps valued at \$108 million every day, yet second tier

workers earn the equivalent in real wages of what their great-great-grandfathers were paid to build the Ford Model T 100 years ago!

The attack on autoworkers set the stage for destroying wages, health benefits, pensions and working conditions throughout the US and world economy. While workers have suffered through the longest period of wage stagnation since the Great Depression of the 1930s, 95 percent of the income gains have gone to the richest one percent since the so-called recovery began.

While the Democrats and Republicans claim there is no money even to provide water to the elderly and low-income families, corporate profits and executive pay have hit record highs and the government is squandering trillions on wars to conquer poor countries and loot their resources. **The cost of just one F-35 fighter jet—\$330 million—is enough to double the annual wages of 10,700 tier two workers.**

There is a growing determination by workers to fight. If autoworkers take a stand, they will quickly win the support of tens of millions of workers who face the same struggle.

Workers need a new leadership and fighting organization, based on an internationalist and socialist strategy, for the coming battle. We call on all autoworkers who want to build rank-and-file committees to take up this fight to contact the Socialist Equality Party today.



To contact the WSWS and the  
Socialist Equality Party visit:

**[wsws.org/contact](http://wsws.org/contact)**