

Auto news update

Mopar workers in Michigan vote to reject UAW-Fiat Chrysler deal as anger grows

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24 September 2015

The first tallies of votes on the UAW-Fiat Chrysler sellout contract show a resounding “no” from autoworkers at Mopar facilities in Michigan and Colorado.

Centerline, Michigan parts workers rejected the national agreement by a 65-35 margin for big division workers and 52-48 for skilled trades workers. At the small-sized parts center in Colorado, 65 percent of workers rejected the deal.

The UAW is growing increasingly nervous of workers’ opposition to its role as an agent of the corporations. The *World Socialist Web Site* learned from multiple sources in the Kokomo, Indiana transmission plant that a UAW informational meeting held Thursday morning erupted in shouting as workers voiced hostility to the UAW’s efforts to ram the sellout contract through.

“It was chaos,” said one Kokomo worker. “The union was dancing around the answers and didn’t tell us anything. Workers were asking questions but we got nothing. For example, why didn’t we have a union representative at our plant all of last night and there was an injury?”

“The UAW peoples’ answers were, ‘we refuse to answer the question and please stop cursing.’ Tomorrow they’re holding the meeting at the school gym because they said they’re afraid its going to be mass chaos and that we’d tear up the new million dollar union hall.”

The union’s refusal to answer workers’ questions in Kokomo comes after tense meetings in Michigan. In Sterling Heights, the UAW called police on supporters of the Socialist Equality Party who were distributing the Autoworker Newsletter on the public sidewalk

outside the union hall. The UAW also attempted to shut down a worker who quoted from the Autoworker Newsletter.

Momentum for a “no” vote is nevertheless growing amongst workers. The vote at Mopar comes after revelations that the new deal creates a third tier for Mopar workers and axle operators, with a cap of \$22 an hour, significantly below the cap for second-tier workers company-wide.

A Centerline Mopar worker told the WSWs, “We voted both the national and the local contracts down and I’d say everyone needs to stick together. This contract is garbage so we need to vote it down.” The worker noted that the company and the UAW are relying on a campaign to penalize workers at plants that vote “no.”

“There was a meeting yesterday where they said they were going to start giving people time off for low performance. This is retaliation in anticipation of us voting no. They fired a shot across the bow, so to speak. A lot of it is intimidation.”

A GM autoworker in Colorado told the WSWs, “I think it was a just thing voting the contract down. They UAW is a very misleading entity right now and their representation is false. I support people for voting no.”

Many workers are coming to realize that a “no” vote is just the beginning of a fight against the UAW-company alliance, and that a “no” vote will not compel the union to come back with a better offer. “I think they’ll throw something on the signing bonus,” said the Centerline Mopar worker.

“But do I think anything is going to change in the big picture? No. You’ll see a little more cash and maybe some stupid bonus they throw in to try to get it to pass.

The local officials are the salesmen for this contract. They are having strategy meetings and conference calls with the international to get it to pass next time. But we are very happy about our ‘no’ vote. People have had enough of this.”

The Colorado worker said, “If you look at the ballots the UAW is giving at Warren Truck in Detroit, having workers vote for both the local and national contract at once and then calling workers back for a re-vote...They got their hand caught in the cookie jar at Warren.”

The opposition of autoworkers is coming into direct conflict with the UAW, which does not represent the interests of workers. The UAW is an agency of management, and it must be thrown out. The WSWS calls on workers to take the initiative to form independent rank-and-file organizations at their plants, to organize opposition and develop lines of communication with all sections of the working class.

Do you have information about informational meetings in your area? Contact the WSWS to share your stories about the meetings and spread the word to autoworkers around the world.



To contact the WSWS and the
Socialist Equality Party visit:

wsws.org/contact