

As opposition to UAW sellout grows, union hack denounces WSWS Autoworker Newsletter

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Autoworkers who are overwhelmingly voting down the sellout deal between the United Auto Workers and Fiat Chrysler are sending a powerful message to the millions of workers who yearn to wage a united counteroffensive against decades of attacks on their social rights and living standards.

In the face of this emerging militancy, the UAW has a message of its own to autoworkers: sit down, shut up, and do as we say.

Among those the union has mobilized to tell the workers what they can and cannot do is a former union official named David Macaray, who published an article Monday titled “Union votes on Fiat Chrysler Deal” on the websites *Huffington Post* and *Counterpunch*.

The article’s purpose is to present the UAW as an organization that workers are not to question.

In barking this order at autoworkers, the author attacks the *World Socialist Web Site* and the *WSWS Autoworkers Newsletter*, claiming that these publications are run by “outsiders” who “have no business weighing in on the merits of a UAW contract.” He continues: “Those Trotskyite websites—the ones that have referred to every UAW leader since Walter Reuther as ‘corrupt’ or as a ‘sellout,’ or as a ‘dupe’—couldn’t be more ignorant or self-righteously socialist.”

The UAW and its allies are taking aim not simply at the *Autoworkers Newsletter* and *World Socialist Web Site*, but at the tens of thousands of autoworkers who want to wage a real fight against the corporations and who know that the UAW is allied with the enemy. Autoworkers across the country are threatening to break through the barrier of the UAW, and the union

fears that it might be losing control. It is raising a hue and cry about the *Autoworkers Newsletter* because this publication seeks to give conscious expression to the growing opposition amongst autoworkers themselves.

Macaray’s antisocialist denunciation of “outsiders” who have “no business” publicizing the UAW’s betrayals recalls the right-wing anticommunist witch-hunts of the 1940s and 50s, when Reuther purged socialists from the leadership of the union and workers were fired from their jobs for sympathizing with socialism. The UAW will allow workers to get information only from their approved list of “insider” sources—that is, from the union, the company and the corporate media.

But the *Newsletter* has received sign-ups and supportive comments from more than a thousand workers in recent days precisely because they are tired of hearing nothing but lies from these “insiders” and their backers in the Democratic and Republican parties.

The anti-working class character of Macaray’s diatribe is made clear by the author’s attempts to pit autoworkers against their working class brothers and sisters in other industries and across the world.

When referencing the millions of workers who have every interest in seeing their autoworker allies win major gains, Macaray says: “First of all, it’s none of their business, and second, the membership always knows best. Because the members—and only the members—will know when it’s time to fight or time to accept a substandard agreement, they don’t need to be prodded or second guessed.”

Macaray doesn’t think the “membership always knows best”; he thinks the UAW always knows best and that the membership has no right to question this.

His doublespeak employs the union's lie that the UAW and the membership are one and the same—a lie whose purpose is to keep the workers chained to a “union” that has become an agency of the corporations.

After all, if the “membership always knows best,” then why is Macaray defending a proposed contract that is being roundly defeated by workers across the country?

Macaray defends the sellout agreement by portraying widespread opposition as meaningless: “As a former union negotiator, I can attest to a truism: every contract ever negotiated can be interpreted either as ‘a decent settlement, given the circumstances’ or as ‘a piece of dog-shit that never should have been brought back for ratification.’”

Referencing “decent settlements” and “pieces of dog-shit,” Macaray admits that he has “seen both, done both, *been both*.”

Indeed, Macaray is a retired union bureaucrat. From 1989 to 2000, he served for 11 years as president of Local 672 of the Association of Western Pulp and Paper Workers, where, by his own admission, he has negotiated sellout contracts. He fails to mention his union presidency in his *Huffington Post* biography, however, choosing to identify himself by the more harmless and respectable “playwright and author.”

In his smugness, his cynicism, and his hostility to the working class, Macaray typifies the American upper-middle class social type that staffs and supports the UAW bureaucracy.

Macaray tells workers that they must accept the dictatorship of the UAW. “The UAW has been the gold standard of unions ever since it was founded in 1935,” he says. “No better union has ever existed.”

He concludes with a vague threat, noting that “even though the last three decades have been unbelievably cruel to the autoworkers, have seen them ravaged—lied to, cheated, manipulated, marginalized, and unfairly punished,” the workers “can be trusted to do the right thing” by sticking with the UAW. It is sign of the UAW's bankruptcy that its supporters embrace the logic of the abusive spouse.

Unfortunately for Mr. Macaray, the autoworkers are not as stupid as he is. They know who is to blame for three decades of being ravaged, lied to, cheated, manipulated, marginalized, and unfairly punished. They have suffered the results of the UAW and the car

companies' policies to cut millions of manufacturing jobs and slash wages and benefits. Under this program, industrial hubs like Detroit were transformed into rusting centers of poverty and inequality.

As a direct result, autoworkers face the same conditions as their great grandfathers faced in the auto factory sweatshops of the 1920s—homelessness, foreclosure, hunger and physical breakdown. On the backs of the workers' labor, the companies are making record profits while the union gets a cut through joint programs, health care co-op schemes, and dues hikes. The CEO of Chrysler makes \$72 million a year while an army of several hundred UAW bureaucrats is paid six-figure salaries to orchestrate the next concession.

Macaray speaks for a broad layer of the so-called “left.” It is significant that his antisocialist, anti-working class diatribe was published on two ostensibly left-wing web sites, *Huffington Post* and *Counterpunch*. The upper-middle class contributors and supporters of these web sites, as well as a whole host of so-called “socialist” groups—most of which have written nothing about the struggle of the autoworkers—see their primary goal as shoring up support for trade unions like the UAW.

This only underscores the pseudo-left character of these forces, which support the trade unions not in spite of their betrayals and concessions, but because of them. These more affluent sections of the population oppose the independent mobilization of the working class and the struggle against the capitalist system, which is the source of their own privileged positions.



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