

Lordstown GM worker speaks on UAW-GM contract

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“I am telling everyone not to vote for this”

A worker at the General Motors Lordstown, Ohio Assembly Plant with 20 ½ years at GM and Packard Electric recently spoke to the *World Socialist Web Site* about the proposed UAW-GM contract.

“My blood is boiling. I am telling everyone not to vote for this. We are slitting our own throats. We are destroying our future.

“I think the union and the company are in bed together. They are in business together. I didn’t like what they did on Sunday night [canceling a strike at the last minute]. I was working and willing to go on strike, wanting to go on strike. The committeeman came down the line saying ‘don’t leave your job, we are getting a contract.’

“That is what they did at Chrysler and that is what they will do at Ford. I guess they figured if it worked at Chrysler they can push it through here as well. I was glad the Chrysler workers voted down the first contract and I wanted them to keep voting down the contract.

“The union didn’t want a strike. If there was one the stock price would go down and that would hurt the union since they own so much GM stock. That is what I mean; they are in business with the company. They are not for us, but for the company.

“I am a traditional employee and I hate the two-tier system. At first they tried to keep us separated, they didn’t want us to know what the other made. They think we are stupid, but we can read and talk. Now we are all together. I don’t like someone working next to me, working just as hard, sometimes harder than me, but making less and having no benefits. That is not

right. We should all be making the same thing.

“Year after year the company is making profit after profit and we are making it for them. I work side-by-side with tier-two workers and they are making that company money, yet they don’t want to treat them right.

“People ask me why I don’t run for the union, but I don’t want to be forced to lie to people. That is all the union does now. They will tell you only a few things about the contract, things they hope will get people to vote yes, but you won’t get to see the whole thing. The union and the company are in it together, they are in business together and they don’t care about the workers.”

She said that many workers at Lordstown transferred from Delphi Packard Electric.

“I was hired in by Packard Electric in 1995 and I was making \$9.50 an hour. They had just started the two-tier system and I had to work for a long time before I got up to grade, which was \$28 an hour. It was part of General Motors at the time; we made the wire harnesses. I worked in the radiation unit so that I would make a little more—I am a single parent with a daughter to support.

“In 1999, it was spun off and my pay was cut to \$16.50 an hour. That was like depression for me. There were thousands of people working there. People were being laid off and they were forcing the older workers to leave. You don’t know how many people ended up committing suicide. They were forced onto welfare; they couldn’t take care of their families.

“The people on the top and the people in the union don’t realize what this does to people. All they care about is money.

“My sister and her husband had 30 and 32 years and they forced them out. They told them they had to retire or they would lose everything. They just lied to them.

“They wouldn’t replace people when they left.

Finally they got down to so few people left that they had to start hiring, but they would only hire one person for every three that retired. They just made everyone work harder.

“In 2008 I got the chance to transfer to Lordstown. I took it, I needed the money, I still had to support my daughter. I kept my corporate years but I was like a new employee at Lordstown. They treated us like crap and because my service says 2008 I can’t bid on jobs.

“I lift 30 to 40 pounds when each car comes down the line and we do at least 400 cars each night. They like us to do 425. That takes a lot out of a person. I’m in my 40s now, my body is starting to fall apart from all the years of working for GM, but I can’t bid on a job because I started at Lordstown in ‘08.

“When I retire I will get my pension for my time at Packard, but no health benefits. I have to try and hold out, if my body will let me, until I am old enough for Medicare. I only get a pension savings account from GM, which I put into from each pay.

“Everything is going downhill. Everything makes me sick. Our union is being bought. They don’t represent us. The tier-two people work just as hard or harder but are making less money and no benefits. That is not right.”



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