

Stiff opposition to UAW-GM deal as balloting concludes

Jerry White
6 November 2015

With balloting ending today on the tentative agreement reached by the United Auto Workers and General Motors, the UAW is going all out to overcome the resistance of workers and squeeze out a ratification of the sellout deal.

Regardless of the final tally of votes, the UAW's resort to lies, intimidation and other underhanded methods to ram through its contracts following the rebellion by Fiat Chrysler workers last month has only further discredited this pro-company outfit. In so far as workers have voted for the deal, it is not because they have faith in the UAW. On the contrary, many workers are convinced the UAW will do nothing to win any improvements for them, even as the automakers are making record profits.

Workers at the Parma Metal Center near Cleveland, Ohio rejected the deal in voting Wednesday, with 53 percent of the 1,045 voting workers casting ballots against the deal. The stamping plant joins several other—including the Fairfax, Kansas and Arlington, Texas assembly plants; the Toledo, Ohio transmission factory; and the GM Tech Center—where the majority of workers voted “no.”

In virtually every plant where the deal has been ratified, the “no” votes have reached 40 percent or more. Thursday's tally of 220 workers at GM's Romulus engine plant, near Detroit, was typical of this trend, with the deal reportedly passing by a 54 percent to 46 percent margin.

With ratifications Wednesday at the Ft. Wayne, Indiana; Wentzville, Missouri; and Spring Hill, Tennessee assembly plants and several smaller facilities, an unofficial result as of this writing shows the “yes” votes leading. In a worried comment, however, the *Detroit Free Press*, long a mouthpiece for the auto bosses and the UAW, warned that “pockets of

resistance remain.”

The results of two major assembly plants—Lordstown, Ohio and Delta Township, near Lansing—are scheduled to be released Friday, along with four General Motors Components Holding factories in upstate New York, western Michigan and Kokomo, Indiana. There is widespread opposition to the contract from the 3,400 workers at the GMCH plants, formerly run by GM's spin-off parts division Delphi. The UAW-backed deal would condemn them to wages between \$16.25 and \$19.86 an hour after eight years, well below their counterparts at other GM plants.

In addition, large numbers of GM's 8,500 skilled trades workers are voting down the contract. According to the UAW's bylaws, the contract cannot pass unless a majority of both production and skilled workers ratify it. The UAW, however, ignored the provision in the 2011 contract.

In a significant vote, which indicates the immense opposition the UAW will confront when it seeks to push a similar contract on 49,000 Ford workers, workers at Ford's Flat Rock Assembly Plant defeated a local contract by 55-45 percent on Tuesday, with skilled trades voting against the deal by 80 percent.

A campaign team distributed the WSWs *Autoworker Newsletter* to GM workers at the company's Delta Township Assembly Plant, near Lansing, Michigan, where a vote was held on Thursday.

A first tier worker with 10 years called the agreement “garbage,” adding, “They didn't give us back our vacation days, and there is nothing in there for the retirees. Instead of eliminating the two tiers they have created four tiers. Five tiers really if you count the subcontractors.

“The UAW is lying about the contract to get it passed. They are telling us if we ratify it we can go

back to our home plants. There are a lot of people here from other plants. This is my fourth plant in eight years.” He added, “They just want to keep GM’s costs down.”

A veteran Delta worker said she also planned to vote “no.” “I think they could have done a lot better. They have not given tier-one a raise in twelve years. Now they are giving us just six percent over four years. That is unfair. The company is profitable. We sacrificed. We want the two tier workers brought up, but I think eight years is too long.”

Asked what she thought about the role of the UAW she was blunt: “It’s all about money.”

Several workers told WSWs reporters that they felt outraged by the fact that only 4,000 workers were being offered retirement incentives although some 20,000 are eligible to retire. “I am voting ‘no’ because of the limit of 4,000 people eligible for retirement,” said one worker. “I am going to retire soon. and I don’t know how they are going to choose who gets the money.”

Another veteran worker said, “When I hired in back in 1979, there were 394,000 GM workers. Now there are only 52,700. The union says the company will move to Mexico if we demand our pay and conditions back. More givebacks are not going to hurt the International reps—they get two pensions and cost of living increases.”

“We’ve been through several contracts and we see how it works,” another tier one worker said. “They use scare tactics about shutting your plant if you don’t approve the contract. I only get five days off in a month—four Sundays and one Saturday. We are working six-day weeks, and it is killing our bodies. How do I cope? I go to medical.”

“They’re telling the second-tiers they are going to get up to top pay in eight years, but in four years with the next contract that could all change,” said a worker with 15 years. “The supposed raise is a slap in the face. At the end of this contract it will be 14 years since we got any real increase.”

“This contract is BS,” said another veteran worker. “UAW International officials have prolonged strikes to get their family members hired, but they say we cannot strike. We’ve got the company by the balls and have enormous leverage now, with them depending on the US for profits.

“The UAW officials say it would hurt us

economically to strike. What did the sit-downers in Flint have to endure? It was a lot worse. The UAW just wants to railroad this deal through.”



To contact the WSWs and the
Socialist Equality Party visit:

wsws.org/contact