

“The company is making huge profits but it is not doing us any good”

## Michigan Ford workers denounce UAW sellout

A WSWS reporting team  
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Autoworkers at suburban Detroit factories are expressing their anger over the effort of the United Auto Workers to rush through a pro-company agreement before workers have time to read it and mount opposition. Having faced deep opposition at Fiat Chrysler and General Motors, the UAW is stepping up its campaign of lies and economic blackmail to beat back the resistance of Ford workers.

A campaign team from the *World Socialist Web Site Autoworker Newsletter* received warm support from workers getting off their shift Monday afternoon at the Michigan Assembly Plant in the Detroit suburban city of Wayne. Workers who had just been handed the bogus “highlights” of the deal by UAW Local 900 officials gathered around newsletter reporters to discuss the deal. After about 20 minutes UAW officials called security guards to order the campaigners from the parking lot.

Earlier this year Ford announced the layoff of 673 workers at the factory due to a slowdown in small car sales and said it would move production of the Focus and C-Max models to its factory in Cuautitlan, Mexico. At the time, UAW-Ford Vice President Jimmy Settles defended the layoffs, saying, “We are reminded from time to time that our industry is cyclical and volatile to market conditions.”

A veteran tier-one worker told the *Autoworker Newsletter*, “They want us out. We are the last of the Mohicans and after us it will all be tier-two workers. They are throwing out money in signing bonuses so that people will forget the long-term picture. Ford is making huge profits but it is not doing us any good. All

they have done is take \$1,500 from our own profit-sharing money and put it to the signing bonus. It’s our money and we are going to be taxed at 42 percent.

“[UAW Vice President James] Settles is not missing any meals. For many second-tier workers Thursday is going to be their last day at work. They are cutting their throats right before the holiday. That is really nice. As far as the eight-year progression, they can say in four years that things are not working out economically, that sales are down and they’ll throw the promise to reach top wages out the window.

“With production going to Mexico this plant is going to be gone. They’re bringing in a little truck for a while to ease the pain but they want to get rid of this plant.”

Another worker with 25 years at Ford said, “The UAW is so shady. None of us have any faith in the union. I don’t like the tier-two guys making less; they work just as hard as we do. Eventually they are going to be the majority and if we don’t stand with them they might vote to cut our pensions one day to get a raise. I’m already struggling with no savings and trying to help my dad. As far as the next generation, they have nothing but low paying jobs.”

“We’re essentially getting \$500 more in a signing bonus than GM but the contract is the same,” said another older worker. “The \$1,500 extra in the signing bonus is our own money.

“Ford has made untold billions from the tier-two workers and now they are eliminating the caps on tier-two workers forever. They’re trying to dangle a carrot in front of these workers to get them to buy this.

“Nobody likes this,” said a tier-two worker. “I

wasn't here in the last contract but they said we would get all of our stuff back after Ford regained its profits. That's not happening."

Another worker said, "What I lost in COLA is way more than the signing bonus. Take your \$10,000 signing bonus and shove it. Give me my cost of living back."

He added, "The UAW is doing just what you say: ramming this down our throats. Look at how fast this is coming out! We don't even have time to read it. Don't lie about it. I hope everybody votes 'no!'"

A fourth Ford worker commented, "I went to the union meeting yesterday, and there probably were not more than 100 people at it. They are disgusted with the UAW."

"They say Jimmy Settles got us two vehicles—the Ranger and then when that

goes we'll get the Bronco. That is just Ford giving us what they want to give us, a low volume vehicle.

"We don't know when the vote is, but it's soon. It could be Thursday, or next Monday. Who has time to read the contract before then?"

The *Autoworker Newsletter* also spoke to a second-tier worker at the Ford Dearborn Stamping plant who said she and her coworkers also planned to vote "no" on the contract.

"This, what they call a 'contract,' needs a lot of work. Everyone I have talked to is saying 'no.' I have not talked to one person who says they are voting 'yes.' After looking at the Chrysler and GM contracts they said if they come to us with that, it will be 'no.'"

"The wage progression for tier-two workers could have been brought up to \$19.28 this year." She said that as far as the promise to bring all second-tier workers up to top pay after eight years, "How can you make promises for eight years into the future on a four-year contract?"

She said there were many other problems with the contract as far as she was concerned. "They didn't bring cost of living back. They are throwing in part of our profit sharing and calling it a bonus. It's not fair to the retirees either."

She was angry over the attempt by the UAW to declare the GM agreement ratified despite the fact that skilled trades workers voted "no." The UAW is currently interrogating skilled trades workers so it can claim they voted against the contract for general

economic reasons rather than issues particular to skilled trades. This will then be used to override the UAW constitutional bylaws, which require that both production and trade workers approve a deal before it is ratified.

"It sounds like they are telling them how to vote. They voted the way they voted. How can they say this is the reason they voted 'yes' or 'no'?"



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