

“Your resolve to stand up... is something to be admired”

Ford workers call for joint struggle with Nexteer workers

Our reporters
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Autoworkers at Ford have just passed through an important experience in their recent contract fight. Like Nexteer workers, the workers at Ford—as well as those at GM and Chrysler—confronted the corporation, the UAW and their allies in the corporate media and political establishment.

There was mass opposition to the sellout contract agreed by the UAW, and workers voted overwhelmingly “no” at major plants before the UAW claimed that the contract miraculously passed by the slimmest of margins. Many workers suspect that the UAW committed election fraud to ram the sellout contract through.

The WSWS *Autoworker Newsletter* contacted a number of Ford workers to discuss with them the situation at Nexteer, where workers recently voted overwhelmingly against a contract backed by the UAW and the company. The interviews were carried out before the phony strike called by the UAW beginning early Tuesday morning, which lasted less than one day.

To my brothers and sisters at Nexteer: I would like to let you all know that your brothers and sisters here in Chicago support you and your efforts to rise up against the corporate machine that threatens each and every hard working citizen in America today. Know that your resolve to stand up to the injustices committed against the working class is something to be admired and shines like a beacon of hope in dark times.

I work at the Ford Chicago Assembly Plant. As a fellow UAW member, believe me when I say that your struggle is our struggle. As many now know, at the 11th hour with a 53 percent “no” and 47 percent “yes” tally on the Ford contract, somehow it passed after the

votes from the final plant were taken.

Dearborn Assembly [the last plant to vote] is a plant consisting of a majority “legacy” employees that were present in 2007 when that contract called for them to give up their pensions, COLA and created the two-tier worker system, among other injustices. It goes without saying that the likelihood of these workers being in favor of a contract that literally gave none of it back while creating additional tiers for workers is laughable.

There have been reports of criminal tactics employed by UAW officials out of Dearborn that include ballot stuffing, voter intimidation, voter fraud and an archaic process in general. Here in Chicago we played witness as UAW international reps walked our assembly line beating the corporate drums. They attempted to put us in fear for our jobs and used other means of intimidation. They were singing the praises of this new contract like it was the best thing since bottled water. However, they only proved to us what has become more apparent as of recent years: The UAW is but an extension of the “Big Three” automakers.

That is why your fight is important to all workers represented by the UAW. That is also why it is of the utmost importance and urgency for plants across the US to build rank-and-file committees. To insure that the interest and rights of workers are protected from the UAW. Doing this is necessary to stop union officials from further advancing the corporate agenda at the cost of what is owed to the workers.

Although difficult times lie ahead in this battle, stay strong; for there is light at the end of this tunnel. Adversity is the catalyst to evolution. Pain is the guide to understanding. If we fear pain, then what we truly fear is growth. If instead we face it head on, we become

stronger. We gain the power to not only overcome obstacles, but to obliterate that which stands in our way.

We, the working class, have the power and only WE can stop those among us that are tearing our house down. As long as we unite, nothing can stand in our way. United we stand, divided we kneel! On behalf of workers all over the world, I would like to thank you for taking a stand.

My advice to Nexteer workers would be, first and foremost: *Don't believe the UAW*. The UAW wants to play the master of the workers. They tell the companies, "Don't worry, pay us, and we'll control the workers."

We had a safety meeting here last weekend, and just like the *Autoworker Newsletter* said would happen after the contract went through, they're talking now about speeding up the line. Right now it's about one vehicle every 55 seconds, and they want to go up to 74 an hour.

We make almost 1,300 vehicles every day, averaging, say, \$40,000 each, and they've been getting that from us for the last three years. That's *a lot* of money.

I hope the Nexteer workers stay strong, and I really hope things get better for them. I think they should fight for their money; they've earned it. And it's there! It's not like it's not there. The profits are there; they can pay more.

I also think we have to get supporters internationally if we want to get anything. I'm going to tell you what my friends in Mexico have told me: They say, "We're waiting for you. If you guys can do it, if you can fight back against the UAW and the corporations, we'll follow." If they see we can do it, immediately, it's not going to take long, it'll be like lighting a match. It's going to go haywire from here straight down to South America.

The *Autoworker Newsletter* is the only newsletter that was giving us actual information. If you want something that's objective and it's the truth, that's the *Autoworker Newsletter*.



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