

After the contract at Fiat Chrysler: UAW and company cheat workers of pay

Eric London

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Since it rammed through the contract at Fiat Chrysler (FCA) on October 22, the United Auto Workers has been working with the company to break contractual obligations and cheat workers out of their money.

The WSWS *Autoworker Newsletter* spoke with autoworkers at FCA's Toledo North Assembly Plant in Ohio, where the Jeep Cherokee and Wrangler are made. Workers described a situation in which all of the harmful elements of the new contract are being enforced while workers are being denied basic protections on the shop floor. They also voiced support for the struggle of Nexteer workers in Saginaw, Michigan.

In other words, the deal that was passed in October is not a contract in the traditional sense, because the company and the UAW will interpret its language as they see fit in order to help the company post record profits through intensified exploitation of the workers.

"The UAW will sink to all lows to get what they want," one Toledo worker told the WSWS. "People are just pissed. They haven't implemented the new contract. We can't use sick days or vacation days. We were supposed to be able to call in and use vacation days, but they're saying we can't do that until a certain date and they won't tell us when that is."

The worker also explained that the UAW-corporate alliance is cheating them out of performance pay bonuses that workers would have received from the old contract. In their efforts to portray the contract as "one of the richest ever negotiated," the UAW failed to tell workers that the new contract eliminated such bonuses.

"They told us since we got the signing bonus we weren't eligible for the performance bonus this year based on reaching certain milestones. At our plant, we received a Bronze rating, and we should have gotten \$725 this December, but they said we can't have that.

The UAW promised us this before the contract and so we stayed and cleaned and made everything look nice and pretty so we could get the World Class Manufacturer 'Bronze' rating.

"But the whole WCM takes away jobs anyway by making individual workers work much harder, doing the work of many workers. In other words, the union talked us into supporting cutting jobs and then they didn't even give us the blood money.

"People are also angry about the strike fund and the dues hike last year. The UAW stole an extra half-hour of our work in dues money to get us to build their strike fund, which they didn't use. Now the UAW is threatening to blacklist people who break their chain of command."

Another Toledo autoworker said that the UAW and the company "aren't even following the contract. We're still fighting to get the terms enforced." The worker showed the *Autoworker Newsletter* photos of water seeping onto the floor. "It's dangerous because you can slip," the worker said, "and the company doesn't clean it up."

"The UAW does whatever it wants and gets away with it. There is nothing resembling accountability or fairness in our plant. They kept us from getting our performance bonus, and they're keeping temporary workers from getting hired in."

The WSWS also spoke with autoworkers at the plant about the struggle being waged by 3,300 Nexteer auto parts workers in Saginaw, Michigan. Workers there rejected a sellout contract by 97.5 percent one week ago, which forced the UAW to call and then promptly cancel a bogus 20-hour strike. Workers have reported that the company has since sought to intimidate workers by firing up to 30, citing problems in productivity. Many workers believe the UAW is

responsible for victimizing those workers who are most vocal against the UAW-corporate alliance.

Although the Toledo plant uses parts produced by Saginaw workers, the UAW has not kept workers informed about the struggle at Nexteer. Although many workers did not know about the struggle at Nexteer, once informed by the WSWS campaign team they were unanimous in their support.

One worker at the plant told the *Autoworker Newsletter* that “Nexteer workers should keep up their fight for everybody. You need to not have divisions because that’s what management wants. We learned at FCA that you can’t trust the UAW. It is paid off by corporate CEOs.”

Another worker, Michael, had heard of the Nexteer contract rejection.

“It’s unfair what they’re doing to them. If they voted ‘no,’ that’s their right. Why fire them? It’s morally wrong. You’ve got to keep fighting. It’s all you can do. If you stay quiet you can’t make any progress.”

The autoworker quoted at the beginning of the article has been following the struggle of Nexteer workers in the *Autoworker Newsletter*.

“They have the company by the throat,” the worker said. “It’s a matter of keeping the union from scaring people. The UAW antagonizes and harasses everyone to the point where they might break like they did at FCA. It wasn’t that they pulled a good lie; it was that they harassed people, and people are afraid to stand up and lose their jobs. Nexteer workers have to have a mindset of not struggling for garbage and not make our mistake by listening to the union.”



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