

UAW local publishes blacklist of workers who opt out of dues payment

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In its latest tactic aimed at bullying workers, the United Auto Workers has published a blacklist of workers who decided to end their membership in the UAW and stop paying dues to the organization under Michigan's so-called Right-To-Work law.

The Republican-backed law is anti-worker and aimed at blocking any collective resistance to the corporations. That being said, workers have every reason to stop paying the UAW for the "privilege" of being sold out.

In its most recent newsletter, UAW Local 412 in the Detroit suburb of Warren, Michigan—which is composed of Fiat Chrysler autoworkers as well as county, health, and military equipment workers—listed the names of 43 workers who have stopped paying dues. In addition to saying these workers will no longer have the right to vote on contracts, the newsletter urges other workers "not [to] share any tools, knowledge, or support" with "ex-UAW members."

The UAW newsletter targets one Fiat Chrysler worker in particular, mentioning him by name and noting, "Although this person made substantial gains economically from [recent Big Three contract] negotiations, he has chosen to quit paying his fair share..."

This statement turns reality on its head. First, what the UAW calls "substantial gains" is the poverty contract the UAW imposed on behalf of the auto bosses through a series of lies, tricks, and threats.

The deal the UAW rammed through after FCA workers overwhelmingly rejected the first tentative agreement was essentially the same as the first. The contracts at all three automakers—FCA, GM and Ford—include paltry wage increases, no cost-of-living-adjustment, a retention of the Alternative Work Schedule and more corporate flexibility for temp

hiring. They limit labor cost increases to below the rate of inflation, open the way to a further assault on health care, and will provide billions more in profits for the automakers.

Second, workers who choose to leave the UAW have not "chosen to quit paying their fair share," they have made the completely justified choice to stop forking over their hard-earned money to an organization of pro-corporate stooges.

Workers know their dues money is used to finance the salaries and perks of the army of pro-company executives that man the UAW apparatus. After forcing workers to accept the recent sellout contract, UAW-Ford negotiation officials used workers' money to go on an all-expenses-paid beach binge in Miami Beach, Florida. They stayed at the luxury Eden Roc Resort, where rooms cost \$600 per night. While UAW officials were enjoying \$200 massages and \$60 drinks on their vacation, UAW workers at Kohler in Wisconsin were receiving just \$200 a week in strike pay to feed their families. In other words, the UAW wants workers to "pay their fair share" of the bar tab of these corrupt officials.

This is not the first time a UAW local has posted lists of workers who have chosen to decertify. At GM's Spring Hill plant in Tennessee, the UAW printed a similar blacklist, labeling those who chose to decertify as "scabs."

A "scab" is a worker who betrays the working class by weakening the workers' unity, who goes behind the backs of the workers to help the corporation make profit, and who will do anything to keep production and profits up, all for a tiny and pathetic pay-off from his corporate master.

As the recent contract struggle shows, this is a definition that applies to the UAW, and a scab

organization has no right to call workers names for choosing not to pay up any longer.

The UAW is engaged in a campaign to threaten and silence workers who speak out against the UAW-backed corporate tyranny in the factories and the relentless speedup, job-cutting and deadly working conditions the UAW will enforce under these sellout deals.

Workers have been fired at Nexteer in Saginaw, Michigan as well as at Ford's Kansas City Assembly Plant for voicing opposition to the UAW and the corporations on social media. Many workers suspect the UAW is helping the company pick out the most class-conscious workers for victimization.

This follows the redbaiting and anti-socialist campaign the UAW launched against the *World Socialist Web Site Autoworker Newsletter* for telling autoworkers the truth and rallying the opposition of thousands of rank-and-file workers against the pro-company labor agreements.

To the UAW and the corporations, workers have no rights in the workplace. In the eyes of the UAW and the corporations, workers accept conditions similar to life under a police state dictatorship.

In a telling online interaction, one UAW official reprimanded an autoworker for opposing their blacklist. After a UAW Facebook page posted an article about the blacklist, workers began to denounce the anti-democratic measure only to be told by the UAW that they have no rights.

One autoworker commented: "Since [the UAW] won't address people's very legitimate grievances, they turn to censorship in an attempt to make the problems 'disappear.' Cute."

UAW bureaucrat Ralph Lyke replied with the chilling statement: "There is No 'Free Speech' in Our UAW Workplace...Again, the U.S. Bill Of Rights Don't Apply—When we enter our UAW workplaces, we leave our civil liberties in the glove box of our vehicles."

Such a statement might well have been made by one of Hitler's cronies in a fascist "Labor Front." During Hitler's reign, the fascists crushed the opposition of workers and imposed dictatorial shop conditions and forced workers to join pro-corporate, pro-government "Labor Front" organizations. While the UAW is not a fascist organization, in the corporatist, nationalist and deeply anti-democratic outlook of its management there

are many parallels.

The *World Socialist Web Site* opposes all attacks on the rights of workers, whether from right-wing forces like the Koch Brothers, who want to outlaw any means for workers to collectively oppose the employers, or from the UAW, which calls itself a "union" to conceal the fact that it is nothing more than an arm of corporate management and the government.

New forms of representation and struggle must be built, including factory committees democratically controlled by the workers themselves and committed to the methods of class struggle, not class collaboration.

This must be combined with the development of a powerful political movement of the working class to end the dictatorial control of the corporate and financial elite, and its political servants in both big business parties. Genuine democracy in the workplace will only be created when the economy is put under the control of workers themselves and reorganized on the basis of the socialist principle of production for human need, not profit.



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