

“The only ones who gain from war are those in power, the upper one percent”

US autoworkers denounce drive to World War III, demand freedom for Maruti Suzuki workers

Marcus Day, George Gallanis
17 April 2017

Autoworkers in Chicago and suburban Detroit denounced the growing threat of World War III in comments to the World Socialist Web Site *Autoworker Newsletter* Saturday. Workers also expressed their solidarity with the 13 Maruti Suzuki in India who were framed up and sentenced to life in prison.

Many voiced strong hostility to US imperialism’s war drive in the Middle East and Asia, and expressed a deep unease over the danger of a nuclear war breaking out from one or another flashpoint. A number signed the petition calling for the release of the Maruti Suzuki workers, while others expressed interest in the upcoming International May Day Online Rally on April 30.

Ford’s Chicago plant employs over 4,200 and is the company’s oldest continually operating factory, opening in 1924 with production of the Model T. Chicago’s Far South Side, where the plant is located, has undergone decades of deindustrialization, and jobs at the factory are eagerly sought after, despite often wretched working conditions and grueling shifts of 10 hours or more.

Many of the workers are younger, with the majority hired after President Obama’s halved the wages of all new hires at GM and Chrysler during the restructuring of the auto industry in 2009. CAP has also been the site of militant opposition to the pro-corporate demands of the United Auto Workers (UAW) union, and workers there have voted down several UAW-backed contracts by large margins.

Workers at the plant currently produce the Explorer SUV and the Taurus sedan. Sales of the models have been declining over the last year, with Explorer sales down 6.6 percent year-over-year as of March. As sales across the auto industry have slumped, the automakers have sought to cut back production, with General Motors eliminating entire shifts at plants in Detroit-Hamtramck and Lansing in Michigan, and in Lordstown, Ohio, and plans for a 10-week shutdown at many plants later this year to trim inventories. For its part, Ford temporarily shut down five plants at the end of 2016, and in March warned of possible layoffs later this year.

“I’m against war,” said Frank. “I think all workers from here in Chicago, to workers across the seas, in Afghanistan, Syria, Russia and everywhere should stick together and go antiwar. We could start a peace movement.”

Asked what he thought underlay the growing war danger, Ted said, “It’s always about profit, and the banking system. This stuff is rotten to the core. You got owners of the country, a ruling class, the one percent. That’s the whole thing. Put it this way, these people don’t want to stop their money coming in. They’ve got their bunkers, and we’ll be the ones who’ll end up dead. It’s going to end killing our kids, our children. Trump’s kids aren’t the ones going to war. The Democrats and Republicans don’t give a damn about your family, or a damn about you.”

“I hope we don’t go to war,” said Sam. “I don’t

know what else to think about it. How the hell can I prevent this?" A WSWWS reporter explained it was urgently necessary to build a mass antiwar movement of the working class, politically independent of the Democrats and Republicans. He added that workers were being exploited by the same transnational corporations all over the world, and that workers in the US had to turn to workers in Mexico, India, China and elsewhere to prevent a new world war from happening. "That makes sense," Sam replied.

WSWS reporters also explained the campaign in defense of the 13 victimized Maruti Suzuki workers in India, who have been framed up for murder because of their opposition to sweatshop conditions, temporary employment schemes, and shop floor abuse. Sam noted that many of the issues they faced sounded familiar to him, and when told that they had been facing the death penalty but were sentenced to life in prison, said, "Like that's much better. Their situation sounds crazy."

When a reporter for the WSWWS said workers needed their own political party to fight back, Ted responded, "Oh, most definitely. And that's going to have to be done, because these unions have sold out all the way.

"Something's going to have to give. I appreciate what you are doing. Keep informing people and keep a voice out here."

A number of workers raised suspicions over the official pretext for the missile strike on Syria last week, namely that President Bashar al-Assad carried out a chemical weapon attack. "It seems kind of like the WMDs they went over there looking for in Iraq that never appeared," noted one worker.

Another, upon taking a leaflet asking what a US-European-Russian war would look like, said, "It's crazy what's happening. There could be bombs coming in over our heads as we speak."

"I'm against war," said Mario. "I think war is wrong. The only type of people that gain anything from war are those that are in power, the upper one percent, the wealthy. The rich keep getting rich from it and unfortunately our children and our grandchildren are the ones who are shipped off and made to go fight these wars. How about we start sending the senators and the House of Representatives? And how about we are start sending their kids to war? Maybe they wouldn't be so amped up to go ahead and start conflicts wherever.

"I just wish there would be an end to all of this, but

whenever there is money involved things continue. I'm definitely against this, and I'm sure a lot of my union brothers and sisters are against it as well. If we could all band together and do something I'm all for it."

On the plight of the Maruti Suzuki workers, Mario added, "I would tell these workers to stick together. Unity and solidarity can get things done. I wish them the best, I hope they can stay strong and good luck to them in their fight."

In suburban Detroit, supporters of the International Youth and Students for Social Equality (IYSSE) campaigned at Fiat Chrysler's Warren Truck assembly plant on Saturday. A worker who was born in Jordan and emigrated more than two decades ago, said, "I'm glad to see people out here opposing war and fighting to defend workers. It's like 0.01 percent of the population—the real lunatics—are making all the decisions. I believe there a lot more cases of frame-ups like the Indian workers.

"I'm against war and all the Islamophobia. The people in the United States are nice and want peace. It's the politics that are rotten here in the US and all over the world. None of them look after the people. They want us fighting against each other so they can continue to make all the money."

Another worker added, "I'm all for these workers in India. They should stand up for what they believe in. If upper management can get away with it there they will make us work for lower wages and take away our health care here. We should all be standing together all over the world and fighting for the same goals."



To contact the WSWWS and the Socialist Equality Party visit:

[wsws.org/contact](https://www.wsws.org/contact)