

Canadian autoworkers warn CAMI strikers on role of Unifor, condemn attack on WSWWS

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Workers at General Motors and Ford plants in Canada who spoke to the *World Socialist Web Site Autoworker Newsletter* expressed their support for striking workers at GM's CAMI assembly plant in Ingersoll, Ontario and warned the embattled workers about the treacherous role of the auto union, Unifor.

Autoworkers also denounced the physical assault on a WSWWS reporter by a Unifor thug during last Friday's solidarity rally outside the CAMI plant.

Last year, the more than 20,000 GM, Ford and Fiat Chrysler workers in Canada, who work under a separate contract from the 2,800 workers at CAMI, cast the largest no vote for a union-backed contract since the Canadian Auto Workers, the predecessor of Unifor, broke with the United Auto Workers in 1986. There was widespread opposition, particularly from workers at Ford's plant in Oakville and GM's Oshawa plant, over Unifor's effort to ram through the sellout deal without revealing its entire content to workers.

Addressing the CAMI workers a tier-two worker from the Oakville plant said, "My advice is to stay strong and fight. You need to have full information before you vote on any contract.

"We struggle with our union here in Oakville. We don't have the protection we need. Unifor is not doing its job. The opinion across the board is that Unifor is paid off and not for the workers.

"I voted 'no' on our last contract. We talked to the Ford workers in Windsor, and it turns out that they were not fully informed. They didn't gain anything with the agreement. They are now angry."

Commenting on the revelations of corruption on the part of United Auto Workers officials in the US, she added, "It is disgusting." She continued, "We are not getting the support we need. We are lied to all the time."

Speaking of the specific conditions at her plant she added, "The company doesn't allow us time off. It is a fight. I give them six months notice, and they still say no.

"Workers who transferred from the Windsor plant to Oakville say this is the worst plant they've ever worked in with the way they are treated. If you talk to the union, they are buddy-buddy with management."

A retired GM worker from St. Catharines, Ontario spoke to the WSWWS on the CAMI strike and the role of Unifor. "It is a pretty bleak picture for the workers. We have done nothing but give concessions. We have given so much ground. It seems unionized workers in the US and Canada have taken a kicking. The workers seem to concede everything."

Speaking on the experiences of the GM retirees, he said, "We got nothing in 2016. We just go backwards."

He said he strongly agreed with uniting autoworkers internationally. "We should all be together. We should be together with the US and Mexican workers. That would take away their ability to undercut."

He was critical of the role of Unifor. "I've tried to call our local union hall, but all you ever get is an answering machine. Something is wrong here. With all the money they are taking in they could put someone on the phone. It doesn't matter what time you call, you don't get an answer.

"I try to call the benefit rep. I want to know if I can get a leg brace. It's 'please leave a message.' Are they ever there?

"The first concessions started in the 1980s. Then it was you started at 85 percent of base pay and you got to full pay after 18 months. Then they started eating away. Now with the two-tier, you take a guy who is trying to raise kids, it's criminal."

Remarking on the assault on the WSWWS reporter by

Unifor goon he remarked, “That’s too bad the Unifor guys roughed you up. They are trying to silence you.

“I don’t have a lot of faith in [Unifor President Jerry] Dias. And from Detroit, you hear about the union officials being bought off. Can you blame GM for hiring a thug like [former Fiat Chrysler executive Alphons] Iacobelli? We just seem to be peddling backward.”

Bruce Allen, a veteran worker from the St. Catharines GM plant said the following about the assault on the WSWs reporter: “The violence and intimidation directed against persons associated with the WSWs at the CAMI strike support rally on Friday was totally indefensible but not surprising. The leadership of Unifor has a long history of absolute intolerance for anyone who questions their policies and actions. This is not a democratic organization, contrary to the claims of its spokespersons and anyone who is courageous enough to openly say so risks being relentlessly vilified by a Unifor nomenklatura who stifle democratic debate. In the face of this kind of behavior the words of a true internationalist Rosa Luxemburg are well worth recalling: Freedom is always freedom for those who think differently.”

A second-tier worker at CAMI also defended the WSWs and denounced the attack.

“I find your newsletter to be incredibly accurate. Unifor’s intent to silence the WSWs is just another example of their undemocratic, dictator ways.

“The WSWs *Autoworker Newsletter* encourages workers to assemble rank and file committees and for workers to abandon the undemocratic operations of UNIFOR and the UAW, so they can unite themselves for workers’ interests instead of Unifor’s corporate business interests, which come off our backs. Bullying WSWs reporters is just another example of their dictatorial ways.”



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Socialist Equality Party visit:

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