

UAW executives are “nothing more than fat cats collecting huge checks”

Autoworkers denounce company-UAW scheme to hire low-paid workers in the face of mass layoffs

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There is growing outrage among autoworkers over a United Auto Workers-General Motors scheme to lay off high seniority workers and hire low-paid temporary workers as part of an effort to drastically reduce labor costs.

On Tuesday, the *World Socialist Web Site* published an article exposing the rotten agreement. It noted that GM reported that its subsidiary, Lordstown GM Subsystems, was hiring low-paid temporary workers only days after GM announced the elimination of an entire shift and 1,500 jobs at the giant Lordstown, Ohio assembly plant, under a framework agreed to by the UAW.

The article has been shared thousands of times and has been read by tens of thousands of workers, once again sparking a groundswell of opposition such as the incipient rebellion that erupted in 2015 against contracts with GM, Ford and Fiat Chrysler rammed through by the UAW.

“UAW officials make \$3,500.00 a week... sitting in their office doing nothing,” wrote a worker from Lordstown to the *WSWS Autoworker Newsletter*. “If you take a stand, they take you to human resources and try to fire a union member.

“Now look! Behind your back, hiring a lower wage worker. This is a very bad practice... *It is not a living wage. To agree to this is simply bulls**t ... This is not a union. It's nothing more than fat cats collecting huge checks and bonuses while the workers are getting screwed.*”

Another wrote, “This has and will cause untold hardship. These people are not statistics. Many great people with lovely families. Worse still, many will not know their fate until the last minute. In an already economically depressed area [Youngstown, Ohio], the multiplier effect is going to cause much hardship.

“If we aren’t able to make gains, or at the very least stay even, when the company is making record profits, then how are we ever going to make gains?”

Another autoworker wrote, “Just like 19th century England, mired in poverty amidst unbridled wealth of the capitalist class, the USA is thus replicating history.”

In a failed effort to stem the groundswell of opposition, Lordstown Shop Chairman Dan Morgan issued a second leaflet to the members of UAW local 1112 on Friday. He wrote, “Your Shop Chairman has had extensive discussions with Local Management and the International Union regarding the outsourcing of work as it pertains to the Competitive Operating Agreement (COA). Your Chairman and the International Union are not in agreement with Management’s position and we will aggressively resist all initiatives that put a third party in our plant while we have team members on the street and no product commitment.”

His leaflet is a pack of lies. Morgan and the rest of the UAW at Local 1112 and on up the ladder will do nothing to defend jobs. In her public statement on the matter, UAW International Vice President for General Motors Cindy Estrada declared, “For Lordstown, local

leadership and management came to Detroit, and with the regional and national parties, an agreement was negotiated to make changes that we believe will put the plant in a better position to stay open.”

The COA was agreed to, accepted and signed off on by all the relevant representatives of the union. To pretend today that they did not know what was in store is a patent fraud.

This and every other agreement negotiated by the corrupt UAW must be repudiated by autoworkers. They have been rendered null and void by the revelations that top UAW officials have been taking payments from the auto companies in exchange for pushing pro-company contracts.

The developments at Lordstown only provide further proof that the UAW is not a workers' organization, but a labor contractor, whose job is to enforce poverty-level wages on workers and do whatever it can to suppress opposition.

Rank-and-file factory committees, independent of the union and the company, must be organized to prepare and coordinate opposition. The *WSWS Autoworker Newsletter* urges all auto workers to contact us to help organize this fight.

It is particularly urgent that autoworkers join their struggle with that of teachers throughout the US and internationally. A series of strikes—in West Virginia, Oklahoma and now Arizona—has demonstrated the role of the teachers unions in isolating and shutting down strikes, when they cannot prevent them altogether. That is, they are playing the same role as the UAW, attempting to isolate teachers and impose defeats.

A skilled tradesman at GM in Flint, Michigan spoke to the *WSWS Autoworker Newsletter* about the situation. “What is happening to us is happening to teachers across the country,” he said. “Their struggle is suppressed by the unions. They are being controlled by the people who are being paid to represent them.”

He continued, “I would like to see all of labor band together and strike. We are all in the same boat. As the saying goes, we will have to hang together or we are going to hang separately.”



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