

Ignoring workers overwhelming strike vote

UAW extends contract for Saline, Michigan Faurecia workers

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On Friday UAW officials ordered workers at Faurecia in Saline, Michigan to continue working past the expiration of their contract, ignoring an overwhelming vote by rank-and-file workers in early May, authorizing strike action against the highly-profitable global parts supplier.

Having kept its members in the dark throughout negotiations over many weeks, the four-member bargaining committee at local 892 posted a perfunctory and incoherent statement on its Facebook page twelve hours prior to the scheduled contract expiration. Without citing a single issue in dispute, or offering any explanation, the union announced it had decided, without consulting the membership, to grant the company a three-week extension until June 21.

The extension was a slap in the face to workers who have made perfectly clear they want action against years of pay cuts, unsafe working conditions, the destruction of medical benefits and the reduction of scheduled hours of work. Many workers were angered by the delay.

“What was the purpose of us voting for strike, then?” one worker exclaimed. She was angered by the whole conduct of the union, and especially the contract extension. “This union is worthless! The s--t they are doing is unreal.

“We need to get our money back with a real wage increase,” she said, referring to countless pay cuts over the years, pay freezes and the introduction of multiple pay grades that cut everybody’s wages. “We need to get Blue Cross back,” she added, referring to their previous insurance coverage.

After the last contract in 2015, the company slashed Blue Cross health insurance and imposed a low-grade

Aetna medical plan with the collusion of the union.

She spoke about the need for a trusted rank-and-file committee in the plant to take the question of safety into its hands. In a hard rain the water pours through the roof, she noted. “There are all kinds of hazardous conditions in there,” she added. “They don’t care about us, the workers. The union lets them get away with murder.”

Many workers have described the preventable deaths of co-workers in the factory.

Despite the widespread sentiment for struggle on vital demands, the UAW’s groveling post begins, “In Good Faith the Leadership has decided to grant Faurecia Interior Systems at Saline an extension until Friday, June 21st at 12:01[A.M.]”

Without explaining any of the issues that have prevented them from reaching a new agreement, the UAW states, “We believe that this extension will allow the negotiators the needed time to address these significant issues, and hopefully come to resolution.”

The extension is a stall and a cave-in on the part of the union. It takes place in the midst of a strike by some 2,000 nurses and support staff, who are members of the UAW, in Toledo, Ohio and on the eve of the opening of contract negotiations in advance of the expiration in mid-September of contracts for 155,000 workers at the US-based auto companies.

The UAW is determined to prevent the merging of the struggles of auto parts workers with a broader movement of the working class demanding the restoration of concessions and opposition to mass layoffs that would disrupt its cozy relations with management. They are well aware that there is a growing mood of resistance in the working class as

expressed in the strikes by teachers and healthcare workers that coincides with a global resurgence of class struggle.

The critical question facing Faurecia workers is the need to take independent initiative in opposition to the sabotage of their struggle being carried out by the UAW. This calls for the building of a rank-and-file committee to take the conduct of the negotiations out of the hands of the UAW.

Rank-and-file committees must be elected from among the most trusted workers on the line to replace the bargaining committee, which has been selected by the union executives to serve as a rubber stamp of prior decisions taken in corporate boardrooms and backed up by the thoroughly corrupt and discredited officials at Solidarity House.

Preparations should begin for an all-out strike to win the restoration of all concessions, the elimination of tiers and temporary part-time work, and workers' control over line speed and safety. This must include the mobilization of Faurecia workers throughout Michigan, nationally and globally against the French-based auto parts giant. Workers interested in conducting such a fight are urged to contact the *World Socialist Web Site*.

The author also recommends:

Faurecia auto parts workers await contract expiration in Saline, Michigan

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