

“This contract is crap!”

Faurecia workers denounce UAW sellout agreement

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To prepare a strategy that unites parts workers with Ford, General Motors and FCA workers, the WSWS Autoworker Newsletter is hosting a call-in meeting today at 7:30 p.m. To register, go to wsws.org/autocall

Workers at the Faurecia automotive components plant in Saline, Michigan, just west of Detroit, are voting today on a new four-year agreement engineered by the United Auto Workers (UAW) with the full support of the Local 892 shop committee and bargaining committee.

There is widespread opposition from workers to the deal, which will perpetuate poverty wages for a majority of the workforce and atrocious safety conditions that have caused the deaths of three female workers in a single year. Top pay for machine operators with full seniority will be \$20.75 after four years.

The practice of hiring subcontractors with no job protection for \$11.00 an hour, combined with the despised points system used to dismiss workers for the slightest infraction, means that most workers who hire in at a little more than \$13 an hour will not last a full year or ever earn more than entry-level pay.

On the company website, CEO Patrick Koller brags of the “resilience and agility of Faurecia’s business model.” The systematic assault on job security, income security and safety conditions meant record profits for the French-based global conglomerate last year in spite of the decline in auto sales worldwide. Profits rose 10 percent to €1.2 billion (\$1.45 billion), with a profit margin of 7.3 percent. For this, Koller was handsomely rewarded, pocketing €3.3 million (\$3.7 million) last year.

Last week, the UAW shut down a strike by the 1,900 workers at the plant after just nine hours. The UAW

called the walkout as a means of dissipating pent-up anger, but shut it down immediately because the strike was leading to a shortage of parts for Ford and other automakers, which rely on the “just-in-time” delivery of parts instead of stockpiling. The last thing the UAW wanted was a successful strike on the eve of contract talks for 155,000 workers at General Motors, Ford and Chrysler.

The UAW is seeking to export the miserable sweatshop conditions that it has enforced in the auto parts industry into the Big Three assembly plants. Last week, *Automotive News* reported that GM is seeking a vast expansion of low-paid contract workers as well as deep cuts to workers’ health care benefits.

Faurecia management responded to the shutdown of the strike by escalating the firing and victimization of workers. One worker told the *WSWS Autoworker Newsletter*, “The strike was called off on Friday morning and by Saturday they were firing left and right.”

The company and the union are working in tandem to pressure workers to ratify the new contract. The corporate news media has pitched in too, claiming that the new deal includes “major wage hikes.” The UAW has rushed the ratification vote without giving workers time to study and discuss the contract.

Expressing his unbridled contempt for the democratic rights of workers, UAW Local 892 President Larry Robinson denounced workers who insisted on seeing the full contract instead of the bogus “highlights” used to sell the deal. In a post on the local’s Facebook page, he complained, “We release Preliminary Highlights to show you how we reached a Tentative Agreement that makes this a more desirable place of employment for

ALL of us... And you are ALREADY talking about voting No before you hear All the DETAILS! This is exactly why most Locals do NOT release any information until the Town Hall.”

After demanding workers endorse the pro-company deal, Robinson insisted, “Our EXPECTATIONS must be Reasonable. Your Bargaining Team will NOT Bargain us Out of Business [!!] because that Benefits NOBODY!”

For Robinson and the UAW apparatus, workers’ demands for decent wages, safe working conditions and a secure job are “unreasonable” because they threaten the profits of the company.

The WSWs *Autoworker Newsletter* issued a statement calling on Faurecia workers to reject the sellout deal and set up rank-and-file committees to reach out to all autoworkers and prepare a national strike.

Many workers denounced the deal as a sellout. “Larry Robinson says this is the best contract we can get, but no one is benefiting from this contract except the union reps and a select few.

“There is a signing bonus split into two payments of \$1,500 now and \$1,000 in January. Half the people in the shop will not even be here in January because they are hiring and firing people as they please.

“We had informational meetings on Wednesday and the very next day we have to vote. This contract is crap. I agree with building rank-and-file committees and a whole new organization.”

A young worker added, “If you work for an outside contractor, they can fire you with no warning, no nothing. They pay \$11.00 an hour.

“What General Motors is proposing to do is outrageous. I know what these outside contractors are all about. They have no sympathy for the people. It is a dirty game. There is no future for your family, or for yourself, period if you are working for an outside contractor.”

A Faurecia worker at the company’s plant in Indiana said conditions were no different there and that the union at the plant, the International Brotherhood of Electrical Workers (IBEW), was no better than the UAW. “I can tell you from experience never to get hurt at work. The safety director immediately called the hospital to tell them that I needed to return back to work.

“They told me I couldn’t miss work and I couldn’t go without a paycheck. They sent me to a doctor, but he released me to work immediately. I went right back to the floor to work. I had to work six weeks in a cast, so they didn’t have to pay me workman’s comp.”

A Faurecia worker in Michigan explained that parts workers at the nearby Magna plant were working 16 hours a day and that one worker had just finished working 22 hours straight.



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