

Autoworkers must form rank-and-file committees to counter UAW conspiracy

The WSWS Autoworker Newsletter
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On September 12 at 7:00 pm Eastern, the WSWS Autoworkers Newsletter is hosting an online meeting to discuss the strategy and perspective needed to organize this struggle. To participate, visit wsws.org/autocall

With little more than a week before the September 14 contract expiration, the urgent task facing autoworkers is to organize independently of the corrupt United Auto Workers and prepare a real fight against the auto companies.

Workers have voted overwhelmingly for strike action. They are determined to stop the attack on health benefits, abolish the multi-tier pay and benefit system, end the abuse of temporary and contract workers and win substantial raises.

The meeting between GM CEO Mary Barra and Trump at the White House yesterday is an indication of the seriousness with which the political and corporate establishment views the impending conflict. They are above all fearful that the credibility of the UAW has been shattered and that it will be unable to control the anger of autoworkers.

The entire process is illegitimate, a criminal farce. The people who are ostensibly in charge of negotiations on behalf of the autoworkers, from UAW President Gary Jones on down, have had their houses raided or face the prospect of criminal charges. If they are negotiating anything, it is their plea bargains. If they are holding discussions, it is with their lawyers over what they can do to stay out of jail.

An entire series of contracts have been agreed to by people who were taking bribes from the company. These past contracts must be considered null and void, and nothing that the UAW is currently doing can be given any credibility or legitimacy. The entire bargaining committee has been completely compromised, exposed as a criminal conspiracy against

autoworkers.

Under these conditions, workers have no choice but to repudiate the authority of the UAW. No one would retain a lawyer who was being paid by the other side. Why should workers accept the authority of the UAW and its “bargainers” who are being paid by GM, Ford and FCA?

The *WSWS Autoworker Newsletter* urges autoworkers to form rank-and-file factory committees, democratically controlled by workers themselves and independent of the company agents in the UAW.

In every factory and workplace, workers should elect their own representatives and formulate their own demands. Rank-and-file committees will provide workers with real information about what is happening, unify all sections of auto workers, and protect workers from victimization.

The establishment of such a network of committees will lay the framework for a national conference of rank-and-file committees to coordinate a struggle against the auto companies.

Demands should include:

- * A 40 percent wage increase and the restoration of COLA to make up for decades of pay cuts! Fully funded health care, including dental and optical, for all workers!

- * Eliminate the tier system, with all workers immediately brought up to top pay. Stop the harassment of part-time and contract workers and convert them to fulltime positions, with no loss of pay and seniority.

- * Restore overtime pay for work after eight hours and on weekends!

- * Stop all plant closings and layoffs, reopen Lordstown and other shuttered plants, and rehire all laid-off and victimized workers

- * Abolish labor-management committees and joint

training centers! For real industrial democracy by extending workers' control over production, line speed and safety.

Everything depends on the initiative of the workers themselves. No confidence can be placed in the Trump administration and its Justice Department. The government is not carrying out the corruption probe to help workers. Sections of the ruling class are considering putting the UAW under receivership—like the Bush administration did to the Teamsters in 1989—so they can ban strikes and impose binding arbitration to push through another pro-company deal.

At the same time, workers must be on guard against the UAW calling a bogus “Hollywood strike” like the eight-hour walkout at Faurecia earlier this year, in order to allow workers to let off steam while it signs another pro-company deal.

Autoworkers have powerful allies—workers throughout the United States and around the world who have begun to fight back.

With companies operating on a global scale today, American workers can and must appeal to our class brothers and sisters in Mexico, Canada and around the world who are fighting the same transnational corporations. Only coordinated action across borders can stop the efforts to shift production to other countries in the event of a US strike.

The formation of independent factory committees, free of the control of the unions, will also allow workers to make a direct appeal to all sections of workers—teachers, telecom workers, Amazon and logistics workers and others—who are facing the same conditions and the same attack.

From AT&T workers who struck in the South and Mexican workers in maquiladora sweatshops, to the mass protests in Hong Kong, Puerto Rico and France, workers around the world are saying enough is enough! It is time that autoworkers mobilize our full strength and take a stand for the whole working class. There is no time to lose!



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