

Autoworkers at GM, Fiat Chrysler and Ford react to UAW's starvation strike pay

Tom Hall
20 September 2019

Yesterday, the *World Socialist Web Site* published a statement analyzing how the United Auto Workers uses its strike fund as a slush fund, while forcing autoworkers to subsist on meager strike pay of \$250 per week, which won't begin until after a full week of the strike.

"The reason for the low strike pay is not because the UAW lacks the resources to pay workers more," the WSWs wrote. "The strike fund controlled by the UAW is \$760 million. This money comes directly from contributions made by the workers. But only a fraction of that amount is being allocated by Solidarity House to the striking workers." Instead, the UAW uses the strike fund to pay the bloated salaries of UAW officials, hundreds of whom earn more than \$100,000 per year.

Many autoworkers wrote comments in response. Workers were particularly supportive of the demand to triple weekly strike pay to \$750 a week.

"Yes! Definitely need to raise strike pay to at least \$750 per week, starting day one," a worker from Indianapolis wrote. "And even more, the top UAW officials should suspend their pay or at least drop to strike pay!! After all, it's all the members' dues money for times like this, not 'official vacation money.'"

A worker from Sterling Heights Assembly Plant wrote: "The fact that the UAW feels that it's OK for us to receive less than minimum wage for strike pay is asinine. In my honest opinion, it's just another method in which they can appease both parties. They give us the worker less than bare minimum, (with fingers crossed behind their back); that way we can't say that they did absolutely nothing for us, all the while winking at the companies and assuring them that we can't hold out for too long on such a low weekly wage. The whole Solidarity House needs to be cleansed!"

"Yes, that is an excellent idea, because \$250 per

week is ridiculous," a Detroit public school teacher wrote. "However, a closer look at the books to determine exactly how much is really in the strike fund is needed."

One worker who wrote in suggested \$500 per week instead but agreed that "the national union should get just \$500 per week also when their members are on strike.

The worker continued: "I also believe they should get no more of a pay raise that the rank and file, and they should get the same retirement pay and health benefits.

"I have questioned my local on why all the national meetings are held in vacation spots, when St Louis, Missouri has more than enough space and at a lower cost to handle any convention. This has to be looked at very carefully, as well as the use of more teleconferencing."

"Yes, it should be at least minimum wages. Damn UAW!" a GM Arlington worker wrote.

"One thing for sure," another wrote, "the leaders that are stealing and harmful and living the life with the heads of GM should be dealt with. GM is making record profits. I was with GM and never got a decent bonus when the company did well. We have to make management hurt.

"I say to the young folks stand with the high-seniority men and women and don't sell your vote. Think about the future, the long term."

A Canadian autoworker wrote in to say: "This is disgusting. I thought the leadership of local 707 the old CAW [Canadian Auto Workers]. This is totally unacceptable! Put those clowns in jail!"

"Yes, strike pay should at least be a weeks' pay," a GM Wentzville worker said. "What is being done with the rest of the money in the strike fund? Is it just sitting there? Isn't it supposed to be used during a strike? So

it's been building since the last strike, and what [then]?"

"Yes, I do think it should be raised," said a worker from Jefferson North Assembly Plant. "For decades the question has been asked 'What are we paying dues for?' We have officials that are for the company, not the workers. We have committees that don't do anything unless it's time for audit.

"There is no safety or representation," he added. "I have witnessed, and am still witnessing, safety issues being kicked to the side by management even now with all the leeches being exposed. We don't matter. We are only a number. Our number is worth less than that serial number on that car in the eyes of management and anyone else that gets 'PERKS.' It has to stop!"



To contact the WSWWS and the
Socialist Equality Party visit:

wsws.org/contact