"We will not submit, and we will not bow out."

Hundreds of autoworkers discuss GM strike and global strategy in online meeting

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On Thursday night, over 300 workers once again participated in an online forum held by the WSWS *Autoworker Newsletter*. The meeting was held on the fourth day of the strike against General Motors, now the longest nationwide strike in the US against a Big Three auto company in decades.

The meeting began with an opening report by Socialist Equality Party (US) National Secretary Joseph Kishore. He stressed that the strike of 46,000 GM workers is a turning point in the development of the class struggle, which has unleashed a wave of enthusiasm and a desire to fight.

"Workers, however, must be warned," he said. "The United Auto Workers does not have a strategy for victory in this strike, it has a strategy for defeat. If the struggle remains in the control of the UAW, it will be isolated and shut down and a new concessions contract imposed."

The UAW, he explained, is seeking to isolate the strike by not mobilizing Ford and Fiat Chrysler workers, while starving GM workers on $250 a week in strike pay, which they will only begin to receive after two weeks on strike.

In opposition to this, Kishore outlined "a strategy for victory," based on the organization of a network of rank-and-file strike committees to take control of the strike, expand it to all auto workers and reach out to broader sections of the working class in the US and internationally.

The online forums held by the WSWS have increasingly taken on an international character, with participation Thursday from workers in the US, Mexico, Canada, Brazil, and in the Middle East. Over the course of the online meeting, an extraordinary exchange took place between Mexican, American and Brazilian workers, with GM workers of each nationality expressing solidarity with each other and calling for their international unity to fight back against the global corporation.

Last week a group of workers at the GM plant in Silao, in central Mexico, held an assembly to discuss how to respond to management's harassment and victimization of workers and demands for speed-up to help offset the loss of production in the US during the strike.

A number of Silao workers participated in the online meeting Thursday night, directly appealing to workers in the US to come to their defense and carry out a common struggle against both GM and the pro-company unions in both countries.

Israel Cervantes, a GM worker with 13 years, speaking in Spanish, stated, "We at the Silao Complex are organizing to get rid of the current union of the CTM [Confederation of Mexican Workers] that was imposed by the company and that, far from helping workers, leaves them to fend for themselves and accepts that the company carries out reprisals against them.

"On September 15, we met to solidarize ourselves with you, and to reject the company's use of overtime here to make up for work lost from the strike in the United States. We appeal to you to raise as one of your own demands the reinstallation of those fired at General Motors Silao Complex and the San Luis Potosí Complex, since we are one company and we suffer the same deprivations. I call on workers across Mexico and the world to join this struggle."

Another Silao worker said, "We will strengthen your

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struggle by not letting ourselves be pressured into higher productivity. We will continue to organize in small groups like those you call rank-and-file committees to stop the abuses and, above all, to back your struggle and defend our interests. If the employer is the same, our interests are the same. Resist, fellow workers, resist! We are with you!"

A worker at GM Arlington Assembly spoke passionately in support of a joint struggle with workers in Silao, saying, "In order to get results, we have to learn to organize and to demonstrate, because we have to move as a unified front. This is bigger than a dollar. We're standing for the life of us, and the future of our kids."

"To my brothers in Silao, and my family in the United States, let's continue to do what we have to do, and let them know we will not submit, and we will not bow out."

Along with autoworkers in Mexico and Canada, a GM worker in Brazil also participated in the meeting, noting the similarity of the conditions they confronted. He stated, "Greetings from Brazil, GM workers in the city of Gravataí - Rio Grande do Sul. Here too, our union is in the hands of a leadership that gives up our rights. We are destroying our bodies in the name of corporate profit, but we don't want that anymore."

Following the greetings from workers in GM Mexico and Brazil, multiple striking workers denounced the UAW for calling a strike "with no game plan." One worker suggested that the strike was called as a means of diverting attention from the ongoing corruption scandal that has implicated virtually the entire leadership of the UAW in taking bribes from the auto companies in exchange for imposing sellout contracts.

Two Amazon workers, Michelle Quinones and Kim, also participated in the meeting and voiced their support for autoworkers. Michelle stated, "They promote this disconnect between union and nonunion workers, but the conditions we face are the same. At Amazon they deny things that we are entitled to such as workers comp, which ruined my life. But it's the same thing with GM and the UAW.

"You have to stay strong. The companies will be ahead of you if you wait, so you need to get out in front of them. We have to be selfless. You cannot back down."

Discussion then centered on the Autoworker Newsletter's proposal to form rank-and-file committees, to which numerous workers at the meeting responded enthusiastically. "I would definitely do so," said an autoworker at a GM supplier in Arlington, Texas. "I have family and friends who work at GM, and I'm willing to stand in solidarity."

A worker at Ford Dearborn Truck in Michigan responded, "I'm with that as well. I'd like to sign up and get with other people and figure it all out, have leadership in multiple plants and be able to communicate with everybody."

"There's quite a few of us who are interested in a rank-and-file committee at Wentzville," said a worker at the GM plant in the St. Louis suburbs. "We just wanted to know how to go about it, and what we're discussing is the avenue I've been looking for, so I can tell them, 'Get online, get on the meeting, get on social media, so we can do it.'"

Among those who spoke, there was unanimous agreement on the need to form independent rank-and-file committees. This perspective is winning growing support among autoworkers on the picket lines and can serve as a catalyst to unite the separate struggles of the working class taking place internationally.

Throughout this strike and going forward, the WSWS *Autoworkers Newsletter* will do everything in its power to assist autoworkers in forging these links and organizing opposition independently of the UAW.

On Thursday, September 26 at 7:00 p.m. Eastern Time, the WSWS Autoworker Newsletter *is hosting an online meeting to discuss the latest stage in the autoworkers' contract fight. To participate, go to wsws .org/autocall.*

To contact the WSWS and the Socialist Equality Party visit:

wsws.org/contact

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