

# GM Lansing workers launch the GM Lansing Workers Rank-and-File Committee

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*The statement below was issued by a group of workers who have recently formed the GM Lansing Workers Rank-and-File Committee. To contact the committee, fill out the form at the end of this article.*

We, the GM Lansing workers, are forming the GM Lansing Workers Rank-and-File Committee in Michigan to unite workers across the industry and internationally. The committee supports our brother Will Lehman, second-tier Mack Trucks worker in Pennsylvania, and his campaign to abolish the UAW bureaucracy and transfer power back to us, through the building of the International Workers Alliance of Rank-and-File Committees. Our committee was inspired by the rank-and-file committees at GM Flint, Caterpillar, Dana and others internationally.

## **Why do we need a rank-and-file committee?**

The UAW has failed workers at Lansing Grand River and Lansing Delta Township. This committee exists because the union no longer fights for us. The UAW apparatus supports GM and GM supports the apparatus.

Both the union and management create divisions on the shop floor. Since 2007, we have been divided into temporary and seniority workers. Temps max out at roughly \$16.64 while seniority workers are at \$32.32 right now, while we both work side by side with each other. For many temps it takes over one year to become full-time, in other plants it takes over two years. Then General Motors is allowed, with the UAW's blessing, to bring in more temps. Temps only have three days off that are never guaranteed, while some get over 100 hours based on their seniority and the contract date. Temps don't have any rights, while full-time can call the committeemen, but with no response.

GM has a standard for "continuous improvement," which for us means job cuts and chaos in the plant.

More work is put on our backs, for less money. Management decides last minute to move us from line to line, job to job without adequate training. Because of the shortage of workers, we are put through emergency training. There is a lack of organization of employees caused by management; while on shift they will pull you and put you on another line across the plant. If the UAW was a workers' organization there would be repercussions for management for this kind of treatment of workers.

We take pride in the work we do and the cars we build. We have concern about the lack of quality of cars and for the safety of the people who drive them. But it is not the fault of us workers that the quality suffers. Management will tell us to pump numbers out and push defects through. The company only cares about the money, not the quality of cars being shipped. Some of us are sent to the repair yard to fix issues with cars before they are put on the trains. Hundreds of cars are put on hold only because GM is focused on their bottom line.

All of this causes tension and animosity in the plant. Our common enemies are in the UAW bureaucracy and General Motors management. This committee is concerned about not only our jobs, but those of our children. The rank-and-file workers built GM, not the executives. Our demands are as follows:

- **Abolish tiers and temporary positions. All workers including temporary must be brought up to full pay and benefits.** No more 3 percent raises that are below inflation. We need a 50 percent COLA raise to live a high-quality life. The tiers are a tool to create divisions among workers and make a race to the bottom, all the while GM rakes in billions.

- **Workers' control over production, safety.** This includes placement of workers, transfers, daily

manpower requirements for shifts, and all training. The plant should be shut down for proper training of all employees. We know how to run the plant while management can't tell you how jobs are done. Management sometimes trains us for less than a day to do a new job. This creates a risk to our safety. When there are problems on the line, they should not be passed to the next worker. The line must be shut down to repair any defects.

Neither the UAW nor management has concern for our safety. Instead, they fuel animosity and tensions among us workers. Violent incidents happen and we only know about it when the police show up in front of the plant. We are genuinely fearful for our lives. Management creates discontent that brings more personal problems to a head. Management doesn't address these issues, but rather allows it to continue. Then they decide who to fire. The organizational chaos and irrationality produced by the current regime is the result of subordination of production to short-term profit.

- **Reject Layoffs.** The layoffs are used to increase GM's profit while putting more work on our backs. GM's goal of \$2 billion in cost reduction is a threat to all workers. GM tells the press that several hundred white collar workers are being eliminated, which is just the beginning. This is a strategy being used all over the world. Just like with our brothers and sisters at Dana, management here faces the pressure of the Big Three to fire workers. We need technicians and engineers to make the jobs on the line easier.

- **No more backroom deals by the UAW bureaucracy. All contract talks must live-streamed and overseen by the rank and file.** We support and are following closely the struggle waged by our brothers and sisters at Caterpillar. The UAW announced a tentative agreement right after the expiration of their contract. Their goal is to make sure workers' wages are held down below inflation, while driving up health premiums. They will do the same to us.

The GM Lansing Workers Rank-and-File Committee will be an instrument to assert our demands in the plant against the management dictatorship upheld by the UAW bureaucracy. The struggle this year will be a critical turning point for all our coworkers across the country and internationally. With inflation, the ongoing

attack on jobs, electrification, and a newer lower-paid tier of EV workers, we need to know what we are up against. The UAW bureaucracy can't simply be bypassed. As our brother Will Lehman stated, "The rank-and-file must prepare for the next stage in our struggles by linking up across plants and across industries in a network of democratically controlled committees through which we can leverage our strength and overcome the domination of the union bureaucracies."

We call on all GM Lansing Delta and Grand River workers to join the GM Lansing Workers Rank-and-File Committee in opposition to the UAW bureaucracy. We are fighting not just for our generation but for the future generations of workers. We support all workers in the US and internationally. In 2019, while we were on strike, our brothers and sisters in Silao, Mexico refused to work overtime that would help GM. Their union like ours fingered them to management. GM, like most companies, is global, our fight has to be global as well. For the first time in years, Canadian autoworkers have the same contract expiration year as us. If we are to fight the corporate demands for lower living standards, we have to join with both Canadian, Mexican and all workers across the border in a joint struggle.



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Socialist Equality Party visit:

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