

“We’re being lied to”: Toledo Jeep worker denounces UAW sellout, Biden’s support for genocide in Gaza

Jerry White
5 November 2023

Join the next meeting of the Autoworkers Rank-and-File Committee Network to discuss the implications of the UAW-Ford deal and how to organize to defeat the sellout. Register here to attend.

Sign up for text message updates on the Detroit Three contract fight by texting AUTO to (866) 847-1086.

A second-tier Jeep worker at the Stellantis Toledo Assembly Complex in northern Ohio spoke with the *World Socialist Web Site* about why he is voting against the UAW-Stellantis contract and calling on his fellow workers to do the same. The more than 5,200 workers at the giant factory were among the first to be called out on strike as part of the United Auto Workers’ limited “stand up” strikes.

After reaching a deal with Stellantis on October 29, UAW President Shawn Fain ended their six-week strike and ordered Jeep workers back to work before they could see or vote on the deal. UAW Local 12, which organizes Jeep workers, is holding informational meetings on the contract this week and plans to hold a ratification vote on November 15.

“The support for Fain is dwindling,” a Stellantis worker at the Toledo Assembly Complex told the WSW. “The claim that we squeezed the last dime out of the companies is a bunch of crap. The workers at my plant have been going back and forth on the deal but it’s leaning towards a ‘no’ vote now.

“Initially, there were some guys saying, ‘The contract is good for me because I’m on my way out.’ That soon became a punchline for someone being selfish, and people started saying, ‘This contract is not good for everyone.’

“Workers need to talk to each other about what really is in the contract, expose the details and get all the

information out there. We should ask the union officials at the informational meetings hard questions about what is hidden in the contract. We need to vote this thing down, and fight for what we really need.”

The worker explained what he thought were the biggest reasons workers were against the tentative agreement. “Some people thought this would finally help the TPTs. They were pissed when they found out not all temporary workers were going to get hired in. They also don’t like having to use vacation time and PAA (Paid Absence Allowance) days before you can take FMLA (Family and Medical Leave) days off.

“They’re also up in arms about the extra half hour they want to call off. There are so many reasons why people call off, they get in an accident, or they or their kid gets sick, and they don’t have an hour to call off. This is just another way to give people points and threaten their jobs.

“They’re acting like Trenton Engine, Belvidere and the PDCs [Parts Distribution Centers] were on the way out anyway, and that they held the company back. Whatever happened to saving jobs? They’re closing 19 facilities. Those are going to be 2,500 jobs lost. That’s going to lead to more families and lives destroyed. Others will be forced to uproot their families and move hundreds of miles to keep their jobs. Fain and [UAW Vice President] Rich Boyer say this contract is ‘historic.’ Workers are feeling we were lied to.

“A lot of the older cats haven’t gotten a raise in 10 years or more. Chrysler has made huge profits off their labor. They are going to be hiring in temps at \$21 and Fain is shouting about the huge increase in pay they got! Chrysler is going to profit off these workers for years and keep using them for cheap labor. The idea

that these workers are going to work nine months of ‘continuous service’ without being laid off is ludicrous. I was laid off three or four times when I was a TPT. They will use them and lay them off before they get their nine months to roll over to full time. Any day of the week, they can come to work and be told they don’t have a job.”

Referring to the bankruptcy restructuring of GM and Chrysler by the Obama-Biden administration in 2009, he said, “The government helped bail them out, but they have never paid back the labor force for what we gave up.

“Stellantis made \$12 billion in the first half of the year alone. They can certainly afford to bring all workers up to full time pay immediately. What we got is not enough. They’re going to give the money we make to their shareholders and executives instead of us.”

The worker also spoke about the broader issues facing the working class. He said he was against the Israeli slaughter of the Palestinians in Gaza and praised the statement issued by Will Lehman, the Mack Trucks worker and socialist candidate for UAW president last year, which demands that the UAW stop producing military equipment for Israel.

“It was great what Lehman said about supporting the call by the Palestinian unions for unions around the world to refuse to build weapons and transport weapons for Israel. I think he hit the nail on the head about a campaign to educate UAW members about what is happening in the Middle East. Workers need to know about history and understand that Israel was started by driving out the Palestinians.

“We are all so engulfed in work and stressed, so when we get home, we look for a little food and comfort, and when we turn on the TV, we are fed this propaganda. The politicians and the news are unequivocally for Israel and against the Palestinians. If that is all you hear, you will say things that you don’t understand and really mean. But if we are educated, we can mobilize the working class to stop these wars. The protests around the world are gaining momentum. Even in Toledo, I saw pro-Palestinian protesters on the corner. I wailed my horn at them. This is starting to catch on like wildfire. But more people need to be educated.

“In the military they tried to brainwash us with videos

of the Twin Towers on 9/11. But some of the guys who came back from the Middle East and other areas are coming to terms with what happened. They’re worried about a bigger war and don’t want it to happen. I’ve got buddies who were in the military with me who are still having nightmares every night.

“Both parties are for war. Bush lied about Afghanistan and Iraq, and Biden is doing the same thing now. The president wants to increase taxes and cut programs to fund these wars. But after 30 years of one war after the other, no matter how much they try to ‘normalize’ it, workers want to know—when is it all going to stop?”



To contact the WSWS and the
Socialist Equality Party visit:

wsws.org/contact