

Dakkota workers' strike in danger as UAW demands fifth vote on sellout agreement: "We have the strength to stand up and fight back"

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The courageous rebellion of striking Dakkota parts workers, who have defied an unprecedented four sellout agreements, is in danger of being shut down and betrayed. The United Auto Workers bureaucracy is now trying to ram through a pro-company contract a fifth time in a vote on Saturday, with constant threats and blackmail that workers will be locked out and lose their jobs.

"They came back with the *same* deal a fifth time," a Dakkota worker told the *World Socialist Web Site*. "They didn't change anything. It's the same sellout deal."

The UAW bureaucracy's latest attempts to foist a sellout must be urgently countermanded with a real strategy aimed at mobilizing workers at Ford Chicago Assembly—which Dakkota supplies parts to—and all autoworkers in the Big Three and other parts suppliers who are fighting poverty wages, job cuts and mass layoffs.

In response to the initiative of the Dakkota Workers Rank-and-File Committee's call for a ban on scab parts, the UAW apparatus is trying to shut down the strike and prevent the strike from expanding to Ford workers and beyond. The pro-company UAW bureaucracy is widely hated by rank-and-file workers and is increasingly isolated and nervous of the growing rebellion of workers.

On Wednesday afternoon, Dakkota and Ford workers picketed outside Ford Chicago Assembly with the latest statement from the Dakkota Workers Rank-and-File Committee.

The leaflets handed out by Dakkota workers has spurred disquiet and anger among Ford workers, who have been outraged about using scab parts. As one Ford worker said on Facebook, "Why is the union allowed to abandon

Dakkota local 3212? If their dues are going into the same pot as ours, then why is the UAW International turning their backs on them?"

In response, a Dakkota worker said, "We appreciate your support but need more. They're talking about locking us all out. And our union they're pretty much nonexistent. The so called leadership shows us no support whatsoever."

On Wednesday evening workers reported that the UAW Local 3212 president rushed to the picket lines to try and threaten workers that if they did not accept the sellout contract, they would be locked out. The latest deal offers workers a mere \$1 more for senior workers in the first year, starting at \$22 an hour and topping out at \$26.50 by 2027. New hires will only make a poverty wage of \$16.80 and end at \$18 at the end of the contract.

One Dakkota worker said, "Our 'union president' came to the picket line and told us that we are acting like fools with this continued strike and that we should be ashamed of ourselves for kicking Dakkota in the rear, by turning down the sweet deal that they're offering! Then he jumped in his new Cadillac and drove off back to the air conditioning of the union hall!"

"They're pissed they're not getting their under-the-table money," he added. "Funny, there's hundreds of us and a few of them, and we are the stupid ones?"

Another said, "I think we still deserve a lot more. You can work a retail job getting paid more. People who have been there should not accept \$22 an hour. You can work at Amazon getting just as much walking in the door. A lot of people have seen such small increases for a long time."

The deals brought back by the UAW bureaucracy are a slap in the face to workers who face skyrocketing inflation and sweatshop working conditions. At the same time, the company's Chairwoman Andra Rush is herself a

millionaire many times over, and the company has been estimated to have made over a \$1.1 billion in 2023.

Throughout the strike, the UAW intentionally starved workers on the picket line, leaving them without strike pay for more than two weeks. They have even told workers to provide their own water and picket signs with their own money. Despite all the threats from the company and the union, the workers have resisted heroically.

“We were getting pressured and threatened,” said a worker in the rank-and-file committee. “We were sitting out in 90-plus degree heat. We had no union support. Our local president showed up to say the same things about the same deal. After that, he didn’t bring any water, any signs, anything.”

On Thursday evening, the UAW sent all its local officials to drum workers into accepting the sellout deal. They announced on the picket lines that those who crossed over and already returned to work will be able to vote on the contract, which outraged striking workers.

“Wow! So now the union reps are stacking the votes by allowing members who crossed over to vote,” a worker responded on social media to the latest provocation by the UAW.

The UAW officials also tried to intimidate workers from speaking to a WSWS reporting team Thursday evening, telling them not to listen to “outside agitators” or that “socialist garbage,” clearly nervous of the role the WSWS has played in giving voice to the real sentiments and needs of workers throughout the strike.

Nonetheless, workers spoke to our reporters and continued to express their anger and opposition, as well as express support for the only continuous reporting done on their strike by the *World Socialist Web Site*.

“They wanted to divide us, to make us back down, to be afraid, to believe they held all the power,” a worker said on Facebook. “But at the end of the day, it’s they who fear us, because they know we have the strength to stand up and fight back. Now, it’s time to show them what we’re made of! No matter what comes next, it’s been an honor standing beside you all!”

But the isolation of the strike by the UAW President Shawn Fain and the bureaucracy is now coming to a head. Workers face a make-or-break situation, and they have to begin to take matters into their own hands. Everything depends on the timely intervention of workers at Ford Chicago and other key plants.

“If we were all out to go on strike at the same time,” a member of the Dakkota Workers Rank-and-File

Committee said, “that would have a bigger impact.

“If Ford Chicago workers did not accept scab parts,” she added, “we can still fight. We would have a bigger support system. The union wouldn’t have wiggle room to just come back with crumbs. We would have had more support from our brothers and sisters for what we wanted and more. We would have a real fight.”

The intervention of Dakkota workers among Ford workers has already had an impact, and workers have voiced their anger and disgust on Facebook and amongst themselves.

“This is why this ‘union’ stuff rubs me the wrong way on so many levels!” a Ford Chicago worker said. “WHAT ABOUT THE LITTLE PEOPLE?! Because Dakkota is small and has very little notoriety, Shawn Fain and the rest of international don’t have time for them? What about their lives, children, homes and cars?? This is f-d up on so many levels!”

Another said, “Fain is too busy talking to Kamala [Harris] instead of caring for the Dakkota workers.”

One Chicago Ford worker reacted to responses of UAW reps that the UAW constitution prevents workers from refusing to handle scab parts. He said, “This is what I find funny. We’re told we can’t do certain things because ‘we have a signed contract.’ While we’re beholden to the terms of the ‘signed contract,’ the company that signed the same contract breaches it day after day in many ways and is almost never held accountable.”

He added, “We as the membership are more often stopped and told what we can’t do than the company. How can a group of people be told they hold all the power, but when it comes time to use that power, they ultimately come up powerless and met with restrictions that are only enforced one way?”



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