

Halt the police-state searches at Ford factories! Reinstate every victimized worker!

International Workers Alliance of Rank-and-File Committees
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The International Workers Alliance of Rank-and-File Committees (IWA-RFC) demands an end to the intrusive searches of workers at Ford plants in Michigan and other states and the immediate reinstatement of every worker fired or suspended for refusing to have their personal belongings combed through by Ford security personnel.

According to workers at the Dearborn Truck Plant, the unannounced searches have increased in recent weeks. Over the past few days, there have been multiple suspensions and terminations of workers who refused to be searched, including the two-week suspension of a worker with 25 to 30 years and no previous disciplinary issues.

Many workers are demanding to know why United Auto Workers Local 600 officials, including Shop Chairman Nick Kotolis, have said and done nothing to protect them. In fact, the UAW bureaucracy has enthusiastically repeated company lies that the searches are to protect the safety of workers.

No thinking worker believes this. First, workers were told the searches were needed to rid the factories of drugs and guns. But such supposed concerns about workers' safety come from a profit-hungry corporation that subjects workers to physical and mental abuse every day.

The excuse has now been shifted to theft prevention—as if workers are squirreling away parts to build F-150s at home like some old Johnny Cash song! In reality, Ford lost \$570 million due to recalls last quarter and another \$800 million because of Trump's tariffs.

There is only one reason for these intrusive searches: to intimidate workers and assert the unchallenged dictatorship of management. To corporate management and their cronies in the UAW bureaucracy, once a

worker walks through the factory gates, they forfeit their constitutional rights.

"Rank-and-file workers in the auto industry and every sector must oppose the attack on Ford workers," said Will Lehman, a Mack Trucks worker and leader of the IWA-RFC. "That means upholding the principle that 'An injury to one is an injury to all!' and demanding the immediate reinstatement of all victimized workers, with full back pay, and a halt to these police state-style searches."

He continued, "Ford's executives have been emboldened to trample over the rights of workers by Trump's deployment of ICE Gestapo agents to raid workplaces, including Hyundai's EV battery plant in Georgia, and the military occupations of Los Angeles and Washington D.C. They have also been encouraged by the craven cowardice and complicity of UAW President Shawn Fain and the rest of the UAW apparatus with the Trump administration.

"In every factory and workplace, workers must build rank-and-file committees, controlled democratically by workers themselves, to discuss a strategy and prepare for collective action to defend democratic rights. A critical fight against dictatorship involves the fight to expand the democratic control of the workplace and end the corporate dictatorship enforced by both corporate-controlled parties and their cronies in the UAW bureaucracy."

Workers should remember that their cherished rights were never attained without mass collective struggle, often in the face of the violent resistance of the corporate bosses, their police, judges and politicians.

This was particularly true at Ford. In the early decades of the 20th century, the "Ford Sociology Department" regularly conducted intrusive, unannounced searches of workers' homes and

investigations into their private lives. This was to ensure that Ford workers, most of whom were highly exploited immigrants, adopted a lifestyle of sobriety, Christian virtue and American “values,” as Henry Ford defined it. Those who failed these home inspections were denied the much vaunted \$5-a-day wage and told they had six months to adopt the “right” lifestyles or be terminated and starve.

This is how Henry Ford, the world’s richest man and an avid admirer of the Nazis, lorded over his industrial slaves. It was only through the mass struggles of workers, led by socialists and left-wing militants, and the martyrdom of countless workers, including the 1932 Hunger Marchers, that workers finally smashed Ford’s network of industrial spies and thugs and won UAW recognition in 1941.

There is much similarity with Trump and his government of oligarchs. The major difference is Ford does not have to rely on thugs like Harry Bennett and his “servicemen.” Today, they have the UAW bureaucrats to do their dirty work.

Just 11 days after Trump’s inauguration, on January 31, Ford brought in local police with dogs into the Michigan Assembly Plant. In February, the raids were expanded to the historic Ford Rouge Complex, with police and K-9 units sent into the Dearborn Truck and Rouge Electric Vehicle plants.

The UAW bureaucracy supported these actions by Ford’s newly established Global Security Task Force. Scott Elliott, the UAW local president at the Michigan Assembly Plant, boasted that union officials would be working with the task force’s “safety monitors,” i.e., undercover agents and industrial spies, being sent into every Ford plant in the US.

In opposition to this, the Ford Workers Rank-and-File Committee issued a statement on February 16, titled, “No police, no dogs, no undercover agents in our factories! Build rank-and-file committees in every plant!”

The statement read in part:

No matter what the bureaucrats from Solidarity House or the locals say, we do not give up our constitutional rights when we walk into the plant. Under the Fourth Amendment to the US Constitution, enacted into law in 1792

and upheld ever since, no agency of government, no company nor individual has the right to conduct unreasonable searches and seizures of our property or our persons, no matter where they may occur.

The committee demanded no police in the plants, an end to ICE raids, and the building of rank-and-file committees in every plant to fight job cuts, restore pensions and defend democratic rights.

This statement and others were read and circulated by thousands of workers, forcing Ford to temporarily back off. But over the last month, the provocative searches resumed, and workers who uphold their rights have been threatened with disciplinary action. Ford has now moved to make an example of these workers. In this they are following the playbook of Trump, who has exploited the killing of right-wing ideologue Charlie Kirk to demand the firing of anyone critical of his dictatorial policies, from Jimmy Kimmel to teachers, airline workers and others.

These victimizations are also a preemptive strike. Ford and UAW officials know that workers will resist the job cuts and other sacrifices that management will be demanding in the coming months amid growing signs of recession and the transformation of US industry for war. The company is conducting a world-wide cost-cutting campaign, including slashing 2,900 jobs two weeks ago in Cologne, Germany, as it moves to close Ford’s largest European plant.

That is why the fight to reinstate victimized workers and halt the searches will be a critical part of mobilizing the industrial power of workers against fascism and dictatorship.

To support the fight to reinstate victimized workers and halt the police state-style searches, fill out the form below.



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