Where is our contract? Is the UAW still trying to put lipstick on a pig?

Nexteer Workers Rank-and-File Committee
29 September 2026

The following is a statement by the Nexteer Workers Rank-and-File Committee on the situation facing 1,300 workers at the Saginaw, Michigan auto parts plant three months after the United Auto Workers bureaucracy imposed a pro-company agreement that had been rejected three times before. To join the committee, fill out the form at the end of the statement.

Not one of us has seen a single page of a written, signed contract. "It's at the printer," we're told. September 26 marked three months since TA4 was forced through by UAW Local 699 officials together with Shawn Fain and Solidarity House.

We must see it now, along with all side agreements and MOUs. The delay only deepens our suspicion that a written contract never existed and that the "ratification" was a charade to keep us from striking.

While we were fighting for our contract, so were parts workers at Dana, Bridgewater and American Axle. All of us have suffered decades of UAW-backed concessions—attacks on our wages, COLA, pensions, shift premiums and more—designed to boost the profits of the Big Three. The UAW bureaucracy, a pro-company apparatus of well-paid officials and reps with cushy jobs, deliberately kept us separated from other workers who were also voting down concession contracts.

In the end, sellouts were imposed on all of us, in some cases with phony promises of "30 by 30." Even if delivered, $30 an hour would leave us far behind what American Axle, Delphi and other parts workers earned in real terms at the start of this century. That is what the UAW calls a "good deal."

A strike at Nexteer, controlled by the rank and file, would have spearheaded a revolt throughout the auto parts supply chain and crippled production at the Big Three. That is precisely why the UAW hierarchy and management worked so hard to prevent one. By blocking us from using our power, the UAW handed management a blank check.

What happened

Three times we voted no, and our decisions were ignored. After rejecting TA2, nearly identical to TA1, we forced a strike vote on May 21 and passed it by 86 percent. The UAW buried that vote. After each no vote, officials extended the 2021 contract behind our backs and told us a strike would be "illegal." Fain and Region 1D Director Steven Dawes enforced this strike ban.

The TA4 vote was not held at the union hall, where we had organized to defeat the first three sellouts. It was held inside the plant, on company property, under management's eyes. The union didn't object—it arranged it. Local officials let management hand-pick company loyalists to "assist" the election committee we elected to run our vote.

The UAW also delayed the TA4 vote so that new hires could become union members. They were then "encouraged" to vote yes with phony promises of signing bonuses. Instead, they have been slated for layoffs. These young workers were used by the bureaucrats to pass the contract and are now being tossed out like trash.

Jobs

On August 27, Nexteer signed a deal with Phoenix Investors, a Milwaukee firm, which bought about 1.8 million square feet of the Nexteer complex, including Plants 5, 6/1 and 7. Nexteer leased back part of it, and Phoenix will market roughly 552,000 square feet in Plant 5 to new tenants. The UAW knew these negotiations were under way throughout our contract struggle and concealed them.

As one worker put it: "Floor workers believe local leadership and management bypassed the strike vote and pushed through the 4th TA to maintain plant viability appearance during the sale of several facilities." Phrases like "planned transition" and "repositioning" are corporate code words for consolidation and job elimination. What language in our contract opens the door to new job cuts? We have a right to know.

The UAW apparatus has no intention of fighting job destruction through AI and automation, or the massive cuts to social spending both parties are preparing to pay for the national debt and war. Instead, it backs Trump's trade war,

© World Socialist Web Site

which pits American workers against workers in Canada, Mexico and other countries at a time when the international unity of the working class against job cuts, war and austerity has never been more necessary.

Wages

Production workers start at $19.50 an hour and top out at $27 in 2030—the same pay workers at this plant made in 2005, while the cost of living has risen more than 70 percent. We know workers who sell blood plasma to make ends meet. Meanwhile, the bureaucrats voted themselves raises of $10,000 to $30,000 at the UAW Constitutional Convention in June. Nexteer was never mentioned.

ESTA

Michigan's Earned Sick Time Act was supposed to give us 32 new hours of paid sick time on top of what we had. Instead, Nexteer took 32 hours straight out of our vacation banks and relabeled them "sick time." What other health care coverage was given up?

What lessons should we draw?

The union officials are not merely corrupt and dishonest. They are a bureaucracy—a separate, privileged layer of full-time officials whose salaries, positions and lifestyles depend on boosting corporate profits. Their interests are diametrically opposed to ours. The job of Fain, Boyer, Dawes and their flunky at Local 699 is to keep us from using our power against Nexteer, the ruling class and its two parties, the Democrats and Republicans.

That is why they blocked a strike, held the vote under management's eyes, hid the sale of the Nexteer complex and fired Antwiane Sanders, our coworker who spoke out. These were not mistakes. They were doing their job—for the company.

This apparatus cannot be pressured or reformed. It must be abolished. The network of rank-and-file committees must become the authority in the plants, with control over our contracts, schedules, jobs and safety. We cannot wait for the next contract to fight back.

What we are fighting for

• Immediate release of the contract and all side agreements, including health insurance details, to show how the company and union conspired behind our backs.

• Collective action now, not in 2030. Rank-and-file workers must unite against job cuts, poverty wages, inadequate benefits, unsafe conditions and victimizations.

• Reinstatement of Antwiane Sanders with full back pay. An injury to one is an injury to all.

• An end to the part-time scheme. Behind our backs, part-time workers restricted to 29 hours a week are being scheduled for weekend work, with no overtime pay and no health insurance, at slightly higher pay than the senior production workers they are replacing. This scheme divides us and drives down everyone's conditions. The part-time workers are victims too, not our enemies. Equal pay and benefits for all. No two-tier system.

• An independent investigation by a committee of trusted rank-and-file workers into UAW Local 699, the Bargaining Committee and Jason Tuck, to expose to the entire membership how they collaborated with the corporation and how they can be thrown out.

We are not extras in a movie directed by management and Solidarity House. We build the parts that keep the Big Three lines running. That is real power, and we intend to use it. The rank and file—not the bureaucracy, management or shareholders—should decide what happens on the floor.

To our brothers and sisters in parts and assembly plants across the United States, Canada, Mexico and beyond: We will not allow the corporations to play us off against each other across borders. The only answer is to unite our struggles.

Join and expand the Nexteer Workers Rank-and-File Committee and the International Workers' Alliance of Rank-and-File Committees (IWA-RFC). The rank and file must become the authority.

To contact the WSWS and the Socialist Equality Party visit:

wsws.org/contact

© World Socialist Web Site