

Outpouring of support for WSWS Autoworker Newsletter among US autoworkers

By Eric London
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In recent weeks, hundreds of workers from auto factories, parts manufacturing centers and other work sites across the United States have signed-up for the *World Socialist Web Site's* Autoworker Newsletter.

Support for the Newsletter has come from Michigan, Texas, Ohio, Kentucky, Indiana, Illinois, Missouri, New York, Kansas and other states. The enthusiastic comments left by autoworkers when they signed up speak for themselves.

A GM worker from Bedford, Indiana writes: “You handed out newsletters at GM Powertrain recently and I just wanted to inform you that you really opened a lot of peoples’ eyes. Everyone I’ve spoken to about it says the same things and agrees with a lot of what you guys are saying.”

“Opening eyes,” “telling the truth” and revealing the “facts” are common themes in the comments. Workers are fed up with the conspiracy of silence coming from the companies and the unions about the negotiations taking place behind closed doors.

“I think you guys are doing a great job informing us of all things automotive and union,” writes a Ford worker from Louisville Assembly in Kentucky. “We need to keep our eyes open!”

A Fiat-Chrysler worker from Michigan says: “I love the information that is published in the newsletter. It gives me insight into other opinions on the issues I have concerns with. This newsletter makes you open your eyes to what is happening with the UAW.”

Another worker from Louisville Assembly writes: “Thank you for the articles. It is about time someone speak the truth about this ‘mob like’ strong-arming of union membership. Also, during the decade of no raises, the International voted themselves raises...twice

from what I hear.”

“The newsletter is right on,” adds an Ohio Ford worker. “The UAW is losing sight of protecting its workers. The workers have had enough of the untruths and scare tactics.”

The overwhelming enthusiasm for the Autoworker Newsletter reveals big cracks in the United Auto Workers’ decades-long efforts to strangle working class militancy. There is widespread support among autoworkers for a real fight against the auto companies and a growing understanding that this requires a break with the pro-management hirelings of the UAW.

The flood of comments sent by autoworkers across the country points to the fact that the justified anger of the autoworkers at the role of the UAW is reaching a breaking point.

“I welcome your article on the UAW selling out workers,” writes an autoworker at an Illinois Fiat-Chrysler plant. “I agree with a unification of all auto workers, including those in Mexico.”

“I think our union has gone to hell!!” Says a Michigan Ford worker. “We are never informed of anything! We’re left in the dark about everything! I feel our union is more for the company than the workers! I’m not comfortable paying union dues anymore because I feel like I’m giving it right back to Ford!”

Another Louisville Assembly Ford worker writes that they have been “sold out by a union that Ford bought a long time ago.”

A Dearborn, Michigan autoworker writes: “The UAW has been lying to us for far too long! It’s time for all concessions back, but they want to institute a VEBA for us. That’s a cut to my health care. What

about retirees?” The UAW and the corporations are considering instituting a union-operated health care fund (Voluntary Employees’ Beneficiary Association or VEBA) for all workers, with the union taking over responsibility for slashing benefits. (See, “The corporate-union assault on autoworker health care”)

“I think the UAW has become a tool for management to control the hourly workforce,” writes a Warren Stamping worker from Michigan. “We don’t need to be paying for their ‘services.’ We are being sold down the river in the guise of being represented.”

“I have been a union member for 27 years,” the same Michigan autoworker continues. “I’m tired of the ‘cooperation’ with Fiat-Chrysler. We need to organize independently and start calling the right shots. We need checks put in place so our new leadership cannot be swayed by corporate money.”

A Marysville, Michigan Axle Plant worker wrote to the Autoworker Newsletter in response to a recent video interview with a homeless Chrysler worker named Chris.

“I totally agree with Chris,” the letter reads. “We need to start holding the UAW accountable, and if we have to fight the UAW then so be it. They have benefited off the sweat of the union workers paying dues and now there’s a dues increase—but what do we get for our dues increase? Nothing, and that’s wrong.”

Support for the newsletter is not only a product of growing opposition—it will also be a platform for elevating the political consciousness of workers so that they can be prepared politically to fight the company-union alliance and win. As one Canadian autoworker wrote: “We need to educate the workers of the true situation of what’s happening on the shop floor.”

The growing militancy of workers is a necessary prerequisite to waging a unified struggle against decades of attacks and betrayals by the auto companies and their union stooges. But a militant resolve alone is not enough to withstand the tricks and tactics of the companies, the unions, the police, the courts and the elected officials in the Democratic and Republican Parties.

Autoworkers must arm themselves with a political strategy based on the independence of the working class and must establish their own independent rank-and-file organizations, controlled by the workers

and based on a program of uniting workers internationally against the capitalist system.

This is the role that the *World Socialist Web Site*, Socialist Equality Party and the Autoworker Newsletter will play in the emerging struggles of the autoworkers against the big three auto companies.

The WSWS appeals to autoworkers and their supporters: become a partisan of the Autoworker Newsletter in your place of work! Sign-up for the Autoworker Newsletter, share its articles in your workplace and on social media sites, use the Newsletter as a forum for sharing your thoughts and experiences with autoworkers around the world, contact us to learn more about the establishment of rank-and-file committees in your factory, and read the WSWS on a daily basis to study world politics from a revolutionary, working class perspective.

To contact the WSWS and the
Socialist Equality Party visit:

<http://www.wsws.org>