

Ford Action Committee in Germany supports strike preparations by US autoworkers

Ford Action Committee
12 September 2023

The following letter has been sent by the Ford Rank-and-File Committee-Saarlouis in Germany to autoworkers in the US, who face a September 15 strike deadline.

Dear colleagues,

We at Ford in Saarlouis are on your side and support your struggle in the US. We welcome your readiness to strike and will organize solidarity. If you win, we will also be strengthened. We must stick together. Jim Farley and the auto bosses are pursuing an international strategy of attacks on social gains. We, on the other hand, are building international solidarity of autoworkers, and together we are stronger than they are!

We read on the *World Socialist Web Site* that your collective bargaining agreement with the Ford group expires on Thursday, as do agreements at other plants. Your almost 100 percent (97%) vote to strike has roused our enthusiasm here in Saarlouis. We also read that your wages, shifts and working conditions are just as miserable as ours.

Now it is a matter of consequently carrying through on the struggle. The time of retreat and concessions must be ended. We must take back what we are entitled to and what we need to lead a decent existence with our families. We are workers and not beggars; we have rights, and the right to a decent wage is a fundamental right.

On the WSWs we also read a great deal about the corruption of the UAW bureaucracy and the role of Shawn Fain. Our experience here is that the union leadership and its apparatus are completely on the side of the corporation and the government.

The past two years have been painful but instructive for us at Ford in Saarlouis. For the production of a new electric car, starting in 2025, the company, in close

consultation with IG Metall and its works council, organized a bidding competition between our plant and the plant in Almussafes, Spain. Whoever offered the better bid—that is, the lower costs—was to be awarded the contract. We in Saarlouis lost this bidding competition and our plant will be shut down in the next year and a half. And now our colleagues in Almussafes are also paying the price for the contract award in the form of wage reductions and job cuts.

We joined together in the Ford Rank-and-File Committee-Saarlouis, which from the beginning has called for the rejection of the bidding competition and for a united fight with our Spanish colleagues for the preservation of both plants.

But the IG Metall union in Germany and the UGT in Spain have done everything they can to prevent exactly that from happening. They have offered huge wage cuts and job losses to the Ford group and played us off against each other. It is they, the unions, who are now implementing the closure of our plant in Germany and the reduction of wages and jobs in Spain. They have suppressed and threatened any opposition.

We would like you to benefit from our experience: do not trust the UAW union leadership under Shawn Fain. No matter how loudly they proclaim to defend the interests of the workforce, they will do the opposite. Our IG Metall works council chairman is a prime example of these outspoken traitors who collude with corporate leadership behind our backs to conclude and pursue attacks against us.

Here in the Rank-and-File Committee we have discussed at length that the brutality with which the IG Metall officials are suppressing any serious labor struggle is related to the current developments toward war. The union leaders have made a pact with the federal government to saddle us workers with the costs

of the billions spent on arms deliveries to Ukraine and the gigantic buildup of the military.

You, too, are confronted not only with the Ford corporation, but also with the UAW leadership backed by the Biden administration. Ford, just like all other car companies, is trying to use the transition to electric vehicle production to mount more massive attacks. More than anything they want to cut hundreds of thousands, if not millions of jobs worldwide.

You can only win the upcoming struggle if, firstly, you organize independently of the UAW and organize the strike yourselves. You are determined to strike, but Fain and the UAW bureaucrats are determined to sabotage the strike. You must take action and act yourselves.

Secondly, you must ally yourselves across corporate boundaries with your colleagues at GM and Stellantis and at your suppliers. This must be only a first step in establishing contact with our colleagues in Canada and Mexico and, of course, with those in Europe.

We offer you our hand in doing this and in building the International Workers Alliance of Rank-and-File Committees.

Long live international solidarity!

With solidarity from Saarlouis, Germany!



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Socialist Equality Party visit:

wsws.org/contact