

Reject UMW sellout! Spread the Warrior Met strike!

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Warrior Met coal miners should vote to reject the sellout contract offer accepted by the United Mine Workers and begin mobilizing support now to broaden their fight.

After working under a \$6 an hour pay cut since 2016 while the company rakes in massive profits, workers are being asked to accept an insulting wage increase that divides workers by pay grade and will not take full effect until 2026. Meanwhile, the company's brutal disciplinary policy, which has resulted in countless unjust terminations, is being kept in place, only with six strikes before dismissal instead of four.

Miners are in a powerful position to carry forward their struggle and press their demands, including full restoration of all pay cuts, restitution of lost wages and concessions, along with the abolition of the company's draconian attendance policy.

Any claim that there is no money to meet these demands is a lie. Warrior Met made \$302 million in 2019, while CEO Walter J. Scheller III has pocketed an annual salary of over \$4 million even during the pandemic.

The main obstacle workers face is the United Mine Workers, which is seeking to corral and strangle the strike. On Wednesday, UMW President Cecil Roberts, who "earns" a salary of \$210,000 annually, told Warrior Met miners that a \$1 to \$2 pay raise was the best the union could get.

While sitting on assets of over \$164 million, the union is attempting to starve workers on a strike pay of only \$300 a week. Meanwhile, it is keeping the strike isolated from other sections of workers, such as teachers, Amazon workers, steelworkers and autoworkers.

Workers must organize independently of this corrupt organization and build a rank-and-file strike committee

to take over negotiations and continue the fight. Instead of ending the strike, Warrior Met miners should expand the struggle, demanding a nationwide miners strike and solidarity action from workers throughout the area. Delegations of striking miners should go to the US Steel and US Pipe mills in nearby Birmingham, the Amazon warehouse in Bessemer, the Constellium aluminum plant in Muscle Shoals, the Mercedes Benz plant in Vance and schools in Birmingham, Montgomery and other cities where educators are fighting the deadly back-to-school policy.

Conditions are developing to wage such a fight. After a year of a pandemic in which the government has shoveled literally trillions of dollars into the coffers of the corporations while doing nothing to keep the population safe from COVID, workers are ready to fight back. Already significant struggles are breaking out.

- * More than 1,300 steelworkers at Allegheny Technologies Inc. are on strike at nine mills in five states seeking to overturn a pay freeze and restore lost concessions.

- * About 700 nurses at St. Vincent Hospital in Worcester, Massachusetts are entering the fourth week of strike action against Tenet Health Care for safe patient ratios and patient care.

- * In New York City, 3,000 graduate student instructors at Columbia University are in rebellion against the United Auto Workers, which is seeking to shut down their strike against poverty-level wages without even achieving a contract. Meanwhile, other graduate student instructors at New York University are preparing to walk out.

In waging their struggle Warrior Met miners must advance demands based on what they need, not on what the company and the UMW says management can

afford.

These demands must include:

*Full restoration of all wage and benefit concessions and a large pay increase to make up for what has been sacrificed.

*Ending of all pay tiers. Equal pay for equal work.

*Abolition of the disciplinary system. Rehire with back pay all workers who were unjustly terminated.

*End forced overtime and grueling work schedules. Hire additional miners to ease the workload and give workers time with their families.

*Workers' oversight of health and safety conditions. Appropriate social distancing and daily testing for COVID. Workers must have the right to refuse to work under unsafe conditions.

In mobilizing to fight for these demands Warrior Met miners should turn to the militant traditions of class struggle in Alabama going back more than 100 years. Alabama coal miners have waged repeated strikes in the face of company gun thugs and state militia and confronted repeated attempts to divide workers by race.

A rejection of the contract is not enough. New rank-and-file organizations of struggle are needed. The unions long ago turned their backs on the working class for the warm embrace of corporate management. This fact is underscored by the failure of the union drive at the Amazon Bessemer plant. Workers want to fight, but they know the corporatist unions will do nothing to defend them.

As long as the struggle is left in the hands of Cecil Roberts and the UMW, it will be isolated and defeated like the strikes against A.T. Massey and Pittston Coal in the 1980s and 1990s.

Workers must build their own rank-and-file strike committees and democratically decide for themselves their demands and how to conduct their struggle. The strike against Warrior Met is part of a nationwide and global movement of workers against the obscene growth of billionaire wealth amid the deaths caused by the willful negligence of the corporations and their political frontmen, whether it is Trump and the Republicans or Biden and the Democrats.

Workers everywhere are fighting the same global corporations and are increasingly facing identical conditions under a rampaging pandemic. The fight against the sacrifice of workers' lives to the drive for profit must be combined with building an international

political movement of the working class for socialism, and the reorganization of society so the wealth created by the collective labor of workers goes to them not the wealthy few.

The *World Socialist Web Site* encourages miners to help circulate this statement.

For more information about building rank-and-file committees and to share your story, contact the WSWs today.



To contact the WSWs and the Socialist Equality Party visit:

[wsws.org/contact](https://www.wsws.org/contact)