"The rich are worried that the pitchforks are coming out."

Volvo Trucks workers demand full contract and additional week before vote on UAW sellout deal

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Volvo and Mack workers can contact the Volvo Workers Rank-and-File Committee at volvowrfc@gmail.com *or by text to (540) 307-0509.*

With the strike by nearly 3,000 Volvo Trucks workers in Dublin, Virginia entering its fifth week, opposition is growing to the tentative agreement for a new six-year labor contract being pushed by the United Auto Workers. The new deal, which includes wage increases far below the rate of inflation and increases out-of-pocket healthcare costs for current and retired workers, is little more than a rehash of the two previous UAW-backed proposals, which workers rejected by a 9-to-1 margin in May and June.

Volvo workers are demanding the release of the full copy of the new proposal along with all the associated letters of understanding and memoranda of agreement. The UAW has refused to release anything but several pages of the tentative agreement, which include supposed improvements over the previous agreements. The full contract is under lock and key at the UAW Local 2069 union hall. Individual workers are reportedly allowed to see the document, which is several hundred pages long, but not allowed access to a copy themselves.

Fearful of the workers, the UAW has not even called any "town hall" meetings before the scheduled ratification vote Friday. Instead, local union officials have instructed workers to come to the union hall, again individually, if they want to ask local, Region 8 and UAW International reps any questions about the agreement.

With the long Fourth of the July weekend ending Monday, the UAW is essentially giving workers only three days to review and discuss the deal, which will govern their wages, benefits and working conditions until 2027.

"We have to have the full contract and an additional week to go through everything before we vote," a striking Volvo worker told the *World Socialist Web Site*. "Everybody needs to sift through it, and with the Fourth of July we haven't had time.

"We should be having at least two meetings a week where everybody can attend and ask questions. That's how we think things out. If workers think clearly about this, they will reject it.

"That's why the UAW has not called any mass meetings—they're scared to. All they're saying is, 'Stop by the union hall to ask us questions.' [Local 2069 President Matt] Blondino and the bargaining committee are frightened to come out in front of the membership.

"The UAW sent us back to work [after the first strike] so Volvo could get hundreds of more trucks out. The float [stockpile] is going down now, and if we vote the contract down again that would really put the feet of the Volvo supervisors to the fire with their bosses in Sweden."

The Volvo Workers Rank-and-File Committee, which has led the opposition to sellout contracts and fought for the expansion of the strike to all Volvo facilities, has issued a statement calling for workers to vote "no" on Friday. The statement also calls for the release of the entire contract, at least 10 days before any vote, three membership meetings to discuss the contract, rank-and-file supervision of the vote, and the provision of strike pay equal to weekly wages.

"From the information that has been released," another striking worker said, "the company dropped the 10-hour workday proposal, but we still have the point system to discipline workers over attendance, and we have to use all our vacation time before using FMLA [Family and Medical Leave Act]. They are trying to get workers who were hired between 2011-15 to vote for it by bringing them straight up to top pay. But there is no COLA [cost of living adjustment], the health insurance is still going up, and it will still take six years for new workers to make top pay. It would be another thing if everyone went to Core Group [highest seniority and

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pay] right away and everybody kept our insurance, but that's not what's happening.

"Most of the Core Group workers are against it, but the UAW is trying to scare them by saying if we vote it down, they will bring in an arbitrator, and the deal we get will be even worse. It's wrong for these people in power to use intimidation to get a 'yes' vote. That's just another scare tactic. I still see a majority voting this down because people are sticking together."

He also endorsed the call for rank-and-file supervision of the vote. "It's easier to manipulate the vote when it's not a 90 percent rejection. We are going to have to watch the vote and the count like hawks to prevent them from manipulating it."

The worker also condemned the UAW for deliberately concealing information about the strike from other UAW members in the auto industry.

"The UAW has done nothing to publicize the strike. If it was a union, that would be the first thing they would do. But the company and the union had a strategy from the beginning to push a pre-planned contract through, and we got in the way. They strategized how to screw their own people. It would be one thing if they were hurting from the pandemic. In 2008 they were hurting, and we took deep cuts, including a $6 an hour pay cut for new guys. Now the company is making money hand over fist, and they still want to take a bunch from us.

"Workers are getting tired of this. The rich are worried that the pitchforks are coming out. It's coming to an end, and workers want to turn things around."

The UAW is terrified of the growing support for the striking Volvo workers, including from Mack Trucks workers in Pennsylvania and Maryland, who are angered over handling scab parts from the strikebound plant in Virginia.

An Allentown Mack-Volvo worker denounced the deal the UAW is trying to shove down the throats of striking workers. "If it's the good contract that they say it is, then why can't they show it to the workers?

"The UAW did the same thing to us back when we were on strike in 2019. They said they had a great contract and sent us back to work, shutting the strike down. Then they pushed the bad contract through once they got us back in the plant. The only thing we hear about the strike is from the *World Socialist Web Site*. We don't hear anything from Republicans or from Democrats."

Workers are also posting statements of the Volvo Workers Rank-and-File Committee and WSWS articles on the local Facebook pages for New River Valley workers.

In comments on the Local 2069 page, workers denounced the treachery of the UAW and called for industry wide unity of workers. One post read: "As a fellow UAW member that has also had enough of the IUAW's bulls**t I just want to say that I'm really proud of my brothers and sisters at Volvo that have stood up to both the company and union leadership. Stay strong!"

Another said, "Being a retiree from Volvo what the hell is the use of having a union if the employees can't vote the way they want to. I see signs along the road needing people with pay starting at $13.00-$17.00 an hour. Seems to me Volvo is offering you no more than the last time, and the UAW is going along with it."

"As a retiree we still got screwed," another post read. "We were told when we retired we were grandfathered in and kept benefits we retired with. What a bunch of crap. I retired with full benefits and now have to pay insurance which I was promised. BS!!!!!!!!"

Another post referred to Ray Curry, the former UAW treasury secretary who was just installed as UAW president. Curry betrayed the 2019 strike of Mack-Volvo workers and signed off on the two Volvo NRV contracts, which workers repudiated.

"Low life!!!!! Will he build a fancy house if he does what the other International president did??? ... Is he gaining from what he's saving Volvo on the contract???? Why would he get a promotion to the presidential chair in the middle of the contract settlement???? I smell a pile of dead rats!!!"

Another striking Volvo worker wrote, "They have done nothing for the retirees. Now they are doing the divide and conquer tactic. Hope the tier can see what they are doing. If tier falls for it, eventually they will suffer for their choice. The current T/A is not worth breaking solidarity over. The company can do better."

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