

UAW continues to withhold the full contract agreement for Volvo Trucks workers in Virginia

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It has been just over two weeks since the United Auto Workers ended a five-week strike of nearly 3,000 Volvo Trucks workers at the Swedish transnational's New River Valley (NRV) manufacturing facility in Dublin, Virginia. The UAW, in collusion with the company, shut down the strike after forcing workers to vote again on a six-year contract which they had already rejected, which includes sweeping concessions on workers' wages, benefits and working conditions. The union claimed the deal passed by just 17 votes out of the 2,369 ballots counted.

Significantly, the UAW still has not released the full details of the contract, undoubtedly a fearful response to the widespread anger and disgust felt among workers to the union's betrayal. Indeed, the union has also canceled next week's monthly union meeting.

"I'm not going to continue to pay them union dues, and have them steal from me," one worker told the *World Socialist Web Site Autoworker Newsletter*. "My dues money will be used towards my insurance instead. I'm very disappointed and very aggravated."

The same worker also spoke on Volvo's plans for production once workers return to the plant following the current two-week re-tooling shutdown. Volvo has already attempted to ramp up production to make up for the losses as a result of the strike, which workers have been opposing.

"As of right now, when we go back to work, we've already been told that we'll be working every other Saturday, with second shift working the Saturdays we don't, and we will be on nine hours a day," the worker continued. While the UAW has claimed that the new contract does not contain the hated Alternative Work Schedule, which rips up the eight hour day, it remains

to be seen whether the contract contains loopholes allowing the company to implement it.

A veteran NRV worker described how the UAW defrauded hundreds of newly hired workers (those with fewer than 90 days on the job) out of the contract signing bonus. In the context of a contemporary contract struggle, trade unions typically dangle such bonuses—\$2,000 in this case—in front of workers as an incentive to return to work after they have been struggling to get by on paltry strike pay.

"The union let the 90-day people get swindled. Lots of these new people were on strike with us. The union pushed them to vote 'yes' in part with their talk about the ratification bonus. Many of them voted 'yes' thinking that they were getting the bonus and they got nothing. They found out the first day they got back. They got dues taken out within their 90 days and didn't get their bonuses. They were angry and I don't blame them. They paid dues to be able to vote on the contract, and this is what they got for it. They were starved and bullied into it."

While rank-and-file opposition to union betrayals grows, the Democratic Party and its pseudo-left backers have rallied to the defense of the UAW. President Biden recently visited the Volvo-owned Mack Truck plant in Macungie, Pennsylvania, where he promoted an economic nationalist perspective alongside company president Martin Weissburg and officials from UAW Local 677, all of whom posed together for photo ops. The hosts of the pseudo-left Alabama radio program Valley Labor Report podcast offered provided a false account of the strike, which wrote out the role of the Volvo Workers Rank-and-File Committee and the WSWWS while propping up the UAW.

Despite these distortions and the continuing media blackout of the Volvo strike, the influence of the Volvo strike is making itself felt among other workers, who are beginning to draw important lessons from the strike. Yesterday, workers at a Mack Trucks plant in Macungie, Pennsylvania announced the formation of their own rank-and-file committee.

The Baltimore Amazon Rank-and-File Safety Committee issued a statement on July 27 that called the strike a “watershed moment for the working class.” Freightliner workers in North Carolina have also contacted the VWRFC indicating their interest in forming a committee at their own plant, citing a UAW-backed agreement at their plant similar to the one at Volvo Trucks.



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