

September 28 public meeting of the Railroad Workers Rank-and-File Committee: Organize independently to defeat the government- and union-backed sellout!

26 September 2022

The Railroad Workers Rank-and-File Committee has announced its second public meeting, “Organize independently to defeat government- and union-backed sellout!” It will be held this Wednesday at 7:00 P.M. Eastern Time. Register for the event [here](#).

The September 15 agreement reached between the union and the carriers, and brokered by the White House, is a betrayal which meets none of the workers’ demands, including an end to Hi Viz and Precision Scheduled Railroading, paid sick days and guaranteed time off and wage increases above inflation. Now that contract language has been released, railroaders are discovering hidden new concessions all of the time, including *new* punitive attendance policies for yard workers. In the meantime, the unions are enforcing a de facto strike injunction, dragging out the voting past the midterm elections.

Thursday is the strike deadline for more than 5,000 machinists, who have already overwhelmingly rejected their contract and voted to strike. But the International Association of Machinists (IAM) is clearly preparing either to keep them on the job by either extending the self-imposed contract deadline or by announcing a new deal, virtually the same as the first.

With the unions, it is not a question of whether they will try to run roughshod over workers’ rights to impose the deal but how. Last week, well-connected media commentators even raised the possibility of the unions unilaterally imposing a deal after workers reject it.

The critical question is: How will workers respond?

The country’s 120,000 railroaders must leverage their

immense social strength, which so terrified corporate America and Washington with the threat of a strike, by organizing themselves independently of the union apparatus to fight for rank-and-file control. This means developing a network of rank-and-file committees uniting workers across all 12 unions, all seven Class I carriers and every major terminal and yard.

On September 14, the day before the deal was announced, a public meeting of 500 railroaders sponsored by the Railroad Workers Rank-and-File Committee passed a resolution which made the will of the railroaders crystal clear. It declared:

1. We will not accept any act by Congress that violates our democratic right to strike and imposes upon us a contract that we do not accept and has not been ratified by the rank and file.
2. We demand a contract that addresses our needs, including a major pay increase to make up for years of declining wages; cost-of-living adjustments to meet soaring inflation; an end to brutal attendance policies; guaranteed time off and sick days; and an end to the push for one-man crews.
3. We inform the unions that any attempt to force through contracts that we do not accept and that have not been voted on, or to keep us working without a contract, will be in violation of clear instructions given by the rank and file.

This must now be enforced by building alternative structures which enable railroaders to countermand the unions' betrayals, enforce democratic oversight of voting procedures and balloting and prepare for strike action in conformity with the overwhelming will of railroaders.

Watch David North's remarks commemorating 25 years of the *World Socialist Web Site* and donate today.

Register for the meeting today, and share the registration link as widely as possible. Share it on social media pages frequented by railroaders and invite your coworkers to the meeting, and tell them to invite other coworkers.

To join the Railroad Workers Rank-and-File Committee, email railwrfc@gmail.com or text (314) 529-1064. Alternatively fill out the form below:



To contact the WSWS and the Socialist Equality Party visit:

wsws.org/contact