

Stop the attempt by the UAW to shut down the Clarios strike! Workers have a right to know what's in the contract!

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Clarios workers: Fill out the form at the bottom of this page for more information on forming a rank-and-file committee to mobilize opposition to the attempted sell-out of the strike.

United Auto Workers officials announced to workers Friday that they had reached a tentative agreement with Clarios battery company and scheduled a meeting and ratification vote for Monday morning, in a bid to end the strike by 525 workers at the Toledo, Ohio plant. UAW Local 12 and UAW International officials have refused to release any details of the supposed agreement and intend to ram it through without even giving workers the weekend to study it and discuss it.

Late Friday, UAW Local 12 Chairman Aaron Shinaul posted a brief statement on Facebook from the local bargaining committee. It read: “We have reached a tentative agreement. We will be putting packets together this weekend and handing them out at the meeting and discussing. The meeting will be held at Local 12 Monday 5/22/23 at 10 am the vote will be immediately after the discussion. ... Please pass this along because everyone does not have Facebook please let all probationary members know to come also. Bargaining Committee”

The attempt by the UAW bureaucracy to push through the contract with hardly even a pretense of democracy is a slap in the face to the workers, who have been on strike at the Toledo plant—owned by the world’s largest battery manufacturer—for almost two weeks. Workers have defied threats of arrest and the company’s strikebreaking operation.

Clarios workers and all autoworkers have the right to know what is in this contract! Rank-and-file workers will be the ones who will have to live with its terms for the next four to five years, not UAW Local President Bruce Baumhower, Region 2B Director David Green or UAW International President Shawn Fain.

Clarios workers should demand the immediate release of the full contract—not just the phony “highlights”—and an entire

week to study and discuss among themselves and other UAW members before any vote. If UAW officials refuse to provide workers with adequate time and information to fully understand the contract, the workers should reject it on principle. Workers also cannot trust the UAW officials to accurately count the votes and should elect a committee of trusted rank-and-file workers to oversee the vote.

Workers must make it clear at Monday’s meeting that they will not be bullied and swindled by union bureaucrats who are making \$200,000 a year and more off their dues money.

If it was a good contract, the UAW officials would not be afraid to release all of it immediately to the membership. But they have not done that because they know that Clarios workers would use the weekend to examine it, expose its pro-company terms, and organize an overwhelming “no” vote, just like they did with the first sellout agreement brought back by the UAW on April 27.

Rank-and-file workers should demand the resignation of the bargaining committee and set up a committee of trusted rank-and-file workers who will make sure that all negotiations are open to the full membership. This committee should survey all Clarios workers and outline a series of demands that must be met before workers ratify any deal. Such demands should include a 40 percent increase in wages to make up for four years of declining pay, the restoration of full cost-of-living protection, the maintenance of overtime after eight hours and the elimination of exhausting work schedules.

With the contracts for 173,000 GM, Ford and Stellantis workers in the US and Canada expiring in mid-September, every autoworker has a stake in the outcome of this struggle and the right to know the content of the tentative agreement. In opposition to the isolation of the strike by the UAW bureaucracy, the International Workers Alliance of Rank-and-File Committees (IWA-RFC)—a network of militant and class-conscious workers’ committees—is calling for autoworkers to take collective action in its defense, including the refusal to handle scab-made batteries.

The underhanded methods of the UAW bureaucracy further demonstrate that the new administration led by Shawn Fain, despite rhetoric about “ending corruption” and creating a “democratic, membership-led union,” is just as much a tool of the corporations as the previous bribetakers at Solidarity House. Fain, who has not even bothered to show up at the picket line or issue a statement on the strike, is terrified that a victory for the Clarios workers will encourage Big Three workers to reject the sellout agreements his administration is preparing for them.

“If it’s no good, we will vote it down again,” a Clarios worker with seven years told the WSWS. “We’re not going to vote for it if it’s just a few small changes. Why can’t they share the whole contract with us? We pay them.

“Even before the strike, the other UAW officials told us it was against the law to disclose information to us. We knew a guy who used to be a UAW regional rep and he said the reason they don’t release info is because they don’t want things to ‘avalanche.’ In his post, Aaron did not say this was a great contract.

“We are not going to accept them saying, ‘Here’s the highlights,’ and they take out the bad parts and then say, ‘This is the best you are going to get.’ We have a bunch of guys who will stand up at the meeting and won’t let them BS us. Yes, the UAW is a big machine and hard to fight. But it will be a lot easier if all the autoworkers, not only at Clarios, but all over, stick together. It is only coming to the end of week two and we got to hold out for what we need.”

Another striking Clarios worker said, “The 3 percent raise needs to be at least double for me to even consider. And I don’t want a swing shift. I still want to work five days a week like we do with scheduled overtime and at least have the chance to get out of work after eight hours. I don’t want to be locked into 12 hours the whole contract. Also, I want our overtime to stay the way it is (after eight hours) and not go to overtime after 40 hours.”

From the beginning, the “negotiations” between the UAW apparatus and the company have not been talks between two opposing sides, but rather a conspiracy between management and union executives to squeeze even more out of the workers for the company’s billionaire investors, who already made \$1.6 billion in profits last year. But rank-and-file workers who have taken pay cut after pay cut and work long hours in unsafe conditions said “enough is enough” and voted down a sellout contract by 98 percent at the end of April.

The UAW bureaucrats never wanted this strike and have done nothing to inform, let alone, mobilize all UAW members to win

this decisive struggle. But workers at Toledo Jeep, Dana and the GM, Ford and Stellantis plants across Ohio, Michigan and other states are demanding that autoworkers stop handling scab batteries and want to support the strike. That is why Fain & Co. are so anxious to shut the strike down and impose a deal, which will still be on management’s terms, regardless of whatever tweaks it includes.

Since workers threw the last sellout agreement in the garbage, the UAW bureaucracy has been biding its time and waiting for the right moment to try to ram through another pro-company deal. “I’m just excited they’ve brought something back to the table,” said Dave Green, the UAW’s Region 2B director, telling the *Toledo Blade* he hopes workers get “some justice.” But Green has a long record of selling out workers. As former UAW Local 1112 president at the GM Lordstown, Ohio plant, he agreed to outsource jobs to a low-wage GM subsidiary, along with huge layoffs and other concessions to supposedly “save the plant.” The factory was closed anyway.

The Clarios strike is a battle in a broader war of autoworkers. Momentum is building up for rank-and-file workers to transfer power from the UAW apparatus into their own hands. More and more workers, at Dana, Stellantis, GM and other companies, are joining the growing national and international network of rank-and-file committees, under the direction of the International Workers Alliance of Rank-and-File Committees (IWA-RFC), and Clarios workers in Germany and other countries are calling for international solidarity with the striking Ohio workers.

Clarios workers should stand firm, demand the release of the full contract and a full week to study and discuss it. At the same time, autoworkers at Stellantis, GM, Ford and other companies should build rank-and-file strike support committees to enforce a ban on scab batteries and support this critical fight.



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