

Mack workers erupt in anger at UAW “information sessions”

Tom Eley, Erik Schreiber, Jesse Thomas
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For updates and to discuss joining the Mack Workers Rank-and-File Committee, text MACK to (877) 861-4428.

The UAW reported Sunday night that workers rejected the UAW-backed contract. See Live Updates on the Autoworkers Struggle.

Mack Trucks workers erupted in anger at a Saturday afternoon “information session” held in Bethlehem, Pennsylvania, hosted by UAW Local 677 to try to ram through a tentative contract that the bureaucracy used to abort a strike one week ago at Mack Truck.

About 400 workers from Mack’s flagship Macungie plant attended the meeting, at which the UAW hoped to present packaged “talking points” to workers to convince them to vote for a contract that it presents as a “record.”

Workers told the WSWWS after that comments from the floor were universally hostile to the contract. At one point, an audience member asked how many in attendance were in favor of the contract. A single hand went up—that is, 1 out of 400.

Many workers entered the building with self-made black T-shirts with “Vote No” emblazoned on them. Workers exiting the event told *World Socialist Web Site* reporters that UAW reps were yelled at, booed and taunted by the audience, which were audible even outside the arena.

Will Lehman, a rank-and-file socialist worker from the Macungie plant who challenged Fain and other bureaucrats for the UAW presidency last year, spoke from the floor. Lehman condemned the contract, and called for the expansion of the struggle.

“This is the kind of contract that gets negotiated behind closed doors,” Lehman said. “There needs to be full transparency to all the workers, and as far as the vote count goes that needs to be made transparent to the

workers as well.”

He added that the UAW apparatus seeks to pit “workers in one country against another, while workers essentially don’t have any differences with each other, no matter if we’re in the US or if we’re in Sweden. We’re all trying to put food on our plates for our families and roofs over our heads.”

“We’re telling you we don’t like these decisions that you made for us,” another worker said during the meeting. “Why can’t you fix it? Why can’t you go back to them and say, ‘Our membership doesn’t like this?’ And you should’ve known, being at that table. You sat there with us before you became our representative, not liking what people before you did. So, why can’t you say, ‘Our membership doesn’t like this?’”

New UAW president Shawn Fain, who won his office in a dubious election in which only a tiny percentage of autoworkers voted, hailed the deal in a letter to Mack workers that included the UAW’s “highlights.”

The UAW released 120-plus pages of what it said was the full contract on Friday, making a full review by workers impossible before the vote. But even the UAW’s cherry picked “highlights” reveal that, if ratified, it would be a catastrophe for workers.

The contract’s 19 percent wage increase, spaced out over five years, does not even make up for inflation over the past three years. For workers at the Macungie, Pennsylvania, plant, the deal would extend the length of the working day to 8.5 hours, without overtime pay. Workers would be shackled to the contract for five years—rather than the normal four—preventing a 2027 conclusion that would correspond with the expiration of a contract at Mack Volvo’s sister plant in Virginia, New River Volvo—where auto workers are also fuming against UAW treachery.

The UAW has been backfooted by worker anger against the tentative deal. In scores of communications to the *World Socialist Web Site* with rank-and-file workers and in social media posts, opposition has been unanimous.

Should the UAW claim a victory for their contract in Sunday's votes, workers will know it is a fraud. The bureaucracy is most fearful that the restive Mack workers will provide the trigger for a struggle that spreads into an industry-wide shutdown encompassing the Big Three.

Fain and Solidarity House are attempting to forestall such an outcome by carrying on fraudulent "stand-up strikes" that affect a few non-essential Big Three plants, leaving more than 8 of 10 GM, Ford, and Stellantis workers on the job—ensuring only a negligible impact on corporate profits. That Fain did not extend the limited Big Three strike on Friday, citing "progress" in negotiations, indicates that a sellout is imminent.

At Saturday's meeting in Pennsylvania, several workers addressed the extra half hour per day by which the new contract would expand the work week. One mentioned a disabled family member who requires care. "Is the Family and Medical Leave Act going to be pro-rated to include these extra two and a half hours a week?" he asked. "I can't work an extra half hour a day. I need to be there for her. She has medical appointments that I need to take her to."

Another worker pointed out that the contract would give 130 hours of workers' time to the company per year. "I realize that some people think this is no big deal, but we do have brothers and sisters who are fighting just to live," she said. "There are people here battling chronic illnesses who absolutely could use that time with family and friends, and Volvo can't be bothered to fix a parking lot to get us out."

The worker continued, "I think most of us just wanted a win. Okay? I don't think any of us feel like this is a win." Citing the inadequate raises, the cost of rent and the "absolutely horrible culture" that the company has created in the plant, she said, "We deserve better."

"How gullible and ridiculously delusional do you guys think that we are?" asked a worker. Workers had been ready to strike, she continued, when the tentative agreement was announced at the last minute. "You tell

us, 'We understand and we agree.' But you don't, because we're here. We're not outside. We're not fighting for our rights."

Addressing the UAW reps on the floor, she said, "What exactly do you think that we're here arguing for? Do you think we're just stupid people who didn't understand the contract that was given to us? Or do you think that we're gullible enough to fall for the crap that you tried to sell us? You guys should be ashamed of yourselves."



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