

We demand an all-out strike: An Open Letter to UAW President Shawn Fain from the Mack Trucks Workers Rank-and-File Committee

Mack Trucks Workers Rank-and-File Committee
10 October 2023

The following open letter to UAW President Shawn Fain was adopted by the Mack Trucks Workers Rank-and-File Committee on October 10, 2023. A pdf version is available here.

For updates and to discuss joining the Mack Workers Rank-and-File Committee, text MACK to (877) 861-4428.

To UAW President Shawn Fain:

Nearly 4,000 UAW members who work at Mack Trucks in Pennsylvania, Maryland and Florida are now on strike, after we overwhelmingly rejected a contract supported by the UAW leadership at the local and national level. Our massive no vote should make clear that your pro-company deal with Mack was the polar opposite of what the membership needs, and the time of forcing concessions on us has come to an end.

But you and the UAW apparatus are now trying to cover your tracks and pretend as though you didn't just try to force this contract on us.

In the UAW International's statement announcing the beginning of the strike, you are quoted as stating: "I'm inspired to see UAW members at Mack Trucks holding out for a better deal, and ready to stand up and walk off the job to win it." You add, "The members have the final say, and it's their solidarity and organization that will win a fair contract at Mack."

Neither you nor the UAW bother to mention the fact that you, as UAW President and Director of Heavy Truck, praised the agreement in a message sent out before the vote. You wrote that the UAW's deal with Mack—reached behind our backs—was a "record contract for the Heavy Truck industry" that included "major gains" on all the demands of workers.

We rejected the contract you and local officials

"negotiated" because it fails to meet our minimal demands. Your "record contract" includes sub-inflation pay raises, no COLA, attacks on seniority and job security, and extensions to the length of the work day. Many of us are particularly outraged at the proposal to extend the contract from four years to five, which would separate us from our brothers and sisters at Deere, Volvo Trucks and the Big Three.

You say that it is our "solidarity and organization that will win a fair contract at Mack." That begs the question: Why are you doing everything you can to block the solidarity of all autoworkers in our fight against the companies with your "stand up" strike?

Like us, workers at GM, Ford and Stellantis voted overwhelmingly to strike. Yet, more than three weeks after the expiration of contracts for these 146,000 UAW members, more than 83 percent of them remain on the job. We are hearing disturbing reports of UAW workers being laid off, with no assistance from the UAW, and being unable to collect unemployment. Others have been victimized by management, which has a free hand now that the contracts are expired.

We read in the media that the strikes at the Big Three have had "little to no direct effect" (CNBC) on the profits of the companies and that they "spare automakers from financial pain" (Wall Street Journal). How can a strike that barely impacts the bottom line of the corporations have any impact at all in securing what we need and deserve?

We know that we face a bitter struggle at Mack Trucks against corporate executives determined to protect their profits against our just demands. We also know that our fight would be enormously strengthened by a united fight with all our brothers and sisters in the

Big Three. And their struggle would be enormously strengthened by a united fight with us.

We therefore demand:

1. All workers at the Big Three be called out immediately

You claim that the members of the UAW “have the final say,” yet Big Three workers voted overwhelmingly to strike. They did not vote to stay on the job while their brothers and sisters are strung out on the picket lines. All plants should be called out now.

We also learned today that GM workers in Canada have gone out on strike this morning, which raises the possibility of internationally coordinated action of all autoworkers.

2. All negotiations be conducted on the basis of demands that meet our needs

The Mack Trucks Rank-and-File Committee has discussed and adopted the following as the basis of our strike: 1) A 50 percent wage increase to make up for decades of declining real wages; 2) COLA indexed to the real inflation of basic necessities; 3) The immediate abolition of all tiers; 4) Fully funded pensions for all; 5) No increase in healthcare costs; 6) No layoffs; 7) No cap on profit sharing; and 8) A four-year contract, with contracts for all autoworkers ending at the same time.

All autoworkers confront the same issues, and we should all be fighting on the basis of demands that will secure our needs, not the profits of the companies.

3. \$750 a week strike pay for all workers

Strike pay should be raised to a level that can sustain workers for as long as it takes. This is what the massive strike fund, built up with our dues money, is supposed to be for. It must not be a slush fund for the apparatus. To assist in paying workers for this struggle, all unessential members of the UAW apparatus should be removed and the pay of all UAW officials, including yourself, should be reduced to the same level as strikers.

4. Rank-and-file control over negotiations

We demand detailed, daily reporting on all negotiations. All proposals submitted by the UAW must be released to the rank and file for review, along with all proposals from the companies. No more discussions taking place behind our backs.

President Fain, if you are unwilling to meet these demands, which correspond to the demands of the membership, then you should step aside and turn over

control of the union to the rank and file. It is, after all, we who have the “final say.”

To our fellow autoworkers in the Big Three, we call on you to take up this fight yourselves and not allow your strike to be sabotaged by the UAW leadership. We have launched our strike in defiance of the apparatus, and we call on you to do the same.

Establish rank-and-file committees at every factory and workplace. Demand that meetings be held to vote on an all-out strike. Formulate your own list of demands for your struggle. Restore power to where it belongs, with workers on the shop floor. Contact us to establish lines of communication with rank-and-file workers at Mack and prepare coordinated action.

The Mack Trucks Rank-and-File Committee

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