

UAW prepares to announce sellout deals at GM and Stellantis, as rank-and-file anger mounts against Ford deal

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Join the next meeting of the Autoworkers Rank-and-File Committee Network to discuss the implications of the UAW-Ford deal and how to organize to defeat the sellout. Register here to attend.

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The United Auto Workers is preparing to announce tentative agreements with both General Motors and Stellantis, according to multiple media reports Friday evening. The news comes two days after the UAW President Shawn Fain announced a sellout deal with Ford Motor Company and unilaterally ordered Ford strikers back to work, before they had even seen the proposed contract.

General Motors and the UAW were continuing talks into Friday night that reportedly included both UAW President Shawn Fain and GM CEO Mary Barra. Meanwhile, Stellantis executive Mark Stewart, chief operating officer of the company's North American operations, also met with UAW officials earlier in the day, with "negotiations" set to resume at Stellantis Saturday morning at 10 a.m.

There is no question that the UAW apparatus has already agreed to deals with GM and Stellantis along the lines of the sellout at Ford. The primary concern of Fain's administration is ending the limited "stand-up strikes" and getting workers back on the job, without a contract, producing profits for the companies.

A warning must be made: The strike by 28,000 workers at GM and Stellantis who are still on the picket lines is in imminent danger of being shut down by the UAW bureaucracy. It is critical that workers organize now to prepare to overcome the betrayal the UAW apparatus is carrying out.

The shutdown of the GM and Stellantis strikes would further expose the absurd justification for ending the Ford strike given by UAW Vice President Chuck Browning, who claimed Wednesday that ending the strike at Ford without a new contract in place was aimed at putting "pressure" on

GM and Stellantis.

In fact, the dismantling of picket lines is aimed at creating a sense that the ratification of the contract is a foregone conclusion and that opposition by workers is futile.

Opposition to the UAW-Ford deal, however, is already quickly emerging. A Ford Chicago Assembly worker with 10 years experience told the WSW, "Let's shout out real loud that we're not accepting this deal. We should continue to strike to get what everybody wants, what everybody on the picket line was expecting to get.

"Basically, the 40 percent raise and our pension is needed, for our future, for when we get older, for our medical. We need it all!"

Despite the official ending of the strike at Ford, workers have not been called back to work at the three Ford plants that were struck. It is not clear if these workers will still be eligible for strike pay for the days they are out of work, even though they are without a paycheck.

The move by the UAW to shut down the strikes at the Detroit automakers comes as the Biden administration is moving closer to war with Iran, surging troops, aircraft and naval forces into the Middle East and while the Israeli onslaught against Gaza intensifies. Alongside this is a growing movement of the international working class, including mass protests against the genocide in Gaza and strikes over rampant social inequality.

The UAW's deal with Ford is a cynical betrayal of all workers' basic demands, one which places in the crosshairs massive numbers of jobs from the transition to electric vehicles. The agreement maintains tiers, does not eliminate temp work and does not restore pensions or retiree health benefits for all workers. Management insisted during an investor call Thursday that the modest increases in labor costs—amounting to only a few tenths of a percentage point of Ford's profit margin—would be offset by increases in "efficiency" and "productivity," meaning more speed-up and cost cuts.

“Shawn Fain, you are a scam, a fraud”

At an emergency meeting of the Autoworker Rank-and-File Committee Network Friday night WSWS Labor Editor Jerry White and Mack Trucks worker Will Lehman reviewed details of the sellout at Ford and outlined a strategy to mobilize opposition.

Both called for the expansion of the work of the rank-and-file committees and stressed that workers must demand that the full details of the contract and all letters of understanding must be released, and that rank-and-file delegations should be organized to oversee the vote in order to prevent it being rigged by the UAW bureaucracy.

At the meeting many workers spoke out passionately against the Ford sellout and urged the widest possible fight for a “no” vote.

A veteran worker at Chicago Ford said, “Everyone should vote no on this sellout contract. It was a sellout from the beginning. Fain was just playing games.

“They are going to make \$13-14 billion, and what are we going to get out of it? A sellout contract. How can they put me on strike and then make us go back without a contract and not knowing what is in the contract?

“They never give you information. They give you highlights and make you vote. You won’t know what is in the contract in its entirety for a year. They are using us as pawns.”

A temp at the GM Flint truck plant denounced the UAW’s fraudulent “stand up strikes,” which have kept the vast majority of Big Three UAW members on the job without a contract. “I am still working and being told I am on strike. I am not on strike, I am still making profits for the people who don’t want to pay me or hire me.

“This does not seem like the union I was told about from my great grandfather. Where is the strength we had during the sitdown strike? I was raised being told those stories.

“This was a strategic layoff agreed upon by the UAW and the automakers. All the officials at the top are not thinking about us; they never were. This was all worked out from the start.”

Another Ford Chicago Assembly worker said about the deal, “It is a fraud and a scam. I say ‘no deal.’

“How do they have the audacity to send us back without a contract? Shawn Fain, you are a scam, a fraud. You have the audacity to send us back for 25 percent. What happened to record profits, record contract? Are you serious? By the time five years get here we are going to be five years behind.

“They are making billions off our backs, our knowledge. We come to work every day; we are actually risking our lives every day, breaking our bodies down.

“Fain is not for us, he is for Ford. You think we made history? You are getting paid \$200,000 while we stand out in the rain and cold with \$500 a week. This is a smack in the face, I am so upset.”

A long-time worker at Bridgewater, Interiors a supplier of seats for the GM Lansing Grand River and GM Delta Township plants, said, “Just seeing the highlights; I don’t think Fain was fair. I do feel he sold them out. It is a sellout for suppliers too. Not just for the wages, not just bonuses, but for the benefits all together, how we can take care of our families in the future. Why settle for something even near what Fain put out there.”

A leading member of the Mack Trucks Workers Rank-and-File Committee—which has led the opposition to the sellout deal pushed by the UAW—said, “I want to let brothers and sisters know, I am voting no to this BS, I am doing it for my children and grandchildren. The working class around the world needs to be more involved; we are all being sold out. This is unacceptable.”

Replying to the discussion Will Lehman said, “We need to draw conclusions. We can fight back if we are unified on the shop floor, if we have democratic decision-making by the workers.

“I would encourage the broadest ‘no’ vote possible. It must be demanded for the vote be open for all to see, not just counted behind closed doors with members present. It must be the rank and file that has full control.

“We are facing a jobs massacre with the transition to EVs. The UAW are only interested in collecting dues from whomever they can.

“We are the power that produces all these profits and we can take all that away from them. But we need the political perspective to do that.”



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