UAW pushes Mack Trucks' "last, best and final offer," identical to contract voted down in October

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Text MACK to (877) 861-4428 for updates and to discuss joining the Mack Workers Rank-and-File Committee.

On Tuesday, the United Auto Workers sent notice to striking Mack workers that the heavy truck maker's "last best and final offer" for a new Master Agreement is virtually identical to that made on October 1, which workers voted down by an overwhelming 73 percent margin.

That it is the same as the rejected contract was confirmed by a UAW "bargaining update" sent to workers on Wednesday. In addition to putting forward the same Master Agreement, the new offer supposedly includes revised terms for the specific local agreements pertaining to Mack facilities in Macungie, Pennsylvania; Hagerstown and Baltimore, Maryland; and Jacksonville, Florida.

Rather than rejecting out of hand this obvious provocation by the company, the UAW is facilitating the attempted strikebreaking, scheduling the pro-corporate contract for another vote, tentatively scheduled for November 15 and November 16.

Some 3,900 Mack workers in Pennsylvania, Maryland and Florida have been on strike for one month, since October 9, after voting down by a nearly 4-1 margin the previous tentative agreement (TA) hailed by the UAW and union president Shawn Fain as a "record" deal. The TA included wage increases that did not make up for recent inflation, excluded COLA cost of living adjustments, and lengthened the work day. By imposing a contract length of five years, rather than the usual four, the contract would also separate Mack workers from those at the New River Valley Volvo plant in Virginia, whose contract expires in 2027.

Importantly, the deal presented by the UAW and Mack provides no job security amidst the development of electric vehicle (EV) production. Mack, like the Big Three, wants a free hand to use EV to lay off workers and close plants. The transition to electric is well underway at Mack. Production on the Mack LR Electric began in December 2021. This was followed this year by the 2023 Mack MD Electric. Orders for electric trucks increased five-fold in 2022.

The UAW bureaucracy are once again acting as mouthpieces and enforcers for management. A worker at the Mack plant in Hagerstown told the WSWS that a UAW official sent the following message to workers:

> Volvo has nothing else to offer. They walked away from the table saying this is their best and final offer. There will be no more meetings. This is the same contract as before. They would not accept any offer we gave.
>
> The vote will be next Wednesday, Nov 15 from 9-5. There will be info meetings held Thursday, Friday Monday and Tuesday where the committee can answer all questions and explain in detail.
>
> Bottom line is if it's ratified on Wednesday, we return to work on Nov 19th. If not ratified, they will expect you to cross the picket line to return on Thursday Nov 16 with absolutely no union representation. I know it sounds confusing but the consequences of how it goes is complicated.

While the official sought to scare workers with the threat of there being "absolutely no union representation" if the agreement is rejected, the reality is that workers already confront a total lack of "representation" by the UAW apparatus.

Workers should organize now to campaign for an overwhelming rejection of the UAW-Mack concessionary deal. Mack workers have not sacrificed for weeks on the picket lines just to see the same agreement they rejected rammed down their throats!

The UAW bureaucracy, at the local and International levels, has demonstrated that it is utterly hostile to waging a real struggle for workers' interests. To win the strike, it is

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necessary for Mack workers to take control out of the hands of the bureaucrats and into their own. The Mack Workers Rank-and-File Committee must be expanded, and an urgent appeal made to Big Three autoworkers to unite in a common struggle.

Moreover, no trust can be placed in the UAW apparatus to carry out a fair vote, given that ratification is clearly the outcome it wants. Mack workers should organize rank-and-file delegations to oversee all ballot-counting and prevent any possibility of vote-rigging.

Despite the all-out propaganda by the media and UAW presenting the contracts at Ford, General Motors and Stellantis as "historic," they are no less of a sellout than the one at Mack. Indeed, opposition is building among autoworkers to the UAW's pro-company deals, with GM workers at the Flint Engine and Romulus Powertrain plants voting down the agreement in recent days.

"Another NO vote is coming"

The fact that the UAW is bringing back to the membership the same deal that workers overwhelmingly rejected over one month ago was greeted with outrage and defiance by the rank and file.

"Another NO vote is coming," one worker wrote on social media. "The UAW should be ASHAMED to bring back NOTHING."

Another worker said he found the UAW's actions "ominously suspicious."

"[T]he UAW is basically telling us we can't get you COLA," the worker wrote. "But they had no problem raising our dues. And also union leadership got a 31 percent raise in 2018. F*** them. It's going to be a no vote."

The worker at the Hagerstown plant continued, "Our union reps have been explaining COLA to us as if it's a bad thing. They're all pro-contract without saying it."

The UAW last imposed a sellout deal on striking Mack workers in 2019, shutting down a strike before holding a vote or showing workers the contract. Since then, profit margins have soared for the international corporation headquartered in Gothenburg, Sweden. According to Macrotrends, Volvo Group's first quarter growth this year jumped over 28 percent, bringing in $3.375 billion in gross profit. Annual gross profit in 2022 was $11.073 billion, almost matching a 2019 high of $11.118 billion. The current year's profit is expected to shatter these marks.

Mack Trucks played no small part in the profit surge of its parent corporation. In 2022, deliveries increased 13 percent and net sales grew by 35 percent year-over-year. Market share rose to 6.2 percent for the last quarter of 2022 compared to the previous quarter. The financial analyst website Zippia said annual revenue is $1.5 billion. The revenue per employee ratio is a staggering $750,000, demonstrating the grotesque exploitation of Mack workers.

The UAW's effort to bring the Mack strike to an end on terms dictated by the company comes amidst its operation to shut down the partial strike of Big Three auto workers by pushing through a sellout deal. In spite of overwhelming support for an all-out strike among workers at GM, Ford and Stellantis, the UAW imposed a selective "stand up strike" strategy, which permitted only a small percentage of the workforce to walk out—and which secured the profit streams of the automakers.

The UAW's goal is to isolate and strangle the struggle at Mack. As the Mack Trucks Workers Rank and File Committee put it in a statement issued last week, "The UAW's shutdown of the Big Three strikes is not only a betrayal of autoworkers; it is a stab in the back for Mack workers as well. Fain and the UAW bureaucracy are attempting to isolate our strike and prevent a rebellion from spreading throughout the auto industry."

From the beginning, UAW President Shawn Fain has collaborated intimately with the Biden administration, which fears above all else a crippling strike wave as it wages a proxy war against Russia in Ukraine, pours weapons into Israel's genocide against the Palestinians, and prepares for war against China. Connecting the war on autoworkers with Washington's war abroad, Will Lehman issued a powerful statement this week calling for strike action to stop the genocide in Gaza.

Mack workers do not have to look deep into history to find a warning about the UAW's treacherous strategy. In 2021, the UAW presented striking workers at New River Volvo with a "last and final" offer--and told them it would be imposed no matter which way the vote went. The UAW declared ratification by the dubious margin of just 17 votes, refusing calls by workers for a recount.

The lesson is clear: Workers must take the struggle out of the hands of the corrupt UAW bureaucracy and broaden it to a strike of the entire auto industry. There is no time to spare. Text MACK to (877) 861-4428 for updates and to discuss joining the Mack Workers Rank-and-File Committee today.

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