

Why Mack Trucks workers need to vote “no” and take this fight out of the hands of the UAW bureaucracy

Mack Trucks Workers Rank-and-File Committee
14 November 2023

The following statement was released by the Mack Trucks Workers Rank-and-File Committee. Text MACK to (877) 861-4428 for updates and to discuss joining the Mack Workers Rank-and-File Committee today.

Many Mack workers are asking how it is possible that the UAW leaders are telling us to vote on the same pro-company contract we rejected by a three-to-one margin more than a month ago. We already made it clear that we would not accept a contract that includes sub-inflation wages, no COLA protection, the continuation of second-tier wages and benefits, attacks on seniority and job security and another half-hour added to the length of our workday.

The Mack Truck Workers Rank-and-File Committee is calling for a “no” vote by the largest possible margin on this garbage contract. But to decide what to do next, it is necessary to understand how we got into this situation.

UAW President Shawn Fain and the rest of the UAW International, regional and local officials never wanted us to strike. Ten minutes before our October 2 contract expiration deadline, the UAW announced it had a deal and called off the strike we voted for.

After we rejected the deal, Fain pretended to support our decision and made his pilgrimage to Macungie and Hagerstown. But Fain did not come to confess his involvement in the sellout. Instead, he said he didn’t really know what was in the contract. Fain claimed the only reason he had called it a “record contract” was because he had been misinformed by his subordinates. But all would be good, Fain declared, because the UAW International would dedicate its “full resources” to win our strike.

But Fain was lying.

Rather than raising our strike pay and linking up our strike with an all-out fight of Big Three autoworkers, Fain spent the next month shutting down the limited “stand up strikes.” At the same time, the UAW bureaucracy deliberately isolated our strike, knowing that Mack was about to spring its “last, best and final” offer on us.

The local 677 and 171 bargaining committees have both signed letters to the membership repeating management’s threats to fire and replace us with strikebreakers if we don’t bow to their corporate demands.

It remains an open question whether or not the company could get enough replacements, given that they can already hardly find anyone who will work for their miserable wages. But the fact that the local leaders, and behind them Fain, allow management to make such threats only shows that both the company and the UAW apparatus are trying to blackmail us into accepting this miserable contract.

We should call things by their names: Fain and the rest of the UAW officials are scabs and strikebreakers.

This is not the first time the UAW has forced workers to re-vote on a contract they had already rejected. During the 2021 Volvo Trucks strike at New River Valley, the UAW at the local and International level made workers re-vote on a tentative agreement they had rejected by nearly two thirds. The union suspiciously declared ratification by just 17 ballots and refused calls for a revote.

Later that year, the UAW used the same anti-democratic methods against striking John Deere workers. In each case, the UAW leadership acted as the representatives of management, declaring the

companies would impose their “last, best and final” offers even if workers voted no, and making clear they would do nothing to fight it.

Real conclusions must be drawn.

- **We must vote down this contract by the largest margin.** We should join the Ford, GM and Stellantis workers who have decisively shifted against their sellout contracts, which open the door for huge job cuts, maintain the hated two tier and temporary work system, and provide workers with inadequate raises and COLA.

- **To guarantee the integrity of the vote, committees of rank-and-file workers should oversee the entire ratification process on Wednesday.** Workers should refuse to accept as legitimate any “ratification” which is not overseen and verified by trusted workers from the shop floor.

- **Once this contract is voted down, workers must demand the removal of the entire bargaining committee.** Anyone who signed their names to last week’s blackmail letters has lost any authority to negotiate in our name. The current bargaining committee should be replaced with a committee elected by the ranks, which is made up of the most militant and trustworthy workers.

Rank-and-file workers should provide the newly elected committee with our own “last, best and final” demands, which are non-negotiable. These should include a 50 percent wage increase, full COLA protection, the abolition of all tiers and substantial increases in pensions.

To make sure there are no backroom deals, the committee must provide daily reports to the membership on everything discussed between the UAW officials and Mack Trucks management.

Many Mack Trucks workers know that simply voting down the contract is not enough. As experience shows, the UAW bureaucrats will not come back with anything better. That is why rank-and-file workers must take the conduct of this struggle into our own hands and chart an entirely different course.

Fain claims the “members are the highest authority in the union,” but for the UAW apparatus this is just words. The Mack Trucks Rank-and-File Committee is fighting for the transfer of power and decision making

from the UAW apparatus to the workers on the shop floor.

This is not a matter of this or that corrupt union official. Even newly elected local officials are drawn into the machine of the UAW bureaucracy, which is connected by a million threads to the corporations. That is why our committee calls for the abolition of the entire UAW bureaucracy and for rank-and-file power.

Our fight cannot be won in Macungie or Hagerstown alone. We have to link up with the growing network of rank-and-file committees at GM, Ford and Stellantis, and prepare a real strike, not a phony “stand up strike,” to win our demands.



To contact the WSWS and the
Socialist Equality Party visit:

wsws.org/contact