

UAW declares ratification of Mack Trucks contract following re-vote and blackmail campaign

Marcus Day
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The United Auto Workers union announced the ratification of its tentative agreement with Mack Trucks on Wednesday night, declaring that it passed by 93 percent but providing no vote totals or breakdown by plant. The announcement followed a joint UAW-company campaign of blackmail and threats to workers' jobs. In a mockery of democratic rights, the UAW forced Mack Trucks workers to revote on a deal they had previously rejected by 73 percent in October.

Workers in Macungie, Pennsylvania, reported that they were ordered to begin breaking down their picket lines Wednesday evening before the vote results were even announced.

As it was shutting down the Mack strike, the UAW apparatus was simultaneously pulling out all the stops to secure passage of its sellout contracts at the Big Three. After a series of increasingly large "no" votes at General Motors, the UAW announced a suspiciously large "yes" vote at Ultium Cells—where workers are not even formally employed by General Motors yet—and GM Arlington Assembly.

In its announcement of the vote results at Mack on social media, the UAW wrote, "NEWS: After 39 days on strike, UAW members at Mack Trucks have voted by 93% to ratify their new contract with significant local improvements."

Workers from both Mack and elsewhere flooded the comments on Facebook with denunciations of the agreement and the way in which it was rammed through:

"After being threatened to lose their jobs if they

don't ratify it. Don't forget that part," one wrote.

Another commented, "Significant improvements? Am I missing something, I can't believe this even passed 93% that is horrible."

A third said, "We didn't have a choice but vote yes if we wanted to keep our jobs."

Mack workers in Macungie immediately cast doubt on the UAW's report of a lopsided "yes" vote. "I don't think it was 93 percent," one worker told the WSW. "They lie like everything else they lied to us about."

There is every reason to doubt the credibility of the UAW's vote results at Mack, and there are grounds to demand a recount under the supervision of the rank and file.

UAW President Shawn Fain and the local and regional leadership had universally endorsed the first pro-company tentative agreement with Mack, despite it containing below-inflation wage increases, no COLA and threats to job security. After workers rejected it by a two-to-one margin, the UAW was compelled to call a strike but worked to isolate the walkout and keep workers in the dark on their talks with management.

Even if the ratification result were taken at face value, however, it would be no less illegitimate. UAW officials acted as representatives of the company, conveying management's threats to permanently replace workers if they voted to reject Mack's "last, best and final offer."

In a letter to workers last week and "informational" meetings this week, local and International UAW representatives made clear they would do nothing to oppose Mack's provocative strikebreaking threats.

"Volvo [Mack's parent company] has nothing else to

offer,” the UAW wrote to Mack workers. “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.”

In its own statement, Mack praised the announcement of ratification, stating:

UAW leadership has informed us that their members have ratified the new five-year agreement.

The agreement guarantees significant wage growth and delivers excellent benefits for our employees and their families. At the same time, it will safeguard our competitiveness and allow us to continue making the necessary investments in our people, plants and products.

We look forward to welcoming our employees back to our sites on Monday, November 20, for your usual shift.

The UAW’s announcement of ratification will settle nothing. Workers will be immediately thrust into struggle against speed-up and the degrading terms of the contract. Voicing the defiant sentiment among workers, a worker at Macungie told the WSWS, “We will give the company the same respect they gave us, almost none. And no one has faith in this union anymore.”

Throughout, the Mack Trucks Workers Rank-and-File Committee gave voice to the opposition among workers and led the fight against the UAW-company gang-up. In statements in recent days, the committee called for a rejection of the deal and for workers to take matters into their hands.

“This is not a matter of this or that corrupt union official,” the committee wrote. “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.”

Will Lehman, a leading member of the Mack Trucks Workers Rank-and-File Committee and 2022 candidate for UAW president, told the WSWS Wednesday night, “From the very beginning the UAW representatives

sought to ram through this contract. From diverting our strike, claiming this was a record deal, stringing us out in the cold on substandard strike pay just to bring the same thing back again.

“What is clear is the workers fought this at every step. Rejecting the TA didn’t ‘empower’ the negotiators, as Fain said. Instead, it increased their hostility towards us. The UAW bureaucracy did not increase the pressure on the company, it ramped up the pressure against the workers.

“I don’t believe the union’s vote totals. I believe the workers who fought against this sell-out.”



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