

UAW to announce fraudulent contract “ratification” at GM and Ford

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The United Auto Workers is expected to announce by Friday that its contract for 48,500 General Motors workers was ratified, a fraudulent outcome of an illegitimate process designed to secure the auto companies’ interests. As with virtually every auto industry contract over the past 45 years, the UAW bureaucracy rammed through its sellout by means of misinformation, threats and likely outright vote-rigging.

Nothing that has been announced by the UAW bureaucracy can be trusted. To get to the truth, it is necessary to conduct an audit of the vote, including an investigation of how the ballots were handled. This audit must be conducted under the supervision of committees of trusted rank-and-file workers, elected from the shop floor. Rank-and-file committees should gather testimony from workers on irregularities and instances of intimidation.

According to the union’s official figures, the deal passed by only 2,002 votes out of the 30,860 cast by production workers, an extremely narrow difference of 53.24-46.76 percent. Among skilled trades workers, who must separately ratify the deal, it passed by 1,261 votes out of the 5,097 skilled workers who voted. The media is citing the combined votes on the UAW’s ratification tracker, but even this shows a narrow approval of 54.74-45.26 percent.

In any case, none of these figures are credible. As late as Wednesday afternoon, the Associated Press, the *Detroit News* and other news outlets were predicting the deal was on its way to defeat after days of mounting opposition.

The narrative suddenly turned when the UAW announced that GM workers had approved the deal by over 60 percent at the Arlington, Texas assembly plant, a result that was incongruous with the increasingly

large rejections at seven major assembly plants in Michigan, Indiana, Missouri, Tennessee and Kentucky, which had defeated it with “no” votes as high as 69 percent.

GM workers have protested that they were forced to vote inside the plants, instead of at union halls, and that they were under the watchful eye of management and even company cameras. Others have said that ballot boxes were not secured, there was no clear chain of custody of the ballots, and that without rank-and-file oversight, there was nothing to prevent the tossing of “no” votes and adding of “yes” votes. The UAW bureaucracy has a long and sordid history of such fraud, including most notoriously against Ford Rouge workers in 2015.

As in 2015, when the Ford deal appeared headed to defeat before a sudden reversal, the UAW once again manufactured just enough “yes” votes to pass the deal.

Significantly, 1,263 of the votes in the current GM contract ratification came from workers at the Ultium Cells electric vehicle battery plant in Lordstown, Ohio, who, the UAW says, voted by 97 percent to approve the deal. At the time of the vote, however, Ultium workers were employed by the GM-LG Energy joint venture and ostensibly ineligible to vote. The same is true for nearly 1,000 workers employed by GM Subsystems Manufacturing LLC, who also voted on the deal.

The UAW’s anti-democratic tactics were not isolated to GM. At Mack Trucks, union officials used gangster methods to force 4,000 striking workers to accept the same UAW-endorsed contract they had rejected by a three-to-one margin more than a month ago. Prior to the vote, local union bureaucrats told workers they would be fired and replaced by strikebreakers if they rejected the deal again.

In effect, workers were forced to accept the

agreement under duress, with a metaphorical gun to their head, which by all rights should render the contract null and void.

Workers should reject this illegitimate process and demand a revote at all three auto companies, along with Mack Trucks.

Even if the vote results at the Big Three and Mack is taken as accurate, the opposition by GM workers is a massive repudiation of the claims by Fain, President Biden, Bernie Sanders and the whole political and media establishment that the UAW had won “record” and “historic” gains for autoworkers.

In the factories, workers took their own measure of this agreement. Inadequate wage and cost-of-living provisions will not reverse the massive loss in real wages workers have suffered due to decades of UAW concessions and record inflation. The contracts will not restore lost pensions and retiree health benefits, end the hated tier system and abuse of temps, or shorten exhausting and back-breaking work schedules.

Workers dismissed Fain’s claims that he “squeezed every last dime” from the companies with his bogus “stand up” strikes, which were designed from the beginning to have as little impact on the companies as possible. Most workers were kept on the job throughout the “strike,” and all workers were sent back before the vote was even held.

Most significantly, the deal is intended to pave the way for the massive destruction of jobs as the corporations, with the full backing of the UAW bureaucracy, force workers to pay for the transition to electric vehicle (EV) production. The deals at GM, Ford and Stellantis include “voluntary employment termination” buyouts, and target plants like the Ford Rouge complex as “surplus.” The CEO of Ford has said he expects EV production to require 40 percent fewer workers, meaning the companies are planning the destruction of hundreds of thousands of jobs.

A career bureaucrat, Fain was installed in a rigged election in which nearly one million of the union’s active and retired members were excluded. The UAW bureaucracy, with the help of the court-appointed UAW Monitor and Biden’s Labor Department, refused to update addresses for mail-in ballots or adequately inform UAW members that there was even an election, as exposed by Mack Trucks worker Will Lehman in a series of election challenges and lawsuits.

In other words, an illegitimate UAW president—“elected” by about 3 percent of rank-and-file workers—oversaw the illegitimate contract vote.

From the beginning, Fain has worked closely with Biden, who has relied on the union bureaucracy to contain social anger and suppress struggles by railroad workers and dockworkers, writers and actors, UPS and Kaiser healthcare workers, and others.

The White House is utilizing the union apparatuses to impose the full cost of the economic crisis and the massive outlays for war on the backs of the working class. The role of the UAW bureaucracy was perhaps revealed most starkly last week, when Fain appeared with Biden in Illinois to celebrate getting workers “back to work,” while thousands demonstrated in Chicago against Washington’s support for Israel’s genocidal war against Gaza.

However, in imposing the companies’ demands, the UAW apparatus and Biden have further undermined their already tattered credibility. As Lehman—the Mack Trucks worker and socialist—explained in a Newsweek op-ed earlier this month, “UAW President Fain may think he has settled matters by calling off the Big Three strikes. But the UAW’s contracts will only intensify inequality and fuel the rank-and-file rebellion by workers.”

The autoworkers’ fight is part of a new eruption of class struggle internationally. A global mass movement against austerity, inequality and war is emerging. The further development of this movement requires the expansion of the network of rank-and-file committees in the factories and workplaces and their coordination globally through the work of the International Workers Alliance of Rank-and-File Committees (IWA-RFC).



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