UAW keeps Allison Transmission workers on the job two weeks after 96 percent contract rejection

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13 December 2023

To contact or discuss joining the Rank-and-File Committee of Allison Transmission Workers, email rfcallisonworkers@gmail.com or fill out the form below this article.

Since Allison Transmission workers in Indianapolis rejected a United Auto Workers-backed sellout proposal by 96.2 percent almost two weeks ago, the UAW bureaucracy has kept workers on the job, defying the widespread sentiment for strike action.

On Sunday, UAW International, regional and UAW Local 933 officials and union lawyers held a meeting at Allison, seeking to placate workers. UAW officials told workers "they want to make sure we really have the right to strike legally," according to a worker at the meeting who spoke with the WSWS. This is a cynical lie. Workers have had every right to strike since their contract expired in late November, but the UAW has repeatedly blocked them from taking collective action.

UAW President Shawn Fain, Region 2B Director David Green and Local 933 are trampling on the 99 percent strike vote by rank-and-file Allison workers. After the contract expired on November 14, UAW Local 933 Plant Chairman George Freeman claimed workers could not walk out because he made a "clerical error" by failing to give the company a 60-day strike notice in time. The UAW extended the contract by two weeks, claiming the requirement would be fulfilled by the time of the new deadline.

As workers prepared to walk out, the UAW announced a last-minute tentative agreement, which they tried to ram through less than 72 hours after releasing the details. But in a near-unanimous vote, workers rejected the deal, which maintained wage and benefit tiers, included a sub-inflation rate pay raise and an ambiguous "alternative work schedule," which would likely follow the pattern at other UAW plants with 10-plus hour workdays with no overtime.

After workers rejected the UAW's deal, the Local 933 bargaining committee has absurdly sought to present itself as fighting to "hold the company" to workers' demands. Well aware of the growing anger among workers over being kept in the dark, local officials have released a series of "bargaining updates" since Monday, while concealing the real content of their discussions with management.

On Tuesday, the UAW wrote, "Your Bargaining Committee has heard you loud and clear. The Company had its turn soaking in record profits and record management salaries, now it's our turn to get the contract you deserve."

On Wednesday, Local 933 claimed that it had passed "13 proposals" to the company, writing vaguely that these included "a wage demand, cost of living, work life balance, health and safety and adjustment of the current tier structure, among other important subjects."

Workers who spoke to the WSWS denounced the UAW's efforts on behalf of the company. One worker said, "What happened at Lear seems to be a blueprint for what's going on here! The numbers are the same, the story seems to be the same with a few minor tweaks."

Another worker said, "Who cares if we get a 25 percent raise but still have to work two out of three Saturdays? The nine-hour shifts, 10-hour shifts? What about offering four hours early overtime AND eight hours over every single week? They want us to work 12 hours a day Monday through Friday, 12 on Saturday and eight on Sunday."

In their struggle to win major improvements to wages and working conditions, workers at Allison are not only fighting the companies and the UAW bureaucracy. More broadly, workers confront a political struggle against the Biden administration and the entire corporate-political set-up.

Allison Transmission is critical to US imperialism's proxy war in Ukraine, as well as the US-backed genocidal war on Gaza being conducted by Israel. Allison supplies transmissions for the Abrams tank and Bradley fighting vehicle, as well as the Israeli Defense Force's 8-wheeled Eitan Armored Fighting Vehicle.

The Biden administration has increasingly relied on the pro-corporate union bureaucracies to either block strikes or severely limit their impact. During the Big Three contract struggle, Fain and other top UAW officials were in daily discussion with White House representatives, as each admitted.

Biden is determined that there be no disruption to US war

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plans against Russia and China, and that the war profiteers keep making billions through the exploitation of workers.

Who is Region 2B Director David Green?

UAW Local 933 has sought to present UAW Region 2B Director David Green as leading a fight against the company.

But Green has a long history of selling out workers as he moved up the UAW ladder. He held a trustee position at Local 1714 then later the vice president and president of Local 1112 at the GM Lordstown Assembly Complex. Green played a critical role in facilitating the shutdown of the Lordstown Assembly plant in 2019, which helped him curry favor with the UAW national apparatus.

Last year, Green ran for Region 2B director, posturing as an "independent" reformer, and his election was hailed by the Unite All Workers for Democracy (UAWD) caucus, which backed Fain's campaign and now controls the UAW International Executive Board.

David Green's role, like that of Fain and other bureaucrats, has been to isolate and suppress strikes. At Clarios, where Green oversaw contract talks, 500 battery workers twice rejected UAW-endorsed pro-corporate contracts. After the UAW was forced to call a strike, Green and the bureaucracy did everything they could to undermine it, ordering Big Three autoworkers to continue handling scab-made batteries, despite calls by workers to refuse to do so. After stringing the workers out for 40 days, on $500-a-week strike benefits, Green and the rest of the UAW bureaucracy imposed a contract that included a cut in real wages and introduced a new 12-hour workday without overtime.

Expand the Allison Transmission Workers Rank-and-File Committee!

Workers at Allison have already suffered repeated betrayals by the UAW apparatus. It was the UAW bureaucracy that implemented tiers at the transmission plant and funneled retiree healthcare into the Voluntary Employees Beneficiary Association (VEBA) when GM sold the company to the Carlyle Group.

For its part, Shawn Fain's self-declared "reform" administration has sold out one struggle after another since coming into office, from Big Three and Mack Trucks autoworkers; auto parts workers at Clarios, Lear, and Constellium; to Blue Cross Blue Shield and Detroit Casino workers.

But opposition has continued to grow among autoworkers, who are determined to finally bring an end to decades of UAW-backed concessions. Increasingly, workers are forming rank-and-file committees as a means to unite their struggles and overcome the resistance of both the companies and the UAW bureaucracy.

This is what has motivated workers at Allison Transmission and other plants to join the Autoworkers Rank-and-File Committees Network. In a statement on December 3, workers in the Rank-and-File Committee of Allison Transmission Workers stated, "We need to take control of the situation ourselves. We saw what happened to our brothers and sisters at the Big Three and at Mack Trucks. After Fain said he 'squeezed everything' out of the company, GM brags about their $10 billion stock buybacks and saw their stock price go up 10 percent."

To take forward their fight, Allison Transmission workers should expand the rank-and-file committee and reach out to their coworkers in surrounding parts and assembly plants. The Rank-and-File Committee of Allison Transmission Workers is demanding:

• **Kick out the bargaining committee and Region 2B Director David Green, and replace them with a committee of trusted militants, elected by the rank and file.** All negotiations should be livestreamed every day, and members from every shift must have oversight over negotiations and report back to the whole membership. Instead of our usual hush-hush, we need to know when the UAW and Allison are messing with workers' pay and conditions.

• **Hold emergency meetings of Allison workers to begin preparation for a strike. Workers must uphold the principle, 'No Contract, No Work!"** They voted down the contract by a majority vote, and UAW International, regional and Local 933 officials are ordering them to work. The UAW bureaucrats only want to buy themselves some time before they bring back the same agreement. Workers must have strike pay of $750 a week.

As the committee said, "The UAW bureaucrats lied to our Big Three brothers and sisters when they told them that the strike fund would run out if everyone was out. If 146,000 members of the Big Three went out—even at $500 per week—they would bring the companies to their knees in the first 10 days. The strike fund, paid for with our dues, belongs to us workers. It is not a slush fund for the UAW bureaucrats."

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