

Break the UAW bureaucracy's isolation of the Eaton walkout! No strikebreaking in Michigan!

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After nearly two months on the picket line, the walkout by 525 Eaton Aerospace workers in Jackson, Michigan is in danger of defeat unless rank-and-file autoworkers throughout the state break the isolation of the struggle by United Auto Workers bureaucracy and expand the strike.

UAW President Shawn Fain and other top officials never wanted the strike in the first place. It only began on September 16 after a six-week extension of the old contract, during which time rank-and-file workers rejected two UAW-backed contract proposals that did not meet their demands. Workers are fighting the destruction of pensions, the creation of another hated tier system, unsafe conditions and increasing healthcare costs for current workers and retirees.

After workers rejected a third UAW-backed deal on October 24—which Eaton called its “last, best and final offer”—the giant transnational corporation announced it was hiring strikebreakers to replace the Eaton workers.

Although the UAW has nearly 300,000 members in Michigan, the UAW bureaucracy has not lifted a finger to stop this blatant strikebreaking in the union's home state. Instead, Fain spent more than \$1.5 million of the UAW's resources and thousands of volunteers in a failed bid to elect Kamala Harris, a life-long corporate shill and warmonger.

The refusal by the UAW apparatus to wage any serious fight to back the Eaton workers has already resulted in tragedy. On September 28, Seth Webb was killed with several workers injured when a truck involved in a street race lost control and crashed into pickets. Two other workers, Kyle Alger 29 and Aaron Fraser 27, were critically injured.

The death of Webb, a byproduct of management's ruthless strikebreaking, barely evoked a response from Fain, who only issued a perfunctory statement on the tragic death of the young worker.

In fact, since the start of the walkout, the UAW bureaucracy at the international, regional and local union level has at every point sought to isolate this struggle. Fain

& Co. have sought to wear down rank-and-file workers with poverty level strike benefits and by repeatedly bringing back contract proposals that are essentially the same as the deal workers had overwhelmingly rejected.

Eaton workers should throw out the discredited bargaining committee, which has endorsed every sellout contract, and elect a new committee made up of trusted militants. They should demand the doubling of strike pay and mass rallies, demonstrations and joint strike action by UAW members across the regions to stop the import of scabs into the plant and to win the strike.

The Eaton strike began three days after 33,000 Boeing workers walked out after decisively rejecting a sellout deal negotiated by the International Association of Machinists bureaucracy. On September 23, 5,000 Textron Aviation workers walked out, after rejecting a similar IAM-backed deal. This put workers at Eaton—a critical components supplier for Boeing—in a powerful position to fight for a broader struggle throughout the aerospace industry.

But the UAW bureaucracy, which gave UAW Local 475 President Donnie Huffman and the local bargaining committee their orders, were opposed to any such struggle. Fain and his underlings hope to use the sellout of the Boeing strike and the Illinois Eaton walkouts by the IAM apparatus to push through another pro-company deal at Eaton in Jackson.

Who is UAW Region 1-D Director Steve Dawes?

The strike is being overseen by UAW Director Region 1-D Steve Dawes. Dawes is a long-time UAW bureaucrat who pulled in \$180,266 in reported UAW salary and benefits last year, far beyond the starting wage at Eaton Aerospace of \$15 an hour

Dawes began his career as an official in UAW Local 651 in Flint, Michigan, including local union president from 1999 to 2002. In 1998, he was part of the UAW Local 651 bureaucracy which betrayed the 54-day strike by GM workers at the Delphi Flint East parts plant and Flint Metal

Center, paving the way for the shutdown of the AC Spark Plug and Buick City plants, the spin-off of the Delphi parts division, and the destruction of the jobs and pensions of tens of thousands of UAW members.

In 2004, Dawes was appointed to the staff of Region 1C by UAW President Ron Gettelfinger. Dawes' boss oversaw the historic betrayal of autoworkers during the 2009 bankruptcy restructuring of GM and Chrysler by the Obama-Biden administration. Gettelfinger agreed to the halving of wages for new hires, the destruction of pensions and tens of thousands of job cuts in exchange for a multi-billion payoff to the UAW bureaucracy, which included a large ownership stake in the two auto companies and positions on their corporate board of directors.

In 2010, Dawes was appointed by UAW President Bob King at the UAW's 35th Constitutional Convention to the post of assistant regional director. King had imposed a 30 percent reduction in Ford's workforce from 2005 to 2007. In 2009, King oversaw further concessions and pay cuts for Ford workers.

Also overseeing the isolation of the Eaton strike is Dan Kosheba, a Region 1-D servicing representative. Kosheba was involved in the sellout of 1,000 Ventra workers in Evert, Michigan in 2022. Workers denounced him and international reps after they cut off the microphone of a coworker during a so-called informational meeting on a UAW-backed contract, which workers overwhelmingly rejected.

At the time, the Ventra Evert Workers Rank-and-File Committee wrote: "UAW International rep Dan Kosheba (who makes over \$130,000 a year) had the gall to tell us that we would not get any higher wages because we're 'not the Big Three.'" At the time, workers at the Flex-N-Gate owned company were making \$14-17 an hour.

As supporters of Fain, Dawes and Kosheba endorsed the bogus "stand up" strike in 2023, which kept the vast majority of the 150,000 GM, Ford and Stellantis workers on the job producing profits for the Detroit Three automakers. They then backed the sellout labor agreements, hailed by Fain and US President Joe Biden as "historic," which have resulted in a wave of mass layoffs and permanent terminations.

Eaton Corporation, which has a market valuation of \$144 billion as of this writing, is a transnational corporation with 85,000 employees working in dozens of countries. One hundred and fifty workers at the company's plant in Fareham Hants, England, are also engaging in a series of strikes against a contract offer which does nothing to address years of low pay and the cost-of-living crisis. In a recent statement, management rejected workers' demands and threatened that it had "contingency plans in place to maintain operations and customer service..."

Build the International Workers Alliance of Rank-and-File Committees

The International Workers Alliance of Rank-and-File Committees is fighting for a global campaign to unite workers against the escalating attacks on workers' jobs and living standards. The IWA-RFC insists that workers need an international strategy to fight the global automakers and their efforts to pit workers in different countries against each other in a race to the bottom. This means rejecting the nationalism and pro-capitalist outlook of the UAW bureaucracy and unifying workers across national borders to fight the transnational corporations.

After its failed campaign to elect Harris—whose indifference to the destruction of workers' living standards and jobs led to the Democrats' electoral debacle—Fain and the UAW bureaucracy are offering an olive branch to Trump based on his plans to expand tariffs against China and Mexico. This is inseparable from the pro-war program of the UAW bureaucracy. As it has done under the Biden administration, Fain & Co. will offer their services to Trump to suppress opposition to the ruling class's demand that workers pay for the escalating wars by American imperialism for global domination.

The IWA-RFC calls on autoworkers throughout Michigan to oppose the strikebreaking campaign by Eaton and the isolation of the strike by the UAW bureaucracy. This must be combined with a fight against the escalating assault on jobs by Stellantis, the Detroit Three automakers and parts companies like Dana and Mobis, and to defend the striking workers at the Marathon Detroit Refinery.

The uniting of these struggles must be carried out by rank-and-file workers from below as part of the fight to build rank-and-file committees to transfer power from the union bureaucrats to the workers on the shop floor in every factory and workplace.

To get more information on building rank-and-file committees, fill out the form below.



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