

Lockheed Martin strike in Florida and Colorado as General Dynamics Electric Boat workers authorize walkout

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Are you a Lockheed or General Dynamics worker? Tell us about conditions in your workplace and what you think about the ongoing contract struggles, by filling out the form at the end of this article.

On Thursday, 900 workers at defense contractor Lockheed Martin in Florida and Colorado struck after voting down a sellout deal brought back by the United Auto Workers by a better than 2-1 margin.

The walkout at Lockheed Martin follows a strike vote by 2,400 workers at General Dynamics Electric Boat in Groton, Connecticut who have been held on the job by the UAW bureaucracy well past the April 4 expiration of their old contract. The workers build submarines for the US Navy.

According to a statement released by the UAW, the rejected Lockheed Martin proposal for a new five-year contract maintained a hated wage progression, which forces workers in most classifications to wait between 16-23 years to reach top rate. In an additional insult, the company offered a starvation level \$15 an hour starting wage. This, from a company that raked in \$24 billion in profit over the last three years. During the same period, Lockheed Martin CEO Jim Taiclet received some \$66 million in compensation.

According to a financial report released on April 23, 2025, "the company's Missiles and Fire Control division secured up to \$10 billion in missile program awards during the first quarter involving precision, long-range and multi-domain strike technologies."

The fact that the UAW even presented Lockheed's miserable proposal to workers was a slap in the face and shows that Solidarity House has no intention of waging a serious fight to win workers' just demands. It demonstrates the need for workers to take the fight into their own hands by building rank-and-file committees independent of the union bureaucracy to map out a real struggle. This includes spreading the fight at Lockheed companywide and joining with other sections of defense workers such as Electric Boat.

The need to expand the fight is underscored by the fact that the UAW units involved in the strike cover only a small fraction of Lockheed Martin workers. The company employs

more than 120,000 worldwide in 50 countries. In Florida alone, the company employs over 17,000 workers at 73 facilities. About 10,000 are based in the Metro Orlando area employed in Missiles and Fire Control (MFC) and Rotary and Mission Systems (RMS) Training and Logistics Solutions. Another 14,000 are employed in Colorado.

Will Lehman, a socialist autoworker who ran for UAW president in 2022, issued the following statement:

If workers want to win their fight they cannot leave it in the hands of the UAW bureaucrats. The UAW does not want to create any disruption in the production of arms shipments because Fain and the rest of the UAW apparatus are in alliance with Trump and his nationalist, pro-war agenda.

The union leaders are not calling a strike because they want to lead a fight, but only because they feel they can't contain the fight. If they are left in charge, they will only try to isolate and dissipate the fight.

Workers have repeatedly seen that a struggle can't be won in one plant alone or even in one country alone. This fight will go in the same direction as other sellouts unless workers act independently. We need to fight, but it needs to be done by workers themselves outside of the bureaucracy through rank-and-file committees. We can win if we can connect the fight across plants. These companies have plants all over the world. We need international unity to fight back. The International Workers Alliance of Rank-and-File Committees is prepared to assist Lockheed Martin, General Dynamics and other workers link up with their class brothers and sisters internationally to defend our living standards and oppose war.

Meanwhile, the UAW has not set a strike deadline at Electric Boat, where workers are in a powerful position. The workers, members Marine Draftsmen's Association-UAW Local 571,

create technical drawings used in the design of submarines for the US Navy. According to a UAW press release, workers are seeking cost-of-living adjustments, the return of pensions and affordable healthcare.

The UAW noted, “Despite raking in over \$13 billion in profits over the past three years, General Dynamics is pushing for 52 percent to 161 percent increases in weekly medical insurance costs.”

While denouncing the marathon 23-year wage progression, Fain, who is overseeing negotiations, failed to point out that the highly regressive contract terms he claims to oppose were the terms the UAW bureaucracy had rammed through in earlier sellouts.

A management press release touted the company’s contract offer, claiming “it includes a historic 23.3 percent general wage increase over the life of the contract, plus outstanding benefits and an increased retirement package...” The company did mention that its meagre wage increase would be offset by higher medical costs.

The statement warned, “While we prefer to reach a mutually beneficial agreement, we are actively preparing a business continuity plan in the event of a work stoppage. We will not waver from our commitment to continue building submarines, the nation’s top national security priority.”

The company has meanwhile retained the services of the notorious anti-labor law firm Morgan Lewis. Trump recently picked Morgan Lewis partner Crystal Carey as general counsel at the National Labor Relations Board.

The contract battles at Lockheed and Electric Boat take place under conditions of escalating global tensions stoked by the threats of the Trump administration against Iran as well as the call for the US to seize Greenland and the Panama Canal. Both Democrats and Republicans have voted by huge margins for record military funding, fattening the profits of military contractors.

General Dynamics’ Marine Systems division is massively profitable, fed by fat military contracts. It reported first quarter 2025 revenues of about \$3.6 billion, an increase of 8 percent year-over-year. It has 15,000 employees in Connecticut, making it one of the state’s largest employers.

Overall revenues for General Dynamics, which includes aerospace, technology and combat systems operations, grew 14 percent in the first quarter, reaching \$12.2 billion with operating profits of \$1.3 billion.

The *World Socialist Web Site* warns Lockheed and Electric Boat workers that Fain, who has repeatedly endorsed Trump’s tariffs claiming they are pro-worker, will do everything possible to sell out their struggle to prevent a confrontation with the would be dictator in the White House. The tariffs are not aimed at creating jobs but are a weapon in the escalating drive toward world war aimed at China and other adversaries of American capitalism.

Fain and the UAW apparatus have seamlessly lined up behind

this mad agenda, which flows from the strident America First-style nationalism, militarism and anti-foreigner bigotry long promoted by the union bureaucracy. Fain often talks of the “Arsenal of Democracy,” the propaganda name for US military production in WWII when the UAW worked to suppress strikes and targeted militant workers and antiwar socialists.

Today, the UAW is seeking to prove its continued usefulness to the ruling class by suppressing strikes and ensuring the uninterrupted flow of materials to the US war machine.

Fain has consistently opposed the launching of any industrial action by UAW members to block the shipment of military weaponry to the fascist Netanyahu regime in Israel as it continues its slaughter of defenseless Palestinians in Gaza. In exchange, the UAW and Fain hope that an expansion of military production at UAW-represented plants will add more dues to the union coffers.

At Allison Transmission in Indianapolis, which contracts with the US military, the UAW ignored a strike mandate and pushed through a sellout deal in January 2024 virtually identical to a contract workers had previously rejected. In October 2023, the UAW called off a planned strike by more than 1,100 General Dynamics tank workers in Ohio, Michigan and Pennsylvania and announced a last-minute deal.

The fight of Lockheed and Electric Boat workers is part of a broader fight by the working class against mass layoffs, austerity and wholesale attacks on democratic rights being carried out by the Trump administration, with acquiescence of the Democrats, in the interests of the entire corporate oligarchy. The urgent task is to take the fight out of the hands of the pro-company UAW bureaucracy through the building of independent rank-and-file committees. These committees would fight to consciously link the struggle of defense workers with broader sections of the working class against the social counterrevolution taking place under Trump.

An industrial and political counter-offensive by the working class is needed, which links up the fight for workers’ economic demands with the fight to expropriate the wealth of the oligarchy and transform the giant corporations into public utilities, under the collective ownership and democratic control of the working class. This would enable the transformation of production for war into socially necessary production to meet human needs.



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