Vote ‘No’ on Pratt & Whitney tentative agreement! Build rank-and-file committees to expand the strike and prepare a strategy for victory!

Mike Ingram, Tom Hall
25 May 2025

For more information or assistance building a rank-and-file committee, contact the World Socialist Web Site.

Strikers at Pratt & Whitney in Connecticut must vote “No” on the tentative agreement being put forward at Tuesday’s membership meeting. They should kick out the bargaining committee which is attempting to violate their will by forcing the contract past them sight unseen, and replace them with a new one elected solely from the rank and file, not union officials.

The development of rank-and-file strike committees is necessary not only to prevent another betrayal and impose the democratic will of workers, but to expand the strike and adopt a strategy for victory.

The strike by 3,000 workers at Pratt & Whitney in East Hartford and Middletown, Connecticut is in its fourth week. Workers, members of the International Association of Machinists and Aerospace Workers (IAM), are demanding higher wages, improved benefits, retirement plans and guarantees on job security. It is the first strike at the company in over two decades, following a 10-day strike in 2001.

The IAM negotiators ended talks with Pratt & Whitney management at 1 a.m. last Friday and immediately scheduled a vote on the TA for Tuesday, May 27. They have refused to release details either to the public, the media or the workers themselves, claiming workers will only receive information during the voting itself.

The union makes a show in their statement on Facebook that strikers should remain on the picket line until the vote, but that means nothing given that Monday is the Memorial Day holiday.

Mystery deal can only be a sellout

A statement from Pratt & Whitney said “the company and the union reached a tentative agreement on a revised contract offer that addressed key points of interest among union members.” How these “key points of interest” are addressed in the TA remains a mystery to workers.

IAM Lodge 700’s Facebook page posted a statement from the union declaring that “members will decide if we achieved our objectives around job security, wage security, and retirement security,” effectively endorsing it. They state: “This new proposal has significant changes/improvements in all three of these core areas.”

Long experience shows that any contract introduced in such a fashion can only be a miserable sellout. The bureaucrats are no doubt trying to conceal major concessions to management, which, if the contract is ratified, would only be discovered by workers after returning to work. As one worker asked on Facebook, “If the offer is already known, why aren’t we given the information ahead of time? Why do we wait till the morning of to make a decision?”

Not only should the full text of the tentative agreement (TA) be available to workers for at least a week prior to a vote, but workers should be allowed time to meet with their brothers and sisters to discuss what is in it and whether it meets their demands.

Just how Pratt & Whitney caved less than 24 hours after the restart of talks is not explained. When workers had launched the strike, after voting by 77 percent to reject the first contract, management responded by immediately walking away from negotiations.

Before negotiations re-started last week, the company was already digging in their heels for a bitter fight. As of May 19, workers and their dependents lost healthcare coverage and other benefits provided by the company. Pratt & Whitney has threatened to leave Connecticut in search of lower wages.

The circumstances suggest the contract is likely a re-hash of the initial deal, with some percentage points moved around.

© World Socialist Web Site

IAM bureaucrats protecting the US war machine

The American oligarchy is determined that the defense plants in Connecticut and around the country must begin working around the clock to provide both equipment for disastrous new wars and bumper profits for the defense contractors.

Pratt & Whitney is a leading aerospace and defense contractor and produces a wide range of advanced propulsion systems at the two Connecticut facilities. It supplies advanced aircraft systems to the US Air Force, including the F-22 Raptor and F-35 Joint Strike Fighter programs. The company reported a $580 million profit in the first quarter of 2025, a 41 percent increase over 2024.

The defense industry is in the midst of a strike wave. Workers at Lockheed Martin facilities in Orlando, Florida and Denver, Colorado, members of the United Auto Workers, have been on strike since May 1. Around 2,500 General Dynamics Electric Boat workers in Groton, Connecticut, who produce submarines for the US Navy, had been set to strike on May 18, but the UAW announced a last-minute deal, thus preventing simultaneous strikes at General Dynamics, Pratt & Whitney and Lockheed Martin.

Rather than uniting with other defense workers and workers in other industries, the IAM is shutting down the strike because it threatens the war policies of both parties in Washington, who are openly discussing launching new wars in the Middle East and against China. While workers in the defense plants work for low pay, the new spending bill in Congress contains the largest military budget in US history, to be paid for by massive cuts in social programs and ramping up the exploitation of defense and other workers.

This exposes the claims made by union officials, such as UAW President Shawn Fain, that a war economy means economic prosperity for workers. These claims are being made to justify support for Trump and his “America First” policies. In reality, not only do these war plans pit workers of different countries against each other and threaten to unleash World War III, but the working class, as always, is being made to pay for them, which are being waged in the interests of Wall Street.

Many of this equipment will not only be used against workers in other countries, but against Americans. The Trump administration, as part of its construction of a presidential dictatorship, is openly threatening to invoke the Insurrection Act to deploy troops to put down his political opponents.

Now is the time to take the initiative!

Now is the time to take the initiative, not to cave in to management! There is immense potential for broadening the fight. The strike is part of a growing upsurge of the working class, including last weekend’s New Jersey Transit strike and a series of walkouts at nursing homes and hospitals.

But in every one of these struggles, workers are up against not just management but union bureaucrats who are deliberately working to prevent or limit strikes in order to preserve their corrupt relations with management. New Jersey Transit engineers were sent back to work by officials from the Brotherhood of Locomotive Engineers and Trainmen without having even seen the new contract, in almost the exact same fashion as the IAM and Pratt & Whitney.

Last November, the IAM betrayed a powerful strike by 33,000 Boeing machinists in Washington state, who voted down two sellout contracts before the union succeeded in ramming through a deal that met none of workers’ demands. Following the strike, workers were hit with mass layoffs, which the IAM has done nothing to oppose.

In opposition to this, workers formed the Boeing Workers Rank-and-File Committee, in order to fight the IAM bureaucrats’ “[violation of] the clear will of the rank and file at every turn.”

This experience shows that broadening the struggle requires that workers build networks of rank-and-file committees to put themselves in direct contact with each other and transfer power and initiative from the union apparatus to the shop floor.

Pratt & Whitney workers must make a “no” vote Tuesday the beginning of the second phase of the strike guided by a new strategy. Reaching out to their allies in the working class across the US and the world, they must make their strike part of a broader movement against exploitation, war and the drive towards dictatorship.

For more information or assistance building a rank-and-file committee, contact the *World Socialist Web Site*.

To contact the WSWS and the Socialist Equality Party visit:

wsws.org/contact

© World Socialist Web Site