

Boeing machinists: Vote YES to strike! Build rank-and-file committees to enforce the will of the membership!

International Workers Alliance of Rank-and-File Committees
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The *World Socialist Web Site* urges the more than 33,000 Boeing machinists in Washington and Oregon to vote “YES” today to authorize a strike by the widest possible margin.

But this is only the first step. Rank-and-file workers must immediately organize themselves to enforce the outcome of their vote and override every attempt by the International Association of Machinists bureaucracy to defy the will of the membership and keep workers on the job after the expiration of the contract. If all of workers’ demands have not been met by September 12, a strike must take place, which completely shuts down all production, including at the non-union plant in South Carolina.

The struggle at Boeing, a poster child for corporate criminality, must become the tip of the spear of an offensive by the whole working class in defense of its interests. Boeing workers must appeal for the broadest possible support in the working class across the Pacific Northwest, the United States and around the world.

Boeing wants to force workers to pay the costs of its criminal negligence. The company’s stock is down more than 27 percent, or \$41.5 billion since the beginning of the year. The aerospace giant is refusing to restore the pensions of its machinists and provide wage increases to make up for more than a decade of stagnation and decline because of inflation.

Boeing is also refusing one of the main demands of the workers, on behalf of the flying public, to restore the hundreds of positions related to quality and safety that Boeing has eliminated over the past decade. Its stance during the contract talks belies all public claims by company executives that there is any concern for “quality” or “safety” when they get in the way of corporate profits.

The International Workers Alliance of Rank-and-File Workers calls on Boeing workers to take matters into your own hands. The decades of IAM-backed concessions that have led to massive job losses, the devastation of workers’ livelihoods and unsafe conditions can only be reversed by the determined action of workers themselves. A strike led by rank-and-file workers would win enormous support from workers throughout the US and internationally, including from Airbus workers who have faced tens of thousands of job cuts.

Against war and the two corporate parties

Boeing workers are not only in a fight against the giant corporation but the Biden administration and both corporate-controlled parties. Boeing is a major defense contractor, which produces F-15 fighters, V-22 attack helicopters, and B-52 strategic bombers. A strike would deliver a powerful blow to White House’s ongoing support for Israel’s genocide against the Palestinians in Gaza and American imperialism’s rapidly expanding military confrontations against Russia and China.

These wars are not being waged for “democracy” but for corporate profit. That is, the same selfish social interests behind the slashing of safety measures and relentless war against the jobs, living standards and social programs of the working class.

On July 9, IAM International President Brian Bryant issued a statement reaffirming support for the doddering war criminal Biden, claiming he would “protect our democracy and economy” and “strengthen national defense.” Earlier Biden appointed Bryant, along with

United Auto Workers President Shawn Fain, to the President's Export Council, where he sits with top CEOs from Corporate America and the undersecretary of the US Air Force to plot economic and military war against China and other rivals.

Biden summed up his relationship with the highly paid union bureaucrats, recently telling the AFL-CIO Executive Board that they were his "domestic NATO," i.e., his principal backers in the wars abroad and war on the working class at home. This role was demonstrated in July 2022, when the IAM blocked a strike by 2,500 workers at three defense plants in St. Louis and rammed through a sellout contract virtually identical to one which workers voted overwhelmingly to reject a week before.

That is why the fight for an all-out strike requires building rank-and-file committees, controlled democratically by workers themselves, which will not bow to Biden and his stooges in the IAM bureaucracy.

For workers' control over production!

The IAM bureaucracy continues to repeat the mantra that it is trying to "save Boeing from itself." But the issue is not "helping" corporate management avoid the consequences of their own criminal actions, but for workers to take control over all vital questions of safety and quality control.

Through years of corner-cutting aimed at boosting shareholder value at the cost of lives, management has lost the right to make these decisions. In fact, they cannot even be posed, much less seriously addressed, within the rubric of the profit system.

Workers, meanwhile, are not beholden to profit interests and know perfectly well how to build airplanes in a safe, high quality manner. They must insist that they have the final say over all aspects of production, enforced through the right to stop work if management attempts to make them work in an unsafe manner.

Control over decision making on staffing levels for quality inspectors, on training standards and other key issues must be exercised exclusively by committees composed of trusted rank-and-file workers. Unlike the bogus labor-management committees made up of Boeing and IAM officials, these rank-and-file committees will prioritize safety and the well-being of workers not corporate profit.

The demand for workers' control over production must be connected to a fight to transfer Boeing to public ownership, run democratically by workers. This key section of American industry, in private hands, is nothing more than a plaything of finance capital. The only solution is to remove these parasitic social interests entirely and run Boeing in the interests of public need.

American society has been driven to the point of collapse by endless wars and capitalist profiteering. Only four days before the strike vote, Biden responded to the attempted assassination of Donald Trump by declaring that such acts had "no place in America."

This is absurd, not just because Trump endlessly promotes political violence and attempted to overthrow the results on the US elections on January 6, 2021, but because Biden's own government has left Boeing off the hook for the suspicious deaths of two Boeing whistleblowers, John "Mitch" Barnett and Joshua Dean. The government has also let Boeing off the hook for two deadly crashes with a deal to avoid prosecution, including wrist-slap fine and a token federal safety monitor.

Workers cannot rely on the Democrats, the Republicans or the IAM bureaucracy to defend their interests. If there is going to be a fight against Boeing rank-and-file workers must organize it themselves. This means joining the growing network of rank-and-file committees at factories and workplaces across the US and the world whose activities are coordinated by the International Workers Alliance of Rank-and-File Committees (IWA-RFC). These committees, democratically controlled by workers themselves, are the new organizations through which workers can organize their resistance to capitalist exploitation and assert their collective interests.



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