

Autoworkers: Form rank-and-file solidarity committees to break the isolation of the strike at Volvo Trucks!

The World Socialist Web Site Autoworkers Newsletter
22 June 2021

The *World Socialist Web Site* calls for all Volvo workers and autoworkers to form rank-and-file solidarity committees to break the isolation of the ongoing strike at Volvo Trucks in Dublin, Virginia. These committees should prepare protests, slowdowns and other solidarity actions up to and including the shutdown of Volvo and the entire auto and truck manufacturing industry.

The nearly 3,000 workers at Volvo's New River Valley (NRV) assembly plant are in the third week of their second walkout this year. Workers have rebelled against two attempts by the United Auto Workers (UAW) to force through a concessionary contract, rejecting both deals by an overwhelming 90-91 percent.

The Volvo workers have taken a heroic stand for the entire working class. They are fighting to reverse the pattern of endless givebacks and concessions, the establishment of multiple tiers, ten-hour workdays, and the attack on the health care of workers and retirees. They are demanding significant pay raises and a cost-of-living escalator clause to meet the soaring cost of consumer goods.

This is a struggle that can and must be won. However, it cannot be won if it is isolated!

The workers at NRV are fighting a global, multinational company. Behind the company stands the entire auto industry. Workers must call up their own reinforcements to join the battle. The aim must be to isolate Volvo, not the Volvo workers.

The United Auto Workers is opposed to taking any action to mobilize broader support for the striking Volvo workers. It has not posted a *single* statement about the latest strike on its national website or its Facebook page. There is no plausible explanation for

this except one: It is deliberately keeping its hundreds of thousands of members in the dark about the strike.

Instead of working to mobilize its members at Mack Trucks and throughout the region, the UAW is seeking to cripple the strike's effectiveness, confining it to one plant and attempting to starve workers on the picket line with just \$275 a week in strike pay, less than the federal minimum wage.

This is why autoworkers must take matters into their own hands, through the formation of rank-and-file solidarity committees.

Volvo workers at NRV have formed their own committee, the Volvo Workers Rank-and-File Committee (VWRFC) to oppose the concessions contracts pushed by the UAW and break the isolation of their struggle. The VWRFC issued an open letter on June 14 demanding that the UAW mobilize its membership and provide striking workers with the resources they need to carry out a real struggle.

The initiative of the Volvo workers must be expanded throughout the auto industry, establishing a network of rank-and-file solidarity committees to:

1. Demand that the striking Volvo workers receive full income while on strike, rather than the poverty level of \$275 a week. The UAW's \$790 million strike fund must be used to support the striking workers and send a clear message to the company that workers are serious about winning their struggle.

2. Break the news blackout of the strike by circulating information on the struggle to workers in every auto plant and establishing a network of communication among the workers, independent of the UAW.

3. Take immediate measures to ensure that no production is carried out that enables Volvo to

withstand the strike. This should begin with the shutdown of operations at other Volvo plants, including the Volvo-Mack truck plants in Hagerstown, Maryland and Macungie, Pennsylvania.

4. Prepare solidarity actions, including protests and slowdowns at GM, Ford, Stellantis and auto parts plants throughout the United States.

The rank-and-file committee is independent of the pro-corporate UAW, so that workers can organize their own struggle.

In the 40 years since the PATCO air traffic controllers strike in 1981, the AFL-CIO has overseen the isolation and defeat of strike after strike. The defeat at PATCO heralded the initiation of four decades of corporate assaults on the working class, which were facilitated by the increasingly corporatist trade unions, whose executives accumulated six-figure incomes and immense assets in the process.

The period of defeats is coming to an end, but for the corner to be turned, the *initiative must be actively seized*.

The Volvo strike is part of a series of struggles around the world that reflect a growing mood of rebellion produced by the ruling class response to the pandemic, including, within the United States, the ongoing struggle of coal miners at Warrior Met in Alabama, nurses in Worcester, Massachusetts, steelworkers at ATI in Pennsylvania and other states, and locked-out ExxonMobil workers in Texas.

The isolation of each struggle will lead inevitably to defeat. The path to victory lies through unity, the collective mobilization of the strength of the entire working class in a common struggle against inequality and capitalist exploitation.

Workers! Join hands with your brothers and sisters in Virginia! Form a rank-and-file solidarity committee today!



To contact the WSWS and the
Socialist Equality Party visit:

[wsws.org/contact](https://www.wsws.org/contact)