

Striking Volvo workers appeal to Mack Trucks workers for united action

Volvo Workers Rank-and-File Committee
30 June 2021

This statement was written by the Volvo Workers Rank-and-File Committee at the New River Valley plant in Dublin, Virginia, where workers are currently in their fourth week of a strike against Volvo Trucks. It is written to workers at Mack Trucks, which is a subsidiary of Volvo.

Volvo and Mack workers can contact the VWRFC at volvowrfc@gmail.com or text (540) 307-0509.

Dear Brothers and Sisters:

We, the workers at the New River Valley Assembly Plant in Virginia, are now in the fourth week of our strike against Volvo to demand decent wages, full health care for workers and retirees, an end to the multitier wage and benefits system and the maintenance of the eight-hour day.

We are determined to continue this fight, but our strike is at a critical turning point. If it remains isolated, it will be defeated.

We know that there is immense sympathy for our struggle at Mack. You know that what happens at New River Valley will set the tone for a whole series of struggles at Volvo and throughout the auto industry.

We have heard from workers that you do not want to handle parts being produced by scabs here at NRV but that you are concerned that workers cannot take individual action out of fear of retribution.

The UAW is doing nothing to mobilize opposition and fight back against the company's strikebreaking operations. UAW Local 677 posted a notice stating: "As the NRV strike continues, our brothers and sisters at Local 2069 need our support."

However, it proposed nothing to stop production using scab parts, let alone organize a united struggle. Instead, it only said it was taking up a collection for Local 2069. We know that you are willing to donate and sacrifice, but the real issue is that the UAW is

sitting on a \$780 million strike fund that it has built up with *our dues money*, and it's only giving us \$275 a week.

As for the International, it is deliberately enforcing a news blackout of our struggle. It has not even posted a notice of the strike on its Facebook page. We have spoken to autoworkers in Detroit and elsewhere who tell us that they did not know that we were on strike.

This is why we are making a direct appeal to you, the workers at Mack Truck in the Allentown area and Hagerstown, to form your own rank-and-file solidarity strike committee to take the following measures:

1. Refuse to handle all parts produced at NRV.

The cabs coming to Macungie now are the products of scab labor. All production using these parts is assisting Volvo in keeping profits flowing, undermining our struggle.

2. Build up support for joint strike action. If we are on strike but the company continues to make money at Macungie and Hagerstown, this weakens all of us. During your strike in 2019, the UAW kept us working. When an engine shortage from Hagerstown forced a shutdown in Dublin, many of us were laid off without SUB pay, without the UAW lifting a finger.

We can't let this happen again! The power of workers is in our unity, not our division!

3. Raise our demand that the UAW provide full strike pay for all workers, not a poverty level \$275 a week. This must be combined with ensuring full income for all workers at the Mack plants who are affected by the strike.

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

The UAW is a massive institution with immense resources. The International is staffed by a gigantic

bureaucracy with an annual payroll of \$80 million. There are 17 UAW officials—including the new President Ray Curry, who wants us to take a cut in real wages—who make more than \$200,000 a year, and *more than 450* who make more than \$100,000. It has plenty of resources to demonstrate to the company that we are engaged in a serious struggle.

To fight for our interests, we require organizations that are accountable to us. It is high time to end the one-way street, where the company tells the UAW what it wants, and the UAW forces us to accept it.

We founded the Volvo Workers Rank-and-File Committee because we recognized in the course of this contract struggle that we were fighting a two-front war. On one front we faced the ruthless international corporation driven to extract more profit from our labor at any cost. On the other front, we faced “our” union which has worked systematically to impose the demands of the company on us.

Mack workers: Join us and help break the isolation of the strike at NRV! We ask you to take the following immediate measures:

First, contact us by email at volvowrfc@gmail.com or text (540) 307-0509 for assistance in developing a rank-and-file committee at the Mack plants.

Second, distribute this letter to as many workers as you can to inform them of our struggle and popularize the demands listed above.

Yours sincerely,

The Volvo Workers Rank-and-File Committee



To contact the WSWS and the Socialist Equality Party visit:

wsws.org/contact