

As workers' anger grows

More details of Dana contract show continuation of long hours, mandated overtime

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23 August 2021

According to details of the Dana contract acquired by the *Autoworker Newsletter* from the company's plant in Fort Wayne, Indiana, the proposed tentative agreement (TA) makes no substantial change to long hours, mandated overtime or unsafe, unsanitary and unhealthy conditions in the plant. If anything, the new TA is worse than the last contract, because of the introduction of Alternative Work Schedule (AWS), which effectively reduces overtime pay. It also does not even include provisions for installing air conditioners in the sweltering plant.

The Fort Wayne contract reads, "The parties recognize there may be an increase in the market which will require weekend coverage that may require mandating weekend overtime." The contract says AWS shifts will be 10 hours long, an increase from the last contract.

A Fort Wayne Dana worker, Jim, told the *Autoworker Newsletter*, "Even more people are pissed off today. Everyone is disgusted by the documents."

Last week, workers formed the Dana Workers' Rank-and-File Committee (DWRFC) to inform workers, unite them across plants and coordinate a strategy for a fight against the company. The fact that the UAW and USW work for the company is shown when they hide the contract from workers.

Last Friday, the DWRFC issued a statement demanding: "(1) The immediate release of the full agreement and all the side letters and memoranda of understanding. (2) At least one week to study and discuss the contract before any ratification vote. (3) Rank-and-file oversight of the voting process to prevent

any fraud."

Furthermore, any contract must include massive pay raises of at least 75 percent, a 40-hour week with guaranteed weekends and an end to mandated overtime.

Workers are especially insulted that the union presents as a big win the fact that disciplinary layoff language will now include gender-neutral terms (i.e., referring to "he/she" instead of "he")! This in a contract that forces workers of both genders to work 80 or more hours per week. Working mothers know this "gendered language" will not get them any closer to the right to spend time with their kids.

Jim, the worker at Ft. Wayne, continued: "Some of this language is meaningless. They change a few words on certain things here and there but all they're going to do is make it harder for us to understand. Who cares about this gendered language? And nobody understood the last contract either. We were not AWS before. So, now they won't have weekends at all. Nobody who read those documents was any way enthused about doing that. They are going to push 10-hour days consistently and make that the normal. Now you sometimes do eight before mandates. We want to be able to be home with our families. I have my kids and I barely ever see them. I'm not trying to work seven days a week until I die."

It is not clear whether the details from Fort Wayne apply to all plants, but the general themes are emerging universally. The message from the company and the unions is clear: the new TA will extend and worsen sweatshop conditions for another five years. Workers will continue to have no time to spend with children

and other loved ones. What is more, they will be even poorer, since details of the proposed pay scale show tiny wage increases that will amount to pay cuts when factoring for inflation and the rising cost of living.

Meanwhile, anger is erupting over the fact that the United Auto Workers and United Steelworkers, the two unions which “represent” Dana workers, are keeping workers in the dark about the deal and are providing workers with no information whatsoever, even about which other plants are covered by the contract. Workers everywhere report being forced to speed up and continue with extremely long hours. Every minute this continues helps the company stockpile products in preparation for a strike.

A worker from Paris, Tennessee, told the *Autoworker Newsletter*, “The UAW here is the same as everyone else. No one is giving us any information down the pipeline. That’s got a lot of people upset. We don’t know what we’re bargaining on. This Saturday we’re supposed to have a meeting but that’s too late. As for lack of air conditioning and harsh work environments, yes it is difficult. The AC is constantly breaking down. We have units as old as 1998 and need to be replaced.”

Another worker at Dry Ridge, Kentucky, said, “This plant needs to grow some balls and create this rank-and-file committee. We want at least one day off every week. Technically OSHA standards say we are only working eight hours a day. But they tell us we are mandated every day, so they get by. Even if we get a raise, what’s money when you can’t spend it? We have no time.”

On the impact of pre-strike speedups at the plant, this worker said, “Multiple people leave the floor due to heat exhaustion. Ambulances came in last week as early as 5 a.m. There have been plenty of ambulances there in the last week.”

Articles about the Dana workers’ struggles published by the *World Socialist Web Site* have been read by thousands of workers at Dana in the US and internationally, as well as auto assembly workers and other sections of the working class.

A Mack Trucks worker at Macungie, Pennsylvania, sent the following message to Dana workers: “We at Mack Trucks support you in any way possible. We have experienced the same from Volvo [the parent company of Mack Trucks] and our last contract sucked. The UAW is stabbing all the membership in the back!”

A teacher and member of a rank-and-file committee established in Michigan against the unsafe return to in-person classes said: “We are sending support to Dana workers. No one should be required to vote on a contract without seeing the entire agreement. The UAW should be liable for not producing the full document and allowing appropriate time for members to review and discuss prior to membership voting on said contract.”

The struggle at Dana is just getting started. A “No” vote on the upcoming contract is necessary, but it isn’t enough. What workers need is information, coordination and a strategy to confront a transnational corporation and the two “unions” that do whatever it says. Workers are fighting more than one company, they are fighting the entire capitalist system which creates such levels of ruthless exploitation and social inequality in the name of private profit.

To unite in a common fight, we urge workers to join the Dana Workers Rank-and-File Committee. The committee can be contacted by email at danawrfc@gmail.com or by text at (248) 602-0936.



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