

“The union is not for you; you have to be wise in every move that you make”

## Stellantis autoworker voices support, warning, for Dana auto parts workers

Shannon Jones  
29 September 2021

The *World Socialist Web Site* recently spoke to Yolanda, a longtime supporter of the *WSWS Autoworker Newsletter* who works at the Stellantis Detroit Assembly Complex—Jefferson (also known as Jefferson North Assembly Plant). She declared her support for the struggle by Dana auto parts workers and called for the reinstatement of Dana Toledo worker, Keaira Marsenburg, who was victimized September 16 as part of a vendetta by management and the United Auto Workers (UAW).

Dana workers voted down the last national contract by a margin of 9-1. The margin at the Dana Driveline plant in Toledo was a unanimous 435-0. However, the UAW and United Steelworkers have responded by dragging out negotiations without setting a strike deadline in order to try to wear down workers and give management time to prepare.

The circumstances behind the firing of Marsenburg make clear it was part of this conspiracy, aimed at removing the most class-conscious and militant workers from the shop floor to break the resistance of workers to a sellout deal.

*WSWS*: What do you think about the stand the Dana workers have taken?

*Yolanda*: I support the Dana workers voting down the contract. I was really impressed by the [unanimous] vote in Toledo. They stood up together. It shows how much power we have.

But they should take a warning, the UAW will try to dress it up next time to make it seem better, but it will be the same BS.

*WSWS*: You read the interview with Keaira about her

victimization. What was your reaction to her situation?

*Yolanda*: I understand her frustration and anger. She is seeing how ugly it can get. Like she said, it is a game of chess. The union is not for you; you have to be wise in every move that you make. If you are not doing them favors and kissing their behind ... then, to have the committee person go on her Facebook page. ... It seems they have a vendetta ... They even kicked her off the local Facebook page, that just shows how petty they are.

I have seen the favoritism. There are so many management officials and UAW officials who are joined at the hip, it's pitiful. It is nothing to see my steward hanging out with my supervisor. In the days of old that was forbidden—we are not playing, you are the enemy. Now, everyone is a big happy family.

They make you go through a rigamarole. I've heard of instances, where a lot of times they prey on the weak, they look for a weakness. But, when they see you are strong, persistent, that's when you will get your results. It is important to fight back and not get discouraged, because the union is against you. In the end you will prevail because what they are doing is not fair.

*WSWS*: Can you talk more about your experiences at Fiat Chrysler/Stellantis?

*Yolanda*: After we voted the contract down [in 2015], they came back and shuffled the words around to make it seem like it was different, but it wasn't. It was the same contract; they just put a signing bonus out there. Then there were threats, that this was the best we were going to get. Like every contract, there were also

threats about jobs moving out.

In the highlights they said certain things, but there were lot of things left out. After we got the contract it wasn't like the highlights.

**WSWS:** In 2020 Stellantis workers shut down production at the start of the pandemic. Tell us what happened.

*Yolanda:* During the pandemic, workers were concerned about working under those conditions. The union was only concerned about building cars. The employees got fed up talking to the UAW about staging a protest. All they were telling us is what they couldn't do. So the workers starting shutting down production themselves, it started at SHAP [Sterling Heights Assembly Plant] and forced the company to lay everyone off. The other companies had to follow suit.

The [UAW] showed right there they don't care about the workers. It is all about how many vehicles they can make: money, money, money. It's not about how we can feed our families. It is about helping the company.

**WSWS:** Going back to the Keaira's case, what do you think this shows about the role the union is playing at Dana?

*Yolanda:* People in power never like a person like [Keaira], if they are not on their side of the fence. The fact that she is not just laying down and taking it lightly is good, because people are inspired. I read how she ran for UAW vice chair and didn't get the position. It is not surprising they didn't want her to have that much power. She would know how much they are stealing. They couldn't have that. They probably rigged the vote. It will come out. I commend her for standing up for what is right and wish her the best.

The union can't think they can keep going against the people. There will be a backlash.

**WSWS:** What would you say about the role of the WSWS in your years at Jefferson?

*Yolanda:* The WSWS has taught me a lot about the UAW and socialism; it opened my eyes. It helped me realize what the union stands for and what the unions came from, past and present. I can look at the union and management objectively and with my eyes wide. Every move the UAW makes is about money and power.

Before I started at Jefferson, I thought "I want to be in the union." Before I didn't know how the union worked. My dad worked in an auto plant for 33 years before he retired. Watching him go to work each day, I

thought the union was the way to go, it was about "union strong," about the workers, not management. But now I see it is "every man for himself." From the WSWS I was able to get a heads-up of what to expect.

The WSWS is fighting for the unity of workers and fighting for our rights. Everything that the UAW was supposed to do, and is not doing, the WSWS is fighting for with the rank-and-file committees.

I think unity is critical. The rank-and-file committees are the way to go. It can provide an important example to other plants.



To contact the WSWS and the Socialist Equality Party visit:

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