

Dana Rank-and-File Committee wins backing from Toledo Jeep workers for fight against unjust terminations

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12 March 2023

If you are an autoworker who would like to join or support the Dana Workers Rank-and-File Committee, text or call 248-602-0936 today or fill out the form at the bottom of this article.

A delegation from the Dana Workers Rank-and-File Committee traveled to the Stellantis Toledo Assembly Complex Saturday afternoon to win support for their fight against unjust firings and intolerable working conditions at the Dana Toledo Driveline factory. More than 5,500 workers at the Stellantis plant build Jeep Wranglers and Gladiators, using axles manufactured by Dana workers just four miles away.

A half dozen of the members of the Dana Workers Rank-and-File Committee campaigned at the plant gate during the afternoon shift change, distributing hundreds of copies of their call to action and discussing their fight with Jeep workers.

To meet the demands of Stellantis and other automakers and boost its own profits, Dana has forced employees at the Toledo Driveline Factory to work seven days a week, at least 10 hours a day. Over the last few months, workers report that the company has fired at least 50 workers, particularly targeting those workers who have spoken out against unsafe conditions, wage theft, sexual harassment and other abuses. Far from opposing this, UAW officials have allowed management to run roughshod over workers' rights and have even pointed out militant workers for management to fire.

Both Dana and Jeep workers are members of UAW Local 12.

During the campaign on Saturday, rank-and-file committee members approached several Jeep workers and asked them: "Do you pay dues to the UAW?" The

Dana workers explained that they paid dues to the UAW too but did not get any representation. Several Jeep workers said they faced similar problems, including workers being unjustly discharged at their plant too.

The committee members spoke to several temporary part-time or supplemental employees (TPT or SE) who told them they have not been rolled over to full-time even though they have worked at the plant, in some cases, four or five years. Although they pay dues, these workers can be fired at will and receive no profit-sharing or dental and optical benefits. "We get the worst jobs and don't get any support from the UAW," one SE told the Dana workers.

One of Dana campaigners is a third-generation autoworker who used to work at the Jeep plant and was warmly welcomed by several Jeep workers. When a worker with eight years at the plant stopped to talk to her and other Dana workers, she said, "My shop chairman was in the HR office and told me, 'Well, I can't do nothing to prevent your termination.' I asked for the grievance papers they 'filed,' and I'm still waiting on them." Another Dana worker added, "They don't do anything to support us. My grievance wasn't even processed or reviewed."

Asked what Jeep workers could do to support their fight, the Dana worker said, "We're getting the information out and making our alliances. We're letting Jeep, DMS, Mayco and other workers know what is going on because we are going to give them hell shortly."

Another Dana committee member had a discussion with a Jeep worker with eight years at the plant. The Jeep worker said he also worked at Dana for about five

months and quit because of the intolerable conditions. “A supervisor got in my face for using the restroom. There was a parts change and nothing on the line, and he’s asking me why I went to the bathroom. I had it and I quit.”

The member of the Dana Rank-and-File Committee explained his case to the Jeep worker. “I had two write-ups before they gave me the third write-up, and they wrongfully terminated me, instead of giving me a suspension. I’ve been there two-and-a-half years and for them to just go off and terminate me without a second thought is messed up. We are fighting this to get our jobs back. That’s why we are going around to spread the word, so in the future the next generation won’t be done dirty like that. They are trying to make an example out of us.”

“Absolutely,” the Jeep worker responded. “To me, it’s a weak union.” The Dana worker responded, “They are not representing us. When I was in the room that day, when they fired me, they couldn’t even get a union [official] in the room to defend me.”

The Jeep worker responded, “I was always told not to talk to management here without a union rep. So, I don’t talk to them.” He continued, “Even here, coming in as a TPT, you don’t have 100 percent union behind your back, but they want to take dues out of your check every month.”

Agreeing, another Dana committee member said, “That’s what we are trying to change. The people at Dana, especially the temps, are being represented by the union stewards. There are management conversations, and they’re not even having anyone to be there on their behalf, and they’re being terminated and sent straight out the door.

“We’re trying educate as many people as we can so they know their employee rights, so they are able to protect themselves if they get into entanglements with management. Not only that, what we are trying to teach people is that the corporate abuse they are using on you guys they are using the same tactics on Dana workers across the nation. So, we are trying to spread the word to tell you guys what to look out for and what our movement is about.”

The Jeep worker thanked the Dana workers, saying, “We can’t build these Jeeps without you.”

After decades in which the UAW bureaucracy has done everything possible to isolate the struggles of

individual sections of the working class, the efforts by Dana workers to win support from Jeep and other workers is a major step forward. It expresses the powerful striving of workers to unify their struggles and break the grip of the pro-company UAW apparatus.

Discussing the experience after the campaign, one committee member told the WSWS, “We got out 700 flyers with our mission statement. Getting the information to the workers in these facilities is going to change things.

“Dana is an important artery for the whole auto industry. If we struck, Jeep would not be able to move. At the same time, if the Stellantis workers strike when the contract expires in September, they would shut down Dana and all the other parts suppliers.”

She continued, “In some cases, the conditions at Jeep are even worse than at Dana. Workers start at \$15.40, even less than us. You can be a TPT or SE for years and have no representation, but you still have to pay union dues. We told them about the firings at Dana, but they told us they are facing the same situation at Jeep.

“Several workers said they were not aware of rank-and-file committees and asked us what is their purpose? We said it was more valuable to make alliances with other workers than to look to the UAW officials to protect us because they won’t. We told them to make a list of your demands and create your own rank-and-file committee to fight for it.

“Workers at Stellantis, Ford and GM have contracts coming up, and they are thinking about improving their conditions. Now is the right time to come together to fight. It is strategically at the forefront for Dana workers to unite with the Big Three workers and expand our network of rank-and-file committees.

“We are pushing our demands to get rehired and back pay, but we are fighting to unite all workers. In France, the workers went out on strike and the students shut down the schools. We all need to be allied.”



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