

Dana workers in Pottstown, Pennsylvania form rank-and-file committee

Dana Pottstown Workers Rank-and-File Committee
31 May 2023

The following is the founding statement of a rank-and-file committee founded by auto parts workers at Dana in Pottstown, Pennsylvania. To join the committee or to find out more, fill out the form at the bottom of this article.

We, the workers of Dana Corporation in Pottstown, Pennsylvania, are founding a rank-and-file committee at our plant. We are tired of being ignored, lied to and sold out by our leadership in the United Auto Workers Local 644 and at the national level.

This committee will fight to reveal the abuses of management at Dana Pottstown and also expose the lies of the UAW, who help to keep us exploited. As a genuine workers organization, we will seek to educate our coworkers about the conditions and struggles of workers at other facilities and industries to help build support and solidarity.

Dana is a company of slave drivers. Last year it reported sales of \$10.2 billion, nearly \$1.2 billion more than the year before. According to Zippia, its revenue has grown by 72 percent since 2010. This revenue belongs to us, the source of Dana's wealth.

In the 2021 contract negotiations, 97 percent of us voted to strike against Dana due to its slave ship conditions. This was ignored by the UAW and United Steel Workers, who forced us all to stay and build up the company's inventory, while they worked behind our backs to force through a contract that doesn't meet our needs.

During that struggle, only the *World Socialist Web Site* helped us unite our struggle and communicate with our coworkers at different locations using social media pages and, more importantly, through the construction of a national rank-and-file committee to help us strategize our fight.

At our plant, we work mandatory weekend shifts, and

our pay fails to meet cost-of-living expenses. The pay for a Tier 2 worker, hired after the company's 2007 bankruptcy and making a top rate of \$22 an hour, is \$10 less than a worker in 2007 on an equivalent wage. Needless to say, most of us would prefer to have a living wage than have to look for overtime pay to make ends meet.

Skilled trades and production workers have been divided by a pay gap that can exceed \$10 an hour. Even our yearly raises and bonuses are divided.

Profit sharing hasn't been paid in years. Meanwhile, Dana Corp. has continued to make billions from exploiting us, and managers receive their own quarterly payouts. The UAW has allowed loopholes into its Dana contracts, creating additional barriers to us receiving this form of compensation. This is while non-unionized Dana workers still receive profit sharing.

This is a disgrace. Anyone who agrees to these kinds of terms is not a leader of workers, but a scab for middle managers. In fact, the UAW at our plant regularly jokes around with, and even accepts gifts from management. Management regularly boasts about the fact that the union is in its pocket.

This corruption is just a reflection of the way it is throughout the entire auto industry, where two past presidents of our union have been sent to prison for taking bribes from the company and stealing our dues for their personal use.

Some Dana employees have been worked to death. On June 1 2021, Danny Walters, a 60-year-old worker from Dry Ridge, Kentucky, hit his head while working and went into convulsions. He died later that evening. The UAW didn't bother to even stop the line during his seizure.

We are forming this committee so there will be no more situations like Danny's at our plant or elsewhere.

Earlier this month, an article published on the *World Socialist Web Site* revealed the unsafe situation in Pottstown, with chemical leaks making the air thick with gas while we work.

The R.M. Palmer plant that exploded in nearby Reading, Pennsylvania and killed 7 workers was not a coincidence. Everywhere, companies are sacrificing safety to make profits.

This committee declares its solidarity with the Dana Toledo Driveline workers who were fired from their jobs earlier this year without warning and in violation of Dana's progressive discipline policy. We endorse their demands for their jobs back, but if they are allowed back to work under the same working situation as before, it will just be a matter of time before the UAW bureaucrats stab them in the back again.

In addition to the demand to rehire these workers, we raise a few of our own:

- Do away with the tier system at Dana. Keeping this system only makes it possible for the company to divide us. This undermines our solidarity and forces those of us in Tier 2 to work below the industry standard pay for production workers.

- Give us back our profit shares! We demand no more contract clauses which allow Dana to get off the hook from paying us for what we've helped make for it.

- Safety. We demand a regular, rank-and-file organized overview of the safety policies at our plant, as well as the means to enforce safety standards. If the company wishes to continue running machines despite gas leaks, we walk.

For that reason, we also support the call to "take the power out of the hands that oppress us, Dana and the UAW, and give power to the workers on the shop floor."

To do this, railing against the foul setup that currently exists is not enough. We need to take matters into our own hands and build up our own organization to defend us. No one will do it for us.

This committee exists to raise awareness in our plant of the conditions that exist here and at other factories and to build solidarity with other sections of workers internationally. Dana is operational in at least 33 countries and employs at least 34,000 workers. These are our coworkers. If our struggles are not linked together, we will not win here in Pottstown.

In this regard, our committee sends its solidarity to

our brothers and sisters on strike at the Clarios auto battery plant in Holland, Ohio. They are waging a battle to determine the conditions of workers throughout the industry and deserve our support. No UAW member should be forced to handle a Clarios battery while they are on strike.

Our committee is in solidarity with workers internationally. It is impossible to fight global corporations like Dana in just one location or even in a single country. It is for that reason that we declare our solidarity with the International Workers Alliance of Rank-and-File Committees (IWA-RFC). The IWA-RFC is dedicated to unifying the struggles of all workers, regardless of country or industry. This is the way a struggle should be waged, and what the UAW leadership has forgotten.

All workers who agree to our set of demands please sign up to join our committee and take up the fight for your workplace rights.



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