

“How are you going to hit the companies if you’re still making profits for them?”: Detroit Stellantis workers say all-out strike is needed

Jerry White
21 September 2023

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Stellantis workers at the Warren Truck Assembly Plant just north of Detroit spoke powerfully about the need for an all-out strike by autoworkers to break the resistance of the corporations to their demands.

Many workers expressed anger at the decision of the United Auto Workers (UAW) to only call out three plants, while keeping 90 percent of the workers, including at Warren Truck, producing profits for the corporations.

Before the strike, the UAW allowed Stellantis to put the factory on “critical status,” letting the company force workers to work as much as 10 hours a day, seven days a week, to stockpile Jeep Wagoneers and Ram 1500 trucks in case of a strike.

Over the last couple of weeks, however, hours have been drastically reduced. Earlier in the week, the UAW agreed to implement an “inverse layoff” of higher-paid workers, starting on September 25. Temporary workers have also been told they will not be scheduled for any work next week.

This has raised suspicions among workers that UAW President Shawn Fain might announce a strike at Warren Truck as part of his bogus “stand up strike” policy, precisely because this would have little impact on the company’s production. The UAW’s policy is not designed to hit the companies but to divide and

wear down the rank and file so the union bureaucracy can push through a pro-company contract that it has already agreed to.

Asked what he thought about the UAW’s “stand up strike” policy, a young worker said:

“It’s bull crap that we’re working right now and there’s only three plants on strike when Detroit’s the epicenter of everything. I’ve heard they’re slow rolling it because of the strike fund or something like that, but my honest opinion is we’re the most important ones here in the epicenter of everything, and we should be on strike.”

The young worker pointed to the huge decline in the conditions of autoworkers over the last half century. “I was thinking when we go on strike, I was going to put up a sign saying 30 years ago my grandma worked for Ford, and she made 28 bucks an hour and had a pension and everything. Compare that to nowadays when we make \$31 top pay with zero pensions.”

Commenting on the massive payouts to the corporate executives, including Stellantis boss Carlos Tavares, who made \$25 million last year, the worker said, “That’s ridiculous. It’s everybody here who make this plant run, not the CEOs. They’re a dime a dozen, and they could find a new one anywhere. But they can’t find thousands of employees who make the plant run, which is the reason they make billions of dollars. If we all go on strike, it’s looking real bad for the company.”

He said workers had to fight to win strong pay raises, the abolition of tiers and to roll over temporary workers (TPT) into full-time employees. “I have really close friends who have been TPTs for three years. One of

them rides the bus to work every single day because he can't afford a car. He builds the cars and rides a bus."

Another worker said the strike "would have more power if everyone went out. We especially need to stop producing these pickup trucks, at the Ford Dearborn plant, at the Stellantis Sterling Heights Assembly Plant. Those are the heart of their profits, and we should shut them down."

"We should all be on strike," another worker said. "How are you going to hit the companies if you're still making trucks and profits for them? We should all stick together. But we're not sticking together if half of us are working. At the end of the day, the UAW has a CEO just like Chrysler does, and they make money off us whether they want to admit it or not."

"I want more pay. I want a pension. We're building Grand Wagoneers that sell for \$100,000. I can't afford one of these off the \$20 an hour I'm making. I can't even afford that off of a two-family income."

The Warren Truck Rank-and-File Committee is one of the co-signers of a statement put out Thursday that calls on workers to repudiate Fain's phony strike and transform it into a genuine struggle by bringing out all 146,000 GM, Ford and Stellantis workers.

The statement, issued by the Autoworkers Rank-and-File Committee Network, calls on "workers at every factory to organize now to fight for an all-out strike. At each UAW local, meetings must be held involving the entire rank-and-file membership to discuss and vote on resolutions demanding all-out strike action."

"The UAW bureaucracy will resist these demands and try to placate workers and keep us demobilized as long as possible. Therefore, rank-and-file committees should be formed at each plant, shift and department, for workers to have a democratic say and control over this fight."

The statement was distributed at Warren Truck Thursday afternoon less than 24 hours before Fain said he would call out additional factories unless "progress" was made in negotiations.



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