

Striking Dakkota auto workers picket Ford Chicago Assembly and call for ban on scab parts: “An injury to one is an injury to all!”

Andy Thompson, George Marlowe
28 August 2024

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Dakkota parts workers in Chicago have courageously been on strike for nearly a month. They have rejected four separate UAW-company sellout agreements that would impose poverty wages on them, despite threats of lockouts and job cuts by the UAW and the company.

The rebellion of Dakkota workers has won support among Ford workers, workers in Dakkota plants in Michigan and among other Big Three auto workers.

On Wednesday afternoon, in a development of immense significance in the class struggle, Dakkota workers sought to break the isolation imposed by the UAW bureaucracy and go on the offensive by picketing the Ford Chicago Assembly Plant during the shift change.

The workers handed Ford workers the recently published statement of the Dakkota Workers Rank-and-File Committee titled, Support the Dakkota auto parts strike! An injury to one is an injury to all! Ban the use of scab parts from Dakkota!

Currently, the UAW bureaucracy and UAW Local 551 have forced workers at the Ford plant to continue handling scab parts from Dakkota. But there has been growing opposition among Ford workers to handling parts produced by strikebreakers, which the UAW has completely ignored.

The picketing outside the Ford plant by Dakkota workers is the first of its type in decades. It expresses the objective strivings of workers to expand their strike against poverty wages in the auto industry and link up

their struggle with the fight against job cuts and layoffs.

The picketing by the Dakkota workers outside the Ford Chicago Assembly plant has already begun to have an impact, with Ford workers responding in anger on social media.

One Ford worker responded, “International is leaving you guys to hang. An CAP/551 shouldn’t have taken one scab part! This goes against everything UAW stands for! Where’s the solidarity for [Dakkota workers in] 3212!?”

On the picket line on Tuesday, Dakkota workers had a clear message to workers at Ford: “Stop using scab parts!”

Workers demanded, “Leave the scab parts alone! We need the cost of living just like you all did. We stood out there a few months with you supporting you the same way, and we didn’t get paid for it, but we were out there.” One worker appealed, “Brothers and sisters of the UAW, period. Do not use them scab parts.”

Another worker said to Ford workers, “If they shut Ford down, it costs this company money. Support our strike! We supported you guys when you went out on strike. We were out of jobs. We didn’t get any strike pay when they went out on strike. You should not be using these parts.”

Workers are not shy about expressing their anger at UAW officials. UAW President Shawn Fain, other UAW International executives and UAW Local 3212 officials have responded to the repeated defeat of their sellout contracts by threatening workers, telling them that if they do not accept Dakkota’s demands, they will be fired.

“They are just trying to get us to go back to work,” one worker told the *World Socialist Web Site* on Tuesday. “They are not trying to reason with us or hear what we want. They just want us back in there. The union people, they only come out here to try to convince us to take a contract.

“The offers are terrible,” she continued. “The union is not fighting for what we want. They are only trying to bargain to get us back on the line.”

A veteran Dakkota worker said, “We have no representation. On a strike you usually see a union person somewhere. They have been here only to convince us to go back to work.” He added, “They want to threaten us— that if we don’t go back, we’ll get fired.”

Other workers spoke to the massive disparity in their pay compared to the massive profits of the company. “They made \$1.1 billion in 2023—that’s \$366,667 per employee,” one worker said. “And they employ 3,000 people throughout the entire company. We are getting paid a pittance, and they are raking the profits. That’s not right. We are the ones doing the work. We are the ones sitting in that hot building frying. It’s unfair working conditions.”

For two workers, one of the biggest sources of frustration has been the attempts by the UAW bureaucrats to make workers vote on the same contract proposal multiple times. To add insult to injury, they have done it without giving workers time to study the contract and discuss it with one another.

“Within seven days we voted three times,” one worker related. “There was no explanation about any parts of the contract. The paperwork was given to us the date of the vote. We didn’t have time to think about what we were going to do. I mean, it’s a type of intimidation.”

Workers reported that since the contract was rejected by the rank and file, the UAW is punishing them, pulling out even the most basic support to the strike. “They are stalling us out. No water. We don’t have any ice. It’s wearing everybody down.”

Referring to the \$1.1 million that the UAW donated to the Democratic Party, a worker commented, “They are giving the money away right in front of us!”

Workers were angry to learn that Fain, after speaking at the Democratic National Convention, was in Chicago

again to attend the UAW Women’s Conference. At the meeting he met with Biden’s Acting Labor Secretary Julie Su who sanctioned Fain’s installation as UAW president in an illegitimate election in which 90 percent of the UAW membership was excluded.

On June 25, a federal judge in Michigan ruled that Su’s refusal to act on complaints of systematic voter suppression brought by rank-and-file autoworker Will Lehman was “arbitrary” and completely illegitimate.

A striking worker commented: “I’ve been here seven years. I don’t know who he is. He [Fain] could walk right past me, and I wouldn’t know. He hasn’t been here.”

Another point of anger for workers towards the UAW bureaucracy is that workers groups on social media have been censored or shut down by union officials, making it difficult for workers to share information and coordinate action in the strike. Following the fourth contract rejection, the UAW shut down the local’s Facebook page, where workers expressed outrage over being forced into a shotgun vote.

“The app is gone. We had a UAW app. They put it up, and then they got rid of it. We had a UAW page with the union representatives. They deleted that after our third vote over seven days. They stopped us from responding to it.”

Another worker added, “The whole reason for it to be up there was for us to share our comments and concerns. But you restricted us from doing that!”

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