Italian Stellantis workers back rank-and-file investigation into death of Ronald Adams Sr.

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Stellantis workers in Italy have expressed strong support for the rank-and-file investigation into the death of US Stellantis worker Ronald Adams Sr. The 63-year-old machine repairman was killed at the Dundee Engine Plant on April 7 when an overhead gantry suddenly engaged, pinning him to a conveyor.

Adams was the second Stellantis worker in the United States to be killed in a span of less than seven months. On August 22, 2024, Antonio Gaston, a 53-year-old father of four, was crushed to death at the Toledo Jeep Complex in Ohio.

In the more than three months since Adams' death his family and co-workers have not received any explanation of why it occurred from the company, the United Auto Workers or the Michigan Occupational Safety and Health Administration (MIOSHA).

In mid-May, the International Workers Alliance of Rank-and-File Committees (IWA-RFC) launched an independent investigation to breakthrough this stonewalling, uncover the truth and hold to account those responsible for the death of this well-respected worker, father and grandfather. Several Dundee workers have already provided testimony pointing to a pattern of unsafe conditions sanctioned by the UAW bureaucracy, including widespread violations of lockout/tagout protections.

Like their counterparts in North America, Italian Stellantis workers face a relentless attack on their jobs, living standards and working conditions. The company has cut at least 15,000 jobs in Italy since early 2021, when the Italian-French-US conglomerate was formed through the merger of Fiat Chrysler and PSA. Another 1,600 workers are being forced to accept "voluntary redundancy" packages this year, including at Mirafiori plant in Turin and the Termoli plant in central Italy.

In February 2024, Dominico Fatigati, a 52-year-old machine maintenance worker, was crushed to death at the Pratola Serra factory near Naples in a tragedy that was strikingly similar to one that took Adams' life. Like Dundee, the Pratola Serra factory was being prepared for a production relaunch after Stellantis announced it would manufacture a new range of engines, in this case, for commercial vehicles.

Fatigati, a contracted employee and father of three, was performing routine maintenance when he was crushed to death by the machinery he was working on. His co-workers immediately called for strike action but the unions—CGIL, CISL, UIL, FISMIC and UGL—limited the walkout to the Pratola Serra factory for a few hours to prevent any serious impact on the company's production and profits.

"For the employers, human life means nothing," Tommaso Pirozzi, a Stellantis worker in Pomigliano D'Arco, told the *World Socialist Web Site*. "For them, a human being has no value and is only something to be exploited for their own profit and the interest of the company. On this basis, everything is trampled on: dignity, safety. In the name of profit the worker is squeezed as much as possible at the expense of health.

"I read on the WSWS about the investigation being conducted over Ronald Adams, our colleague who died in the US. By now, the deaths at work are countless. It would be better to identify them as murders since that is what they are.

"We should no longer be surprised by this, given what is happening. This is just like the wars taking place around the world. They are the result of the capitalist system and the incessant desire of individuals for enrichment and power and domination over others.

"As for the unions, they are simply subordinate to the bosses' positions and will always act as spokesmen for the bosses' demands. Only by reappropriating class consciousness can workers change the current state of things. The unions, the employers and the politicians have nothing for us.

"The working class must have one goal: unifying and fighting against capitalism since there can never be common, equal relationship of power between the proletariat and the bourgeoisie. Under the capitalist system, the working class always loses.

"Either we reorganize the masses to fight against this

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system that starves people, destroys work, destroys workers and destroys our very lives, or it will always be worse. We should understand that only through the overthrow of capitalism could we have a more just society. We, the workers' vanguard, should be the ones to carry forward this struggle."

Delio Fantasia, is a Stellantis worker from the Cassino plant in the southern part of Lazio, who was terminated in February 2024 after 36 years of service because he refused to accept a "voluntary transfer" to a factory 80 miles from his home.

Addressing himself to the Ronald Adams investigation, he said:

> Condolences, expressions of solidarity, two-hour strikes, understanding for the families of workers who died on the job and even press releases publicly denouncing the events that occurred are all well and good, but the initiative promoted by the International Workers Alliance of Rank-and-File Committees (IWA-RFC) to discover the truth about the death of auto industry worker Ronald Adams represents a new and effective way of addressing the issues of workers who died on the job. It is the colleagues themselves who investigate, study and directly verify the reasons for the deaths, without letting the various courts cover everything up or archive the cases as inevitable, or as mere side effects of "progress" and what they call "innovation."
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> Establishing an independent investigation, coordinated and conducted by rank-and-file workers into the death of Ronald Adams means being directly involved, without delegating the issue to third parties, in the causes that determine deaths on the job. All this certainly represents a step forward on the road to the claims and emancipation of the working class.
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> The opening of files at the various prosecutors' offices in various countries, with subsequent postponements or acquittals, shows the absolute subordination of the investigating and judging magistrates to capitalist exploitation and control over the popular masses. The ease with which the investigative files are opened and closed is terrible and horrifying. And it happens day after day here in Italy too.
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> We, the workers, in all the factories in the world, are the ones who must conduct investigations into deaths at work, because fundamentally the issue concerns only us and our families, and no one else. And because, as always, the mix between collaborationist unions, inspection bodies, businesses and magistrates is so evident that even the most unprepared workers can see it.
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> The priority of corporate profit, in a global war economy like the one we are experiencing today, is even more of a trigger for deaths at work. And when we workers write about a "war economy" we are not only referring to war conflicts, but also to the war that the employers have always fought against the proletariat, and which today finds its culmination with the definitive dismantling of the last individual, collective and union rights that we have left. That is, the last weapons at our disposal.
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> May the example of the workers in the American automotive industry, primarily Stellantis, be a warning to all workers in all countries of the world.

Ignazio Camboni, a retired warehouse worker, told the WSWS, "Your initiative raises, in a clear and precise manner, a crucial question of the working class struggle against the bourgeoisie: the organization of the struggle in the workplace against the despotism of the employers and against the collaborationism of the bureaucratic apparatus of the unions.

"The struggle against accidents and mortality at work is a struggle that immediately raises the question of workers' control over the entire organization of the production and distribution of goods.

"For its more general implications, the struggle against accidents and fatalities at work raises the need for an alliance of factory workers with scientific workers in the medical-health sector.

"Your initiative is very important for advancing a revolutionary socialist consciousness among the working class. Good work."

To provide information to the rank-and-file investigation into the death of Ronald Adams Sr. fill out the form below. Your identity will be kept confidential.

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