

For an all-out strike to win our demands! Join the Toledo Jeep Rank-and-File Committee!

Toledo Jeep Rank-and-File Committee
8 October 2023

The following statement was issued by the Toledo Jeep Rank-and-File Committee, which was founded last week by a group of militant workers at the Stellantis Toledo Jeep Assembly Complex in northern Ohio. To contact the committee, email jeprfc@gmail.com or call/text (419) 595-0385?.

Dear Brothers and Sisters,

We have been picketing at Toledo Jeep Complex since September 15 to win the just demands of all auto workers. But four out of five of our UAW brothers are still on the line, working under expired contracts, and producing vehicles and profits for GM, Ford and Stellantis. If we don't change course now and use the full power of all 150,000 UAW members to shut down the Big Three, we cannot win our struggle.

We know that everybody voted to strike and that everybody wants to strike. For all his talk about "democracy," UAW President Shawn Fain is ignoring the will of the membership. No one voted for this "stand up strike" policy that has had no effective impact on the auto companies. As the *Wall Street Journal* just wrote, "the decision to forgo the all-in strike that many industry observers had expected has so far considerably softened the disruption to the companies' factory footprints and bottom lines." Plants producing the most profitable full-size pickups and large SUVs, the *Journal* boasted, "remain humming."

The claim by the Fain administration that we can't all strike at once because we would deplete the strike fund is simply not true. At the current level of \$500 a week, the fund could sustain an 11-week strike by every Big Three worker—bringing the companies to their knees. If strike pay was raised to \$750 a week, we could be out seven weeks. The strike fund, which we pay for with our dues, is for striking. It is not a piggy bank for UAW bureaucrats

to play golf at Black Lake or Palm Springs!

Our forbears, who led the Toledo Auto Lite strike, the Flint sit-down and other great struggles that built the labor movement in the 1930s, understood that winning our rights was only possible if the full power of the working class was mobilized against the resistance of the corporations.

We formed the Toledo Jeep Rank-and-File Committee because we believe power and decision-making should be transferred from the UAW apparatus to the workers on the shop floor. We are joining a growing network of committees established by militant workers at Warren Truck, GM plants in Flint and Lansing, Ford Dearborn Truck, Dana Driveline, Mack Trucks and other locations which are fighting for the same thing.

We share your anger and frustration over this ineffective strike policy and believe all autoworkers should act as one and shut the industry down until we win our demands. We are calling on Jeep workers to demand that UAW Local 12 convene an emergency membership meeting so we can discuss and vote for an all-strike.

We also demand a halt to all backroom talks, rank-and-file oversight over negotiations and full reports to the membership. We must see the full contract, not just bogus "highlights," and be given sufficient time to study it before any ratification vote. Changes in any contractual language must be presented alongside the original language. Mass membership meetings must be called where workers have the right to question union officials and openly discuss and debate any tentative agreement. All voting on the contract must be overseen by a committee of trusted workers elected by the membership.

The Toledo Jeep Rank-and-File Committee will call on workers to reject any deal that does not include these core demands:

- A 40 percent general wage increase, plus the restoration of COLA (cost-of-living) raises, to make up for years of wage freezes and the havoc caused by high inflation. According to the living wage calculator for Ohio, a single parent must make \$44.63 an hour to raise two children. A worker in a two-parent household of four must make at least \$36.47 an hour.

- An end to all tiers and “progression” wage schemes by immediately bringing up lower tiers to top pay and benefits.

- The transfer of all temporary and part-time workers to full-time status, with full pay and benefits within 90 days.

- Full funding of pensions and high-quality healthcare for all current workers and retirees.

- The re-establishment of the eight-hour day with wages that allow us to provide for ourselves and our families. Overtime pay after eight hours as opposed to the current policy of overtime after 40 hours.

- Rank-and-file control over line speed and production standards, to be negotiated by local rank-and-file committees, to ensure that workers’ health and safety comes first. The reinstatement of QVS checkpoints on the line, calibrated by ratio of workers on the floor as originally designed.

- Not a single layoff or plant closure! If EVs require fewer labor hours to build, then the workweek should be reduced to 30 hours a week with no loss in pay and the work divided among all workers.

Like you, we are fed up with the high cost of living and decades of UAW concessions that have led to a 30% decline in real wages over the last two decades. We are fed up with two-tier wages and hate how temporary workers—who are basically low-wage full timers—are treated and fired at will. We are also fed up with UAW officials giving management a license to do whatever they want.

But there are 8,000 of us in the plant and only a handful of union bureaucrats. We showed our power when we shut the plant when COVID first hit in March 2020, and saved countless lives. We have the strength, but we need to organize.

The Toledo Jeep Rank-and-File Committee is based on the following principles:

- 1. Empowerment:** Our committee will provide a platform for workers to voice their concerns and participate actively in decision-making processes. It will give the opportunity for workers to have a direct impact on workplace issues and ensure their voices are heard.

- 2. Solidarity:** Our committees will foster real solidarity

among workers by facilitating communication and collaboration, allowing us to collectively address our shared concerns. It will promote unity between young and veteran workers, first and second tier, full-time and part-time, workers from Toledo and Belvidere and other closed plants, and help build a stronger collective power to demand our rights from management.

- 3. Transparency:** Rank-and-file committees promote transparency by ensuring that information regarding workplace policies, contracts, and negotiations is shared with all workers. This enables greater understanding and helps build trust between workers and the committee.

- 4. Accountability:** These committees hold management accountable for their actions and decisions, thereby safeguarding workers’ rights. They advocate for fair treatment, improved working conditions, and equitable compensation, holding management responsible for meeting agreed-upon standards.

- 5. Collective Bargaining:** Rank-and-file committees provide a platform for workers to participate in collective bargaining processes. Through these committees, workers can collaborate on negotiating contracts, improving benefits, and addressing workplace concerns collectively, ensuring a fair and balanced representation of their interests.

- 6. Knowledge and Education:** These committees often provide opportunities for workers to receive training, education, and updates on labor laws, collective bargaining strategies, workplace rights and the history of labor struggles. This empowers workers with knowledge and skills to effectively navigate their work environment and advocate for their rights.

- 7. Democratic representation:** Rank-and-file committees operate democratically, giving all workers an equal voice and equal representation. This ensures that decisions made by the committee reflect the interests and wishes of the majority, enhancing workers’ democratic participation within the workplace.

There is no time to lose. We, the rank-and-file workers, must take control of this struggle before we are sold out again. If you agree with these principles, we urge you to join and build the Toledo Rank-and-File Committee today.



To contact the WSWs and the Socialist Equality Party visit:

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