

“These layoffs are like a bomb going off in people’s lives”: Stellantis workers denounce plans to cut second shift at Warren Truck

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Reports of the elimination of a shift at the Stellantis Warren Truck Assembly Plant in suburban Detroit as soon as July 1 have angered autoworkers already staggered by massive job cuts in the wake of the 2023 United Auto Workers national contract.

On Thursday, UAW Local 140 at Warren Truck posted the following notice on its Facebook page. “The local leadership has just been informed there will be one shift of production, starting July 1st. More information will be provided as it is received.”

The elimination of the second shift could affect the jobs of half of the 3,700 hourly workers at the plant. The cuts follow the remarks of Stellantis CEO Carlos Tavares at an investors conference in Italy last month that the “EV race has become a cost-cutting race,” and that the sourcing of parts would “move from the Western world to the best-cost countries.” *Automotive News* reported Tavares saying that at least two US plants “need a significant turnaround, which could mean more job cuts.”

The layoffs at Warren Truck follow the firing of at least 2,300 supplemental employees by Stellantis, mass layoffs at the Toledo Jeep and Detroit Assembly Complex-Mack plants, the cutting of hundreds of engineering staff and cuts at the MOPAR parts distribution centers. Ford has slashed jobs at the Rouge Electric Vehicle Center in Dearborn. GM has also cut thousands of white collar and production jobs.

“These layoffs are like a bomb going off in people’s lives,” a veteran Warren Truck worker told *World Socialist Web Site* reporters Friday outside the factory.

A worker who was transferred to Warren Truck after being laid off from the Stellantis plant in Belvidere, Illinois, said, “I uprooted my family from Belvidere and now I could lose my job again.” Another former Belvidere worker said, “It’s like a flashback. It’s 3, 2, 1

and you are out of a job.” A young worker said, “I just got rolled over from a temporary part-time position, and now they are laying me off.”

Another worker, who is from a Middle Eastern background, said, “In a few months this whole factory might be nothing but a warehouse. The prices of these cars are unaffordable. You can’t get a used car for less than \$30,000; and a new one costs \$50,000. These companies are worried that the Chinese are making more affordable EVs and at better quality. That’s one of the reasons the US wants war.

“The US has sent Israel 70,000 tons of military equipment, and the cost of these wars comes out of our pockets.”

The new round of job cuts are a further confirmation of the warnings by the International Workers Alliance of Rank-and-File Committees. The IWA-RFC said the 2023 contract sellout, hailed as an “historic” victory by the Biden administration and the corporate media, would open the door to a jobs bloodbath as the auto companies shift the cost of the transition to electric vehicles onto the backs of workers.

This is part of a global attack on workers by the auto companies. Ford has announced that it plans to cut 3,800 jobs in Europe this year and recently announced it would cut another 1,600 jobs at its plant in Valencia, Spain. Meanwhile, Stellantis has cut thousands of jobs in Italy, including 1,560 at Turin’s historic Mirafiori plant.

According to a source, Stellantis has a large stockpile of vehicles from Warren Truck that are missing various parts due to shortages and cannot be sold until the proper parts arrive. These parts shortages are not due to an “act of God” but are the result of Stellantis squeezing its suppliers for lower costs, with workers caught in the middle. Earlier press reports stated that companies have

refused to deliver parts due to rising prices, asking that Stellantis compensate for their increased costs.

“This is bull,” another Warren Truck worker told the WSWS. “The UAW knew this was going to happen when they signed that contract. Fain lied to us. First, they fired the supplementals and now they are laying off more senior workers.”

“I’m tired of these people,” a worker with 12 years said. “It’s horrible the way they do us. They are laying people off while they are hiring new people. I’m going back to school because they already fired me, hired me back, fired me again, and I’m tired of playing.”

She agreed there should be a fight against the layoffs and said a job should be “secured” but didn’t know how to win that. As for the UAW, she said, “I don’t pay attention to the UAW anymore. They are all scratching each other’s backs and whatever else they do.”

“These are troubling times and they don’t care about us,” another worker said. “The UAW had us on 10 hours, seven days. They haven’t been fighting for us. We can’t even take time off. The people with the money, they don’t care. Us, the little ants, we get stepped on.” Referring to Stellantis CEO Carlos Tavares, who got a 56 percent pay bump to \$39.5 million in 2023, he said, “He got a huge raise and they’re cutting jobs, where’s that money going, straight to him. Me and my wife work here. We can’t even take days off for our family.”

He agreed with the call to unite workers to defend jobs and said it was “divide and conquer” to pit workers against each other in a race to the bottom to keep their jobs.

Another veteran worker said, “It’s just like the TPTs who lost their jobs.” Her co-worker added, “I wish this would stop.” She said it was “awesome” that rank and file autoworker and socialist Will Lehman won a court victory against the Biden administration’s effort to sanction the bogus UAW election that installed Fain as president with less than 10 percent of the vote. “There has to be a fight, otherwise nothing is going to change,” the worker said, agreeing that this had to be a worldwide fight.

The layoffs at Warren Truck come in the midst of a mounting crisis in the UAW leadership. In late May, UAW President Shawn Fain removed Vice President Rich Boyer as head of the union’s Stellantis department. Boyer was originally a committeeman at Warren Truck before being elected as part of Fain’s slate in the first-ever UAW direct election. In removing Boyer, Fain claimed he had failed to “push back” against Stellantis’ attacks, including the mass firing of supplementals. In an attempt

to answer Fain’s accusations Boyer revealed that Fain and the rest of top UAW leadership were well aware that the contract would lead to the firing of thousands of temp workers.

Meanwhile, the monitor overseeing the UAW said earlier this month that he is investigating new allegations of corruption in the UAW leadership involving Fain, UAW Secretary Treasurer Margaret Mock and an unnamed regional director. The monitor claimed that Fain was obstructing the investigation by slow walking the release of thousands of documents that the UAW monitor had requested.

Socialist Equality Party vice presidential candidate Jerry White, in a statement posted on X/Twitter, wrote:

“Rank-and-file workers must mobilize to oppose elimination of the second shift at Warren Truck. If these cuts are allowed to take place it will impose further hardship on workers, missed mortgage payments, shattered families and suicides.”

The cuts confirm the correctness of the warning made by the International Workers Alliance of Rank-and-File Committees that the outcome of the phony “standup” strike and the 2023 sellout contract negotiated by Shawn Fain would be a jobs massacre. To fight back, workers must build rank-and-file committees to coordinate their struggles globally to defend jobs. This struggle must be organized independently of the UAW apparatus which is allied with the Biden administration and its program of war overseas and war against the working class at home.

The Warren Truck layoffs underscore the importance of the call by rank-and-file Mack Trucks worker and socialist Will Lehman for the abolition of the corrupt UAW apparatus and the transfer of power to workers on the shop floor through the building of rank-and-file committees.

To join the fight for rank-and-file committees, fill out the form below.



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