

Fight the layoffs at Stellantis Warren Truck! Organize a rank-and-file counteroffensive!

Autoworkers Rank-and-File Committee Network
11 August 2024

Take up the fight to save Warren Trucks and auto jobs everywhere! Fill out the form below to join the Autoworkers Rank-and-File Committee Network.

Friday's announcement that Stellantis plans to axe up to 2,450 workers at Warren Truck Assembly Plant is a major escalation of the global offensive against auto jobs. Workers must organize to fight the layoffs, coordinating joint actions with autoworkers against both management and the sellout union bureaucrats.

The cuts, scheduled to start October 8, would reduce the factory to just one shift as it ends production of the Ram 1500 Classic pick-up truck. The continued existence of the plant is itself directly threatened, with the remaining workers producing the much lower-volume Jeep Wagoneer and Grand Wagoneer SUVs. The latest cuts at Warren Truck will have a domino effect on auto parts workers. A Bridgewater Interiors factory in Detroit has already announced 63 layoffs to occur around September 30.

A line in the sand must be drawn! Warren Truck is now a critical battleground in the global war on jobs. Autoworkers must make this the start of a broad counteroffensive, counterposing workers' right to employment and a decent standard of living against management's so-called "right" to profit.

Throw out the sellout bureaucrats!

Later this week, United Auto Workers Local 140 is holding a meeting to discuss these cuts. Workers have seen this song-and-dance routine a thousand times before. The bureaucrats will claim they had no part in the cuts while insisting that nothing can be done to fight back.

In fact, Local 140 Vice President D Robinson already admitted to the *Detroit News* that he and his fellow officials knew the layoffs were coming and did nothing even to warn workers, much less prepare a response. Robinson told the

News: "It's been in discussions for some time. It really was not much of a surprise for me. We hate to see it happen, but we did know the possibility was out there."

The entire UAW bureaucracy is guilty of sabotage. Thousands of autoworkers have lost their jobs since the UAW shut down the limited "standup strike" last year and rammed through new contracts. Stellantis alone has fired over 2,000 supplemental workers, with Toledo Jeep and Detroit Assembly Complex–Mack especially hard-hit. Hundreds of white collar workers have also been fired.

At the Local 140 meeting, workers should respond by ejecting the union officials from their meeting and taking over the podium, converting the meeting into a mass, democratic discussion to plan out what to do next.

Workers should elect a rank-and-file committee from among the most trusted and militant workers on the shop floor, with no ties to the bureaucrats, to coordinate and organize the fight to save Warren Truck.

Delegations of Warren Truck workers should fan out to every auto plant in southeastern Michigan and northwest Ohio to appeal for support and prepare for collective industrial action.

The central strategic question workers face is throwing off the dead weight of the union bureaucracy. It has no legitimate claim to leadership. The administration of union president Shawn Fain was elected on a nine percent turnout due to fraud, and Fain and other top leaders are under investigation on corruption charges. UAW-Stellantis VP Rich Boyer admitted they covered up the planned layoffs while workers were voting on the contract last year.

The bureaucracy's real base of support is not autoworkers, but management. No less crucial is its ties with Washington and the pro-corporate government of "Genocide Joe" Biden. Fain was installed in a sham election overseen by the Labor Department in an operation to install a bogus "reformer" who is in reality a trusted bureaucrat.

Fain and the UAW officials have extremely close ties with the Biden/Harris administration, which backed last year's sellout and elevated Fain to the level of a de-facto

government official. Indeed, the layoffs were announced only a few days after Fain spoke at a rally for Kamala Harris in Detroit, where Harris denounced anti-war protesters.

Workers must combine the fight to save Warren Truck with the demand for new UAW elections, this time controlled by the rank and file. Workers cannot organize a fight under a “leadership” controlled by the other side.

For the global unity of autoworkers

What is involved here is not just a response to declining profits at a single carmaker. It is a global attempt to use labor-saving electric vehicle technology to eliminate hundreds of thousands of jobs in the coming years. Stellantis CEO Carlos Tavares summed this up in June when he told investors that “the EV race has become a cost-cutting race.”

As always, the bureaucracy is trying to deflect responsibility from themselves onto foreigners. In response to the Warren Truck announcement, Fain called Tavares, the company’s Portuguese chief executive, “a disgrace and an embarrassment to a once-great *American company* [emphasis added].”

Meanwhile, the corporate media is trying to pin the blame for the layoffs on workers in Mexico, where Stellantis is reportedly planning to send overflow production of its Ram 1500 Tradesman pick-ups.

This “America first” nationalism has never saved a single job. At any rate, the corruption scandal which brought down the last crop of UAW officials, centered on what was then Fiat Chrysler, shows that the bureaucrats have never been particular about the country of origin of executives feeding them bribes.

The truth is there is no such thing anymore as an “American” auto company. These are global transnational corporations which scour the globe for the lowest costs and the highest rates of return.

This is certainly true for Stellantis, which is the result of a series of mergers between the American company Chrysler (at one time owned by German truck maker Daimler), the Italian company Fiat, and the French automaker PSA Group, with its headquarters in the Netherlands.

Meanwhile, the bosses and their union bureaucrat stooges whip up nationalism in the US and other countries to divide workers in a global race to the bottom.

Our real allies are not “loyal” American businessmen, but autoworkers in every country. This is especially true of Mexican autoworkers, who appealed repeatedly for our support in their mass wildcat strikes in Matamoros, Mexico,

while GM workers in Silao, Mexico took solidarity action with their American brothers and sisters during the 2019 US GM workers strike.

Warren Truck workers must establish lines of communication with Stellantis workers in *every country* where the company is active, as well as at other global auto giants such as GM and Ford, Volkswagen, Toyota and Tesla.

Workers in every country are fighting a two-front war against management and union sellouts, whether IG Metall in Germany, Unifor in Canada or the UAW and Biden-backed SINTTIA union in Mexico.

The battle for Warren Truck is of concern to every autoworker on the planet. What happens here, in the center of the Detroit auto industry, will have profound repercussions in the global war for jobs. At the same time, Warren Truck workers cannot defend their plant without the support of a coordinated counter-offensive by autoworkers everywhere.

A basic strategy for such a counter-offensive was laid out in January in a statement of the International Workers Alliance of Rank-and-File Committees (IWA-RFC), which proposed the following four point program:

- End all job cuts immediately, and reinstate all those already affected!
- Reduce the length of the workday, with an *increase* in pay, to account for the fewer hours needed to produce EVs and make up for decades of stagnant wages!
- Unite across borders to fight the global jobs massacre!
- Place the auto industry under social ownership and democratic workers’ control!

There is no time to lose! We urge autoworkers at Warren Truck and other plants to make the decision to join the fight back and sign up to discuss getting involved in this struggle today.



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