

Stop mass layoffs at Warren Truck! Mobilize the international working class against job cuts!

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The mass layoffs at Stellantis' Warren Truck Assembly Plant are a threat to autoworkers all over the world. The cuts at the Detroit-area plant, set to take place on October 8, are a battle in a world war on jobs, pitting a working class united by global production against the giant transnational corporations.

At a local meeting Thursday, Warren Truck workers were furious and determined to fight. The United Auto Workers bureaucracy, on the other hand, could not muster the energy to pretend to care, only distributing leaflets from the company itself about how to file for unemployment.

Shawn Fain and the UAW apparatus were fulfilling their role as an arm of corporate management. They presented the layoff of 2,450 workers—which they knew about beforehand and are the result of the sell-out contracts they rammed through last year—as a *fait accompli*, which workers can do nothing to oppose.

This is a lie! The cuts can and must be opposed, but it requires the organization of the working class independently and in opposition to the bureaucracy, mobilizing the collective strength of all workers in the UAW and beyond.

Autoworkers in the US must see their struggle as a global battle, pitting an international working class against transnational corporations engaged in a jobs bloodbath.

While the layoffs at Warren Truck are related to declining vehicle sales, at bottom they have been planned out for years, as part of the biggest transformation in the auto industry since the days of Henry Ford and the assembly line. The automakers are using the shift to electric vehicles, which require less labor to build, to eliminate huge sections of the global auto workforce.

As the International Workers Alliance of Rank-and-File Committees warned last year, in advance of the sellout contracts now being used to lay workers off, the companies plan to use EV to threaten half of all US jobs over the next decade, cut half-a-million jobs in Europe and hundreds of thousands more elsewhere.

Stellantis CEO Carlos Tavares said “the EV race has become a cost-cutting race.” Those jobs that will remain will be on poverty wages, often sourced to the lowest cost-markets.

Already this year, automakers have cut 8,000 jobs in the US alone, including over 2,000 at Stellantis' nearby Mack plant in Detroit and thousands of more supplementals, whom the UAW lied to when they promised they would be hired in at full-time under the new contract.

Tesla has also announced 14,000 cuts in its worldwide operations, both in the US and abroad, including 3,000 at one plant in Berlin. Many workers only discovered they were unemployed when they tried to scan their badges at work.

Massive layoffs have taken place throughout the German car industry, especially among suppliers, and Volkswagen is also threatening the closure of its plant in Belgium, which employs 3,000 people.

Italian autoworkers have been decimated since the formation of Stellantis via a merger between Fiat-Chrysler and Peugeot in early 2021. The Italian workforce at Stellantis has fallen from 55,000 to 43,000 in just three years, with the company announcing more than 3,500 more cuts earlier this year.

And General Motors has just announced it intends to carry out a major restructuring of its business in China, where sales have collapsed since a peak of 4 million vehicles in 2017 as a consequence of tightening trade war measures by the United States.

The global character of the layoffs underscores the need for an internationally-unified response by the working class. As the Autoworkers Rank-and-File Committees Network statement declared this week, workers at Warren Truck or any other factory in the world “cannot defend their plant without the support of a coordinated counter-offensive by autoworkers everywhere.”

It also explained that this is a fight against the union

bureaucracy in every country, where workers “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.”

A global strategy is needed to take control of a complex world economy, which has created unprecedented levels of productivity and wealth, but which is now subordinated to the corporate oligarchy’s profits.

The intervention of the working class is also needed to put a stop to war. The US proxy wars in Ukraine, Gaza and developing conflicts elsewhere have nothing to do with “human rights” as is claimed, but are really about the conquest of markets, raw materials, shipping lanes and labor, while denying them to their enemies. The electric vehicle race in particular is central to the growing preparations for war with China.

In every country, the union bureaucrats help enforce layoffs while promoting “America First,” “Italy First,” “Germany First” and so on. By promoting this divisive nationalism, they help the companies whipsaw workers against each other.

This finds sharp expression in the United States, where the UAW and other unions are engaged in a corporatist alliance with the government. Biden endorsed the contract being used to lay off thousands of autoworkers, while UAW President Fain has been elevated to the level of semi-government official. The UAW apparatus is now one of the top boosters of the Harris campaign.

This is also a wartime alliance to prepare the “home front.” Fain, wearing shirts with World War II bombers on them, declares that workers have to follow in the footsteps of the “Arsenal of Democracy,” implying they must be prepared to sacrifice for another world war.

In a video released Friday, United Auto Workers president Fain denounced the Portuguese Tavares and “overseas executives” for “mismanaging” Stellantis. He compared Stellantis unfavorably to the allegedly more “American” General Motors and Ford—which in reality also operate all over the world. He neglected to inform viewers that the UAW is helping lay off people at all three companies.

The global economy has not only resulted in the transformation of the union bureaucracies into open agents of management and of the national state. It has also created a working class which is far larger and interconnected than ever before, creating the possibility of a new, international movement against exploitation.

There are many signs confirming this possibility, including the transatlantic wildcat strike wave forced the auto industry to shut down in the initial phase of the pandemic. Wildcat strikes also broke out in Italy this year against mass layoffs.

While the UAW is responding with anti-Mexican

chauvinism to Stellantis’ threat to move more production down south, Mexican workers are fighting back against sweatshop conditions and have appealed for support from their northern brothers and sisters, such as when they refused to handle scab production during the 2019 GM strike. In 2018, tens of thousands of parts workers walked out in defiance of the Mexican unions and marched to the US border to call for a united struggle.

It is time to draw a line in the sand and fight! The global jobs massacre must be opposed and resisted, and Warren Truck is now a critical battleground in the working class counter-offensive.

For this fight to be successful, workers must take immediate measures to organize rank-and-file committees, to establish lines of communication with their coworkers and build up a network of rank-and-file committees to plan joint action against layoffs, in the US and internationally.

The WSWs urges workers to take up the principles outlined in the International Workers Alliance of Rank-and-File Committees statement in January:

- 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!

For assistance in forming rank-and-file committees, fill out the form below.



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