

# With massive layoffs at Warren Truck less than a month away, autoworkers must organize a fight

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With less than one month to go before mass layoffs are to take place at the Stellantis' Warren Assembly Plant in metro Detroit a sharp warning needs to be sounded.

These cuts are only the start of a tidal wave of job cuts throughout the auto industry in coming months, as Stellantis and other automakers seek to offload the cost of the transition to electric vehicles onto the backs of workers. They are planning, in the next few years, the largest wave of layoffs and plant closures since the 2009 restructuring of the auto industry under the Obama administration.

Like then, autoworkers are to be made to pay for the continued profits of the giant auto transnationals with all the consequent devastating social consequences that entails—foreclosures, bankruptcies, the breakup of families and suicides.

At Warren Truck, 2,450 jobs are to be axed. All those with seniority dates after June 3, 2018 are subject to layoff. Meanwhile, the United Auto Workers are keeping workers totally in the dark. Hollow promises by UAW officials of transfers to other plants for some of those slated for layoff have evaporated, as job cuts have been announced at other area plants.

It is highly unlikely that Stellantis will keep Warren Truck operating with only one shift of 1,200 workers for very long. The plant is one of the oldest Stellantis facilities and has faced repeated closure threats by corporate management.

In addition, Stellantis has announced that it is reneging on a pledge to reopen the shuttered Belvidere assembly plant by 2027 to produce a midsize truck. The “saving” of the Belvidere plant was trumpeted by the UAW leadership as a major “victory” in the 2023 contract and used to sell the deal. Hundreds of Belvidere workers transferred to Detroit area plants when their home plant was idled. They now face either being permanently stranded away from home or the loss of their jobs in the layoffs.

A veteran Warren Truck worker said, “If those who are being laid off are getting any useful info, I don’t know about it.

Somehow, I don’t think they are being told anything. After all, this is Chrysler. Information does NOT flow downhill. Currently, we still have two shifts of people in General Assembly. But we are working alternating weeks. When 2nd works next week, they will be doing so on 1st shift hours.”

A flyer circulating at Warren Truck has announced a meeting Thursday afternoon at the UAW Local 140 union hall that will feature top UAW officials, perhaps including President Shawn Fain.

Instead of a real fight to oppose the layoffs, Fain has advanced a “keep the promise” grievance-writing campaign and issued empty threats of a strike that the bureaucracy has no intention of carrying out.

He has blamed “foreign executives” who are hostile to American workers unlike US-based GM and Ford. Fain has tried to throw dust in workers’ eyes by calling for the removal of Stellantis CEO Carlos Tavares and the hiring of a more “responsible” corporate leadership, citing the fact that profits are much higher at General Motors and Ford.

Fain’s touching concern for Stellantis shareholder’s bottom line exposes where his bread is buttered. He conceals the fact that mass layoffs are also taking place at the other Detroit automakers, as well as virtually every auto company in the world.

The veteran autoworker, commenting on the role of UAW President Shawn Fain remarked, “That man is a pariah and needs to be taken down by any means necessary. He orchestrated this entire situation through lies and manipulation. He absolutely knew this was going to be the outcome of passing this contract and pushed it through.”

A worker at the Stellantis Detroit Assembly Complex—Jefferson plant said that workers were following with concern the layoffs at Warren Truck. He agreed with the call by the International Workers Alliance of Rank and File Committees for a fight. “I think the workers need to strike, everyone needs to strike and stand with them. That’s the only way. We have to stand together, we can’t be separate.”

Workers face a two-front battle against a ruthless corporate management and the UAW bureaucracy. The UAW is assisting

in the assault on jobs because they are joined at the hip to management and the capitalist Democratic Party. Their program of America-First nationalism and militarism cuts across the international unity of the working class that is vital to waging a successful struggle.

Underscoring the global character of the assault taking place on jobs in the auto industry, last week workers at the Audi plant in Vorst near Brussels stopped work to protest layoffs sweeping Europe by Audi parent Volkswagen. Workers from supplier plants that will be affected have also joined the protests.

As the deadline for layoffs at Warren Trucks approaches there are increasing signs of impending slump, with slower auto sales and short term layoffs. Earlier this month Stellantis halted production of the Jeep Wrangler, built in Toledo and Jeep Grand Cherokee, built at the Detroit Assembly Complex Mack and Jefferson. The company cited continued slower sales and excess inventories. Stellantis sales were down 21 percent in the first six months of 2024.

In a statement posted on Twitter Socialist Equality Party presidential candidate Joseph Kishore stated:

In less than one month, 2,450 workers at the Stellantis Warren Truck Plant are set to lose their jobs.

As the Socialist Equality Party candidate for president of the United States, I stand with Warren Truck workers in the fight to oppose the mass layoffs set for next month.

The SEP insists that a good paying job is a social right that takes precedence over the money mad drive by corporations like Stellantis for ever more profits. This right can be secured only through struggle, and a frontal assault on the wealth of the capitalist oligarchy and their control over the economy.

While Biden and Harris claim to be pro-worker, they defend the profit system and the vast enrichment of the corporate and financial oligarchy off the sweat and toil of workers. They are working closely with union bureaucrats like Shawn Fain to prevent a fight to defend jobs and living standards so profits will continue to flow and nothing will disrupt the US war machine.

Let's be clear: If matters are left in the hands of Shawn Fain and the UAW apparatus these cuts will go ahead with devastating impact, not just on the lives of Warren Truck workers but auto parts workers and the broader community. Families will be devastated, homes will be foreclosed and lives disrupted. It will only be a matter of time before Warren Truck is closed like so many other auto plants in the Detroit area over the last decades.

The layoffs at Warren Truck are not the result of mismanagement by "foreign" executives but come from the ruthless drive of all the auto companies to force the

cost of the transition of electric vehicles onto the backs of workers. They are a foretaste of a jobs bloodbath that is gathering force throughout the auto industry worldwide, including white collar and engineers.

The only answer is the mobilization of the power of the entire working class based on the principle, an injury to one is an injury to all.

I urge Warren Truck workers to build and expand the network of rank-and-file committees as part of the International Workers Alliance of Rank-and-File Committees. These committees will establish lines of communications with workers in other Big Three plants and at auto parts plants like Dakota Industries, where workers recently voted down four sellout contracts negotiated by the UAW.

Workers must also reach out to autoworkers overseas in Mexico, Brazil, France and Germany in a common fight to end sweatshop conditions and defend jobs for all.

We reiterate the call to action issued by the International Workers Alliance of Rank-and-File Committees, 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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