German workers support rally against mass layoffs in Detroit

Our reporters
9 February 2019

Workers across Germany have sent solidarity greetings to the demonstration against GM plant closings taking place this Saturday, February 9, in Detroit. The demonstration is organized by the WSWS Autoworker Newsletter *and the Steering Committee of the Coalition of Rank-and-File Committees and opposes the closure of General Motors plants.*

From Berlin, four bus drivers sent the following statements:

We support your rally today and the "call for workers to express their strength and their determination to fight through the formation of rank-and-file committees, independent of the corporate-controlled unions, run by thoroughly corrupt and privileged executives."

Here in Germany, too, the unions have been working against us for more than two decades. They promote nationalism to break our strength. Already about twenty years ago, when the European Union asserted the open competition of the market also in the areas of public life such as schools, hospitals and public transport, the trade unions prevented a successful fight against it. On the contrary, the unions helped cut wages and destroyed our social conditions.

Today, through many connections, they have become the extended arm of the employers and the state and behave like a company police force that suppresses any independent action by us.

You are at the forefront of a coming movement to stop the destruction of our lives. We send you greetings of solidarity and promise to take up the struggle for a global network of the international working class here as well. When the Yellow West struggles began in France, the WSWS wrote, "The central question that now arises is that of perspective and strategy."

This initiative, which came about under the leadership of the International Committee of the Fourth International (ICFI), must be expanded and further developed. We need new organizations of struggle linked to the construction of a revolutionary political leadership in the working class—the ICFI and its national sections, the Socialist Equality Parties.

As Leon Trotsky stressed in 1935, workers must understand such action committees "as the only means of breaking the anti-revolutionary opposition of party and trade-union apparatus."

Andy Niklaus
Jan Clausen
Velimir Stanojevic
Kevin Ketels

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Workers from the Ford factories in Saarlouis also showed solidarity with their demonstrating colleagues in the US. Gérard, who has worked for Ford for eight years, wrote:

My father was a Ford worker for 45 years, and I work night shifts here at Ford. We sacrifice a large part of our lives and receive no recognition for it. We only get information through social networks and sites like the *World Socialist Web Site* .

The unions have practically already sold our plant here. The workers in Mexico did it right. Workers should do the same in Turkey, Russia, Spain, France, everywhere and show that we workers are the ones who keep the factories running.

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Kamal works through a rental company in the Ford factories. He explained:

Our jobs are under threat. The matter has already been decided for us temporary workers: We are the sacrificial lamb that is being slaughtered. The works council is not on the side of the workers. Everyone has to decide individually whether they are prepared to

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organise themselves against the works council.

The demonstration on February 9 in Detroit is enormously important in my eyes. Such an organization, which unites the workers, is really social solidarity.

Workers should all pull together. That's why I thought the strikes in Mexico were so important, because they prevailed against the joint power of the corporations, management and trade unions. Where there's a lot of money, there's a lot of power, and the high bosses think they can decide the fate of thousands of people.

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Florian, who works as a tram mechanic in Frankfurt, wrote to the WSWS:

Greetings from Frankfurt/Main, fellow auto workers. Until you stood up, I had to look at the parts from so many places on the planet working together in one car to remind myself: "There is hope. There is a future for humanity worth loving and worth struggling. There is a chance to wipe aside the 200 competing vampiric mafias strangling us and to finally build up a human civilization living up to its name." You make this real now. In Mexico, Hungary, the United States… You give me courage to join the action and spread the word. Solidarity!

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