

SGP candidate Ulrich Rippert at Tesla plant in Germany: “Build action committees to prevent layoffs!”

Our reporters
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The announcement by car manufacturer Tesla that it will cut 14,000 jobs worldwide has triggered great unrest among the workforce. At the Grünheide plant just outside Berlin, Germany, the so-called Gigafactory Berlin-Brandenburg, many workers are particularly outraged that there is no concrete information about the planned job cuts. The workforce is being deliberately kept in the dark and the uncertainty is being used to intensify exploitation.

When finance daily *Handelsblatt* wrote on Monday a week ago that around 3,000 of the announced 14,000 redundancies would take place in Grünheide, company management immediately responded with a denial, with a spokesperson declaring there were no concrete plans as yet. Three days later, it was announced that the company would no longer be employing 300 temporary workers with immediate effect. However, these were not redundancies, as the temporary workers were not Tesla employees, it was stated.

A few days later, the *Frankfurter Rundschau* ran the headline “Musk carries out job cuts at Tesla: A quarter of the workforce in Grünheide has to go.” The article noted, “Tesla boss Musk is reacting to the slump in the electric car market with radical job cuts. The German site in Grünheide is being hit hard.”

According to Bloomberg, the 14,000 redundancies announced so far are just the beginning; Elon Musk is in fact planning to reduce his auto workforce by 20 percent. According to Musk, the reduction should correspond to the decline in vehicle deliveries between the fourth quarter of 2023 and the first quarter of 2024, as Bloomberg reports. Earlier this month, Tesla announced that it had delivered exactly 386,810 cars in the first quarter of 2024, representing a decrease of 20.1

percent compared to the previous quarter. The decline in deliveries was the company’s lowest quarterly result since 2022.

In view of this situation, the recent WSWS statement on how to fight the layoffs was met with great interest by Tesla workers. Members and supporters of the Sozialistische Gleichheitspartei (Socialist Equality Party, SGP) distributed the article as a flyer at the factory gate. Despite the rain and cold, many workers stopped to find out more.

In talking to the Tesla workers, Ulrich Rippert and Angela Niklaus, who are both running for the SGP in the European elections in June, emphasised that the fight against mass redundancies required an international perspective and strategy. This met with spontaneous support. The Tesla workforce, which was expanded to 12,500 last year and works in shifts, is made up of over 50 nationalities. In addition to Arab and African countries, many employees come from nearby Poland and other Eastern European states. International co-operation is part of everyday life in the production halls in Grünheide.

Workers were very pleased to see that the flyer was available in Arabic and Polish as well as German and English.

In the flyer, the SGP calls for an independent rank-and-file action committee to be set up, and offered its support in establishing international links with workers in other countries in order to prepare joint and coordinated action.

The leaflet states: “The SGP appeals to all Tesla workers who want to fight against job cuts and miserable working conditions to unite in an independent action committee. Don’t trust IG Metall,

which sits on the supervisory boards of all other car companies and organises mass redundancies and plant closures there!”

Another important question raised is the connection between the mass redundancies and the development of war. The immense costs of military armament, arms deliveries and acts of war are being imposed on the working class through redundancies, wage cuts and social cuts.

A decisive element in the global mobilisation of workers is therefore the struggle against war. Workers must not allow themselves to be divided by the national conflicts fuelled by the ruling class. But this is exactly what the trade union bureaucracy, which is nothing more than an extension of the various governments, is trying to do. In Germany, IG Metall has made a pact with the federal government and has been pushing through one sell-out and terrible contract after another ever since.

In this context, Rippert emphasised the great importance of the international May Day celebration, which the International Committee of the Fourth International is organising online on 4 May. Anyone can easily take part and follow the reports on workers’ struggles in many countries. In the face of mass redundancies, war and dictatorship, the fight for an international, socialist programme is at the centre of the discussion.

The SGP leaflet ends with the words:

Capitalism is an outdated economic system that is incapable of utilising new technologies and other advances for the benefit of society. Musk and his fellow oligarchs must be expropriated, as must the banks and big corporations. They must be placed under the democratic control of the workers.

The advances in automation and artificial intelligence must be used to lighten the burden of labour and finance comprehensive improvements to people’s lives so that hunger, war and poverty are finally eliminated.

This is the programme that the *World Socialist Web Site*, the International Committee of the Fourth International and the Sozialistische Gleichheitspartei are fighting for.

We invite workers who want to know more about this perspective to send a Whatsapp message to the mobile number +491633378340 or register using the form below.



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