

UAW does nothing as CNH lays off 220 in Wisconsin, more cuts expected

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Work at CNH? Tell us what you think about the layoffs. All submissions will be kept anonymous.

London-based CNH Industrial laid off some 220 workers on April 1 at the Case tractor factory in Mount Pleasant in southeastern Wisconsin, outside Racine. Nearly 220 of the plant's roughly 660 workers were given "indefinite layoff" notices.

The layoffs come over a year after the United Auto Workers (UAW) rammed through a sell-out contract, ending a nearly nine-month-long strike by roughly 1,100 agricultural and construction equipment manufacturing workers in Racine, Wisconsin, and Burlington, Iowa.

Speaking to the WSWs, a former Mount Pleasant CNH worker said, "I feel sad for those that did and now don't have a job. A lot of my friends were laid off."

CNH's 2023 earnings report, released in February, showed a net income of \$2.383 billion, which Scott Wine, CEO of CNH, described as "record full-year revenue and net income." The company also announced a bonus \$500 million share buyback program, to begin once the current \$1 billion share buyback program finishes.

Meanwhile, a typical worker at the plant earns \$52,000 annually, 350 times less than Wine's salary of \$18 million last year.

The billionaire Agnelli family, the principal shareholder of Stellantis, also holds a controlling interest in CNH Industrial through its investment vehicle, Exor. This connection underscores the significant consolidation of corporate power and wealth within a select few hands globally.

Exor's recent restructuring of CNH's executive leadership—with the appointment of a new CEO previously at Volvo Group—is part of preparations for new assaults on their workforce. The new CEO is

reportedly devising CNH's latest cost-reduction strategy, implementing job cuts.

The layoffs come amid growing attacks on workers worldwide. Hundreds of thousands of workers in the United States have lost their jobs. Tesla's fascistic billionaire CEO Elon Musk recently announced the electric vehicle maker would slash 14,000 jobs.

In northern Wisconsin, in the village of Hawkins, JELD-WEN, a door and window manufacturing company, will close its manufacturing facility on June 10 and lay off 338 people.

In southeastern Wisconsin, Conagra Brands plans to close its Birds Eye facility in Beaver Dam by the end of the summer and destroy 250 jobs.

After the UAW rammed through a contract last fall which it falsely hailed as a "historic" victory, there have been 8,000 layoffs in the Detroit 3 automakers. Meanwhile, UAW President Shawn Fain is closing ranks with the Biden administration as it crushes anti-war protests around the country.

The UAW, whose Local 180 oversees the Mount Pleasant plant, will do nothing to bring back jobs and prevent further layoffs. Rich Glowacki, chair of the bargaining committee for UAW Local 180, said, "It's really sad to see because Case used to be one of the premier employers in southeastern Wisconsin. Most people, when they got hired at Case, pretty much said that their life was going to be on a better trajectory. Now, that's all a fairy tale."

Glowacki oversaw the current contract, which created a new tier in healthcare benefits, forced new hires onto high-deductible health plans, raised workers' healthcare premiums by 5 percent, and excluded COLA (cost-of-living allowance), among other concessions.

He admitted that the union was aware that layoffs were coming. Wisconsin Public Radio reported that in

February and March, CNH workers in Mount Pleasant began hearing of a possible “rebalance,” i.e., mass firings due to “market conditions,” Glowacki said. The UAW did nothing to stop them.

To add insult to injury, Glowacki and the UAW are aware that more layoffs are coming. He revealed that CNH informed his local that it aims to cut the workforce even further and bring it down to roughly 170 employees by 2026. But what is the UAW doing to stop these cuts? Nothing.

The Democratic Party has sought to shift blame for the job cuts on foreign workers. As CNH has stated it will be shifting jobs from Wisconsin to Mexico, Wisconsin Democratic Senator Tammy Baldwin released a letter condemning the company for sending jobs to the south. Baldwin stated, “Moving production to Mexico as you are considering would not only be a slap in the face to the workers who have given so much, it would destroy the institutional knowledge that your workforce has developed over decades of building agricultural equipment.”

Such comments aim to distract from the role of management in the US and its lackeys in the union bureaucracy in slashing jobs. A fight to defend jobs in reality requires unity between American and Mexican workers against the transnational corporations which scour the earth for the cheapest labor.

The layoffs can and must be stopped, but that fight must take on a new form, wholly independent from the unions and the multiple arms of the bureaucracy, in the development of rank-and-file committees.

CNH workers affected by layoffs should reach out to their fellow workers in Iowa and globally, as well as autoworkers, UPS workers and others being hit with mass layoffs, to organize a rank-and-file committee to fight the job cuts. This committee must fight to prepare workers for a two-front war against both management and the UAW sellouts.

Workers should develop a plan for solidarity actions to stop the job cuts at different plants and workplaces in Wisconsin, neighboring states, across the country and globally.

Above all, building such committees requires a new perspective, one opposed to the nationalist divide-and-conquer strategies put forth by both capitalist parties, the Democratic and Republican parties, and instead fights for the unity of the international working class.



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