

Stellantis announces 2,450 permanent layoffs at Warren Truck, escalating global jobs bloodbath

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Work at Warren Truck? We want to hear from you: Fill out the form at the end to discuss joining a rank-and-file committee, and to tell us how the cuts are impacting you.

Workers are responding with shock and outrage to the brutal announcement by Stellantis Friday that it is cutting 2,450 jobs at the Warren Truck Assembly Plant in suburban Detroit beginning as soon as October 8.

In addition to full-time positions, the cuts include 216 skilled trades and 114 temporary workers, all together amounting to two thirds of the current unionized workforce of 3,700. The layoffs indefinitely reduce the plant to one shift and make the closure of the facility only a matter of time.

The cuts are part of relentless downsizing at the Detroit automakers in the aftermath of the supposedly “historic” contracts negotiated by United Auto Workers President Shawn Fain and hailed by President Biden. Earlier this year, Stellantis fired thousands of temps, also known as supplemental employees, who had been falsely promised full-time work by the UAW leadership in order to get the 2023 sellout contract ratified.

One Warren Truck worker told the WSWs, “We got a robocall today that we’re going down to one shift permanently. I don’t know where I am on the seniority list. I am not interested in a buyout. I don’t have enough years to make it worthwhile. I need to work. I have only been there one week for the last month and a half.”

He added, “We haven’t heard anything from the UAW.”

A second worker at the Warren Truck plant said, “We’re being told that there is no future for the truck model we build and that there are only 1,200 orders. It’s so expensive, we’re not surprised.”

The latest cuts are part of a global restructuring of the auto industry as companies seek to offload the cost of electric vehicle development onto the backs of workers. It takes place amid growing signs of recession and is only a foretaste of the jobs bloodbath to come.

The corporate attacks on jobs are extending into increasingly broader sections of the economy. Since the beginning of the year agriculture machinery maker Deere & Company has laid off some 2,000 workers at plants in Illinois and Iowa, 20 percent of its UAW-represented workforce. Rather than oppose the cuts the UAW has sought to stoke hostility against workers in Mexico.

The Warren Truck worker added, “This is happening everywhere. There is a big crisis in Europe because of the war. I guarantee that 99 percent of the workers are angry because Fain screwed us. He said, ‘I work for you. We’ve protected your jobs.’ But under the table he signed a deal that is getting rid of our jobs.

“We know that the union did not tell us the truth. They say they work for us but they work for the company.”

As of this writing UAW national headquarters has said nothing about the cuts. On Wednesday, Fain and hundreds of UAW officials held a rally at a hangar at Detroit Metropolitan Airport to help launch the campaign of Democratic presidential nominee Kamala Harris and her vice presidential pick, Minnesota Governor Tim Walz.

On Thursday, Harris and Walz met with UAW officials at the UAW Local 900 hall in Wayne, Michigan. Ford’s Wayne Assembly was one of the plants that struck during the phony 2023 “stand-up” strike, during which the UAW kept most of its membership on the job.

In response to the report of the layoffs, Socialist Equality Party vice presidential candidate Jerry White issued a video statement on Twitter urging rank-and-file Stellantis workers to organize a fight against the job cuts.

“Rank-and-file workers must take action,” White said. “This is the direct result of the sellout contract signed by Shawn Fain and the UAW bureaucracy last fall.”

He continued:

When Fain signed this contract President Biden

claimed it was an ‘historic’ contract. They all knew and Harris knew as well that what was being planned was massive job cuts.

This underscores the necessity of a fight as Will Lehman—who ran as a candidate for UAW president as a socialist— did for power to be transferred from the UAW apparatus to workers on the shop floor. Rank-and-file committees have to prepare strike action to defend jobs and living standards of every single worker.

If these corporations are allowed to go through with their job cuts, tens of thousands will be losing their jobs. Entire neighborhoods will be ravaged. There will be more drug abuse. There will be more families breaking up. There will be more suicides.

White concluded by urging workers to “build a powerful movement of the working class that begins with the needs of workers around the world instead of channeling billions and trillions to war.”

“If brothers and sisters are losing our jobs, we should go on strike”

The Warren Truck worker said:

During last year’s contract the UAW wouldn’t even tell us what they really agreed to. It’s like a game for them.

I think that we should strike to stop the layoffs. This company is making billions of dollars, but it is the people who are making the money. If brothers and sisters are losing our jobs, we should go on strike.

The worker continued:

You can see that Fain and Kamala Harris are on the same page. Many people, especially in Michigan, don’t want to vote for either party. They want to vote for a third party like the Socialist Equality Party. They’re starting to come to you because they know that the union is not going to help, they want to have a voice.

Referring to the attempt by Trump, the Biden administration and the UAW apparatus to scapegoat immigrants for the attacks on jobs and living standards, the Warren Truck worker said:

I tell workers immigrants are not the problem. It’s not the Mexicans coming into the country that are causing the job cuts. Trump and the media are trying to brainwash you. They keep pushing this and in the end it’s the working people who pay the price.

The Warren Truck layoffs follow years of threats by Stellantis management against the jobs of Warren Truck workers, blaming problems with absenteeism and quality on workers.

It takes place as a crisis escalates within the UAW apparatus, with the court-appointed UAW monitor citing a “culture of fear and retribution” within the union leadership. In June, it was revealed that the monitor had launched new investigations into corruption among the UAW’s top officers, including competing claims of wrongdoing by Fain and Secretary-Treasurer Margaret Mock.

In May, Fain removed UAW Vice President Rich Boyer as head of the union’s Stellantis department and took over the duties himself. He claimed that Boyer had not pushed back hard enough against the earlier round of job cuts. Boyer, for his part, asserted in a letter that Fain and his top aides were intimately involved in the contract negotiations and fully aware that Stellantis would not convert all of its temps to full-time status.

The entire UAW bureaucracy is deeply implicated in the attacks now taking place and will not lift a finger to defend jobs. The cuts will only be defeated by workers themselves organizing a collective response.

Rank-and-file committees must be formed comprising the most trusted militant workers to map out a campaign of action to defend jobs. These committees should fight to mobilize the broadest number of autoworkers, including workers at supplier plants. This should be combined with the demand for new UAW elections under the control of the rank and file.



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