

# Reject UAW's support for Trump's tariffs! Unite US, Mexican and Canadian autoworkers to defend jobs and living standards!

**Will Lehman**  
5 March 2025

In a statement posted Tuesday afternoon, United Auto Workers President Shawn Fain gave his full support to Trump's tariffs against Canada, Mexico and China, which will rapidly lead to mass layoffs throughout North America, including thousands of UAW members in the auto and auto parts industry.

Fain falsely claimed that Trump, who has been waging a war against immigrants, federal workers and social programs that tens of millions rely on, was acting on behalf of workers. "We look forward to working with the White House to shape the auto tariffs in April to benefit the working class," the UAW president declared.

Fain lied when he and the UAW apparatus backed Harris and the Democrats, claiming that they were allies of workers. Now he is lying when he claims that Trump's tariffs will benefit the working class.

Workers in the North American and global auto industry are tied together in a single process of world production. Top selling vehicles like the Chevrolet Silverado pickup truck, for example, have an estimated 30,000 individual parts, most of which crisscross the borders of the US, Canada and Mexico at least eight times.

Workers all over the world felt the effect of the breakdown of the global supply chain due to the global COVID-19 pandemic: parts shortages, production disruptions, shift cancellations and layoffs. With Trump's tariffs, much of the auto production in the US and Canada will "go to 2020 pandemic-level idling & temporary layoff within the week," according to Flavio Volpe, president of the Automotive Parts

Manufacturers' Association.

This is not a temporary disruption but the deliberate destruction of the globally integrated auto industry, which will lead to permanent job cuts for workers in all three countries.

But Fain dismisses the "talk about these tariffs disrupting the economy," and says if the corporations cut jobs, then "corporate America bears the blame for that decision." That will be cold comfort for workers losing their livelihoods. As for Fain, his nearly \$300,000 salary will not be affected.

America-First nationalism is based on the reactionary fantasy that the global economy, with its highly complex division of labor, supply chains and production facilities developed over decades, can be stuffed back within the confines of the national economy.

But history, from the Nazis' program of national autarchy to the passage of the Smoot-Hawley Tariff Act by the US Congress in 1930, has proven that trade war is the first step towards a world depression and world war. This is why Trump's trade war measures go hand-in-hand with his pledges to seize the Panama Canal and annex Greenland, Gaza and even Canada.

Most significantly, the trade war measures backed by the UAW bureaucracy are aimed at dividing American workers from our brothers and sisters in Mexico, Canada and China, strengthening the position of American corporate giants and preparing WWIII.

Fain and the rest of the sellouts in the UAW bureaucracy hope they will be able to milk low-paid workers for dues money at factories "reshored" to the

US. They are also vying for positions in the war cabinet of Trump's government of oligarchs, which plans to convert sections of the auto industry for military production.

There have been repeated efforts by Mexican workers to unite with US and Canadian workers, from the march of striking Matamoros auto parts workers to the Texas border to the solidarity action taken by GM workers at the Silao plant, who refused to produce more Silverado pickups during the 2019 GM strike in the US—an action that cost them their jobs.

How can American workers win the support of Mexican and Canadian workers for a fight against the transnational corporations if they support trade tariffs that would toss thousands of these workers onto the unemployment lines?

The International Workers Alliance of Rank-and-File Committees rejects the attempts by the UAW bureaucracy to line workers up behind "our" capitalist exploiters. Instead, the IWA-RFC fights for the unity of workers throughout North America and the world in a common fight to defend the jobs and living standards of all workers. This means expanding the network of autoworker rank-and-file committees with the aim of abolishing the UAW bureaucracy and transferring power from the union apparatus to shop floor workers.

It is time for autoworkers to join the growing movement against Trump, from the mass demonstrations by immigrant workers, the protests by federal workers, and young people demonstrating against war and fascist dictatorship.

Mass protests and strike action to defend the democratic and social rights of all workers must be launched and connected to the political struggle to expropriate the ill-gotten fortunes of Musk and the rest of the billionaires, put an end to capitalist exploitation and the outmoded nation-state system, and reorganize the global economy along socialist lines to meet the needs of the world's producers, the international working class.



To contact the WSWS and the Socialist Equality Party visit:

**[wsws.org/contact](http://wsws.org/contact)**