

# Defend the social rights of the working class! For an independent, global movement against mass layoffs!

International Workers Alliance of Rank-and-File Committees  
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The International Workers Alliance of Rank-and-File Committees (IWA-RFC) calls on workers to organize a global movement of the working class against mass layoffs, in opposition to the corporate parties and the pro-corporate union bureaucracies.

On Sunday, the IWA-RFC sponsored an online meeting titled “Build rank-and-file committees to fight layoffs and hunger!,” attended by more than 200 people. It featured powerful statements from workers in a wide range of industries around the world, some of which will be published on the WSWs in the coming days.

A central focus of the meeting was the wave of layoffs now unfolding on a scale not seen in years, even decades. According to the outplacement firm Challenger, Gray & Christmas, US companies have announced 1.1 million layoffs so far this year, a 65 percent increase over 2022. Last month’s total was the highest for any October in 20 years and the highest for any month since 2008, during the Great Recession. One recent analysis found that 22 states, plus Washington, D.C., are already in recession.

The crisis is international. In the German auto industry alone, 90,000 jobs are set to be eliminated by 2030. Thousands of autoworkers are being laid off across Europe, the United States and other countries, as workers are forced to bear the cost of slumping sales and the impact of tariffs on global supply chains.

The ruling class is weaponizing artificial intelligence against the working class. The World Economic Forum estimates that 92 million jobs will be eliminated through AI by 2030. This threat extends to both industrial workers and white-collar workers. While only 45,000 job cuts in the Challenger report directly cited AI as the cause, 30,000 of those occurred in the last month alone, underscoring the rapid pace of implementation.

Alongside the growth of unemployment and social

misery, unimaginable fortunes are being amassed by the ultra-wealthy. Ten US billionaires increased their collective wealth by \$700 billion over the past year. Elon Musk—the fascistic ignoramus and head of Tesla—has been awarded a pay package worth up to \$1 trillion.

At the same time, there are mounting signs of another global economic crisis, potentially on a scale even greater than the 2008–2009 downturn. The ruling class is determined that the cost of this crisis, the product of unprecedented financial bubbles, be imposed entirely on the working class.

This is being carried out in three ways. First, corporations are intensifying exploitation through longer work hours, lower wages, and attacks on workplace safety. This accounts for the unending string of horrific industrial accidents, including the crash of a UPS cargo jet earlier this month and the gruesome deaths of two US postal workers just this past week.

The second method is the introduction of new technologies to extract more labor from fewer workers. This is the significance of the AI boom. The CEO of Lear Corporation captured its essence when he described the goal of “lights-out manufacturing”—factories operating without human intervention, run entirely by AI.

The third method, as in the early 20th century, is war: imperialist plunder to seize access to raw materials, markets and supply chains. This is the significance of US and European backing for the war against Russia, the genocide in Gaza, and the preparations for an even bloodier conflict against China.

This program cannot be imposed through democratic means. Through Trump and his counterparts in other countries, the oligarchy is seeking to establish dictatorships to suppress the growing resistance it is already provoking.

That is the “solution” of the corporate oligarchy. The solution of the working class must be the development of a network of rank-and-file committees in every industry and workplace, to bring the force of the working class to bear against the entrenched power of the oligarchy.

Workers must fight for workers’ power and workers’ control over production, harnessing the surplus created by new technologies to improve, not lower, the standard of living for the masses.

There is enormous opposition developing. Strikes are breaking out all over the world, including among tens of thousands of US healthcare workers, among military and civilian Boeing workers, and in many other sectors. In Italy, preparations are underway for another general strike, focused on the genocide in Gaza.

But this opposition faces a fundamental obstacle in the trade union apparatus, which functions as an instrument of management and of the capitalist governments.

The unions have not proposed any serious struggle against mass layoffs. Worse, they are helping to carry them out. In the US, 48,000 people have been laid off this year at UPS, the product of the Teamsters’ 2023 sellout contract. Indefinite layoffs are beginning at Ford’s Dearborn Truck Plant, but the United Auto Workers does nothing except instruct workers on how to apply for buyouts!

Meanwhile, the heads of both unions and many others are openly backing Trump’s “America First” economic war on the world, falsely claiming it will save jobs which they themselves have helped to destroy.

A basic task of the growing working class movement is a rebellion against the union apparatus and the destruction of its social influence. The apparatus must be abolished and replaced with new, democratic organizations, rank-and-file committees. This is the aim of the International Workers Alliance of Rank-and-File Committees.

The IWA-RFC meeting on Sunday gave powerful expression to the voice of the working class—angry, eloquent and determined, not cowed by the brutality of the Trump administration.

Speakers included US government workers discussing the recent shutdown, postal workers exposing unsafe conditions that led to a death at a Michigan facility last week, autoworkers confronting mass layoffs, and educators defending the right to public education. The meeting also included reports on the class struggle in Canada and Europe.

This must be developed into a powerful movement of the working class in defense of its basic social rights. The

demand must be: Not a single layoff to pay for the crisis of Wall Street’s making! The surpluses created by artificial intelligence must be used to meet the social rights of the working class, including the right to healthcare, pensions, housing and education!

Workers must reject the nationalist poison that seeks to play workers in one country off against workers in another and to blame immigrants and minorities. These are not enemies but brothers and sisters, all being exploited by the same financial oligarchy.

We demand an end to the wars, the dismantling of the military-industrial apparatus, and the use of the resources spent on the destruction of human beings instead for the benefit of human beings.

The ruling elite will no doubt retort, pointing to market forces and the demands of stockholders, that this program is unrealistic. But this only shows that social rights are incompatible with the anarchy of the marketplace. Even the wealthy themselves depend not on the “free market” but on trillions in government bailouts.

Workers must connect the defense of jobs with the end of the domination of the oligarchy. We must take control of the economy out of their hands through the expropriation of the banks and major corporations and their placement under workers’ control. At the same time, this is the only realistic basis for fighting dictatorship in the US and around the world, since the selfish and irrational class interests of the capitalist class are the source of dictatorship.

The IWA-RFC will do everything it can to render assistance. Contact us now and begin fighting.



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