

Remarks to IWA-RFC meeting

# Rank-and-file committees and the fight against layoffs, hunger and the industrial slaughterhouse

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*The following speech was delivered by Tom Hall, a reporter for the World Socialist Web Site, at the online meeting hosted by the International Workers Alliance of Rank-and-File Committees (IWA-RFC) on Sunday, November 16, 2025. Titled “Build rank-and-file committees to fight layoffs and hunger!,” the event brought together more than 200 workers and supporters from around the world.*

We have called this meeting because we are in the midst of a war on the working class. The task before us is to prepare a counteroffensive rooted in the independent organization of workers, based on the fight against inequality and oligarchy and on a program that advances the unified interests of workers all over the world.

This is a war with economic, political and military dimensions. It is being carried out by a financial oligarchy whose wealth and power have expanded to unprecedented heights. Elon Musk’s new pay package from Tesla totaling up to \$1 trillion is only one recent example. This is a car company that made \$5 billion in profit last year, never captured more than a few percentage points of the global car market, and whose sales and revenue are declining.

But this is only one of the more extreme examples. A mountain of statistics makes the case for the expropriation of this layer. Oxfam reports that just 10 US billionaires saw their wealth increase six-fold since 2020. Over the past year, they amassed \$700 billion more in wealth, from \$1.79 trillion to \$2.5 trillion.

Inequality has reached levels never before seen, and it dominates every aspect of life in the United States—and,

indeed, the entire world.

For generations, the ruling elite in America has enforced its political domination through two corporate parties. But with the emergence of Donald Trump, his flagrant violations of the Constitution, and his attacks on democratic rights, their class interests are expressed more clearly and crudely than ever. Trump is the instrument for establishing a corporate dictatorship. The Democrats will not fight this because they are the other Wall Street party.

The recently ended government shutdown was used to attack the social programs on which tens of millions rely. For want of just \$8 billion, food stamp recipients were allowed to go hungry and starve this month. Yet the same amount was easily found to pay military salaries and secure loyalty for Trump. Meanwhile, Wall Street knows that if its financial swindling collapses, trillions will be found in a matter of days to bail it out.

Oligarchy and democracy are incompatible. Indeed, the destruction of democratic rights is the political expression of the attack by the ruling class on workers’ living standards and social rights. The goal is to throw workers’ conditions back a century. This cannot be done even with the semblance of democracy.

This social regression is shown graphically in the unending series of disasters. Explosions and fires at workplaces have become a regular part of American life. This month’s UPS plane crash that killed 14 people was the product of corporate recklessness. The aircraft was past its lifespan and had major fuel tank repairs. More will emerge about the criminal behavior of UPS management.

These horrific accidents are caused by relentless speedup and the flouting of safety. This includes the horrific death of postal worker Nick Acker, near Detroit, who was sucked into a mail sorting machine. His body was not found for another eight hours.

This year, US corporations have announced 1.1 million job cuts, according to Challenger, Gray & Christmas. Layoffs continue through the holiday season. Verizon has announced 15,000 cuts. UPS boasts that it has eliminated 48,000 jobs this year alone. Amazon has announced 14,000 more. The auto industry all over the world is cutting thousands.

The corporations are weaponizing AI to eliminate entire sections of the labor force. Amazon hopes to use automation breakthroughs to hire 500,000 fewer workers over the next few years. A World Economic Forum study estimates 92 million job losses by 2030.

The question is: Where is the money going? First, it is flowing into the pockets of Wall Street, which expects massive superprofits through increased exploitation. AI itself has become a massive financial bubble, with trillions being poured into it. And enormous resources are being prepared for new wars.

AI is not the problem. Properly harnessed to progressive social aims, increases in productivity could be used to reduce the workweek with no loss in pay, improve healthcare and pensions, and eliminate hunger and poverty. That it is being used for the opposite purpose is due entirely to who controls it—the capitalist oligarchy.

The ruling class tries to divert attention by blaming foreign workers and immigrants. The trade union bureaucrats—including UAW president Shawn Fain and Teamsters president Sean O'Brien—join in, eager to cover up their own role in betraying workers' interests and pushing through sellout contracts. But the reality is that workers all over the planet confront the same oligarchy and have the same social interests.

Workers must not only resist further attacks, but we must go on the offensive, fighting for the redistribution of wealth and for workers' control of production to end the parasitic domination of the ruling class.

This is what the International Workers Alliance of Rank-and-File Committees fights for: the building of an independent movement and organizations rooted not in appeals to the ruling class, but in the struggle for equality and against oligarchy. We fight to end the wars

of plunder that kill and maim workers all over the world. We fight against dictatorship by fighting for democratic control of society by the working class, the vast majority that creates all wealth. And we fight for the vast transfer of wealth back to where it belongs: the working class.

We insist that this movement must take the form of rank-and-file committees because it must be completely independent, from both corporate parties and from the lackeys in the union bureaucracy. Rank-and-file committees are a new type of organization to fight for genuine democratic control in the workplace, the abolition of the bureaucratic apparatus in the trade unions, and unification of workers all over the world in a common struggle. Such committees have been built across the world in the past few years, and you will hear from some of those workers today.

Everyone at this meeting has a responsibility to decide what they are going to do. Nothing will resolve itself. Inaction is the surest way to guarantee victory for the most reactionary forces without a fight.

We urge you to take the following steps:

First, sign up to learn more and build rank-and-file committees at [wsws.org/workers](https://wsws.org/workers).

Second, identify your most trustworthy coworkers and begin organizing small group discussions about what you intend to do and what your demands should be.

Third, out of this, found a rank-and-file committee at your workplace. Write up a list of demands and circulate them among your coworkers. We will publish them in the *World Socialist Web Site*.

Finally, affiliate with the IWA-RFC. This will give you the power to break out of isolation, to discuss and collaborate with workers all over the world, and to prepare joint actions.



To contact the WSWS and the Socialist Equality Party visit:

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