

# For a united global movement against layoffs in the auto industry!

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 autoworkers around the world to join a unified counteroffensive against the escalating bloodbath of layoffs sweeping the global auto industry.

The defense of the right to a job requires common action on a world scale against the transnational auto companies. This fight requires the building of new organizational structures: rank-and-file committees, democratically controlled by workers and based on the independent interests of the working class, not on nationalist collaboration with the capitalist elite.

On Friday, over 1,100 workers are expected to have their last day at General Motors' Factory Zero in Detroit. The name of the plant (Zero Crashes, Zero Emissions, Zero Congestion) reflected GM's claim that it was the centerpiece of the company's electric vehicle future. Now the plant is to go down to a single shift and could soon be closed altogether.

Layoffs are spreading throughout the industry. Ford has announced it will end production of the electric F-150 truck, placing the future of the Rouge Electric Vehicle Center in doubt. Its battery subsidiary, BlueOval, is firing all 1,800 workers at its plant in Louisville, Kentucky, converting the facility to energy storage production for AI data centers. GM's battery subsidiary, Ultium, is cutting thousands of jobs in Spring Hill, Tennessee and Lordstown, Ohio. The latter plant had been touted as a replacement for the historic Lordstown Assembly Plant, which GM shuttered in 2019.

The United Auto Workers bureaucracy has said nothing about any of these job cuts. This guilty silence reflects its own role in helping to eliminate thousands of jobs since the phony 2023 "standup strike." The UAW has also remained silent on dangerous working conditions, including those that led to the death of skilled tradesman Ronald Adams Sr. this past April.

The only sustained and serious coverage of these developments has come from the *World Socialist Web Site* and from the IWA-RFC, which has exposed conditions

that the union bureaucracy seeks to conceal.

What are the basic principles required for a genuine fight?

**First**, the IWA-RFC calls on workers to reject all layoffs. We reject the "right" of the auto companies to profit and insist on the principle that every worker has the right to a job. This is literally a life-and-death question. Layoffs mean evictions, bankruptcies, the loss of health coverage, family crises, substance abuse and deaths from despair.

The right to employment must be enforced by workers' control. Workers must insist on the final say over all questions relating to employment, safety and production. If production must be reduced, the work week must be reduced with no corresponding decline in paychecks.

To prepare for a fight, workers must demand the immediate publication of all future layoff plans currently being concealed by management and their enablers in the UAW and other unions internationally. These plans affect the welfare of society as a whole and cannot be treated as private corporate information.

Workers are being made to bear the cost of the irrational and socially destructive implementation of the electric vehicle transition. The technology has the potential to lower transportation costs and reduce carbon emissions, but for the automakers, the attraction lies exclusively in the prospect of lower labor costs and higher profit margins.

**Second**, the fight must be guided by an international strategy that rejects "America First," "Germany über alles" and similar slogans that serve only corporate interests. Protectionist tariffs have led to chaos by tearing apart a globally integrated productive process. Led by the United States, a struggle is underway over control of lithium, cobalt and rare earth elements essential for battery technology and over access to advanced semiconductor chips. Under US pressure, the Dutch government recently seized control of a Chinese-owned semiconductor firm, prompting retaliatory export bans by China.

This logic leads inexorably toward war. Indeed, the new war in Venezuela is motivated by the fact that some 80 percent of the country's oil exports go to China.

The struggle of each against all has produced layoffs worldwide. The German auto industry has cut approximately 50,000 jobs amid a sharp fall in exports, particularly to the United States and China. Automakers internationally have been hit by the ending of EV tax credits under the Trump administration, which is openly arguing for a US exit from the EV market altogether due to the commanding lead of Chinese automakers. Meanwhile, so-called “reshoring” through punitive tariffs has devastated the Canadian auto industry, producing thousands of layoffs.

A central principle in the fight for the international unity of the working class is the defense of immigrant workers, who are the targets of vicious scapegoating by the Trump administration as it oversees massive Gestapo-style raids invading entire communities. Workers must reject the filthy lie promoted by Trump and similar forces internationally that immigrants are to blame for the social crisis produced by the capitalist ruling elites.

**Third**, the fight against management must be inseparably linked to a fight against the union bureaucracy. In every country, the apparatuses of the unions are closing ranks more tightly with “their own” oligarchs. In Germany, the IG Metall union promotes “social partnership” with German automakers; in Canada, Unifor is openly aligning with Canadian capitalists against their American rivals.

Nowhere is the corrupt relationship between union and management more pronounced than in the United States. The United Auto Workers has helped US automakers destroy over 1 million jobs since 1979 and transform Detroit from the city with the highest standard of living to the poorest big city in America. This is the product of its nationalist and corporatist program, claiming that workers must accept sacrifices in order to keep “American” companies competitive.

UAW President Shawn Fain promoted Trump’s tariffs as a supposed boon for jobs. But far from “saving” “American” jobs, the UAW’s trade war strategy is a major factor in the mass layoffs. Meanwhile, the UAW remains silent on the jobs bloodbath within the US, with 1.2 million layoffs announced by employers and the economy heading toward recession.

The UAW openly supports war. Invoking the mobilization of US industry during World War II, Fain presents a new world war practically as a jobs program, suggesting the conversion of excess industrial capacity to weapons production. His counterparts in Europe support breakneck rearmament programs, the logic of which is direct war between Western Europe and Russia.

The UAW treats the layoffs as inevitable and tries to convince workers that there is nothing they can do. In Europe, IG Metall holds symbolic marches and, at best,

negotiates for slightly better severance packages—while its top officials collect hundreds of thousands of euros sitting on corporate works councils alongside management. In every country, the union bureaucracy acts to suppress resistance and protect the interests of the corporations.

But workers are not powerless! The International Workers Alliance of Rank-and-File Committees (IWA-RFC) is mobilizing the working class as a class, uniting workers across borders to strengthen their position through international solidarity. The trade union bureaucracies divide and conquer—just as Trump and the far right do—whereas the IWA-RFC builds unity to fight back.

This means developing a global network of rank-and-file committees, affiliated with the IWA-RFC, to organize independent initiatives from below. These committees are based on democratic control by workers themselves, not the diktats of pro-corporate union officials or the parties of the capitalist establishment, whether Democratic, Republican or their counterparts internationally.

Ultimately, the interests of workers are incompatible with the capitalist profit system. The fight must advance toward the expropriation of the auto industry from private hands and its transformation into a public utility under workers’ democratic control.

This is essential not only to protect jobs, wages and living standards, but also to halt the spiral toward global war between rival capitalist cliques and to place production under rational, social control. Social ownership of the auto industry would also enable new technologies—including electric vehicles—to be used for an environmentally sustainable future, not as weapons to bludgeon workers with job cuts and speedup.

The time to act is now! Fill out the form below to contact the IWA-RFC and take the first step in building a unified global movement of the working class in defense of jobs, democratic rights and the future.



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