

# Trump to visit Mack Trucks plant in Pennsylvania on Tuesday to promote militarism and economic nationalism

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President Donald Trump is scheduled to visit the Mack Trucks facility in Lower Macungie Township, Pennsylvania on Tuesday in a carefully stage-managed exercise to promote economic nationalism and conceal the ever-worsening conditions of workers. The visit comes just days after Will Lehman, a rank-and-file worker at the same plant, was nominated for president of the United Auto Workers at the union's Constitutional Convention in Detroit.

Trump's appearance was announced last Thursday by Pennsylvania Republican Congressman Dan Meuser, who praised Mack Trucks as a "symbol of America's manufacturing strength" and thanked Trump for "standing up for American workers." In a statement released Monday, Mack Trucks confirmed the visit, framing it as part of "the ongoing celebration of America's 250th Anniversary" and describing itself as having played "a key role in building, moving and defending America for more than 125 years."

The event has been organized as a tightly controlled affair. Attendance requires pre-registration, with a limit of two tickets per mobile number on a first-come, first-served basis. The White House has learned from experience. Trump's last major auto plant visit—to the Ford Rouge Complex in Dearborn on January 13—ended in a debacle.

Assembly-line worker Thomas "TJ" Sabula denounced the president on the factory floor, calling him a "pedophile protector." Trump responded by shouting profanities and raising his middle finger, and a video shot by another worker went viral. Sabula was immediately suspended without pay.

The UAW, which had signed off on the visit without notifying workers, issued no public protest and did

nothing to win his reinstatement. Sabula was eventually reinstated with no discipline after GoFundMe campaigns raised over \$800,000 from more than 30,000 donors. In Macungie, the ticket registration system, the pre-screening and the company and UAW's silence are all designed to ensure the president faces a controlled audience, not the actual workforce.

The association of Trump, a representative of corporate oligarchy engaged in the systematic destruction of every Constitutional right, with the revolutionary and egalitarian traditions of 1776 is a travesty. Trump will not be citing Jefferson, Franklin or any of the other Founding Fathers, but will promote his filthy brand of economic nationalism, militarism and gangsterism.

The fact that Mack Trucks is a subsidiary of Volvo Group, the Swedish transnational that is itself partially owned by the Chinese automotive conglomerate Zhejiang Geely Holding Group, exposes the reactionary character of the "America-First" nationalism promoted by Trump and the UAW bureaucracy. Workers in the US are part of an international division of labor and have the same interests as workers in Europe, Asia and every region.

Earlier this year, Volvo North America cited uncertainty over Trump's tariffs—fully backed by UAW President Shawn Fain—for cutting 800 positions across its North American operations.

At the same time the UAW International and Local 677 have sought to channel workers' legitimate anger over job losses into anti-Mexican chauvinism because Volvo executives have decided to move some truck production to their new plant in Monterrey, Mexico.

Trump will no doubt promote his massive military

spending, presenting this as a job creation plan for American workers. Just days before Trump's arrival, Republican Congressman Ryan Mackenzie announced a new \$47 million federal contract for military heavy dump truck production at the smaller Mack Defense facility in nearby Allentown. In 2018, Mack Defense was awarded a contract for up to 683 M917A3 armored heavy dump trucks valued at up to \$296.4 million.

Tuesday's visit takes place amid a sweeping effort to convert civilian manufacturing for military production. Trump has invoked the Defense Production Act; GM Defense and Lockheed Martin have pooled capabilities; the Pentagon has enlisted GM and Ford in an arms buildup for the wars in Ukraine, Gaza and Iran. UAW President Shawn Fain has backed this program along with Trump's tariffs and "re-shoring" agenda. But where these policies have generated investment announcements, they have not generated jobs: companies are deploying automation to cut headcount, not expand it.

Tuesday is not the first time a sitting president has come to Macungie to drape himself in the image of American manufacturing. In July 2021, Biden walked this same floor, flanked by Mack's president and UAW Local 677 officials. They were silent about the five-week strike just concluded by Volvo truck workers in Dublin, Virginia, whom the UAW had forced to accept a contract they had rejected three times. During that struggle, a rank-and-file committee reached out to Swedish workers at Volvo and received powerful support.

Against the economic nationalism promoted by both Trump and the Fain bureaucracy, Lehman's campaign advances an explicitly socialist and internationalist program. He calls for the abolition of the union bureaucracy and the transfer of power to rank-and-file committees on the shop floor; for opposition to both capitalist parties; for the defense of immigrant workers; and for the building of solidarity with workers in Mexico, Canada and across the world against the transnational corporations that exploit them all.

The way forward, Lehman's campaign insists, lies not in the economic nationalism of Trump and the union officialdom but in the independent mobilization of workers themselves—building rank-and-file committees to organize and coordinate their struggles in opposition to the bureaucracy and to the war drive of

American imperialism.



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