

# Trump at Mack Trucks promotes trade war and xenophobia, hails UAW bureaucracy

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In a campaign-style event at the Mack Trucks plant in Macungie, Pennsylvania on Tuesday, President Trump sought to posture as a defender of American workers in a fascistic speech that promoted his tariffs and trade war policy in front of a carefully vetted audience. A large banner in back of the stage read “American Workers First,” but few if any Mack workers were present.

In reality, Trump’s speech was aimed not at workers but directed at the trade union bureaucracy and the United Auto Workers apparatus, in particular, which has provided critical backing for the administration based on the shared program of nationalism, militarism and trade war.

The event took place with Trump’s approval ratings at the lowest level of his presidency, just 29 percent in Pennsylvania, in the wake of the Iran war and soaring inflation driven by Iran’s closing of the Strait of Hormuz. Republican Congressman Ryan Mackenzie in the 7th Congressional District, where the Macungie Mack plant is located, is facing a difficult bid for re-election in a race that is considered crucial if the Republicans are to retain a House majority.

As Trump began his speech, security manhandled and dragged a protester out of the hall after he reportedly shouted “pedophile protector” in reference to Trump’s coverup of the sex offender Jeffrey Epstein. The incident recalled the attempted victimization of Ford autoworker “TJ” Sabula after a similar incident during Trump’s tour the Ford Rouge Complex in Dearborn, Michigan in January.

Nationwide, inflation has sparked a surge in strikes by autoworkers, as well as workers in other sectors. One reflection has been a series of contract rejections by auto parts workers and the month-long strike at American Axle in Three Rivers, Michigan.

The most conscious expression of this growth in militancy was the nomination last week of rank-and-file Mack Trucks worker and socialist Will Lehman for president of the United Auto Workers to challenge incumbent UAW President Shawn Fain, who is a nationalist and promoter of Trump’s tariffs.

Trump’s speech lasted almost an hour and a half and was laden with its usual ballast of lies and fascistic demagoguery. While presented as part of a celebration of the 250th anniversary of the Declaration of Independence, Trump made no reference to the ideals of the American Revolution at the event. His only reference to the anniversary was to celebrate the deranged Ultimate Fighting Championship bloodfest staged on the White House lawn on June 14. Trump even invited UFC fighters Bo Nickal and Anthony Cassar to the stage.

Trump began his remarks by praising Mack Trucks as a great company and denouncing “illegal immigrants” and “globalist politicians that let other countries rip you off and close your factories, rob your jobs, take them away to foreign lands.” He boasted, “I stood up to the trade cheaters, their cheaters, and abusers, and violators of the world.”

In fact, workers in the US are linked with workers in other countries in a system of global production that makes it virtually impossible to determine the “nationality” of any particular vehicle. This is apparent at Mack Trucks, an “American company” owned by transnational Volvo Group, which itself is partially owned by the Chinese automotive conglomerate Zhejiang Geely Holding Group.

The president falsely claimed that his tariffs have led to a surge in manufacturing jobs in the US, a decline in the unemployment rate and the slashing of the trade deficit. In fact, unemployment is rising, and 2025 saw a

net decline in manufacturing jobs and no change in the trade deficit. Earlier this year, Mack Trucks parent Volvo Group announced it planned to cut 800 jobs across North America, citing uncertainty due to Trump's tariffs.

Most significant was Trump's praise for the trade union apparatus. At one point, Trump declared, "I just spent time with the heads of your unions, and they are terrific. They work with us." Trump cited by name Tim Hertzog, shop chairman of UAW Local 677 at the Mack Trucks plant in McCungie. The UAW and the leadership of Local 677 have been promoting stridently nationalist, anti-Mexican agitation over Mack Truck's plan to open a heavy-duty truck plant in Monterrey, Mexico later this year. They are even distributing T-shirts with the logo "not made in Mexico" to Mack workers.

Trump has boasted of the UAW's support for his tariff program and views the support of the union apparatus as critical to US war plans, including the Pentagon initiative to expand the US defense industrial base and replenish depleted military stockpiles.

For his part, Fain often talks about the "Arsenal of Democracy" in reference to the militarization of the US economy, in particular, the auto plants, during World War Two, and President Biden calling the unions his "domestic NATO." Trump has invoked the Defense Production Act to boost military production and has enlisted GM and Ford in an arms buildup for the wars in Ukraine, Gaza and Iran.

At the UAW convention in Detroit, Fain invited an array of Democratic politicians to speak, who all promoted economic nationalism along the same essential lines as Trump. Fain himself barely mentioned Trump during the convention.

In his Macungie speech, Trump spoke repeatedly of "radical leftist communists" being elected, in reference to various figures being promoted by the Democratic Socialists of America, such as D.C. mayoral candidate Janeese Lewis George. Trump's real concern is not the fake socialists from the DSA but the radicalization of the working class, including the nomination of a socialist autoworker running for UAW president. The UAW apparatus shares this fear.

In a statement posted on his X social media account after Trump's visit to Mack Trucks, Lehman said:

As candidate for UAW president, I denounce the visit of Donald Trump to my home plant, Mack Trucks in Macungie, Pennsylvania. Trump came to stoke nationalist divisions and try to line workers up behind the interests of American corporations in competition with their rivals abroad. Workers need to understand that nationalist ideology is a poison that must be actively fought. That is shown every day in the ICE raids where our friends and neighbors are being dragged away, and in the escalating war, where working people are paying the price in lives, livelihoods and social services.

Trump told workers here that he is delivering for them. But the stock market and the wealth of the oligarchy is one thing, and your paycheck is another. Reality is the judge of this presidency, and the verdict is already in.

Trump, in his remarks, singled out UAW officials for praise—an expression of the ongoing collaboration between the union apparatus, the corporations and the state. Under Shawn Fain, the UAW has itself embraced Trump's economic nationalism that pits us against our class brothers and sisters in Mexico, Canada and around the world. What is required is the international unity of the working class against both corporate management and the union bureaucracy that is an arm of management.



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