

VW Action Committee calls for strikes and industrial action at all sites. Break the control of the IG Metall union apparatus! Defend every job!

Volkswagen Action Committee
9 July 2026

The following statement was issued by the VW Action Committee, an independent organization of workers formed in Germany to fight both management and the pro-corporate bureaucracy of the German autoworkers union, IG Metall. Volkswagen is moving forward with plans to cut 100,000 jobs and close four plants in Germany, the deepest attack on VW workers ever and part of a global wave of layoffs in the auto industry.

Dear Brothers and Sisters,

Unless we take the defence of our jobs into our own hands, VW management's slash-and-burn policy will know no bounds. The IG Metall union and the works council it leads are trying to cover their tracks. Yet everyone knows that they work hand in glove with management and have long been informed, via the supervisory board and the economic committee, of all plans for plant closures and redundancies. The feigned indignation of some union speakers is pure hypocrisy, and the call for "more protests!" is a bluff.

The fact is that at the end of 2024, IG Metall and the works council had already agreed to the destruction of 35,000 jobs, 15,000 of them at Wolfsburg (site of VW's global headquarters and the largest auto plant in the world) alone. They signed an agreement allowing wage cuts of up to 20 percent, reduced working hours without full wage compensation, more than halving training places and abolishing holiday pay, or rather converting it into an "IG Metall member bonus."

The union apparatus and works council (in German labor law, a committee of elected employee representatives that co-manages workplace relations) have become so desperate that they are trying to lure members with such "bonuses." But even that no longer works. Resistance is growing in the plants. IG Metall officials and works council reps are being seen for what they are: the biggest obstacle to organising a serious fight to defend jobs and wages.

VW chief Oliver Blume and the oligarchs behind him—the Porsche and Piëch owner families—can act with such brazenness because they know IG Metall is working to block a united struggle. They are announcing ever more drastic waves of redundancies: first 35,000, then 50,000, then 100,000. Some media outlets are already writing of 140,000.

IG Metall is deploying its entire bureaucratic apparatus and its plant officials to prevent workers from uniting across all sites against the slash-and-burn policy. From the union's standpoint, protests are meant to contain workers' anger, not organise a real fight.

In the call for protests, union leader Christiane Benner and works council Chairwoman Daniela Cavallo appeal to the VW executive board finally to "do its homework." It suggests VW "Sort out the optimisation potential between the brands" rather than attacking workers' rights. The call also imposes a strike ban on the workforce: "Caution: These [protests] are not ... warning strikes," it declares, adding that an industrial "peace obligation" still applies.

In reality, the jobs massacre by the executive board means it has already abrogated the "peace obligation" and is launching a frontal assault on the workforce. Yet IG Metall wants to bind us to a one-sided industrial peace and prevent strikes. We will not allow that!

A look beyond the plant gates shows that the same game is being played everywhere. Over 100,000 jobs have already been cut in the automotive and supplier industries over the past two years. The German Association of the Automotive Industry (VDA) has announced that a further 125,000 jobs are on the line.

IG Metall has not organised a single industrial dispute to defend jobs. Instead, it has signed contract after contract and plant agreement after plant agreement, which have all destroyed jobs.

Establishing Action Committees and preparing for strike action

The first step in the fight against the jobs massacre is to continue building and strengthening the rank-and-file Action Committee. We need this new organisational structure in order to break the dictatorial control of the union officials and works council, with their constant intimidation and threats.

We therefore invite you to an online meeting on Wednesday,

July 15, at 6:00 p.m. Central European Time. You can register completely anonymously.

At the meeting, we want to discuss the following questions:

First: Prepare coordinated strikes at all sites—and of further industrial action, up to and including the occupation of plants and departments threatened with closure—with the aim of defending every job.

When our opponents say that this is utterly impossible, they are merely making clear that the capitalist profit system is no longer compatible with the population's basic needs, because it uses every change in production to increase profits and enrich the owners and investors. But the right to work and to a wage is a fundamental right. It stands above the enrichment of the wealthy.

When the Porsche and Piëch oligarch families—whose billion-dollar fortunes go back to the Nazi dictatorship and the exploitation of forced labourers—now plunder the corporation and grab the choicest cuts for themselves, we have a clear answer: The building of the Action Committee must become the starting point for a struggle to expropriate the oligarchs and establish workers' control over production.

Second: Prevent the conversion of production to armaments and war goods.

There is a close connection between the wave of mass redundancies—whose scale is comparable only to the Great Depression of the 1930s—and the policy of military rearmament and war, which is being financed by massive social cuts.

The crisis in the automotive industry is not a temporary cyclical crisis that will subside in the foreseeable future and give way to stable conditions. Nor is it a structural or transformation crisis caused by the switch to electric vehicles that will be overcome once the new technology has succeeded. Rather, the crisis in auto is a sharp expression of the historic crisis of the capitalist system on a world scale.

The close international integration and globalisation of production means there is no longer a “national” car—or any other purely national product—in any country. It has sharply intensified the contradiction between international production and the obsolete nation-state system on which capitalism rests. Every major capitalist power is now fighting for raw materials, energy sources and markets. The international trade war is becoming a prelude to a world war.

In the last century, this historic crisis of capitalism already produced fascist dictatorships and two world wars. Today, too, the fight against war is moving back to the centre of the class struggle. The government is pushing ahead with the biggest rearmament programme since Hitler and financing it through massive social

cuts affecting the unemployed, pensioners, education and the healthcare system. It is supported in this by all parliamentary parties. In the Action Committee, we will develop and discuss plans for how the fight against mass redundancies can be combined with mobilisation against war and rearmament.

Third: Cooperate internationally at all sites.

VW and all other car manufacturers are global companies. Our allies are the workers at all other sites. Our central strategy is internationalism. Trade war and war are justified with hysterical nationalism and chauvinism. The trade union bureaucrats spread the poison of nationalism with their demands for national industrial policy and securing production sites. They divide workers and pit those in one country against workers in other countries and other regions. We counter this reactionary policy of division with the unity and close cooperation of the global working class.

Workers have no fatherland. Workers everywhere have the same problems. They are confronted with the same global corporations and with governments that deepen exploitation and suppress all resistance to it.

We are building the VW Action Committee as part of the International Workers Alliance of Rank-and-File Committees (IWA-RFC). Anyone who doubts whether and how the domination of IG Metall can be broken should look at the campaign of American autoworker Will Lehman.

Lehman is a socialist and works at Mack Trucks in Macungie, Pennsylvania. Last month, he was nominated as a presidential candidate at the United Auto Workers (UAW) congress in Detroit. He fights for the abolition of the union bureaucracy and the transfer of power to the rank and file.

After his nomination, he particularly emphasised the unity of workers across the whole world in a statement. Lehman wrote: “Workers are fighting against the corporations, against the bureaucracy that serves them, and against the profit system to which people's needs are subordinated. This struggle must not stop at a factory gate or at a national border. In it, workers must be united across all plants, in all industries and all countries.”

If that is possible in the United States, then it is also possible here! It is time to become active. Waiting is not an option for nothing will change until we change it.



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