

As deadline for Warren Truck layoffs nears, UAW President Fain holds phony “Day of Action”

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With the deadline for the layoff of 2,450 workers at the Stellantis Warren Truck Assembly Plant just north of Detroit fast approaching, UAW President Shawn Fain spoke at a sparsely attended rally near the plant last Thursday, where he proposed zero action while promoting various Democratic Party politicians as supposed allies of workers.

The mislabeled “Day of Action,” held at the UAW Local 140 union hall a few blocks from Warren Truck, was largely boycotted by workers, who have seen Fain betray one promise after another. Perhaps a hundred, mostly lower and middle level union officials, joined the crowd that heard speeches from Fain, as well as Michigan Democratic Congresswoman Haley Stevens and other Democrats.

Outside the rally, Socialist Equality Party presidential candidate Joseph Kishore distributed a statement calling for the mobilization of a rank-and-file rebellion of the working class against the apparatus, to unify all workers to fight against the cuts. The statement was warmly received by the workers who did attend.

At the rally, Fain touted the UAW’s “Keep the Promise” campaign supposedly aimed at forcing Stellantis to honor commitments made in the 2023 contract. In reality the 2023 contract was a sellout. The UAW leadership knowingly gave Stellantis, as well as Ford and General Motors, the green light to carry out a massive restructuring for electric vehicle production on the backs of workers. Shortly after signing the contract, Stellantis announced a wave of job cuts, including the firing of thousands of temp workers who the UAW leadership falsely claimed were to have been promoted to full-time status.

At the “Day of Action,” Fain essentially

acknowledged that the supposedly “historic” 2023 UAW contract sanctioned the massive cuts taking place, including the provocative announcement last month by Stellantis that it plans to delay reopening the shuttered Belvidere, Illinois Assembly Plant.

“While they’re not yet in violation of the agreement at Warren Truck, they are in violation at plants across this nation, and we intend to fully enforce our contract from the grievance procedure to the right to strike because what affects one of us affects all of us,” Fain blustered.

Meanwhile, UAW Local President Eric Graham was more explicit, stating that the coming layoffs at Warren Truck were a done deal. “I wanted to have this rally to show those members who are facing this indefinite layoff that they are not alone, that a lot of us here have went through similar circumstances, and we recovered from it. We made it back.” He continued, “We went through struggles, but the UAW always comes back. ... So, you can’t give up hope.”

Stellantis, meanwhile, issued a press statement Thursday reaffirming its drive for massive cost cutting “by streamlining operations and finding efficiencies that will enhance our competitiveness and ensure our future sustainability and growth.” It announced a minuscule “\$97 million investment that will support Warren Truck’s role in this transition as part of a more than \$400 million investment in the state of Michigan.”

The \$97 million that Stellantis says it will invest in Warren Truck is only a tiny fraction of what would be needed to retool the plant for a new product. It points to the fact that the elimination of the second shift, set for early October, is the prelude to the permanent closure of the entire facility, the oldest plant that Stellantis

currently operates.

“We have got to stand up and stand together. It is corporate greed and it is a terrible CEO running the company,” said Fain repeating his claim that Stellantis CEO Carlos Tavares, as a foreign-born executive, was not concerned about American workers and was mismanaging the company, in contrast to the American CEOs running Ford and GM. This is only the latest iteration of the UAW’s bankrupt nationalist and corporatist Buy American campaign that has done nothing over the years but devastate workers’ jobs and wages while funneling countless billions into the coffers of the US automakers.

As for the supposed friend of autoworkers Congresswoman Stevens, she is a typical corporate shill, whose promises of solidarity with Warren Truck workers mean nothing. She praised “the humble, the very hard-working UAW President Shawn Fain,” calling him the “man who knows how to cut the deals.”

She continued, “We bailed these guys out. You took the cuts for years and years,” she declared, shamelessly referring to her despicable role as part of the Obama administration’s auto industry task force that slashed starting pay for new hires by 50 percent in 2009.

A quick check of Stevens’ campaign contributors shows that in addition to auto companies Ford, General Motors and Toyota NA, her list of donors is a Who’s Who of Corporate America, according to Federal Election Commission filings. Recent donors include Delta Airlines, Rock Financial, Boeing, Bank of New York Mellon, General Mills, JP Morgan Chase, Walmart, Google and Comcast among others.

Stevens has fully endorsed the US-backed genocide in Gaza and has received \$700,000 from the American Israel Public Affairs Committee.

Fain’s remarks underscore the urgency for rank-and-file workers to take action independently of the UAW apparatus in defense of jobs by joining and building rank-and-file committees at every Stellantis plant. Jobs will not be saved through futile appeals to management to see reason but by mobilizing the enormous power of the autoworkers. Stellantis workers must reject the UAW’s poisonous American nationalism, pitting US workers against workers in Mexico and other countries. American autoworkers must join forces with their brother autoworkers globally who are facing similar

attacks, including workers in Italy where Stellantis is threatening 25,000 jobs.

A veteran Warren Truck worker told the WSWS that workers had no confidence in either Shawn Fain or the local UAW leadership. “The UAW leadership is terrible. They don’t do anything.

“I know this is just the beginning (of the layoffs). I’ve called and asked questions. I know it is just time before it is in my area. I know it won’t be long.

“People are on work one week and off another. They are getting sub pay and unemployment, but it is wacky. It is messing with people’s paychecks. It is scary. You don’t know anything.

“My son was hired and laid right off last year when they were trying to get the contract passed. The temp workers thought they were going to get rolled over. They hired a lot in at all the plants, and as soon they got the contract passed, they got laid off.”

Speaking of Local 140 President Graham, she remarked, “They reran the local election in June, because he [Graham] claimed he was cheated in the previous election where he lost. They’re so crooked, who knows? They get who they want in office. They are all crooked and stay in office.”



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