

How I Organized a Tesla Takedown in Troy, Michigan

written by Hank Kennedy | March 12, 2025



Photo credit: Peter Werbe

It was a lot easier than I thought. The website teslatakedown.com has a link at the top to ActionNetwork to create your own event at a Tesla dealership or showroom. Once there, I clicked the button that said “Host an Event for this Campaign” and picked my target. Activists had been protesting the showrooms in Ann Arbor and West Bloomfield, but one hadn’t got much attention. In Somerset Mall in Troy, there is a Tesla showroom on the first floor. The mall lies on a major thoroughfare, Big Beaver Road, meaning any protest would reach many people. I selected Sunday, March 9th as the date, 1PM for the time.

From then on the protest basically organized itself. I pressed friends and family to attend and they spread it to other people. Many saw the event on the #TeslaTakedown website and social media sites Reddit and Facebook. I heard from some participants that the protest was talked about it in church that morning. Fitting, since on the Lord’s day we were doing the Lord’s work: trying to drive the money changers out of the temple.

On a bright Sunday afternoon, Metro-Detroiters showed up to unequivocally say “No!” to Elon Musk and Tesla fascism. Although the crowd started small, it kept growing until around one-hundred were present at the height. Signs said “Stop the DOGE Coup,” “Detroit vs. Musk,” and “Stop Funding a Fascist: Dump Tesla.” More humorous signs read “If it Honks Like a Goose and it Steps Like a Goose” and “Destroy the Turd Reich.” Trying to give the rally some socialist content, my own sign quoted “Big Bill” Haywood: “The capitalist has no heart, but harpoon him in the pocketbook and you will draw blood.”

Passing motorists were overwhelmingly friendly, with many laying on their horns to show solidarity. Black drivers were particularly supportive. Nonetheless, there were others who gave the crowd the one-finger salute or a bellowed “Fuck you!” but this was a small minority. The poor rent-a-cops milled around with nothing to do. It was as if they’d never seen a protest before.

Elon Musk is an eminently hateable figure. He is anti-union. He promotes anti-Semitism. He spews hatred against transgender people. He throws out “Sieg Heils” like they were candy. He is the personification of a decaying system. He is the perfect target for anyone looking to pick a fight with modern capitalism.

Socialists should take a leading role in organizing these protests. Who else could? Democratic politicians? Congresswoman Haley Stevens was too busy hosting a fundraiser at exclusive Heathers Country Club. After praising Ronald Reagan in her State of the Union response, Senator Elissa Slotkin has been running ads on social asking for money for reelection even though she was just sworn in this January and won't face reelection until 2030. Governor Gretchen Whitmer was just appointed by Donald Trump to the Council of Governors. Clearly, no condescending savior is coming.

Opposing Musk gives socialists the opportunity to highlight the century-plus long link between fascism and big business. Standard Oil and Dow Chemical "had significant dealings" with the Nazi conglomerates I.G. Farben and Krupp right up until World War II. Torkild Reiber of Texaco illegally sent oil to Franco during the Spanish Civil War. He then threw a party celebrating the fall of France to the Nazis in 1940. In attendance were executives from ITT, General Motors, and Ford. Henry Ford, who Musk most resembles, received the Grand Cross of the German Eagle from Nazi officials in 1938. Ford worked with Christian Nationalist—and future Holocaust denier—Gerald L.K. Smith to prevent his workers from unionizing.

Socialists have the opportunity to explain how to effectively counter the unmasked power of big business. Boycotts and corporate campaigns are fine, but what would really damage Tesla's bottom lines would be to unionize their workplaces. Every dollar in wages and benefits those workers get, is a dollar less Musk has to loot the Treasury for him and his robber baron accomplices.

Many participants thanked me for organizing the protest, even though I repeatedly stressed it wasn't difficult. After canvassing the crowd, I announced we will be coming back next week. The people I met are looking for ways to fight back against the present plutocracy. One said they had never been to a protest before. Socialists should take a leading role in taking down Musk and Tesla fascism.