

GM sends termination notices to 48 TPT workers in Indiana less than two months after UAW signs concessions contract

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Forty-eight temporary part-time (TPT) workers at the General Motors Marion Stamping Plant in Marion, Indiana, are being given notice that they will be terminated, according to a Facebook post by WMTV Channel 27 Marion News Thursday evening.

According to the station's sources—likely the United Auto Workers (UAW) union, which negotiated the workers' contract with General Motors (GM) in October—thirty-five of those workers were eligible for full-time employment in January.

“Union reps were lied to and this is happening throughout all GM plants,” reporters were apparently told.

The original post has over 675 comments, 880 reacts and 1,100 shares. It links a photograph of the termination “walking” letter allegedly sent to TPT workers, signed by Denise Monnier, site human resources/labor relations director at the Marion Metal Center.

Most workers will not believe the nonsense that the UAW was blindsided in this shameless firing of the most vulnerable workers. The UAW-GM contract passed October 18 was carefully worded to allow the company to lay off and rehire temporary workers at will, so that they never qualify for full-time employment with benefits.

The so-called “path to full-time employment” in the contract highlights touted by the UAW is no guarantee of full-time work, but a giant loophole: temps will be hired in at full-time positions only after three “consecutive” years of employment. If temporary workers are laid off for 30 days or more and then re-hired, they must start again from the beginning.

The announcement makes clear the class character

and bankruptcy of the UAW, which betrayed 48,000 workers who sacrificed for 40 days on strike in October by negotiating a contract that wrested deeper concessions from the workers to serve the profit interests of GM and the banks and financial institutions behind it.

The agreement, passed in October amid widespread UAW intimidation, was widely opposed by rank-and-file workers. It allows the company to expand its low-paid temporary workforce and sanctions the shutdown of three factories and one parts facility: the Lordstown, Ohio, assembly plant; the Warren and Baltimore transmission plants; and the Fontano, California, parts distribution center.

After the sellout contract was pushed through, GM immediately took action to fire militant workers who had spoken out on social media against the concessions contract. The workers received no protection from the UAW.

Those termination moves came after GM fired workers at its complex in Silao, Mexico who refused to increase production of the highly profitable Silverado and Sierra pickup trucks to offset the company's lost profits during the strike. The Mexican workers took this action to support their working class brothers and sisters in the US.

The TPT layoffs at GM Marion Stamping are a part of the corporation's international strategy to beat out its rivals in the automotive industry in a race to lower the cost of labor in the battle to win market share for the development of electric and self-driving vehicles.

On Tuesday, GM announced that 814 hourly and salaried workers at its Detroit-Hamtramck plant in Michigan will be laid off beginning February 28.

According to the company, these workers will be forced to uproot their lives and families for alternative opportunities elsewhere in Michigan and Ohio while the plant is retooled for production of electric vehicles, due to begin in 2021.

This attack was also sanctioned in the UAW-signed contract. The Detroit-Hamtramck plant was originally slated for closure, but the contract “negotiated” a deal that would allow it to remain open with a \$3 billion investment to produce an electric pickup truck and van model. After retooling, the plant will allegedly have 2,225 employees.

GM announced Thursday that it will partner with South Korea’s LG Chem to build a new \$2.3 billion electric vehicle battery plant near the site of the shuttered Lordstown complex. This plant will be operated under a separate UAW contract, where workers will earn substandard wages. The majority of the 1,600 workers at the closed Lordstown plant were forced to relocate while others took a paltry buyout offer.

The UAW itself is steeped in crisis after corruption allegations began to emerge in early 2018, leading to a number of officials being charged and implicated in bribery scandals, and revelations surfacing of top officials, including former UAW presidents Gary Jones and Dennis Williams, spending workers’ union dues on personal luxuries.

Jones resigned from his position as UAW international president and from membership in the UAW after a lawsuit was brought by GM against rival automaker Fiat Chrysler (FCA) which provided further evidence on the UAW corruption case. Jones had been implicated in the scandal and was under investigation by federal authorities while overseeing the drawing up of sellout contracts at both GM and Ford.

On Friday, acting UAW President Rory Gamble announced that the UAW will disband the 17-state UAW Region 5 in an attempt to put a “reform” gloss over the badly discredited union by distancing itself from the corruption of Region 5 leaders such as Jones and his former aide and ex-Region 5 director, Vance Pearson, who was charged in September with embezzlement of union funds, money laundering and fraud.

Gamble’s move is a way to buy time for an organization on its last legs. Gamble has deep ties to

leaders at the top of the apparatus who have committed outright fraud, serving as Region 1A director in southeast Michigan before climbing his way up to the UAW-Ford vice presidency in 2018.

The contracts negotiated at GM and Ford and that currently being negotiated at Fiat Chrysler have been drawn up by criminals in the UAW and corporate ruling elite. They should be considered null and void. Rank-and-file workers must themselves organize a fightback against all of the attacks imposed under these contracts. No trust whatsoever can be placed in the UAW or any unions in the AFL-CIO for reform.

There is only one way forward for autoworkers in this fight. Workers in auto plants throughout the US must form rank-and-file committees, independent of the unions and pro-corporate Democratic and Republican parties, and hold meetings to democratically discuss and decide upon their own demands. These demands should include, but not be limited to, a guarantee that all TPT workers be made full-time with full pay and benefits, that all closed plants be reopened, and all terminated workers rehired with no further plant closures or layoffs, and a 30 percent wage increase and free health care benefits for all workers.

The UAW’s strategy to force through concessions was based on the tactics of isolation. Not only did they isolate GM workers on strike from workers at Ford and FCA and other workers in the US, they isolated them from the immense strength of the international working class by pitting workers of one country against another.

For this reason, rank-and-file committees must demand the rehiring of the fired workers in Silao, Mexico and build international bonds with other sections of workers, including autoworkers, around the world.



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