

UAW executives spout lies about Stellantis sellout deal

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If you can say anything about UAW President Shawn Fain, he keeps a straight face when he is lying through his teeth. That was certainly the case Thursday night when Fain and UAW Stellantis Department Director Rich Boyer attempted to pitch the UAW's latest "historic agreement" during a livestreamed event.

Fain claimed his "stand up strike" policy had wrenched "every last dime" from Chrysler's parent company, even though the UAW only called out two assembly plants and less than a third of the UAW's 44,000 members at Stellantis. Underscoring the ineffectiveness of this policy, Ward's reported that vehicle inventories *rose* for all three automakers during the isolated strikes. Stellantis reported earlier this week that its third-quarter revenue jumped 7 percent despite the strike.

Lie #1: "We got record raises"

In broad strokes, the Stellantis deal is similar to the ones at GM and Ford. Workers will only receive a 25 percent raise over the four-and-a-half-year contract, barely above the 22 percent rise in inflation since the last UAW contract in 2019. The cost-of-living adjustment is inadequate and will not fully keep up with the increase in consumer prices, let alone the impact of rising interest rates for cars, homes, credit cards and student loans not counted in the Consumer Price Index. To add insult to injury, Stellantis will claw back up to 10 cents an hour out of the quarterly COLA raise throughout the term of the contract, supposedly to pay for higher healthcare costs.

Lie #2: "We stopped plant closures and layoffs"

Like the other contracts, whatever pay increases Stellantis incurs will be more than made up through forced retirements, plant closures and mass layoffs. Included in the tentative agreement is a "Voluntary Termination of Employment Plan," which will pay workers between \$15,000 (with one to two years of service) and \$72,000 (for more than 25 years).

Fain claimed that the "economic gains in this contract are so enormous that some company analysts and pundits have tried to spread fear that the Big Three will try to walk away from their product commitments." The UAW—which sits on dozens of national, regional and local labor-management committees—has already agreed to the decimation of jobs as the industry transitions to electric vehicle production.

Fain claimed the UAW had stopped plant closures and layoffs. In fact, the agreement accepts the shutdown of 19 facilities, including 10 Mopar parts distribution centers. Boyer said, "We had to face some hard choices for Mopar" and boasted that although hundreds of workers losing their jobs and being forced to uproot their families would "cause some discomfort," they would be paid "enhanced moving bonuses."

Fain and Boyer claimed they forced Stellantis to reverse its decision to close the Belvidere, Illinois, assembly plant. They claimed that workers would be able to "return home" because the company had agreed to invest in a new electric vehicle and battery plant in the location. In fact, Stellantis was given hundreds of millions in state and federal tax cuts and subsidies to build the EV assembly plant, which will not open until 2027. As for the battery plant, it will not open until 2028. While Fain said workers at the battery plant would be under the "UAW Master Agreement," he admitted new hires would start at roughly \$26 an hour.

In addition, a new "Belvidere Consolidated Mopar Mega Hub," which reportedly will be modeled on Amazon warehouses, is scheduled to open in 2024 "through the consolidation of work from Marysville, Chicago and Milwaukee PDCs," the contract states.

Lie #3: “The Era of Perma-Temps is Over”

Perhaps the most egregious lie to come out of Fain’s mouth was that the contract meant that “the era of perma-temps is over.”

In fact, the UAW agreed to even worse provisions for the conversion of temporary workers to full-time status at Stellantis than they did at Ford, leaving the door open precisely to the creation of a new tier of highly exploited perma-temps.

The Stellantis contract book indicates the company nominally agreed to convert future temps to full-time status after nine months, as in the Ford deal. However, the UAW’s deal with Stellantis includes the highly significant exception that the company and the union “can agree to extend this period”—making the nine-month restriction on employment as a temp practically meaningless.

In another concession, the Stellantis-UAW deal states that the nine months of “continuous service” before conversion will only begin to be counted once the contract is ratified. This opens the door for the virtually ceaseless churning of these workers, who will be laid off and rehired again without ever reaching their roll-over date.

In another major concession, the UAW agreed to allow Stellantis to convert only a limited number of temps to full-time status if the contract is ratified. In the “highlights” of the deal the UAW posted Thursday night, union officials claim that within the first year, 3,200 temporary workers will be converted to full-time, citing a Memorandum of Agreement on page 254 in the so-called White Book of the entire contract. If one goes to that page, however, the letter to UAW Vice President Rich Boyer with the subject “Supplemental Conversions” states that only 1,957 temps will be converted to full-time “within 90 days of ratification.”

Stellantis and the UAW do not spell out how they will determine which temps will be converted, stating that the “process for selection and placement of the converted employees will be agreed to by the parties.”

Lie #4: “The members are the highest authority in the union”

The fact is the UAW worked out the terms of all three of these agreements with the corporations and the Biden administration months ago. The bureaucracy’s only concern was how to get such a sellout past a militant and rebellious workforce determined to win back decades of UAW-backed concessions, especially in light of massive rejections of such deals by workers at Deere, Volvo Trucks, Dana, Clarion, Lear and other companies.

To get ahead of workers, Fain adopted a series of popular demands—40 percent pay raises, the abolition of all tiers, conversion of temps, restoration of company-paid pensions and retiree health benefits, which he completely dropped. Ignoring the 97 percent vote for an all-out strike on September 15, the UAW conducted the bogus “stand up strikes,” which did more economic damage to workers than to the companies. Cynically, Fain only called out the most profitable plants just before announcing the deals and sent workers back to work before they saw, let alone voted on the deal.

Now the bureaucracy is hoping to exploit the economic desperation of workers, especially the lower paid temporary and second-tier workers with \$5,000 signing bonuses, \$1,500 car vouchers and an upfront raise of 11 percent.

“If you are desperate, you might vote for this,” a young Stellantis worker at the Detroit Assembly Complex-Mack told the WSWS. “They’re putting out some tasty cheese, but it’s in a mousetrap. The voucher to buy or lease one of their cars is insulting. We’re paying them back for the cars we build. They only pay \$4,000 in total costs for these cars, and our labor is probably the lowest portion. Now, we’re going to be paying them back \$12,000 a year for the privilege of driving one.

“The temps who are rolled over will only be making \$20.69, and by the end of the contract only \$29 an hour. The older workers and lot of the second-tier workers are not excited about this contract either. And what they’re not telling us is all the job cuts the UAW already agreed to. They’re also pushing these buyouts. Can you imagine after working here 25 years, only getting a \$72,000 payout to leave. That’s less than \$3,000 a year. Ridiculous.”

Rank-and-file workers must mobilize now to defeat these sellout contracts. They should follow the model of the Mack Trucks workers who rejected a Fain-backed contract by a three-to-one margin and walked out on October 9. Big Three workers must expand the network of rank-and-file committees, discuss and expose the lies in the sellout deals and organize the biggest “no” vote possible.



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