

Fired Stellantis temps issue open letter: “Unite all workers to stop the job cuts!”

Our reporters
8 February 2024

The following statement was issued by the newly formed Rank-and-File Committee to Fight Job Cuts. The committee was established by supplementary (temporary) employees last month after Stellantis fired hundreds of SEs without any opposition from the United Auto Workers. To contact the committee, call or text (248) 919-8448.

An open letter to all autoworkers: Reinstate the fired SEs! Defend all jobs!

Urgently, Brothers and Sisters,

Less than three months after the ratification of our “record contract,” it has become clear the United Auto Workers leadership deceived the membership into voting for a sellout contract.

Thousands of Stellantis supplemental employees (SEs) were told by UAW officials that we would be rolled over to full-time, but instead we are being permanently fired. Instead of “saving” plants and “adding jobs,” the new contracts have given automakers a free hand to lay off thousands of workers at Stellantis plants in Detroit and Toledo, GM plants in Orion Township and Lansing, and at the Ford Rouge Complex in Dearborn, Michigan.

On February 8, UAW Local 140 officials informed Warren Truck workers that “Global management was surveying the plant for downsizing” and that deep cuts were on the way.

This is only the beginning.

Workers from all over the world are forming rank-and-file committees to defend workers’ jobs. UPS just announced 12,000 job cuts as well. We have formed the Rank-and-File Committee to Fight Job Cuts (RFC-FJC) to unify SEs and full-timers, the employed and unemployed, and workers across all industries and countries. We are calling for mass demonstrations, strikes and other collective action to stop these corporate attacks and fight for the right to a secure and good-paying job for everyone.

We demand:

- ✊ Stop all job cuts
 - ✊ Immediately rehire fired temps and laid-off workers with full back pay
 - ✊ Shorten the workweek with no loss in income to secure jobs for all
- We are appealing to every brother and sister, whether you

have been terminated or are still working in the plants, to join us in this fight. Full-time workers have a target on your backs too, it's just a matter of time. Supervisors are writing up workers for the tiniest things, trying to initiate disciplinary action against them. Collectively, we can defend our means of livelihood. Since we have been repeatedly deceived by the UAW bureaucrats, from International down to the local level, we, the shop floor workers, are organizing this fight.

Terminated SEs have requested a face-to-face meeting with UAW President Shawn Fain and he refused. Local UAW officials have canceled union meetings because they don’t want to talk to fired workers. The whole organization is hiding from the membership.

Fain and other union officials swear they stand in solidarity with the membership yet thousands of members are out of work, struggling in this economy to find income, to provide for their families and put gas in their cars. We are not receiving protection from the UAW when we paid dues! When we were working, they never skipped deducting dues from our paychecks no matter how small they were.

When we say solidarity, we mean rank-and-file workers, shop floor workers, we have each other’s backs and we can show that by standing together. We are all in this fight together; we all deserve to be able to pay our bills and put food on the table.

Here are the facts:

On January 12, without any warning from the company or our UAW representatives, Stellantis permanently terminated 539 SEs in Metro Detroit and Kokomo, Indiana via text message followed by an automated call. On January 31, the company cut our medical insurance (we never had vision or dental). The day after we were fired, UAW Vice President Rich Boyer released a letter admitting that another 1,600 SEs would soon be terminated across the company. Rather than standing up and defending the lowest tier members, he instructed local union officials to “Please inform all the SEs of this information.”

Boyer repeated the company’s lies that we were fired because of “poor work performance/attendance issues” or because we “hadn’t been used for an extended period.” Most of us had spotless performance and attendance records. Prior to the contract expiring last September, the vast majority of us were mandated to work 10-12.5 hour shifts, six days a week at

plants like Warren Truck, which were put into “critical status.” With the acquiescence of the UAW, we were forced to stockpile trucks for a possible strike.

Our hours were drastically cut once Fain’s bogus “stand up” strike began. The company locked our badges out from the building and the parking lots. It appears as though management and UAW officials were exerting as much pressure as possible onto us so we would vote for the contract. They promised us job security, profit sharing and signing bonuses. Even so, a lot of us DID NOT take the bait and voted against the sellout deal.

In the contract highlights book, the UAW claimed, “Within the first year of the agreement, 3,200 SEs will be converted to full-time. After that, if an SE has nine months of service, an SE will automatically have full-time status.” This would make sense and seem like a good deal if the UAW was truly fighting to end the abuse of “perma-temps,” as Fain and Boyer said.

But hidden in the 900-page contract is the fact that only 1,957 out of the company’s 5,219 SEs are being converted. As for the nine-month rollover deadline, the contract says, “The Parties can agree to extend this period.” In other words, SEs will still be at-will employees who can be repeatedly laid off before reaching their rollover date or terminated at any time.

According to Boyer, Stellantis agreed to convert an additional 900 SEs at the Toledo Assembly Complex. However, many of these workers are going to be laid off immediately, if not terminated. The company withdrew its promise to add a third shift and is laying off 1,225 workers on February 19 instead. Under a deal worked out by the UAW, 900 SEs will be chosen from a company-wide pool and Toledo will be designated as their “home plant.” Of these, only 372 will remain there while 500 are transferred to the Jefferson plant in Detroit where other workers will lose their jobs.

To make matters worse, SEs from the Toledo plant (some of whom have been stuck in temporary status up to six years) are fearful they will be passed over because the UAW made a last-minute decision that conversions will not be based on corporate/hiring date but Social Security numbers.

Stellantis and other automakers are slashing jobs while boasting that the strike did not affect their profits. On February 2, 2,445 workers, including 750 SEs, were put out of work when the third shift was eliminated at the Detroit Assembly Mack plant. The UAW has also agreed to the closure of 10 MOPAR parts distribution centers and the Tipton Transmission plant near Kokomo, Indiana.

When asked about the mass firings of SEs by a local Detroit reporter, Fain said the firings were driven by “corporate greed” and that the UAW did not agree to it. If they did not agree to it, why is it hidden within the contract? Fain continued, “You know we have a contract and we’re going to operate within the means of that contract, but we expect the company to take care of our members and we’re going to fight every step of the way for them.”

Fain must think we are fools. He and the other high-paid

union officials saw the contract before any of us did—it was negotiated by them! They knew these job cuts were coming and they concealed them from us to get our votes. Courts have found that employers breach their duties of good faith and fair dealing by: firing or transferring employees to prevent them from collecting sales commissions (profit sharing) and misleading employees about their chances for promotions and wage increases (job security). In this case, both the company and the UAW bureaucrats sold us this fraudulent “contract.”

When it comes to “corporate greed” Fain & Co. should look in the mirror. He is part of a vast business, known to many as UAW, Inc., which has assets of over \$1 billion and pays out \$75 million a year in salaries to people who do nothing for us. The only thing that has changed since Fain was installed as president was his salary. For years, he was pocketing \$156,364 as a UAW International “administrative assistant.” As head honcho, he’s pulling in nearly \$300,000 a year.

In conclusion:

The working class is in grave danger and anyone who expects UAW officials to give truthful answers to the membership will be sadly disappointed. The union leaders were given a chance to do the right thing. Now, it is up to us to unite all UAW members so we, the workers, have a fighting chance. It is crucial that we stand together stronger than we ever have before.

Both the UAW apparatus and management play divide and conquer with the workers on the shop floor. Many stir the pot by telling full-timers the exploitation and mass firings of SEs will help them secure their jobs and profit sharing checks. They try to discourage us from reaching out to full-timers because we are “just temporaries.” They call us union-bashers for exposing the facts. When UAW bureaucrats declare “there is nothing we can do” and say the company “has the right to protect their profits,” they are allowing union members to be disposed of at the company’s whim.

Fain said we’d “Eat the Rich” while he allows the rich to chew us up and spit us out. Enough is Enough! It is time for us to come together and fight for everything we were promised!

Join the fight now, our future depends on it.

Yours in real solidarity,

The Rank-and-File Committee to Fight Job Cuts

To contact the committee, call or text (248) 919-8448.



To contact the WSWS and the
Socialist Equality Party visit:

wsws.org/contact