

More details emerge exposing pro-corporate character of 2023 UAW contracts

Stellantis hires more “perma-temps” as GM puts early retirement payouts on indefinite hold for many

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To join the Rank-and-File Committee to Fight Job Cuts (RFC-FJC), call or text 248-919-8448 or fill out the form at the end of this article.

In the wake of the recent termination of over 2,000 temporary workers in the US by Stellantis, reports are coming in that the global automaker is resuming hiring new temps off the street.

The reports are sparking further outrage among United Auto Workers members over the fraudulent way in which the union bureaucracy promoted the contracts.

UAW President Shawn Fain and other UAW leaders had promised that current temporary workers—known as “supplemental employees” (SEs) at Stellantis—would be advanced to full-time status after nine months under the contract. Instead, the UAW gave a green light to the termination of more than 2,300 of the 5,219 supplemental workers employed by the company. Since the start of the year layoffs have taken place at Ford and General Motors as well.

On Friday Stellantis announced further cost-cutting, stating that 400 US salaried employees in engineering, technology and software will be terminated as of March 31, about 2 percent of its salaried workforce. Management said the cuts were part of its Dare Forward 2030 plan aimed at boosting profits by “optimizing” the company’s cost structure.

Meanwhile, senior workers at General Motors, expecting to be able to retire and receive a \$50,000 bonus promised under the 2023 contract, are now being told they must wait indefinitely. GM announced, with the apparent agreement of the UAW, that it is limiting current eligibility to just 2 percent of the workforce at each plant. That means that only 900 of about 7,800 eligible hourly GM workers can take retirement in the first phase of the program. It has not been stated when phase two will start.

The cuts in the US are part of a global downsizing by all the auto companies as they move to place the burden of the transition to electric vehicles on the backs of workers. Stellantis has also targeted plants in Italy and France for layoffs in recent months.

New punitive attendance program

Stellantis workers are being further provoked by the implementation of a new punitive attendance program that has been implemented under terms of the 2023 contract. At Warren Truck outside Detroit it is being reported that as many as 2,500 workers have accumulated points under the policy, putting them on track to be terminated. The firing of hundreds of supplemental workers at the plant and consequent short-staffing has put an additional strain on the workforce.

The 150,000 hourly workers employed at the Big Three automakers are now seeing even the few apparent gains previously sold to them by the UAW leadership being exposed one after the other as lies and deceptions. It is becoming ever more broadly understood that the so-called “reform” of the UAW under Fain was a cynical hoax.

A worker at the Stellantis Kokomo Engine Plant spoke to the *World Socialist Web Site Autoworker Newsletter* about reports that the company was hiring more supplementals in the wake of the recent mass firings. Hundreds of Kokomo-area Stellantis supplemental workers were summarily terminated in January, along with more in Detroit.

“I think it’s been a practice of theirs in the past. They are going to hit top pay, have to be flipped [made full-time], so they fire them. Then they hire again, they get to top pay, have to be flipped, so they fire them again.

“I believe this started way back when. I don’t have proof, but there was a lawsuit filed years ago. The first round of TPTs [temporary part-time workers] were kept for years. When I hired in, they were still flipping right away. Then there was the first batch they fired. They turned around and said you can have your job back at starting pay.

“Those people were TPTs for years, even after they took their jobs back.”

A former Detroit-area Stellantis worker said of the reports of the company newly hiring supplementals: “They recycle, 89

days and out. They have been doing that for the last four years. Our union doesn't tell us anything.

"The union is supposed to be anti-corporation; some form of protection. But they have been in bed together quite some time. That's how I see it."

In response to the firings, a group of Stellantis workers formed the Rank-and-File Committee to Fight Job Cuts. The committee endorsed a picket at UAW Solidarity House in Detroit held on March 2 to demand the reinstatement of terminated supplementals and the renegotiation of the sellout 2023 national UAW contract.

In response to reports that GM and the UAW were conniving to place strict limits on who could take the retirement bonus, a worker posted a YouTube video expressing his anger at the UAW leadership. The former Lordstown Assembly worker said that he had already made plans to retire and move back home but now was being told he could not because only a handful of workers at this plant were being allowed to collect the bonus.

Speaking of Fain and other UAW officials who allowed this, he said, "Workers are feeling that you care more about the company's interest than dues-paying members.

"GM is saying they can't have an exodus of people all at the same time. But here we are, four months after the contract. GM hasn't hired anyone to backfill so we could go out."

He added, "GM plays games, and the International union acts like they are cool with this. We have to say 'no.'

"GM didn't have any problem with hiring people three-four years as a temp when they knew they could keep them as a temp. But now they have to hire them [as permanent employees] after nine months, they are slow to hire them."

Stellantis Toledo workers' sickout on March 4

On March 4, hundreds of second-shift workers at the Stellantis Toledo Assembly Complex that builds Jeep brand vehicles reportedly called in sick to protest the abrupt termination of 341 supplemental workers at the plant.

A Toledo Jeep worker told the WSWs that the UAW International leadership and their own local officials had lied about the process of converting supplementals to full-time status under the 2023 contract.

The determination of the list of those to be converted to full-time at Toledo was based on an opaque process involving the use of Social Security numbers, with the result that some lower-seniority workers got rolled over while workers with up to three years were passed by. In the end, the worker reported, only 450 out of the promised 900 supplemental rollovers at the Jeep plant took place.

"This is also not what was said at every [contract information meeting] given by [UAW Vice President] Rich Boyer ... that

every SE would be taken care of, rolled over, and get profit sharing starting in March of 2024." The worker added, "And Local 12 Chairman Sawya did not inform the membership that the SEs at Toledo were being let go.

"The UAW, Boyer and Fain used all of these programs to dangle in front of the SEs to get this contract passed. This contract, that only accepts colonoscopy as an excused absence and gives more than one point for tardies and absences, will cause many with families and kids that have things happen to lose their jobs faster.

"Toledo was the only plant that voted this contract down, we saw through the lies and crap and knew that there was no way they were going to do all the things they were promising."

The worker said that the company had forced many of the converted supplementals to work in Detroit while workers from Detroit were being forced to stay and work in Toledo. "Why force anyone to drive over an hour when they could easily send people closer to their homes giving them less time driving and more time with their kids and families?

"Now the company wants to move the second-shift start time to 4:00 p.m., meaning people from Detroit have to leave even earlier to get to work. Now local people won't ever see their kids because they will leave for work before they are out of school.

"Where is the work-life balance that Fain and Boyer promised and swore they fought for?"

The conclusion that must be drawn is that if there is to be a fight conducted in defense of workers' jobs and working conditions, then the rank and file has to organize it in opposition to the UAW bureaucracy. Workers interested in building or joining a rank-and-file committee should contact the *WSWS Autoworker Newsletter* by filling out the form below.



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