

More Stellantis layoffs at Sterling Heights and Mack Avenue Assembly in Detroit, forced overtime announced in Toledo

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On Monday, Stellantis laid off 199 workers at the Sterling Heights Assembly Plant (SHAP) north of Detroit. It warned of more layoffs to come, as the company continues to cut jobs in the wake of the sellout 2023 contract agreement with the United Auto Workers.

The cuts at SHAP follow an announcement at Detroit Assembly Complex-Mack that 57 non-skilled workers would be laid off starting this week. Workers with a seniority date before April 7, 2021 could be affected.

And after earlier carrying out layoffs at the Stellantis Toledo Assembly Complex, management is now forcing the remaining workforce to carry out mandatory overtime. Stellantis said it would cut one shift, on the line building Jeep Gladiators, and put the rest of the plant working mandatory 10-hour days, seven days a week starting April 19.

In a terse statement issued Monday, Stellantis declared, “With a focus on preserving business fundamentals in a highly competitive and challenging US automotive industry, Stellantis continues to take action to improve the efficiency of its manufacturing facilities.” It continued, “As a result of ongoing operational reviews, the company will be implementing indefinite layoffs across its U.S. footprint over the coming months. These actions will help improve productivity and ensure the company’s long-term sustainability in a rapidly changing global market.”

In other words, management, with the collaboration of the UAW, is seeking to boost its bottom line by squeezing more production out of a smaller workforce.

These cuts follow the mass firing of thousands of supplemental employees (SEs), cuts to the white collar workforce and the elimination of a shift at the Mack plant. This is part of a broader assault on jobs including mass layoffs at EV maker Tesla, as well as Ford and GM, as part of a deliberate state policy to drive up unemployment to undermine worker militancy.

The cuts make a mockery of promises by UAW President Shawn Fain and the Biden administration that the 2023 contract was “historic” and that thousands of temporary workers would be made full time under its provisions.

In response to the latest attack, UAW Local 1700 at SHAP merely issued a pathetic statement complaining that management was putting “profits before people,” as though that hasn’t always been the case. The UAW International, headquartered only a few miles away at the misnamed Solidarity House in Detroit, has said nothing as of this writing.

A Mack Assembly worker told the *World Socialist Web Site* that in the wake of the earlier layoff of over 2,400 workers at the plant management was overloading jobs.

“Now we are being overworked. They will put you first on one line and then pull you for another line. We are doing two or three jobs. On my line there are people doing 3-4 jobs, nine hours a day.

“They shut down the third shift and put in floaters who didn’t get an open job and have no assignment. But they are not being utilized as they should. Now we are doing nine hours a day.

“We were told by the union that there may be more cuts in July, they moved it up from September.

“The majority on some lines were TPTs (temporary

part time). One line was all TPTs. The TPTs were told that if they signed the contract they would get this and get that. They got nothing but the boot.”

The UAW Jeep Executive Committee, acting as a messenger boy for management, sent out a memo declaring that Stellantis is invoking the “M-2(7) Emergencies” section of the contract because, according to management, it lost 2,270 units during the parts shortage. The UAW cited language hidden in the 2023 contract that it claims gives management the unilateral right to impose forced overtime.

The memo stated that the Jeep Gladiator line would be losing an entire shift and the workers reassigned to the line building the Jeep Wrangler.

In addition, management said it is bringing in another 283 TPTs and will “canvass the 341 SEs that were separated.”

A Jeep worker told the WWS, “The 50 TPTs that Stellantis kept in Toledo, out of the 350 they originally fired, are being fired at the end of this month. Yet they are calling the ones they fired two months ago and asking them to come back as temps. It’s crazy.”

The Mack worker, added, “[We] have no life. The UAW promised us more quality of life.” She continued, “The only thing I have heard from the union is ‘they can’t stop layoffs.’”

“People are scared. They feel they don’t have any backing from the union. You would be better off as an ‘at will’ employee than paying a union to do nothing.”

The worker also explained that Mack workers had voted down a proposed local contract agreement in February that had been pushed by the UAW.

“No one had any input. They opened negotiations two years ago, but no one knew anything about it. We asked them about it during the international strike, but no one had any answers.

“When the local contract came up, they gave us information one day and then the next two days they wanted us to vote with no notification at all. There was no time to have any discussion about the contract, but they wanted us to come in and vote. Everything was put at management’s discretion. That was a ‘no’ for me.

“For instance, there is supposed to be an eight-hour day. In the highlights, the contract said that the company had the right, at their discretion, to work you more than 9 hours. Who thinks it’s OK to make it at their discretion to work more than 9 hours? Why would

I agree to that?

“There also were a lot of things that skilled trades didn’t agree with.”

A recently terminated Mack supplemental worker said, “No one wants to work two or three jobs. You get in the hole and have to run to catch up. That is the way people get hurt. People get tired and beat up.”

Commenting on the vote by Volkswagen workers in Chattanooga, Tennessee to join the UAW, he said he understood that workers wanted to fight back against oppressive conditions. But, he warned, “They will find out that they will be fighting for themselves, because management and the UAW are working together. Now they have a middleman to help management push them out.”



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