

Stellantis laying off 1,139 Toledo Jeep workers, as global auto jobs bloodbath expands

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Are you an autoworker facing a job cut? Fill out the form at the end of this article to expand the Network of Autoworkers Rank-and-File Committees to fight to defend the right to a secure and good-paying job.

On Wednesday, United Auto Workers Local 12 officials informed workers at the Toledo Assembly Complex that Stellantis management planned to indefinitely lay off 1,139 workers starting as early as January 5, 2025. According to the union, the company is eliminating a shift on the South Assembly side of the plant, reducing production of the Jeep Gladiator JT model from two shifts to one.

UAW Local 12 President Bruce Baumhower told local media that the 1,139 job cuts included 500 workers from the Gladiator lines and 639 on the Wrangler lines in the north plant.

In a statement released to local news media, company officials said, "These are difficult actions to take, but they are necessary to enable the Company to regain its competitive edge and eventually return production to prior levels."

In its letter to the Local 12 membership, the UAW Jeep Unit Executive Committee did not even hint that the union bureaucracy had any intention of opposing the brutal job cuts. On the contrary, the union officials simply acted as messenger boys for the giant corporation.

These layoffs are part of a wave of mass job cuts in the aftermath of last year's UAW-Stellantis contract, which was hailed by UAW President Shawn Fain and US President Joe Biden as a "record" job-creating labor agreement. They follow the elimination of 2,400 jobs at the Warren Truck Assembly Plant in suburban Detroit.

Thousands of other workers have been laid off in Detroit, Toledo and Kokomo, along with 2,400 supplemental or temporary part-time workers who were fired after being promised that they would be rolled over to full-time positions. In addition, Stellantis is threatening up to 25,000 jobs in Italy and to close two Vauxhall plants in the UK.

Stellantis and other automakers were given a free hand by the UAW bureaucracy to slash tens of thousands of jobs as they shifted the cost of the transition to electric vehicle production onto the backs of workers. To cover its tracks, the UAW

President Shawn Fain is carrying out a bogus "Keep the Promise" public relations campaign, which includes empty threats of a future strike if Stellantis does not uphold its supposed job commitments.

"I find it hard to believe that the UAW International didn't know these layoffs were coming," Steve, a Toledo Jeep worker being hit by the layoffs, told the WSWS. "At the end of the day, Stellantis and the CEO have run this company into the ground. Big trucks and SUVs are selling, but the company has no midsize SUV, and they stopped making a bunch of engines for the Wrangler."

"While the UAW is hemorrhaging jobs, President Fain was hosting rallies for Harris. The last two livestreams were touted as discussions about the possible strike against Stellantis. Instead, they were Harris rallies.

"We got no answers, and Fain doesn't even mention the layoffs. If you read the comments, everyone was angry and wanted answers. The fact they treated us like fools made even more people decide not to vote for Harris, to be honest. My guess was he got promised a position in Harris's cabinet. It was another phony sellout."

Mark, a veteran Toledo Jeep worker, added, "It was already known that low sales were coming before the contract was signed. They told the temps they were going to get hired to get the contract passed. The union was boasting that it won bigger issues to hide the company's plans for layoffs that were already looming. Workers need to increase and expand their attention to the 'fine print' in the contracts and in politics and 'the bigger picture' needs to be exposed and somehow explained."

Commenting on the Toledo layoffs, a veteran Warren Truck worker added, "We knew it was coming. They are going down to one shift like we did. Warren Truck will lay off more soon they said. Things are getting scary."

Global jobs bloodbath

The global automakers are conducting a worldwide jobs massacre, which stretches from North America and Europe to Japan, Korea and China, as they fight for market share amid a growing global economic slowdown. This week, Nissan announced it is cutting 9,000 jobs out of its global workforce. VW is eliminating up to three of its 10 plants in Germany, cutting tens of thousands of jobs, and imposing a nearly 20 percent pay cut on its 120,000 workers in Germany. Audi, which is owned by the VW Group, is threatening to reduce its workforce by 15 percent—impacting as many as 4,500 jobs in Germany alone—along with closing a plant in Brussels, Belgium.

Sumitomo Rubber announced Thursday it is closing its manufacturing facility in Tonawanda, New York, eliminating 1,550 jobs. The United Steel Workers union is doing nothing to oppose the plant closure.

Layoffs are also spreading to parts suppliers, including Dana's operations in Warren, Michigan, where workers told the WSWS that more than 200 workers were laid off after the Warren Truck layoffs, and more job cuts are coming.

To divert social anger over the relentless job cutting, the UAW bureaucracy is reading from its nationalist playbook again, blaming the Stellantis layoffs on the company's "foreign owners" and contrasting this to the so-called loyalty of US-based GM and Ford. But this is belied by GM's mass layoffs at its plant in Fairfax, Kansas, and firing of hundreds of temporary workers across the US. Ford has announced a two-month shutdown of its Rouge Electric Vehicle Center in Dearborn, Michigan, affecting 800 workers.

After spending weeks promoting the corporate shill and warmonger Harris as a champion of the working class, Fain responded to Trump's electoral victory by declaring his willingness to work with the fascist president on new trade barriers, including "fix[ing] our broken trade laws like the USMCA (United States-Mexico-Canada Agreement)."

The only way workers in the US can wage a fight against job cuts is by rejecting the nationalist and pro-capitalist program of the UAW bureaucracy and uniting with their class brothers and sisters all over the world to fight the global job cuts. On October 29, the International Workers Alliance of Rank-and-File Committees (IWA-RFC) issued a statement calling for a global campaign against job cuts in auto and other industries.

"The massive attacks by transnational corporations, aided and abetted by the trade union bureaucracy, must be answered by mobilizing the power of the international working class," the IWA-RFC declared, including "worldwide pickets and rallies and culminating in international strike action."

It continued: "The ground for this must be prepared by establishing lines of communication between autoworkers in the US, Germany and other countries, in alliance with workers in other industries facing cuts, including at Boeing."

At the same time, rank-and-file committees among autoworkers in both North America and Europe "must be

expanded to include every key factory, giving workers the power to shut down the global industry," the IWA-RFC statement declared.

For an industrial and political counter-offensive

An industrial counter-offensive by the working class must be combined with a political fight by the working class for socialism, including the transformation of the giant auto corporations into public utilities, collectively owned and democratically controlled by the working class.

Addressing the broader issues, Tom, a Stellantis worker at the Sterling Heights Assembly Plant (SHAP) in suburban Detroit, said:

The job cuts in Toledo are bad. At SHAP, we know, even more cuts are coming. It's happening throughout the economy. People are coming to work and finding out that their plant is closing, and they're being laid off after working 20 years. This shouldn't be happening.

The UAW president is on the campaign trail for Harris when thousands of jobs are being eliminated throughout the Midwest. A lot of workers said they were for Harris until Fain showed up. Fain didn't do anything to protect our jobs, and people are fed up with him. He didn't go to Biden and say we need a solution.

Trump was able to capitalize on that. He got people who were losing their jobs, who were hurricane victims who didn't get anything but a \$750 check. Now, he's saying he is going to roll back emission policies, and this will make the auto industry boom again. He is going to let Elon Musk get a monopoly on EVs, so he can get even richer.

Stellantis can't keep up, and it's guaranteed that the company is going to be sold to someone else. The people with the money and power who run this country are shifting to something else, but we don't know what it is. We're going to have to fight them. We can't just keep switching between one party and the other. Nobody in the government is in there for us.



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