GM workers look to fight layoffs at Factory Zero in Detroit

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Autoworkers: Take up the fight against layoffs! Fill out the form at the end of this article to speak out against layoffs and learn more about joining the Autoworkers Rank-and-File Committee.

As General Motors moves to permanently eliminate 1,140 jobs at its Factory Zero Detroit-Hamtramck Assembly Center beginning January 5, 2026, workers are seeking a way to organize a fight against the layoffs. The job cuts, imposed after months of forced overtime and temporary shutdowns, are being carried out with the acquiescence of the United Auto Workers, which has not even made a pretense of defending workers' jobs even as GM continues to reap billions in profits.

In recent days, Factory Zero workers—many facing permanent layoffs—have written to the *World Socialist Web Site* expressing anxiety and anger and appealing for support. Tens of thousands of workers have accessed and widely shared WSWS articles and videos exposing the layoffs, the silence of the UAW and the broader assault on jobs throughout the auto industry.

"I work here at Factory Zero and it's disappointing that we do so much hard work to keep up with quality and demanding numbers just to end up not knowing how we're going to take care of our children," one worker wrote. "These people show dedication and compassion for this place and we are being set aside like old shoes. We have the number one vehicle but we are losing our jobs. It's just a hard thing to understand. We need help. Please."

Another worker described the collapse of contractual protections. "Every bit of the contract that we agreed and voted on has been tossed out and management does whatever they feel is necessary, without following the agreement, in order to better their individual selves at the expense of the worker."

The worker continued, "Costs are being cut in every department and area that are causing a decline in the work environment. There is no solidarity, just individual agendas and abuse and ignorant use of power."

Others emphasized the deterioration of working conditions. "No suggestion or experience is taken into consideration from the seasoned worker regarding safety and quality and workplace conditions," one wrote. "Workers are being looked at under a microscope more than the actual company and product."

Workers across the US and Canada also wrote in expressing their solidarity with Factory Zero workers. An OPmobility worker from Western Michigan summed up conditions across the state. "It's horrible working in Michigan. Our government allows these companies to screw us over and control our lives. It's modern day slavery."

A Canadian worker warned of the broader implications. "If we don't fight back, all we hold fair and firm will be gone within seven years." Denouncing Trump, he said, "Us Canadians got rid of our idiot and I think it's time for the U.S.A to get rid of yours."

Factory Zero workers repeatedly pointed to the role of the UAW in enforcing the layoffs. One worker hired shortly before the ratification of the 2023 national contract said the union functions as an arm of management rather than an organization defending workers.

"The union is saying we may be called back September or October next year. Maybe," the worker said. "I am actively looking for work. There is really nothing out here. I am not getting hired because I am still technically employed."

Under the contract, workers placed on "indefinite layoff" retain health insurance for up to 24 months, but GM retains the right to force transfers anywhere in the country. "They can force me to go to a plant anywhere in the country," the worker explained. "Having to sell your house at the last minute, if that's where it goes to."

This modern version of the notorious "GM gypsy" system has already imposed brutal conditions. A WSWS reporter recently spoke to a Factory Zero worker who drives two and a half hours each way from Fort Wayne, Indiana, every day to keep her job while seven months pregnant.

In interviews with the WSWS, Factory Zero workers also raised serious safety concerns tied to EV production.

"I was there when one of the cars exploded on the line," one worker said, referring to a fully autonomous vehicle built at the plant in December 2023. "It caught fire and blew up in the middle of the line."

That same month, a hi-lo struck a stack of batteries, triggering another major fire. Workers were evacuated repeatedly, including during a blizzard when they were forced to stand

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outside for hours before being sent back into the plant. “They cleared the fire and then put us back to work,” the worker said. “They had to get rid of the smell, so it was OK for us to breathe.”

The worker drew parallels to the independent investigation into the death of Stellantis worker Ronald Adams Sr. at the Dundee Engine Complex. “I can totally see that happening,” the worker said. “They don’t fix anything. They just get it back running as quickly as possible.”

The layoffs at Factory Zero are reverberating throughout GM’s EV supply chain, including at the Ultium Cells battery plant in Lordstown, Ohio, where more than 600 workers face permanent layoffs and hundreds more will be out of work for six months or more.

An Ultium worker who wrote in told the WSWS that management initially claimed 850 workers would be retained, only to later reduce that number to 750. “I feel bad for everybody else that’s going through it,” the worker said. “A lot of them are younger kids with families, car payments, house payments—right at the holidays.”

Battery production has been sharply curtailed, with entire sections of the plant shut down. The batteries produced in Lordstown supply vehicles assembled at Factory Zero, including the Hummer EV.

“This is very unsettling,” the worker said. “A couple months ago, we were told it was a temporary layoff. The fact that they can just change it like that—it could be us next.”

Despite being covered under the GM master agreement, Ultium workers report that the UAW has provided no leadership or plan to fight the layoffs. “We’ve just been getting little morsels of information,” the worker said. “That’s basically all that’s been said.”

The worker, a 20-year Delphi veteran, described decades of broken promises and union betrayals. Hired after Delphi’s 1999 spin-off from GM, he was excluded from pensions and transfer rights. “They promised we would get GM benefits. It never happened,” she said. “Then they went bankrupt.”

After taking a buyout, she later returned to the auto industry, only to confront the same cycle again. “You’re on a roller coaster ride, or you’re a cockroach with the head cut off,” he said. “That’s the best way I can describe it.”

She also warned about automation and artificial intelligence. “They want to displace workers with AI and I don’t like that,” she said.

The layoffs at Factory Zero are part of a far broader assault on auto jobs internationally. Ford has cancelled the F-150 Lightning pick-up program and scrapped next-generation EV projects and is laying off 1,800 workers at a battery plant in the Louisville area, while Stellantis has taken similar measures. In Europe, the auto giants are carrying out massive job cuts, particularly in Germany, as companies retreat from EV investments and impose sweeping restructuring.

The immediate trigger for this wave of layoffs is the Trump administration’s cancellation of consumer tax credits for electric vehicles and its open hostility to EV production. But this shift, together with sweeping tariffs, is aimed at a deeper restructuring of the US auto industry. Under conditions of intensifying global competition, particularly with China, the ruling class is seeking to slash labor costs, intensify exploitation and discipline the working class, while preparing for broader economic and ultimately military confrontation. Workers are being made to pay for this strategy through mass layoffs, speedup and forced transfers.

UAW President Shawn Fain has backed Trump’s trade war measures and is dividing US workers from their brothers and sisters in Canada, Mexico, China and around the world.

That is why the International Workers Alliance of Rank-and-File Committees (IWA-RFC) has called for the mobilization of the working class to defend the right to a job through independent, internationally coordinated action.

Asked what GM workers can do to oppose the job cuts at Factory Zero, Socialism AI, a new chatbot developed by the WSWS, said:

> The only effective basis for defending jobs is the democratic, independent organization of workers on the shop floor—rank-and-file committees that act in the interests of the working class, not the union apparatus or corporate management. Such committees must be formed by trusted, militant workers in every department and shift at Factory Zero, with elected, recallable coordinators, open membership and transparent accountability. They must immediately demand a full membership meeting called by the rank and file, not the UAW leadership, to decide strategy.
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> The aim of these committees is to unify and coordinate action—strikes, mass protests, pickets and regional plant solidarity—rather than negotiate behind closed doors. A fighting platform should include demands that begin from workers’ needs: no permanent layoffs; full pay and benefits for all affected; immediate membership meetings; shortening of the workweek with no loss of pay to preserve jobs; and democratic control over production decisions.

Workers who want to join this fight should fill out the form below.

To contact the WSWS and the Socialist Equality Party visit:

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