

# “They treat their employees like we’re disposable” Last day of work Friday for workers at GM Factory Zero in Detroit and Ultium Cells in Ohio

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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.*

Friday is likely the last day of work for thousands of GM workers at the Factory Zero plant in Detroit and the Ultium Cells battery plants in Lordstown, Ohio and Spring Hill, Tennessee. GM is cutting shifts and converting large numbers of temporary layoffs into permanent dismissals as part of a coordinated retrenchment across its EV and battery operations.

Two days after Trump boasted about the “greatest economy in the history of our country” and blamed immigrant workers for every social problem in the US, thousands of GM workers are being thrown in the street.

Approximately 1,145 assembly workers at Factory Zero and 600 workers at the Ultium Cells plant in Lordstown are being laid off indefinitely after the holiday break on January 5. An additional 850 workers in Lordstown and 710 in Spring Hill will be temporarily laid off beginning the same day.

A Factory Zero worker described the devastating social impact of the layoffs to the WSWS. “You have people losing their livelihood and their families are depending on that. The rug is swept under your feet with very short notice and very little time to prepare. I came from another state and have been here a year.

“They treat their employees like we’re disposable. GM makes billions because their employees help them to get billions. You can’t throw people away like yesterday’s trash. We slaved here for 10 and a half

hours, sometimes 12 hours a day, seven days a week, just for them to say, ‘See you later. We may give you a call next year.’ That’s crazy.”

She said that workers expected the UAW would do something to protect their jobs but that hasn’t happened. “We pay the union’s salary. If you’re not going to do anything for me, what are you here for?” Expressing her support for building a rank-and-file committee to defend jobs, she said, “We have to use our voice collectively, even if it’s to speak against our own union leaders.”

At the Lordstown Ultium Cells plant—a GM–LG Energy Solution joint venture that came online in 2022 to make cells for the Cadillac Lyriq, GMC Hummer EV and other Ultium-platform vehicles—workers described a similar betrayal.

“At first, I was told it would be a temporary layoff but now they told me it is permanent,” one worker told the WSWS, describing a fate shared by many. Another, newly saddled with a mortgage, warned: “I have some savings, but with mortgage, utilities, food and car payments I don’t know how long it will last.” Young parents and workers hoping to start families said their lives are being upended by management’s decision.

These cuts come while GM posts massive profits and continues to dole out billions to shareholders through buybacks and dividends. Despite the fall in EV sales, the company is expected to make \$13 billion in profits this year, following record 2024 profits of nearly \$15 billion.

GM management has invoked market shifts, tariff impacts and Trump’s end of federal EV tax credits as

explanations. But workers are being sacrificed to maintain profit margins and restructure production to reduce labor costs.

United Auto Workers President Shawn Fain and the rest of the UAW bureaucracy have maintained a guilty silence on the massive job cuts. Fain has promoted Trump's tariffs and sought to divide US workers from their brothers and sisters in Canada, Mexico, China and European countries.

Rank-and-file anger at the UAW is widespread. Workers at both Factory Zero and Lordstown repeatedly said the union "is in bed with management" and has kept them in the dark. Union officials have offered nothing except the possibility of being rehired sometime in the future or being forced to transfer long distances.

History shows that relying on corporate managers, politicians or the union apparatus will not halt corporate restructuring. The 2023 national contract produced nothing but mass layoffs. Closed-door contract talks and patriotic appeals to "protect jobs at home" are the means through which the bureaucracy helps to destroy jobs.

The only effective basis for defending jobs is democratic, independent organization by workers themselves—rank-and-file committees on every shift and in every department—to transfer power and decision-making from the UAW apparatus to workers on the shop floor.

Rank-and-file workers must demand an immediate membership meeting, with the podium controlled by workers and not bureaucrats, to discuss a strategy to defend jobs. If the union refuses, workers should hold it themselves.

Workers must discuss concrete, fighting demands: no permanent layoffs; full pay and benefits for all affected; no forced transfers or relocations; a reduction of hours with no loss of pay to preserve jobs; full publication of layoff and retooling plans; and democratic control over safety and production decisions.

Rank-and-file committees should prepare mass actions—pickets, plant-wide and industry-wide strikes. GM workers should link up with Ford and Stellantis workers facing similar job cuts along with forced overtime and deadly conditions. They must also document and publicize company profits, executive pay and stock buybacks to expose the lie that "we can't

afford jobs."

GM is a transnational corporation. Local defenses that accept national isolation will fail. The current wave of layoffs is global—Ford, Stellantis and German suppliers are all cutting thousands of jobs—and can only be fought through coordinated international action.

The International Workers Alliance of Rank-and-File Committees (IWA-RFC) rejects the nationalism of the UAW bureaucracy. It has called for a unified global movement against layoffs in the auto industry and for the building of a network of democratic, worker-controlled committees to coordinate strikes and solidarity across plants and borders.

On Thursday, the **International Workers Alliance of Rank-and-File Committees** issued a call For a united global movement against layoffs in the auto industry!

It stated:

The International Workers Alliance of Rank-and-File Committees (IWA-RFC) calls on autoworkers around the world to join a unified counteroffensive against the escalating bloodbath of layoffs sweeping the global auto industry.

The defense of the right to a job requires common action on a world scale against the transnational auto companies. This fight requires the building of new organizational structures: rank-and-file committees, democratically controlled by workers and based on the independent interests of the working class, not on nationalist collaboration with the capitalist elite.

*Join the fight to build rank-and-file committees to defend the right to secure, good-paying job for all by filling out the form below.*



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