

After Stellantis CEO resigns, UAW moves to wrap up phony “Keep the Promise” campaign

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Following the resignation of Stellantis CEO Carlos Tavares, the United Auto Workers bureaucracy is moving to wrap up its bogus “Keep the Promise” campaign. In statements to members, the union has ruled out any further strike authorization votes or threats of strike action until next year.

According to statements by UAW President Shawn Fain and other officials, the union will not strike or hold further strike votes at Stellantis over grievances related to job cuts until months into 2025, if ever. In the meantime, all local grievances related to the campaign have been withdrawn per instructions of the UAW leadership.

The UAW had filed a series of grievances related to the move by Stellantis to delay the reopening of the shuttered Belvidere Assembly Plant, claiming the company had violated the 2023 contract, and conducted strike votes at four locals.

At the same time, in a highly significant statement, UAW President Shawn Fain has indicated his willingness to collaborate with the incoming administration of fascist Donald Trump on trade war measures. “If this administration is willing to address issues like bad trade deals and the right to form a union, then we can work with them,” Fain told the *Detroit News*. The support for Trump’s tariffs dovetails with the UAW bureaucracy’s claims that “American jobs” are being shipped to Mexico and Canada.

For his part Trump has made overtures to the trade union bureaucracy through the naming of Republican Congresswoman Lori Chavez-DeRemer as his pick for US labor secretary. Trump’s pick combines right-wing politics with protecting the financial interests of the union apparatus through her support of the so-called PRO Act.

In several public statements, Fain has claimed the

“Keep the Promise” campaign played a role in forcing Tavares out, a man who Fain accused of “mismanagement.” This complaint exposes the identification of interests of the union apparatus with those of company. For Fain and the UAW leadership the issue is not to oppose and abolish the system of class exploitation but to make it more effective and efficient.

The resignation of Tavares will not lead to a let-up in the company’s assault on workers. The Stellantis CEO was forced out for failure to cut costs quickly enough for Wall Street and European investors. Having done his job, Tavares was seen as spent goods who was a lightning rod for workers anger. His departure is being used to facilitate the collaboration of the union bureaucracies in further job-cutting in the US and Europe.

Another factor in the winding down of Keep the promise appears to be the decision by Stellantis to finally allow the UAW into the new Kokomo battery plant joint venture with South Korean electronics company Samsung. Under the deal the plant will “lease” workers to Stellantis to allow them to be UAW members. About 1,000 jobs are involved.

Fain had pushed hard for the UAW to have the right to unionize workers at the plant to partially offset the loss of dues income due to layoffs at the Stellantis transmission operations in Kokomo. The UAW has encouraged laid off workers to apply for jobs at the battery plant, despite reports of fires and other unsafe conditions. Though not stated explicitly, the agreement by Stellantis to unionize involves a pledge by the UAW to maintain substandard wages at the plant.

While workers contacted by the WSWWS shed no tears for Tavares leaving, deep anger at the refusal of the UAW apparatus to mount any serious fight to defend

jobs persists.

A veteran worker at the Stellantis Warren Truck Assembly plant north of Detroit, where at least 1,300 out of 2,400 planned cuts have already taken place, told the *World Socialist Web Site*, “Most people are not sorry to see Tavares go. They did a stock buyback then raised his salary.”

While he said some workers hoped for a “better” CEO to replace Tavares, the worker said, “The problem is capitalism. We need to get rid of all CEOs. Any man who has a billion dollars represents a policy failure.”

About the UAW attempting to make overtures to the Trump administration he added, “People are starting to wake up about Trump. How has a billionaire got anything in common with a guy living in a mobile home eating ketchup sandwiches?”

A worker at Detroit Assembly Complex-Mack told the *WSWS*, that job cuts and uncertainty continued at the plant where thousands have been laid off already this year. “They laid off half the people on my line, then brought them back and put them on some of the worst jobs. One man’s blood pressure got dangerously high just from the stress and worry.”

She said she heard that when Fain spoke to workers at Sterling Heights Assembly, “with all these layoffs they really let him have it and rightfully so. People are being laid off and then called back and then laid off again. It is being done by department.”

She said that workers wanted a fight, but not another phony “stand up” partial strike like the UAW used during the 2023 contract negotiations that ended in a sellout contract opening the door to mass layoffs. “A lot of people are saying we should shut down everything,” she said.

Throughout the bogus campaign, Stellantis has been escalating its attack on jobs. Nearly 4,000 workers in the Detroit area and Toledo area have been laid off just since September. This included the elimination of a shift at the Warren Truck Assembly Plant north of Detroit and recently announced layoffs of 1,100 jobs at the Toledo Assembly Complex in January. Other Stellantis plants in Michigan and Indiana have also faced continuing rounds of layoffs.

Stellantis is also threatening to cut 12,000 jobs in Italy, planning to close at least one Vauxhall plant in the UK and is cutting jobs at its Opel plants in Germany.

This is part of a global jobs massacre by the transnational automakers, including GM’s plans to close plants in China, Ford’s plans to lay off 4,000 workers in Europe, including 2,900 in Germany, and VW’s elimination of tens of thousands of jobs in Germany.

The only way workers can fight the global automakers is by adopting an international strategy and building of rank-and-file movement independent of the pro-nationalist and pro-capitalist union bureaucracies. The International Workers Alliance of Rank-and-File Committee is calling for a global campaign to defend the right to a good-paying and secure job for all workers.

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