

“We shouldn’t be pitted against each other”: Canadian and US Stellantis workers call for cross-border unity to defend jobs

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31 October 2025

Stellantis autoworkers in Canada and the United States have denounced Trump’s trade war measures and called for a unified, cross-border struggle to defend jobs and living standards. Their statements come as mass layoffs mount and global automakers deploy AI and automation to extract more production from a shrinking workforce.

On October 14, Stellantis announced it was scrapping plans to build its new Jeep Compass in Brampton, Ontario, and shifting production to its long-shuttered Belvidere, Illinois, plant to shield the company from Trump’s tariffs. The decision threatens 1,500 Brampton jobs and may lead to the plant’s closure.

United Auto Workers President Shawn Fain immediately hailed Stellantis’ move, praising Trump’s tariffs for bringing “back thousands of good union jobs to the US.” Fain also pointed to General Motors’ \$4 billion investments in Michigan, Tennessee and Kansas as proof of the supposed “gains” from the UAW’s alliance with Trump’s nationalist policies.

Barely a week later, GM announced new job cuts. Factory Zero in Detroit will be reduced to a single shift in January 2026, eliminating about 1,200 jobs. Battery-cell production at Ultium plants in Ohio and Tennessee will pause for six months, affecting another 2,100 workers. Ford is threatening to idle its Rouge Electric Vehicle Center in Dearborn, Michigan, which has already been cut from three shifts to one.

Neither the UAW nor its Canadian counterpart Unifor has lifted a finger to oppose the layoffs. The job losses are the direct result of Trump’s cancellation of EV consumer tax credits and the global collapse of EV demand. Instead of organizing resistance, Unifor is allying with the right-wing Liberal government of Mark Carney to promote Canadian nationalism and counter-tariffs.

Last week, supporters of the International Workers

Alliance of Rank-and-File Committees (IWA-RFC) distributed the *WSWS Autoworker Newsletter* at Stellantis’ Windsor Assembly Plant, across the river from Detroit. The newsletter included a statement by Mack Trucks worker and IWA-RFC leader Will Lehman, who denounced Fain’s claim that “cutting the jobs of our Canadian brothers and sisters is a win for American workers” and called for the defense of the jobs of Brampton workers.

“Fain is allied with a fascist president who sends ICE thugs against immigrant workers, threatens to invoke the Insurrection Act to establish military rule, and is destroying public education and health care to enrich the oligarchy he represents,” Lehman said. “Just as trade war preceded World War II, trade war today is the prelude to a new world war for global domination—from the Middle East and South America to Russia and China.”

Lehman concluded:

Our greatest strength is our international unity. The only way to defend our jobs is through cross-border solidarity in struggle. In every factory, workers must build rank-and-file committees, controlled democratically by workers themselves. This can only succeed if it is independent of the UAW bureaucracy and the two parties of big business, which offer only poverty, war, and dictatorship.”

Stellantis workers in Windsor responded enthusiastically to this call for unity.

“It’s time to form one union across the global auto industry,” said a veteran Windsor worker. “We used to be

in the same union with the American workers, but we were split up. The industry operates all over the world. It doesn't matter if it's Democrats or Republicans in the US, or Liberals and Conservatives here—none of them are for the workers. We need politics for the working class.”

Several denounced both Trump and Carney, who is preparing massive austerity measures modeled on Trump's attacks on federal workers and programs to enrich the financial elite and expand the military.

A young Windsor worker addressed US workers directly:

“We got to stick together, man. It's about the workers being together regardless. We're not the ones using these billion-dollar industries to screw each other over. We all have families. We want to survive. We got to team up and work together to stop this.”

He added, “We shouldn't be pitted against each other by people up there who don't give a crap about us. We should be united as one—all the workers across all countries.”

When a WSWS reporter noted that trade wars historically lead to world wars, he agreed: “Right, because once a country can't make money, they have no other option left but war. Trade war makes enemies between countries. We don't need wars.”

He also praised the “No Kings Day” mass protests in the US against Trump. “It was awesome to see that many people show up. I'm proud American workers support us. We might be from different countries, but we're under the same umbrella.”

On Unifor's role, he said: “The union says the trade war sucks but tells us to ‘build the best product possible’ to keep our jobs. That just pits one plant against another. Look what happened with Brampton—they took the Charger and Challenger from there to Windsor. We're lucky to have work, but it's not fair. How long before the company takes the work from us and moves it again? That's why we need unity, not only here but worldwide.”

Stellantis says it will add a third shift in Windsor in early 2026 and offer Brampton workers transfers—a four-hour commute away.

Stellantis workers in the US face the same attacks. In Detroit, the fire at the Novelis aluminum plant in Oswego, New York—which supplies 40 percent of US auto-grade aluminum—has disrupted supply chains amid heavy tariffs. This has forced production cuts at multiple automakers.

A veteran worker at Warren Truck Assembly, idled for weeks, described the mounting crisis: “Everyone being displaced by AI should be supported by some kind of

economic floor. There should be a four-hour workday at the same pay. The work should be spread around. Until you hit these companies in their profits, they'll keep doing what they want.”

He traced the assault on workers to Reagan's firing of the air traffic controllers in 1981: “After Reagan fired the PATCO workers, wages stayed flat, but productivity went up. Profits went through the roof, and the unions went along. The UAW has so many backdoor clauses and side agreements that let management off the hook.”

On the Brampton-to-Belvidere transfer, he said: “That's whipsawing—stealing jobs from one group of workers to give to another. That's nothing to brag about. It would be like taking work from Warren Truck and giving it to Sterling Heights. There's a lot of opposition to Fain, and he could lose the election in 2026.”

He rejected Trump's scapegoating of immigrants: “Immigrants are not the enemy, and neither is China. The enemy is in America. Everyone should have a good-paying job. Look at Detroit—40,000 abandoned houses, and plenty of work that needs to be done.”

The statements from workers in Windsor, Brampton and Detroit expose the fraudulent claim that tariffs and nationalism can “bring back jobs.” In reality, Trump's trade war is an instrument of economic warfare on behalf of the financial elite, while the UAW and Unifor act as labor police enforcing corporate demands.

The only way forward is for workers to unite across borders, industries and languages to defend their jobs, living standards and democratic rights. The fight to oppose plant closures, layoffs and the drive toward war requires the building of independent rank-and-file committees—linked through the International Workers Alliance of Rank-and-File Committees—to coordinate joint action against the global auto giants and the capitalist system they serve.

Fill out the form below to build the International Workers Alliance of Rank-and-File Committees.



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