WE CAN'T FIGHT FOR WHAT WE NEED WITHOUT ORGANIZING OURSELVES



BY WILL LEHMAN
Mack Trucks worker and rank-and-file candidate for UAW president

I'm Will Lehman, a Mack Trucks worker running for president of the UAW. Yesterday, I was nominated at the UAW Convention. This means that I will be on the ballot for president this fall.

This is a major victory for our campaign to build a rank-and-file movement against the entire pro-corporate UAW apparatus. I want to thank all the workers who made videos and wrote in to demand that your delegates nominate me. It would not have happened without your support.

The next stage now begins.

My campaign is about building a rank-and-file movement of workers in the UAW to fight for what we need, not what the corporations and UAW bureaucrats say is possible. We need massive wage increases to make up for decades of concessions; cost-of-living adjustments to meet soaring inflation; full pensions and high-quality health care for workers and retirees; the restoration of the eight-hour day and an end to grinding schedules and forced overtime; and so much more.

I direct this appeal to all sections of the working class. The UAW bureaucrats view young workers making poverty level wages the same way the old AFL viewed industrial workers: as "garbage on labor's doorstep." But they have the same contempt for older workers who have seen their pay stagnate for decades, and for retirees who they won't even allow to run in the election.

My campaign is not aimed at replacing one bureaucrat with another. We can't fight for what we need without organizing ourselves.

This means rank-and-file committees in every workplace to place power where it belongs, with workers on the shop floor. It means establishing real unity among all workers in the UAW by breaking out of the isolation imposed by Solidarity House.

It means connecting our struggles with the fight of rail workers, dockworkers, teachers, health care workers, service workers and all sections of workers who are in the same fight.

It means linking up with our class brothers and sisters throughout the world—in Canada, in Europe, in India and Sri Lanka, throughout Asia, Africa and Latin America, in every country. Together, the working class is the most powerful force on the planet.

Such a fight cannot and will not be carried out by the corporate toadies making six-figure salaries in Solidarity House. The bureaucratic apparatus that exists only to suppress our struggles can not be reformed. It must be swept away.

I can't do this alone, I am not a miracle worker. This campaign is not so much about me, but about you. It will be successful to the extent that you get involved, that we develop through this campaign the organization and initiative to fight and to win.

I call on all workers to sign up to build this movement. Make it as widely known as possible. Discuss it with your co-workers. Build election committees. Organize meetings. Make statements on social media. Get the word out any way that you can.

The working class is on the move, and we must press forward. By taking the initiative and organizing ourselves, we can fight and build a society that is based on our interests, not on the profits and wealth of the few. In the words of one worker I spoke to at Warren Truck this week: “Let’s do this.”

JOIN THE FIGHT FOR WORKERS’ POWER!

Get involved with the rank-and-file campaign in the UAW elections.

willforuawpresident.org/get-involved