

Video: UAW presidential candidate Will Lehman on the lessons of the 1932 Ford Hunger March and the transformation of the UAW

Will Lehman
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For more information on Will Lehman's campaign for UAW president, visit WillforUAWPresident.org.

On Saturday, August 27 at 5 p.m. Eastern, Will Lehman will be holding a live online Q&A. Learn more and register to attend.

UAW presidential candidate Will Lehman issued a video statement following a campaign at Ford's Dearborn Truck (Rouge) Assembly plant this week.

The video is also posted on Facebook.

In his statement, Lehman noted that 90 years ago, in March 1932, "Henry Ford's Dearborn police attacked a march of 5,000 workers demanding jobs for the unemployed, a halt to the use of company spies and private gun thugs against workers, and the right to organize unions. Five workers were killed and 60 others were wounded. It would take another nine years of struggles against Henry Ford, a notorious Nazi supporter, before the UAW won recognition."

"The Ford Hunger March," Lehman said, "was part of many struggles led by socialist workers during the Great Depression of the 1930s, which established the UAW as a mass industrial union.

"But the UAW abandoned any struggle against the corporations a long time ago and became a tool of the corporations. Workers have long suffered the consequences of this betrayal in the loss of jobs, wages and deadly working conditions."

Lehman recounted a tragic boiler explosion in February 1999, when six workers here were killed when a boiler exploded at the nearly 100-year-old Rouge Center Power House.

"Before the fatal explosion, three of the six workers

who died filed health and safety complaints. The UAW ignored the complaints, and on the day after the blast defended management and claimed the facility was one of the safest in Ford's system."

"I am running for UAW president," Lehman concluded, "to mobilize workers to protect our jobs, overturn decades of UAW-backed concessions and win the demands that workers need, not what the companies say they can afford. Workers need to build rank-and-file committees to build up their power, abolish the UAW bureaucracy and transfer control to the workers on the shop floor. Change will occur only to the extent that workers organize to change it."

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