

Video: German workers support Will Lehman

Our correspondents
9 November 2022

The deadline to mail in ballots in the UAW election to ensure that they are counted is fast approaching (November 18). Vote for Will Lehman and mail your ballot today! If you have not received a ballot, go to uawvote.com and request one immediately. For more information on Lehman's campaign, visit WillforUAWPresident.org.

The two videos published here document the support Will Lehman's campaign against the union bureaucracy enjoys among German workers.

Lehman, a 34-year-old worker at Mack Trucks in Pennsylvania, is running for president of the United Auto Workers to abolish the UAW apparatus and transfer power to the rank-and-file.

Lehman's campaign is directed not only to the more than one million UAW members and retirees in the US who are eligible to vote for him, but to the entire working class. Calling for the formation of independent rank-and-file committees, Will Lehman declares, "These committees are made up of us, the workers themselves; we control them, and through them we will press our own demands against the decisions of management and the union apparatus."

Lehman, an outspoken socialist, links his campaign to a call for international working-class unity: "We're fighting to unite workers in the US with workers in Mexico, Canada and around the world."

"His call to break with the corrupt UAW bureaucracy and build independent rank-and-file action committees is also important for us here in Germany," explains Andi, an auto worker from Bavaria. "The German unions, especially IG Metall, are no less corrupt and anti-working-class than the UAW."

Andi explained that IG Metall works council representatives recently concluded a deal at the Ford plant in Saarlouis that means the closure of the plant.

IG Metall, he said, "acts as the factory police and suppresses any opposition." To enable the closure of Ford's Saarlouis plant by 2025, IG Metall and the Spanish UGT union have played Ford workers at the Saarlouis plant and the Almussafes plant near Valencia off against each other. The same manoeuvre is now to be repeated at Mercedes-Benz in Ludwigsfelde, near Berlin.

Florian, a German bus mechanic living in Norway, is also enthusiastic about Will Lehman's campaign. He said, "The role of unions is the same everywhere," recounting how in Norway, teachers, natural gas drillers, airport workers "and mechanics like me wanted to strike for higher wages." But the German and British governments, with the help of the unions, ensured that natural gas supplies from Norway were not cut off during the NATO war against Russia. "The unions got us back to work as quickly and as cheaply as possible."

Both videos are strong appeals for the formation of independent action committees in all workplaces. "Will Lehman and his supporters are at the forefront of this movement," Florian said. And Andi declared, "Will's struggle is our struggle too."



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