

Massive international response to Will Lehman Tik Tok video calling on workers to take action to stop genocide in Gaza

Kevin Reed
8 November 2023

A TikTok video by Will Lehman—striking Mack Trucks autoworker and socialist candidate for president of the UAW in 2022—calling on workers around the world to take immediate action to stop the genocide in Gaza by halting the production and shipment of weapons to Israel has been viewed hundreds of thousands of times internationally.

The video, which was posted on Sunday by Lehman on his TikTok page, has been shared thousands of times by users who support his call for the working class to intervene and stop Israel’s murderous assault on Palestinians in Gaza.

In the two-minute 15-second video, Lehman says, “I unequivocally denounce the Israeli government’s ongoing slaughter of the people of Palestine, which has the full backing of the US government and both capitalist political parties. What is taking place is nothing less than a war crime, and the working class must be alerted and mobilized to stop it.”

Lehman goes on to fully endorse the appeal of the Palestinian General Federation of Trade Unions to workers in relevant industries “asking workers of the world to refuse to build weapons destined for Israel, refuse to transport weapons to Israel, to take action against complicit companies involved in implementing Israel’s brutal and illegal siege.”

He then demands the United Auto Workers cease production of all equipment intended for the Israeli military, adding, “When production of munitions and military equipment for Israel is stopped, all workers in the affected factories must be paid 100 percent of their salaries by the corporations who have profited from contracts with the perpetrators of war crimes.”

The statement by Lehman has won a viral and

enthusiastic response from TikTok users. The overwhelming majority of the social media video sharing platform are young people. According to one survey, for example, 60 percent of the estimated 80 million active TikTok users in the US—some 48 million people—are between the ages of 16 and 24.

One repost of Lehman’s TikTok video by user actualpress has received, as of this writing, approximately 221,000 views, more than 4,000 shares and more than 3,000 comments. A quick review of some of the comments shows that Lehman’s appeal for the working class to use its power to halt the crimes of the Zionist state in Gaza has struck a tremendously powerful chord with TikTok users.

Amy wrote, “they can’t do this without the peoples’ cooperation, we have more power than we think. thank you will!!!”

Buer wrote, “Yes! “The international working class is the kind of global unity I’m looking for!”

Fooburt posted, “We need more people like this standing up for what’s right.”

Hira Lee wrote, “Thank you for your bravery and your eloquence. Yours is a voice that can surpass barriers and is likely to be heard.”

And MidnightBlue424 wrote, “You are a true hero. Stopping and educating the public. The awakening is moving and commendable. Thank you. ENOUGH. Stop all wars.”

The comment about educating the public was clearly a response to Lehman’s demand in the video: “a coordinated education campaign must be initiated to inform the entire UAW membership about the ongoing genocide in Gaza and resolutions in support of the appeal by our brothers and sisters in Palestine must be

passed in every local.”

Lehman goes on to expose the support being given to the Biden administration’s backing of Israel’s aerial bombardment and ground assault on Gaza by the UAW leadership and union President Shawn Fain. He says Fain has “ignored the appeal by the Palestinian trade unions.” What is more, in September Fain invited Biden to Wayne, Michigan, “to posture as a friend of working people. ... Biden is not standing with workers, he is standing with Netanyahu and the Israeli military as they massacre civilians and bomb hospitals and schools.”

While President Biden is being denounced internationally and within the US as “Genocide Joe” for his open defense of Israeli crimes, Fain and the members of the Democratic Socialists of America and former Bernie Sanders staff members in his inner circle are coming to the aid of the White House. On Thursday, Biden is scheduled to join Fain in Belvidere, Illinois, to help the union bureaucracy promote sellout tentative contracts negotiated by the UAW with the Detroit Three.

As part of his efforts to further integrate the union bureaucracy into his war plans against Iran, Russia and China, Biden is joining Fain in promoting the lie that the UAW won “historic agreements” for autoworkers at Ford, GM and Stellantis. This includes the claim that the deals “saved” the Belvidere factory. In reality, both the federal and state governments showered hundreds of millions of dollars in tax cuts and other subsidies on Stellantis in exchange for vague promises about opening up an electric vehicle and battery plant over the next few years “if market conditions allow.”

On Tuesday, Fain appeared on MSNBC with Rachel Maddow and praised Biden, saying, “For the first time in the history of our country, a president chose to visit a picket line. That says a lot.” Maddow did not ask and Fain did not say a word about Biden’s full backing of the Israeli genocide in Gaza.

On Wednesday afternoon, Lehman posted a follow-up video on TikTok in which he explained that his first video had gone viral and revealed, “the overwhelming opposition of the international working class to the crimes Israel is currently committing with the full support of the US government, the Biden administration and both the Democratic and Republican parties.”

Lehman said in recent days he has received messages of support from rank-and-file workers throughout the UAW and across the world supporting his call for actions to stop the genocide. He contrasted this response to the “cowardly silence” of Fain, the UAW apparatus and the entire AFL-CIO bureaucracy, which is continuing to support Biden and “to keep production running as bombs and missiles made in the USA continue to rain down on the defenseless people of Gaza.”

Lehman concluded by emphasizing that the developing anti-war movement “must be based on the working class, the social force capable of bringing imperialist war and capitalist exploitation to an end.” He called on all workers to join the rank-and-file movement by signing up at wsws.org/worker.



To contact the WSWS and the Socialist Equality Party visit:

wsws.org/contact