

The working class must stop the US-Israeli genocide in Gaza

Appeal from socialist auto worker and former UAW presidential candidate

Will Lehman
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Will Lehman is an auto worker at the Mack Trucks assembly plant in Macungie, Pennsylvania. Last year he ran as a socialist candidate for the presidency of the United Auto Workers, and received nearly 5,000 votes.

Workers throughout the world have been horrified and angered over Israel's genocidal war against the Palestinians. For two and a half months, Israeli military forces, with the full backing of the US government, have dropped more than 40,000 tons of explosives—the equivalent of more than two nuclear bombs—on Gaza, a territory no bigger than the city of Detroit with more than three times the population. Israel has destroyed residential buildings, hospitals, schools and refugee camps and deliberately targeted hundreds of medical workers, journalists, teachers and other civilians for assassination.

At least 20,000 Palestinians have been killed and 54,000 wounded, the majority women and children. Many more face death in the coming weeks, as Israel lays siege in the south and deprives Gaza's 2.2 million people of food, water and medical care. Hunger and disease are rapidly spreading through their makeshift shelters.

The claims by the Biden administration that it is pressuring Israel to reduce civilian casualties are nothing but hypocritical lies. Despite international calls for a ceasefire, the US government is fully supporting Israel politically, financially and militarily.

A recently leaked Pentagon document stated that US "security assistance" was arriving in Israeli on a near-daily basis. The US had already delivered 36,000 rounds of 30mm artillery shells, 1,800 M141 Bunker-buster bombs and other munitions to Israel by late October alone, according to the document.

Under the rubble, alongside the buried bodies of children, Palestinian rescue workers have found bomb fragments with the manufacturing codes of Boeing and other US defense companies. There is unchallengeable evidence that the Biden administration and both corporate-backed parties are just as guilty as the Netanyahu government for perpetrating the

greatest war crime of the 21st century.

Stop the production and shipment of arms and equipment for the Israeli military!

The working class can and must stop this war. In October, the Palestinian General Federation of Trade Unions called on "unions in relevant industries" all over 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."

Last month, I fully endorsed this appeal and demanded that the UAW cease production of all military materiel that Israel could use in its genocidal campaign against the Palestinians.

When production of munitions and military equipment for Israel is stopped, I said, all workers in the affected factories must be paid 100 percent of their salaries by the corporations that have profited from contracts with the perpetrators of war crimes. I also called for the initiation of a coordinated education campaign to inform the entire UAW membership about the ongoing genocide in Gaza and for the passage of resolutions in every local to support the appeal by our brothers and sisters in Palestine.

The leadership of the UAW, however, has ignored the appeal by the Palestinian trade unions. Instead, UAW President Shawn Fain has joined a section of Democratic Party politicians who are backing a toothless resolution in Congress, which, even if it passed, would do nothing but "urge" President Biden to call for a ceasefire. The real aim of this resolution is not to stop the war but to promote illusions in the Biden administration and the Democratic Party, which have been deeply discredited by their support for the Israeli genocide.

At the same time, Fain has blocked strikes by General Dynamics and Allison Transmission workers—the latter voted

down a UAW-backed contract by 96.2 percent—which would have had a direct impact on the production of tanks, infantry-fighting vehicles and other military equipment that are being shipped to Israel, Ukraine and elsewhere.

Autoworkers have had enough of this double-talk from Fain, having just seen the UAW bureaucracy push through a so-called “record contract,” which was a sellout and which has been followed by mass layoffs at Stellantis, Ford and GM.

Form rank-and-file committees to put the power in workers’ hands

In every factory, workers should expand the network of rank-and-file committees to break the stranglehold of the UAW bureaucracy. The fight against layoffs, austerity and inequality must be united with the fight against war. Stopping the genocide requires strikes and boycotts of arms companies, work stoppages at the docks and airports to prevent the shipment of any items to Israel with a military use and the systematic preparation for a political general strike against the war.

Millions of workers and young people throughout the world have marched to demand an end to the Israeli genocide. But the Biden administration and capitalist governments around the world have ignored their pleas. Instead, they have organized a witch-hunt against the protesters, slandering them for “antisemitism” even though Jewish youth have played a prominent role in the anti-genocide demonstrations. In reality, Biden is teaming up with right-wing Republicans who collaborate with real neo-Nazis and antisemites.

The conflict in the Middle East is not some incomprehensible thousand-years-old religious battle. In 1986, Biden said, “Were there not an Israel, the United States would have to invent one to protect her interests in the region.” In other words, Israel has been and remains a forward military base for American imperialism’s efforts to control the oil wealth of the region.

The American ruling class sees the slaughter of the Palestinians as one front in a far wider war that it has already begun, against Iran, Russia and China. Such a global war, which threatens the future of humanity, is, of course, madness. But confronting an unprecedented economic and political crisis at home, including rising social opposition by the working class, the corporate and financial oligarchy is plunging mankind into a world war. The aim of this war is to recolonize the globe and reassert the unchallenged supremacy of US imperialism over the world’s resources and markets.

In a bipartisan vote last week, the US Congress passed a record military budget of \$883.7 billion for the coming year, an increase of \$145 billion, or 20 percent, since 2020. In addition, the Biden administration is seeking another \$105 billion to fund the US-NATO proxy war against Russia in Ukraine, escalate

the military confrontation with China, provide additional funding for Israel’s war crimes and further militarize the US-Mexico border and deprive immigrants of the right to asylum.

Who is going to pay for this massive war spending? Both parties intend to make the working class pay by gutting funding for public education, Medicaid, Medicare, Social Security and other vital social programs. In other words, the American ruling class is waging a war on two fronts: one to reconquer the world and plunder its resources, and the other to destroy the jobs and living standards of workers and young people in the US to pay for war. The fact is the American ruling class does not care about the lives of American workers any more than it does the Palestinians in Gaza.

Unite the fight for workers’ interests with the fight against war

Workers are told there is “no money” for adequate raises or necessities like proper ventilation to prevent the spread of COVID-19 and other infectious diseases in schools and factories, while there is endless money for war, bank bailouts and other giveaways to the rich.

Throughout the world, social anger is erupting against war, austerity and social inequality. In the last year major strikes in the US increased by 30 percent, with October recording the most lost days due to work stoppages in four decades. The number of strikes would have been even larger if walkouts had not been blocked or limited by the UAW and other union bureaucracies.

The working class has the power to stop the wars and reorganize economic and political life. Workers in the US must unite with Arab and Jewish workers in the Middle East to abolish the Israeli apartheid system and create a secular state where democratic and social rights are guaranteed, regardless of religious or ethnic backgrounds. The working class must take control of the vast wealth of the region from the multinational oil companies and local rulers as part of the socialist reorganization of the world economy.



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