

Rank-and-file candidate for United Auto Workers president Will Lehman introduces resolution against Iran war

Jerry White
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Will Lehman—a rank-and-file Mack Trucks worker and socialist candidate for UAW president—introduced a resolution opposing the war against Iran at a meeting of UAW Local 677 on Saturday. Lehman proposed that the resolution—“Against the US-Israeli Imperialist War on Iran; For the Independent Mobilization of the Working Class”—be taken up at the 39th UAW Constitutional Convention, scheduled for June 15–18 in Detroit.

The resolution was put to a vote at UAW Local 677 and was defeated 7 to 1. Lehman cast the only vote in favor. The seven who voted it down were not rank-and-file workers but local officers and their associates—a tiny bureaucratic clique convened without the 2,400 Mack Trucks workers. Their vote is entirely typical of the pro-war UAW apparatus that has, from the national leadership on down, either actively promoted the war drive or maintained a cowardly silence in the face of it.

The resolution proposed by Lehman is a powerful statement outlining a strategy for the working class to stop the war. It denounces the war as criminal, drawing on the Nuremberg precedents established after World War II, and documents its staggering human costs and implications.

The resolution also directly connects the war to the attacks on the democratic and social rights of the working class at home. The same government that bombs Iranian cities is deploying militarized federal agents against immigrant workers, killed Renée Nicole Good and Alex Pretti, and is building what the resolution characterizes as “the largest immigration prison system in American history.”

It condemns the \$1.5 trillion Pentagon budget alongside savage cuts to Medicare, Medicaid, food

assistance, housing and education, and raises the threat now hanging over every auto plant in the country: the conversion of production from vehicles to weapons of war, which would “integrate autoworkers, against their interests, into the production of the weapons used to kill workers in other countries.”

The resolution places responsibility for the war squarely on both parties of big business. It declares that “the Democratic Party has joined with the Republican Party in funding and prosecuting this war, with leading Democrats supporting the strikes and Senate war powers resolutions failing repeatedly — demonstrating that the working class can place no confidence in either capitalist party or in the institutions of the capitalist state to end the war, and must rely on its own independent strength.”

The resolution lays out a program of action rooted in the independent initiative of the rank and file. It declares that the war “can be ended only by the independent mobilization of the working class,” not by appeals to Congress, lobbying the Democrats, or reliance on “capitalist politicians of any stripe.” It therefore calls on UAW members to “actualize” the resolution through the formation of rank-and-file committees in every local—independent of and not subordinate to the union bureaucracy, elected in open meetings, accountable solely to the membership, and subject to immediate recall.

The resolution specifies what these committees would be charged with: taking the resolution into every workplace and convening the membership to discuss and act on it; organizing the defense of immigrant coworkers against ICE raids and deportations; opposing the conversion of auto and auto parts production to

military output; and preparing to oppose conscription and defend any worker or young person who refuses to fight in an imperialist war. It further calls for establishing direct lines of communication and coordination with rank-and-file committees in other UAW locals, other unions, and with workers internationally, including in Iran.

Finally, it links these organizational measures to concrete industrial and political action. The committees are instructed to convene assemblies, prepare the membership for “industrial and political action up to and including work stoppages and strike action,” and report back “regularly and openly” on progress. The resolution underscores that implementation cannot be left to “officials, staff, or apparatus,” but depends on “the conscious, organized, and independent action of the rank and file.”

The vote against Lehman’s resolution by the Local 677 apparatus is politically significant not for its tally—7 to 1 in a meeting designed to exclude the membership—but for what it reveals. A handful of officials, acting as a closed bureaucratic clique, moved to suppress any expression of opposition to an illegal war and prevent even a discussion among the 2,400 Mack workers they nominally “represent.” In this sense, the vote is a concentrated expression of the role of the UAW apparatus as a whole.

UAW President Shawn Fain has positioned the apparatus as a reliable prop of the war drive. He has issued no statement opposing the Iran war, while reviving the poisonous mythology of the World War II “Arsenal of Democracy”—the corporatist arrangement under which auto production was converted to armaments, workers were stripped of the right to strike, and the union bureaucracy was rewarded with state sanction and institutional privileges in exchange for enforcing “labor discipline.”

Fain’s embrace of Trump’s economic nationalism and tariff war flows from the same logic: divide workers along national lines, subordinate their struggles to the “national interest” of American capitalism, and prepare the union to police the workforce as war and austerity escalate.

The WSWS calls on autoworkers and all UAW members to take Lehman’s resolution into every plant and every local, circulate it on the shop floor, and implement the strategy that it lays out. As the

resolution states, the working class possesses, through its position in production, transportation and the universities, the social power to halt the war machine. The issue is organization and leadership: whether workers’ collective strength is consciously mobilized, or strangled by officials whose privileges depend on keeping workers politically disarmed and isolated.

The WSWS urges workers to build rank-and-file committees, link up across plants and borders, and prepare collective action to stop the war drive and defend the working class from the onslaught that accompanies it.



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