

United Auto Workers backs reelection of warmonger Biden

Jerry White
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The United Auto Workers, as expected, has endorsed the reelection campaign of Democratic President Joe Biden. With its endorsement, the UAW bureaucracy is backing a war criminal who is overseeing Israel's genocide in Gaza and a rapid expansion of American imperialism's wars of global conquest.

Just minutes into his acceptance speech, Biden was interrupted by chants of "Ceasefire now" from the floor of the UAW political action conference in Washington D.C. While Biden stood silent and bewildered, the assembled UAW bureaucrats repeatedly shouted "UAW! UAW!" to drown out the protesters.

In his introduction of Biden, Fain predictably did not say a word about the US-backed slaughter of more than 30,000 Palestinians, mostly women and children, even though the UAW has adopted a pro forma resolution calling on the president to demand a ceasefire.

Instead, the UAW president employed his standard left-sounding rhetoric to portray Biden—a corporate shill for his entire political career—as a champion of the working class who was ready to battle the "billionaire class and their backers here in Washington D.C."

During the UAW's online presentation of the event, there was a steady stream of critical posts by workers denouncing "Genocide Joe," condemning Biden's outlawing of the railroad workers' strike in 2022, and exposing the fraudulent claims by Biden and Fain that the sellout agreements in the auto industry last year were "historic" victories.

Fain insisted that workers had a huge stake in the outcome of the contest between Biden and Trump, saying:

This November we can stand up and elect someone who stands with us and supports our cause, or we can elect someone who will divide us and fight us every step of the way. That's what this choice is about... Who gives us the best shot of organizing, negotiating strong contracts, of uniting the working class and winning our fair share once again?

In fact, the differences between the openly fascistic Trump and the warmonger Biden are entirely tactical. Both are enemies of the working class who insist that workers pay for the historic decline of American capitalism and military confrontations around the world through brutal austerity. The differences arise over how best to suppress the popular resistance of the working class, with Trump seeking to build a fascist movement to crush opposition and Biden relying more on the services of the trade union bureaucracy.

In an effort to draw a sharp contrast between the two reactionary capitalist politicians, Fain reviewed the candidates' relations with the UAW bureaucracy since 2008, distorting Biden's record.

During the 2008-09 financial crash and auto industry crisis, Fain said, Biden "helped save the auto industry," while Trump blamed the union. In fact, the Obama-Biden administration collaborated with the UAW to shut dozens of GM and Chrysler plants, eliminate 35,000 jobs, slash new hires' wages in half, abolish company-paid pensions and retiree health benefits, and ban strikes for six years. In return, the Democrats handed the UAW apparatus a significant ownership stake in the companies, seats on their corporate boards, and control of the multibillion-dollar retiree health trust.

Fain pointed to the closure of the Lordstown, Ohio plant during the Trump years and the Republican president's criticisms of local UAW officials, but he failed to mention that the UAW agreed to the closure of the plant as part of the sellout of the 2019 GM strike.

In 2023, Fain said, the Democratic president "stood by our side every step of the way instead of talking trash about our union. ... Biden supported our historic victory." The UAW president then rehashed his claims that last year's "stand up" strike—which never involved more than a third of the members at the Big Three—had brought the companies to their knees and won the biggest advances for workers since the union's founding in the 1930s.

In fact, the UAW agreed to contracts that will facilitate the destruction of tens if not hundreds of thousands of jobs, as the corporations shift production to electric vehicles. Since Fain pushed through the contracts last autumn, the automakers have announced thousands of layoffs, as well as the termination of

hundreds of temporary workers. The UAW had told the temporary workers that they would be converted to full-time status under the new contracts. Instead, they have been fired, with the complicity of the UAW.

On July 19, 2023, two months before the expiration of the contracts for 146,000 GM, Ford and Stellantis workers, Biden held a closed-door meeting with Fain at the White House. Administration officials were in virtually daily communication with the UAW bureaucracy throughout the contract struggle.

Over the ensuing months, White House officials conspired with Fain and other UAW officials to wear down the resistance of workers and impose pro-company contracts. In exchange for the UAW bureaucracy's collaboration in imposing pro-company contracts, Biden pressed the automakers to allow the UAW to "represent" workers at the EV battery factories, i.e., to collect dues from these low-paid workers. The deals that the UAW rammed through were worked out well in advance by the auto companies and the Biden administration, which sees the slashing of labor costs for EV production as critical to its economic and military confrontation with China.

In his speech, Biden erupted into an anti-Chinese rant, promoting the same nationalist poison that the American ruling class and labor bureaucracy have long used to divide American workers from their class brothers around the world and, in the present geo-political context, prepare for war against China.

Biden said:

I'm tired over our jobs going overseas and having products shipped back here from China. Trump and a lot of other administrations allowed that. Not anymore. Now we're building products here and shipping them overseas. What's really important is you made sure the future of the world will be made in America.

He continued:

China is determined to dominate the EV market. The previous administration was content to sit on the sidelines and let China take all these jobs, but I won't let that happen. That's why I pushed and drafted the Chips and Science Act, investing more than \$50 billion in manufacturing semiconductors here at home.

As a sop to the UAW bureaucracy, the president added:

I strongly believe that companies transitioning to new technology should retool, reboot and rehire in the same factories, in the same communities, with comparable

wages and the existing union workers should have the first shot at those jobs.

No doubt, the administration is already in discussions about handing the UAW bureaucracy federal funding to "retrain" workers for low-wage EV jobs.

Most ominously, Biden referred to the alliance forged by the Roosevelt administration with the unions in the run-up to World War II:

When Roosevelt was talking about the value of the unions, he said that any money Congress gives the president to spend on aircraft carriers, tanks or automobiles was supposed to be built by an American worker. Well, I guess, I'm going back to that. We're building America, we buy America.

He concluded by thanking the assembled UAW bureaucrats for "choosing to stand with me" and all the "progress we made together."

The Biden administration is pursuing a corporatist strategy based on integrating the union apparatus into the capitalist state and corporate management so as to impose the savage austerity and labor discipline at home needed to wage war abroad.

The endorsement of the warmonger Biden also exposes the role of the Democratic Socialists of America, which has been brought into the leadership of the UAW to impose the dictates of US imperialism on the working class.

The destruction of jobs and demands for "sacrifice" for war are provoking widespread opposition to the UAW bureaucracy and both corporate-controlled parties. Mack Trucks worker Will Lehman won nearly 5,000 votes as a socialist candidate for UAW president in 2022, despite the suppression of votes by the UAW bureaucracy, which was sanctioned by Biden's Labor Department. This is an indication of the broad support that exists for the building of rank-and-file committees to transfer power from the UAW apparatus to the workers on the shop floor and for the development of a politically independent, international movement of the working class against war, social inequality and the capitalist system.



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