

Riot police protect Biden from anti-genocide protesters at UAW campaign event

Jerry White
2 February 2024

Police equipped with riot shields and batons attacked anti-genocide protesters on Thursday outside a campaign event for President Joe Biden hosted by the United Auto Workers in suburban Detroit. Protesters carried signs and chanted slogans denouncing “Genocide Joe” for supplying military and political support to Israel’s nearly four-month slaughter of more than 30,000 Palestinians.

UAW President Shawn Fain and the rest of the union leadership endorsed Biden’s reelection last week at a union political action conference in Washington, D.C. Secret service agents and union goons dragged out protesting UAW members for chanting “ceasefire now” during Biden’s speech to the union conference in Washington. Since then, Fain has become one of Biden’s chief national spokesmen, declaring on several major news outlets that the warmongering president and a long-time shill for Wall Street is an opponent of “corporate greed.”

In preparation for the presidential visit Thursday, UAW Region 1 headquarters in Warren, Michigan was transformed into a virtual bunker. The building was encircled by heavy-duty municipal dump trucks filled with road salt to protect the president from attack. Secret Service agents, Michigan state police and local cops from Warren and nearby Centerline blocked all streets leading to the UAW hall and kept protesters hundreds of feet away.

Protected by riot police, Fain told the assembled Democratic politicians and handpicked union bureaucrats, “We’re going to fight like hell to ensure that Joe Biden is the next president.” They responded with chants of “Joe, Joe, Joe!”

Fain, who has been promoted by the Democratic Socialists of America as a militant champion of the working class, predictably kept his mouth shut about

the genocide in Gaza, even though the union apparatus has adopted a toothless resolution calling for a ceasefire.

In his rambling remarks, Biden denounced China and praised the UAW bureaucracy, declaring, “Supporting you is the easiest thing I’ve ever done.” Biden worked closely with the UAW apparatus last year to ram through pro-corporate labor agreements that have opened the door to massive job cuts, as the US auto industry competes with China over electric vehicle markets. This is part of Biden’s reliance on the UAW and other unions to block the resistance of workers to American imperialism’s expanding wars for global conquest abroad and austerity and political repression at home.

“I came here today to tell Biden that we don’t want him here,” Evan, a young protester outside of the event told the *World Socialist Web Site*. “We don’t support what he’s doing. He’s helping Israel commit a genocide. The cops aren’t even letting us go through to protest on a public sidewalk, to voice what our opinions and thoughts are.

“Biden wants to keep doing what he’s doing and try to win this election while killing innocent children in Palestine and funding Israel with all the weapons and bombs. He knows that most of us are against that and he doesn’t want to hear it, so they won’t let us through. They don’t want the news or any social media to post about this online for people to see the truth, the reality of what’s really happening.

“The whole government here in the US is so rigged. The fact is the only two options we are given are a racist, white supremacist Trump, or Biden, who is literally committing a genocide, and they keep feeding us all these lies! Honestly, at this point they’re both horrible and neither of them should be the president.

All they care about is money and power. They don't care about human lives."

Describing the police state measures being used outside the UAW hall, another protester told the WSWs, "I feel like I'm in a third-world country. The president doesn't want to see anybody. Nobody can express their opinion on the genocide and the inhumane treatment of the Palestinians. They're very frightened."

Asked what he thought about the UAW apparatus supporting Biden, he continued, "They are doing it from their own selfish point of view. They are Democrats and want to get support from the government. They don't care about any humanitarian cause."

"They forgot that [unions] were created to help the workers, the weak ones, a noble cause. The top officials have some interests, something going on. The basic instinct of a human is to stand with a human cause, but they are on the other side, and that means something wrong is going on behind the scene."

Addressing workers in the United States, he said, "Workers have to stand up for justice because whatever we do for others will come back on us too. We have problems here. The students, the people who are sick and need health care, the workers who have no jobs or they have jobs with very bad conditions and low pay. We need to address this. Why send the money over there [to Israel] and forget about here?"

Also joining the protesters were Hannah and Monique, two Stellantis Warren Truck workers who were recently fired along with hundreds of other supplemental (temporary) workers due to the sellout labor agreement signed by the UAW bureaucracy. Fain and other union officials told the workers they would be rolled over to full time positions. Instead, more than 2,100 are being fired, with the complicity of Fain & Co.

"I am here today supporting the Palestinians because I was a former UAW member and our union president Shawn Fain endorsed Biden, who is the reason for the genocide against the Palestinian people going on right now. They're using our union dues and our tax dollars to fund a war that we don't want, and they're acting like we have no say-so about it. We don't support this. We don't support Joe Biden. We don't support Shawn Fain endorsing him. We're coming out here and standing up with the Palestinians because these are our people too."

Monique added, "I don't endorse Biden, and I think it's terrible what he's doing. We need to come together to fight this. They should have a meeting to ask how the working class people feel about endorsing Biden. But they made a decision that we didn't know anything about. It was more an inside-job than an outside-job."

"We lost our jobs. Fain is always going on about 'corporate greed.' Well, what he is doing is really corporate greed, because the union worked with the companies to get rid of the lowest class of workers, the TPTs [temporary part-time workers]. Some of us are out here living in our cars and can't provide for our kids."

Commenting on the fact that higher levels of unemployment force more workers to join the military, she concluded, "The fight against job cuts and war should be one fight. We should all come together and fight this together."



To contact the WSWs and the
Socialist Equality Party visit:

wsws.org/contact