

Socialist Equality Party vice presidential candidate Jerry White campaigns at Detroit area auto factories

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Workers at Stellantis Warren Truck and Ford Dearborn Assembly warmly received Socialist Equality Party vice presidential candidate Jerry White Friday afternoon as the party's petition campaign to achieve ballot status in Michigan continued to ramp up.

Many workers stopped to greet White and members of the SEP campaign team as well as to add their signatures to the petition to place White and SEP presidential candidate Joseph Kishore on the ballot.

They expressed disgust with the choice being presented in the 2024 elections between Biden and Republican candidate Trump. "They are no good, it is all very disappointing" one worker said. "Hang on, we are in for a rough ride," another said about the elections.

Many responded with anger to the invitation by Biden to Shawn Fain to attend the State of the Union speech last week. Biden hailed Fain as "a great friend and a great labor leader." Both men have claimed the 2023 sellout contract was a "historic" advance for autoworkers.

"The Democrats and Republicans are for the rich and whatever they say are lies, just like what Fain said was a complete lie about the contract," White told workers.

"Biden is killing Palestinians and Fain is making believe that Biden is for the working class."

In the wake of the 2023 sellout, anger continues to boil among autoworkers as job cuts mount, including the mass termination of temp workers. In response, laid-off and terminated supplemental workers have organized the Rank-and-File Committee Against Job Cuts.

Workers were lied to by United Auto Workers President Shawn Fain, who claimed that upon

ratification of the 2023 national auto contract, supplemental workers would be made full time. Instead, thousands have been terminated at Warren Truck and other Stellantis plants in Ohio, Michigan and Indiana.

Now, workers at Warren Truck reported that as many as 2,500 workers at the plant have accumulated "points," putting them on track toward termination, under the new strict attendance policy imposed under terms of the sellout deal negotiated by Fain. Workers said part of the cause of attendance issues was short staffing caused by the firings of supplementals.

One worker told White, "It is a set up to fail. You miss one day and you get two points. You have a car breakdown and are two minutes late, you are tardy and get points."

White remarked, "They are treating full timers now like pariahs, just like they treated temps. What do they expect, they are working 9-10 hours and workers' bodies are breaking down."

A worker asked what was the difference between the SEP campaign and the Democrats and Republicans. White explained, "They are liars and corrupt because while they claim to be for the people, they in fact speak for the big corporations and banks. What they do, including funding these wars, is for the interests of big business. What we are fighting to do is build a mass political party of the working class, uniting workers of all races and nationalities, because we all have the same interests. It is not in our interests to be killing one another in a war over who will control cobalt, lithium and oil."

The worker wanted to know, "How is this going to be accomplished?"

White responded, “We are building a party and organizing workers independently of the UAW bureaucracy, because the UAW bureaucracy is in bed with management. That’s why Fain was at Biden’s State of the Union last week.”

She responded, “Of course he did, because he’s Obama’s boy and Obama did the debacle with the bailout. So it’s the old shaking of the hands. But what’s the difference between you and Ralph Nader (former Green Party presidential candidate)?”

White replied, “One of the things Nader promoted, like Trump, was that the cause of our problems is Mexican immigrants. That’s a lie. The source of our problems is the billionaires. We are socialists, we are saying these giant industries that were built up collectively by the labor of generations of workers should belong collectively to the working class. So that wealth that workers create flows back to the workers, to the schools, to education.”

Another worker said that she worried about her son who is serving in the military. “The question of war is on my mind. A nuclear war would kill everybody. There is enough to go around. I hate to break it to them, but there is.”

White responded, “The wealth is being hoarded by a handful of oligarchs, billionaires. Perhaps three families have more wealth than 50 percent of the population. Workers are creating all that wealth.”

White also spoke to Ford workers at the Rouge Electric Vehicle Center (REV-C) where more than a thousand jobs are being cut on April 1 when the plant goes to one shift.

Several workers told the campaign team that this would be their last day on the job at Rouge. Fifteen hundred workers on the B and C crews at the Rouge Electric Vehicle Center were originally scheduled to work through the end of March. But the date of their termination was advanced two weeks because of the precipitous slump in sales of the electric pickup trucks they produce. “This is my last day,” said a worker facing permanent layoff, “and I don’t know what is going to happen next.”

Workers have been kept in the dark about transfers to the Michigan Assembly Plant.

Workers at REV-C and the adjacent Dearborn Truck Plant also expressed anger over the betrayal of their contract struggle by the UAW bureaucracy.

“Of course, Fain was at Biden’s State of the Union,” one Ford worker told the WSWS. “He sold us out.”

SEP supporters distributed hundreds of statements introducing the election campaign. Many workers expressed disgust with Biden and Trump and stopped to speak to White about the SEP campaign.

“It’s great that you’re running,” a young worker told supporters. “With Biden and Trump you’re just choosing your poison.”

A supporter of the Ford Rank-and-File Committee at the plant stopped by to voice her support. “I don’t fully understand socialism, but I am glad we have an alternative to Biden and Trump. All they care about is money and war. In these wars every bullet, every bomb and every tank is being paid for with money that was taken from us. We have to stop it and the union is doing nothing for us.”



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