

Judge orders University of California academic workers to halt strike against genocide and police repression

Our reporters
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A judge has granted the University of California's request for a temporary restraining order to halt the strike by tens of thousands of UC academic workers against the police crackdown on campus protests over the US-backed genocide in Gaza.

On Friday afternoon, Orange County Superior Court Judge Randall J. Sherman, an appointee of former Republican Governor Arnold Schwarzenegger, ordered workers to return to work until June 27 while final exams are taken at many campuses.

The county judge intervened as the strike spread to six of UC's 10 campuses this week and 30,000 of the 48,000 grad students, researchers and other academic workers employed by the US's largest state university system. The strike, which began on May 20, was initially limited to one campus by United Auto Workers Local 4811 officials, but threats of wildcat strikes by rank-and-file workers forced the UAW to expand the strike.

The judge hypocritically ruled that the strike appeared to be causing "damage to students' education" while saying nothing about the violent attacks on protesting students by Zionist thugs and riot police. The state intervention is part of a national crackdown on anti-genocide protesters, overseen by the Biden administration and implemented by Democrats and Republicans at every level, which has already seen the arrests of more than 3,000 students and the destruction of protest encampments throughout the country.

UC officials hailed the judge's action. "From the beginning, we have stated this strike was illegal and a violation of our contracts' mutually agreed upon no-strike clauses," Melissa Matella, UC associate vice president for Systemwide Labor Relations, said in a

statement. "We are extremely grateful for a pause in this strike," Matella said.

The state's Public Employment Relations Board rejected two previous requests by UC administrators for an injunction, preferring instead to rely on the UAW apparatus to isolate the strike and wear down the resistance of academic workers.

The UAW bureaucracy has imposed an information blackout on the strike and limited the scope of the struggle to appeals for the Public Employment Relations Board (PERB) to rule that the suspension of free speech is an unfair labor practice.

Having already endorsed the reelection of Biden, UAW President Shawn Fain and his leading staff members from the Democratic Socialists of America are doing everything they can to prevent a direct political clash between the working class and the Democratic Party.

In their response to the ruling, UAW Local 4811 posted a brief statement on Twitter/X making it clear officials were preparing to capitulate to the judge's strikebreaking order. "Having twice failed to secure an injunction from the PERB, the university today succeeded in their search for a more favorable outcome. The law is on our side, and we're prepared to keep defending our rights."

Socialist Equality Party candidate for US president Joseph Kishore denounced the decision of the California judge and called on UAW members and all workers to oppose the strikebreaking decision and defend the democratic rights of strikers and their students.

It read in part:

The injunction is completely illegitimate from a legal standpoint. Similar injunctions have historically been used by the ruling class and its courts against every effort of the working class to assert its fundamental rights...

The court decision underscores the bankruptcy of the UAW apparatus' "stand-up strike," which has been aimed at blocking an all-out strike of all academic workers in the UC system. The union apparatus has also enforced a virtual information blackout, refusing to even inform auto and other workers in the UAW that the strike is taking place.

UAW President Shawn Fain endorsed "genocide Joe" Biden, who has hands that can never be washed clean of the blood that stains them. Biden has overseen US support for the genocide in Gaza and the attack on the free speech rights of protesters. And the Democrats and Republicans have jointly invited the butcher of Gaza, Netanyahu, to address Congress next month...

The entire working class must be mobilized to stop the genocide and defend democratic rights! This requires the development of rank-and-file committees, independent of the apparatus, to organize all sections of the working class, connecting the fight against the genocide with the fight against imperialism, inequality and capitalist exploitation.

Prior to the judge's intervention, WSWs reporters spoke to striking academic workers and protesting students at UC San Diego and UC Merced.

In San Diego, a striking academic worker said the UAW's "stand-up strike" strategy has not been effective. "Students want change. But a sharply worded letter to a senator won't change the course of what they are doing. There needs to be a halt to the fundamental mode of production."

He added, "Anyone that claims these protests are antisemitic is simply lying. It's politically convenient to make such a claim and a way to weaponize a term against any opposition to war. What about all the Jewish students protesting the genocide? What about the long history of Jewish/Israeli reporters or activists

who have been murdered in Israel or Syria or elsewhere by Zionists for speaking out?"

A UC San Diego student added, "It seems there's this desire for the United States to colonize and exert its power over everyone. I want an end to all colonialism. I'm here in support of the students that have been facing repression by police."

The student added, "I was angered by the response of the police to the protesters at the encampment [on May 6]. The police violence and the Zionist violence—one seems to perpetuate the other." He concluded, "I want to see the students continue on and not let up in their struggle to end war!"

A UC Merced academic worker said that he had been protesting in support of Palestine for over twenty years. In contrast to unsubstantiated claims by Israeli and US officials that Hamas had beheaded babies, he said, there is photographic proof that Israeli bombs have brutally killed babies.

Upon hearing of the UAW's maneuvers to isolate and muzzle the current strike, another academic worker said, "That sounds like the UAW." He then recounted his experience with the UAW's betrayal of the 2022 strike, in which he participated. "It felt like someone above the local leadership in the UAW told them to wrap up the strike quickly, and that's what they did."



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