

Police rampage on UCLA campus after UAW calls off academic workers' strike against Gaza genocide

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Beginning Monday night and through Tuesday morning, hundreds of police officers alongside private security forces were deployed to the University of California Los Angeles (UCLA) campus, where they proceeded to assault and arrest students, demonstrators and academic workers protesting the genocide in Gaza.

The violent police assault lasted several hours and resulted in at least 25 arrests, according to a statement issued by the UCLA Police Department. Those who were arrested are currently facing misdemeanor charges of “willful disruption” and have been ordered to stay away from the campus for the next 14 days.

On-the-ground reports and video footage show police snatching and punching peaceful demonstrators and firing “less lethal” pepper ball rounds at them as they march, rally and, at various points, attempt to construct a third Gaza solidarity encampment following the taking down of two previous encampments.

Photojournalist Shay Horse reported that police “kinda just kept throwing people around like ragdolls.” Horse later reported that police “fired probably a couple hundred pepper balls at peoples and press.”

Videographer Sean Beckner-Carmitchel, who posts under the “X” handle @AcatWithNews, likewise recorded police firing dozens of “less lethal” pepper ball rounds at protesters.

Photos show that the police transformed the campus into a makeshift prison as the night went on. Marco, a PhD student at UCLA, tweeted:

Really super cool to see the building in which I take classes, hold office hours, and teach my students used as a f***ing holding cell.

Protests at the Los Angeles campus began Monday afternoon, less than 18 hours after UAW Local 4811 President Rafael Jaime ordered UC workers to return to work following a temporary restraining order issued on Friday by an Orange County Superior Court judge. Thousands of academic workers voted to strike last month in response to police and Zionist attacks on students and workers exercising their democratic right to peacefully protest.

The judge’s order was welcomed by the UAW bureaucracy, which has worked from the onset to isolate and end the political strike. After delaying a strike authorization vote for nearly two weeks following a right-wing Zionist assault on student protesters at UCLA, the union initially sought to limit the action to one or two campuses in the 10-campus University of California system, and only expanded the strike to six campuses, involving 30,000 of the UC system’s 48,000 unionized academic workers, under threat of wildcat actions.

The UAW has deliberately kept the general membership in the dark about the California strike so as to isolate the academic workers from their industrial counterparts in the union.

The bureaucracy called the action a “stand-up strike,” after the tactic employed by UAW President Shawn Fain to drastically limit the impact of the UAW strike called last year against the Big Three US automakers. The vast majority of workers were kept on the job to undermine the impact of the work action and minimize the effect on the auto bosses’ profits.

The “stand up strike,” commonly referred to by workers as the “stand up sellout,” opened up the autoworkers to thousands of layoffs after the so-called “historic” contracts were ratified.

Fain and other top UAW officials are currently under investigation by the federal court-appointed monitor in charge of overseeing the union in regard to the misuse of funds, retaliation against members and the hiding of documents.

Copying Fain, Local 4811 President Jaime refused to call out the entire membership at UC and from the onset imposed a cutoff date of June 30 for ending the walkout.

While the bureaucracy meekly acquiesced to Friday's strikebreaking order, hundreds of militant UCLA student workers resisted and continued protesting on Monday. Beginning in the afternoon, student protesters marched through the campus, reading off the names of some of the over 46,000 Palestinians who have been killed in the eight-month US-Israeli genocide.

The *Daily Bruin* reported that beginning at 2:00 p.m., over 100 anti-genocide protesters began marching through campus. Roughly an hour and a half later, the first barricades were erected around Dickson Plaza. At 5:45 p.m., according to the *Daily Bruin*, campus police declared the encampment "unlawful" and ordered it to disperse. Shortly thereafter, police began to attack the encampment, causing students to flee.

For the next several hours, students and protesters attempted to set up encampments and barricades around the university, as platoons of police trailed and arrested them. In addition to campus police, elements from the California Highway Patrol, Los Angeles Police Department and APEX private security were deployed against the students.

In a statement issued on social media, the Socialist Equality Party candidate for US vice president, Jerry White, denounced the arrest of the students, noting that it "follows the mass arrest of over 3,000 demonstrators, overwhelmingly students and faculty, in the last two months."

He continued:

These arrests have been carried out by police on campuses almost universally controlled by the Democratic Party. The Democrats are working in tandem with the trade union bureaucracies, which are working to suppress opposition to the genocide and American imperialism's escalating wars for global domination.

White observed that the strike was "initiated by rank-and-file workers themselves" and added, "It signaled the powerful entry of the working class as the decisive social and political force to stop war and police state repression."

He concluded:

The California judge who intervened against the strike did so out of concern that the UAW bureaucracy, which has endorsed the reelection of "Genocide Joe," could lose control of the situation. The ruling class feared that the strike could become a catalyst for a far broader movement of the working class against war abroad and austerity and repression at home.

The main takeaway from this struggle is not that political strikes are futile—which is what the UAW bureaucracy would have workers believe. Instead, it is that these struggles cannot be left in the hands of the pro-war and pro-capitalist trade union bureaucracies like those which control the UAW apparatus, which is now enforcing the California judge's strikebreaking order.

Instead, UC workers must form rank-and-file committees to unite with UAW members and all workers throughout the auto, weapons and aerospace industries and other sections of the working class to prepare common action to halt the war machines of American imperialism and the Zionist state.

Such an industrial and political counter offensive by the working class is the only way to put an end to war and repression at home and put an end to capitalism, which is the source of war and dictatorship.



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