

Teamsters union president to speak at Republican National Convention, in another sign of growing alliance with extreme right

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Teamsters General President Sean O'Brien will speak at the Republican National Convention next month, a major step in the union bureaucracy's growing ties with the extreme right. The announcement was made by Donald Trump on Truth Social, his right-wing Twitter/X alternative.

The appearance by a Teamsters head at the RNC is "truly unprecedented," a union assistant director of communications said. Although Teamsters President James P. Hoffa attended the 2000 RNC as a guest of the Republican Party chair and did not speak—this is of an entirely different character. O'Brien will be speaking at a meeting that will be, for all intents and purposes, a fascist rally.

In addition to the Republicans' candidate for the would-be Fuhrer Donald Trump, it will be addressed by countless other co-conspirators in the plot to overthrow the 2020 elections and install Trump as dictator. Speech after speech will attack immigrants, "communists," the Chinese and other so-called enemies of the American nation.

Much of downtown Milwaukee, Wisconsin will be locked down by local police and Secret Service for the convention. While Biden, hated for his role in the genocide in Gaza, feebly tries to present himself as the last best hope for American democracy, Democrats at the city, state and federal level will work to shield this right-wing cabal at the RNC from protesters. This contrasts sharply with the brutal bipartisan crackdown on anti-war protests, which led to over 3,000 arrests.

The state chapter of the American Civil Liberties Union has filed suit over the decision of authorities to approve a route for a protest march blocks away from the convention center. In addition to attacks by the government on the right to protest, there is also the real

danger they will be met by right-wing militia working with the police. While guns will not be allowed inside of the inner security zone or in the convention hall itself, they will be allowed in the outer perimeter where the demonstration is set to take place.

Officially, the Teamsters bureaucracy has not yet endorsed a candidate, and O'Brien is also seeking a speaking slot at the Democratic National Convention in August—where protests are also certain to be met with a brutal police response. But whether or not the Teamsters apparatus chooses to endorse Trump or side with the majority of the union bureaucrats in backing "Genocide Joe," the Teamsters officials have already done their utmost to help normalize and legitimize fascism.

The appearance at the RNC is the latest in a series of escalating engagements. In January, O'Brien met Trump at his estate in Mar-a-Lago, Florida for a private meeting. This was followed by an appearance by Trump at the Teamsters headquarters for a "candidate roundtable" the following month. Following the meeting, the content of which was kept secret, the Teamsters gave Trump a union-branded podium from which to attack immigrants and stump for trade war with China.

The Teamsters have also donated \$50,000 to the Republican National Committee and \$5,000 to Missouri Senator Josh Hawley, a key figure in the January 6 coup, whom they also welcomed at a picket line in St. Louis.

Trump has used these meetings to promote his nationalist program as a boon to American workers. But nothing could be further from the truth. What his "America first" program really means is preparing the country for world war and dictatorship. The catastrophic costs of this policy will be borne by the working class in the United States and around the world, first through brutal austerity to free up resources to the military, then

through ripping up democratic rights and finally through conscription of working class youth and their deployment to foreign killing fields.

Trump's continued political prominence is due to the fact that the basic framework of this war policy is supported by both parties. The main line of attack by the Democrats against Trump has always been his perceived "weakness" against Russia, against which the US has fomented a bloody proxy war in Ukraine. If elected, however, he would only escalate American imperialism's wars for global domination.

Meanwhile, both parties are in basic agreement on the need to launch a major war against China. Biden has imposed a raft of unprecedented tariffs against Chinese imports, to the applause of the Teamsters, the United Auto Workers and the bureaucrats of other major unions.

Under conditions of a political monopoly by two capitalist parties, the Democrats' open identification with the wars in Ukraine and in Gaza have enabled Trump to become the undeserved beneficiary of some of the popular opposition to war.

The Biden White House has heavily relied on the union bureaucracy, including in the Teamsters, to enforce labor peace by selling out major struggles and smash the growing wave of resistance from below to inequality and brutal social conditions. This is seen as key to securing the "home front" in preparation for war.

The Teamsters have been fully engaged in this. Last year, they sold out 340,000 UPS workers, pushing through a contract which is now being used to cut over 12,000 jobs, close hundreds of facilities and "automate everything." In 2022, O'Brien was in constant contact with the White House while stalling for time to prevent a strike on the railroads, buying Biden and Congress the time they needed to pre-emptively ban it.

Biden presents his industrial policy as the new "Arsenal of Democracy," a reference to the mobilization of American industry to fight World War II. In reality, that policy was based on a "no strike pledge" imposed on workers by union bureaucrats and through the prosecution of anti-imperialist socialists in the Trotskyist movement. Today, Biden's policy has more in common with the corporatist policy of Mussolini's fascist regime in Italy.

In a statement on O'Brien's appearance, Socialist Equality Party candidate for US vice president, Jerry White, said:

The union bureaucracy has long been fertile soil

for the cultivation of fascistic tendencies. Long before Trump appeared on the political scene, the union bureaucracy espoused extreme forms of nationalism, anti-communism, groveling subservience to capitalism and racist agitation against foreigners and immigrants. This reactionary outlook arises from the social interests of the bureaucracy, based on its deep connections with management and the state. The bureaucracy hates and fears the working class because it understands that the development of a powerful movement against the capitalist ruling class would imperil its own six figure salaries and affluent lifestyle.

It remains to be seen whether the Teamsters will back Trump or Biden, or whether either will even turn out to be the candidates in November. The union's ties with Trump have, at least partially, the character of hedging its bets, under conditions where Biden is both deeply hated and visibly faltering mentally and physically. If Trump were elected, however, the Teamsters and the whole union bureaucracy would have no problem offering their services to the fascistic president to crush working-class opposition to war, austerity and dictatorship.

The reliance of the capitalist class on these discredited, corrupt union bureaucrats is a sign of its own fundamental crisis. But there is no time to lose. To defend their living standards, democratic rights and guarantee a future to the next generation that is free from war, workers have to break with the entire capitalist political framework of which the bureaucracy is part. The interests of the working class can only be advanced through the development of powerful industrial and political counter-offensive of the working class, which is independent of corporate-controlled parties, and fights for the international unity of all workers and the replacement of the capitalist system with socialism.



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