

# Union bureaucrats stump for Democrats in Detroit, Milwaukee and Pittsburgh on Labor Day

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On Monday, the Labor Day holiday in the United States, top Democratic Party politicians campaigned alongside dozens of union bureaucrats and functionaries at tightly controlled events in Milwaukee, Wisconsin; Detroit, Michigan and Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania.

Wisconsin, Michigan and Pennsylvania are three of the seven so-called “battleground” states that, under the undemocratic Electoral College system, will likely decide the US presidential election. Most polling predicts that the Democratic nominee will win the nationwide popular vote, as has been the case in every presidential election since 2004. But it is the Electoral College, based the state-by-state results, which decides the outcome. Donald Trump defeated Hillary Clinton in 2016, despite losing the popular vote by three million, gaining a majority in the Electoral College, in part by sweeping those three industrial states.

The purpose of the campaign events was to present the Democratic Party and the trade union bureaucracies as defenders of the economic and social well-being of the working class, even as the trade union apparatus works with the government and major corporations to carry out mass layoffs and job cuts in order to fund the global war policy of American imperialism.

The social chasm that separates the working class from the union officialdom and the politicians was evident at every rally. Union officials repeatedly claimed the Biden-Harris administration was the most “pro-union” and “pro-worker” in history, yet none of the events featured more than a few hundred people, with access tightly limited so that only trusted union officials and their supporters could attend.

Both of the events featuring Vice President Kamala

Harris were held indoors in order to control access and prevent even a single anti-genocide protester from interrupting the proceedings. None of the politicians or union bureaucrats who spoke at the any of the events discussed the central focus of the Biden-Harris administration—the proxy war with Russia in Ukraine—or mentioned the genocide in Gaza. The words “Israel,” “China” and even “Russia” likewise went unmentioned.

Instead of warning the working class of the calamity American imperialism is hurling all of humanity into, the politicians and trade union officials spouted endless empty social demagoguery rooted in American nationalism.

Seeking to avoid any confrontation with anti-genocide protesters, the first rally, which was attended by maybe 100 people, was held in the early afternoon at a high school in Detroit. Vice President Kamala Harris was joined on the stage by several union officials, including United Auto Workers (UAW) President Shawn Fain and American Federation of Teachers President Randi Weingarten.

In her remarks Harris said nothing about the impending mass layoff of over 2,000 workers at the Stellantis Warren Truck Assembly. Instead she began by thanking the “unions” for helping to “build America’s middle class.”

In a line that was repeated several times throughout the day, Harris declared, “When unions are strong, America is strong!” This phrase reflects the vital role the trade union apparatus plays in suppressing the class struggle domestically so that US imperialism can carry out its war aims overseas.

Dropping her support for a single-payer healthcare

system, Harris pledged to “continue to strengthen the Affordable Care Act” and “fight for a future where every worker has the freedom to organize” by passing the PRO-Act, a bill aimed at strengthening the ability of the union apparatus to extract dues from workers.

While Harris was in Michigan, her running mate, Minnesota Governor Tim Walz campaigned at the AFL-CIO-organized “Laborfest 2024” in Milwaukee, Wisconsin. Speaking of the COVID-19 pandemic in the past tense, even as some 2,000 people succumbed to the virus in the US in the last two weeks, Walz praised Harris for keeping workers “on the job.”

He said, “Vice President Harris was the deciding vote on the American Rescue Plan that kept workers on the job and the public safe during the pandemic.” None of the politicians or union officials remarked on the tens of thousands of union members and their family members who have needlessly died because of the “herd immunity” policies implemented by the Biden-Harris administration with the support of all the major trade unions.

In the early evening, Harris traveled to Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania, to the International Brotherhood of Electrical Workers (IBEW) Local 5 building and held her first joint campaign rally with President Joe Biden since she replaced him at the top of the ticket. AFL-CIO President Liz Schuler and IBEW International President Kenny Cooper praised Biden and Harris as the “most pro-union administration” in American history.

In the midst of this fawning over Biden and Harris, none of the union officials at any of the events commented on the outlawing of a 2022 railroad strike by the Biden administration, with the help of both capitalist parties and the trade union apparatus. The same government-union-corporate conspiracy that revealed itself in the 2022 rail struggle is present in every major struggle of the working class.

Speaking after Cooper, Biden touted his version of “America First” nationalism and promised to block the purchase of US Steel by Japanese capitalists. Following Biden, Harris too promised to keep US Steel owned by American capitalists, saying it was “vital for our nation” and that “US Steel should remain American-owned and American-operated.”

While Harris stayed far away from any actual workers on Labor Day, Socialist Equality Party

candidate for US president Joseph Kishore and his running mate Jerry White spoke to hundreds of workers and Detroit residents at the Detroit Labor Day parade.

In a statement on X, Kishore said that autoworkers, “in particular, spoke with contempt of UAW President Shawn Fain, who is presiding over mass layoffs at Warren Truck and the ramming through of a concessions contract at Dakkota, where workers rejected a UAW-backed deal *four times*.”

While Harris did not speak at the parade, Fain and Weingarten did. Kishore said the pair:

lied about the agenda of the Democrats, centered on a massive escalation of war abroad and the war on the working class at home. It is impossible to defend the social and democratic rights of workers without a political struggle against both parties.



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