

UAW bars World Socialist Web Site from press conference

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The United Auto Workers barred the *World Socialist Web Site* from its October 4 press conference announcing its tentative contract with Ford.

A UAW official stationed in the main lobby of the venue for the press conference, the UAW-Ford National Programs Center in downtown Detroit, informed this reporter as I arrived in advance of the briefing that I would not be admitted. When asked the reason, the official said the *World Socialist Web Site* was not authorized to attend. She advised me to call UAW Public Relations Director Michele Martin. As of this writing, the UAW has not returned our call.

The union welcomed the anti-labor corporate media, including such publications as the *Wall Street Journal*, *BusinessWeek*, and the *Detroit News* and *Detroit Free Press*, knowing that these capitalist publications would praise the contract agreement. It barred the WSWS because it is terrified of a socialist publication that accurately reports the content of its pro-company contracts and, more broadly, its anti-working class policies.

The WSWS and its predecessors, the *International Workers Bulletin* and the *Bulletin* newspapers, have been covering UAW press conferences and events for decades. The fact that the UAW decides to bar us now only underscores the bankruptcy of the organization and its fear of mounting opposition among rank-and-file workers.

In the course of the ratification vote on the General Motors contract, supporters of the Socialist Equality Party and the WSWS who distributed statements outside UAW informational meetings were repeatedly

threatened by union officials, who on several occasions called the police to evict them.

The UAW apparatus is clearly concerned over opposition to its sellout among Ford workers, who in 2009 defeated an attempt by the union to impose additional concessions patterned on those accepted at GM and Chrysler as part of the restructuring carried out by the Obama administration's Auto Task Force. The deal would have frozen the wages of tier two workers and lifted the cap on the number of second tier workers in the plants, as well as imposing a no-strike pledge. Opposition was so intense that UAW President Bob King was booed off of the platform at one local union meeting.

The UAW was no doubt desperate to avoid a repetition of its September 20 press conference announcing the UAW-General Motors tentative contract. At that briefing, WSWS reporter Jerry White challenged UAW President Bob King's claim that the union was creating "middle class" jobs. He noted that even with the small raise contained in the GM contract, second tier workers would be making barely enough to avoid qualifying for food stamps in Michigan. On the other hand, White pointed out, the UAW has been disbursing \$90 million to its top staff, paying them \$150,000 and more, and hiring their wives as stenographers for another \$60,000.

The exchange, which was reported the following day in the Detroit press, left King flustered and angry.

The ban on the WSWS is a pathetic attempt at damage-control by King and the rest of the executives who control the UAW. It underscores the right-wing

and anti-democratic character of the organization.



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