

# SEP presidential candidate gives press conference, speaks to workers in Findlay, Ohio

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SEP presidential candidate Jerry White received a warm response from locked-out Cooper Tire workers in Findlay, Ohio, where he held a noon press conference on the picket line Wednesday.

White announced his candidacy in the 2012 US presidential elections and declared his support for the 1,050 locked-out Cooper Tire workers. The Cooper workers are now in their eleventh week of a lockout after rejecting a concessions contract in November. The event was attended by local media, including the local radio station, WFIN, and Toledo television station WTOL.

White asserted that the struggle of the Findlay workers deserves the support of the entire working class. “What is happening here in Findlay is in fact happening all across the United States and around the world,” White said. “In my campaign, the Socialist Equality Party will fight to unify every section of the working class against the domination of the banks and big business over the economy and the entire political system.” (See embedded video)

White called for a political movement of the working class in opposition to both the Democrats and Republicans. He also denounced the United Steel Workers for isolating the workers at Findlay, Ohio.

“The working class cannot accept the miserable choice between having no job and having a job and working for starvation wages,” White said. “The Socialist Equality Party insists that all workers must have the right to a secure and good-paying job... The fight for socialism means the fight for social equality. It means the reorganization of society on a much higher form, that is, production for human need, not private profit.”

Workers on the picket line spoke with White and the SEP campaigners afterwards.

Some workers remarked on White’s characterization of the global and historic character of their struggle. Chico mentioned the intolerable conditions leading to worker suicides at the Foxconn plant in China, which produces Apple devices. White pointed out these workers lived in dormitories near the plant and were wakened in the middle of the night to implement new engineering changes on iPods.

Another worker noted that the conditions in the mines that his grandfather worked in were similar to the conditions faced by workers in China. The miners were paid in scrip and had to go into debt to the company store to survive. These conditions were returning, he said.

Workers on Wednesday openly and angrily denounced the USW International for “taking the only leverage we have from us” when they brokered a deal at the Cooper Tire plant in Texarkana, Arkansas last month. One worker pointed out that every new hire will

have union dues taken out of their pocket on the fifteenth day of work, when he won't even receive a livable wage.

"Be sure and invite me into the White House after you're elected," one worker joked.

A reporter from the local Findlay radio station, WFIN asked White what he meant by a "revolution." White replied: "You can see in 2011 the beginning of the resistance of the working class," from Egypt to Tunisia, Wisconsin and the Occupy Movement. "It is clear to millions of people that this whole political system is stacked against them, that the Democrats, Republicans, the courts are controlled lock-stock-and barrel by the richest 5 percent of the population."

"The working class has to take political power in our own hands. That is clearly becoming an issue confronting workers in every part of the world."

(Listen to an MP3 recording of the interview on the WFIN web site.)

White was sked whether the presence of socialists in the "fairly conservative community" of Findlay could "backfire and dwindle local support for locked-out workers."

He replied: "Not at all... There are very rich traditions of socialism. What does socialism mean? Workers are told to be frightened of it, but socialism means equality. It means genuine democracy. It means the working people run society instead of the wealthy elite. So those who are trying to frighten workers from socialism are trying to cut the working class off from the only way forward to defend our livelihoods and our living standards."



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