Teamsters for a Democratic Union-linked Facebook page censors Amazon worker's video calling for a united struggle with UPS workers

Will Morrow
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The "Vote No on UPS Contract" Facebook page, whose administrators are part of the Teamsters for a Democratic Union (TDU), a faction of the Teamsters union, has censored a post of a video by Shannon Allen, an injured homeless Amazon employee, appealing for a united struggle between Amazon and UPS workers.

The post was taken down on Tuesday. Shannon's video is a response to Democratic Party Senator Bernie Sanders, whose campaign published advertising material featuring another video she posted on YouTube about being evicted from her home and forced to live in her car while working at Amazon because of the poverty-level wages. Shannon states in the censored video: "I am not a Bernie Sanders supporter. He is just another Democratic Party politician whose job is to keep workers like me chained to a two-party system."

Shannon also reveals that the Teamsters union wanted to use her story to help "boost their image" and secure a position taking the dues money from hundreds of thousands of Amazon workers. "I told them no," Shannon said, "because the problems me and my fellow workers face won't be solved by giving dues money to unions that are all in cahoots with the corporations."

Shannon concludes by calling for the "building of a rank-and-file committee run by the workers themselves, independent of the Democratic and Republican Parties and the unions. We need to link up the working class. We need to link up Amazon and UPS workers. We need to link up across the world. [Amazon workers in] Germany, Poland, Spain, I stand and support you."

These are the plain truths spoken from an Amazon worker to her counterparts at UPS that the Teamsters union, including the TDU, does not want workers to hear.

The action makes clear what the TDU's real attitude is to workers. The TDU is calling for a "no" vote against the sellout contract that the Teamsters released last month. But it is no less hostile than the current Teamsters leadership to the efforts by workers to break free from these corrupt and pro-business organizations and form their own rank-and-file committees of struggle in the hubs and warehouses.

The entire Teamsters apparatus is terrified of the prospect of UPS workers linking up with their coworkers at Amazon, USPS, FedEx and elsewhere in the US and internationally.

The "Vote no on UPS contract" page "about" section states that the Facebook group is for "Teamsters who work for United Parcel Service in the United States, only." In other words, workers at Amazon, at USPS, other Teamsters members in other industries, and workers from other countries should not be allowed to speak to their US-based coworkers. UPS has international operations, including in Germany, China and Canada, but the TDU is opposed to workers linking up across national borders in a common fight.

The administrator for the "Vote No on UPS Contract" Facebook page who removed the post told *World Socialist Web Site's* Kayla Costa, who posted the video to the page, that the video violated the page's rules because "we can't have any posts referencing

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politicians," i.e., Sanders.

The administrator said that Mark Timlin, who founded the Facebook page in 2013 while a member of the TDU steering committee, "told us other group administrators and moderators that he doesn't want any posts having to do with government politicians" because they "distract from the purpose of the group."

The claim that workers engaged in struggle must "avoid politics" only means that workers should not challenge the politics of the capitalist class and the unions' efforts to subordinate workers to the Democratic Party, to which the TDU and Teamsters have close and longstanding ties. The call for "no politics" means, in practice, no socialist politics and no revolutionary politics.

Since Shannon's video was removed, other articles posted from the *World Socialist Web Site UPS Workers Newsletter* have also been removed.

The same anti-democratic action was taken by the Oklahoma Teachers United Facebook page, used by tens of thousands of teachers during the wave of teachers strikes in West Virginia, Oklahoma and Arizona this year. The OTU censored articles from the *World Socialist Web Site* exposing the preparations by the teachers' union for a sellout, with the justification that there could be "no politics" allowed.

UPS management and the corporations do not have a strategy of "no politics." As many workers know, any strike at UPS will be met with ferocious opposition by the ruling class and its state, from court injunctions, police repression, and attacks by the Trump administration, the Democratic Party, and the entire corporate-controlled media, who will immediately rush to the side of the company and its shareholders and denounce the workers for their irresponsibility and disruption of the economy. How can workers possibly fight against these forces if they are forced to submit to the union's diktat: "no politics"?

The logic of the UPS workers' struggle, from which the Teamsters apparatus is seeking to blind them, poses the necessity of expanding their struggle. Rank-and-file factory committees must be built to turn out to other sections of workers across the United States and internationally, in opposition to all the political parties of the ruling class, including the Democrats and the Republicans.

UPS workers should demand an end to all acts of censorship by the administrators of the "Vote No on UPS Contracts" Facebook page, and that workers have the right to discuss and share whatever they want, free from the censorship of the Teamsters and the TDU.

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