

Amazon worker Shannon Allen opposes censorship of her video statement by Teamsters-linked Facebook page

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11 August 2018

Shannon Allen, the injured and homeless Amazon worker who published a video statement on Monday calling for a united struggle of Amazon and UPS workers internationally, responded yesterday to the censorship of her video by a Facebook page controlled by members of the Teamsters for a Democratic Union, a faction of the Teamsters union.

More than 20,000 UPS workers are members of the “Vote no on UPS contract” Facebook page. The administrators of the page removed a post of Shannon’s video on Tuesday.

Shannon said the censorship of her video showed that the Teamsters union was fearful of workers from Amazon and UPS forming rank-and-file committees in the warehouses and hubs and linking up their struggles.

“It reminds me of being at work, where we’re not allowed to speak to one another,” she said. “Amazon has the workstations so far apart because they don’t want employees to talk. That’s one of the reasons the breaks are so short, so you don’t have time to walk to areas with other workers.”

Shannon said the Teamsters union “doesn’t want us talking to one another because we would be a powerful force if workers at Amazon, UPS workers and the [United States] Postal Service all united. Everybody thinks Jeff Bezos is powerful because he has Amazon. But the workers banding together, to become a rank-and-file committee, would be more powerful than Bezos’ \$150 billion. Because we could control the operations, and we could slow or stop production. At UPS, the drivers wouldn’t be doing 40 routes a day, speeding through parking lots, trying to hurry up and deliver the next package.”

In her video, Shannon noted that the Teamsters union

wanted to use her story to help “boost their image” and gain a foothold at Amazon, where they would be able to extract dues money from hundreds of thousands of Amazon workers’ wages.

Yesterday, she explained that a Teamsters official contacted her, “and said she was in Dallas one more day and asked if I would like to meet with her. She said she wanted to buy me lunch and put some gas in my car. Everybody knows I’m having a hard time right now.”

The union official told Shannon that “she wanted to explain what the union was about and what they could do for Amazon workers. She wanted me to distribute literature to other Amazon employees about what the union could do at Amazon. That’s not something I was willing to do. I told her that I had a different agenda for a rank-and-file committee. If you bring in a union you’re just going to have the corporate managers deciding with the union head about what happens to the employees. But a rank-and-file committee would be where all the workers collectively decide what we want to do.”

The Teamsters for a Democratic Union (TDU) has called for a “no” vote against the sellout agreement released by the union last month. Its concern is to keep the widespread anger among workers confined within the union and prevent workers from forming their own organizations in opposition to the Teamsters, which functions as a pro-corporate labor-management business.

Shannon rejected the position of Mark Timlin, a former member of the TDU steering committee and founder of the “Vote no on UPS contract” Facebook page, that statements could not be permitted that

referenced politicians. Shannon’s video opposed Democratic Senator Bernie Sanders, who used her earlier YouTube videos in his campaign advertising, as “another Democratic Party politician whose job is to keep workers like me chained to a two-party system.”

Responding to the argument that workers should not discuss politics, Shannon said: “What this really means is no politics for certain people,” she said, “like the *World Socialist Web Site* and anyone who speaks out against the Democrats and the Republicans. Why can’t workers talk about the struggles we’re having or about Bernie Sanders, without being censored? This is supposedly the ‘land of the free.’ Why can’t I say what I want to say, even if it’s about a politician?”

Shannon concluded by restating her call for logistics workers all around the world to unite in opposition to all forms of nationalism and the efforts by the unions to keep workers divided. “The UPS workers should stand up together and not accept anything less than they deserve,” she said. “We should all stand together. If you work for a company, be it Amazon, UPS or USPS, you should have the same conditions anywhere in the world. Workers in India should not be getting less than workers in America.”



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