

UAW bars WSWS from opening of UAW-Ford talks

Shannon Jones
16 July 2019

Continuing a now longstanding policy, the United Auto Workers barred *World Socialist Web Site Autoworker Newsletter* reporters from a press event marking the opening of contract negotiations between the union and Ford.

On arriving at Ford World Headquarters in Dearborn, the site of the talks, *Autoworker Newsletter* editor Jerry White and this reporter were stopped by Ford media representatives. The Ford officials informed the WSWS reporters that their publication was not on the approved list.

The following exchange then took place with a Ford media official who identified himself as Ted O'Neil who is listed as Ford's Labor Communications Coordinator.

Jerry White, "Who decides this? (The press ban) "There is such a thing as freedom of the press. There are autoworkers who want to know exactly what's going on. The WSWS has a circulation of thousands of autoworkers who read our coverage every day and they are interested in what is going on."

Mr. O'Neil: "The UAW explained to you..."

Shannon Jones: "So the UAW made the decision?"

Mr. O'Neil: "Well, it's not their facility. But its just invited media only."

Jerry White: "So, you are aware that the UAW didn't allow us? How did you learn about that?"

Mr. O'Neil: "I read it on your web site."

Shannon Jones: "Is there a list of who are invited?"

Mr. O'Neil: "No."

Jerry White: "The *Detroit Free Press* is going to be here. *The Wall Street Journal* is going to be here, *Automotive News* is going to be here, but we are not invited? Again who does the inviting?"

"We made a request to you. How are we supposed to proceed?"

Mr. O'Neil: "I don't know."

The UAW rightly fears that the WSWS *Autoworker Newsletter* would pose questions that the corporate media won't ask such as, "Why after revelations of the massive bribery of UAW officials to rig the 2015 contract and previous agreements should anyone believe what the union says? Why after decades of concessions should workers believe Gary Jones' statement, "we will halt the race to the bottom, we will protect our jobs, our work and our way of life?"

Our reporters would also have asked questions on behalf of autoworkers about the widely publicized plans by the corporations for a sharp increase in medical coverage costs for workers and expansion of low-wage contract and temporary workers.

The decision to bar the *Autoworker Newsletter* is further proof that the talks between the UAW and Ford are in reality a conspiracy against autoworkers. In the face of a continuing profit boom by the Detroit automakers, workers are determined to regain concessions surrendered by the UAW in an endless series of concessions contracts. Meanwhile the auto companies, and their bought-and-paid-for stooges in the UAW leadership, are plotting to impose further concessions.

In response to the ban on the WSWS one autoworker wrote, "Blocking your reporters, isn't surprising, it's sad. They claim to have bylaws built on and to mirror the constitution of the United States of America. But hindering freedom of the press. Of course they want to control the lies that they present to us. Our local is horrible, people are working in fear that they won't criticize the officials in fear of some imaginary mark they would put on those who speak up."

The WSWS *Autoworker Newsletter* will not be intimidated. We will continue to bring workers the truth

by exposing the lies of the UAW. At the same time we will assist workers in the building of rank-and-file factory committees independent of the UAW to fight for the interests of workers against the company-union gang-up.

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