

UAW officials threaten *World Socialist Web Site* reporters at Eaton picket lines

Our reporters
25 October 2024

On Thursday, *World Socialist Web Site* reporters were threatened by individuals associated with United Auto Workers (UAW) officials on the picket line outside Eaton Aerospace in Jackson, Michigan. The incident took place as workers were voting on a sellout contract that was ultimately rejected, marking the third time strikers have voted down an agreement pushed by the UAW leadership.

The threats began at a provisional voting location, where one individual, when handed a leaflet from the WSWs opposing the agreement, threatened, “Get out of here or I’ll knock you on your ass.”

About half an hour later, at the picket lines outside of the Eaton workplace, the same individual was seen along with two others in extensive discussion with UAW Local 475 President Donnie Huffman.

Huffman and the three individuals with whom he is clearly associated walked past the WSWs reporters who were speaking with workers. The three other men in Huffman’s group stopped and engaged the WSWs reporters. One of them, the same individual who had made an earlier threat against the reporters, loudly stated, “The Commies are back.” While he refrained from making a direct threat again, he stated that the WSWs reporters should “get [their] hidden Communist agenda out of here.” He added, “You should leave,” which could only have been interpreted as a threat of violence given the earlier interaction.

The WSWs reporters responded by stating that they were there to speak with rank-and-file workers and asked if others on the line wanted them to leave. The two workers who had been engaged in the conversation expressed their willingness to continue talking. The other two men in Huffman’s group accused the WSWs reporters of “trying to divide workers against the UAW.”

This incident reflects the growing nervousness in the union apparatus over the mounting anger and determination of rank-and-file workers to struggle, as reflected in the rejection of the UAW’s third sellout agreement with Eaton. Many workers have expressed opposition to the contract, which they say overlooks critical issues like the tier system, pension benefits, and healthcare costs. The third contract was rejected by an even larger margin than the second.

The attempt to intimidate the WSWs is the latest in a series of efforts by the UAW and other union bureaucracies to restrict the influence of independent, rank-and-file workers. Amid a wave of contract rejections, workers are fighting to break free from the control of the trade union apparatus, which is closely tied to both corporate management and the state.

The *World Socialist Web Site* has covered the Eaton strike from the beginning, continuously advancing a strategy for rank-and-file workers to build their own committees to take control of the struggle out of the hands of the UAW bureaucrats.

We call on rank-and-file Eaton workers to come to the defense of our reporters at your picket lines and demand that the UAW bureaucrats stop their efforts to intimidate opposition to their pro-corporate maneuvers. Fill out the form below and contact us today to share your support or get involved in building an Eaton workers’ rank-and-file strike committee.



To contact the WSWs and the
Socialist Equality Party visit:

wsws.org/contact