

UPS workers: Build rank-and-file committees to organize opposition to the contract!

The WSWS UPS Worker Newsletter
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Teamsters executives are meeting in Chicago today with officials from every local to discuss their strategy to push through the sell-out agreement they have reached with UPS.

Workers know that the deal is rotten to the core. The union is seeking to dress up a far-reaching attack on workers as a great victory. The contract includes the creation of a new “hybrid” class of “22.4” driver/warehouse workers, who will be paid far less than current drivers and are not guaranteed full-time hours. The new position is designed to destroy the last remaining decent-paying, full-time jobs at the company and extend part-time “flexibility” from the warehouses to the delivery drivers. The contract also maintains poverty-level wages for hundreds of thousands of part-time warehouse workers.

Wall Street has given the verdict of the corporate and financial elite on the agreement. Market speculators have sent UPS share prices up by 11.8 percent in the month since the union released the proposed contract and extended the deadline. They are assuming that there will be no strike, and they are relying on the Teamsters union to make this a reality.

At the beginning of June, workers voted by a margin of 93 percent to authorize strike action after the July 31 expiration of the current contract. The Teamsters union, however, had no intention of calling a strike. It has now extended the existing contract to give it more time to find a way of getting the agreement passed.

The union is simultaneously blackmailing workers into voting for the agreement with threats that a “no” vote will result in an even worse offer, while slandering workers’ opposition as the work of “Internet trolls.”

Form rank-and-file committees to organize a fight!

There is growing anger and a determination to fight

among workers, but this opposition must be organized. The Teamsters must not be allowed to retain the initiative and continue its conspiracy with the company against the workers unopposed.

The *WSWS UPS Workers Newsletter* urges workers to form rank-and-file committees in the hubs and warehouses to take the struggle into their own hands. Such committees must begin reaching out to UPS workers in other areas to coordinate opposition.

Rank-and-file workers’ committees should draw up their own demands as the basis for a nationwide strike. These should include:

- * Immediate transformation of all part-timers to full-timers, with a corresponding increase in pay, and full benefits.
- * Abolition of all tiers
- * An across-the-board pay increase of 30 percent and restoration of cost-of-living adjustments
- * Billions of dollars to fully fund the pension and health care funds for all workers.
- * Workers’ control over production, including the setting of safe line speeds. The endless demands for speedups in the warehouses and on deliveries have caused countless injuries, heat strokes and deaths.

Many workers have raised justified concerns that the Teamsters will seek to push through the contract vote by ballot stuffing. The campaign for a “no” vote must therefore raise the demand for workers’ oversight over the balloting process and verification of the integrity of the vote. There must be no more backroom deals between the Teamsters and the company; all negotiations must be livestreamed for all workers to see. Control of the \$160 million Teamsters strike fund, financed by workers’ dues, must be under workers’ control to ensure adequate pay during any strike.

UPS workers must reach out to other sections of the working class!

The UPS workers, numbering more than a quarter million, possess immense social power. They transport over one third of all package deliveries in the United States, much of which is critical to the functioning of large portions of industry and the economy. They have powerful allies among the 200,000 United States Postal Service (USPS) employees and the half-million Amazon workers internationally, who form part of the same global supply chain and confront similar conditions of exploitation and corporate abuse.

Workers are aware that a strike that shuts down UPS deliveries would be met with ferocious opposition by the ruling class and its state, from court injunctions and police repression, to attacks by the Trump administration and the Democratic Party, denunciations from the corporate-controlled media, and efforts by the Teamsters to isolate and betray the struggle.

The logic of the UPS workers' fight therefore poses the need for workers to expand their struggle. Rank-and-file committees of UPS workers would turn out to unite and establish communication with distribution workers at Amazon, USPS, FedEx and other sections of the working class in the US and internationally.

A strike at UPS would win the support of millions of workers who have suffered three decades of attacks on their jobs, wages and social rights. Around the world, there is a growing determination of the working class to fight, expressed in the overwhelming strike votes by Ryanair airline workers across Europe, the wave of US teacher strikes this year, and strikes by Amazon, rail, metal and industrial workers in Europe and the Middle East.

This is precisely what the ruling class fears. Under both the Obama and Trump administrations, it has pursued the single-minded transfer of wealth from the working class to the corporate elite, through a policy of ultra-low interest rates, corporate tax cuts, the slashing of wages and the looting of social programs.

The logic of the class struggle

The endless rise of the stock markets has depended upon the continued lowering of wages and the suppression of every independent struggle of workers by the unions, which function as agents of corporate management, not workers' organizations. The unions accurately described their own function during legal arguments during the recent *Janus v. AFSCME* Supreme Court hearings on compulsory union "agency fees," arguing, in the words of the union's attorney, that such fees were the "tradeoff for no strikes."

The most dangerous illusion would be to believe that the Teamsters union can be forced to adopt a militant policy and defend the workers' conditions. This is the lie promoted by the Teamsters for a Democratic Union (TDU), which represents a faction of the union apparatus itself.

The TDU calls for a "no," but it offers no perspective upon which workers can fight. It calls on workers to place their faith in the union to return to the negotiating table and reach a better deal, and it has explicitly stated that it is not calling for strike action. This is because they want to contain opposition and prevent it from developing into a real struggle against the company and the capitalist ruling elite.

The working class has a long history of dissident factions operating within the unions, whose oppositional rhetoric is so much hot air. The TDU itself controlled the Teamsters union under Ron Carey from 1991 to 1997, overseeing a series of concessionary contracts. It accepts the nationalist and pro-capitalist framework of the union. Its chief concern is to be brought into the union leadership and secure a greater share of its highly paid positions.

The class struggle is a war. The trade unions, the corporation and the government are working out their strategy against the workers, which they have been pursuing for the last 30 years. The workers must therefore base themselves on their own strategy and their own independent organizations.

Every struggle by workers to defend the most elementary needs raises the question of which class holds political power and decides how society's resources are allocated: the working class, which produces all the wealth in society through its labor, or the capitalist elite.

The Socialist Equality Party fights for a socialist movement of the working class to expropriate the gigantic corporations such as UPS and Amazon, and harness the immense resources produced by workers for the benefit of humanity, rather than private profit, through the transformation of these corporations into public utilities under the democratic control of the working class.

We urge UPS workers who wish to take up such a struggle to contact us today.



To contact the WSWs and the Socialist Equality Party visit:

[wsws.org/contact](https://www.wsws.org/contact)