

“We need a united front of auto and UPS workers”

Autoworkers warn UPS workers: Don't trust the union

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As opposition grows among UPS workers to the sellout contract backed by the Teamsters union and UPS management, there is widespread support in the working class for broadening the UPS workers' struggle.

The *World Socialist Web Site* UPS Workers Newsletter has received statements from autoworkers across the US this week calling for a united struggle of logistics and autoworkers and warning their counterparts at UPS not to place any faith in the Teamsters.

John, a Jeep Fiat Chrysler worker from Toledo, Ohio, said he had read of the Teamsters' efforts to blackmail UPS workers into voting for the contract via the WSWS. The Teamsters union is dispatching its officials across the country to threaten workers that they will lose healthcare coverage if they strike, and that the current contract is “the best they can get.”

“That's the tactics the United Auto Workers used,” John said. “They always come and threaten plant closures or losing jobs, or losing product, if we voted against the contract or went on strike.”

John said he thought the UPS workers should “vote ‘no’ and keep voting ‘no.’ They should go on strike. It would stop the economy. Every industry in the world gets packages from UPS. It would probably ground the economy to a halt.”

As with the UAW, John said the Teamsters “gets paid by the company to ensure a strike doesn't happen, and they get paid by the workers, supposedly to help us. But the only thing we can do is strike. The people in the Teamsters don't care about the workers.”

“The workers should start their own organization, not the union,” John said. But he felt that such

organizations must “not be subservient to any of the political parties,” because “as soon as you get in bed with the Democrats and the Republicans, like the UAW, you become a prostitute to the system. You have to create your own organization with your own guidelines.”

The *WSWS UPS Workers Newsletter* calls for UPS workers to establish rank-and-file workplace committees in the warehouses and hubs to coordinate opposition to the contract and the Teamsters-UPS conspiracy. These committees would formulate their own demands for a nationwide strike and seek to broaden the struggle by sending delegations to workers at Amazon, in the auto industry, and elsewhere.

When asked what he thought the response would be among autoworkers to such an initiative, John said: “That would work.” He felt that the “biggest problem we autoworkers have now is the way the UAW manipulates workers and pretends there is solidarity, by wearing red on Friday or giving you a sob story from 50 years ago.” But “there actually is solidarity and support for uniting” among the workers.

“If UPS workers could find a way to break away from their union, the autoworkers would follow them,” he concluded. “Everyone wants higher wages. The workers are sick of the union's BS, and there are more workers than there are union reps.”

Widespread hatred of the UAW among autoworkers has been further confirmed by the ongoing UAW corruption scandal, which has exposed the transfer of millions of dollars to UAW executives in exchange for pushing through pro-company contracts.

“We all see what is happening with the UAW corruption,” John said. “This is something that they

can't explain away. Before, they said it was just a couple of bad actors. But they can't do it anymore. It is \$9 million. It's not a few givebacks to bad actors. It is the company bribing the whole organization."

A WSWS reporting team spoke to autoworkers at Michigan's Fiat Chrysler Warren Truck assembly plant yesterday afternoon, and distributed an article on the corruption scandal and an article on the Teamsters blackmail of UPS workers.

Chrystal, who is on an eight-year progression at FCA before reaching top pay, told us that during the 2015 contracts, "the union said we would lose our jobs if we strike. Now people are saying we should just vote in different UAW representatives, but I don't think that will do it."

Like the UAW in 2009, the Teamsters are proposing the creation of a new tier under the contract, a "hybrid" driver/warehouse worker role that will be paid up to \$6 per hour less than current drivers. It also maintains poverty-level wages for part-time warehouse workers, who currently earn as little as \$10 per hour.

When she heard these details, Crystal said, "It is outrageous. They want to introduce a new tier just like here. And \$10 per hour—they want minimum wages everywhere."

WSWS reporters asked Chrystal what she thought about a united struggle of UPS and autoworkers. She replied: "I think that would be a positive thing if we could come together in solidarity. The unions won't do it. That's why we have to come together and be strong."

Mike, who also works at Warren, has been an autoworker for 25 years. Before that he was a member of the Teamsters union for eight years, while working as a tractor-trailer driver. "It's not just the UAW. It's not just the Teamsters. It's all of them," he told us. He made the following statement to UPS workers: "Just say 'no' and stand up for yourself. UPS is making billions in profits. I think we should unite. I'm all for it."

Juan, a Ford worker in Chicago, issued the following statement to UPS workers: "From my experience, the only thing I can tell you is that the union is only going to look out for itself. Here in Chicago, they just replaced the tier system with a different name... [In 2015], the union came to us telling us there was no more money, there wasn't enough money to make

everybody legacy, that this is all there was. It came out just within a month or two after the contract went through that Ford had acquired their biggest profit in years."

"I would say: don't trust the union," he added. "They're basically there to take care of themselves, and that's it."

The WSWS UPS Workers Newsletter urges all UPS workers who are interested in building a rank-and-file committee in your workplace, and linking up your struggle with autoworkers and other sections of the working class, to contact us today.



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