

For a rank-and-file investigation into the contract vote at UPS!

The UPS Workers Rank-and-File Committee
25 August 2023

Join or provide testimony to the investigation by writing to the UPS Workers Rank-and-File Committee at upsrankandfilecommittee@gmail.com.

Brothers and sisters,

The UPS Workers Rank-and-File Committee is announcing a rank-and-file investigation into the UPS contract. General President Sean O'Brien and the Teamsters bureaucracy have declared this new deal the richest in the history of UPS, which they say passed in a landslide vote of 86 percent. In fact, there was enormous opposition to the deal. Those of our coworkers who were taken in by the promises made about the deal will soon discover to their shock that the contract falls far short in reality.

The contract is not an “historic” gain, it is a sellout that helps limit the company’s labor costs for the next five years. The Teamsters claim it eliminates tiers, but it maintains the company’s bottom tier, part-timers, who make up two-thirds of the 340,000-strong workforce. The new \$21 per hour starting part-time pay is only slightly above Amazon wages and leaves UPS workers in poverty. They will be left waiting for years to move up to full-time because the contract includes a pathetic 7,500 new full-time jobs over five years.

Pension contributions will be frozen in much of the country in order to offset modest increases elsewhere, the general wage increases are below inflation for drivers, the air conditioning “deal” will leave drivers in most vehicles without air conditioning, and Uber-style personal vehicle delivery remains intact.

We went into this contract one of the most exploited unionized workforces in the United States, little better than nonunion employers like Amazon, and we have come out the same.

An illegitimate vote can only produce an illegitimate result. The bureaucracy will use the result to claim

there is huge support for them and this contract. But that is a lie. The whole procedure, from start to finish, was manipulated to produce the desired outcome.

We intend to comprehensively review every element of this process, as well as the contract itself. We will use the testimony of our coworkers, who are being silenced by the union bureaucracy and the company, to show how they violated the will of the rank-and-file as well as our democratic rights.

The investigation will focus on a range of issues, including:

- The integrity of the ballot itself, including potential security vulnerabilities, such as the fact that it was possible to change one’s vote with access to a unique QR code. There was also no independent monitoring of the balloting, which was apparently conducted by only five people: O’Brien, his number-two man Fred Zuckerman, the president of the election vendor and two New York City-area members of the pro-administration Teamsters for a Democratic Union.

- The Teamsters spent huge amounts of workers’ dues money on a PR campaign promoting the contract. We will investigate the role of PR firm BerlinRosen, which has a history of helping union bureaucrats promote unpopular contracts, as well as document and refute the numerous falsehoods and half-truths promoted by the bureaucracy about the agreement. Among these include: that the contract includes no concessions, that wages would double for current 22.4 drivers and that the deal includes major improvements to pensions.

- The main selling point of the contract was the \$7.50 general wage increase and the new starting rate of \$21 an hour for part-timers. But these “gains” can be easily canceled out through the manipulation of Market Rate Adjustments. We will monitor changes to starting pay at facilities around the country to investigate whether

wages for new hires actually rise at all. We will also reveal the implications of the new tier system for part-timers, with the lower tier of all new hires not eligible for the GWI.

- We will expose cases of threats and intimidation by the bureaucracy against both specific Teamster members who had encouraged a “no” vote as well as threats against the membership in general. Teamsters officials widely claimed that a “no” vote would result only in an even worse contract. They also manipulated the economic insecurity of UPS workers to present a strike as meaning only the loss of income and health insurance.

Finally, we will expose the claim by O’Brien and the bureaucracy that this contract was produced by a “credible strike threat.” We will show how the “strike ready” campaign was theater designed to frame a contract which they had already worked out. We will demonstrate how their failure to make even basic preparations proves that they never intended to call a strike at all. We will also show how they continuously backtracked on their own “red lines” during the negotiations, and deliberately isolated UPS workers by selling out freight drivers at ABF and Yellow.

Any contract lawyer knows that a contract passed with the aid of lies and fraud cannot be considered legally binding. Moreover, UPS violates the contract whenever it wants with no consequences from the Teamsters. We will document and expose every violation of those provisions which do exist in the contract, or were promised by the Teamsters to exist.

We welcome and encourage the broadest participation in this investigation from our co-workers, including all individuals and groups among UPSers who are opposed to the contract and who have been victims of bureaucratic intimidation. We urge you and your coworkers to provide testimony and to collaborate in this investigation. The development of this investigation on the broadest possible basis will make it as comprehensive and as authoritative as possible.

The UPS Workers Rank-and-File Committee was founded to organize UPSers in a fight against both management and the corrupt Teamsters bureaucracy. In our founding statement, we said: “The only response must be to organize ourselves—not to ‘support’ the bargaining committee and cheerlead for them, but to enforce our democratic will, and position ourselves to

countermand the inevitable sellout.”

This is still true today. The “ratification” of this deal resolves nothing for UPSers. The problem we face is the same: the fight for workers’ control. We intend our investigation to be a critical step in this fight, exposing the bureaucracy’s lies and providing workers with the information that we need in order to mount a collective fight for workers’ interests.

Moreover, this investigation will arm workers facing betrayals in other industries, including in the auto industry, where the United Auto Workers bureaucracy is copying the Teamsters’ playbook word by word. When UAW President Shawn Fain and his administration comes out with the same tricks as O’Brien and the Teamsters, autoworkers will be able to see through it.

Contact the UPS Workers Rank-and-File Committee by emailing upsrankandfilecommittee@gmail.com.



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