

Amazon workers carry out one-day strike at San Bernardino air hub

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Dozens of workers walked off the job at Amazon's San Bernardino air hub on Sunday, July 21 to protest the company's retaliation against workers seeking to unionize.

The KSBD air hub, which opened in March of 2021, is one of Amazon's largest facilities on the West Coast. It receives around 14 flights and processes hundreds of thousands of packages daily, employing between 1,200 and 1,600 workers. It runs on a 24/7 schedule, and the workers are expected to work outdoors in all weather conditions.

Workers often operate heavy machinery with thousands of pounds worth of cargo, with little or no experience on how to operate them, leading to a number of workplace accidents.

Workers have carried out other job actions at the hub in previous years. In August of 2022, 150 workers walked off the job against inadequate heat safety provisions. They gathered 800 signatures from employees demanding a pay increase.

But conditions at KSBD are still unbearable. The facility was cited five times, including two serious violations, by the California Occupational Safety and Health Department for high heat exposure during last year's heat wave in July 2023.

Temperatures had averaged well over 100 degrees Fahrenheit (38 degrees Celsius) in San Bernardino and even reached temperatures of 108 degrees during the peak of last year's heat wave.

In May of 2024, Amazon workers at the KSBD air hub confronted management over unpaid wages and being refused rest breaks after 10-hour shifts, even though this is mandated by law. The state's Supreme Court ruled employers are required to pay one additional hour for each workday that a rest period is not provided.

Since the hub opened, workers have shown their determination to fight against brutal conditions. Their efforts to join a union express an entirely justified understanding that this fight requires organization and unity. Workers across Amazon and southern California must defend their democratic right to join a union, which is being violated by management

But their initiative is being sapped by the Teamsters bureaucracy, which is limiting them to one-day protest actions that have not seriously impacted operations. The bureaucracy's aim is not to organize a fight to win massive improvements to wages and conditions, but to set up the corrupt relations they currently enjoy at UPS, on the railroads and other workplaces.

Amazon workers must fight to retain their independent initiative by linking up directly with rank-and-file workers at UPS, the railroads and other Teamsters-organized workplaces, where they have formed rank-and-file committees in opposition to the bureaucratic sellouts.

There have been a number of explosive working class struggles that have been suffocated and incapacitated by the Teamsters bureaucracy over the years, whether that be potential strikes by workers in rail, auto, healthcare, logistics or retail. In each one of these struggles, the Teamsters bureaucracy has worked hand in glove with the Democratic Party to ensure that the home front is secure for preparation for their wars abroad.

Last year, the Teamsters rammed through a contract at UPS which management is using to lay off tens of thousands of people and either close or automate 200 facilities.

The Teamsters bureaucracy under General President Sean O'Brien has enjoyed close ties with the Biden White House, with whom it conspired to block a strike

in late 2022. But now they are openly courting Trump and the extreme right, with O'Brien delivering an "America First" speech at the Republican National Convention this month. Whether they work with the Democrats or Republicans, the bureaucracy is joined at the hip with the corporate parties.

It is only through the formation of rank-and-file committees that control of the situation can be taken out of the hands of the Teamsters bureaucracy and workers can take control of their work environment.

The betrayals of the UPS and rail workers should be a warning to workers at Amazon that the Teamsters have no intention of fighting for better working conditions, but instead are seeking to secure more favorable relations with management as they've done in every workplace they manage.

If you are interested in creating a rank-and-file committee or would like to leave an anonymous tip or comment, please fill out the form below.



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