

Teamsters bureaucracy does nothing as UPS announces hundreds of additional layoffs

Joshua Rodriguez
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UPS has announced a new wave of layoffs that will leave hundreds of workers in multiple states without a job. The announced layoffs will affect 198 UPS workers in Charlotte, North Carolina on March 31, 65 UPS workers in Hialeah, Florida on April 27, and an undisclosed number of UPS workers in Portland, Oregon on July 1.

This comes immediately after layoffs were initiated mid-January in Vernon, California, Commerce City, Colorado, Portland, Oregon and Oklahoma City, Oklahoma, affecting nearly 1,200 UPS workers this year.

These cuts are part of an ongoing barrage of job cuts at the company, which is seeking to drastically reduce labor costs by implementing automation and artificial intelligence technologies at the expense of workers as part of the “Network of the Future” initiative announced last year.

UPS has continued their layoffs without any serious opposition from the Teamsters union, which purports to represent some 300,000 workers at UPS.

The catalyst for these layoffs was implemented by the Teamsters bureaucracy itself through President Sean O’Brien’s fraudulent “Strike Ready” campaign in 2023. Prior to the expiration of the contract, UPS workers revealed their willingness to fight with a 97 percent strike vote.

As UPS workers voiced their support for a strike, tens of thousands of members of the Writers Guild of America (WGA) and Screen Actors Guild-American Federation of Television and Radio Artists (SAG-AFTRA) were also on strike fighting for protections against job loss from automation and AI.

The potential for an enormous joint struggle between

actors, writers and UPSers was sabotaged by the Teamsters bureaucracy, which called off the strike a week before the deadline with the announcement of a “historic” agreement with UPS.

The only thing “historic” about the agreement is the number of layoffs it has allowed. Since it has gone into effect, some 40,000 UPS workers have been fired or laid off.

The refusal of the Teamsters apparatus to fight in defense of UPS workers and their jobs is not unique in the slightest.

In 2023, the Teamsters sold out workers to Wall Street during the bankruptcy of the trucking and logistics company Yellow, which led to the wholesale destruction of over 30,000 jobs. This happened after the Teamsters handed Yellow \$5 billion worth of concessions across multiple sellout contracts to supposedly “save” jobs and prevent a bankruptcy.

Revealing the social chasm between the labor bureaucrats and the rank and file, while Yellow workers were calling for a joint strike with UPS workers, O’Brien called off a strike and peddled the lie that in doing so, it would buy Yellow enough time to pay into workers’ pensions. The company used the time afforded to them to file for bankruptcy in terms more favorable to themselves while workers received nothing.

Most recently the Teamsters blocked a strike at the retail giant Costco. Mirroring the betrayal at UPS, 18,000 Costco workers voted by a wide margin of 85 percent to initiate trike action but Teamsters officials overrode this decision and announced announced a tentative agreement which fell far short of worker’s demands. The sellout contract brought forward by the

Teamsters was passed by a slim margin of 53 percent to 46 percent with widespread dissatisfaction among the membership.

The recent betrayals of the Teamsters bureaucracy are not a reversal of their previous course but a continuation of their rotten role of policing the working class on behalf of the financial aristocracy.

At a time when near-daily protests are taking place against Trump's attacks on immigration, science and federal workers, the Teamsters apparatus is terrified that a major strike by UPS workers could catalyze not only the 1.2 million members across the US and Canada, but also intersect with a broader movement against Trump's dictatorial measures and exploding social inequality.

Much like the American Federation of Government Employees (AFGE), which has refused to call for strike action even as Trump/Musk purge thousands of government workers, claims to represent federal workers, the Teamsters are far more worried about a genuine movement from below that threatens their six-figure salaries than they are of Trump and fascistic forms of rule.

On the contrary, O'Brien attended the inauguration of the fascist president and has supported Trump's reactionary cabinet nominees and the anti-immigrant, pro-Wall Street policies of the Republican Party more broadly.

On Monday, Republican Representative Lori Chavez DeRemer was voted in as acting Labor Secretary in a bipartisan 67-32 vote. Prior to the vote, the Teamsters official X/Twitter account praised DeRemer as "a champion for American workers," while attacking Democrats and Republicans for voting against her nomination.

DeRemer, like every capitalist politician, is not a "champion" for the working class, but for the financial oligarchy and US imperialism. Her top donors in the 2023-2024 election cycle included Nike Inc. (\$19,875), infamous for global sweatshops, and the American Israel Public Affairs Committee (\$122,354), the foremost Zionist and pro-genocide lobby in Washington.

The Teamsters backed her nomination due to her previously stated support for the "Protecting the Right Organize" Act or PRO Act. The central purpose of the

Democratic Party-crafted legislation is to bolster the union bureaucracies which are increasingly, and deservedly, reviled by the majority of workers.

Recent experiences at UPS, Costco and Yellow underscore that the fight to protect jobs and workplace safety cannot and will not be initiated by the Teamsters bureaucracy, or any other nationalist trade union officials, who have made their peace with Trump, corporate America and his fascist minions overseeing key government positions.

The way forward requires workers breaking with both big business parties and the trade unions, which function as labor police for Wall Street. Logistics workers, and every section of the working class, must build independent rank-and-file committees to transfer power from the corrupt apparatus to the workers on the shop floor.



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