

Vote No By Striking UPS No Workers Left Behind!

On 7/25/23 the Teamsters Union reached a tentative agreement with UPS. This agreement has betrayed the rank-and-file UPS worker and has broken promises. The IBT bureaucracy has made a toothless and opportunistic contract with UPS, for the sole purpose of averting a strike. This contract leaves behind not only UPS part-timers, but workers of the entire logistics industry, including the Postal Service, FedEx, and Amazon. The IBT had a chance to set the bar for industry standards and they have squandered it. Teamsters President Sean O'Brien made the promise that no workers, particularly part-timers, would be left behind. The tentative agreement currently leaves over 180,000 part-timers with no path to full-time status or equivalent wages. Only 7,500 part-timers will be made full-time. Sean O'Brien's rhetoric on July 16th, from the UPS Teamsters Member Update Webinar: *"...this is unacceptable, UPS can't give our part-timers crumbs, they gotta reward these folks."*

So what is the cause of this sudden change of pace from IBT Leadership? The answer seems to be the Biden Administration. According to various interviews with people involved in the union, the Biden Administration has been pressuring the Teamsters to settle the dispute a week before the deadline to "avoid economic shocks". If true, the Biden Administration has now intervened in three major strikes, the ILWU strike, the Rail Strike, and now the UPS Strike. It would seem the UAW is next in line. One by one the union regime has done nothing more than serve as a wing of the Democratic party. A party that proudly proclaims itself as "the true party of law and order." The Democrats and opportunists have rejected the call of the labor movement, they have always chosen the path of making peace with the bosses.

What has been gained from the agreement? Admittedly, one of the gains of the current agreement is the end of the two-tier system. This has been described however as only a nominal change. The agreement contains \$2.50-an-hour raises for full-time Teamsters drivers and \$7.50-an-hour for Teamsters drivers with more than five years of experience. New UPS trucks will be installed with AC, however, AC's will not be installed in existing UPS trucks, instead, two fans and air induction vents will be installed. Notably, there is nothing in the contract guaranteeing AC's for hub workers either. All seniority part-time employees will be paid at a floor of \$21/hr. After applying said floor, the deal includes a pay raise of 7.50/hr throughout the five-year contract to all part-timers with

seniority. Of course, inflation will change the buying power of this \$7.50. The average rate of inflation from the last major fluctuation (2008 recession) to now is 2.35% per year. If inflation remains steady, the effective buying power of a 7.50/hr wage increase will be \$6.56 by 2027.

The concessions are very much underwhelming, and of course, would not have been achieved without the agitation of the rank-and-file union members, especially the part-time workers who often have the least to lose and most to gain. It is these very part-time workers who, as Sean O'Brien puts it, "UPS can absolutely not hire enough scabs for." Yet these same workers are the ones who have been left behind. The demand for \$25 has not been met. Moreover, there is nothing in the contract removing forced overtime on part-timers. UPS can still force part-timers to work 9.5-hour days. Strain and injuries be damned! UPS will continue to squeeze everything out of the worker until they have nothing left to give.

What comes next? With SAG-AFTRA set to strike for months to come, and smaller strikes spreading like wildfire across the nation, now is the time to strike while the iron is hot. The UPS worker has an opportunity set the tone on the national stage for all workers of America. On principle, but also tactically, we advocate an immediate strike, through an ambitious campaign to override the opportunists and their bureaucratic tools. Staying on the offensive and utilizing the very negotiating tactics of the bosses (playing hardball), not only provide gains for the workers but also set an example of struggle to other workers. Doing so builds working class unity and establishes a sort of power in numbers. Of course, we understand that the conditions in America are such that it is standard practice for a strike to be conditional on a vote. Under the current system, voting takes place online where the voter remains anonymous and isolated. Organize with your coworkers, demand that an open discussion take place on the work floor, and demand that voting take place in assemblies of workers. Do whatever you have to do, and do it in numbers. Remember that the "best and final" offer is a bluff, but they will not share their hoarded wealth without a struggle. For it was only through class struggle that the victory of the 1997 UPS strike could materialize. Are you willing to take part in history? Or will you let UPS and union leadership keep you in your place?

International Communist Party

international-communist-party.org | icparty@interncommparty.org