



NEW DAY AT UPS

NEWS FOR UPS WORKERS, BY UPS WORKERS!

PROBLEMS OF PEAK SEASON AND THE TEAMSTERS

by Frank Loder (WORMA)

On September 26, UPS announced that it would hire 100,000 seasonal workers, compared to a little over 300,000 year-round employees in the US. Like always, UPS is doing everything possible to undermine their most dedicated employees, maximize the work done while minimizing payroll expenditure, and is resorting to extremely shady tactics to squeeze every ounce of work they can possibly get out of their workforce.

First of all, what is the legal, contractual position of the seasonal workers? This is actually extremely important to consider, since if UPS actually does what they announced, then around one-quarter of the UPS workforce in the US will be seasonal workers for the next several weeks. Consider the following extracts: Article 3 Section 3 of the National Master; "The Employer will provide a list of peak season employees to the Local Union. The Company agrees to honor the dues checkoff cards for peak season employees." Article 57 Section 2 Subsection B1 of the New England Supplement; "Temporary jobs added from October 1 to December 31 shall not be subject to bid." Article 57 Section 4 Subsection H of the New England Supplement; "Employees hired for temporary job openings in all classifications from October 1st through the first two (2) full weeks of January and in the Feeder Classification from October 15 through the first two (2) weeks of January will not accrue seniority during that period and such job openings shall not be posted for bid during that period." And Article 69 Section 1 Subsection A of the New England Supplement reads, "The Employer agrees to make payments to the New England Teamsters and Trucking Industry Pension Fund for each and every employee performing work within the scope of and/or covered by this Collective Bargaining Agreement whether such employee is a seniority, probationary, temporary or casual employee, irrespective of his/her status as a member or a nonmember of the Local Union, from the first hour of employment subject to this Collective Bargaining Agreement as follows... [It goes on to explain the hourly rates to be paid into the fund.]"

What does this mean? This means that the seasonal workers, who are doing union work, pay union dues and accrue money into the pension fund, are

essentially institutionalized scabs. UPS is able to pay out less overtime to their long-term employees through the use of seasonals. The seasonals are a lower tier of union worker, and the IBT is okay with this so long as UPS deducts dues and pays into the pension fund, which the seasonals obviously cannot collect from since they cannot achieve seniority. They are allowed to take work and they are compelled to pay the union but they are not given the same job guarantee as everyone else. And, in the event that the seasonals are not taking enough work and the part time inside workers are actually able to work a full time schedule, UPS is able to evade their contractual obligation to create new full-time positions, thanks to Article 55 Section 1 of the New England Supplement which says, "Part time employees who work eight (8) consecutive hours for a total of thirty (30) days in a sixty (60) day period, excluding coverage and seasonal period [!], shall create a 22.3 position." Thus, UPS is able to cover all of their bases with the help of the IBT, whose sole condition is a share of the loot for themselves.

How is this actually implemented? In practice, it means straight up lying to seasonals about their job prospects. (Actually, in PRORI they have even taken to lying to seniority employees about moving them to easier positions! But then again, seniority means little to nothing at UPS if you aren't in the IBT local's clique.) Seasonals are, by definition, inexperienced and prone to slacking since they know they have no future at the company. To get around this, the scummiest UPS managers tell seasonals that hiring is done by merit, in order to fool them into working hard. (UPS is contractually limited when it comes to hiring drivers off the street per Article 22 Section 4: "Part-time employees shall be given the opportunity to fill full-time jobs before hiring from the outside on a six-for-one basis.") And this informal policy aligns perfectly with UPS' formal policy of sign-on bonuses, referral bonuses, and other schemes for strengthening their revolving-door employment strategy.

The fact is, peak season takes all of the problems that exist year-round and makes them worse. Poorly trained new hires might be able to skate through a light spring season, but in peak season conditions they are almost guaranteed to injure themselves or someone else. UPS' policy of operating with the

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minimum people at the maximum speed at all times is atrocious normally, but during peak, this leads to complete operational failures when volume exceeds the capacity of the machinery. (In fact, recently in WORMA, a belt was so badly overweighed in the secondary sort that it had to be restarted by having people stand on it, brace themselves on the rafters, and push it with their feet.) As always, the people actually doing the most work, with the most knowledge of the job, are getting paid the least while UPS has seemingly endless funds to pay out to useless managers and idiotic productivity and hiring-based bonus schemes. The seasonals, for their part, are getting a bad deal as well: they are paying money to an organization that they do not enjoy the supposed privileges of, they have no job security, won't be at UPS long enough to take advantage of benefits like health insurance, and it is a guarantee that UPS will work them to the bone since they are completely disposable. And all this takes place with the consent of the IBT, which enshrines this in their contracts (it should be noted that the number of seasonals hired might even surpass the number of votes for the contract) on the condition that money continue to be funneled to the locals which have zero oversight. And what is the condition of the locals?

Look at the example of local 570 when workers at two MOM's Organic Market locations voted to join the Teamsters. The workers at MOMs wanted to organize themselves into a union to force MOMs to improve wages and establish a clear and consistent raise structure as well as improve job security/reduce turnover. Once Teamsters had won elections, the IBT instituted their well-known regime of shadily-ratified backroom sweetheart deals with the company. The IBT agreed to a \$16/hour starting wage (the Baltimore area, where the stores are, has a subsistence living wage of \$17.81) and enshrined MOMs raise-quota system, which limits higher raises to the top 10% of employees, into the contract. The IBT held the vote on the contract at the union hall instead of the store or via mail, and MOMs actually paid for people's Uber rides to go vote on the contract seemingly written by their own lawyer. The IBT not only refused to strike MOM but went so far as to tell the MOMs workers that they would have to "eat shit" if they wanted a contract. The IBT split up the two Teamsters stores (which are in the same local) into separate contracts. As regretful MOMs organizers put it, "For MOMs, a yes vote puts the largest MOMs store into a contract with extensive no-strike and management rights clauses that allow MOM's to operate as they do now and pay roughly equal to slightly below what non-union stores make. [...] For the Teamsters, a yes vote gets them dues and revenue." The experience at MOMs is a perfect complement to the recent events at Yellow and inside the IBT itself. (The October edition of New Day covered the IBT's role in liquidating tens of thousands of jobs at Yellow Corp in greater detail.) IBT Vice President John Palmer recently came out against the non-disclosure agreements and other shady practices around the contract, and was sent threats by other Teamster officers and will likely lose eligibility for union office.

(He described his experiences in an interview titled, "The UPS Contract, Union Democracy, Business Unionism & Retaliation With IBT VP John Palmer" uploaded to "laborvideo" on YouTube.) Palmer's conflict with the IBT is similar to the events in the BLET (an IBT affiliate of railroad workers) last year, when incumbent President Dennis Pierce's slate tried to undo the election of Eddie Hall on the grounds that he shared an article that criticized the lack of Teamsters' internal democracy. (The point of the article was that 25 of the 26 national elected officer positions only had one candidate and therefore the election was a sham.) I think it is safe to say that this is a pattern, and it is one that has existed in the IBT for a century now.

This also demonstrates the falsehood of the line that "The union is only as strong as the members." This is an attempt to blame the members for the actions of the officials, it shifts blame for their actions onto us. This is a typical abuse tactic (not coincidentally there have been a number of recent scandals involving sexual harassment/assault and outright theft of funds in other unions) and it's a flimsy evasion of the fact that the members do not decide IBT policy and frequently have IBT policies wielded against them, if they aren't being outright attacked by extremely belligerent officials or their "friends". Nobody talks about the "Brotherhood of Loyal Americans and Strong Teamsters", a literal gang organized to physically wreck meetings of workers opposed to Teamster corruption, or even just General President O'Brien's unhinged rants threatening to punish TDU candidates. These facts must be taken into account if we are to actually take the offensive against UPS. The money is there for everyone, including the seasonals, to work year-round and pay their bills. UPS spent \$47.781 billion on compensation and benefits in 2022. Divided evenly among 600,000 employees (a high estimate of the number of global UPS employees during peak season) this amounts to \$80k/year, and obviously we would all be doing less work if we had peak season employment year-round. Instead, that money goes to executive compensation schemes, which go into multiple millions of dollars per head, middle and upper corporate management, and a tiny number of UPS Teamsters who actually make six figures. We know for a fact the money is there, it is a question of organizing ourselves and making a plan to take it, ideally marching in lockstep with the rest of the logistics industry.



IBT General President Sean O'Brien with Republican Senator Josh Hawley: "Had a productive discussion about how collectively, we can assist working people in the state of Missouri. Appreciate you taking the time, Senator. Look forward to more dialogue in the near future." via Twitter



New Day is a newsletter produced by UPS workers to rally our coworkers against UPS corporate and their agents in the Teamsters. New Day Committees are for gathering information and disseminating the basic outlook of the revolutionary UPS workers to the rank and file in the operation, as well as a base that our coworkers can use as a launchpad for campaigns around more immediate issues. Our long-term goal is the creation of a revolutionary industrial logistics union.

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