



NEW DAY AT UPS

NEWS FOR UPS WORKERS, BY UPS WORKERS!

THEORY AND PRACTICE OF TDU PART I: ORIGINS AND AIMS

by Frank Loder (WORMA)

New Day at UPS has criticized the Teamsters for a Democratic Union in a number of issues now. It is not possible to talk about the IBT without talking about TDU, the leading faction within the union which advertises itself as a champion of the rank and file and a center of trade union militancy. A concrete analysis of the organization and its role in the International Brotherhood of Teamsters has been needed for some time. TDU counterparts have popped up in other unions, and TDU continues to be the object of public and enthusiastic praise from labor-liberals. Therefore it is not just a question of the UPSers, but of the IBT and what is called "the labor movement" broadly.

TDU's founding convention was held in 1976 at Kent State University. Its organizational precursors included the Teamsters for a Decent Contract, Teamsters United Rank and File, UPSurge, and the Professional Drivers Council, all activist groups which pursued grievances within the limits of the IBT. The leadership of TDU has always been the union officialdom and student activists. This is its social basis, although they are able to draw recruits from the rank and file with promises of grievance money, easier work, or privileged positions within the IBT. The early leaders of TDU included Pete Camarata, then-steward and TDU's only delegate in the IBT convention at first, and Ken Paff, a student activist from UC Berkeley.

The conditions TDU was created under are extremely important. The IBT was kicked out of the AFL-CIO for rampant corruption and gangsterism in 1957 and subsequently Hoffa and his ilk doubled down by putting pension funds towards organized crime, most notably the Central States Fund's loans to Las Vegas developers. The IBT supported Nixon and cut sweetheart deals with basically every company they "organized". The IBT at the time had hundreds of thousands more members than it does now, but even then it was clear the labor movement was in decline, and the IBT was extremely unpopular with the membership. In fact, Teamsters and specifically UPS Teamsters waged a series of isolated wildcat strikes throughout the 70s. In New York in 1970, UPSers held a minor wildcat strike over the dress code. In Pennsylvania in 1973, traveling pickets were set up, with UPSers traveling

between buildings to rally more people to the strike. In 1976 a wildcat strike broke out in Detroit in response to then-president Fitzsimmons' settlement of a freight contract, followed by UPSers in eight midwestern cities when Fitzsimmons sold them out too. (from Cal Winslow, "Forty Years of Struggle at UPS", published by TDU) There are rumors that people were able to compel locals to pay strike funds out to wildcatters under threat of decertifying the IBT. The IBT, for its part, dispatched officers and "associates" to threaten picketers with violence or termination, even savagely attacking their own officials like Camarata when they actually defended the interests of the membership. In opposition to this, the Fraternal Association of Steel Haulers waged a minor insurrection of sorts. The FASH (formed in 1967) was a group of mostly owner-operators represented by the IBT who waged fierce wildcat struggles throughout the midwest, which evolved from pickets to full-on shootouts with police who were escorting scab trucks. Unfortunately, we will probably never see a full accounting of how many people took part in wildcat actions in the logistics industry in the 70s. There are only occasional mentions in labor-liberal history books such as "The Package King" and "Rank and File Rebellion" (both written by TDU supporters) and from old news articles.

It is in light of these facts that TDU must be understood as a reactionary organization aimed at propping up the crumbling dictatorship of the IBT in the logistics industry. This was explicitly TDU's goal as explained in Article 2 of its original constitution: "The object of this organization is to build a national, unified movement of rank-and-file Teamsters that is organized to fight for rank-and-file rights on the job and in the union. We aim to bring the Teamsters union back to the membership. We do not advocate secession from the Teamsters Union, or 'Dual Unionism' in any form whatsoever." This point is extremely important. TDU hid their renunciation of the trade union struggle behind the bogeyman of "dual unionism". The nature of the IBT, whether it constituted a trade union at all or simply a gang employed by the government to undermine the development of trade unions in the logistics industry, is a fundamental question for any trade-union activist. TDU completely took for granted the legitimacy of the IBT at a time when it was

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fighting tooth and nail against the trade union members in the logistics industry. TDU's goal was always to "fight" "in the union", not against the companies which employ Teamsters, and what this actually means is factional maneuvering in the IBT instead of organizing the mass of Teamsters for trade union struggle. Their "strategy" for doing this is called the "rank and file strategy". The "rank and file strategy" has two sides. One side is the "strategy" of bureaucrats posing as part of the rank and file, and the second is the "strategy" of asking bureaucrats to give minor concessions to the rank and file. That is the method (which they borrowed from the liberals, specifically the so-called "democratic socialists" in the Democratic Party) for fighting for rank and file rights on the job and in the union. TDU resolutions always focus on "education", "empowerment", and "getting out the vote". For instance, the 2019 TDU convention's "Resolution on TDU's Goals and Priorities for the Coming Year" does not say a single word about the trade union struggle, instead resolving to "Provide strategic help to Teamster reformers and Vote No activists to run for local union office [...] Work for the very best outcome for resolving the pension crisis. [...] Build local organizing committees to develop a rank-and-file army of activists who will petition, run for Convention Delegate, and turn out the vote for TDU-backed candidates for IBT office." This electioneering is incompatible with the militant trade union struggles waged by the UPSers and other workers and small proprietors in the logistics industry, and in reality is a policy directed against them aimed at profiting off their spontaneous action.

In conclusion, TDU's pretense of empowering the rank and file of the Teamsters has always been a cover for maneuvering within the IBT. Empowering the rank and file through the IBT actually means empowering the IBT at the expense of the rank and file, who have been relegated to the position of financial and electoral supporters of TDU. The organization came into existence as a reaction against the rank and file forcibly taking leadership of the trade union struggle away from the IBT, and it was only able to get any support from them by exploiting the rank-and-file's legitimate grievances against UPS and the IBT. In the next edition, we will examine the development of TDU, how it came to occupy leading positions in the IBT, its actual behavior in leadership, and the phenomenon of new organizations claiming to oppose TDU but in actual fact copying its theory and practice wholesale.

IBT General President O'Brien poses with Donald Trump: this is what the "progressive" "militant" leadership of TDU actually looks like



HOW UPS CONDUCTS LAYOFFS

by Johnnie Wahlbreaker (RI) & Jonathon Stack (NC)

It's been almost a month since part timers at the Warwick, R.I. hub learned that the daytime sort was being shut down. The Warwick day sort has only been in operation since 2020, when high load volumes caused by the pandemic necessitated another sort. UPS' cycles of hiring and cutting have created a roster on the day sort where a majority have less than 4 years of seniority. It was initially said that February 15th would be the day sort's last day of operation. Since then, this was moved to March 1st then to March 15th. Other than the sort's last day of operation, part timers have not been told anything regarding the sort's closure. Potential transfers to the other sorts have been approached individually by the day sort manager. Those who have been approached have all had at least 2 years of seniority. For those who aren't approached, the running assumption is they will be laid off. All of this is happening with zero information from UPS or Local 251. Amid the largest layoffs the Warwick hub has seen since the pandemic, IBT officials have gone silent. Seeing this silence as complicity and not ignorance is an important lesson for part timers across all sorts at the Warwick hub. More cuts are being planned with 50+ feeder and brownie drivers being sent to work inside the hub.

At the West Charlotte, N.C. hub, not a single seasonal worker was kept on past December. Meanwhile, for non-seasonal inside workers, they've been met with increased surveillance, salts, load quality checks, and overall scrutiny from management. All of this is part of the post-peak routine of thinning the workforce and maximizing profits at the expense of those who remain. The remaining UPSers are being forced to work in areas manned by skeleton crews. In some areas, they have half the workers they had a month ago. Local 71 stewards and officials in Charlotte are nowhere to be seen during these staff cuts and speed ups. In WORMA, some seasonals were not told of their termination until January 16, just before the first sort after the contractually mandated period when seasonals can be terminated. At least one individual was told via phone call on their drive to the sort. Whether management is just that incompetent or deliberately malicious, it is hard to tell, but that same day part time supervisors were ordered to do hourly work.

UPS is cutting hours and staff, so while there is less volume post-peak, the average inside worker has a much higher package-per-hour rate as UPS crams as much volume through in as little time as possible. This creates an exhausting and constant rapid pace of work, which leads to full chutes and verbal ragging from management. (UPS announced January 30th that it would cut 12,000 management and contractor jobs in 2024 on top of the union layoffs. No doubt low-level managers are "feeling the heat" too right now.) Corporate's annual crackdown makes union organizing even more urgent, as the IBT is simply not representing us.

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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