



NEW DAY AT UPS

NEWS FOR UPS WORKERS, BY UPS WORKERS!

HOW THE REVISIONISTS WRECK THE TRADE UNION STRUGGLE AT UPS AND COVER FOR THE TEAMSTERS

by Frank Loder (WORMA)

Revisionist Support for O'Brien and the 2023 Sellout

The 15th and 16th editions of New Day were an in-depth analysis of Teamsters for a Democratic Union. TDU is “the leading faction within the union which advertises itself as a champion of the rank and file and a center of trade union militancy”, and we rightly condemned them as “simply profiteers and wreckers of the trade union struggle.” However, there is another dimension to their work that is common across a number of organizations at UPS. TDU was initially a project of the International Socialists, and continues to be supported by groups such as the Democratic Socialists of America. The reality is that there are a huge number of trade union wreckers who have carried out their wrecking activities under the signboard of “socialism” and “communism”.

In theory, communists are supposed to be the leaders of the workers in their struggle against the owners and state (class struggle). They are supposed to be the most politically intelligent, principled, and hardworking members of the working class capable of leading other workers down the path of seizing state power and reorganizing the economy. In practice, most people who call themselves “socialist” and “communist” are actually “revisionists”, namely, they are traitors who mislead the workers, reject the principle of class struggle, and serve the owners and politicians. In our limited context of the trade union struggle, the revisionists naturally work to limit the trade union rights of the masses. THE REVISIONISTS CANNOT BE UNITED WITH IN THE TRADE UNION STRUGGLE BECAUSE THEY SERVE OUR ENEMIES AND REJECT OUR STRUGGLE. That the trade unions only fight the class struggle in a limited way with limited tools does not change the negative role of the revisionists at UPS. They were, and remain, a major pillar of support for O'Brien and the Teamsters and supported the 2023 contract.

Consider the following facts from 2023:

February 21: “Socialist” journal Jacobin publishes an interview with Sean O'Brien titled “Inside the Teamsters' Preparations for a UPS Strike” where he says, “There's no running from the fact that I was with Hoffa at one

point in time. But whether you choose to be affiliated with TDU or you're considered a staunch socialist, how different are we? We have common goals and objectives.” Thus, not only did the supposedly “international socialist” TDU elect O'Brien, but O'Brien considered himself as having “common goals and objectives” with certain “socialists”.

July 25, the contract is announced and discussion and voting begins and does not conclude until after the August 1st strike deadline. Teamster representatives have no answer for what happens in the event of a majority no vote.

August 9: Newsweek runs an article titled, “Blue-Collar Workers Are Under Attack by an Intellectual-Industrial Complex” written by Jill Dunson. (Newsweek doesn't mention that Dunson was on the unelected negotiating committee responsible for the sellout, or that she received a tidy \$15,616 from the Teamsters in 2023—strange!) Dunson's article says, “We're not interested in any activist fixations on a proletarian revolution.” Thus, while O'Brien tells Jacobin that he is working for common goals with socialists, one of his negotiators demands people accept the sellout contract and reject “proletarian revolution”, aka socialism.

August 16: Cosmonaut publishes a lengthy article written by Teamsters Mobilize members titled, “The UPS Struggle and the Tasks of Marxists in the Labor Movement”. This article defends the idea of “a temporary tactical alliance with O'Brien” and criticizes New Day specifically as a “danger”. The article tells organizers to “win over those rank-and-file UPS workers who do not yet see the issues with IBT leadership”. They claim the issue with TDU is that, “They were unable to see the need for the only type of organization capable of systematically elevating the consciousness of the working class beyond the limits of spontaneous development, a true Communist Party.” After the contract has already passed, Teamsters Mobilize, who was in favor of a no-vote, wants to ally with the supporters of the IBT leadership as part of building a Communist Party.

Since then, a number of groups such as the Communist Party USA, Party for Socialism and Liberation, and Socialist Alternative have praised the contract and the role of the Teamsters in the logistics industry.

Email Us at Newdayatups@proton.me



Isn't this all a terrific mess? O'Brien is literally in the Biden administration while donating to Republicans. (He recently agreed to speak at the Republican National Convention.) Despite this he is supported by "socialists" and he graciously accepts this support. Meanwhile the Teamsters completely sell out the UPSers and even have anticommunist screeds published in the capitalist press. UPS lauds the sellout contract as a "win". The Teamsters and the "socialists" agree it is a "win", but some of them get embarrassed and walk back their support or form splinter groups. [Note that Teamsters Mobilize is literally just a TDU splinter: "Teamsters Mobilize grew out of TDU. All of the original founders of Teamsters Mobilize were TDU members. We met through TDU." (See "Teamsters Mobilize 2023 TDU Convention Report" via Teamsters Mobilize on YouTube at 6:40)] Nevertheless, everyone is very optimistic about "the labor movement".

Revisionist Tactics at UPS

Revisionism in the trade union struggle has labor-management cooperation as the core of its policy, often in the form of a joint grievance process, acceptance of arbitration boards and government regulations, etc. For half a century, the revisionists of TDU claimed to be working to "take back the union" from the old guard. And what did it accomplish? Power went from Hoffa, to Hoffa's lieutenants, to Hoffa's son, to Hoffa's son's lieutenant—and it's been nothing but concessions since the very first national master contract. Less than a year later, it is absolutely impossible to claim the contract was anything other than a sellout. Mass layoffs as sorts and hubs are closed, speedups (projected to reach a 12% increase in average productivity by 2026 according to UPS), management doing whatever they want, new hire pay multiple dollars below what it was a year ago due to the termination of market rate adjustments, etc.

Revisionist tactics in the trade unions can't even be considered tactics at all. Selling T-shirts and merch, making rap songs (Teamsters Mobilize did this), "marching on the boss", fundraising, hosting or attending speaking panels of people that don't work at UPS—these aren't trade union tactics at all but plain grifting. The main weapon in the trade union struggle is the strike and the main method in trade union organizing is persuasion. The revisionists reject economic action (strike, slowdown, sit-in) and in doing so reject the only material basis for trade union power. It goes without saying that only New Day actually proposed economic action for the 2023 contract (and not simply a "threat") and only we are in favor of economic action against UPS' current offensive. (Even the UPS Workers Rank and File Committee was only in favor of a "rank-and-file investigation into the contract vote at UPS"—presumably they do not unite with our open proposal for economic action, the Charlotte Plan.) Strike activity in the US is basically a statistical accident. Over the last few decades, UPS has lost a grand total of two work weeks to striking, and otherwise has been able to take whatever it wanted from the UPSers. The revisionists have consistently praised every step of this process as a step in "democratizing" the Teamsters and finally got their "historic win" last year—conveniently without costing UPS a single minute of lost time.

The revisionists use different tactics against New Day, however. I recall one "Maoist" who went by "Raheem" who decided that actually I wasn't threatened by local 25 for propagandizing at a contract meeting, and that he was going to spread rumors to other UPSers to try to convince them not to help me organize. (Despite the fact that the Teamsters, and local 25 specifically, have a public record of doing exactly that. Imagine using a known police tactic—rumormongering—to defend a police union!) I remember a "Maoist" podcaster whose entire contribution to the labor movement is complaining about the critics of the state unions, and even made a podcast episode about UPS in which he defends tailing the Teamsters. Yet another "Maoist" edited a ridiculous polemic defending a "tactical alliance with O'Brien" and then tried to disavow it in private to get in our good graces. I would be absolutely shocked if there weren't other incidents I did not know about, since I rely completely on other workers for information about wrecking activities. Even publicly though, I could cite a whole host of current and ex-TDU people hastily covering up their support in the press right now.

New Day Editors Self-Criticize for False Modesty, Incorrect Methods of Struggle

Only New Day at UPS is pursuing a correct trade union policy at UPS right now. This policy is build up the shop committee system on the basis of organizing a slowdown for various demands, mainly against the "Network of the Future" plan. (Our plan for a slowdown is readable on the archive, called the Charlotte Plan, after the West Charlotte hub where people have no break, work at breakneck speeds for few hours, and the hub is slated to close this year.) Any organization claiming to represent the workers that rejects our trade union policy is de facto revisionist. However, we made a legitimate mistake in our approach to fighting revisionism. New Day was formed as the theoretical organ of trade unionism at UPS: nevertheless, we followed an incorrect division of labor. We wrongly separated the struggle against revisionism from the trade union struggle, and carried it out behind the backs of the UPSers. This was partially due to the mistaken belief that the revisionists were capable of realizing their errors and accepting our trade union line as correct, and partially due to a lack of confidence in the UPSers' ability to differentiate between us and the revisionists. The revisionists rejected the repeated warnings of New Day that a sellout was imminent and are now desperately trying to cover their tracks.

The UPSers have correctly boycotted the numerous revisionist groups, they have correctly boycotted the Teamsters, but they do not know why they feel compelled to do so and they have no alternative vision. That is what New Day is meant to be. It represents the class-conscious element organizing the spontaneous trade unionist elements at UPS. This organizing is done on the basis of linking up the immediate demands of the UPSers with long term political objectives, which right now is building the basic trade union machinery. Obviously, New Day does not decide whether the UPSers will fight or not: I know for a fact that turnover is extremely high, the pressure to conform to UPS and the IBT is enormous, and there are an uncountable number of factors (including just language barriers) hindering our trade union struggle. Nevertheless, the objective basis for trade union organizing is there. The revisionists are organizing incorrectly and consequently their influence must be actively combated.

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.

