



NEWS FOR UPS WORKERS, BY UPS WORKERS!

PROBLEMATIC STRIKE PREPARATIONS

by Johnny Wahlbreaker (PRORI)

Contract negotiations between Teamsters and UPS officially stopped this past Wednesday, July 5, with 3 weeks remaining on the current contract. According to the union, UPS walked out of the talks after the Teamsters national negotiating team rejected UPS's last contract proposal. Teamsters General President Sean O'Brien has repeatedly promised that "Teamsters will never sell out our members" in multiple press statements: giving UPS an ultimatum of either agreeing to the union's unspecific demands or facing "the biggest private sector strike since the 1950s". These statements, as well as the multiple posts/statements from other high ranking Teamsters, can make someone believe that the union is actually prepared to lead 350,000 workers on strike. However, a simple analysis of Teamsters' "strike preparedness" action at one local actually reveals the contrary.

When the Teamsters leadership called for a strike vote in early June, 97% of the national membership voted to approve a strike. By itself, this turnout would be a convincing sign that Teamsters members are prepared to go on strike. However, such a result begs the question: how did Teamsters officials organize this locally, on the ground?

At Local 251 in Rhode Island, members were given a week's notice for 2 opportunities to vote: either at the local union hall on a Sunday or at the gates of the UPS hub on a Tuesday. When the strike vote at the union hall occurred, only 100 people were in attendance. When the strike vote occurred at the UPS gates, Teamsters officials had an easier time of getting the 1500 people who work at the Warwick hub to participate-- handing people a piece of paper as they're entering or leaving the hub.

While it's good that a majority of the Warwick UPSers voted in favor of striking, it's clear from the strike vote procedure at local 251 that Teamsters officials had little influence in this regard. UPSers are in favor of striking-- but not because of any training or organizing done by these officials. In fact, the IBT specifically told members to vote to strike not because executing a strike is necessary to win concessions from UPS, but on the grounds that the vote would help the negotiating team move things along by giving them "leverage".

Since national contract negotiations began, Local 251 has shown abysmal results in turning out its UPS membership. When Teamsters leadership called on members to complete contract surveys last November, Local 251 officials only visited the hub once. Nearly all members at the Warwick hub have reported not talking to a Teamsters official about what they wanted in the new contract. When Teamsters leadership announced the formation of contract action teams (consisting of members who would update and mobilize other members as the negotiations unfolded), no one from the local went to the hub to ask UPSers to join these teams. In fact, according to one Warwick UPSer, the only times that 251 officials were seen at the hub was to solicit sign ups and donations to the Teamsters political fund.

251's low turnout for these early "strike prep" actions have now lead to their complete absence at the hub in these crucial weeks. When Teamsters leadership announced the start of "practice pickets" (informational practice picketing meant to prep the members for a potential strike), local 251 officials again only visited the hub once.

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The "practice picket" conducted by these officials consisted of them handing out flyers to people as they were leaving or coming from the hub. It was not the type of active demonstration Teamsters social media posts have featured recently. Though a member of the contract action team also participated in this "practice picket", this Teamster later revealed two important things: that he himself is a steward and that most of contract action team members are also stewards. Instead of actively talking and connecting with other UPSers, stewards at the Warwick hub are notoriously known for keeping to themselves. The fact that the contract action teams are only made up of stewards shows exactly how ineffective the 251 officials are at mobilizing the Warwick hub.

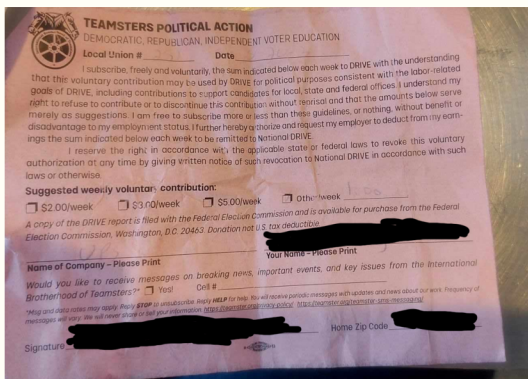
Local 251 has announced regular "practice pickets" every Tuesday and Thursday starting this week. UPSers at the Warwick hub shouldn't be surprised when these "pickets" are exactly like the previous ones. With the contract expiring August 1st, UPSers should recognize that a strike isn't going to materialize out of thin air just because Teamsters says so. There is also the ever-present possibility of the IBT thwarting a strike with a last-minute concessionary tentative agreement with UPS, as well as the serious question of what terms would end a strike. The IBT never had the UPSers assemble a basic set of demands that the company must meet to avert/end a national strike, and even now all of the demands are extremely vague. Without a centralized strike program, how can people be expected to adequately prepare? What even was the supposedly historic economic proposal the IBT showed the company? The fight for a better contract--for better wages, hours, and job opportunities--is ultimately in our own hands.

LOCAL 25 GOONS THREATEN UPSER

by Frank Loder (WORMA)

On Sunday, June 25, a "contract action team training" for the New England UPSers was held at Local 25 in Boston, MA. A New Dayer from a nearby local was in attendance. Upon showing the newsletter to Boston-area UPS workers, two Local 25 thugs took it upon themselves to chase him out of the meeting, follow him, intimidate him while recording him, (illegally, as Massachusetts is a two-party consent state), and try to break into his car, on the grounds that he "did not have the right" to air his views.

This is as shameful as it is unsurprising. We do not live in the fantasy world of Teamsters for a Democratic Union, where the government doesn't intervene in strikes and Sean O'Brien is the torchbearer of democracy. We live in the real world, where the IBT has imposed concession after concession on all of its largest bargaining units for decades, Sean O'Brien is a self-described careerist who is completely unrepentant about threatening dissenters (including TDU members themselves), and the UPSers are exploited by everyone from the shareholders, to management, to the Democratic and Republican Parties, and of course, the IBT officialdom. Let this be a somber reminder to the UPS workers that the IBT does not work for us. They see us as a cash cow. In their view, it is our job to shut up and pay dues and occasionally turn out for photo ops, while unelected negotiating committees decide in total secrecy what concessions we should be forced to hand over to UPS. The IBT is particularly sensitive about UPSers, because we are by far the largest bargaining unit and a significant source of press and dues money for them. (Dues money that is not optional in many states, despite many of us struggling to afford basic necessities!) These hack officials have no intention of letting us overthrow the little fiefdoms they have built for themselves at our expense. But the New Dayers will continue to fight until our bargaining unit actually functions according to the interests and will of the majority of the UPS workers. We will do this because not only do we have "the right" to air our views, we in fact have a duty to fight for the interests of ourselves, our coworkers, and working people generally.



TEAMSTERS POLITICAL ACTION
DEMOCRATIC, REPUBLICAN, INDEPENDENT VOTER EDUCATION

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New Day is a newsletter produced by UPS workers to rally our workers against UPS corporate and their agents in the Teamsters. Teamsters is controlled by white collar bandits who undermine our fight for better pay and working conditions. We aim to build a rank-and-file organization that can bend Teamsters to its members will, enforcing and negotiating contracts that improve our lives as hardworking UPSers. Following Teamsters can only mean more concessions, and only the united majority (composed of all non-management job classifications) can win us a decent contract.

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