

Bullets, Rocks, Bricks . . . and 'Card Checks'!

Teamster Kingpins Adopt New Organizing Strategy at UPS Freight

Nearly seven years ago, Teamster czar Jim Hoffa and his lieutenants launched a nationwide strike against Overnight Transportation (now UPS Freight).

In late 1999, Teamster bosses wielded "exclusive" (monopoly) bargaining power over roughly 2500 Overnight employees. The strike's aim was to seize control over all of the Richmond, Va.-based company's 10,000 blue-collar employees nationwide.

During the strike, which continued until late 2002, countless non-striking employees were shot at and assaulted. And a federal judge ruled in 2001 that Mr. Hoffa and other union officials could be held civilly liable for up to 55 attacks.

One non-striking driver, Indianan William Wonder, a husband and father of four, suffered a potentially mortal bullet wound while driving through Memphis, Tenn., December 1, 1999. He was saved only through the heroic efforts of medical personnel.

Another driver, James McCain, suffered life-threatening injuries 13 days later when a brick crashed through his windshield, pulverizing his face, as he was crossing a bridge near Memphis.

In September 2003, the Teamster hierarchy revealed it would not contest allegations made in a National Labor Relations Board (NLRB) case that Teamster agents had shot at, beaten, threatened, and destroyed the property of hundreds of nonstriking Overnight employees between 1999 and 2002.

And the Teamster settlement with the NLRB specifically let stand uncontested the NLRB charge that Teamster bosses



Massive strike violence failed to accomplish Teamster union czar Jim Hoffa's objectives at Overnight.

had "condoned" and "ratified" Overnight strike violence.

Appalled Overnight Workers Gave Teamster Bosses the Heave-Ho

The vast majority of Teamster-"represented" Overnight employees were obviously appalled by the violence.

Starting in the summer of 2002, workers in Teamster-"represented" Overnight terminals began voting, usually by wide margins, to oust the union. In at least one terminal, Teamster bosses skedaddled before workers got a chance to vote them out.

Ultimately, the Teamster hierarchy lost

control of all 2500 Overnight employees over whom they had once wielded monopoly power. This was the sole significant way in which the union brass was held accountable for rampant strike violence.

But now Jim Hoffa and company may have finally found a way to corral the entire Overnight workforce into their empire.

Last year, the United Parcel Service (UPS), whose blue-collar employees have long been subject to Teamster monopoly bargaining, acquired Overnight for \$1.25 billion and rechristened the enterprise UPS Freight.

And this June, UPS announced it had cut a "card-check" deal to allow Teamster bosses to take over one former-Overnight terminal solely through the acquisition of union authorization cards from employees.

Card-check deals make it extremely difficult for independent-minded employees to resist unionization successfully.

And this deal indicates that UPS managers, who are clearly concerned about the impact of a strike at their already-unionized facilities, may soon hand over all their former-Overnight employees to the Teamster brass.

Will Card-Check Coercion Accomplish What Rampant Violence Failed to Pull Off?

National Right to Work Committee Vice President Doug Stafford commented that he was "gravely concerned" that the thuggish Teamster hierarchy could use a federally-sanctioned card check to secure privileges that it failed to obtain through rampant strike violence.

"The best solution to the card-check problem is to repeal the federal labor-law provisions that authorize union bosses to act as a group of employees' monopoly-bargaining agent in contract negotiations," he said.

"But as a first step, Congress should pass pending bills [H.R.874 and S.1173] that would make it harder for union bosses to seize monopoly power by banning all card checks. The potential Teamster-boss coup at UPS Freight underscores the urgency of this legislation." 📢

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