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# LOCAL AGITATOR

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"Agitating for the Rank-and-File"

April 2016

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## The Delegate Elections

I know things have been quite **chaotic** and crazy in our local the past 3 months under the new E/B. I have been hearing **horror stories** myself. But this is not what this newsletter is about (at least not yet). They have 3 years to figure things out and for all of our sakes **I wish them luck**. However, we are in the midst of a Delegate election to this summer's Teamster Convention.

Every 5 years a **Teamster Convention** is held in Las Vegas in order to nominate candidates for General President. Each local is allocated a certain number of "**delegates**" to represent their local. Our local of 6500 members is entitled to 8 Delegates (along with 8 Alternates). According to current rules, a candidate needs at least **5%** of all the delegates at the Convention in order to be officially able to run. Otherwise, there is no election and Hoffa, our President since 1999, would get another 5 years in power.

Once at the Convention, your delegates will be asked to vote on proposals and amendments to the Teamster Constitution as well as whom they are supporting. The **Teamsters United Against Hoffa** slate has stated publicly that it is supporting **Fred Zuckerman for GP** and his entire slate which includes **Tim Sylvester for Secretary Treasurer**. We are proud to say we support Fred and are unafraid to say we oppose Hoffa.

Teamsters United are **proud** and **unafraid** because Fred is a **real fighter**. He is a 37 year Teamster and has been President of **Local 89** (UPS' largest local with 15,000 members) since 2000. Fred has served as Grievance Panel Chairman under **Ron Carey** as well as Hoffa. He was **Carhauler Director** until he broke with Hoffa and ran with **Fred Gegare** in 2011. Fred is not TDU but he is one "**pissed off Teamster**". In 2013, he led the fight against the Hoffa concessionary contract by mobilizing his entire membership which held up ratification by voting 94% against their Supplement. After several

rejections, Hoffa dictatorially **imposed** the contract on Fred's local.

Last week Fred visited Local 804 to do some campaigning. He hit 5 buildings in 2 days, shaking hands and meeting the rank and file. The reception was fantastic. Members were **impressed** with his knowledge, friendliness and willingness to stand out there and answer every question. They knew they were definitely voting **against** Hoffa, but after that campaign swing, they now knew why they were voting **for** Fred.

Nonetheless, our current E/B (**804 "Strong"**) is not saying publicly who they are backing. They prefer to say: "We are going to the Convention '**neutral**'". Brothers and sisters, "**neutral**" is a **weasel word** used by "leaders" without **the balls** to tell you the truth: that they support Hoffa. The evidence? They gave Ken Hall (Hoffa's #2) a plaque...**NOT NEUTRAL**. They attended a Hoffa fundraiser...**NOT NEUTRAL**. They used a Hoffa VP's son (Walter Kane) as their campaign manager...**NOT NEUTRAL**. And they hired Kane as Local 804's lawyer...**NOT NEUTRAL**. Our current E/B **owes** a great deal to **Hoffa** (as well as to Liam) for helping them win their current positions.

But why the mystery? Why the pretense? Hoffa has been in power since 1999. Is our E/B the only **clueless** members who are not aware of what Hoffa is about? The time to make up your mind happened **a long time ago**- it came and went. **Real leaders** stand up and take stands. **Real leaders** take sides. Think of the old labor song: "**Which side are you on?**" Do you want a "neutral" President or BA going into the office with you? **Fuck no!** There is a saying: "You can't be neutral on a moving train"- which means that events are moving in certain directions and to be "neutral" only means that you accept it.

In 2011, **87%** of our local voted **against Hoffa**, yet 804 Strong will go to Vegas and their masters who they are indebted to will tell them to put on the notorious "Red vest" and "vote as we tell you to." Brothers and sisters, **there is no**

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**middle ground.** It is quite simple: you are either with the 87% or you are not.

From what I have been hearing, the membership has been thrown by this realization. In my building alone, there has been a wave of **buyer's remorse** when it comes to this new E/B. The Twi Alternate Steward Steve Sedlak told me: "Kenny, we had no clue they were Hoffa supporters." A full-time insider said: "We **never** would have voted for them!" Numerous drivers "**feel betrayed**".

Once again this is **not** leadership. This is **capitulation** to Hoffa. The members elected 804 Strong to represent the rank and file **not bow down to Hoffa**. Back in 2001 and 2006, our Old Guard E/B took a similar stance in relation to Hoffa. For years they carried Hoffa's water and in return the membership got **nothing** but higher dues, concessionary contracts, frozen pensions and a bleeding Health and Welfare Fund. We then voted them out in 2009!

Can our E/B honestly say they support a man who **NEVER** ran his own local, who **NEVER** was a BA, who **NEVER** was a shop steward, who **NEVER** fought like a mad dog against some manager or DM? Can they honestly back a man who imposed **Teamcare** and a **frozen** \$10/hr wage on our part-timers? Can they support a man who **allowed** Sure Post, Telematics, Orion and language that expanded dishonesty discharges?

Regardless, I knew one man who would not be able to support that kind of International leadership. His name was **Ron Carey**. A matter of fact in reaction to our E/B's support of Hoffa, super-sharp shop steward **Rocky DiPaolo** remarked: "Ron Carey is rolling over in his grave!" 804 Strong **talk** "unity" yet they turn their backs on the 87% of the membership in the **Home of Ron Carey**?

For those of you who might not be familiar with our local's history, Ron Carey was the President of Local 804 from 1968 – 1998. According to long-time Queens North shop steward **Ted Hlampeas**, "Make no mistake about it, Ron Carey was without a doubt **the greatest leader** in our local's history!" Ron Carey took on and beat a corrupt and mobbed up E/B in 1967 and within a year of taking office had negotiated our **25 and out** pension that is the **envy** of every local. During his tenure, Carey led numerous strikes against UPS and always **Put Members First**. He **NEVER** gave in to the corrupt International no matter how much they singled him out as an outlier and a troublemaker.

In 1989, the Federal government's **Consent Decree** allowed for elections for General President which lead Carey to run and become **the first** democratically elected Teamster President. He went to Washington and **cleaned house** by selling the union jets and condos, cutting bloated salaries and increasing organizing. In 1997, Carey led us in our **successful national strike** against UPS. Subsequently, he was **unjustly** taken down by some powerful forces. He was forced to resign but was ultimately **acquitted** of all charges.

His **legacy** still lives on in Local 804. We will **NEVER** give in to Hoffa and his cohorts of Old Guard mentality and corruption. The Ron Carey legacy lives on in the **Teamsters United Against Hoffa** slate led by Tim Sylvester, some former BAs and union activists who want to make Local 804 members **proud** again.

Hoffa's only skill seems to be his ability to stay in power. His **famous name** got him in and re-elected several times but Hoffa's **failure** to produce unity or good contracts is **his sorry legacy**.

Brothers and sisters there is a **Perfect Storm** brewing in our great Teamster Union. Never before has Hoffa had to go against such **powerful headwinds**. It seems his famous name alone is just **not** getting the job done anymore. Under his regime, there have been: Hoffa officers charged with corruption, concessionary contracts, the Central States fiasco, the Vote No Campaign, the return of multiple salaries and lower membership. He has forced contracts down the throats of uncooperative locals **like a dictator** and, recently, negotiated a Carhaulers contract that was **rejected** by 85% of its members.

In addition, while last election there was a 3-way race, in this year's election, the **TDU** and **Fred Gegare** people have **joined forces** to form a powerful Coalition slate. There are hundreds of thousands of "**pissed off**" **Teamsters** who are voting for Fred Zuckerman.

But the first step to getting rid of Hoffa is to elect the **Teamsters United Against Hoffa slate** to represent the rank and file of Local 804 at the Convention. The second step is to **stay informed and engaged** in what is going on in our Local and the International. The third step is to **help Fred** by contributing time or money to his campaign. And lastly, you need to **vote** in November for **Fred Zuckerman for General President**.

