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The Teamsters: Controversy and Reform**

Brill, Steven. *The Teamsters*. New York, NY. Simon & Schuster. 1978. 414pp. o.p.

The author, a journalist, tells the story of the Teamsters through the lives of contemporary union leaders and members. In addition to Jimmy Hoffa, Brill devotes chapters to IBT presidents Frank Fitzsimmons, Hoffa's immediate successor and the man Hoffa thought he could control from prison, Jackie Presser, then International vice-president, president of the powerful Ohio Teamsters and FBI informant, and Ron Carey, at that time president of Teamster's Local 804. Brill's profile of Carey brought the future reform president his first national attention. Other famous and infamous Teamster officials Brill highlights include Tony Provensano, New Jersey Teamster leader who was implicated in Hoffa's disappearance, Allen Dorfman, who controlled the Teamsters' Central States Pension Fund and frequently dolled out loans to known mobsters, and Harold Gibbons, International vice-president, former president of the St. Louis Teamsters, and long Hoffa's right-hand man. It is Gibbons, socialist, intellectual, builder of a model union in St. Louis, who represents to the author the tragedy of the Teamsters. After working so diligently to bring numerous benefits to his St. Louis membership—free, unlimited hospitalization and medical care, a nonprofit grocery, recreation facilities—he allied himself with Hoffa in his rise to power and was seduced by a luxurious lifestyle. The most engaging stories belong to two rank-and-file Teamsters, Al Barkett, an over-the-road trucker from Ohio who credited the Teamsters with the secure life he and his family enjoyed, and Charlie McGuire, a New Jersey warehouseman, former shop steward, and PROD member, who resisted mob involvement and fought for twenty years to correct his seniority standing without help from his union.

Crowe, Kenneth C. *Collision: how the rank and file took back the Teamsters*. New York, NY. Charles Scribner's Sons. 1993. 303pp. o.p.

Crowe, a prize-winning investigative reporter who covered labor for *Newsday*, uses his journalistic skills to provide a dramatic account of Ron Carey's two-year campaign to win the national presidency of the Teamsters. He also documents the 1987 RICO case brought against various Teamster officials by Rudy Giuliani, then U.S. Attorney for the Southern District of New York, which resulted in a consent decree between the federal government and Teamster officials. The iron-willed Judge David Edelstein's ruling gave the appointed election officer the power to run every aspect of the direct, secret-ballot, IBT 1991 election and paved the way for Carey's victory. Crowe describes how incumbent Teamster officials fought among themselves for the presidency, while Carey's campaign manager, Eddie Burke, who had been drafted from the

* Prepared by Linda Oppenheim, Social Sciences Reference Librarian.

** Items on this list should be ordered directly from the publisher or obtained through your library. Addresses are given only for monographs and documents in print.

United Mine Workers, focused on the delegate elections, bringing Carey the votes he needed to be nominated at the convention. Using the nationwide network of dissident TDU members, Carey's tireless travels from work site to work site meeting rank-and-file Teamsters resulted in a grass-roots landslide victory.

Dobbs, Farrell. *Teamsters rebellion*. New York, NY 10014. Pathfinder Press (410 West Street). 1972. 218pp. \$16.95, paper.

This is the first of four books about the early history of the Teamsters written by the militant Minneapolis organizer and Socialist Workers Party leader Farrell Dobbs. It tells the story of the violent 1934 strikes in Minneapolis that led to expanded recognition for the union, seniority rights and higher wages. In a brilliant organizing campaign, Dobbs brought the long-distance truckers and warehousemen into the Teamsters union, which had previously ignored them. By the time he left the Teamsters in 1939, Dobbs had put the faltering union with declining membership on firm ground with the establishment of the Central States Drivers Council and had increased its membership more than fivefold. *Teamster power* (255pp. \$50.00, cloth; \$17.95, paper) describes the growth and consolidation of the Teamsters union in Minneapolis and the eleven-state organizing campaign that brought union power for the first time to many areas of the Midwest. He also relates his ideological conflicts with Dan Tobin, IBT president. *Teamster politics* (256pp. \$50.00, cloth; \$17.95, paper) relates the political fight within Minneapolis Local 544 and between the union and local and national politicians over issues of war and union democracy. The last book in the series, *Teamster bureaucracy* (304pp. \$55.00, cloth; \$18.95, paper), covers events during the period between 1937, the start of Roosevelt's second term, and 1944 on both the international, national, and local scenes.

Goldberg, Jeffrey. "Jimmy Hoffa's revenge," *New York Times Magazine*, February 8, 1998, Section 6, pp. 38-45, 62, 67-68, 76-77.

In his profile of the current candidate for IBT president and son of the famous Teamster president, Goldberg highlights the differences between both the personalities of the father and son and the unions that one headed and one seeks to run. Like many unions today, the Teamsters has seen a drop in membership from the 2.3 million in 1971 when the elder Hoffa went to prison to 1.4 million in the 1990s. The younger Hoffa, who has never held a union position, is described as an avenger of his father as much as a fighter for the interests of rank-and-file Teamster members. Hoffa sees the U.S. Government, which has spent years investigating Teamster operations and which Hoffa holds responsible for his father's undoing, as as much an opponent as any candidate from the Carey wing of the union. This did not stop Hoffa from using the same government investigative apparatus to bring about Carey's downfall, by pressing revelations that Carey election staff embezzled money from the Teamster treasury to aid in his re-election campaign. The result of the scandal for the ordinary Teamster is "a union divided and under siege...distracted labor leaders, emboldened employers, an empty strike fund and weak contracts." Goldberg concludes that globalization and anti-labor legislation, such as the striker replacement law, are obstacles to building union strength that neither Carey nor Hoffa could overcome.

Goldberg, Michael J. "The Teamsters' Board of Monitors: an experiment in union reform litigation," *Labor History*, Fall, 1989, pp. 563-584.

The Board of Monitors was a three member, court-appointed watchdog that was created by the settlement of a class action lawsuit, *Cunningham v. English*,

filed on behalf of thirteen Teamsters from five New York area locals to prevent James Hoffa and his slate from taking office after the 1957 election. The lawsuit followed an initial attempt to enjoin the election altogether until reforms had been implemented. The author describes the turbulent three-year existence of the Board, which was to recommend reforms necessary to holding a new convention and election. Martin O'Donoghue and Godfrey Schmidt, interpreting the Board's powers broadly, issued Orders of Recommendation to charge and expel union officials whose financial abuses had been exposed by the McClellan Committee and to revise election procedures. Court appeals, obstruction by the union, infighting among the monitors and plaintiffs, and charges of conflict of interest slowed the Board's progress. By 1960 the Board had ceased functioning altogether and was dissolved in 1961. Goldberg believes that the chief reason the Board was not more successful was the lack of an organized rank-and-file reform movement, like the Teamsters for a Democratic Union, to support the Board's efforts to clean up the union.

La Botz, Dan. *Rank-and-file rebellion; Teamsters for a Democratic Union*. New York, NY 10014. Verso (180 Varick St., 10th floor). 1990. \$20.00, paper.

Founding member of the TDU, La Botz traces the rise of the dissident union, in an account punctuated by short profiles of rank-and-file teamsters, who participated in various reform efforts that illustrate the tradition of democracy in the IBT. FASH, the Fraternal Association of Steel Haulers, was organized in 1967, immediately after a successful strike of steelhaulers, whose particular problems as owner-operators had been ignored for years by the Teamsters, becoming an independent union in 1969 after a second strike which the Teamsters attempted to destroy. In 1971, after a wildcat strike, teamsters from sixteen states, angered by the National Master Freight Agreement negotiated by acting I.B.T president Frank Fitzsimmons, gathered in Toledo, Ohio to form the short-lived Teamsters United Rank and File (TURF), with the intention of reforming the union. As the National Master Freight Agreement 1976 expiration date approached, thirty-five Teamsters from local unions in fourteen cities met, drew up a list of contract demands, and established Teamsters for a Decent Contract (TDC). The TDC merged with UPSurge, another reform movement, in 1976 to form the TDU. In an earlier book, *Teamster rank and file: power, bureaucracy, and rebellion at work and in a union*, (Columbia University Press, 136 S. Broadway, Irvington, NY 10533, 1982, 303pp., \$59.00.) Samuel R. Friedman examines the activity of members of Local 208 in Los Angeles who challenged and changed their leadership, democratized their local union and successfully confronted employers to improve their working conditions. This history of the local begins with a rank-and-file rebellion in the late 1950s that foreshadowed reform movements that culminated in the development of Teamsters for a Democratic Union.

PROD. *Teamster democracy and financial responsibility: a factual and structural analysis*. Washington, D.C. PROD. 1976. 177pp. o.p.

This headline-making report, written by John Sikorski and Arthur Fox, was the first full-scale critique of corruption in the Teamsters' bureaucracy from the membership point of view. It documents financial abuse by union leaders and the union organizational structure that concentrated power in the hands of the General President, allowing the holder of that office to dominate and control the General Executive Board and the Convention. It lists the multiple salaries, exorbitant allowances and expense accounts, the union-owned fleet of airplanes, as well as the organized crime ties and criminal records of many Teamster

leaders. Convictions reported include selling out union contracts to employers for kickbacks and theft of union funds. In addition to identifying fundamental political and financial weaknesses in the union, the authors offer general suggestions for reform.

Sloane, Arthur A. *Hoffa*. Cambridge, MA 02142. MIT Press (5 Cambridge Center). 1991. 430pp. \$35.00, cloth.

Sloane presents an in-depth portrait of one of the best-known American labor leaders. Sloane's even-handed portrayal documents the actions that won Hoffa the devotion of the Teamster rank-and-file and commanded the respect of trucking industry executives. Hoffa always made himself accessible to union members, giving out his telephone number at the end of each public appearance and inviting people to call him directly. Violence was a part of Hoffa's life from the beginning of his union career, and Hoffa did not hesitate to use physical force nor to enlist the aid of gangsters in order to achieve his objectives. Though Hoffa's alliance with organized criminals began early and lasted throughout his career, Sloane suggests that Hoffa's ultimately independent stance led to his death, still unsolved, at the hands of the mob. Sloane's portrait does not neglect other aspects of Hoffa's remarkable personality such as the devoted father and husband and the arrogant, combative subject of Senate committee investigations.

United States. Congress. Senate. Select committee on improper activities in the labor or management field. *Hearings...85th Congress, 1st Session-86th Congress, 1st Session*. Washington, D.C. Government Printing Office. 1957-1960. 58 vols.

These are the hearings of the McClellan Committee that undertook the full-scale, two year long investigation of labor-management corruption. Fifteen hundred witnesses testified before the Committee, and thirty-four of the volumes are devoted to the Teamsters. The Congressional inquiry is described in books by Senator John L. McClellan of Arkansas who chaired the committee, (*Crime without punishment*, Duell, Sloan and Pearce, 1962, 300pp., o.p.) and Robert F. Kennedy, then chief counsel for the committee, (*The enemy within*, Harper, 1960, 338pp., o.p.)

Witwer, David Scott. *Corruption and reform in the Teamsters Union, 1898 to 1991*. Providence, R.I. 02912. Brown University. 1994. 598 pp. (Unpublished Ph.D. dissertation) Available from UMI, 300 N. Zeeb Street, P.O. Box 1346, Ann Arbor, MI 48106. \$43.50, cloth; \$36.00, paper.

This dissertation, currently being prepared for publication, surveys the causes and patterns of corruption and reform in the Teamsters Union from its founding and the defeat of president Cornelius Shea by reformist Dan Tobin, who ultimately stopped trying to eliminate corruption in the highly autonomous local unions, through the high level corruption of the Hoffa regime to the election of Ron Carey. Witwer describes in particular efforts to reform the union from within and the forces in the union and in society at large that have supported or constrained reform. Where reformers had once been able to secede from the national union and form a rival union that could operate within a confined local economy, by the 1960s the national integration of trucking companies undid the bargaining power of any single local union. Witwer believes that the future of reform depends on what happens in the locals. Though the internal review board appointed jointly by the union and the government can look into corruption throughout the union, the bylaws of the locals were not changed and therefore can be used against dissenters.