

Teamsters financial documents show record income, 213 officials making \$200,000 or more a year

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The 20,000 layoffs at UPS are the latest in massive attacks on the working class with the support of the union bureaucracy. Since the passage of a new UPS contract in 2023 on the basis of lies, tens of thousands of jobs have been destroyed through the so-called “Network of the Future” restructuring, with the guilty silence of the Teamsters union.

Their role in the layoffs expresses the hostility of the bureaucrats to workers they claim to represent. This is not the result of bad policies but of social interests. This has drawn the bureaucracy into alignment with the extreme right against the working class. Teamsters General President Sean O’Brien, elected four years ago as a bogus “reform” candidate, is one of many top union officials openly backing Trump, especially his tariff policies which will put countless Teamsters out of a job and lead to war.

These social interests were exposed in a recently published annual financial report for the Teamsters for 2024. The Teamsters bureaucracy sits upon a treasure chest of nearly \$650 million, which it uses almost exclusively to pay itself exorbitant salaries and benefits.

These documents demonstrate that the bureaucracy is an unreformable institution that must be swept away by a rebellion of the rank-and-file to return power to the shop floor and seize back control over the immense financial resources stolen from workers.

Documented assets of the Teamsters International are the highest in at least 25 years. At \$650 million in 2024, the Teamsters bureaucracy holds immense wealth in the form of financial and real estate assets, not even including the assets of various local unions.

Annual income for the Teamsters is also the highest in decades, at \$375 million. Of this sum, \$215 million is generated from member dues, at an average of \$172 a year per member. A further \$120 million was made from the sale of financial assets to fund the purchase of additional assets, primarily Collective Trust Funds, which are typically used in retirement accounts.

This is what the bureaucracy is preoccupied with, not defending its members but shuffling assets around to maximize benefits for itself.

The rank-and-file received just \$23 million back in strike benefits. The rest was largely consumed by the bureaucracy for General Overhead (\$29 million), Representational Activities (\$61 million), Union Administration (\$20 million), and employee

benefits (\$43 million). Distributed among these categories are employee salaries and other disbursements totaling \$58 million. This means that the bureaucracy consumes a total of \$153 million just for its own salaries, benefits and activities, or 71 percent of member’s dues payments.

In the documents there are 655 people listed as officers or employees of the Teamsters headquarters, placing the total average spending for each employee at \$233,587. This does not include the additional income union officials may make from their locals, which can have assets of their own in the tens of millions.

It is not surprising then that the Teamsters have increased the number of people making \$200,000 a year or more from 160 in 2023 to 213 in 2024. This “200k Club” is monitored by the message board T-Union Link, which publishes an annual list of officials making \$200,000 or more in total. Among this list are 30 officials making more than \$300,000 a year and three making more than \$400,000 a year, including President Sean O’Brien, who made \$431,000 in 2024.

This level of income places the 200k Club members in the top 6 percent of American society. Figures like Sean O’Brien make enough to be in the top 1 percent of income earners.

O’Brien’s Teamsters United slate of candidates for 2026, backed by Teamsters for a Democratic Union, is full of 200k Club members.

Fred Zuckerman, who is running for General Secretary Treasurer and who has caucused with the TDU, makes \$391,327 a year.

- Juan Campos, running for general Vice President, makes \$311,695.

- Matt Taibi, running for Eastern Region Vice President, makes \$256,044.

- Thomas Gesuladi, also running for General Vice President, makes \$456,638, second highest in the bureaucracy.

The list goes on, filled with long-time bureaucrats who make many times what a typical Teamster makes every year.

While these bureaucrats gorge themselves on members’ dues money, they allow thousands of Teamsters to lose their jobs. This includes the 22,000 workers at freight company Yellow, who lost their jobs in 2023 when the company went under, and the continuing barrage of layoffs at UPS.

At UPS, warehouses have been closed all over the country. This includes the recent closure of the Swan Island hub In Portland,

which has been hotbed of opposition. Over 200 workers will lose their jobs upon closure and another 700 will see their jobs threatened when the upgrades are complete.

These layoffs are sweeping across UPS, with the company firing 10,000 people in middle management in preparations for automating 200 locations, setting the stage for mass layoffs. The “Network of the Future” restructuring is using automation to destroy as much as 80 percent of inside jobs.

The UPS Workers Rank-and-File Committee, formed to prepare a rebellion against the bureaucracy, raised the alarm at an early stage. Even during the contract vote, the Committee explained:

The bureaucracy is worse than dead weight. We don't need their permission to organize a fight. In reality, our fight is not only against UPS but against the management stooges who control the Teamsters union.

It is not a question of bad apples at the top; the bureaucracy, which we have no control over, is what *produces* the bad apples.

The treachery of the bureaucracy rooted both in social interests and history. Over the past 50 years the rapid globalization of the world economy has rendered the program of national reform untenable. To defend its social interests the bureaucracy has turned from class compromise to class collaboration, subordinating the unions to the interests of capitalism and turning deeper into support for nationalism and war.

Teamsters President Sean O'Brien is emerged as a top supporter of Trump since his speech at the Republican National Convention last year. He has given extensive support to Trump's Labor Secretary pick, Lori Chavez-DeRemer, calling her the “only choice” in an interview with PBS. He has said that he speaks with Trump on the phone “three to four times a month” and praised Trump for “making certain that working people, especially union people, were taken care of.” O'Brien's “union people” in the bureaucracy are certainly taken well care of.

He has also given public praise to fascist Republican Senator Josh Hawley's rants against transgender people and foreign companies and has given tacit support for Trump's trade war policies, joining other union leaders in promoting the illusion that tariffs will bring back manufacturing jobs to the US.

This is part of a broader shift, involving those hailed by the pseudo-left as “reform” candidates only a short time ago in the front rank. United Auto Workers President Shawn Fain has been very vocal in his support for the tariffs, falsely claiming that the tariffs will restore jobs in the auto industry while advertising the UAW's services to the American state as a buttress for American war manufacturing, invoking the UAW's role during the Second World War as the “arsenal of democracy.”

Both dockworker unions, the International Longshoreman Association (ILA) on the east coast and the International Longshore and Warehouse Union on the west coast, have thrown their support behind trade war policies which will cause the ports to grind to a halt and lead to mass layoffs spreading through the

country and the world.

The union bureaucracy is not simply mistaken on Trump's policies, they are making a conscious political decision to line up behind his policies for global trade war, and eventually imperialist war. They support the tariffs, not because they will bring back jobs (which they will not), but because they support the plans to consolidate economic forces in North America under US dominance in preparations for world imperialist war. The bureaucracy's social interests are tied to the profitability of the national capitalist system and they see Trump's policies as essential to defending and bolstering their social position.

The rank-and-file cannot afford this parasitic caste of labor bureaucrats, either financially or politically. Bureaucrats like O'Brien and his ilk are throwing themselves behind Trump to defend their own interests, which are independent of and antithetical to those of the working class.

Workers therefore need their own independent program and organizations to exercise their strength and promote their interests. In 2023, the UPS Workers Rank-and-File Committee wrote:

We need structures which we control. On our own, the Teamsters bureaucrats will be able to isolate us and wear us down. Organized, we will be powerful enough to countermand this and all future sellouts. We call on our coworkers to join us in building a network of rank-and-file committees, linking hubs and other facilities together across the country.

This must be an international movement, unifying workers around the world in defiance of the aims of the capitalist class and the trade union bureaucrats to divide workers by nationality.

The International Workers Alliance of Rank-and-File Committees must be built as the organizing center for such a global movement, rejecting “America First” and its equivalents in other countries in favor of the slogan, “Workers of the world, unite!”



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