

Court monitor's report exposes thuggishness of UAW bureaucracy under "reform" president Fain

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A new report by a court-appointed monitor exposes United Auto Workers President Shawn Fain as a foul-mouthed authoritarian who uses threats and retaliation to enforce discipline within the UAW bureaucracy.

The twelfth status report, filed on June 17, paints a picture of a bureaucracy ruled by gangster-style methods. Far from the "reformer" portrayed by pseudo-left outfits like *Labor Notes* and the now-defunct Unite All Workers for Democracy (UAWD), Fain emerges as just another corrupt and vindictive union functionary.

Among the report's explosive findings:

- At a meeting of hundreds of union officials, Fain threatened to "slit the f**king throats" of anyone who "messed" with members of his staff. "You could hear a pin drop," one witness recalled.

- Fain attempted to push through no-bid contracts over the objections of Secretary-Treasurer Margaret Mock, including deals with a public relations firm for a Chattanooga campaign and vendors for the union's online store. The latter is particularly significant, as kickbacks from union merchandise were central to the previous UAW corruption scandal, which led to the conviction of top official Michael Grimes.

- Fain routinely uses abusive and profane language toward subordinates. During one incident in the UAW Print Shop, he erupted over the inclusion of a photo of Mock on the back of a contract highlights document, yelling, "Who told you to put [Mock's] motherf**king photo on there? This is my motherf**king membership." In another confrontation with Mock, after she stated she had a fiduciary duty to the membership, Fain shouted, "Your only job is to sign the f**king check."

- Fain retaliated against Mock for refusing to authorize certain expenses by stripping her of oversight over eleven departments and reassigning them to himself and loyalists on the International Executive Board.

- The monitor's investigation continues to face obstruction. The union has failed to turn over key communications, including text and WhatsApp messages from central figures, in defiance of court orders. As of the latest filing, the monitor has

still not received requested documentation related to a separate corruption probe involving a UAW regional director.

To conceal his own responsibility, Fain orchestrated the removal of Mock's responsibilities through two intermediaries—Regional Directors Laura Dickerson and LaShawn English—whom he had recruited in advance to make and second the motion before the International Executive Board. All three—Dickerson, English, and Mock—are black. Fain later admitted to the monitor that he arranged this for appearance's sake, stating it would be "better coming from her than me, a white guy."

This cynical maneuver exposes the reactionary role of identity politics, which serves to elevate a privileged layer into positions of power and secure access to lucrative six-figure salaries, while masking the bureaucracy's alignment with the ruling class.

The pseudo-left, particularly the "reform" faction Unite All Workers for Democracy (UAWD) and *Labor Notes*, are also implicated. UAWD, which played a major role in backing Fain's candidacy, formally disbanded earlier this year, discredited by its silence on mass layoffs and support for Trump's tariffs. However, former UAWD leaders Jonah Furman and Chris Brooks remain entrenched at the highest levels of the union—Furman as communications director and Brooks as Fain's top aide.

Both Furman and Brooks figure prominently in the monitor's report. In particular, Furman's communications department pushed for several of the no-bid contracts that Secretary-Treasurer Margaret Mock refused to authorize, triggering the retaliatory campaign against her. Furman was also one of the officials Fain was defending in his reference to throat-slitting.

The revelations in this report demolish the entire narrative of Fain's rise to the UAW presidency. His 2022 election was not the result of a democratic upsurge from below, but a carefully stage-managed operation in which the federal government played a central role.

Following the exposure of massive corruption involving former UAW presidents Gary Jones and Dennis Williams, and much of the top leadership, the union adopted a consent decree

in 2021 to avoid a federal takeover. This led to a vote by UAW members for direct elections of top officers—a measure hailed by the corporate media and pseudo-left organizations as proof that the UAW was “cleaning house.”

But the report makes clear that the real character of the UAW bureaucracy has not changed one iota. It remains what it has long been: a labor syndicate bound by a thousand threads to corporate management, the capitalist state and the Democratic Party.

Fain’s arrogant stonewalling of the monitor’s investigation is explained by the fact that he is himself a major political operative. Moreover, the UAW is a pillar of capitalist rule in America—one of the most politically connected of the major unions that function as an industrial police force against the threat of a working class movement against capitalism.

Fain, the son of the former police chief in the industrial town of Kokomo, Indiana, and a longtime UAW functionary before becoming president, is particularly well-suited to this role.

Presidents, senators and others are on Fain’s speed dial. He was a key backer of Democratic President Joe Biden, who appeared on the picket line with Fain during the 2023 fraudulent “stand-up strike.” That limited action, which kept the vast majority of Big Three workers on the job, paved the way for a contract filled with givebacks and mass layoffs, which the union knew would come but deliberately concealed. Biden personally praised the deal and joined Fain in claiming it was a “historic” victory.

Now, Fain is cultivating ties with Donald Trump and echoing the fascist president’s nationalist, anti-Mexican rhetoric. After dismissively referring to Trump as a “scab” during the election—a glib understatement of the real danger he poses—Fain has since moved to align himself with Trump’s trade war agenda. He has remained silent on the crackdown against anti-genocide protests on college campuses, many involving UAW members, as well as the nationwide deployment of police and troops.

Fain has emerged as a particularly prominent advocate for the role of the union bureaucracy in preparing for world war. He has repeatedly cited the wartime economy of the 1940s as a model, praising the unions’ role during World War II. What remains unstated—but is well understood in Washington—is that this model also involved a no-strike pledge, the suppression of working class resistance, and the purge of political opposition. Echoing this legacy, Fain has called for redirecting “excess capacity” toward war production, promoting the retooling of factories to build bombs and tanks.

The report also exposes that a central preoccupation of the UAW bureaucracy is infighting over control of the union’s nearly \$1 billion in assets, amassed from workers’ dues. Fain himself received more than \$300,000 in total compensation last year.

Meanwhile, the consequences for workers have been devastating. Thousands of autoworkers have lost their jobs

since the ratification of the 2023 contract. Wages have stagnated or declined for decades.

Through its role in labor-management “safety” committees, the UAW is complicit in workplace injuries and deaths, including that of Stellantis worker Ronald Adams Sr., who crushed by a gantry crane at the Dundee Engine Complex on April 7. The UAW has told the family and workers nothing in the two months since Adams’ death.

The report entirely vindicates the campaign of Will Lehman, the socialist autoworker who ran for UAW president in 2022. At the center of Lehman’s campaign was the call for the abolition of the corrupt union bureaucracy and the transfer of power to rank-and-file workers on the shop floor, organized through rank-and-file committees.

While not explicitly named, the report also underscores the complicity of the Department of Labor, which continues to defy a federal court order stemming from a lawsuit filed by Lehman over systematic voter suppression in the 2022 UAW election. That election saw a turnout of just 9 percent—fewer ballots were cast than were returned as undeliverable by the postal service.

On Thursday, Lehman filed a new lawsuit charging the Department of Labor with an “arbitrary and capricious” refusal to comply with the June 2024 court order requiring it to respond to allegations of widespread voter suppression in the UAW election.

The UAW apparatus cannot be “reformed.” It must be overthrown. For the working class, the central issue is not reshuffling the same cast of bureaucrats, but abolishing the entire UAW apparatus and restoring power to the rank and file through the formation of independent, democratically controlled rank-and-file committees. This is inseparable from the broader struggle of the working class against war, inequality, and dictatorship.

History is passing judgment. Leon Trotsky, the co-leader of the Russian Revolution, wrote that the trade union bureaucrats “will never succeed in holding back the wheels of history.” Through bitter experience, a new generation of workers is learning that the fight for democracy and equality is inseparable from the fight for socialism.



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