

Status report by UAW monitor points to deepening crisis in union apparatus

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As anger mounts among rank-and-file autoworkers over escalating layoffs and deteriorating working conditions, there are continuing signs of deep crisis in the United Auto Workers apparatus, already despised by a large and growing number of workers.

On November 14, the court-appointed UAW monitor, Neil Barofsky, released another scathing status report citing the union's "toxic culture of division and retaliation at the highest levels of the organization," laying particular blame on UAW President Shawn Fain.

While citing supposed progress on implementing certain, largely cosmetic, structural reforms, the report stated, "As of the date of this Thirteenth Status Report, for the reasons discussed below, the Union does not appear to be on the path to sustainable cultural reform. The reality is stark: the current prioritization of political infighting and settling personal grievances over meaningful reform are stalling improvement and undermining good faith attempts to complete the necessary compliance infrastructure."

The report went on to state that the UAW International Executive Board had even excluded the monitor from meetings of the UAW Culture Committee. This body was created as part of the federal monitor's oversight to implement reforms around internal union culture (ethics, accountability, retaliation, etc.).

The report focused in particular on conflicts in the apparatus centered on the removal of duties from UAW Secretary Treasurer Margaret Mock and UAW Vice President Chuck Boyer, in effective demotions. In particular, Barofsky found that the charges against Mock had been fabricated and called for the reinstatement of her duties. Along with that he also blasted the loose to non-existent independent oversight and control over the UAW's more than \$1 billion in assets.

The monitor said he is preparing a supplementary report that will detail the use of UAW Compliance Officer Marni Schroeder "as a Trojan horse to advance false accusations against the Secretary-Treasurer." Marni resigned earlier this year, allegedly for "personal reasons," shortly after the monitor wrote in his last report that she had helped put together a special compliance report, "heavily shaped and substantially written" by Fain's staffers, wrongly accusing her of misconduct.

Previous reports have revealed that Fain operates an authoritarian regime and frequently uses threats and profanity directed at subordinates. At one meeting of hundreds of union officials, the monitor reported, 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.

The monitor also alleged Fain sought to push through a no-bid contract with a Washington D.C. consulting firm in violation of the federal consent decree, which requires a minimum of three bids.

In addition, the UAW bureaucracy is still refusing to turn over certain key communications, including text and WhatsApp messages from central figures, in defiance of court orders. In the previous filing, Barofsky stated his office had not received requested documentation related to a separate corruption probe involving an unnamed UAW regional director.

The report emerges amidst continued personnel shakeup in the UAW apparatus, including the resignation of Region 9 Director Dan Vicente, elected in 2022 as part of the "reform" Unite All Workers for Democracy (UAWD) slate. According to Fain, Vicente stepped down "in the best interest of his health, for his family and for our union."

Immediately following Vicente's sudden and unexpected resignation, Fain announced the merger of Region 9 and Region 9A, circumventing the need for the election of a new director. The merger plan evoked sharp opposition from local officials in Region 9, who saw opportunities for cushy staff jobs being curtailed.

In addition to Schroeder's resignation, the UAW's independent ethics officer, Cathy Creighton, an attorney currently employed by Cornell University, also stepped down for unexplained "personal reasons" last summer. The *Detroit News* has reported that Creighton's husband had received funding and political backing by the UAW for his ultimately successful campaign for mayor of Buffalo, New York—an obvious conflict of interest.

Earlier this year, officials at several local unions who are backing Mock and Boyer brought charges against Fain under provisions of the UAW constitution for dereliction of duty, financial mismanagement and retaliation. The action, held largely over the heads of the rank and file, had the character of a palace coup within the top echelons of the apparatus, by officials who have collaborated in Fain's betrayals of the rank and file. Both Mock and Boyer were former allies of Fain and backed the 2023 sellout contract, which dropped workers' key demands and paved the way for the mass firing of temp workers and the layoff of full-time workers.

The effort to bring charges against Fain was derailed by the UAW monitor on the basis of alleged procedural errors, giving

Fain at least a temporary reprieve.

However, the strong support given to Mock by the monitor's report and the corporate media suggests that a plan B is being prepared ahead of the upcoming 2026 elections for top union officers in case Fain appears too discredited to win or even seek reelection.

At a November 6 online town hall, dozens of rank-and-file workers posted comments denouncing the UAW apparatus for colluding in the elimination of their jobs. At one point, an exasperated Fain lashed out at a worker at the Warren Stamping Plant who had been laid off for more than a year, saying, "Get real, the union doesn't lay people off."

Under conditions of growing popular opposition to Trump's attack on immigrants, gutting of food stamps and other essential programs, and further moves to establish a dictatorship, Fain has emerged as a critical political supporter of the fascist president and his trade war policies, which have destroyed the jobs of workers in the US and internationally.

Fain has shamelessly hailed the decision by Stellantis to shift production from its plant in Brampton, Ontario in Canada to the idled Belvidere, Illinois Assembly Plant, potentially costing 3,000 Canadian autoworkers their jobs. Fain has also said shifting some Dodge Ram pickup production from Mexico to the Detroit area showed the success of "targeted tariffs."

All factions of the UAW apparatus continue to collude with management in imposing long hours of forced overtime and covering up the circumstances surrounding the preventable deaths of Stellantis Toledo Jeep workers Antonio Gaston in August 2024 and Stellantis Dundee Engine skilled trades worker Ronald Adams Sr. in April this year.

The UAW bureaucracy has also given the green light to the job cuts, which are being announced almost daily. In the latest cut, General Motors supplier Avancez said it will permanently lay off 143 workers at its plant in the Detroit suburb of Hazel Park because of GM's planned cuts at its flagship EV plant, Factory Zero, in Detroit. The latest layoffs follow GM's announcement of 3,400 job cuts related to the downsizing of its EV operations, including 1,200 jobs at Factory Zero and 850 temporary layoffs at Ultium Cells battery plant in Lordstown, Ohio.

Ford said it is considering discontinuing its F-150 Lightning EV truck and has temporarily laid off thousands of workers at the Dearborn Truck Plant and the adjacent Rouge Electric Vehicle Center (REV-C). Production of the Lightning was halted following a fire at the Novelis aluminum plant in upstate New York, and other product lines have also been impacted. The facility supplies aluminum used in auto production at Ford and other companies. Due to Trump's tariffs there is no cost-effective alternative source. Further production cuts seem likely after a second major fire hit the Oswego, New York facility last week.

Production at the Stellantis Warren Truck assembly plant outside Detroit was earlier halted for three weeks due to the aluminum shortage.

The crisis in the UAW apparatus is of acute concern to the ruling class, since the auto union has long served as a vehicle for suppressing the struggles of this critical section of the working class. The years-long federal corruption investigation, the removal

and jailing of leading officials and the imposition of a court appointed monitor in order to supposedly root out corruption were aimed at restoring the credibility of the union's bureaucratic apparatus.

Last month, the US Department of Labor issued a 36-page document defending the rigged 2022-23 UAW election for top national officers. The election was carried out amid massive voter suppression by the UAW apparatus, with only 9 percent of the membership voting.

Just like Biden's labor department had done before them, Trump's DOL officials brushed aside evidence submitted by rank-and-file Mack Trucks autoworker and UAW presidential candidate Will Lehman that the UAW bureaucracy deliberately failed to inform members of the election, refused to update mailing lists and allowed tens of thousands of ballots to go undelivered.

Lehman, who ran as a socialist candidate against Fain and other union bureaucrats, called not for the reform, but the abolition, of the UAW bureaucracy and the transfer of power and decision-making to workers on the shop floor through the expansion of a network of rank-and-file committees in every factory.

The monitor's report again demonstrates complete imperviousness of the UAW bureaucracy to attempts at even cosmetic reform. It exists as an arm of management in the factories whose sole purpose is to prevent a fightback against speed-up, job cuts and deteriorating safety. In return for this service, hundreds of UAW officials live the high life off members' dues.

The conclusion that must be drawn is the need to abolish the whole corrupt structure through a rebellion by the rank and file. Power must be wrested from the apparatus and put in the hands of workers themselves. These committees must mobilize workers to oversee safety and production in the factories, wage a collective fight to defend all jobs, and unite with Canadian, Mexican and all workers to defend the right to a secure and good-paying job.

The fight against capitalist exploitation must be combined with an industrial and political counter-offensive to end the threat of dictatorship, expropriate the oligarchy, and reorganize society to meet social needs, not corporate profit.



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