

Summary Report of UNITE HERE Local 75 Trusteeship and Raid

January 30, 2018

The UNIFOR raid of UNITE HERE Local 75 is underway. Several dozens of UNIFOR organizers have joined 13 former UNITE HERE International and Local 75 staff in a reprehensible attack on the once unified membership of Local 75. New evidence suggests this raid was weeks, if not months, in the making.

Recent Events

Dec 6, 2017 - After 15 months of seeking to resolve a series of internal conflicts within Local 75, the Executive Committee of UNITE HERE International Union voted unanimously to authorize President D Taylor to impose a trusteeship at Local 75 on a future date to be decided at his discretion.

Dec 11, 2017 – Lis Pimentel, Local 75's former President, filed a lawsuit against UNITE HERE International in an attempt to prevent the imposition of a trusteeship. Ms. Pimentel did not disclose the fact that she initiated this lawsuit until several days later.

Dec 12, 2017 - In a meeting with International President D. Taylor, Ms. Pimentel and David Sanders (the Local's Organizing Director), were given the option of having a cooperative trusteeship. At no time during this meeting did Ms. Pimentel or Mr. Sanders disclose to President D. Taylor that she commenced legal proceedings against UNITE HERE International.

Dec 14, 2017 - With less than 24-hour notice given to other officers, and without informing a majority of the Executive Board, Ms. Pimentel held a "special Executive Board meeting" in which she terminated twelve members of the Local 75 Executive Board who were opposed to her and replaced them with her supporters.

Following the meeting, Ms. Pimentel had the locks to the office changed. She refused to give keys to the other two officers, Nuredin Bulle and Valrie Lue, and six other black and brown staff people. Ms. Pimentel and her staff supporters continued to have access to the office.

Jan 3, 2018 – Ms. Pimentel held another "Executive Board Meeting" with less than 24 hours' notice to remove Mr. Bulle as the Secretary-Treasurer of Local 75.

Jan 4, 2018 - Local 75 was placed into trusteeship after Ms. Pimentel's motion for an interim injunction to prevent the trusteeship was adjourned because of her inability to satisfy the legal requirements of the undertaking as to damages. The adjournment of the motion had explicitly been without any terms or restrictions on the International's ability to impose a trusteeship.

Jan 9, 2018 – The January membership meeting was scheduled and noticed to be held at the USW Local 1998 Union Hall. With doors being blocked and strict sign-in procedures, hundreds of members could not even enter the hall.

After a brief appearance, Ms. Pimentel exited the Steelworkers Hall and walked across the street to the Polish Combatants Association Hall, where she staged an alternative “membership meeting.” Clearly, the second hall had been rented days previous to the meeting with no notice to the other officers, the elected Executive Board, or the membership at large. She called for various votes to justify the objection to the trusteeship, framed as an “American Invasion.” She and her supporters posted photos and statements of the alternative meeting, purporting it to be the democratic will of the members with no mention of the hundreds who showed up at the Steelworkers Hall seeking a different path forward.

Jan 8-10, 2018 – UNITE HERE International Union terminated six International Union employees, including Ms. Pimentel and Mr. Sanders, for breach of the duty of loyalty and insubordination.

Jan 16, 2018 - Following the failed and abandoned lawsuit to stop the trusteeship, Ms. Pimentel resigned her office and immediately went to work as President of UNIFOR Local 7575.

On the same day, UNIFOR split from the Canadian Labour Congress and went public with a raid of UNITE HERE properties.

Campaign staff were seen leaving Local 75 offices with multiple boxes and upon gaining re-entry into the offices, the trustee has found campaign and bargaining file drawers empty of documents covering work for the past 2-3 years, returned computers were wiped of documents after October 2016 and grievance files in disarray and/or missing. Further, it appears that the office phone system has messages being forwarded to former staff.

Important Factual Background:

- The majority of the Local 75 Executive Board (17 of 25 people) petitioned the UNITE HERE International Union for trusteeship in April and May 2017, due to Ms. Pimentel’s failure to follow the democratic procedures of Local 75, and for failing to recognize the Executive Board as the governing body of Local 75.
- UNITE HERE responded by voting unanimously with three abstentions for International supervision and named Mike Casey as the supervisor. Under the UNITE HERE Constitution, a supervisor may make recommendations to the local

leadership but does not have the authority to impose changes. Both factions agreed to supervision voluntarily.

- On July 6, 2017, after several day-long meetings, the two sides agreed to a written settlement.
- That settlement was short lived. At the July 11, 2017 General Membership Meeting, the settlement was withdrawn as Ms. Pimentel's faction sought to condemn those who had sought trusteeship as a resolution. Several alleged violations of democratic procedures occurred, now under investigation.
- More than 150 members mostly people of African and Caribbean descent left in protest when their voices had been silenced during the meeting and it was clear that Ms. Pimentel had negotiated in bad faith.
- Following the July meeting, Ms. Pimentel banned the Local's Secretary Treasurer, Mr. Bulle from certain Local 75-represented hotels without authority and due process.
- The IU received more than 65 protestations and complaints over the last 15 months, most of which pertained to allegations of violations of democratic procedures and racism.
- Following the end of the supervision, UNITE HERE International Union's Executive Committee convened a special meeting and resolved to conduct two formal investigations, one for concerns related to violations of democratic procedures and the other for concerns related to racism.
- Preliminary findings in the democratic procedures investigation document clear violations of democratic procedures. Membership meetings were scheduled and run in an undemocratic fashion and have impacted the Local's finances and affairs in violation of the Local's bylaws and UNITE HERE's Constitution.
- The racism investigation is ongoing with many witnesses to interview and an abundance of evidence still under review.

Roots of the Conflict:

- In August 2016 UNITE HERE Local 75 held its Local elections which resulted in the re-election of Local 75 officers Ms. Pimentel as President, Mr. Bulle as Secretary Treasurer and Ms. Lue as Vice President along with 25 Executive Board members, overwhelmingly rank-and-file, immigrant leaders of colour. They ran together unopposed.

- While the elected officers and Executive Board is the governing body of Local 75, Ms. Pimentel stripped them of their decision-making responsibilities shortly after the election.
- In addition to their elected positions, Mr. Bulle and Ms. Lue, both of whom are black, held leadership staff roles at Local 75. Mr. Bulle also served as Staff Director, and led the hotel team, overseeing a number of hotel Organizers. Ms. Lue was an Organizing Lead.
- Immediately following the Local election, Ms. Pimentel and Mr. Sanders started making changes in both the workplace and at the Executive Board level.
- In October 2016, Ms. Pimentel stated to the Executive Board that the International President of UNITE HERE, D. Taylor, was going to cut funding to Toronto and that the only person who could “save” the Local from the cuts was Mr. Sanders if he became Canadian Director. She told the Executive Board she would “burn the house down” if Mr. Sanders did not become Canadian Director.
- When two Executive Board members questioned President Taylor about the cuts and discovered that Ms. Pimentel had lied, she confronted the two members during an Executive Board meeting, questioning them for reaching out to President Taylor.
- Ms. Pimentel began making decisions without so much as consulting the other elected officers, Mr. Bulle and Ms. Lue, or the Executive Board on such important decisions as the hiring of union staff, a practice common in other UNITE HERE affiliates.
- Mr. Bulle was stripped of his role as Staff Director and was cut out from any decisions related to hiring and firing. All black staff under Mr. Bulle’s structure felt targeted for discipline.

Going Forward

While this treacherous raid is having some effect on our confused and bullied membership, the local and IU leadership are committed to carry on the work of the Union.

2018 is an important year for Local 75 members in Toronto. There are significant opportunities as hotel contracts covering the majority of members are re-negotiated. This is a chance to negotiate better wages and benefits, reduced housekeeping workload and stronger job protections. Like any Union, Local 75 needs to face

employers through a unified and strong UNITE HERE Local 75. While UNIFOR attempts to destroy that unity and to divide the membership, their efforts are facing stiff resistance. The effect of Unifor's raid is encouraging employers who can only hope that this year they will meet a weakened and divided membership at the bargaining table.

Local 75, under this trusteeship, will not permit that to happen. Local 75 is working with members, shop stewards and negotiating committees to strengthen the local. Through this struggle, Local 75 will become a better and stronger Union.