

Rank-and-file Canadian educators discuss “How to end the pandemic” webinar, vow support for John Deere strike

Cross-Canada Educators Rank-and-File Safety Committee
2 November 2021

Educators from across the country attended the latest meeting of the Cross-Canada Educators Rank-and-File Committee held last Sunday. The main topic of discussion was the Oct. 24 webinar “How to end the pandemic,” which advanced a global strategy to eliminate COVID-19. In the course of the discussion, education workers drew the connection between the fight to stop the pandemic and the need to unify their struggles with other sections of workers battling low wages and onerous working conditions.

The meeting heard reports from committee members on the scientific material presented at the event and the political perspective it advocated. The following resolution was discussed at length and approved unanimously:

“The Cross-Canada Educators Rank-and-File Committee (CERSC) enthusiastically welcomes the October 24 webinar ‘How to end the pandemic.’ The event, which was co-sponsored by the International Workers Alliance of Rank-and-File Committees—with which the CERSC is affiliated—and the *World Socialist Web Site*, outlined a scientifically grounded policy for a strategy aimed at the global elimination of COVID-19.

“Internationally renowned scientists explained key issues that workers must understand to wage a struggle against the pandemic. These include the devastating impact of Long COVID, how COVID-19 is transmitted by aerosols, the debilitating impact of the control exercised by for-profit corporations over life-saving vaccines, and the ability of an elimination strategy to reduce community transmission to zero within a matter of months.

“Drawing on the rich body of scientific material

presented at the webinar, the CERSC pledges to fight for the following understanding of what the pandemic is and how to fight it among educators and other workers across Canada:

“1. The target of SARS-COV-2—the virus that causes COVID-19—is not individuals, but entire societies.

“2. Therefore, the only effective strategy is one based on a globally coordinated campaign aimed at the elimination of the virus on every continent, in every region, and in every country. There is no effective national solution to this pandemic.

“3. The policies pursued by virtually all governments since the start of the pandemic must be repudiated. The subordination of that which should be the unquestioned priority of social policy—the protection of human life—to the interests of corporate profit and private wealth accumulation cannot be allowed to continue.

“4. The initiative to bring about a decisive turn to a strategy directed towards global elimination must come from a socially conscious movement of millions of people.

“5. This global movement must draw upon scientific research. The persecution of scientists—many of whom labour under threats to their livelihoods and even their lives—must be ended. The global elimination of the virus requires the closest possible alliance between the working class—the great mass of humanity—and the scientific community.

“Flowing from this, the CERSC will intensify its fight to mobilize educators independently of the trade unions, which have enforced the ruling elite’s murderous open economy/open schools policy. Our committee aims to build an expanding network of rank-and-file committees among educators, caretakers, and

other sections of workers to coordinate and lead a mass movement to eliminate COVID-19 and save lives.”

Later in the meeting, a committee member from Ontario spoke on the significance of the strike by over 10,000 John Deere workers in the United States, who are fighting on two fronts against the ruthless demands of corporate management and the determined efforts of the United Auto Workers (UAW) to sabotage their struggle. Deere workers overwhelmingly voted down a UAW-backed sellout contract in early October and went on strike October 14. Workers have established the John Deere Workers Rank-and-File Committee to organize their struggle independently of and in opposition to the corrupt UAW.

The CERSC member stressed the importance of Canadian educators declaring their solidarity with the strike. After Sunday’s meeting, he prepared the following statement, which was warmly endorsed by other committee members:

“We, the Cross-Canada Educators Rank-and-File Safety Committee (CERSC), are a group of education workers across Canada who are fighting to save the lives of children, workers and the community as a whole by advocating for an elimination strategy to end the COVID-19 pandemic.

“We stand in solidarity with John Deere workers in your courageous struggle against the company and their hacks in the UAW. We are paying close attention to your struggle because workers everywhere are fighting the same struggle, regardless of the industry we work in. As unionized public sector workers in Canada, we are learning lessons from your struggle, especially about the dirty tricks the union and the company are using to break your strike. We expect the government and the public sector unions to employ similar tricks here, so we are arming ourselves with the knowledge necessary to defeat their efforts to sabotage our struggle.

“In Canada, education workers are under attack from pro-corporate governments, which are forcing kids and workers back into unsafe schools so that parents can go to work to be exploited for the profits of the parasitic financial elite. Schools have become COVID farms where children and education staff are exposed to a disease that is evolving into more contagious and more lethal variants. Public education has been under assault for decades by pro-big business governments in

Canada, which have imposed wage and benefit cuts on us, and slashed public spending on education.

“Education workers and Deere workers in the US and around the world face a similar struggle. Governments in Canada and the US have been captured by the oligarchy and serve its interests. The assault on the working class in the private and public sector benefits the oligarchy. Cutting our wages, cutting our pensions and cutting our benefits means the elites get to steal more of our money and force us to live barely above the poverty line. All this is happening in the middle of a global pandemic where schools are forced to open, so that workers at John Deere and other profitable multinationals can go to work and be exploited for the profits of corrupt executives and shareholders. Both John Deere workers and education workers and their children are exposed to this lethal pandemic so that the rich can continue to increase their wealth by risking workers health and lives.

“Just as your strike is part of a growing strike wave in the US, similar struggles are mounting here in Canada. Tens of thousands of public sector workers are currently on strike against attacks on wages and pensions in New Brunswick, and thousands of workers at mining, industrial, and food processing companies have walked off the job over the past few months.

“The CERSC stands in solidarity with you, John Deere workers! Your struggle is part of a developing counter-offensive by the working class to secure decent-paying, secure jobs for all!”

To get involved in the CERSC’s work, contact us at ceresc.csppb@gmail.com or follow us on Twitter.



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