

# Canadian postal worker calls for unity with Boeing strike: “We are all in this together”

Daniel Berkley  
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*The following is a report given to a meeting held Sunday by the Boeing Workers Rank-and-File Committee, “Mobilize the working class behind the Boeing strike!” Nearly 200 workers, including dozens from outside of the United States, met to discuss a global strategy to win the strike and make it the start of a broader counteroffensive by the working class.*

*Workers from six countries and four continents spoke about the unity between the fight of Boeing workers and the class struggle in their own countries. “The enormous social power of the working class, in the US and internationally, must be activated in order to deliver a massive defeat to the corporate oligarchy,” the Committee explained in its meeting announcement.*

*To contact the Boeing Workers Rank-and-File Committee, text (406) 414-7648, email [boeingworkersrffc@gmail.com](mailto:boeingworkersrffc@gmail.com) or fill out the form at the end of this article.*

Hello and good afternoon. My name is Daniel Berkley, and I am a rural postal worker at the Canada Post Corporation. I am an active member of the Postal Workers Rank-and-File Committee (Canada). Thank you for giving me the opportunity to contribute to this meeting.

Canada Post’s approximately 55,000 delivery agents’ collective agreements were set to expire at the beginning of 2022. Instead of preparing for negotiations or strike action when our collective agreements expired almost three years ago, the Canadian Union of Postal Workers (CUPW) unilaterally acceded to collective agreement extensions of two years. This was in the midst of the COVID pandemic. These extensions have now been expired for over seven months, and we find ourselves in the final leg of protracted contract negotiations.

Our strike vote concluded seven days ago, and

CUPW announced the results of the vote two days later, with 96 percent of postal workers voting in favour of taking strike action. Shortly before the vote totals were officially announced, a statement by the Postal Workers Rank-and-File Committee (Canada) encouraged workers to vote YES to strike, while warning that “If the CUPW bureaucracy has its way, we will never go on strike, even if we deliver a unanimous strike vote.”

This warning was vindicated when CUPW announced the vote results claiming that they only count if the National Executive Board determines strike action is “...necessary to secure our demands [and] prevent employer rollbacks ...” I think the membership speaks for itself with such an overwhelming mandate, but the union clearly does not respect the 96 percent who voted in favour.

Even as the unions spout demagogic appeals to the workers, the fact remains that our unions are aligned in a corporatist tripartite alliance with the government and with management. The cowardly union bureaucrats—including both CUPW and the International Association of Machinists in the US—would never dream of defying strike-breaking legislation, which would require the broad mobilization of workers across industries and across geographic lines, such as we are doing right now.

Workers, including myself and others here today, have experienced a series of contracts where we end up facing capitalist governments head on. Biden calls the union bureaucracy his “domestic NATO,” meaning they help him secure the “home front” for war. They dutifully play their class role by immediately abandoning us at the all-powerful altar of private profit.

Within the seven months since our collective agreements have expired, AI and automation have

made an impact on our workplaces, whether that's in a sortation plant, a retail space or a mail depot. Between the East Coast dockworkers, CN and CPKC rail workers and, of course, Boeing—and I'm sure there's others—it's become clear that these attacks on workers are being negotiated and enforced by their union bureaucracies. These bureaucracies are more concerned with corporate profitability than decent working conditions or wages.

On the other hand, the international working class shares the same basic interests, and our contract negotiations up here are connected to working conditions across all of North America and even the world.

New automation technologies, like machine sequenced mail, and AI technologies, like dynamic routing, have the potential to shorten our workweeks and make our jobs better, but this potential can only be realized under the democratic control of workers themselves. I think it's clear that we must break from the confines of the union officialdom that demobilizes us and isolates us, counterposing *their* dictatorial rule with our *organs of workers' power*. That's why we're building rank-and-file committees aligned with the International Workers Alliance of Rank-and-File Committees (IWA-RFC).

This rank-and-file meeting has been organized by our brothers and sisters in America. Our ability to reach broader sections of workers is an expression of the objective conditions forced upon us internationally. Across industry and geographic lines, workers are facing increasing workloads, decreasing pay and deteriorating workplace safety.

Although we've seen savage attacks against our working conditions over the past decades, including attacks on our defined benefit pension plan and attacks on our weekends and holidays, we are now in a far stronger position than our brothers and sisters were in the past to defy government and union attacks and win our just demands in struggle. That's because key sections of the working class are already on strike or rebelling against the union bureaucracy across North America, fighting for many of the same demands we have.

On October 1, 45,000 East Coast dockworkers went on strike demanding job security, wage increases and to oppose the use of automation to destroy their jobs. The

UAW has been completely discredited in the eyes of autoworkers as they enforce supposedly "historic" contracts, which in reality are being used to lay off tens of thousands. And of course, as this meeting has made clear, Boeing machinists are facing off against the corporation, the government and the union bureaucracy.

We are all in this together! Thank you once again for the opportunity to contribute to this meeting. Cheers.



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