

Don't let CUPW make us fight Canada Post and the Liberal government alone! Build rank-and-file committees to launch an all-out strike, broaden our struggle, and defeat state strikebreaking!

Postal Workers Rank-and-File Committee (Canada)
14 November 2024

Are you a postal worker? Contact the Postal Workers Rank-and-File Committee to let us know what you think about the impending strike and the government's looming strike ban by emailing canadapostworkersrfc@gmail.com or filling out the form at the end of this statement.

Brothers and Sisters:

Canada Post, working in tandem with the Trudeau government and backed to the hilt by all corporate Canada, are intent on gutting our rights and working conditions. To do so, they are preparing to invoke the power of the state to once again strip us of the legal right to strike and impose binding arbitration.

In the face of this ruling class onslaught, CUPW is doing everything to demobilize and demoralize us. It has foot-dragged negotiations and ignored the massive 95 percent strike mandate. Most telling of all, although it has been evident throughout that Canada Post's "bargaining" strategy is predicated on government strikebreaking, CUPW has done nothing to prepare for mass defiance, and to mobilize the working class in an industrial and political struggle against the big business Trudeau government.

The Postal Workers Rank-and-File Committee (PWRFC) says an immediate strike of all 55,000 urban and rural postal workers should be launched just as soon as we are in a legal strike position Friday morning. But an all-out strike is only viable if workers take the struggle out of the hands of the CUPW bureaucrats, who connive with management on a daily basis, by building rank-and-file committees. They must become the instruments for mobilizing support throughout the working class.

We can and will be able to rally mass support because the issues we are fighting for—the defence of public services and the right to strike; an end to concessions and austerity; and the use of new technologies to improve the lives of working people, not slash jobs and increase worker exploitation—are of vital concern to all working people.

CUPW's 72-hour strike notice was a sham. It didn't commit the union leadership to calling any job action whatsoever. In an accompanying media release, it declared, "The National Executive

Board (NEB) has not yet determined whether job action will take place immediately." Moreover, the NEB more or less announced that if and when it authorizes strike action, it will once again confine us to time-and region-limited rotating strikes. They'll justify this with the claim that if we do as little to disrupt Canada Post operations as possible, we can avoid a back-to-work law. We all know how that worked out in 2011 and 2018!

Emboldened by the CUPW leadership's cowering, Canada Post issued its own 72-hour lockout notice. Management provocatively announced that as of 8 a.m. Friday, workers will no longer have contractual protections and the employer will start making unilateral changes to our working conditions.

Our experience closely mirrors that of dockworkers in Montreal and British Columbia. The BC Maritime Employers Association locked out approximately 700 port foremen at West Coast ports on November 4, after their union had called for an overtime ban. In what was clearly a coordinated action aimed at inciting the government to intervene and rob workers of their right to strike and bargain collectively, the bosses at the Port of Montreal locked out 1,200 longshore workers on November 10. On Tuesday morning, Labor Minister Steven MacKinnon did the bosses' bidding and criminalized the port workers' struggle against real wage cuts, hazardous working conditions, the use of new technology to eliminate jobs, and unpredictable and onerous scheduling regimes.

In doing this, the big business Liberal government acted like a dictator. It didn't even secure token "legitimacy" for its action by passing a strike ban through parliament. It issued a decree based on a reinterpretation of an obscure clause in the Canada Labour Code (Section 107) that it cooked up last summer to impose binding arbitration on 9,300 CN and CPKC rail workers.

Like the dockworkers, Canada Post workers know how it feels to have our wages fall well behind inflation and suffer overburdening. If we allow capitalist interests to dominate us, dynamic routing and weekend delivery will create an unpredictable scheduling regime that will ruin work-life balance.

To avoid the same fate as the dockers, we must take matters into our own hands now.

We postal workers must make our impending strike the spearhead of a worker-led counteroffensive to secure the rights of all workers against the increasingly arbitrary dictates of the Trudeau government and its backers in corporate Canada. This means building the PWRFC at every Canada Post worksite and reaching out systematically to other sections of workers to explain why they must join our struggle and why its outcome will have consequences for all workers.

We would like to ask CUPW President Jan Simpson and her entourage, “What are you waiting for?” After over a hundred bargaining sessions in a year, and with at least 17 areas of disagreement with the Crown corporation listed by CUPW on Tuesday, is it not clear that only a genuine struggle can bring the corporation to its knees and force them to concede to our demands? And as if that were not enough, isn’t it now also clear that the corporation, backed by its Liberal government allies and the financial oligarchy, is setting the stage with its lockout for an all-out assault on us that it intends to conduct with no holds barred?

This may all be too evident to those of us working on the floor, but the CUPW bureaucracy stands on the other side of the fence. Its top priority is to keep its close ties with Canada Post management and the Liberal government, which it has been an ally of ever since then-CUPW President Mike Palecek toured the country in 2015 to help elect Trudeau. The CUPW leadership thinks Canada Post should be run as a profit-making concern. That’s why it’s willing to accept us working seven-day weeks and wants us to fit additional services like senior-safety checks into our already overwhelming workday.

Although Labour Minister MacKinnon has consistently acted with disdain for the working class, the CUPW bureaucrats collaborated with him, at the eleventh hour, to delay our strike for over a week. We could have been legally on strike as of November 3, which would have put us in a far stronger position to answer Canada Post’s provocations, including by linking up our struggle with the Montreal and BC port workers. CUPW’s delay has allowed the employer to take the offensive.

The PWRFC urgently warns postal workers: Canada Post, the Liberal government, and the CUPW are colluding against us. Faced with Canada Post’s demands to eviscerate our rights so the Crown corporation can profitably compete with Amazon and other gig-economy employers, CUPW president Jan Simpson declares that the union “recognize[s] the challenges our employer is facing, and our goal is not to simply make demands, but to work together toward solutions.”

We for our part reject that postal workers’ jobs and wages—or those of any other workers, including our super-exploited brothers and sisters in the gig sector—should be sacrificed on the altar of big business profit.

Postal workers must recognize our class enemies, and take the struggle into our own hands. We must mobilize independently of the rotten tripartite union-management-government alliance and put forward our own set of demands, including an immediate 30 percent pay raise to offset inflation and workers’ control over the

introduction of all new technologies.

What is required for us to win our just demands is above all the recognition that we are in a political fight. We must appeal to all workers to join us in a worker-led counteroffensive against universally deteriorating working conditions, the gutting of public services, and the diversion of society’s resources from meeting crying social needs to waging war.

We urge postal workers to build on the successful public meeting the PWRFC held Sunday, where we adopted a resolution providing a clear orientation for developing the struggle. It declared in part:

We call on postal workers and all workers throughout the delivery and logistics sectors to join and build the Postal Workers Rank-and-File Committee. We fight to:

1. Achieve postal workers’ demands, including a 30 percent pay raise to make up for years of concessions and for workers’ control over the deployment of new technologies.

2. Broaden our struggle to other sections of workers across Canada in order to defy a back-to-work law or any other anti-democratic state-imposed strike ban.

3. Launch a political struggle that rejects Canada Post being run as a profit-making enterprise, and makes our contract fight the spearhead of a worker-led counteroffensive in defence of fully-funded public services and workers’ rights, and against austerity and war.

We strongly urge all postal workers to distribute this statement widely among your colleagues and friends, and contact us at canadapostworkersrfc@gmail.com to get involved.



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