Mobilize the industrial and independent political power of the working class to defend the Canada Post strikers and all public services!

Socialist Equality Party (Canada)
5 December 2024

The Postal Workers Rank-and-File Committee (Canada) will be holding an online public meeting Sunday, December 8, at 1 p.m. Eastern Time: The Canada Post Strike at the Crossroads. *Register here to participate.*

The now three-week-long strike of the 55,000 Canada Post workers is a major class battle whose outcome will materially impact all working people. It pits the postal workers not only against an employer notorious for its indifference to workers' health and safety, but against the Trudeau Liberal government, which has ultimate control over the Crown corporation, and all of corporate Canada.

If the postal workers are to prevail, the working class throughout the transportation and logistics sectors, and across all other economic spheres, must be mobilized and the strike made the spearhead of a working class counteroffensive against the capitalist elite's class war agenda of austerity and war.

Such a struggle must necessarily involve a political break with the politics of the Canadian Union of Postal Workers (CUPW) and Canadian Labour Congress (CLC) bureaucracies, which are themselves close allies of the Trudeau government. They propagate the fiction that postal workers can achieve their demands through the state-designed, pro-employer "collective bargaining" system and by waging their struggle as an isolated contract fight.

To break out of the stranglehold of the trade union/New Democratic Party/Liberal alliance—the prerequisite for mobilizing the industrial and political power of the working class—workers must take the struggle into their own hands by building rank-and-file committees. Successful defiance of an impending intervention by the government to break the postal workers' strike and impose Canada Post's demands will only be possible if broader sections of workers are mobilized in an industrial and political movement to bring down the Trudeau government and fight for the transfer of political power to the working class.

The issues confronting postal workers are of vital concern to the entire working class

The issues at the heart of the postal workers' strike concern the entire working class. Canada Post management's introduction of automation and artificial intelligence (AI) to increase workloads and "efficiency," its push for more permanent part-time and temporary contract workers, and its gutting of pension and benefit rights will be familiar to workers across the board.

Canada Post's plans to restructure the postal service, which according to some calculations could see the elimination of over 20,000 full-time jobs, are part of a concerted drive by the ruling class to maximize profits and privatize public services. All workers who rely on the education system, health care, social services and the postal service will be hit by this, whether directly as employees or indirectly in their daily lives.

The outcome of the postal workers' struggle will have significant consequences for the right to strike, which is under systematic attack across Canada and has been all but abolished when workers are in a position of strength. The trade union-backed Liberal government has criminalized numerous strikes using back-to-work legislation—including the postal workers' 2018 campaign of rotating strikes. In recent months, it has dispensed even with the "fig-leaf" of parliamentary support when robbing workers of their basic rights.

Trudeau and his labour minister, Steven MacKinnon, have cooked up a "reinterpretation" of Section 107 of the Canada Labour Code to arrogate the power to ban strikes and impose binding arbitration at will, using the unelected Canadian Industrial Relations Board (CIRB). They deployed these dictatorial powers against 9,300 rail workers in August, and 2,000 dock workers in Montreal and Vancouver in early November.

The ruling elite wants to inflict a decisive defeat on postal workers, to whom they are venomously hostile due to their history of militant struggles. Should they succeed, it would set a precedent for a savage onslaught on workers' jobs and social rights, as the ruling elite steps up its efforts to "Amazonify" all workplaces in the public and private sectors alike.

Whether corporate Canada seeks to impose its terms on the postal workers through government/state strikebreaking and the direct imposition of a concessions contract, or by allowing "market forces" to push Canada Post into bankruptcy, the success of their plans depends upon the tireless work of CUPW and the CLC unions to isolate the striking Canada Post workers. An egregious example of this is provided by the Teamsters union. On the first day of the strike, it issued a worthless "solidarity" statement, pledging that it would not allow workers at Canada Post's Purolator subsidiary to be used to break the strike. Ever since, the Teamsters bureaucracy has kept mum as Purolator, at Canada Post's instruction, has imposed overtime on its precariously employed gig workers to scab on the strike, and offered huge discounts to Canada Post's corporate customers.

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The ruling elite's agenda of war, austerity and dictatorship

The Trudeau Liberal government is backing Canada Post management to the hilt, just as it has worked throughout its nine years in office to advance the predatory interests of Canadian big business. It has overseen a massive growth in social inequality, facilitated by a sustained onslaught on the social position of the working class. Through a combination of strike bans, public spending austerity, pandemic bailouts of big business, and the use of the post-2020 inflation surge and interest-rate hikes to impose real-wage cuts, the Liberal government has engineered a huge transfer of social wealth from the bottom to the top.

In addition to enriching the already fabulously wealthy, the funds squeezed out of the working class by the Liberals, with the backing of the unions and New Democrats, have been used to fund militarism and war. Ottawa has spent over $12 billion supporting the far-right regime in Ukraine, which locks up its political opponents and acts as a proxy for the imperialist powers' war on Russia. Canada's government also backs Israel's genocide against the Palestinians and the US-led economic, diplomatic, and military preparations for war with China. It is spending hundreds of billions on procuring F-35 fighter jets, new warships, and other weapons of mass destruction.

War abroad goes hand in hand with attacks on democratic rights at home, because Canadian imperialism's predatory global ambitions enjoy no popular support. The use of the Labour Code's section 107 to ban strikes is part of a turn by the Canadian bourgeoisie towards authoritarian forms of rule.

If the ruling class has its way, Conservative leader Pierre Poilievre, who rose to prominence as a strident advocate of the fascist-led "Freedom" Convoy, will soon replace Trudeau as prime minister. Like Trump's election victory in the United States, the coming to power of a Poilievre-led government would represent a violent realignment of the political superstructure to correspond with the real structure of contemporary Canadian capitalism, in which a financial oligarchy subordinates all of society to its pursuit of profit and wealth.

The role of the CUPW and the CLC, and the case for rank-and-file committees

Over the past four decades, CUPW, the CLC and its affiliated unions, Unifor and the Quebec-based Confederation of National Trade Unions, have been integrated into a corporatist partnership with big business and the state. This partnership, expressed politically in the union bureaucracy's alliance with the Liberals, the ruling elite's preferred party of government, and the New Democrats, has systematically suppressed the class struggle. The unions have imposed concessions and massive job cuts in industry and sabotaged the mass struggles that have repeatedly erupted against the dismantling of public services—including the anti-Harris movement in Ontario during the late 1990s, the 2012 Quebec student strike and the 2022 Ontario education workers strike.

One graphic example of this process is Canada Post. The CUPW has repeatedly policed antistrike laws and agrees that the Crown corporation must be run as a profit-making concern at the expense of the workers. Thus, CUPW President Jan Simpson has proclaimed the union's support for Canada Post's financial "success." "We recognize the challenges our employer is facing," said Simpson in a recent union bargaining update, "and our goal is ... to work together towards solutions."

The unions, working in close concert with their NDP and Liberal government partners, have thus far succeeded in derailing the strike wave that has swept the country since the fall of 2021 and involved workers across the public and private sectors, and in all parts of the country. Workers have shown great militancy, often times repudiating sell-out union-endorsed tentative agreements. But ultimately, the caste of highly-paid union bureaucrats has isolated the many struggles, often using government intervention or the threat of it to intimidate workers into accepting concessionary contracts. Meanwhile, they and their NDP allies have continued to prop up the Liberal government even as it wages war, breaks strikes, and presides over the collapse of public services and an explosion of hunger and homelessness.

The union top brass justify this course, as they have for more than a quarter-century, with the claim that the Liberals constitute a "progressive" bulwark against the even more right-wing Tories. In reality, the political suppression of the working class has only strengthened reaction and is paving the way for Poilievre and his far-right Tories to come to power, making a demagogic social appeal to popular anger over the union- and NDP-backed Trudeau government's indifference to socioeconomic distress.

New forms of organization that correspond to the realities of the class struggle are needed: rank-and-file committees to mobilize the social power of the working class and conduct a political struggle against big business and all its political representatives, from Poilievre and Trudeau to PQ leader Paul St. Pierre-Plamandon and the NDP's Jagmeet Singh.

Postal workers have taken a significant step forward in this fight by establishing the Postal Workers Rank-and-File Committee. It fights to place power back in the hands of workers on the shop floor and unify postal workers in a common struggle with broader sections of the working class. As part of the International Workers Alliance of Rank-and-File Committees, the PWRFC fights to unite postal and logistics workers internationally to confront the global onslaught on their jobs and conditions waged by the ruling elite around the world. This includes Royal Mail workers fighting privatization in the UK and USPS workers battling automation south of the border.

For the political mobilization of the working class on a socialist and internationalist program

The Canadian ruling elite's assault on postal workers, abrogation of the right to strike, and decimation of public services is driven by the deepening global crisis of capitalism. The irresolvable contradictions that produce this crisis, between the global character of production and the division of the world into rival nation-states, and socialized production and private profit, are compelling the imperialist powers to seek to eviscerate all that remains of the social conquests the working class made through the mass revolutionary struggles of the last century, and to pursue a world war for control over raw materials, pools of labour, trade routes and strategic territories.

The working class must counterpose to this madness a class strategy of its own. The defence of jobs, worker rights and public services requires a frontal assault on the financial oligarchy's death grip over society. It demands a struggle to assert workers' control over society's vast wealth and productive forces—including new technologies like AI which have the potential to greatly increase the productivity of labour—so that they can be deployed to meet social needs, not private profit.

Such a revolutionary transformation will only be realized through the industrial and political mobilization of the working class to seize political power from the ruling class and set about transforming society along socialist lines. The Socialist Equality Party and *World Socialist Web Site* support the construction of rank-and-file committees among all sections of

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workers to break the stultifying grip of the pro-capitalist unions, mobilize the social power of the working class against the employers and the state apparatus that enforces their diktats and initiate a movement for working class political power. Workers ready to take up this fight should join and build the SEP as the revolutionary leadership needed to lead this movement on the basis of a socialist and internationalist program.

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