

What way forward for postal workers after the rejection of Canada Post's concessions-laden contract?

Postal Workers Rank-and-File Committee (Canada)

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We encourage all postal workers to contact the Postal Workers Rank-and-File Committee at canadapostworkersrfc@gmail.com or by filling out the form at the end of this article.

Canada Post workers have delivered a powerful rebuke to management, the federal government, and the anti-worker Canadian Union of Postal Workers (CUPW) bureaucracy. Nearly 70 percent of urban and rural postal workers rejected the company's final offers in a government forced vote designed to impose sweeping concessions and job cuts upon us.

This was no ordinary ratification vote. It was the latest move in a coordinated campaign by the Liberal government, Canada Post management, and the CUPW apparatus to break our resistance, destroy our jobs and working conditions, and impose a brutal restructuring of the postal system. After 18 months of struggle, the message from the rank and file is resounding: We will not be sacrificed on the altar of profits!

But let us also be clear: the contract rejection, as necessary and defiant as it was, is not enough on its own to halt this assault. As we argued before the vote began, it must become the launching pad for a renewed fight based on an entirely new strategy—one that breaks the stranglehold of the CUPW bureaucracy and mobilizes the immense social power of the entire working class in a political class struggle.

An industrial and political counteroffensive against the capitalists' onslaught on social spending, public services, and workers' rights is urgently necessary. Corporate Canada and their political hirelings are determined to make an example of us. By imposing a massive defeat on a section of workers long identified with militant struggle, they hope to intimidate all workers, so as to pave the way for the evisceration of public services and worker rights.

We can and must make our struggle the spearhead of a working-class counteroffensive against capitalist austerity and war. Conditions are propitious to do so, because the issues at the centre of our struggle are of vital concern to all workers, public and private sector alike: an end to concessions, defence of public services and the right to strike, and worker control over AI and other new technologies.

According to the Canada Industrial Relations Board (CIRB)—which is a corporatist arm of the government and state, not a “neutral third party”—68.5 percent of Urban operations members and 69.4 percent of Rural and Suburban Mail Carriers (RSMCs) voted to reject the final offers, with more than 80 percent of the members of each unit voting.

This happened under conditions of unprecedented suppression. Our strike was illegalized in December and when we regained the right to strike in May the union demobilized the membership by imposing a

toothless overtime ban; we were forced to vote through a government-run online system that disenfranchised many, particularly in rural areas; and while nominally calling for a “No” vote, the CUPW leadership refused to advance any viable strategy to fight back. Instead, blowing soap bubbles in the sky, it lamely claimed that mere rejection of the contract would suddenly cause management and the government to begin bargaining “in good faith.”

Despite all this, tens of thousands of us across the country said “No!” That is a clear vote of non-confidence in the entire process—from the Industrial Inquiry Commission (IIC) led by anti-worker mediator/arbitrator William Kaplan, to the Trudeau-Carney government's attempt to dictate our working conditions, to the CUPW leadership's refusal to organize any fightback.

But political conclusions must now be drawn. If our struggle continues as a pure “collective bargaining” affair, no matter how “militant” our struggle, it will inevitably be defeated. To prevent this and secure victory, we must initiate a powerful working-class movement to defend public services, jobs, and working conditions for all.

CUPW's betrayal: Strike ban, arbitration, and demobilization

We must face the facts: CUPW has colluded with the government-management conspiracy every step of the way. When we delivered a 95 percent strike mandate in fall 2024, the union leadership refused to call any action for weeks. When a nationwide strike was finally called in November, only under pressure from the rank and file, it quickly gained momentum and broad support across the country. But the Liberal government intervened in December, using a fraudulent reinterpretation of Section 107 of the Canada Labour Code to ban the strike outright.

CUPW's response? Total capitulation. Without organizing a vote or consulting the membership, the leadership ordered an immediate return to work, refusing to challenge the illegality of the ban or mobilize the widespread sentiment among workers to defy it.

When the legal right to strike was supposedly restored months later, CUPW refused to exercise it. Instead of organizing a walkout or escalating action, they announced a toothless “overtime ban”—then quietly undercut their own tactic by allowing part-time and temporary workers to work extended hours, blunting any disruption to operations.

The miserable offers we were forced to vote on were legitimized through the government's IIC, led by Kaplan, a career arbitrator and well-known friend of management. The demands of corporate Canada advanced by the IIC included:

- A vast expansion of part-time, precarious work;
 - Seven-day delivery enforced through “flexible” job classifications;
 - Use of dynamic routing, AI surveillance, and “load levelling” to push workloads to the breaking point;
 - Wage increases far below inflation, meaning real wage cuts;
 - No protections against mass job elimination.

The blueprint aims to turn Canada Post into a “lean” logistics operation—a low-wage, over-surveilled delivery machine modeled on Amazon.

Yet the CUPW leadership has actively supported this roadmap. They agree postal services at Canada Post must be subordinated to capitalist profit and have begged the federal government to impose binding arbitration—handing the final say over to a government-appointed bureaucrat with no vote and no right to strike. President Jan Simpson and other union bureaucrats continue to do everything they can to silence the rank and file and demobilize resistance.

A political class struggle: Carney’s big business government and capitalist restructuring

Postal workers are engaged in a political struggle. We confront not simply a rogue employer or “out-of-touch” management. We are facing a ruling class determined to make an example out of us by carrying out a sweeping restructuring of the postal system—at the expense of jobs, wages, and the very principle of universal public service.

The Liberal government under Prime Minister Carney, the former Bank of Canada and Bank of England governor, is rapidly shifting Canadian politics further to the right. In addition to banning our strike before the election, the Liberals have pledged to slash public sector jobs and spending, all while hiking the military budget by hundreds of billions over the next decade and pouring tens of billions more into corporate subsidies and big business development projects. The same political establishment that tells us there’s no money for full-time jobs or pensions at the post office is showering weapons manufacturers and tech monopolies with public funds.

In this context, AI, automation, and digital surveillance are not being used to lighten workloads or improve services, but to intensify exploitation and eliminate jobs. The goal is not to modernize the post office in the interests of the public, or of the workers who make it run, but to subordinate operations ever more fully to profit—transforming Canada Post into a logistics appendage of the private parcel industry in preparation for its partial or full privatization.

A genuine struggle against this class war agenda would start by explaining to all workers why the issues at the heart of our fight are of urgent concern for every worker. It would reject the subordination of public services to private profit, oppose privatization, and insist that defending secure jobs and safe working conditions are non-negotiable demands. Moreover, it would make clear that society possesses more than enough financial resources to provide public services and good-paying jobs for all, but that these resources are currently controlled by a capitalist oligarchy, which spends them on militarism and war, and subsidies to enrich itself.

The CUPW apparatus is fully integrated with the state and corporate Canada, which is why it bitterly resists the development of such a movement. Its reaction to our strong “No” vote has been to rule out strike action and appeal to the very forces orchestrating the attacks on us. They now say the Carney government must “prove” it respects collective bargaining. As if a government that outlawed our strike and organized a sham forced-vote can be trusted to respect workers’

rights! “No more back-to-work orders. No more forced votes,” says CUPW, but we know that the tiger is not about to change its stripes.

The reality is that management and the government are still weighing their options for forcing through a massive restructuring. Government-imposed binding arbitration remains on the table. But workers must also be on guard for the possibility that Canada Post will provoke a strike under conditions where they know the union bureaucracy will do everything in its power to ensure that it remains isolated, toothless, and ultimately self-defeating. Under such conditions, they would deliberately let a strike drag on, with the aim of eroding workers’ morale, starving workers out, and using further deterioration in Canada Post’s finances and client base to force through their concessions and restructuring agenda. That must not be allowed to happen!

Take the struggle into our own hands: Build the PWRFC!

The rejection of the “final” offers must be the beginning of a real counteroffensive, led by the rank and file. That’s why the Postal Workers Rank-and-File Committee (PWRFC) was established—to give voice to the growing movement of workers demanding an end to betrayals and the forging of a new path based on democratic control, working-class solidarity, and socialist principles.

The PWRFC calls on postal workers to form rank-and-file committees in every depot, plant, and delivery unit to take control of the struggle. Workers must defend the right to strike, while rejecting arbitration as an anti-democratic sham. We must link up with workers at Purolator, Amazon, FedEx, and in the broader public and communications sector—healthcare, education, and transportation who are all facing the same attacks.

This requires the organization of a nation-wide fight against the Carney government’s austerity program and the corporate restructuring of Canada Post and the development of international ties for the united mobilization of the entire working class which confronts the same issues rooted in the exploitative nature of the capitalist system.

It is for this reason that the PWRFC was founded in affiliation with the International Workers Alliance of Rank-and-File Committees (IWA-RFC) in order to coordinate actions with postal and logistics workers, and every other section of workers, across North America and around the world.

Postal workers are facing a decisive moment. Management is backed by the full force of the state and the big business Liberals. CUPW is actively helping to implement their plans by keeping us confined within the straitjacket of the pro-employer “collective bargaining” system and accepting the framework of profitability set down by the ruling class.

We, the rank and file, hold the real power— but only if we organize and fight. We must turn this fight into the beginning of a broader working-class counteroffensive—for jobs, public services, and workers’ power.

To get involved or find out more contact the Postal Workers Rank-and-File Committee today at canadapostworkersrfc@gmail.com or fill out the form below.



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