

Prime Minister Carney demands “significant changes” as Canada Post workers continue strike against government assault on postal service

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30 September 2025

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.

More than 55,000 Canada Post workers continued their nationwide strike for a sixth day Tuesday, as the Liberal government of Prime Minister Mark Carney presses forward with its drive to dismantle postal delivery as a public service under the banner of returning the Crown corporation to “sustainability” and profitability.

The strikers face a political struggle against the Liberal government and all corporate Canada, which back the demands of Canada Post management to the hilt because they correspond with the ruling class’ determination to destroy public services, increase worker-exploitation and impoverish the working class. Speaking to reporters in London, England on Saturday, Carney asserted that “significant changes” to Canada Post were urgently required and denounced the service as “not viable.” He complained that Canada Post “loses more than \$10 million a day—\$10,000,000 a day, day after day,” and insisted that “the situation needs to change.”

Striking postal workers must respond to the government’s declaration of war on their livelihoods by making their struggle the spearhead of a broader mass mobilization to defend all public services, decent-paying and secure jobs, and the right to strike. The context of the strike underscores that favourable conditions exist to develop such a movement, since all sections of workers face similar attacks, and militant struggles by flight attendants, college instructors in Ontario, and BC government employees have swept across the country in recent weeks.

Postal workers began spontaneously walking off the job last Thursday, after Transformation, Public Works and Procurement Minister Joël Lightbound announced a sweeping Canada Post “transformation plan.”

This plan, dictated by Canada Post management and rubber-stamped by the Liberals, directs the corporation to dramatically curtail services and eliminate tens of thousands of full-time jobs in the coming years.

The first walkouts took place in Atlantic Canada and Manitoba, where letter carriers and sorting plant workers downed tools in immediate defiance of the government’s diktats. Within hours, news of the job action spread rapidly on social media, sparking further walkouts. By Thursday evening, the Canadian Union of Postal Workers (CUPW) which had held workers on a tight leash since they regained the legal right to strike last May, announced a nationwide strike. The bureaucracy’s aim in so doing was to place itself in a better position to control and contain the growing rank-and-file rebellion.

Workers on the picket lines speaking to the *World Socialist Web Site* voiced their outrage over the government’s repeated intervention on the

side of management and rejected the push to return Canada Post to profitability on workers’ backs and by gutting services. A postal worker in Ottawa explained, “The mail is a public service. Imagine your house is on fire and the fire department says it’s not going to put the fire out because it’s not profitable!” Another worker with 20 years’ experience agreed, remarking, “It’s a service, not a for-profit organization.”

This eruption of the rank and file has quickly escalated into one of the most significant confrontations between Canadian workers and the state in decades. It threatens the stability of the recently elected Carney government as it launches its program of “austerity and investment,” which will entail slashing public services to the bone while funneling billions into military spending and corporate coffers through subsidies and bailouts. The strike also blows a hole in the bogus nationalist tub-thumping to promote “Team Canada” amid a roiling trade war launched by the Trump administration in the United States. In reality, the Canadian ruling class wants to inflict Trump-style policies, including savage austerity, strike bans and skyrocketing military budgets, to make workers pay for the global capitalist crisis.

Carney, who previously served as governor of the Bank of Canada and governor of the Bank of England, cited in his comments Saturday Canada Post’s \$5 billion in losses since 2018 and a projected \$1.5 billion deficit this year as justification for the cuts. This alleged financial drain, approximately 25 cents per Canadian per day, pales in comparison to the massive sums being lavished by his government on rearmament and war. In June, Ottawa hiked military spending by \$9 billion in just this fiscal year, and pledged thereafter to raise overall defense expenditures to 5 percent of GDP, an astronomical figure that will funnel tens of billions more into preparations for imperialist war. That no expense is spared for the armed forces while vital public services are gutted demonstrates the real priorities of the Carney government and the corporate elite it represents.

Gutting the postal service, slashing jobs and “Amazon-izing” the workforce

The transformation plan outlined by Lightbound incorporates virtually every longstanding demand of Canada Post management. Within 45 days, the corporation must present an implementation strategy that will strip door-to-door delivery from the four million households that still receive it; establish “community mailboxes” nationwide; end the moratorium on

rural and suburban post office closures; and reduce letter mail delivery from five days a week to three.

The Liberals will also allow non-urgent mail to be shifted from air to ground transport, dramatically slowing service, and grant management new leeway to hire part-time workers and raise stamp prices more quickly.

These sweeping measures, clearly seen by management and the government as an initial down payment, were modeled directly on the report of the rigged Industrial Inquiry Commission overseen by William Kaplan, a trusted government mediator/arbitrator whose recommendations amounted to a copy-and-paste of management's concessionary blueprint.

Employment Minister Patty Hajdu responded to the postal worker walkout by calling on Canada Post to table its "latest offer" to CUPW, while refusing to rule out further government intervention. "This union and corporation have to figure out the future of their workforce together," she declared, "and how they're going to actually, together, transform Canada Post to be a viable, sustainable Crown corporation. There is no time to be wasted here."

Hajdu's sanctimonious rhetoric drips with hypocrisy.

Over the past ten months, the government has repeatedly intervened in the negotiations in support of Canada Post. It banned the month-long strike in December 2024 with the connivance of CUPW, which overrode mass rank-and-file support for defying the government's draconian use of Section 107 of the Canada Labour Code to dictate an end to the strike without so much as a parliamentary vote.

The ban included a prohibition on strike action for five months. When workers regained their right to strike in May, CUPW sabotaged a nationwide walkout, calling instead for a toothless overtime ban. Later Hajdu intervened directly to force postal workers to vote on Canada Post's concessions-filled contract offers, only to have them decisively rejected, with 70 percent of urban and rural postal workers voting against.

Now, emboldened by the government's transformation plan, management has delayed its presentation of new offers, originally slated for Monday, so it can incorporate the Liberal mandated restructuring framework into its demands.

The attack on Canada Post is not simply a war on postal workers. It is a declaration of war on the entire working class. Insiders such as Carleton University Professor Ian Lee, a former Canada Post executive, have openly called for the elimination of 40,000 jobs and the reduction of the corporation to a rump service restricted to servicing remote areas.

Workers must take the struggle into their own hands

The Canadian Labour Congress (CLC) has issued a demagogic statement vowing that Canada's unions "will always stand in solidarity with postal workers." However, its main concern is defending the corporatist partnership CLC enjoys with the Carney Liberal government, whose election it celebrated, and big business.

Thus the CLC statement portrayed the postal workers' struggle in thoroughly nationalist terms, as if they are in the fight to protect "Team Canada." The statement declared, "Their fight is a fight for the future of our public services, our jobs and Canadian institutions that tie this country together."

Behind this bogus "national unity" rhetoric, the CLC's "support" is oriented to redirecting workers' anger into making dead-end appeals to the very government that is waging a vicious class war against them on behalf of corporate Canada. Its appeals to defend "Canadian institutions" and "Team Canada" provide political cover for the Liberals, who have long used nationalism to disguise their anti-worker program. During the

2018 and 2024 Canada Post strikes, both of which ended with Liberal government back-to-work orders, the CLC's so-called solidarity amounted to nothing more than verbal sympathy combined with determined efforts to block postal workers mounting a genuine counter-offensive by mobilizing the entire working class in their support.

History offers a stark warning. In October 1978 when postal workers courageously defied a government back-to-work law, the CLC mouthed words of support while privately it assured Liberal Prime Minister Pierre Trudeau that it would not lift a finger in their support. Armed with these assurances, the government went on a tear. Trudeau threatened to fire postal workers en masse, CUPW offices were raided, and CUPW President Jean-Claude Parrot was arrested and jailed.

Postal workers confronting Carney's Liberals should expect a no less hostile response from the CLC bureaucracy today. They are determined to prevent the postal workers' struggle becoming the catalyst for a mass working class challenge to their Liberal government "partners" and to the Canadian bourgeoisie's agenda of austerity, rearmament and war.

CUPW itself has issued only perfunctory denunciations of the government's plan to dismantle Canada Post, accusing Ottawa of having "failed the public." Yet the union remains fully committed to the pro-employer "collective bargaining" framework and has no intention of mounting a genuine fight. Its role is to suppress independent worker initiative and channel the struggle into fruitless appeals to the very government carrying out the assault.

The union is terrified of the example set by Air Canada flight attendants, who in August openly defied a back-to-work order. It fears an eruption of similar militant defiance among postal workers that could spin out of its control. For this reason, CUPW advances no strategy beyond futile negotiations and token protests, even as the government prepares to let the strike drag on in order to starve workers into submission.

The only way forward lies through the independent initiative of workers themselves. In a letter to the WSWS, striking letter carrier Daniel Berkley, a founding member of the Postal Workers Rank-and-File Committee (PWRFC), explained:

More than nine months after our strike was abruptly ended last December by the government with the full backing of the union, CUPW has been forced to sanction a national strike. The current return to picket lines was started from below, and defiance of any government back-to-work order will also depend on action from below. I urge all postal workers to recognize that linking our struggle with other sections of workers will require the rank and file to seize the initiative. Purolator, Amazon, UPS and even United States Postal Service workers and beyond are all facing similar attacks on their working and living conditions. We can and must deepen our struggle, positioning ourselves as the lightning rod for a massive grassroots movement in defense of all public services, the right to strike, and safe, well-paying jobs.

Berkley stressed that a successful struggle requires postal workers to take the fight into their own hands by building sections of the PWRFC in every work location, and to link their fight with workers across Canada and internationally. "Linking up with other workers throughout Canada and internationally is of decisive importance in the struggle not only for our own working conditions, but also against capitalist austerity more generally, and even against dictatorship and war," he wrote.

Whatever strategy the government ultimately employs to break the strike—whether it be through a back-to-work order, starving workers into submission through a protracted strike or a combination of the two—its success depends entirely on the complicity of CUPW, the CLC and the

rest of the union bureaucracy in isolating postal workers. To give just one example, the Teamsters are playing their part by allowing Purolator, a Canada Post subsidiary where they act as the bargaining agent for the workers, to scab on the strike just as they did last year.

In the face of this array of forces, the central issue confronting postal workers is how to broaden their struggle. Preparations must be made to defy any back-to-work law, but this cannot be accomplished in isolation. It requires transforming the strike into a political class struggle that unites the working class as a whole against the Carney government's austerity agenda and the capitalist system it defends.

The transformation plan at Canada Post is the spearhead of a ruling-class offensive to gut public services, criminalize strikes, and divert resources to imperialist war. To resist this onslaught, postal workers must seize control of their struggle from the union apparatus and place it in their own democratic organizations of struggle. Rank-and-file committees must be established in every sorting plant, mail depot and postal station.

Through the International Workers Alliance of Rank-and-File Committees, postal workers can link their fight with Amazon workers, logistics workers and postal employees internationally who confront the same attacks. The task now is to transform the strike into a conscious political struggle against the Carney government and the capitalist system it serves. Only by pursuing such a strategy can postal workers defend their jobs and conditions, secure the future of public services, and lay the foundation for the socialist reorganization of society.



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