

Boeing machinists must unite with East Coast dockworkers to defend jobs and stop world war!

Boeing Workers Rank-and-File Committee
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The following statement was issued by the Boeing Workers Rank-and-File Committee. To get more information or to join the committee, text (406) 414-7648, email boeingworkersrfc@gmail.com or fill out the form at the end of this article.

Brothers and sisters,

The strike by East and Gulf Coast dockworkers that began on October 1 is another sign that rank-and-file workers across the country are taking a stand. In the nearly three weeks since we began our strike, 525 aerospace workers at Eaton Aerospace walked out, 5,000 fellow machinists at Textron Aviation rejected a sellout contract pushed by the IAM bureaucracy, and now 45,000 longshoremen from Houston to New York have gone on strike.

And it's not just in the United States. Canadian dockworkers in Montreal began a 3-day strike the same day.

We have to press our advantage. Union officials everywhere are on the back foot because of the scale of rank-and-file anger after years of soaring inflation, declining healthcare and unresolved and deadly safety issues. We are demonstrating in every industry that we are the most powerful social force, and now it must be organized.

Above all, we have to organize a fight against the union bureaucracies, which gain their wealth through deals with the corporations and keep every strike isolated. It's telling that none of the updates from District 751 have mentioned the strike by thousands our brothers and sisters at Textron Aviation, *in our field of work and in our own union*, or the smaller but no less important fight at Eaton Aerospace. In the past, we held to the basic idea that "an injury to one is an injury to

all." Companies knew that it wasn't so easy to go after workers at smaller plants when the rest of us would come out to defend them.

But now, when the union bureaucracies have their way, every strike is isolated and ultimately shut down. That's what happened to us in 2008, and what the IAM leadership is trying to do now. Rather than calling out the entire 600,000-strong membership of the international, we're left on the picket lines with essentially no communication about how we're going to win our fight.

The fight against exploitation at home is totally connected with the fight against war. The government is on the brink of all-out war with Iran and Russia, wars that we did not vote for and want no part of—wars that will kill millions of people or worse, leading to nuclear strikes. And these same unions are fighting to make sure war production stays steady.

That's why Harold Daggett, president of the International Longshoremen's Association (ILA), has maintained his pledge to keep military equipment moving through the ports even through the dockworkers' strike, and why the IAM international has kept machinists at District 837 in St. Louis on the job, one of the centers of Boeing's military production. They all agree with United Auto Workers President Shawn Fain that the union bureaucracies are a key part of the new "arsenal of democracy"—in reality, the arsenal of genocide—threatening human civilization with nuclear catastrophe.

The trillions being wasted on wars are being sweated out of workers at Boeing, the docks and everywhere else. The wealth we generate is being used to end human lives both overseas and at home.

This is why the rank and file at Boeing, the docks and everywhere has to lead these strikes. We must turn our strikes into a broader movement of the working class against exploitation and war.

For that, we need a new strategy.

First, we have to understand that by striking we aren't just facing off against a giant corporation and rebelling against a sellout bureaucracy. Behind them stands both parties of big business, the Democrats and Republicans, who want these strikes shut down as quickly as possible. We are both directly challenging corporate profits as well as the expanding wars, which rely on military equipment produced in part by Boeing and shipped through the East Coast docks. A joint struggle would pour cold water on the US-led proxy war against Russia and on Israel's ongoing genocide in Gaza and its expanding wars against Lebanon and Iran.

Second, we have to break through the isolation imposed on us by the union bureaucracies. On the docks, the International Longshoremen's Association (ILA) has already made clear that it will continue to ship military equipment through the ports on strike. And the IAM has kept machinists at District 837 in St. Louis on the job, one of the centers of Boeing's military production.

That means communicating directly with other sections of workers. In addition to those already on strike, we have to talk to Alaska Airlines flight attendants who voted down their contract, Seattle teachers who are facing school closures and railroaders who are being forced to accept one-man crews by their own union bureaucracies.

A special appeal has to be made to West Coast dockworkers, who are being forced to scab on their East Coast brothers and sisters by the International Longshore and Warehouse Union (ILWU), as well as dockworkers in Canada and Mexico, who are being oppressed by the same multinational corporations.

We're all suffering because the same profit motives driving our wages and living standards into the ground are behind the escalating wars. We're all being robbed in order to pay for killing other workers in other countries. No matter who wins the presidential race in November, both Trump and Harris will continue what Biden, Obama and all their ilk started.

Finally, we have to prepare for an intervention by the government to break these strikes. While Biden claims

he won't use a Taft-Hartley injunction to break the dockworkers strike, no one should forget that's exactly what he did in 2022 against the railroaders, in the name of "national security" and "unity." The fact that there was a federal mediator involved in the talks at Boeing since the strike began is another indication that the government is ready to move in if the IAM and ILA bureaucracies don't move fast enough to suppress these strikes.

We formed the Boeing Workers Rank-and-File Committee because we knew that the IAM bureaucracy was trying to sell us out. But we also knew that even bigger fights by the working class were on the horizon, and we were right. World war is not just on the horizon but is already happening, and it's up to the working class to stop it.



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