

Canada Post striker demands: Transparency in negotiations! All offers submitted or received by the CUPW must be made public!

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This article was submitted to the World Socialist Web Site by a leading member of the Postal Workers Rank-and-File Committee, which was established by postal workers to seize control of their contract struggle from the hands of the Canadian Union of Postal Workers bureaucracy. We encourage all striking Canada Post workers and workers throughout the logistics sector to contact the committee at canadapostworkersrffc@gmail.com.

Approximately 55,000 Canada Post workers are rapidly approaching one month on the picket lines in a strike aimed at preventing the total restructuring of Canada Post at workers' expense, as demanded by management, with the full backing of the Trudeau Liberal government and all corporate Canada.

Our strike is in grave danger, because the Canadian Union of Postal Workers (CUPW) and Canadian Labour Congress (CLC) are offering no viable strategy to defeat the Crown corporation's drive to turn us into a low-paid, precariously employed workforce with no rights.

This fact is underscored by CUPW's refusal to be open with the rank and file about the givebacks they are offering Canada Post behind the scenes. On Monday, CUPW President Jan Simpson released a brief statement summarizing the union bureaucracy's "new proposals to Canada Post." They included a major climbdown on wages, with the union dropping its previous demand of 22 percent over four years to just 19 percent.

Even though CUPW's update leaves out many details, it's clear that they're offering much more to the corporation. First, the CUPW has offered to convert RSMC (rural and suburban mail carrier) Permanent Relief Employees to Permanent Flexible Employees, who would be expected to work weekends. Second, the CUPW has offered to expand separate sort and delivery restructures for the UPO (urban postal operations) negotiating group. Third, the CUPW has offered to make overtime less accessible to route holders. While these concessions are significant on their own, the CUPW made clear, "This is a sample, not a complete list, of the proposals the Union made to the Employer."

So long as CUPW succeeds in isolating our struggle from the

rest of the working class—beginning with our class brothers and sisters in the logistics and transportation sectors—these concessions will only get worse.

The Postal Workers Rank-and-File Committee (PWRFC) demands:

- **Transparency in negotiations! All offers submitted or received by the CUPW must be made public! All negotiation activity, including mediation sessions and meetings with government officials, must be live-streamed!** Canada Post is aware of all the offers submitted by the CUPW apparatus, but we workers are left in the dark. Closed-door negotiations could not possibly be for our benefit. The CUPW admitted in a December 4, 2024 update, "We understand members want more detailed information... and we need to be very careful about what we say, so the Employer can't use it against us later." What this really means is that the CUPW bureaucracy would lose all credibility, be exposed as working with the corporation and the government against postal workers, and risk losing its paralyzing grip over the strike, if what is being discussed behind closed doors with management were made known to the rank-and-file. They've already expressed their concern to management and the Labour Minister about being able to reach an agreement that is "ratifiable," i.e., something that they can persuade us to vote for.

- **An immediate pay raise of 30 percent to match inflation!** Our collective agreements were extended for 2 years at the beginning of 2022, and now even those extensions have been expired for almost a year. Inflation has been at 40-year highs for much of this period. Prior to that, we experienced years of real wage cuts and stagnation as the result of contracts "negotiated," as in 2018 and 2011, after the government stripped us of the legal right to strike. The CUPW has reduced its demands for raises from 24 percent to 22 percent, and as of

the December 9 update, the ask stands at a paltry 19 percent over 4 years. This is unacceptable.

• **Send information pickets to Canada Post-owned Purolator depots to appeal to Purolator workers to shut them down!** CUPW's repeated retreats and refusal to fight to broaden our struggle to other sections of workers has emboldened the employer to demand even more sweeping attacks on our working conditions and wages.

Canada Post Corporation (CPC) and its corporate backers are happy to drag out negotiations, since the loss of business to its Purolator subsidiary increases their leverage against us, enabling them to intensify their push for our wages and benefits to be reduced and made "competitive" with those of our precariously employed Purolator colleagues.

This strategy is predicated on CUPW and the CLC keeping us isolated from other workers. Confident that Canada's union bureaucracies will continue to do this, the CPC made clear on Monday that they are eager to drag out negotiations, stating, "We don't want to provide false hope to impacted employees, small businesses, charities and northern communities that were hoping for a speedy resolution."

Canada Post owns 91 percent of Purolator. Doug Ettinger, CEO of Canada Post, is on Purolator's Board of Directors. A section of the ruling elite thinks the best way to "Amazonify" Canada Post is to let "market forces" siphon off Canada Post business to Purolator and other delivery services, like Amazon that exploit their workforce even more brutally than Canada Post does, driving the Crown corporation toward bankruptcy. This explains why, less than two weeks before the Christmas holiday, corporate management appears so relaxed about prolonging the work stoppage, so long as their "partners" in the union bureaucracy prevent us from broadening our strike.

A no less dangerous threat to our struggle is posed by government intervention to criminalize our strike and impose a settlement on management's terms. This could take the form of Labour Minister Steve MacKinnon invoking Section 107 of the Canada labour Code to order the unelected Canadian Industrial Relations Board (CIRB) to implement a pro-employer arbitrated contract. The Liberal government already used this cooked-up, anti-democratic mechanism against rail workers at CPKC and Canadian National in August and against Quebec and British Columbia port workers at the beginning of last month.

The Teamsters President Francois Laporte, who claims to represent Purolator workers, emailed CUPW National President Jan Simpson when our strike began on November 15, feigning solidarity with postal workers. Laporte acknowledged that "employer tactics reveal a blatant disregard for employees," and he promised that "Purolator will not be handling packages postmarked and/or identified as originating from Canada Post should a strike or lockout occur." Two weeks after that statement was made by the Teamsters President, the WSWs exposed his empty rhetoric in an article titled, "Teamsters at

subsidiary Purolator scabbing on Canada Post strike."

Since then, it has become clear that Purolator is soaking up our parcel volume, and even though Purolator charges significantly more per parcel—in some cases, twice as much—Purolator workers don't have access to the same benefits or pensions that postal workers have. The Teamsters refuse to take any action in support of our strike or use this opportunity to raise the bar for their own employees. Like the CUPW, the Teamsters have abdicated their role as the leadership of the working class.

Almost a full year after postal workers' collective agreements expired, we are witnessing the CPC deepen its attacks by laying off retail workers. We have made note of the similarities between the ongoing negotiations at the CPC and the privatization of the United States Postal Service. Attacks on our working conditions are not limited to just post offices or confined within Canada. What we face is a global implementation of automation and artificial intelligence technologies in a way that jobs are being eliminated, and those workers that remain are gig-ified—overworked and underpaid.

The PWRFC makes an urgent appeal to postal workers to send pickets to Purolator, UPS, Fedex, Amazon, and other delivery depots. We will find a strong base of support among Purolator workers, whose jobs are under similar attacks as our own. The invasive surveillance technology rolled out in the CPC's corporate fleet can be used to intimidate and harass Purolator workers as readily as it is being used against us. Canada Post workers, like those at Purolator, both suffer raises that fall well behind inflation. Logistics workers across Canada will be affected by the same market pressures and technologies postal workers are grappling with right now.

Above all, we face a political struggle, not one of traditional "collective bargaining." Postal workers will find strong support among broad layers of workers, provided we position ourselves as the spearhead of a working-class counteroffensive to defend all public services and stop capitalist austerity. I urge all workers who agree with this perspective to join and build the PWRFC. We need a network of rank-and-file committees at every workplace to mobilize workers' social power and build an independent political movement of the working class.



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