

For emergency action to stop the Trump-Musk purge of federal workers!

International Workers Alliance of Rank-and-File Committees
23 February 2025

The International Workers Alliance of Rank-and-File Committees (IWA-RFC) calls for mass action to stop the Trump administration's assault on federal workers, now being carried out by Elon Musk's Department of Government Efficiency (DOGE). This is an unprecedented attack on the working class, an open declaration of war. If workers do not take action now, the consequences will be catastrophic—not only for federal employees but for the entire working class.

The IWA-RFC calls on federal workers to form rank-and-file committees, independent of the union bureaucracies, to lead this fight. Mass meetings and demonstrations should be called to prepare emergency strike action to stop the firings and the gutting of essential programs.

Musk, acting as Trump's vice *Führer*, is treating the government as his personal corporation, purging thousands of federal employees, including career and probationary workers. By executive fiat, employment contracts are being voided, due process rights trampled, and workers fired at the whim of a billionaire oligarch.

In the latest attack, Musk announced on social media over the weekend that "Consistent with President Trump's instructions," all federal workers will have to send an email by Monday night explaining "what they got done last week. Failure to respond will be taken as a resignation." Shortly afterward, federal workers received a three-line email instructing: "Please reply to this email with approx. 5 bullets of what you accomplished last week and cc your manager."

This is an attempt to terrorize, humiliate and eliminate opposition. Federal workers are being reduced to serfs, forced to crawl before Musk and the financial oligarchy.

Musk is following the playbook he used in purchasing Twitter, where he sent the exact same email to every employee before laying off 80 percent of them. If even a fraction of federal workers meets the same fate, it will mean hundreds of thousands of layoffs, in the largest single mass firing in US history.

Musk's directive followed moves to purge tens of thousands of workers performing critical social functions. A "deferred resignation" program led to 75,000 workers leaving before a federal judge temporarily halted it. Nearly all employees with less than a year of service are being targeted, affecting up to

220,000 workers across multiple agencies.

The Federal Aviation Administration (FAA) is being gutted, as planes are crashing due to understaffing, aging infrastructure and safety failures. The Food and Drug Administration (FDA) is being slashed in the midst of an ongoing pandemic and the emergence of new diseases like H5N1. The Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) is being dismantled, as climate change fuels catastrophic disasters across the US and the world.

Musk, the world's richest man, wants to know what the workers do. In short, everything. The real question is: What do Musk and his fellow oligarchs do? They build nothing and contribute nothing. They grow rich off the labor of others.

More than 600,000 postal workers are also in the crosshairs of Trump's privatization drive. On Friday, he announced plans to place the USPS under the Commerce Department, stripping its independence and paving the way for mass layoffs, wage cuts and the selloff of operations to Amazon, UPS or FedEx. The goal is to end the universal service mandate, raising prices while gutting jobs.

In 1981, President Ronald Reagan fired over 11,000 striking air traffic controllers, marking a major turning point in the class war against workers. The strike had broad support, and there was growing sentiment for a general strike. But the AFL-CIO bureaucracy refused to mobilize resistance, allowing the government to crush the controllers, destroy their union, and pave the way for four decades of attacks on wages, jobs, and the right to strike.

Trump's purge of federal workers goes far beyond PATCO. This is not just mass firings—it is an attempt to dismantle the civil service and eliminate social programs. While PATCO strikers were blacklisted, Trump and Musk are wiping out entire agencies, forcing workers to justify their jobs to a billionaire. If successful, this will embolden the ruling class to escalate attacks on all workers, impose wage cuts, mass layoffs and suppress resistance with dictatorial methods.

During the 1980s and in the decades that followed, the union bureaucracy responded to the ruling class's assault on workers by fully integrating itself into corporate management. Now, as Trump and Musk carry out the largest purge of government workers in history, these same organizations refuse to lift a finger to stop it.

The AFL-CIO has issued a perfunctory statement declaring:

The most powerful thing you can do right now is to put a face to the DOGE's reckless cuts. If you are a worker, or the friend or family member of a worker affected by the DOGE, we want to hear more about who you are, how you've helped our country, and how the DOGE is impacting you.

That is, while hundreds of thousands face the loss of their jobs, the AFL-CIO offers only an appeal for personal anecdotes.

The AFGE, the largest federal workers' union, issued a statement claiming it would "challenge any unlawful terminations of our members and federal employees across the country." In other words, they will do nothing beyond filing useless legal appeals, allowing the mass firings to proceed unopposed.

The apparatus justifies its efforts to suppress opposition by claiming that any opposition is illegal—even as Trump and Musk carry out actions in defiance of all existing law and constitutional rights.

As for the Democrats, as a party of Wall Street and war, they support the attack on social programs and the enrichment of the financial oligarchy. Amid the most serious constitutional crisis in US history, they propose only the most impotent appeals to Republican lawmakers. They fear, above all, a movement from below.

A vastly different mood is developing in the working class—a growing determination to fight and to break free from the shackles of the trade union apparatus. This was clearly expressed in the emergency meeting called by the IWA-RFC and the Postal Workers Rank-and-File Committee on Sunday, attended by more than 150 workers.

Tom Hall, a writer for the *World Socialist Web Site*, opened the meeting by warning that this is not just about job cuts, but the establishment of a dictatorship. "Trump's moves are flagrantly illegal," Hall said. "He is attempting to rewrite the Constitution, override acts of Congress and purge all those in the government who are not loyal to him personally. He is attempting to establish a dictatorship in the United States and overthrow democracy or whatever is left of it."

Hall explained, "If Trump's conspiracy is to be defeated—and it can be—it must come through mass, independent action from below by the working class."

A resolution was adopted in an overwhelming vote condemning "the cowardice and complicity of the trade union bureaucracy." The resolution declared: "If the union leadership will not fight this, they will fight nothing." The resolution stated:

The time for empty statements is over. The International Workers Alliance of Rank-and-File Committees (IWA-RFC) and the Postal Workers Rank-and-File Committee call for immediate preparations for mass resistance, up to and including strike action. Postal workers must join with federal workers, logistics workers and all workers to stop this purge.

The IWA-RFC calls on federal workers to form rank-and-file committees independently of the union bureaucracies. These committees must unite with postal workers, autoworkers, Amazon workers, teachers, nurses and all sections of the working class to coordinate collective resistance.

The committees the IWA-RFC is calling for will be the means through which federal workers can communicate between workplaces, exchange information and coordinate joint action. Through the expansion of rank-and-file committees in every workplace, workers can build support and prepare strike action to oppose mass firings, the destruction of social programs and the privatization of public services.

These committees will unite federal workers with immigrant workers fighting deportation, educators and healthcare workers resisting cuts, and industrial workers battling exploitation and unsafe conditions, forging a common struggle against the attacks on the entire working class.

Now is the time to take a stand and fight back! The IWA-RFC is building the leadership and organization necessary for this struggle.



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