RWU Resolution on National Rail Strike

In the context of the recent upsurge in resistance of workers, in various industries, nationally and internationally, the RWU Steering Committee passed the following resolution on Jan. 5th, 2022, to contribute to this critical discussion among railroad workers.

Whereas, the major freight rail carriers continue to refuse to bargain in good faith, leaving national negotiations with the unions at a standstill; and

Whereas, these same carriers – represented by the National Carriers Conference Committee (NCCC) - have been making record profits for years, including all through the pandemic; and

Whereas, Precision Scheduled Railroading, firings and furloughs; increased discipline and harassment; massive job cuts, short-staffing, and chronic fatigue; together with unpaid claims and wholesale abrogation of the union contract has left railroad workers frustrated, angry, and ready to fight back; and

Whereas, Countless workers in an array of industries nationwide are fighting back, organizing, striking, and winning; and

Whereas, current conditions appear to be ripe for railroad workers to mount a successful national strike, including but not limited to:

⚫ A general labor shortage where the rail carriers are unable to recruit and retain employees in the various crafts, including train and engine service.
⚫ Supply chains in crisis, as goods in transit are hampered at every turn.
⚫ Public opinion that has sided with striking workers throughout 2021.
⚫ The record profits generated by the carriers, together with their alienation of shippers, passengers and communities, which suggest that railroad strikers would enjoy vast public support.
⚫ Rail unions of late that have been largely standing together.
⚫ The fact that the carriers have attacked ALL rail workers, solidifying workers from all crafts, unions, and carriers.
⚫ The existence of a sitting President who claims to be “the most pro-labor President you have ever had.”

Whereas, such favorable conditions for rail workers outlined above have not existed for decades - if ever - and will not continue indefinitely;

Therefore, Be it Resolved that RWU urges all railroad workers to consider the strike option, and to prepare for such a strike; and

Be it further Resolved that RWU urge the rail unions to educate their respective memberships on:

⚫ the Railway Labor Act (RLA) under which our actions are governed;
⚫ the history of rail strikes;
⚫ the benefits and risks of taking such action with webinars, printed materials, presentations at local union meetings, and other means of communication; and

Be it further Resolved that RWU urge the rail unions to poll their respective members for a strike vote so as to ascertain the willingness of the respective memberships to take such action; and

Be it Further Resolved that RWU urge the rail unions to undertake informational picketing, “practice” strikes, and other high-profile activities to mobilize the membership, put the carriers on notice we mean business, to educate the public as to our cause; and mobilize our allies; and

Be it Finally Resolved, that the rail craft unions put aside their petty differences and take this opportunity to consummate a single bargaining coalition of all rail labor in order to achieve the greatest possible solidarity, unity, and power.

Adopted by the RWU Steering Committee 1/5/2022