

Communities and Postal Workers United (CPWU)

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U.S. POSTAL WORKERS PROTEST IN SOLIDARITY WITH CANADA POST COUNTERPARTS

By James McCarten *The Canadian Press* (Jan. 15, 2019)

WASHINGTON – U.S. postal workers gathered in solidarity Tuesday outside Canada’s embassy in Washington to protest the federal Liberal government’s decision to legislate their northern counterparts back to work.

About 50 members of the American Postal Workers Union and the National Association of Letter Carriers gathered on Pennsylvania Avenue down the street from Capitol Hill in a visible and full-throated show of support for Canada Post employees.

Brandishing hand-lettered placards and a bullhorn, they chanted slogans, sang pro-union songs and marched outside the embassy, all under the watchful eye of uniformed members of the U.S. Secret Service, which protects Washington’s foreign missions, as well as the White House.

“We’re here in solidarity with the Canadian Union of Postal Workers and our counterparts in Canada who move the mail every day with pride and serve the people of Canada and of the United States,” said APWU president Mark Dimondstein.

“We’re also here to condemn the Trudeau government, in terms of taking away and denying workers their legal right to withhold their labour to get a good contract.”

A dispute over wages, benefits and job security culminated last October in a series of temporary rotating walkouts at Canada Post facilities in various places across Canada, throwing local and regional mail delivery services into disarray.



The strikes persisted for weeks, affecting the busy holiday shipping season, until Ottawa passed legislation in November. That law required workers to resume their duties and appointed a mediator to arbitrate an end to the dispute between

union and the Crown corporation, which has been struggling for years with declining traditional-mail volume.

Ordering them back to work constituted a violation of the charter rights of Canada’s postal workers, said Dimondstein.

“If collective bargaining is undermined in Canada, and the right to strike is part of their collective bargaining rights, our collective bargaining rights are also under attack in the United States,” he said.

CANADIAN UNIONS BLOCK POSTAL FACILITIES

(*Toronto City News*, December 1, 2019)

CUPE and OPSEU members as well as several other union groups blocked the entrance to [Canada Post’s] Mississauga facility as part of a day of action called for by Delivering Community Power, a coalition of various Canadian union and advocacy groups.

Postal workers were on rotating strikes for six weeks before being forced back to work by the Liberal government on Nov. 28.

“We believe in a principle, that working people should be treated fairly, that collective agreements matter, that the right to strike matters, that our constitution matters,” said CUPE Ontario president Fred Hahn. “What is wonderful is, even though it is not coordinated in any way, people are all saying the same thing across our country, enough is enough.”

CUPE said similar protests were scheduled at facilities across the country, allowing workers to enter, but not letting mail out of the plants.



Around 500 people joined a protest in County Galway, Ireland last November to highlight their opposition to the impending closure of the post office in the village of Eyrecourt. Hundreds of people involved in the protest blocked a bridge on the Shannon River and stopped traffic.

KEEP UP ON THE LATEST FIGHTBACK!

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POSTAL WORKERS IN FRANCE ARE HELPING ELDERLY PEOPLE FIGHT LONELINESS

November 30, 2018 by *World Economic Forum*

Mail workers for the French postal service La Poste are being paid to pop in on elderly people on a weekly basis, before sending updates to concerned relatives.

Called Veiller Sur Mes Parents (watch over my parents), the service costs from 19.90 euros (\$22.50) a month and includes a weekly visit and report, as well as a monthly personalized newsletter made from family messages and photos the post worker prints out.

There’s also a 24-hour helpline available as part of a second, more expensive package.

SOLVING TWO PROBLEMS

The service started in May 2017 as a way of tackling two issues: an annual drop of 5% in the amount of mail meaning less work for France’s 73,000 postal workers, and the rise of the ageing population.

But the idea came about following a heatwave.

“We first thought of it a few years ago when city halls called on us to pay a visit to the elderly during a heatwave,” Eric Baudrillard, customer services director at La Poste told Vice News. “They were worried and asked us to check if everything was OK with the old people. And we thought, why can’t we do it all the time?”

ASK YOUR REPRESENTATIVE TO

Support H.Res. 33 against postal privatization, H.Res. 23 protecting door delivery, H.Res 54 to preserve 6-day delivery, and H.Res 60 to restore service standards. All have achieved majority sponsorship in past sessions but never came to a vote.

POSTAL WORKERS RETURN SOLIDARITY FOR TEACHERS

Educators all over the country promoted and honored our Staples boycott, joining with postal workers in our struggle to stop the privatization of post offices.

Now, with a wave of teachers strikes sweeping the nation, postal workers can return the favor.



APWU postal workers rally with LA teachers on strike

(APWU WEB NEWS ARTICLE #9-2019, 1/24/19)

APWU's Greater Los Angeles Area Local joined United Teachers Los Angeles (UTLA) on the picket line last week, offering support to fellow public-sector workers during the week-long strike that ended Tuesday morning.

"It's important to support each other in solidarity," said Greater Los Angeles Area Local President Dominic Davis. "Teachers were out in full force, side by side with us in solidarity, during the *Stop Staples* campaign. We're so closely aligned with them, with both of us going through negotiations [now], so it was important to show our support."

"It says a lot about the teachers union and its members that they risked their own benefits as they stood up for their students," said Davis. "They care enough about the students they serve that they put themselves on the line for better conditions."

VICTORIOUS STRIKERS RETURN TO WORK

On Tuesday, UTLA President Alex Caputo-Pearl and Los Angeles Unified School District Superintendent Austin Beutner announced a tentative agreement at Los Angeles City Hall, which UTLA members overwhelmingly approved later that day.

Teachers were back in school for a normal school day on Wednesday with a new contract that the union described as a "paradigm shift." Virtually all of the union's demands were met with no concessions made by teachers, except for pay lost while out of school on the picket lines.

The new contract includes:

- A six percent pay raise with no contingencies,

- A nurse in every school five days a week,

- Hard caps on class size that will reduce class sizes immediately in 2019-20, with more improvements every year after,

- Clear pathway to cap charters,

- Counselor-student ratios of 1:500,

- Commitment to reduce standardized testing by 50 percent,

- A librarian in every secondary school five days a week,

- Investment in community schools,

- Hard caps on special education caseloads and release time for testing,

- Important wins for adult education, early education, and substitute educators,

- Progress on demands to end random searches, expand green space, and support immigrant families.

UTLA's fight against increased charter funding parallels our own fight against privatization of the Postal Service, as workers demanded the preservation of education as a public service for all people, not just a privileged few. The cap on charter funding is a major win not only for UTLA's public school employees, but for all advocates of the preservation of public services.

PLAQUEMINE POSTAL SERVICE WOES PROMPT PASSAGE OF RESOLUTION URGING USPS TO IMPROVE

By EMMA KENNEDY Jan 28, 2019 - *The Advocate* [Baton Rouge LA]

PLAQUEMINE — Residents fed up with undelivered mail, receiving neighbors' packages and picking up deliveries strewn on their lawns are trying to get a message through to the U.S. Postal Service: Fix the problems.

They didn't just mail in their complaints, though. They got local government leaders of their small city in Iberville Parish to approve a resolution calling on postal officials to act.

The resolution, brought forward by selectman Timmy Martinez, was adopted earlier this month and is the latest in a string of issues officials say they've had with the service.

The city doesn't have any control over the mail service, but drafting a resolution is a way to publicly address that there's a problem, according to Martinez.

"We're not backing down on this, they've got to do a better job," Plaquemine Mayor Ed Reeves said.

Reeves took up a fight with USPS last summer, threatening to put a lien on the post office's Canal Street property if they didn't improve aesthetics at the building like overgrown vines and unkempt lawns.

Reeves and Martinez said since the resolution's passing on Jan. 8, the number of complaints about mail delivery has slowed. Martinez said he plans to follow up with the postmaster in coming weeks to address what has been done to improve the service.

APWU CONTRACT GOING TO ARBITRATION

After five months of contract negotiations, including a national day of action and weekly shop floor actions with t-shirts and buttons; after pledges to substantially improve or eliminate the Postal Support Employee job classification; after a tentative agreement which was turned back by the Rank & File Bargaining Advisory Committee (only the second time this has happened in the union's history); the American Postal Workers Union contract with the US Postal Service will go to arbitration for a binding award. That process will take months, as the National Association of Letter Carriers begins its own contract negotiations in May.