

NEW DAY AT USPS



NEWS FOR USPS WORKERS, BY USPS WORKERS!

INTERNATIONAL WORKERS' DAY EDITION

On May 1, workers around the world celebrate “May Day,” a holiday honoring the struggles past and present through which the working class has fought not only for better wages, shorter hours, and safer conditions, but ultimately for collective power over society itself.

As workers in America, it is our responsibility to understand our place in the fights of workers here in the US, but also the struggles being waged by workers across the globe. In America's role as the main global power, it has used its economic and military strength to dominate and exploit other countries, which has directly contributed to the misery and degradation of the rest of the world and the working classes of those nations. Our energies in the international class struggle must be aimed at bringing down that system, and as postal workers in the logistics industry, we have a strategically important position in that task. Worker power has always been at its greatest when we have used our ability to halt production and the flow of goods and services. A prime example of this power on display was during the 1970 postal strike, when the courts and financial systems were halted and the capitalist system was thrown into chaos. This was due directly to the strength and solidarity among postal workers. Through collective action and the breaking down of the artificial barriers of craft unionism, we stand to play a part in the resurrection of the militant,

class-conscious labor movement that stands in solidarity with the international working class.

History:

On May 1st, 1886, over 300,000 workers went on strike or walked off the job to demand an eight-hour workday, in what was the largest worker mobilization in United States history at that time. This event had been years in the making, as workers who often labored sixteen-hour days were engaged in constant struggles to win shorter hours. Preparations began in 1884 when the Federation of Organized Trades and Labor Unions declared, “eight hours shall constitute a legal day's labor from and after May 1, 1886,” a call taken up by organizations across the country. In the lead-up, worker action increased sharply; in 1885 alone, over 250,000 workers participated in 700 strikes, and organizations grew rapidly.

By May first that year, hundreds of thousands of workers across 13,000 workplaces joined the strike. Chicago stood at the center of it all, with 40,000 workers walking off the job and 80,000 marching there. Just days later, at a rally outside the McCormick plant, police opened fire on workers, killing at least two. In response, a rally was called for May 4th at Haymarket Square. As the event ended and police moved to disperse the crowd, a bomb exploded

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among them, killing one officer and injuring others. Police blamed those who led the rally without evidence, and a wave of repression followed. Police raided meeting places, arrested over 100 people, and charged eight worker activists, many of whom were not present at the rally, with conspiracy. In 1887, four were executed, one died by suicide, and others were imprisoned.

These events inspired international recognition. In 1889, May 1st was declared a day of worker demonstrations. Since then, International Workers' Day has honored the struggle for labor rights and remains a reminder of the sacrifices made and the ongoing fight for dignity and fair conditions on the job. The struggles that gave rise to May Day didn't end with Haymarket; they continue today in workplaces across the country, including the USPS.

Where are we now?

As average rank-and-file postal workers, we are part of the US working class, and just a fraction of the international working class. What binds us together is having to sell our ability to do work, called labor power, to companies/organizations that compensate us with only a fraction of the value that we produce. The working class is in a constant struggle against the owners, the capitalists, because of this antagonism. As part of the working class today, we face a number of challenges: rising food, housing, healthcare, and energy prices; increased political repression, surveillance, and oppression and violence against migrant workers; attacks against organized labor; and more.

Many of us are working paycheck to paycheck, being overworked or getting hours cut, and losing morale. USPS touts the Delivering For America plan as a promising development, but postal workers see job cuts and worsening service standards for people who rely on timely mail delivery. Further privatization still looms as a

threat, and the PMG's announcement of the latest USPS "financial crisis" is being weaponized to weaken NALC and MPHU contracts this year. With all of this, rank-and-file postal workers are in a constant struggle against USPS to improve the conditions under which we sell our labor power.

The narrowly focused, craft union contracts have granted too many concessions at our expense over the years, but there is hope in unity. The history and lessons of the working class's struggle and International Workers' Day must serve as a reminder that the future of our class is in our hands. Previous generations of militant workers have worked tirelessly to understand their place in the global system, showing strength and courage in their organization to struggle against their bosses, oppressors, and US imperialism broadly. If we unite and organize across crafts, postal workers have the power to defend against threats and challenges ahead, and fight for real improvements to our working conditions. The more organized we are among all rank-and-file postal workers, the stronger we will be in the struggle against USPS and the entire ruling class.

