

Southern California USPS rally against Trump's privatization efforts

Our correspondents

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On Sunday, postal workers across the country took to the streets to protest the Trump administration's ruthless drive to privatize the United States Postal Service (USPS). While the demonstrations were officially framed as a show of strength against privatization, it exposed a glaring divide between union bureaucrats and politicians on one side and rank-and-file workers on the other.

The backdrop to these protests is the bipartisan dismantling of public services, with the USPS in the crosshairs. As the *World Socialist Web Site* recently outlined, privatization efforts are part of a broader offensive by the ruling elite against workers. The Trump administration has sought to gut the USPS under the guise of "efficiency," slashing jobs and services while bolstering the profits of private couriers like FedEx and UPS.

The Democrats, despite their rhetorical opposition, have done nothing substantive to stop the carnage. Instead, they offer empty promises and maintain their alliances with corporate interests and the union bureaucracy, which works tirelessly to keep workers' anger contained within "safe" channels that lead nowhere.

At the Los Angeles protest, workers were fed the usual scripted reassurances by union officials and Democratic politicians who live far removed from the daily struggles of the working class.

Brian Renfroe, National President of the National Association of Letter Carriers (NALC), delivered a platitude-filled speech. Last month at a press conference, when asked about the tens of thousands of postal jobs at risk, Renfroe simply shrugged and said he didn't think so.

This is the same man who pushed a pathetic labor contract with a meager 1.3 percent annual raise, utterly failing to fight for meaningful wage increases or job protections. His presence was a perfect embodiment of the union leadership's role: not to defend workers, but to placate them while selling them out.

Congresswoman Maxine Waters sought to pacify workers with hollow assurances that Trump's privatization schemes would go nowhere without congressional approval. This is the same Democratic Party that has allowed Trump's regime to dismantle social programs and public services at will, bending over backwards to avoid any serious confrontation. Her words were not just empty, they were insulting; as if workers should sit back and trust the very system that has repeatedly betrayed them.

"It's like the rich against the poor"

On the other side of the political barricade, workers sounded a very different tone. Robert, a mail carrier, said: "Our vehicles burn. I'll tell you, yesterday I worked 10 hours. I delivered, I do that almost every day." Regarding the aging fleet, he added, "The engines are very old and they're just refurbished. And they're telling us we are getting our new vehicles in 2028. And still no air conditioning. A fan, and sometimes it works, sometimes it doesn't."

On Elon Musk's so-called efficiency review, he asked: "His department is supposed to find wasteful spending which is coming from tax dollars, right? The post office is self-funded. What waste is going on? We're making our own money. Why is he putting his hands in us?"

Robert also condemned the Democratic Party's complicity: "Congress passed a law in 1970 saying private, privatized businesses are not allowed to deliver mail. The federal government must deliver mail. So are we just going to ignore laws? If I were Congress, I'd be really mad about this. On that note, as a Democrat, I'm a little irritated that they just kind of lay down. The Republicans go 'boo' and they go 'oh!' and pass out like goats. It's just this capitulation, it's awful, it's terrible and yeah, we gotta stop it."

Stacey, a federal employee at the Veterans Administration and a 23-year Army veteran, told the WSWS:

“I’m a federal employee, and all of the things that are going on are affecting all of us. And we have to all support each other and stand together in order to get through this hard time. Well, just with the VA alone, where I work, the plan is to cut down 80,000. We’ve already had a lot of people who were removed from their positions because they were probationary workers.”

She warned the ongoing cuts “can be catastrophic for our veterans because many of them, that is the only healthcare they have. We are the only support that they have. We already have a high suicide rate of veterans—I would anticipate that being higher. We try to ensure that they are not out on the street.”

Tracey, a postal driver said, “It’s like the rich against the poor. I hate to say the poor, but we work really hard. And they are getting what they got. So they don’t understand our struggle. They don’t understand what we go through. They don’t care. We get nothing. And what do they want us to do? They want us to die.”

Trump “does not care about the little people,” she said. “He cares about the rich and the people that will benefit him. We don’t deserve that. We work hard. We take care of our families with that. We have to come together.” She emphasized the power of workers: “Without the people that do the real work, we wouldn’t have a system.

“This is supposed to be America. This is supposed to be where we are free...I thought these days would never come, and now that it’s here, it’s very scary. But we’re going to stick together, we’re going to fight together.”

Gloria, also a postal worker, condemned Trump’s attacks on workers and immigrants. “We shouldn’t just pick and choose who to take away from. It’s destroying a lot of homes and families.”

Gloria expressed frustration with the union bureaucracy: “A real leader will make everything fair for everybody, not just the rich. The rich union bureaucrats, they have to take away from us, so they can maintain the money that they want, the raises they want. He gave himself a raise just recently. Yeah, he makes like \$300,000 a year. But we don’t have money for us at the end of the day.”

Irvine demonstration

Reporters for the WSWS also spoke to postal workers and retirees at a smaller rally in Irvine, California on Sunday.

Richard, a letter carrier for 18 years, explained that the

postal service, “wasn’t supposed to be for profit. It is a service for the American citizens and the American businesses.”

Sandra, a letter carrier for about 10 years added, “The Post Office is a public service. We deliver mail to a lot of people, especially the elderly. And I’m big on elderly people. They need their medications.”

She added, “We deliver all the ballots. I don’t know if a lot of people are aware of this, but we also collect a lot of food. In March, we collect a lot of food for the hungry.”

Richard explained that working for the post office has “always been bad” and that “management treats it like it’s more of a business than it is about service. They don’t really care... they are trying to push us to go faster, do less, instead of making sure that our customers are okay.”

“I’ve had customers who are sick. And we literally check on them, ‘Are you okay? Is everything okay? Is there somebody I can call to help?’ I’ve had an elderly customer get locked out of her house, and she couldn’t get in. So I called the locksmith because she couldn’t really figure out her phone. I talked to him and then I told her, ‘It’s okay. He’s on his way. He’s going to come in and unlock your door.’”

Demarco, a postal service worker in Irvine for 41 years, explained that, “everything that management does, it’s to maximize, micromanage, so we are pushed, we are at maximum efficiency.” He postulated that perhaps efficiency could be improved “with...less managers.”

Demarco said the fight against job cuts has to be conducted “together.” He said, “fighting as individuals, we’re not big enough to fight it as an individual.”

Questioned by a WSWS reporter if he would support an international movement of postal workers to defend the postal service in every country, Demarco said,

“Well, I mean, let’s just look at it from a basic right. No matter what part of the world you live in, our needs are the same. You know, and it doesn’t change from country to country. And I think a worldwide unification of the postal service to come together, I would agree with that because, like I say, the needs are worldwide. They are not just nationwide. It’s here in America or Canada. The same needs, the same people doing the same things.”



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