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Global Unions say DHL puts the squeeze on its workers

In dozens of cases in over 20 countries, DHL has sacked, harassed and intimidated workers for union activities. The attacks on workers' rights and unions started long before the financial crisis but now DHL management has latched onto the crisis as an excuse for drastic cost cutting and victimizing its employees.



In Germany, workers at the new Leipzig hub are paid so little they are entitled to government income subsidies. In South Africa, DHL has lost three court cases for wrongful sackings of union stewards.

During the week 9-13 November, DHL employees and their unions stood up to the company and demanded respect for their rights in the "Don't put the squeeze on workers" campaign. The global

campaign for DHL workers was been organised by UNI Global Union and the International Transport Workers' Federation (ITF).

The unions asked the public to go to:

<http://www.respect4workers.org> to send messages to DHL CEO Frank Appel urging him to respect workers' rights.



"We are asking DHL to stick to its own key words: respect and results," said UNI General Secretary Philip Jennings. "If the company respects its workers it will see far better results than if it joins the global race to the bottom on pay, conditions and trade union rights."

During the week of action, activities and demonstrations took place in Austria, Belgium, Burkina Faso, Chile, Colombia, Costa Rica, the Dominican Republic, Germany, Guatemala, Hungary, Italy, The Netherlands, New Zealand, Panama, Russia, South Africa, Switzerland and Trinidad and Tobago.

In Nyon, Switzerland, more than 100 UNI Global Union activists and members of the Swiss communications union SYNDICOM held a demonstration at the global headquarters telling Deutsche Post DHL not to "put

the squeeze” on its workers. A giant wine press was used to dramatise the pressure on DHL workers. The UNI and SYNDICOM activists also sent postcard messages to CEO Frank Appel telling him to respect workers’ and union rights.



To see what happened in each of these places, please go to:
<http://www.iftglobal.org/fusetalk/blog/index.cfm?forumid=16>

CWU and Royal Mail reach an interim agreement

On 5 November, the CWU and Royal Mail reached an interim agreement that was unanimously agreed by the Unions Executive.

The interim agreement provides a period of calm for the CWU and Royal Mail to reach a full and final agreement. The interim agreement guarantees that modernisation will be introduced with agreed job security and improved terms and conditions for postal workers. It also addresses all the issues included in the long running local disputes.

The strike ballot remains in place.

Dave Ward CWU Deputy General Secretary said “there needs to be exceptional efforts to improve trust and relationships between CWU and Royal Mail. As a result both TUC and ACAS will have a continuing role to keep the dis-

cussions and agreement on track.”

During the talks, the CWU had also gathered enough evidence about Royal Mail recruiting temporary staff, to take the case to the High Court. A CWU Spokesperson said that “Now we have an interim agreement we will put to one side the case to stop Royal Mail recruiting workers being used to break a legal trade dispute”.

More information here:

<http://www.cwu.org/83/news.html>

Germany : Deutsche Post and ver.di reach an agreement

According to the agreement, the current wage agreement will be extended until 2011. Postal workers will renounce to overtime pay until June 2011 but will have a 3% increase in December and a one-off payment of 320 Euros in 2011. Furthermore, according to the agreement, there will be no job cuts before the end of 2011.

More information here :

<http://uk.reuters.com/article/idUKLU65601620091030?sp=true>

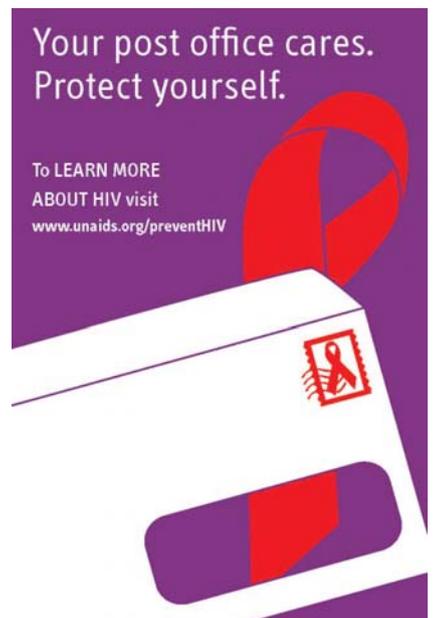
<http://presse.verdi.de/pressemitteilungen/showNews?id=c1ae77e4-c54c-11de-70fb-0019b9e321e1>

UNI elected to UPU CC Management Committee

At the Universal Postal Union (UPU) Consultative Committee meeting held in Bern Switzerland

on 3rd November, UNI Post & Logistics has been elected as a member of the Management Committee of the UPU CC. UNI Post & Logistics already Chairs the UPU CC Working Group on Sustainable Development and now has been elected as a member of the Management Committee in it's own right. The CC also discussed the Sustainable Development project that UNI is leading and presentations were given on the HIV/AIDS project being run with UNI Global Union, the ILO, UN AIDS and the UPU. Esther Bares, UNI P&L Research Assistant presented the progress to date and told the meeting that the next phase of the project was even more important as it was designed to help employees of the Post to deal with HIV and AIDS issues in the workplace.

The project has involved seven pilot countries so far, Nigeria, Burkina Faso, Cameroun, China, Brazil, Estonia and Mali, where UNI affiliates have been involved in developing the programme.



TNT workers in the Netherlands asked to participate in referendum

Workers at TNT in the Netherlands are being asked to take part in a referendum to decide on their future in the company.

Acknowledging the company's financial problems, union representatives have said that workers are being forced to make a difficult choice – between keeping their jobs and taking a pay cut, or keeping their current salaries and risking losing their jobs. Members of the unions, ABVAKABO and FNV Bondgenoten, will be asked to make their views known in a referendum; the outcome will then be the subject of further negotiations with the company.

TNT plans to restructure the company, which would involve cutting 11,000 jobs over a period of one to three years. The company aims to save EUR125 million a year through a new collective bargaining agreement. The unions believe that TNT's restructuring proposals are too drastic and that cost-savings of EUR75 million a year should be sufficient resulting only in 3,500 compulsory redundancies.

"Regardless of the outcome of the referendum, it will be hard to reach an agreement," one of the union representatives, Sander Martins, said. He also wasn't ruling out strike action.

The the workers have a pretty stark choice!

The union advises that its members have to choose between:

1) 3 years no salary increase and a little employee-contribution for

the TNT pension, with in return a guarantee that nobody will become unemployed,

and

2) no pay cut, instead a wage increase in 2009/2010 of 1,5% and a good social plan, but without the possibility of preventing mass redundancies.

The union makes the point that cost-savings of EUR75 million a year should be sufficient and should not result in 3,500 compulsory redundancies. If these redundancies go ahead they say that the cost savings to TNT are about 600 million a year, of which 125 million is savings on labour conditions. The unions are saying that in their opinion (and that of their researchers, Ecorys) depending on the results of the referendum, they will fight for less cost cutting and they definitely won't accept 3500 compulsory redundancies.

France: call to strike on 24 November against postal privatization

The French trades unions, CGT-SUD-CFDT-FO-CFTC met on 6 November and decided to call postmen and postwomen to strike on 24 November in order to reaffirm their position against the privatization of La Poste.

The strike was well followed all over France.

Another postal strike has been called for December 15.

Gabou Gueye's last union congress

The congress of SNTPT Senegal

taking place 19-21 November is the last congress for Gabou Gueye as Secretary General of this union. The great African union leader will retire after the congress. UNI Global Union African Regional Secretary, Zakari Kou-dougu and UNI Post & Logistics Head of Department, Neil Anderson have been attending to say farewell to a great trade unionist who has lead his union into a position of unparalleled strength. Commenting on the Congress, Jean Souliel of the CGT France, who also came to farewell Gabou, along with Hervé Morland of the CFDT 3F France, said he was amazed and extremely pleased to see the number of young people who were delegates and taking an active part in the conference.



Neil Anderson it was clear that Gabou has passed on a vitality and progressive thinking to his union. "Gabou was the driving force behind the France Telecom Alliance and the signing of a global agreement with France Telecom, and he has passed on that mantle to this new generation of Senegalese unionists who are demanding workers rights and respect from the multinational companies operating in Africa and the world. Gabou has quietly got on with making his union a strong and viable organization and at the same time has given all his time to making sure workers rights are respected around the world. This man deserves a huge vote of thanks from all work-

ers in the world. He has been a special person, not only has he been building a union in Africa, but he has also been taking his demand for workers rights all around the world.” The union was also debating how it would face the changes taking place in the postal sector and what it would do to develop its work with organising workers in the new postal companies. Another issue was recruiting and organising workers in the ever increasing call centre industry in Senegal. Several of the delegates at the conference come from that sector.

The new team for SNTPT is:

- Mr Mamadou Diallo, elected new General Secretary of SNTPT
- Mme Ndèye Founé Niang, Sectoral General Secretary for TELECOM
- Mr Ibrahima Sarr, Sectoral General Secretary for POST & LOGISTICS

UNI demands social regulation at UPU Postal Regulation Forum

UNI Head of Post & Logistics, Neil Anderson, speaking at the UPU Postal Regulation Forum, said, liberalisation has only meant job losses, worse service for customers and has not brought the innovation and new jobs that were promised by the neo liberal thinkers who have been pushing these changes. He said speakers at this forum are now saying that a reserved area guaranteeing a affordable quality postal service is a model that should be replaced by government subsidies to maintain the USO. “This is the ramblings of discredited free market

advocates. It is plain that we need proper regulation in these markets. UNI is calling on the postal industry to “regulate deregulation”.

Several speakers talked of the need to think about the range of services provided by a universal service, including the EU Commission representative, Mr Kiljanski who said that people should now consider a 3 day delivery perhaps as a universal service and also that different prices maybe should be considered for sending mail to the more expensive areas. In response UNI said that postal communications was a two way business and it didn't matter where you posted a letter you should be able to be guaranteed a universal price regardless of posting point or destination. “This model has worked for more than 100 years and is still producing profits and quality affordable service, why break a working model?”



He also said, “Postal workers are not high paid workers and here are companies saying we can only compete if we are to slash wages and working conditions! In a time of recession these seems a crazy thing to do. We need to have proper social regulation and proper consideration of common social conditions for postal workers or we are just engaging in a race to the bottom delivering rotten service for customers.”

The UNI presentation and the presentations of all the speakers can be found on the UPU web page at:

<ftp://fornax.upu.int/Forum%20Postal%20Regulation/>

Kazakhstan: become stronger to answer the new challenges

A workshop on information and communication as the tools for trade union campaigns has been held by the UNI Moscow office for the Communication Workers Trade Union of Kazakhstan (RUCWK) on the 18-19th of November. During the workshop the main challenges, faced by RUCWK, and the organizing strategies of the trade union were also discussed.

The Communication Workers Trade Union of Kazakhstan is one of the biggest UNI affiliates in the countries of the Eastern Europe and Central Asia. Despite the economic crisis, the trade union continues to defend efficiently the rights of the trade union members through collective bargaining.

The social dialogue with the JSC “Kazpost”, and with the OJSC “Kazakhtelecom” provides a firm foundation for the structural and financial strengthening of the trade union. The modernization of the trade union structure is under way now. There were separate regional trade union organizations in Post and Telecom, until recently. Now the RUCWK is forming the united, communication workers TU organizations in each region.

“The unified organizations will be more capable to hold organizing activities” – the chair of the RUCWK Ualsher Baisariev has

pointed out.

Raising trade union capacity to hold campaigns is very important for the RUCWK, and that was the main goal of the workshop, provided by UNI MO staff. "The commitment of the TU activists and staff to master the campaigning tools, especially the web instruments, and to implement them into their trade union activity is evident. The TU is now elaborating its web site, with a support from UNI, and I'm sure, that it will be very useful" – says UNI MO coordinator Grigory Ovsyannikov.

UNI part of a workshop on social dialogue in Dakar

11 members of UNI Post&Logistics affiliates in central and west Francophone Africa took part in a workshop about Social Dialogue organized by the ILO, the UPU and UNI on November 23-25.



The following thematic were tackled in the workshop: postal modernization in Africa, managing change in the postal sector, universal service as well as HIV and AIDS and the joint HIV prevention campaign launched by UNAIDS, the ILO, the UPU and UNI.

At the end of the workshop, participants agreed and certain objectives including the promotion of social dialogue in the postal sector, the promotion of corporate social responsibility and the sus-

tainable development of postal services.



The participants were also of the opinion that efforts must be made in order to reach these objectives and that the social dialogue, whatever its form, must be reinforced.

Managing change in the postal industry was also recognized in order to insure the sustainability and the quality of postal services.

It was said that workers organizations must be consulted when structural or economic changes take place and that the various forms of social dialogue, such as collective bargaining, exchange of information, official or unofficial consultations must be properly set up and implemented.

As for the joint campaign on HIV prevention, it was said that it should be extended to other countries and that it could pave the way to other similar initiatives.

Launch of the Initiative: "For a strong post"

The Swiss Communications Union, Syndicat de la Communication, the Swiss federation of trade unions and the Socialist Party officially launched on 26 November an initiative entitled: "For a strong post".

The aim of the text is to guarantee for the future a quality postal service which is close to people, which would be financed by a reserved area and the creation of a postal bank.

By quickly gathering the 100 000 necessary signatures, those launching the initiative hope to have a word to say during the next parliamentary discussion on the liberalization of the postal market.

More information (in French, Italian and German) here:

<http://www.initiativepostale.ch/>

DHL: 788 jobs to go in Belgium

Deutsche post DHL announced last Thursday that 788 jobs at DHL express European headquarter in Belgium would be « relocated ». Accordingly, over the next two years, employees will be offered the possibility to be relocated to the DHL global headquarter in Bonn, the intercontinental hub in Leipzig or the IT centre in Prague.

It only took 17 minutes to the DP DHL management to announce the move of the DHL Express headquarter from Diegem and the loss of these jobs.

According to the unions though, more jobs will be affected, amounting to a total of around 900 jobs, including those from EAT. This represents around a sixth of the DHL workforce in Belgium, which has already been affected with considerable job cuts this year.



UNI Global Union
8-10 Av. Reverdil
1260 Nyon
Switzerland
Tel: + 41 22 365 21 32/47
Fax: + 41 22 365 21 21
postal@uniglobalunion.org
www.uniglobalunion.org