

# THE GREAT POSTAL STRIKE



CELEBRATING  
THE 50<sup>TH</sup>  
ANNIVERSARY

**S**hortly after midnight on a chilly March 18, 1970, New York City Branch 36 letter carriers moved police sawhorses left over from the recent St. Patrick's Day parade into position along the 45th Street side of the Grand Central post office and started picketing. By 1 a.m., the 51st Street police station reported that 30 picketers were there. An hour later, police reported 15 picketers outside the Murray Hill Station at 205 East 33rd St. What would become known as the Great Postal Strike—an illegal wildcat strike that threatened the jobs, pensions and even freedom of scores of America's mail carriers—had just begun.

With letter carriers and other postal workers on duty at 12:01 a.m. in Manhattan and the Bronx, news of the work stoppage spread quickly. Almost immediately, more than 25,000 postal clerks and drivers—members of the giant Manhattan-Bronx Postal Union (MBPU)—agreed to honor the picket lines and refused to go to work, bringing postal operations to a halt.

By the time the morning commute was under way, radio and newspapers throughout the city were reporting lines with hundreds of picketers. What had begun in Manhattan was spreading throughout New York City's other boroughs—Brooklyn, Queens, the Bronx and Staten Island—as well as Long Island and portions of upstate New York, and into New Jersey and Connecticut.

Those first strikers had been afraid that no one would join them, and that the strike would quickly be put down. They had good reason to be concerned, as that's exactly what had happened six months earlier. But as the strike spread to Boston



Opposite page: New York City Branch 36 letter carriers at the picket of the General Post Office on March 18, 1970.

Photo by Neal Boenzi, *The New York Times*

Right: President John F. Kennedy signs Executive Order 10988 on Jan. 17, 1962. NALC President William Doherty (l) looks on.



Branch 34, Philadelphia Branch 157, Detroit Branch 1, Cleveland Branch 40, Pittsburgh Branch 84, San Francisco Branch 214, Minneapolis Branch 9, St. Paul Branch 28, Colorado Branch 47; Chicago Branch 11 and beyond—news the Branch 36 members cheered as they heard it on their radios—they knew that this time was going to be different. The nation was finally forced to pay attention to the inequities that had been piling up for a long time.

## THE ROAD TO THE STRIKE

Before 1970, the Post Office Department was a cabinet-level department and the postmaster general was appointed by the president of the United States. Because it was a federal agency, letter carrier pay and benefits were determined by Congress. If letter carriers wanted a raise, they needed to convince Congress to pass legislation giving it to them, or they needed to convince the president to issue an executive order. Similar to today, legislation could languish and die in Congress or be vetoed by the president, which meant that letter carriers could go years without increases. When raises did come, they were often already behind the rate of inflation.

Throughout the 1950s and '60s, as the United States expanded its economic muscles and private-sector employees saw their buying power greatly increase, letter carriers fell further and further behind. Many carriers were struggling just to remain above the poverty line.

By the time of the 1970 strike, many carriers in New York City or their spouses had to work two jobs just to survive. Wages were so low that in some states, carriers were eligible to receive food stamps, Medicaid and other assistance designed for the poor.

Not only were carriers paid low wages, they had few representational rights. Until 1962, there was no collective-bargaining agreement between the union and the Post Office that spelled out the rights and obligations of both parties, and there was no grievance procedure. Even though President John F. Kennedy had recognized NALC as the organization that would represent city letter carriers in grievance discussions and in negotiations for a national contract, bargaining still excluded wages, hours and fringe benefits. And there was no mechanism for compelling the department to make an agreement or to honor it.

Morale fell so low that many carriers were leaving the Post Office for better jobs in the private sector. By 1967, it was difficult to find people willing to work as carriers.

In the August 1968 *Postal Record*, a Cincinnati, Ohio letter carrier expressed what was on the minds of many:

*Our members are sick to death of the "you have to take what they dish out" attitude. Do we have to continue to take it? ... Resolutions may be introduced [at the upcoming NALC convention], and if accepted, could give our membership the right to "carry a big stick." This would not be the first time the subject of the right to strike was brought up at conventions. The difference is, this year the delegates may just be mad enough to do something about it.*

With some of the union's national leaders urging members to embrace

*I was one of the strikers. I got hired in mid-February 1970...After three weeks and one paycheck, we went on strike. I had joined NALC on my third day of training.*

*I called my father, who was a Rheingold beer truck driver, and asked what should I do. He said if you are a union member, then you strike.*

*Next morning, I was on a picket line in Broadway Station in Long Island City, across the East River from Manhattan. We picketed for about a week, then discovered the strike was over.*

*When I reported for work, management told me, 'No, you are on probation, so you wait until we tell you to come back.' I was notified to report on April 13, 1970. I lost over a month's seniority, but was happy to be back to work with my health benefits.*

**—George T. Mangold, Long Island City, NY Branch 357**

“militant unionism,” letter carriers were becoming increasingly vocal during the summer of 1968. Alarmed, in July the Post Office Department issued a strike contingency plan to all regional directors, field postal inspectors and local postmasters in first-class offices.

At the national convention in Boston

in 1968, a resolution was put forward that called on the union’s national officers, “whenever it becomes necessary to do so...[to] use [the strike] weapon for the welfare of its members.” However, national and local leaders were concerned about the legality of authorizing a strike, and a weaker resolution was passed in its place—instructing NALC’s national officers both to “investigate fully the legal and legislative technicalities” of giving the government employees the right to strike and to study the “feasibility of removing the no-strike oath” required as a condition of postal employment.

By that winter, things got worse when newly elected President

Richard Nixon announced on Feb. 12, 1969, his administration’s intention to increase postal pay by less than 3 percent, well below the rate of inflation, which exceeded 5 percent. By May, Nixon announced his solid support for abolishing the Post Office as a cabinet-level department and replacing it with a self-supporting postal corporation, something all of the postal unions had opposed when put forward by the prior administration, that of President Lyndon Johnson.

NALC and the other postal unions believed that the nation’s postal service should remain a public service directly accountable to the people. Furthermore, NALC feared that if Congress were to lose its leading role in making postal policy, the union would lose the one powerful weapon it had developed over the years: lobbying lawmakers.

When Nixon finally issued an executive order to increase postal pay by only 4.1 percent effective on July 1, 1969, NALC President James Rademacher, recognizing how short tempers had become, sent an open letter to all members the same day urging them to “cool it”—to not engage in slow-downs or sick-outs—because the union had a comprehensive legislative battle plan to win a better increase. In a bid to pressure Congress for an improved pay package, he also announced a court challenge to the “no-strike” oath.

## MILITANT NEW YORK

Rademacher’s call to “cool it” likely came in direct response to what was happening in New York Branch 36, the union’s largest with 7,200 members in Manhattan and the Bronx. New York had become a city of strikes, with a string of successful work stoppages by municipal government workers:

*At 18 years old, I became a letter carrier in 1963 in downtown Jersey City, NJ, right across the Hudson River from Manhattan. By 1970, I had my own two-trip route, which included an hour lunch.*

*When we heard that the carriers in New York City had gone out on strike that morning, we were amazed and curious. I convinced a much older carrier to drive over there with me on our break to see for ourselves what was happening. We were able to witness hundreds of brave carriers and talk with many who were breaking the law and demanding better and fair working conditions.*

*We drove right back home and notified our branch officers of what we had witnessed firsthand. Our president immediately called an emergency meeting that night, and by a unanimous vote, we joined the strike the very next day. Many were very nervous about losing their jobs and pensions, and so was I, but seeing that these brave men with many years’ experience were willing to take a stand, most holding two jobs in order to provide for their families, I realized how little I was risking, being so young and so new to the job.*

*We set up picket lines at all our stations the very next day. No carriers went to work, the clerks and other unions would not cross our picket lines and most of the public respected us as well. Our postmaster came out and ordered us back to work, and promised that we’d all be fired if we did not. We shouted him down, and no mail moved that whole week.*

**—Walter M. Padulo, Jersey City, NJ Branch 42**



teachers, transportation workers and sanitation workers. All had won gains in wages, benefits and working conditions. New York postal workers felt that it was now their turn.

On Sunday, June 20, protests erupted all over the city, with the largest held outside the Manhattan General Post Office, where more than 2,000 letter carriers and postal clerks shouted "Strike! Strike! Strike!" while carrying signs saying "Nuts to 4.1" and "Pay, Not Peanuts." One protester even brandished a hand-written sign, "How about an all-out sick call." Meanwhile, 400 postal workers protested at the Grand Central Post Office in mid-town Manhattan, where they chanted "No Mail Monday" and "I'm Sick Monday." On the steps of the Brooklyn Post Office, a mass protest turned ugly when the police intervened and two carriers were arrested.

On that July 1, almost all of the letter carriers and postal clerks at the Kingsbridge Station in the Bronx called in sick. In response, the New York City postmaster followed the instructions from the strike contingency plan. Supervisory personnel were called in as scabs, postal inspectors launched an investigation of the action, and all absent workers were given 24 hours to answer charges that they had engaged in an illegal activity. The very next day, while all 56 letter carriers and 16 clerks at Kingsbridge were being suspended, 16 of the 36 letter carriers in the Throggs Neck Branch called in sick, and they too were suspended almost immediately.

Even though all of the employees returned to work after most had served a two-week suspension, Branch 36's rank-and-file letter carriers wanted the union to do more for the punished workers. Although the branch already had reached a settlement with postal

management allowing those carriers to use their annual leave during the two weeks they were suspended, at a special meeting members demanded that the branch also pay the suspended carriers two-thirds pay, an action that the New York Metro Area Postal Union representing the clerks at the two Bronx stations already had taken. Branch 36's leaders convinced members to vote the motion down at the time, and did the same throughout the fall, but the members who supported the Kingsbridge and Throggs Neck carriers began to build a network of like-minded carriers.

In an effort to keep the lid on, Rademacher traveled to New York in August for a special meeting of Branch 36. He told cheering carriers that pay legislation was certain to pass within the next six weeks, and that if it didn't, he would personally lead a strike. He urged calm in the meantime.

Six weeks came and went and Branch 36 members were far from calm. An article in *Time* magazine later described the December branch meeting: "Stamping their feet and clapping their hands, members of Branch 36 broke up their December meeting with raucous cries of 'Strike! Strike!'"

Despite his promise to strike if legislation wasn't enacted, Rademacher said later that he felt that the threat of the strike, and not the strike itself, was the weapon of choice to force Congress to approve a decent wage



**Top:** Forty letter carriers from Brooklyn Branch 41 who had applied for welfare in 1969.

**Above:** NALC called for Congress to pass a pay bill in 1962. Before the strike, letter carrier wages could only be increased by an act of Congress or a presidential executive order.



NALC President Rademacher (r) met with President Richard Nixon (l) on Dec. 18, 1969.

for his members. He feared that if a strike were called, only a few members might go out. So, in December 1969, when Nixon asked Rademacher to meet privately with him to forge a compromise on postal pay and postal reform, the NALC president went to the White House.

At this meeting, Nixon agreed to support a 5.4 percent pay increase effective Jan. 1, 1970. In return, Rademacher endorsed the idea of an independent “postal authority” which, because the strike ban was retained, would bargain with postal unions over wages, hours and working conditions, with binding arbitration as a last resort for issues the parties could not resolve.

Postal strikers at the 369th Regimental Armory in New York City refusing to return to work.

Photo by Jack Manning, *The New York Times*



But the Nixon-Rademacher compromise just incensed the Branch 36 carriers, and at their January 1970 meeting the members rejected the branch leadership’s endorsement of the pact and also finally passed the proposal to compensate the suspended Bronx carriers. But that was nothing compared to the March 12 meeting.

On that day, a House committee had approved a bill reflecting the Nixon-Rademacher compromise; shortly after, at the regular branch meeting, Branch 36 President Gustave “Gus” Johnson was interrupted as he delivered a report about the Nixon-Rademacher bill. Although the branch’s executive board had earlier directed stewards to tell carriers to oppose calling for a strike, angry carriers exploded with shouts of “No, no! Not enough! Strike! Enough talk! Strike!” and demanded a strike vote. Raucous debate verging on a brawl ended with an agreement to meet again on March 17, and hold a strike vote at that time.

## THE STRIKE VOTE

By some accounts, nearly 4,000 letter carriers attended that special strike meeting at the Manhattan Center; emotions ran so high that when the meeting did not start on time, many carriers banged on the doors to be let in.

Branch leaders, opposed to a strike, challenged members’ credentials. Only six voting booths were set up, and the voting took so long that one attendee estimated that more than 1,000 carriers became discouraged and left without voting.

Despite the persistent calls for a work stoppage, the possible consequences for letter carriers were serious. Not only could they lose their jobs because they were striking against the



federal government in direct violation of the law, they also faced fines of \$1,000 and felony charges of up to a year in prison. Those who were military veterans and longtime carriers could lose all of the time earned toward a civil service pension.

The tension in the room was palpable as carriers waited after voting to find out the results. At about 10:30 p.m. the voting stopped and, after some 30 minutes of tabulating, the results were announced: 1,555—yes; 1,055—no. NALC's largest local had chosen by a 3-to-2 ratio to strike against the government regardless of whether the national union joined the strike.

Branch President Johnson announced that the branch would be on strike at 12:01 a.m. on March 18. "There will be no mail delivery tomorrow in New York," he said, adding, "Your voice has been heard tonight."

On stage with him was Brooklyn Branch 41 President Jack Leventhal, who promised that his branch would go out on strike, too, as well as MBPU President Moe Biller, who vowed that his members would not cross the picket line. This meant that 25,000 postal clerks and drivers would be joining Branch 36's and Branch 41's carriers.

The support of clerks was vital, as carriers could refuse to deliver the mail, but people could simply go to the post office and collect their mail there. With clerks and drivers honoring the strike, the whole postal system became inoperable.

Only an hour later, letter carriers moved the sawhorses into position and started picketing. That day the New York *Daily News* declared on its front page, "Strike Hits Manhattan, Bronx Mail" and *The New York Times*' front page said, "Mail Carriers Go on Strike in Manhattan and Bronx."

By that afternoon, almost no postal workers had crossed the picket line in the city's five boroughs. The strike spread into New Jersey, Massachusetts, Connecticut, Pennsylvania, Ohio, Illinois, Michigan, Wisconsin, Minnesota, Colorado and California. Within five days, the strikers numbered more than 200,000 (out of 739,000 workers) in 671 post offices.

Vincent Sombrotto, a rank-and-file Branch 36 member who had held no office before the strike, was one of the most vocal leaders and was there as the first picket line went up, providing oak tag from the back of his truck for signs. He recalled later how being on strike was empowering for the carriers: "Bill Braginetz said it best... 'For the first time, I finally feel like a human being,' he told me with tears in his eyes on the afternoon of March 18, 1970, as we walked up and down East 45th Street in front of the Grand Central Station post office."

## TAKING ON THE GOVERNMENT AND NALC LEADERSHIP

Almost immediately after Branch 36 set up its picket lines, the Nixon administration began maneuvering to break the workers' revolt. Government lawyers in New York obtained an injunction ordering a return to work. But Branch 36's strikers defied the order.

The March 30, 1970 edition of *Time* magazine described the strike's effect on government and businesses as devastating. "Many of the country's largest corporations are headquartered in [New York City]; most depend upon the mail for conducting their business," it explained. Wall Street considered shutting down trading because of the lack of mail service, but decided not to.

As the strike extended across the country, NALC President Rademacher



Vincent Sombrotto (second from l) was one of the most vocal leaders of the strike contingent in Branch 36.

*I was a member of the Hollywood, FL branch and a shop steward. Between March 18 and 23, 1970, there was a branch meeting in Hollywood... I led the charge to strike; however, the vote was to wait for Miami, FL Branch 1071 to strike—if they did, we would follow... .*

*The carriers around the nation who went on strike returned to work about March 23, 1970. Shortly thereafter, the PM of Hollywood, PM Williams, a political appointee, called me in his office and said I was the leader of the action to go out on strike and I was a communist and it would be treason to go out on strike. Williams said he would find a way to fire me... .*

*About a couple weeks later, he did fire me, saying I was an unsafe driver. I was out over six months, no pay, and came back to work after Williams retired.*

**—Matty Rose, South Florida Branch 1071**

*Des Plaines, IL Branch 2076 went out on strike on Friday morning, March 20, 1970.*

*On that morning at 5 a.m., the carriers took a strike vote and all the carriers voted to strike... Picket lines were set up at the three Des Plaines stations. A formal vote was taken at 4 p.m. with more than 100 carriers in attendance, and the vote was unanimous—not one dissenting vote.*

*The branch president organized a picket schedule of carriers around the clock to stop incoming mail trucks from delivering to the post office. The carriers were successful, as the truckers honored the picket line. Supervisors would try to lead the trucks into the post office, and when the truck drivers saw the picket lines, they would drive away. Carriers were assigned shifts of four hours to man the picket lines...*

*The special delivery union and the clerks' union supported the carriers' strike and honored the picket lines. We had a lot of support from Des Plaines residents and businesses. Because of all the carriers and clerks sticking together on the strike line, a settlement was reached and the carriers returned to work."*

**—James Sauer, Des Plaines, IL Branch 2076**

was caught between his loyalty to his members and his concern for the union's future. He understood all the reasons why his members had walked off their jobs, yet he feared that if he assumed leadership of the wildcat strike, making it official, the government would totally crush the union—bankrupt it with fines, padlock its offices, strip away its jurisdiction, jail its officers and fire its members. Rademacher later would acknowledge that there are times when workers have no choice but to strike—he simply felt that the morning of March 18 was not such a time.



As the strike took on steam that first day, Postmaster General Winton Blount embargoed all mail going in and out of New York City; at the White House, Nixon's chief of staff, H.R. Haldeman, wrote in his notes, "Start of a postal strike today that could spread beyond New York, [President] wants to be sure we do what we could."

On March 20, Haldeman wrote that Nixon's "first reaction was for really tough stand, examine the law, if people can be fired, fire them, if troops can be moved, move them. Wants to do something now... not worried about the mail, it's the principle."

Washington was abuzz with leaders trying to end the strike, from Nixon and the White House to Rademacher at NALC Headquarters, from the secretary of labor to AFL-CIO President George Meany. But on March 21, at a Branch 36 meeting of nearly 6,000 members at the Harlem Armory, Branch President Johnson—who had quickly pivoted from opposing the strike to being a strike leader—read out a court order demanding that the letter carriers return to work, along with a telegram from Rademacher that outlined an agreement between him and the secretary of labor. In a vote, the branch decided emphatically to continue to strike.

Television cameras captured the action and broadcast it to the nation. The public was largely sympathetic to the letter carriers' plight, recognizing their low pay and their status in the community. A Gallup poll conducted during the strike found 80 percent of Americans supporting a postal pay raise, 41 percent backing an independent postal agency, and 62 percent behind the use of troops to move the mail. A post-strike survey showed support for the strikers at 61 percent with only 25 percent opposed. Recognizing the largely positive image of letter carriers in society, news magazines started referring to the strike as the "Revolt of the Good Guys."

Trying to escape his dilemma and end the crisis, Rademacher first attempted to persuade the strikers to return to work. After being told by the



Nixon administration that negotiations would begin once the strike ended and only then, the NALC president carried this message to an emergency meeting of the presidents of the union's 300 largest branches on March 20 in Washington, DC. He personally urged the presidents to call their members back to work so he could pursue negotiations, and in a spirited, noisy session, hundreds of local leaders accepted the idea with this proviso: If agreement wasn't reached in five days, Rademacher would lead a nationwide strike.

The next day, Saturday, March 21, Rademacher sent a telegram to all 6,500 NALC branches outlining that plan. But the back-to-work appeal had virtually no impact on the picket lines, because for many of the strikers, the wildcat strike was aimed as much at the union's failures as at the government's. At a meeting of Branch 36 the same day, the members voted almost unanimously to stay off the job. In the rest of the country, branches voted to walk out, stay out or schedule a walkout should Rademacher's five-day deadline pass without an agreement.

His efforts at persuasion having failed, Rademacher turned on the strikers. At a press conference Sunday, March 22, he charged that the New York City walkout had been instigated partly by "subversive" elements—members of the left-wing Students for a Democratic Society. That charge would haunt Rademacher for years after the strike, and he later said that he had received bad information. The NALC president also threatened Branch 36's leaders with expulsion from the NALC, and sent national officers out to the field to quash support for the strike.

But on the picket lines, most striking carriers and clerks were listening

to neither the administration's nor Rademacher's promises, for despite the pleas from the national union, fewer than 60 of the approximately 200 branches out on strike returned to work. President Nixon, with business interests clamoring for action and the impact of the strike rolling across the country, went on the offensive in a bid to end the crisis.

## CALLING IN THE TROOPS

On March 23, in a nationally televised address, Nixon took his case to the American people. He issued Proclamation 3972, declaring a national emergency, along with Executive Order 11519, calling on the military to move the mail.

He ordered the deployment of 26,000 troops from the Navy, Marine Corps, Naval Reserve, Marine Corps Reserve, Air Force, Air Force Reserve, Air National Guard, Army, Army Reserve and Army National Guard and directed the secretary of the defense "to take such action as he deems necessary."

In the address, Nixon said that he sympathized with the strikers and their legitimate grievances, including "inequities in postal pay and benefits." He said that he aimed "to eliminate the source of those grievances, that is, the obsolete postal system itself, a system that no longer serves its employees, its customers, or the country as it should." He added that despite his sympathy for the strikers and his belief in creating a better system, he would not tolerate public-sector employees



Some of the coverage of the postal strike in March, 1970







**Top:** The mail began to pile up as letter carriers and postal clerks went out on strike in Chicago.

*AP Wide World Photos*

**Above:** A soldier from Fort Dix, NJ sorts mail at the Brooklyn General Post Office.

*Photo by: Barton Silverman, The New York Times*

interfering with essential services. "What is at issue then is the survival of a government based upon law," he said.

Postmaster Blount then informed the press that there would be no negotiations "with people who are in the process of violating the law." He called on the strikers to return to work and on Congress to pass legislation combining a fix in postal pay with postal reform.

The troops were ineffective: They never moved much mail, as shipments had been embargoed across the country, and the military units lacked the skills possessed by craft workers. Several troop workers reported that they had not been given the training necessary to understand how to sort the mail, were sabotaged by carriers who had pulled the labels off their cases when they went out on strike, or were not motivated to move the mail. In fact, many letter carriers had to leave the picket lines because they were called up to do their second job: military reservist.

Still, Nixon's use of soldiers as scabs, his implied threat to send troops to other cities, the mounting legal pressure and threatened fines, the criticism of the wildcat action by AFL-CIO President George Meany plus Rademacher's appeals and claims

of progress, convinced many postal workers to return to work. But not the strikers in New York City.

It was only when the officers of Branch 36, relaying information provided by the union's national leadership, assured the striking letter carriers that an agreement had been reached with the administration that seemed to meet nearly every demand that the carriers and clerks in New York City put down their picket signs and returned to work. The strike ended on March 25.

In fact, however, no such agreement existed, for what became known as the "phantom package" was simply NALC's proposal—a retroactive 12 percent pay increase, fully paid health benefits, an eight-year pay scale, collective bargaining with binding arbitration and full amnesty for the strikers. Whether this was a deliberate deception, as many believed at the time, or a misunderstanding, the effect was an end to the strike.

The New York carriers never formally voted to return to work, but the eight-day revolt was over. First to go out and last to go back, New York City's letter carriers had shown a resolve and courage that would not be forgotten.

## THE STRIKE'S LEGACY

As soon as the New York strikers returned to their jobs, Rademacher and other postal union leaders, assisted by the AFL-CIO, began round-the-clock negotiations with the Post Office Department. By April 2, the parties reached an agreement they thought would satisfy the demands of the carriers and clerks who, at great personal risk, had defied both the federal government and their national leaders.

The "Memorandum of Agreement" (MOA) expressed the postal unions'

and the Department's accord in four basic areas: pay increases totaling 14 percent—6 percent retroactive to Dec. 27, 1969, and an additional 8 percent effective whenever a postal reform bill was enacted; support for the establishment of an independent postal authority; collective bargaining over wages, hours and working conditions with unresolved issues to be settled through final and binding arbitration; and “compression” of the time required for postal workers to reach the top step of their grade level from 21 years to eight.

Congress quickly approved the 6 percent retroactive pay increase, and this became law on April 15. Obtaining congressional approval of the remaining elements of the MOA proved more difficult, and it was not until Aug. 12, 1970 that the Postal Reorganization Act became law.

Letter carriers and other postal workers had, at long last, achieved full collective bargaining with their employer. Rademacher himself would be partly vindicated, for as the decades ahead proved, the postal reform legislation he had supported brought collective bargaining to postal employees, freeing them from “collective begging”—the total dependence on their elected representatives for pay increases.

Rademacher led the NALC's bargaining team on the very first national agreement with the new Postal Service in 1971. Not only did that contract provide for wage increases and a cost-of-living adjustment—the first ever for postal employees—it also contained a “no lay-off” clause that prohibited the Postal Service from laying off carriers and other bargaining-unit employees “on an involuntary basis.” These became cornerstone rights and benefits for letter carriers ever since.

“The salary part of it was always important,” Rademacher recalled in an interview several years ago. “It's important to everybody. But looking ahead, collective bargaining means salary. To me we needed the pay, but collective bargaining was the future of the union.”

The strike propelled Sombrotto to election as Branch 36 president and eventually as president of the entire NALC. He brought the same leadership skills to the national level, where in his 24 years in that position he negotiated contract after contract that helped improve and solidify the pay and benefits of letter carriers. Sombrotto also oversaw the transformation of the union, both financially and in the representation and services the union provides to its members, until his retirement in 2002.

In a video on the strike's 40th anniversary, Sombrotto said the strike “gave you a feeling that you were something. You can speak up and you can do things that make it better for yourself and for others.”

Indeed, only through the strike could carriers have achieved substantial economic and legislative gains. The long struggle of letter carriers for dignity and justice had taken a major step forward. The strike was a largely uncoordinated, spontaneous uprising of aggrieved workers longing not only for economic justice but also for a voice and a recognition of their dignity and humanity. **PR**

*When I was hired in December of 1963, I was designated a part-time flexible, with no guarantee of hours, and my hourly rate was \$2.16 per hour. I was not eligible for overtime—it was \$2.16 per hour whether it was my first hour of duty or my twelfth... .*

*A week after the initial walk-out, Palo Alto Branch 1019 called a special meeting to be held in the vacant field next to the then-East Meadow carrier station. There were about 90 percent of the carriers of Palo Alto at this meeting. The meeting contained anger, frustration, resolve and fear... .*

*Our branch president, Al Lee, instructed the carriers who supported the strike to move to his left and those who vote not to support the strike to move to his right. The vote to strike was about 170 to 20 to support the strike. And now it's on!*

**—John Spencer, Palo Alto, CA Branch 1019**



**NALC President Rademacher signs the first collective-bargaining agreement on July 1971 as PMG Blount (l) looks on.**



# UNDERSTANDING THE STRIKE'S BROADER IMPACT ON LABOR

**W**e know the significance the Great Postal Strike of 1970 had, and continues to have, for letter carriers and other postal employees. It gave us collective-bargaining rights, a path to the middle class and a new employer—the United States Postal Service. It also gave NALC and letter carriers a special sense of accomplishment that reverberates to this day.

But, with the benefit of a half-century perspective, what are the strike's links to, and impact on, the broader labor movement? Assessing historical meaning always is a complex task—and the Great Postal Strike was a unique occurrence with multiple moving parts.

Timing and location are critical to understanding the strike's genesis and impact.

"New York City was ahead of the curve in terms of public-sector union strength," said Gene Carroll of Cornell University ILR School's Worker Institute and adjunct professor at the City University of New York, where he teaches public-sector union history.

New York City Mayor John Lindsay's first day in office in 1966 was marked by a transit workers' strike that shut down the largest U.S. city, Carroll notes; two years later, a bitter teachers' strike closed city schools and sanitation workers waged a massive strike.

If letter carriers in New York took inspiration from a 1960s environment featuring increasingly aggressive public-sector unions, their strike took things to a new level in the 1970s.

The fact that the postal walkout occurred "just as the public-sector movement was beginning to hit its stride," said Joseph McCartin, professor of labor history at Georgetown University, makes it "one of the most important events in the labor movement's history over the past century."

"It set the tone for the whole

public-sector worker movement," he said. "The postal strike opened up a possibility of expansion, growth and militancy. It energized other public-sector workers and helped establish the fact that militancy could win substantial gains for those workers."

Over the new decade, McCartin said, "You see a big growth in public-sector workers going out on strike to win their demands, even in cases where it was illegal, as it was illegal for postal workers."

Two momentous trends just beginning when the postal strike occurred—involving the economy and labor movement—would magnify its effect.

Economically, the country had been doing well in the post-World War II era. U.S. corporations faced few challenges, with Europe rebuilding and Germany and Japan reeling from wartime defeats. But by the late 1960s, American companies were seeing profit rates slow as global competition increased while, for the first time in a century, U.S. imports exceeded exports.

Faced with a changing world, U.S. corporations realized they couldn't control globalization but that "one thing they can control is their workers," said Lane Windham, author of *Knocking on Labor's Door*, about private-sector union organizing in the 1970s. Windham, former AFL-CIO media outreach director, earned a Ph.D. in history and has served on the board of directors of the Labor and Working Class History Association.

Companies began reducing benefits while pushing back on unions by using strike breakers and violating labor laws at the very time an increasingly diverse workforce was "demanding full access to the American Dream," Windham said.

Private-sector unions and workers, now taking it on the chin, responded. "The entire decade of the 1970s is re-

ally one of class conflict, of blue-collar battles," Windham said. "Working people fought and they lost, and their unions came under immense fire"—setting the stage for decades of rising income inequality and weakened private-sector unions to this day.

But the public sector was less susceptible to the shipping of jobs overseas and other corporate actions harming private-sector unions and intimidating workers. In addition, the number of public employees was rising, as government expanded with President Lyndon Johnson's Great Society initiatives. So public-sector unions began to grow even as private-sector unions were starting to decline, meaning that the postal strike occurred "right at a moment that was a fulcrum in labor history," Windham said.

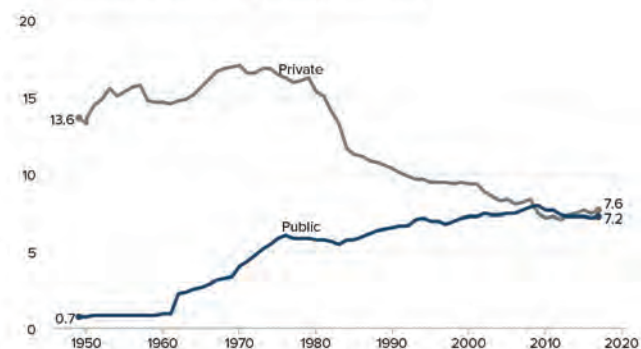
Public-sector unions catapulted over their private-sector counterparts in union density in the 1970s.

The postal strike focused particular attention on the public sector, given the number of workers involved, the nationwide reach, letter carriers' daring in ignoring the prohibition against striking—and the outcome. "Here's an example of a group of workers in the beginning of the decade who took on their employer and won," Windham said.

The strike lent momentum to considerations in states and localities about providing collective bargaining and other rights for public-sector unions, said John Russo, a founding member of the Center for Working-Class Studies at Youngstown State University and now a visiting scholar at Georgetown University's Kalmanovitz Initiative for Labor and the Working Poor.

"It played a very pivotal role in that period, in helping establish collective bargaining at the state and local levels for public employees," Russo said. "It gave a type of energy to teachers and state and county municipal

Union members by sector, 1949–2017 (in millions)



Source: EPI analysis of Current Population Survey Outgoing Rotation Group microdata and Labor Research Association data

Economic Policy Institute

employees. With state or city or school boards that had laws that prohibited that type of public-sector bargaining, it helped push that discussion, which was already moving, toward collective bargaining in the public sector.”

At the federal level, those with postal oversight in Congress watched closely, said Jennifer Klein, Yale University professor of labor history.

“The massive postal workers’ strike really caught their attention: How long are we really going to leave public-sector workers out of what has become the norm; employment with dignity, with security, labor standards, negotiation rights?” Klein said. The 1970 strike was “on the crest of public-sector unions’ push for inclusion in the New Deal benefits that had been applied to the private sector 30 years earlier,” and so was vital “in getting the attention of representatives in the House who were responsible for this, and even in the Senate.” Officials also worried about the prospect of continuing “disruptive strikes” in the public sector.

As a result, Klein said: “That really does get on the political agenda in the early 1970s.”

The postal strike encouraged aggressiveness among public-sector unions for hospital workers, sanitation workers,

local levels, a federal equivalent to the National Labor Relations Act was not realized for public employees, partly because of conservative pushback.

Moreover, President Ronald Reagan’s 1981 firing of striking air traffic controllers emboldened employers and put labor on the defensive, accelerating its decline in membership and clout.

Does that mean the postal strike’s broader impact quickly dissipated, with the letter carriers’ bold action inaugurating a decade of activity and the air traffic controllers’ defeat bookending the period?

The short answer is no.

The growth in prominence and power of public-sector unions, sparked in part by the letter carriers’ actions, provided the labor movement—including the private sector—with solidarity and resources that sustained it in tough times.

In fact, the rising number of unionized public employees and shrinking number of private workers in unions crossed lines in 2010—making government workers the majority within the labor movement for the first time.

“It was extremely important that the letter carriers won and postal workers got the kind of contract they got,” Klein said, “because as private-sector unionism has declined, public-sector unions have become the bedrock of organized

social workers and nursing home workers, which helped link labor rights, civil rights and women’s rights within the burgeoning public-sector movement, she said.

And yet, while progress for public employees took place on state and

labor and have grown in importance throughout the late 20th century and into the early 21st century.”

Moreover, she said, labor’s history serves as an inspiration for future generations: “Workers are empowered when they are able to reclaim their history.”

As public-sector unions face threats in Wisconsin and other states from Great Recession-related financial austerity, privatization and legislation targeting collective-bargaining rights, the use of strikes has resurfaced, particularly among teachers.

“Looking back from the perspective of 50 years,” McCartin said, “nobody would have predicted back in 1970 the tremendous growth in the public sector. The teachers’ strikes might have an impact in our times similar to what the postal strike had 50 years ago. What the strike showed is how...even in a difficult situation workers can come together and make a big change.”

Lowell Turner, who recently retired after decades teaching labor at Cornell University’s ILR School, was a young San Francisco letter carrier when he joined the 1970 strike.

“What that showed was what people can accomplish when they stand up for themselves,” Turner said. The current “wave of strikes, by teachers and others,” reflects “a similar situation to what we faced back in 1970, with no respect, low pay—and then the lid came off.”

“That spirit of militancy, when it’s necessary, that’s never going to die,” he said. “It might have gotten beaten down by the [air traffic controllers’ strike], by 40 years of union busting and decline in terms of the numbers, and yet people are still willing to strike when need be.”

Labor’s “institutional memory” of the postal strike inspires workers even today, Turner said. “The upsurge in labor militancy we see now reflects the same phenomenon: beaten down, fight back.” **PR**



# NEW BOOK TELLS STRIKE HISTORY, SHINES LIGHT ON CURRENT CRISIS

**A** new book is being released to coincide with the 50th anniversary of The Great Postal Strike and letter carriers' stories are a big part of it. The book, *Undelivered: From the Great Postal Strike of 1970 to the Manufactured Crisis of the U.S. Postal Service*, was written by Philip Rubio, a former 20-year letter carrier who became a history professor.

It's not the first book Rubio has written about the mail; previously he wrote *There's Always Work at the Post Office: African American Postal Workers and the Fight for Jobs, Justice and Equality*.

"It was in the back of my mind to write about the 1970 wildcat strike while I was still writing *There's Always Work at the Post*

*Office*," Rubio said. "I was always amazed that this groundbreaking rank-and-file action had been largely forgotten—even by labor historians."

But he didn't want the book to focus exclusively on the strike, seeing a connection to the Postal Service's current financial crisis. "The crisis is something I argue in the book was politically manufactured, originating with the 2006 Postal Accountability and Enhancement Act (PAEA) during the George W. Bush administration, not the rise of the internet. The idea of how the strike, the subsequent reorganization of the Post Office since the USPS and the 2009 crisis were connected came to me after I started writing."

Rubio attended the 2014 NALC Convention in Philadelphia to conduct interviews with 55 letter carriers who had been involved in the strike. The picture the interviews paint is one of a rich tapestry that includes differing opinions and experiences.

"Carriers told me of strike debates and votes held in union halls, bars, swing rooms or even on the work-room floor," he said. "Some of these debates and votes started in the weeks preceding the strike, while others happened spontaneously."

In addition, he did research into the archives of the USPS, NALC, American Postal Workers Union and others, with help from current and retired postal employees and union staff members.

"The strike was a game changer with unintended consequences," Rubio said. "It compelled the federal government to provide collective bargaining to the postal unions and forced the unions to instill greater internal democracy."

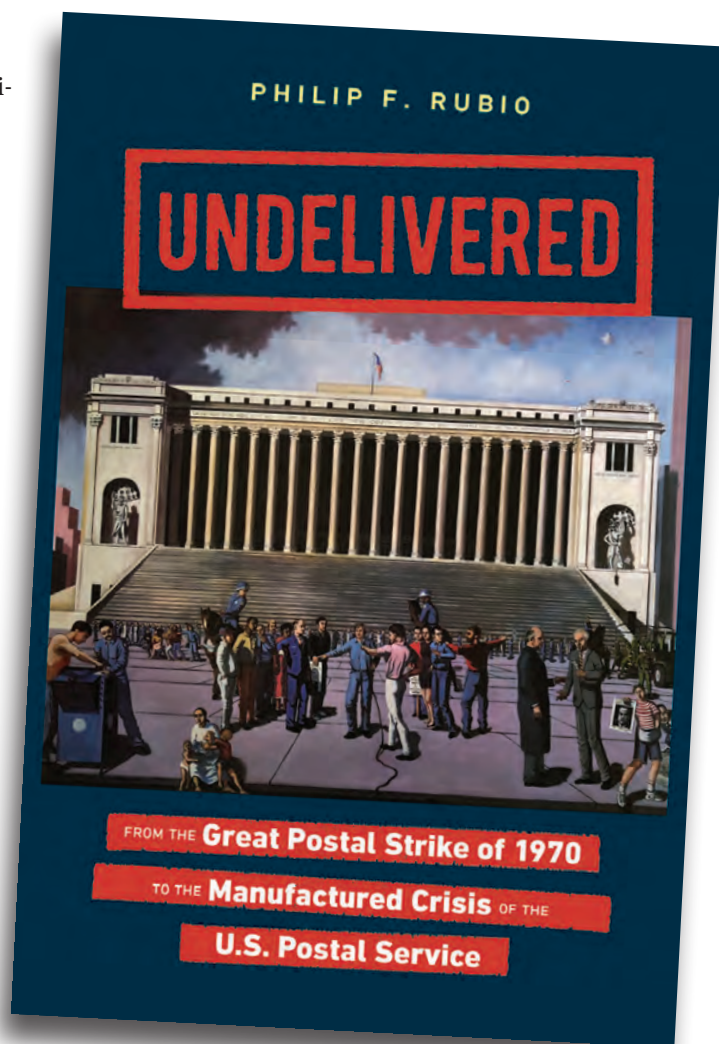
"But forces in government and the private sector that favored a diminishing of union power tried to take advantage of the sudden whopping debt the

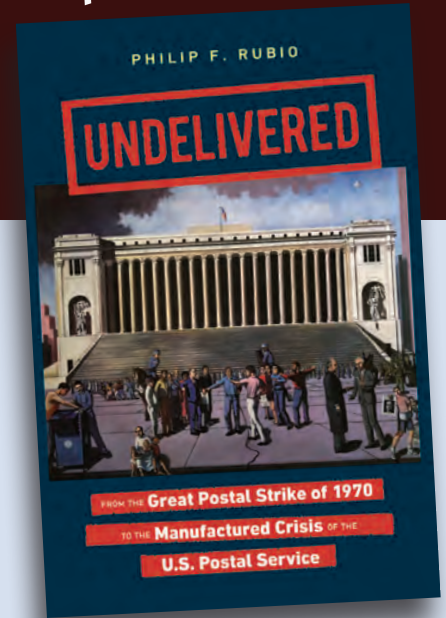
PAEA imposed on the government/corporate USPS to create a narrative of an obsolete Postal Service and redundant postal workers. The postal unions began using that rank-and-file spirit of 1970 to mobilize members and the public to push back."

The book is available through The University of North Carolina Press at [uncpress.org/book/9781469655468/undelivered](http://uncpress.org/book/9781469655468/undelivered). Rubio and his publisher have allowed NALC to print the following excerpt (on pages 27-31) in advance of its publication. **PR**



Philip Rubio





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## The First Picket Lines

Just after midnight, Branch 36 and MBPU picketers at GCSPPO moved the “sawhorse” wooden police barricades still in place from the St. Patrick’s Day parade the day before onto the sidewalk in front of the building. The police barricades thus became an innovative as well as a symbolic and defiant way of establishing a solid object complement to what would soon become moving picket lines across the city that included homemade signs in English or Spanish. These picket lines would grow across the city and much of the United States. Vincent Sombrotto, who became a leading figure in the strike, had grown up in East Harlem (then called “Italian Harlem”) and been neighbors with Frank Orapello. Sombrotto had served in the Navy during World War II, had started working at the post office in 1947 at Christmas, and “made regular” (become a full-time career employee) in 1949. A route that he carried out of GCSPPO was renamed for him in 2014 (Branch 36’s Manhattan office building and the NALC national headquarters in Washington, D.C., are both also named after him.) At the time of the strike, he was a forty-six-year-old father of six who drove a truck as his second job. In many ways, Sombrotto became the iconic public face of the strike. Sombrotto remembered getting oak tag out of the back of his pickup truck to make picket signs along with Eddie Morris and Charlie Springer, and watching “about a hundred” letter carrier routers, clerks, and mail handlers coming out of the building while those coming to work respected the picket line. Cleveland Morgan, twenty-seven at the time and married with two children, proudly shared this recollection: “We went over to Grand Central, Sombrotto, some more guys that went over there, put up the [saw]horses ... and that morning ... we were picketing....It was history!”

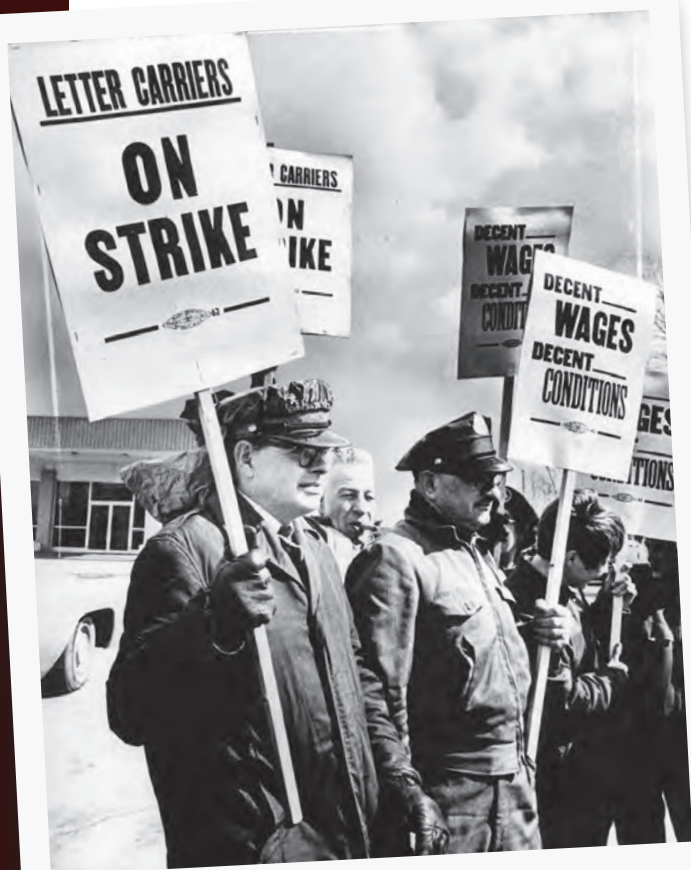
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Picket lines in New York were also going up in Brooklyn and the Bronx. Branch 36 member John Phelan had voted to strike the night before at the Manhattan Center and has this recollection: “I showed up before 6 a.m. at ... Morris Heights Station on Jerome Ave. in the Bronx” with “a couple dozen” other carriers and clerks “just milling around. We knew we had to set up a picket line but we had no ‘on strike’ signs.” Phelan’s solution to the problem was to bang on the “cargo area doors” until the station manager, Sandy Brewer, came out. “I asked for some assistance: poster paper, crayons or felt tip pens and broomsticks.... Surprisingly, within a short period, Mr. Brewer showed up with a load of material.” Stories of supervisor cooperation during this strike are common, though not universal by any means. Phelan’s conclusion is the same as other strikers I have spoken to: “Maybe Mr. Brewer figured that whatever we would get in pay or benefits he would get more, and he was right.”

Also striking that first day were carriers at the Central Islip Post Office in Long Island, New York, according to local branch member Jaime Rodriguez. Rodriguez, who is Puerto Rican, had been a member of Branch 36 before transferring to Long Island—as were most carriers in that small branch (now part of Long Island Branch 6000). He described the tension after hearing that Branch 36 had voted to strike. “While we cased mail the conversation on the floor was: do we go out with Branch 36 or do we wait it out?” Their supervisor, he said, actually gave them time to meet in the swing room to discuss it, “and after a go-around we decided to join Branch 36.”



**NALC Branch 2184's picket line at the Dearborn, Michigan Post Office**  
 Photo by: Ira Rosenberg, *Detroit Free Press*



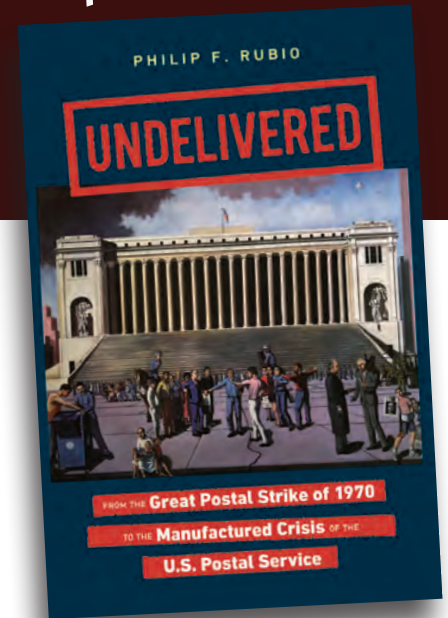
Also striking on Long Island, in Massapequa, was Matthew Illicete, then the branch secretary of NALC Branch 4202 (now merged with Branch 6000). Forty-two years old, he had eighteen years of seniority and was married with five children. Initially opposed to the strike, he nevertheless joined it after the branch voted to strike at their meeting hall. "We actually walked out of the post office," he said, while the station supervisor was taking their pictures. All the carriers walked out, with the clerks joining some days later. In Jamaica, Queens, the NALC Branch 562 had about 600 members. Anthony Parrotta said, "We knew it was coming," and tells of union delegates instructing carriers to walk out of the office that morning. But in Flushing, Queens, Thomas Idoyaga, who had emigrated from Cuba in 1957 at the age of twenty-two, recalls that the strike came "as a total surprise" to his Branch 1094. As soon as they heard the news, they walked out, calling a meeting to vote to strike on Thursday. Branch 3795 (now

part of Branch 38 merged) in Springfield, New Jersey, went out that day also, remembers Dave McDonald, who said they took a vote in the post office swing room. Much to their surprise, their "conservative" Italian-American branch president called for a strike vote that he advocated, and they voted "unanimously." They got support from almost all residents, although the postmaster's wife drove by and yelled, "Get back to work you scumbags!" In Paterson, New Jersey, Murray Ross was president of NALC Branch 120 at the time of the strike, and declared with pride that "in New Jersey we were the first to go out on strike and the last to go back." He added an observation that many NALC strikers voiced: "In my opinion the strike was also against the NALC and the New Jersey State Association," and for that reason Ross believes he "was not very popular with the national and state association officers."

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Across the country in San Jose, California, Mexican-American letter carrier Hector Gallardo was listening to music on the radio that morning while "casing" mail. Gallardo had been working at a sub-station in East San Jose at the time, having transferred from nearby San Francisco, where he was born in 1942. His father had been a union machinist who himself had been on strike more than once during his career. Still a "sub" and a "floater" (carrying regular carriers' routes on their days off) at the time, Gallardo was married "with two kids, one on the way," he said. He remembers that the music he was listening to on the radio that morning was interrupted with a "news flash of the New York City carrier strike. It was like a tidal wave!" He tried calling the branch president, but got no answer, so he walked out along with about twenty-five other carriers. Meet-

ings were called later at the branch hall that he described as "hot" with "people letting off steam." Rank-and-file members were at odds with local officers, and "most military retirees were afraid of losing their pensions....Everybody was caught off guard, but everybody was united" after the strike vote.



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Also on strike in San Francisco was Alfred Chircop, a special delivery carrier, who reflected on some ironic advice his father gave him while he was deciding the previous year what kind of job to apply for: “I had a choice to make in 1969 at the age of 19. I could join the Teamsters Union—I was making \$4.44 an hour as a lumper (casual)—or join the Post Office for \$2.95 an hour. My father advised me to take the Post Office job because there were no strikes or layoffs. Less than a year later we were on strike!”

Back in New York City, Mother Nature was not being kind to picketers. There had been a cold early-spring rain all day—something most letter carriers were used to—with temperatures topping out in the upper thirties. If all eyes (and ears) of the nation’s postal workers were on New York, in the city itself picket lines were growing with carriers, clerks, and mail handlers, while the numbers crossing those lines were thinning to a trickle. “Only a handful of Tour I personnel showed up for work that evening,” Tom Germano reported. “Two actually went into the post office, the rest joined the picket line. At about 1:00 a.m. the last pickets abandoned the lines. As far as the GPO strikers were concerned, the first day had gone well.”

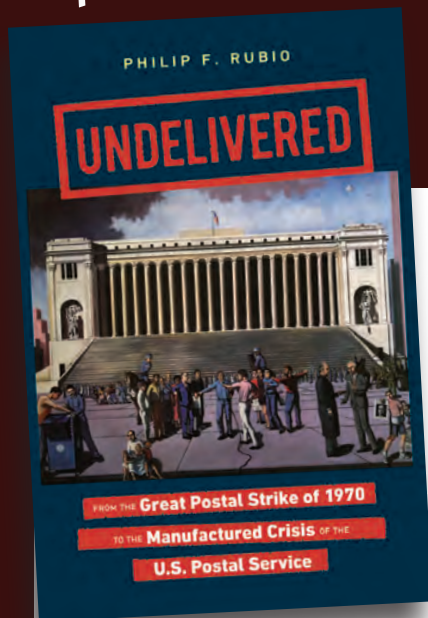
Yet if history was being made that day at midtown Manhattan post office picket lines, there was also plenty of dramatic labor activity that night a few blocks away at the Statler Hilton on West Thirty-Third Street and Seventh Avenue. “It was fabulous! Everybody was on fire!” is how Eleanor Bailey, an African American GPO clerk, recalls the raucous meeting Wednesday night at the Statler Hilton. At least one-quarter of the MBPU’s massive membership packed the Statler ballroom, even spilling out onto the street. Most members had refused to cross carrier picket lines since the first day of the strike. Bailey, known for stopping strikebreakers from sneaking into the GPO, even warned her father, who worked as a GPO mail handler and had gone to work after the strike began. “Dad,” she told him, “I promise you—cross the picket line, I will break your legs!”

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Paul Daniels was a member of NALC Branch 227 in Meriden, Connecticut, a small town halfway between Hartford and New Haven. He describes a raucous branch meeting at the Knights of Columbus Hall on Willow Street that went on for roughly five hours on the night of Thursday, March 19—following a contentious meeting the previous night. Daniels was one of those who had been pushing for a strike. The story he tells resembles that of many other striking postal union branches and locals:

We were split between the young kids that wanted to go on strike, and the older carriers that had legitimate concerns about their pensions. They didn’t know if they were gonna go to jail. They didn’t know if they were gonna lose their pensions. And losing their pensions was one of their biggest arguments they made for not going on strike....And I’ll tell ya, people at that time cared about each other. They weren’t at each other’s throat over old and young. They were making legitimate arguments about their legitimate positions, and at the end of the day they were letter carriers. And I’ll tell you what happened. We voted on the second day of the special meetings. We had votes and votes, it kept getting voted down, no strike....But I wasn’t gonna give up. So the last day, the day of the





strike when we're gonna go out ... about eleven o'clock that night ... everybody's tired ... and they just want to go home....It's about eleven-thirty at night. Last motion, one more motion: "I make a motion we go on strike only if Hartford [Branch 86] goes on strike." ... How in the hell would you know what's going in Hartford? Guy's got a portable radio. Everybody's getting up and getting ready to go home ... and he says, "Hartford just went on strike!" What? Boom! Everybody sit down! "In accordance with the motion that was just passed we're on strike as of midnight tonight!" Nobody was prepared for that....There was four people that went out at midnight and started picketing....And the next morning in Meriden, no one came to work. No one crossed the picket line."

Paul Daniels later wrote in the branch's journal, the *Union Courier*: "There was no vote to return to work. When the sheriff finally caught up with President McAllister and served the Restraining Order, McAllister advised the membership that we had made our point and we should return to work on Monday March 23rd which we all did with our heads held high." Meanwhile, Ernest Salamone was vice president at the time of Hartford NALC Branch 86. It had about 100 members—one of the largest in the state. About three-quarters of the branch supported the strike, and clerks honored their picket line. Twenty-nine years old at the time of the strike, Salamone said that "they arrested some of us picketing on High Street," but they went back on the picket line upon release, and became what he called "the only branch in the country that was fined" for conducting an illegal strike.

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Nineteen-year-old letter carrier and Branch 157 member James Reilly was there that Friday morning in southwest Philadelphia. His story sums up the seeming randomness, combined with real-life dramatic discussions and actions—along with frequent lower-management ambivalence—that made labor solidarity work at street level:

I come from a family of old union people. So I was brought up "union strong, union this, and union that." And being a PTF at that time, you didn't have a steady schedule. Right from the jump I got involved with the union. I talked to the guys. I seen guys older than me—one guy had seven kids. He actually had to collect welfare, food stamps, to make payments, to make it through. This is in Paschall Station in Philadelphia....So my father drives me to work that day. And I was scheduled to come in at 8:30 [a.m.]....The guys were already out on picket. Everybody was out at my station, walking around Paschall Station. I looked at my dad. He says, "Well, what are you gonna do?" I said, "Well, I'm not gonna cross." He said, "Good, good." And then the shop steward came over said, "Jimmy, you better get in there, you're still on ninety-day probation." So I looked at my father. And he said, you know, "What are you gonna do?" I said, "I don't know." This steward said, "Jim, you better go in ... You better go in or they're gonna fire you. *We* can be fired—[but] they'll definitely fire *you*." So reluctantly I went in....My manager was an ex-carrier. He goes, "What do you want to do?" I said, "I don't want to do nothing." He says, "Alright, just sit over there." So, I sat there for four hours, getting my four hours in and I left, and I went out and picked up my picket sign and joined my brothers."

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In Minnesota's Twin Cities, St. Paul went out Thursday, March 19, and Minneapolis followed the next day. Minneapolis letter carrier Mark Schindeldecker started at the post office in 1968. Married with children and in his mid-twenties, at the time he "had nothing to lose," with wages so low he thought he qualified for food stamps. He recalled that, inspired by Branch 36 and others already on strike, NALC Branch 9 in Minneapolis had their strike meeting that Friday night, and began picketing the next day. "I stayed in town and made all the strike signs for the Nokomis Station," he recalls. "It took me most of the night! I showed up in the morning with all the signs and I still had my postal uniform on. Found out from inspectors we couldn't wear our uniforms. I went down to my dad's house and borrowed his pants, size 42. I couldn't find a belt anywhere! The moral of the story is—try holding onto a strike sign and your pants at the same time."

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Meanwhile, Barry Weiner of New York Branch 36, who said that prior to the strike he was a "sixties social radical" who had not considered the union "militant enough," provides a snapshot of what the mood must have been like on the first picket lines in New York City. They were waiting to see who, if anyone, was going to follow them out on strike around the country:

It was easy to be "rah rah rah" leading up to the strike. But once you're there, now we're walking the picket line and we're thinking to ourselves, "Is anyone else in the country gonna go out on strike?" And we're listening to the news with these transistor radios. And at first we heard Brooklyn went out. Yay! Then we hear some branches in New Jersey it's reported are going out on strike. Yay! But that didn't really surprise us that much because we knew that on the East Coast there were a lot of people who were in the same financial situation....Then we started hearing Boston, Philadelphia. On the West Coast, a couple of branches like L.A., San Francisco. We weren't really surprised about that....I then heard on the radio that Minneapolis and St. Paul went out on strike. And I said to the people that I was picketing with ... we're gonna win this thing. I think we've got them. Because if they're going out on strike in the heartland of America, then this thing is gonna spread everywhere, and we're gonna wind up prevailing."

