



May 3, 2019

RAMADAN!

AN INJURY TO ONE IS AN INJURY TO ALL

Islam is not our enemy. Faithful and generous people are not a burden. Ignorance, stupidity and hatred should be our targets, not people of faith. Whether Jews in a California or Pittsburgh synagogue, Christians in a Sri Lankan cathedral, or worshippers at mosques in Quebec City or New Zealand, this can and must stop.

This cultivation of hatred is not an accident, especially in a time where our world becomes more uncertain and chaotic and finance capital has run amok. Workplace victories, few and far between, last for a time, but the dehumanization and isolation of work remains. Yet, as postal workers, we get the job done and connect people everywhere, connecting families and communities in countless ways. Surely, we remain a diverse workforce made more powerful when we stand together. This thing called solidarity *builds our power*.

When we honour the spiritual faith of our membership, we do not choose to endorse or detract from anyone. We highlight the common thread of humanity found in all denominations to treat one another with respect and dignity. It seems appropriate to mention that Ramadan will begin on May 6. Many of our co-workers will use this period for faithful reflection as they work beside us and fast for daylight hours.

For Muslims, Ramadan is not like any other month. It is a time to challenge oneself, to reflect, to become better people, tolerant of others, to walk lightly on this earth, to nurture, and to address our greed and gratification obtained at the expense of others (and ourselves). This reflection helps prepare for the rest of the year and reminds those of faith of the improvements we can make to better ourselves, our families, and our communities. We can choose this as a time of opportunity to better connect with the peaceful and honourable values of people of faith and our troubled world.

Even if we are not practicing Islam, why not issue a challenge to ourselves by supporting those who are? Celebrate these values rather than those manufactured to divide us.

A deeper look reveals disturbing connections between Islamophobia/anti-Muslim racism on one hand, and imperialism and colonialism on which this country still operates, on the other. We tell ourselves stories and myths of inclusion while demonizing and excluding. Racialization serves specific capitalist and colonial political and economic interests. It creates harm and ignorance. Anti-Muslim racism, and in fact all racism, needs to be seen and confronted as something constructed and deployed by ruling elites.



We can resist racism through multiracial solidarity and a politics that links domestic racism and attacks against Muslims, Jews and all people of faith and the system that treats us all as disposable human beings to one degree or another.

How about treating one another with appreciation, respect and dignity? Our picket lines and struggles are made more powerful when we manifest unity in our diversity, and are guided by common values. Unity is not a question of being charitable; it is the practice of firm solidarity in the face of injustice no matter who you are. This gives us strength and power. Division only works for oppressors.

Our hearts go out to those who have lost loved ones everywhere in this cruel game of blame and hate. No doubt, some will use the Sri Lankan catastrophe as an opportunity to blame Islam. If this is the case, do we blame all Christians for the crimes of Adolf Hitler or Timothy McVeigh after the Oklahoma bombing? Works like this are the actions of disturbed and angry people produced by an unequal society driven to horrible extremism in societies that no longer make sense and breed extremism. If we were honest with ourselves, we would also note some African genocides are ignored and receive nary a mention in the press. It is as if some lives clearly matter to some more than others. When Jews are murdered for being Jewish, when Palestinians die for being Palestinian, Indigenous people are jailed for being Indigenous, and people of African decent are carded, harassed, and punished for their blackness, we must ask ourselves who wins from such practices. What about justice, truth, and identifying who and what is responsible for the massive wealth gap, poverty, patriarchy and inequality that defines our world?

Are we, as postal workers and human beings capable of enforcing our values of equality, decency and solidarity in our workplaces? Can we chart a course where our communities and children, and their children, can finally be free of the ignorance, hatred and violence that divides us and allows our enemies and corporate and colonial philosophy to exploit us?

Postal workers provide an important service. Don't let anyone divide us. Powerful transnational corporations and systemic greed create workplace and societal catastrophes at an alarming rate.

Finally, we offer best wishes to all our Muslim members of faith this coming Ramadan. Let us be kind and dignified, and let us use this time to show our humanity and gratitude to all who struggle for a better life and a better world.

In solidarity,



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2nd National Vice-President

