

Detroit Workers' Voice



Detroit Marxist-Leninist Study Group PO Box 28536, Detroit, MI 48228 detroitworkersvoice@yahoo.com Nov. 13, 2014 #114

An appeal to the public and to postal workers:

**Fight postal management and the politicians “on both sides of the aisle”
who plot the destruction of the Postal Service and the jobs of postal workers!**

Protest at the Royal Oak post office, 11 Mile and Main, from 3 to 6 pm, Friday, November 14!

Today the Postal Service is in crisis. Congress has failed to remove the sole cause of the postal deficit – the unfair burden of paying retiree health benefits ahead to 2075 and to do so in ten years. No other federal agency is burdened with this absurd requirement. Its cost is about \$6 billion a year, roughly the size of the yearly deficit.

Now that the Republicans control Congress, Congress is preparing to privatize and dismantle the USPS, destroying the American postal system, eliminating the jobs of thousands of workers and even eliminating postal pensions. The Republicans for years have made no secret of this anti-worker, anti-postal plan. The Democrats have only meekly protested and agree with much of it. In fact, Obama supports eliminating Saturday delivery. Both parties serve the interests of Big Business against the majority of the public, including the postal workers. If the Postal Service is destroyed, both will be to blame.

Right now, postal management plans to eliminate overnight delivery entirely and to close 82 postal processing facilities (on top of the 140 closed since 2012), further degenerating postal service and eliminating many postal jobs. **WE MUST SAY STOP!!**

On Friday, November 14, four postal unions will protest at more than 140 locations all across the country. We call on the public to support us! We call on all postal workers to come out on that day and to dedicate ourselves to fighting for our jobs, our livelihood and for the existence of the Postal Service! We must fight! And we must fight against the politicians “on both sides of the aisle!” **WE MUST HAVE OUR OWN MOVEMENT!**

The privatization plans extend even beyond the actions of Congress. Postal management has already privatized some postal services into Staples stores and is planning to repeat this crime at Walmart and Office Depot locations.

Postal workers have not taken these plans and attacks lightly. We marched *en masse* at the APWU convention in Detroit in 2010. We have held numerous rallies and pickets by all postal crafts and unions all around the country, including in Washington, DC. Retired letter carriers and community activists are occupying the Berkeley, California, post office to prevent its closing. From Seattle, to Kokomo, Indiana, to Detroit, to New York city, postal workers have mounted an active campaign against the farming out of work to Staples stores. And we can do the same at Walmart and Office Depot.

It is a good thing that all four postal union leaderships have called this common action. They need to go further and call for

a single National March on Washington to Defend Postal Workers and the Postal Service!

But postal workers are hindered in our resistance to this onslaught by weak or class-collaborationist stands taken by our own union leaders. On November 5, the day after the mid-term elections, President Rolando of the National Association of Letter Carriers issued a statement that did not call on postal workers to go into action to fight back but instead *called on us to work with* the politicians “on both sides of the aisle,” that is, *work with both Republicans and Democrats*. He said: “*We have a duty to continue building alliances with the men and women on both sides of the aisle....*” That means not to fight the Republican assassins, not to expose the two-faced Democrats, but to lie down with these snakes and let them bite us. As for APWU President Dimondstein, his administration is not campaigning for eliminating the two-tier wage system, which was imposed by his predecessor Cliff Guffey in spite of the 2010 National Convention that voted *unanimously* against it. In contrast to these misleaders, **WE STAND FOR A FIGHT!**

Postal workers, in order for this struggle against privatization to have real strength, to win anything in the short and long run, the real strength of the rank-and-file workers in our hundreds of thousands must be brought to bear. We who move the mail must go into action *en masse*. And for that to happen we cannot rely on the union leaders, many of whom are habituated to limit themselves to grievances at best, collaboration at worst. **WE RANK-AND-FILE WORKERS MUST FORM OUR OWN MOVEMENT.** We must link up with other struggles of the workers and the oppressed, such as the movement for a \$15/hr. minimum wage, the struggles against racist police murders of Blacks and other people of color and the fight for rights for immigrant workers. Our failure to have a trend built up against union bureaucrat sabotage is a weakness of the ongoing postal actions, but we can change that!

In the 1960s ordinary workers in many industries created their own rank-and-file networks and organizations, carried out their own actions and built massive movements, including the postal strike of 1970, which resulted in a great improvement in conditions for the postal workers. There was solidarity among various movements, which further inspired all of them. We must organize ourselves in that spirit!

**Fight back against postal privatization!
Fight against “both sides of the aisle”!
Build our own movement!**

Naomi Klein says *This Changes Everything*

Naomi Klein's new book, *This changes everything: capitalism vs. the climate*, deals with the climate disaster that is already beginning. It is a vigorously written book, and its best sections discuss things glossed over in tamer presentations, such as the faults of the "Big Green" organizations, the looming threat of geo-engineering, and the harm done by market solutions. Among the issues taken up in the book:

► the environmental crisis isn't just another cause, but will increasingly be connected with the whole range of economic and political problems facing us. It will involve not just some minor tinkering with some items in government budgets, but major social, economic, and political changes. It will require the end of market fundamentalism and unregulated capitalism, a turn towards regulation and planning, a reorientation of agriculture, changes in the social and economic position of the masses, and different relations between the developed and developing countries;

► the environmental cause must be connected to the struggle for welfare of the masses, such as the provision of jobs;

► it denounces market solutions such as carbon trading, carbon offsets, and carbon markets, and points to their insufficiency or even harmfulness. But, unfortunately, Klein prettifies the carbon tax, and does not recognize it as a market measure, no better than the rest of them;

► it castigates the major bourgeois environmental groups (which Klein calls "Big Green") for their connections to corporations including oil companies like BP, Chevron, and Shell Oil. Big Green includes, among others, the Sierra Club, the Nature Conservancy, the Natural Resources Defense Council, the National Wildlife Federation, and the World Resources Institute.

Indeed, one of the book's chapters is entitled "The Disastrous Merger of Big Business and Big Green". This is a merger that has even been institutionalized in coalitions such as the United States Climate Action Partnership. Klein writes that "The big, corporate-affiliated green groups don't deny the reality of climate change, of course--many work hard to raise the alarm. And yet several of these groups have consistently, and aggressively, pushed responses to climate change that are the least burdensome, and often directly beneficial, to the largest greenhouse gas emitters on the planet--even when the policies come at the direct expense of communities fighting to keep fossil fuels in the ground. ... The 'market-based' climate solutions favored by so many large foundations and adopted by many greens have provided an invaluable service to the fossil fuel sector as a whole." (pp. 198, 199)

► it exposes the nature of the frightening geo-engineering solutions that are being proposed: space mirrors; spaying seawater into the sky; alternatively, spraying sulfate aerosols into the sky; fertilizing the ocean with iron; covering deserts with vast white sheets; etc.

► it surveys the struggle and views of the more militant section of the environmentalists. One chapter, for example, is

"Blockadia: The New Climate Warriors". Indeed Klein's book represents something of the consensus view of many climate warriors, thus reflecting both the strengths and weaknesses of their views.

Some of the book's weaknesses are that it evades such major questions as the attitude the movement should take to the Democratic Party or to the trade union bureaucrats; it doesn't really put forward a new plan for how to build an effective movement separate from Big Green; while talking of challenging capitalism, it dwells far too much on capitalism's bad philosophical ideas rather than on what the alternative is; and it sometimes overlooks the capitalist class, such as when it attributes Obama's betrayal of his environmental promises to his ideological ideas, rather than to his being the political leader of the bourgeoisie. Klein also seems to think that better moral appeals will build the movement. And if she denounces the bourgeois revulsion at overall planning, she nevertheless capitulates to the fashionable reformist idea that decentralization is a panacea.

This book raises important issues that deserve a more detailed look, which will appear later in comments sent out on the *Detroit Workers' Voice* email list. []

About the *Detroit Workers' Voice* email list

The above article was adapted from the item sent out on Oct. 8 on the *DWV* email list. It is free to subscribe, and subscribers receive important news about the workers' movement and revolutionary theory. To subscribe, just send a request, along with your email address, to detroitworkersvoice@yahoo.com.

Other topics that have been recently covered on this list include:

- Climate change is here! Two faces of the newest UN warning about the ongoing climate disaster (Nov. 8)
- A Palestinian denounces the anti-imperialism of fools – in defense of the struggle against the Syrian dictatorship (Oct.28).
- Against those who, in the name of anti-imperialism, vilify the democratic movement in Hong Kong (Oct. 24).
- Solidarity with the defenders of Kobane (Oct. 14).
- Support the democratic movement in Hong Kong (Sept. 30)
- Denounce Israeli barbarism! Solidarity with the Palestinian people! (Aug. 14).
- Detroit Emergency Manager Orr's plan is a crime against the workers and poor (Aug. 14).

Read *Communist Voice* magazine

Communist Voice is a journal of revolutionary working-class theory against the capitalist system. It supports the ongoing class struggles for freedom, a decent life, and protecting the environment, and it tackles controversies facing activists from a Marxist-Leninist standpoint. It stands for anti-revisionist Marxism, a theory incompatible with Trotskyism, Stalinism, Maoism, and anarchism, or with the false "communist" regimes like the former Soviet Union, China, and Cuba.

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