



All out for the March 31 picket! **Postal workers, unite against job cuts, forced relocation, and overwork!**

Employers all over the country are using the recession to slash their workforce, overwork the remaining workers, and cut our wages. Postal management is doing the same to postal workers across the country. In the last decade, 170,000 postal jobs have been lost. Now, during the recession, postal management wants to cut even more jobs. It even wants to cut back mail service to five-day delivery in order to eliminate thousands upon thousands of more jobs.

That's why postal workers are protesting in front of the Fort St. facility on March 31. We are rallying against this anti-worker onslaught which will also undermine the delivery of mail to the public. This picket has been called, after repeated demands by the membership, by the APWU-Detroit District, but workers of all crafts should come.

Detroit postal workers are under attack

Through years of struggle we won some contractual guarantees against layoffs. But postal management is making a mockery of this by insisting that workers move at short notice to other facilities. Dozens of workers from the Fort Street facility are being moved, some of them to faraway cities, even Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania or Des Moines, Iowa. We are given the ultimatum: either move, or lose your job. And once we move, there's no guarantee we won't be asked to move a second time.

There is no concern about what this means for our lives and those of our children, and many families are faced with separation as now spouses will have to work in different cities. Even when both spouses work for the post office, management thinks nothing of assigning jobs in different cities. When executives are moved, they get lavish compensation, and the post office has even bought their houses for \$1.5 million. But when workers are moved, we face financial ruin, with only minor compensation which may not even cover brokers' fees and closing costs when one tries to sell one's house, to say nothing of the loss we face when our mortgages are underwater.

While telling us that they don't have any more work for us, they are subjecting us to overwork and speedup. At the Fort Street facility, they have removed job classifications from many of us, and made us into "standby room" workers. They then send us back to do the very jobs that supposedly didn't exist, often assigning overtime as well. The point of this insanity is to make us insecure, to take away our work rules and work us to the bone, and to force older workers to quit.

Meanwhile at local postal stations all across Detroit, they have extended the routes of carriers year after year. And they have forced job combinations on clerks and mail handlers. The job cuts and relocations aren't just taking place at one or two facilities, but all across the country. They affect not just clerks, but letter carriers and mail handlers. This is an attack on all postal workers.

Postal workers of all crafts!
Come join the protest picket
Wednesday, March 31, 2-4 p.m.
At Detroit's GWY postal facility
1401 Fort Street, Detroit

As the work has intensified, the toll of injuries has grown. The post office is supposed to find suitable work for injured workers, but management has made a mockery of this contract provision as well. They have instituted a national program to deny injured workers their jobs, which postal management calls "National Reassessment Program". Injured workers who have been working the same job for years are suddenly told, "We no longer have any work available for you", as management seeks to force them out of the postal service.

Postal management acts just like a private employer

Why is postal management doing this? Some people think that because the post office is a government agency, it doesn't act like a profit-mad capitalist company. But although the post office is a public service, it is run as a business. And today the business people and the different branches of government are united in forcing cutbacks on workers.

Oh yes, there's a great recession going on. But the recession doesn't hit us all alike. The banks have been bailed out, and the financiers are making record profits once again. The big corporations have seen much of their stock recover in value. But auto workers, teachers, city workers in Detroit and elsewhere, service workers, and others are seeing their jobs lost, their wages cuts, their benefits slashed. The government-managed postal system

is doing the same to postal workers in order to stay in line with capitalist practice.

We are not losing jobs because there isn't work to be done. If there were a lack of work, we wouldn't be faced with overwork. It's not because we aren't productive. We work harder and move more mail per worker than ever before.

No, we are losing jobs as part of a campaign to drive down the conditions of all workers. And we are also losing jobs in the privatization drive. In postal, as in auto and in government work and elsewhere, subcontracting and privatization is used to take away our jobs and apply pressure to cut the wages of the remaining jobs.

Just as the cutting of auto workers' wages depressed wages and working conditions for all workers, so the attack on postal workers -- if it is allowed to continue -- will help depress wages and conditions for all workers. There are postal workers in towns and cities all across the country. Employers everywhere will take notice of what happens to postal workers, and it will affect other workers. In attacking us, postal management is serving the interests of CEOs and rich financiers everywhere.

The anti-worker drive is also threatening the quality of mail service

Nor does management care about the public. The privatization of the post office won't only mean taking away our jobs, but cutting back service to the public. They have a national plan to slash the number of postal stations across the country. And they are even talking about moving to five-day delivery--which would mean letters wouldn't arrive at all during the weekend.

Postal work used to serve as a stabilizing factor for many communities. Removing not just postal stations, but postal workers from our communities will have a negative impact on many working class communities. Just as the collapse of the auto factories and other industries has hurt working class neighborhoods, so will the privatization of the post office.

Rank-and-file workers unite!

It's time for postal workers of all crafts -- whether in the American Postal Workers Union, the National Postal Mail Handlers Union, or the National Association of Letter Carriers -- to unite to defend our jobs. Today a worker in one craft may be assigned tomorrow to a job in another craft. And healthy and injured workers must unite, as the flood of new assignments and the increase of overwork brings the threat of injury to more and more workers.

All over the country, postal workers are angry about what's going on. In the last few years, protests and informational pickets have taken place from California to Pennsylvania, from Florida to Ohio, and even in Washington D.C. And now, here in De-

troit, there will be an informational picket outside the Fort Street postal facility on March 31. It is called by the APWU-Detroit District, but workers of all crafts should come. Many workers won't be able to come because of their work hours or other commitments, but there are other ways to participate, such as talking to coworkers and neighbors, and forming networks to prepare for future struggle. Indeed, the present picket is supposed to be the start of a series of actions, and additional local pickets are expected for the Detroit area.

But we can't rely on the union leadership to carry out this campaign. We must carry it out ourselves. While the APWU has carried out a number of pickets around the country, the protests have been sporadic and uncoordinated. Moreover, the union leadership has tried to restrict the issue mainly to talking about service cuts. And indeed, we do care about providing good service to the public. But there's also the issue of job losses, forced relocation, and overwork.

In Detroit, many union officials have dragged their feet on protests and pickets. That's why it's only now, after many jobs have already been lost, that the first picket in Detroit is being organized. That's why, at APWU-Detroit District membership meetings, it took heated discussions, again and again, for months on end, until a picket was authorized. And even now, many union officials are telling us to talk mainly about service cuts.

Many union officials tell us to put our faith in grievances, and in begging the politicians. Well, we've filed grievances year after year, and management just keeps violating the contract anyway. The union officials have begged the politicians, and tried to keep postal workers from criticizing them, and it hasn't worked. If some politicians are to do anything at all for us, they had better be afraid of what workers will think of them otherwise. And the union leaders are afraid of embarrassing postal management, when they should be denouncing postal management for treating us like dogs.

So it's time for rank-and-file postal workers to make their voice heard. We must ensure that pickets and protests not only take place, but tell the public about what is happening in the post office. We must not be afraid of other workers, as many union officials tell us to be, but unite with other workers in a fight against the capitalist drive to impoverish us. We must network among ourselves, and we must prepare for the coming contract talks, because postal management will be asking for major concessions. We must be prepared for mass struggle.

The fight for our jobs is going to be a long one. One picket won't suffice. Our fight for our jobs is part of the struggle of all workers to survive the recession and keep our living conditions.

Fight job cuts and forced relocation!

Unite across craft lines!

Defeat postal management's anti-worker campaign! []