

Detroit Workers' Voice



Detroit Marxist-Leninist Study Group PO Box 28536, Detroit, MI 48228 mail@communistvoice.org April 12, 2010 #87

The March 31st picket was a big success

Keep up the fight against excessing, forced relocation, and five-day delivery!

Postal workers picketed in front of the GWY postal facility on March 31. Over a hundred workers took part at one time or other in this spirited event over a two-hour period. Slogans rang out over and over again, such as "Six-day delivery, save our jobs!", "They say cutback, we say fightback!", and "The workers, united, will never be defeated!"

This loud and successful picket had finally been called by the APWU-Detroit District, after repeated demands for over a year by some militant workers at union meetings. Work for it was done mainly by rank-and-file workers, who braved the sneers of union officials who said it was premature. Planning for this picket was done through two open committee meetings, where several rank-and-file workers participated and insisted that the issue of jobs should be raised as well as service to the public.

One, two, many mass actions!

The March 31 picket is a great start, but postal workers have to follow up on it. One mass action isn't enough to stop the anti-worker campaign of management. We need to continue with more actions to draw in other postal workers, and to take our case to other workers in Detroit and other communities. We need to make our voices heard, again and again and again, until we win justice.

The APWU-Detroit District has called a protest rally for in front of the Highland Park post office on Wednesday this week, April 14. Workers from other unions are explicitly invited. Everyone who can make it should come. This could be a start on holding pickets and rallies throughout the area.

Rank-and-file pressure is still needed

But will it be? The April 14 rally has been called without any consultation with rank-and-file union members. There was no discussion at the March union meeting, nor any open committee meetings to plan it. It was simply announced out of the blue in a leaflet distributed by some union officials on March 31.

Moreover, the rally is timed for 11 am to noon, which makes it hard for any postal worker at Highland Park to take part, unless they have the day off. This is probably the result of the lack of rank-and-file worker input into the rally plans.

If we are to have a successful campaign of pickets and rallies, we need postal workers to be informed of all the plans and brought into the planning. Otherwise the pickets or rallies may fizzle out.

At the April 11th APWU-Detroit meeting this last Sunday, it was reported that William Burrus, the head of the APWU, is pressuring everyone not to mention jobs when they talk to the

public. Only the issue of service to the public is to be mentioned. And many local union officials agree with this. So if everything is organized from the top down, if rank-and-file workers don't have their say, there won't be any more slogans against excessing, forced relocation, and overwork. It's up to rank-and-file workers to see that their voices count, and insist on denouncing excessing, forced relocation, and overwork.

We've lost 170,000 postal jobs in the last decade. That was with six-day delivery. And today we're still being excessed, and we're being sent to distant cities. The jobs losses will only get worse if there's five-day delivery. Yet William Burrus and some local union officials are quaking in their boots in fear that the issue of jobs will be on workers' lips and protest signs. Shame on these gutless wonders! Let's learn from the success of the March 31st picket and keep up the pressure on the issue of jobs!

**Postal workers of all crafts!
Come to the protest rally!
Wednesday, April 14, 11am-12 pm
Highland Park Post Office
13215 Woodward Avenue**

All out to make our voices heard!

So it's up to rank-and-file postal workers to make sure that rallies and pickets not only continue to take place, but that they tell the public about what is happening in the post office. Yes, we are concerned about service, but we are also concerned about our jobs. We must not be afraid of other workers, as many union officials tell us to be, but unite with other workers to defend our livelihood during this horrible recession.

We must network among ourselves. If rallies and pickets are to have their effect, we must also talk to neighbors, friends, other workers, and everyone we know about what's happening in the post office. We must prepare for the coming contract talks, because there is not doubt that management is going to be out for blood this year.

This is going to be a long, hard fight. The March 31 picket was a great start, but we are going to have to follow up on it, bring postal workers from more facilities and stations into action, and link up with other workers in the communities.

**Come to the April 14 protest rally!
Fight excessing, forced relocation, and five-day delivery!
Unite across craft lines!
Defeat postal management's anti-worker campaign! []**