

Detroit Workers' Voice



Detroit Marxist-Leninist Study Group PO Box 28536, Detroit, MI 48228 mail@communistvoice.org August 21, 2010 #94

To Fort St. P&DC workers of all crafts!

Arbitrator slaps us in the face!

Raise your voice in protest!

Send a message to management, the arbitrator,
and union leadership!

Come out to the postal march on the occasion
of the APWU National Convention!

12:30 pm Tuesday, August 24, assembling in front of Cobo Hall

Recently it was announced that arbitrator Cannavo turned down in its entirety the extensive set of grievances filed by the Detroit APWU in 2009 challenging management's brutal job cuts. The grievances attacked improper excessing and reassignment of workers at Detroit city stations and at the Fort St. P&DC (including General Expeditors, Mail Processing Clerks, and workers in the Business Mail Entry Unit), and it attacked management's failure to create full-time positions where unassigned employees are actually working. Postal management's cold-hearted orgy of excessing and job abolitions has broken up families, destroyed workers' financial futures, spread insecurity among the workforce and deprived workers of some of the few basic workplace rights they had long enjoyed. The 2009 grievances would not have stopped management's onslaught, but victory on even a few of them might have slowed the pace of their greed and given workers hope. Now the arbitrator has callously told management that it can ride completely roughshod over us without fear of a reversal!

This is outrageous! Workers should come out *en masse* to the APWU-organized march which is being held during the APWU national convention at Cobo Tuesday, August 24, and make our protest heard! We must let management and the arbitrator know that we will not take this assault lying down! Throughout the country today rich CEOs are being given golden parachutes while the workers everywhere are being robbed of their very livelihoods or going jobless. Arbitrator Cannavo's ruling against us is just part of this evil wind that is blowing against the people who do all the work of this society. **It is time for a fight-back!**

Cannavo's brutal ruling comes just before the APWU enters into negotiations for a new contract in September. The arbitrator's complete rejection of the union's case is an indicator of the political climate that will surround the contract negotiations and likely arbitration, and it telegraphs the message that the arbitrators will jam brutal concessions down our throats. To answer this, mass action is what is needed, not relying on the good will of arbitrators and management. Rank and file members should come out to the August 24 march to deliver this message not only to postal management but to the APWU leadership. Mass actions are required in response to management and the arbitrator's attacks. This is not a time to be celebrating with cock-tails the outgoing officers like President Burrus who held back struggle.

Cannavo's decision is all the more outrageous in that it came after a year and a half of delay, during which time workers were uprooted

and thrown to the four winds. The APWU grievances were extensively documented and were presented to the arbitrator at great length. Arbitrator Cannavo's ruling was "a shot across the bow," attacking workers all across the country and telegraphing how arbitrators will respond to the coming contract negotiations.

This is not just an issue for APWU members. Cannavo's decision is a go-ahead sign for management to step up its attacks on all postal workers, including mail handlers and carriers. Even though the August 24 march is called by the APWU, workers of all crafts should come out to it and show a united front against management's attacks. Workers should support workers of other crafts, even if the union leaders don't. We have all seen that the leaders of one craft denounce workers of other crafts at local meetings. Let's show them that the rank-and-file postal workers support each other!

Arbitrator Cannavo's brutal decision shows the necessity of postal workers finding other methods of struggle besides the grievance procedure. *Detroit Workers' Voice* has always supported filing grievances, and we still do, but the Cannavo decision clearly shows the limitation of this method of struggle. Major issues are decided by worker action and pressure. *Workers' Voice* supporters have always advocated that in addition to filing grievances workers use mass action tactics to fight back. We have called for, and helped organize, picket lines of the rank and file workers. On March 31 a successful picket was held at Fort St. despite the refusal of the local APWU leadership to endorse it and the orders from the Burrus national leadership not to raise the issue of forced relocations. The local leadership then held several actions but failed to mobilize rank and file members at Fort St. for them. This temporarily dampened the possibility of a vigorous mass protest campaign. But such a campaign can still be organized. In order to do so, the key is that the rank and file postal workers must be directly mobilized and engaged to build and escalate such actions. Discontented workers should band together to build various forms of mass action. These could be directed not only against postal management itself but also against Democratic and Republican local politicians, who have failed to lift a finger to help the embattled postal workers.

Let your voice be heard!

Come out to the APWU postal march on August 24!

Show the union leadership that we are tired of the policies of no struggle and each craft blaming the other crafts!

Organize for mass struggle! <>