

Letter from an Italian postal worker

Francesca, A postal worker in Italy

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The USPS Workers Rank-and-File Committee is holding a meeting this Sunday at 3 p.m. US Eastern Time, “Stop Trump’s moves to privatize USPS! Oppose the illegitimate NALC contract!” Register for the event here.

Dear American Brothers and Sisters of the United States Postal Service,

I write to you from Rome, Italy, where we postal workers have already lived through the catastrophe that now looms over you in the United States: privatization.

I write not only in solidarity but in warning, so that you may learn from our painful experience and resist this assault with the full strength of an organized working class. The fate of the United States Postal Service (USPS) is not just an American issue—it is an international struggle against the same capitalist forces that have dismantled public services worldwide to enrich a handful of elites.

Do not be deceived by promises that the state will maintain control, or that privatization will bring “efficiency” and “modernization.” We in Italy heard those lies too. Our postal service, Poste Italiane, was first transformed into a joint-stock company in 1998 under a center-left government. We were assured that the government’s ownership stake would shield us from the worst excesses of privatization. It was a lie.

In 2015, again under a center-left government, Poste Italiane was partially privatized through an initial public offering. Today, while the Italian government still holds the majority stake, Poste Italiane is run as a for-profit corporation that has completely abandoned its workers and the public it was meant to serve.

The consequences were brutal. Out of over 200,000 employees in 1998, privatization cut one-third of our jobs. First, they offered early retirement packages, luring workers into leaving before they were ready out of fear that worse was coming. Those who remained faced unrelenting work speedup, impossible efficiency

targets, and a toxic atmosphere of constant restructuring.

Traditional postal jobs were greatly reduced as the company shifted focus from delivering mail to financial activity. The postal service was turned into a bank, its core function sacrificed at the altar of profit. By 2023, only 12 percent of Poste Italiane’s revenue came from mail delivery. This was always about maximizing profit for shareholders at our expense.

USPS workers, the same forces are now coming for you. If the Trump administration succeeds in its plans to privatize USPS, your jobs will be slashed, your working conditions will deteriorate, and the essential public service you provide will be gutted. They will start by promising that nothing fundamental will change, just as they did in Italy.

Then they will introduce “modernization” plans that make your work unbearable. They will rebrand the postal service as a “business” rather than a public good. Before long, Wall Street investors will own your industry, and every decision will be made to serve their profit margins—not the needs of the workers or the public.

And let me be clear: this attack on USPS is not just economic—it is deeply political. Here in Italy, after decades of assault on public services and workers’ rights from all sides of the capitalist political spectrum, we now have a fascist prime minister, Giorgia Meloni. The betrayals of the so-called “left” paved the way for her rise.

The same process is unfolding in the United States. A fascist president threatens not only your jobs but your democratic rights. Trump’s attempts to dismantle USPS are part of a broader authoritarian agenda to crush organized labor, destroy constitutional norm, deport our immigrant brothers and sisters and consolidate power in the hands of the ruling oligarchy.

But workers must also be warned: do not trust the

union bureaucracy. In both Italy and the United States, the union leadership is tied to the state and to the very politicians who have led the privatization efforts. In Italy, it was the center-left government that began the process, and the union leadership facilitated the sellout of workers to investors. The unions did not protect workers—they protected the interests of future investors. They negotiated away jobs, allowed for deteriorating working conditions, and provided cover for the betrayal.

The same is happening in the United States, where union leaders remain tied to the Democratic Party, a party just as committed to corporate profits as their Republican counterparts. To make things worse, I have learned that an arbitrator has imposed the same contract you had rejected by 70 percent, stripping you of any right to vote. Your union, the National Association of Letter Carriers, did nothing to fight it, betraying its members. This deal is a sellout and paves the way for privatization, aligning with Trump's broader attacks on public services.

We must build independent international organizations, free from the influence of the pro-capitalist union bureaucracy, to lead the struggle against privatization. The fight against privatization cannot be waged in isolation. It is not enough for USPS workers to protest alone. Your struggle is tied to that of teachers, nurses, autoworkers and all workers facing the relentless attacks of capitalism.

But more than that, your struggle is tied to workers across the world who face the same enemy. We must forge international bonds of resistance, because the corporations and politicians attacking you today are the same forces that have attacked us in Italy, in Britain, in France and beyond. Only a global movement of workers can halt this descent into fascism and corporate dictatorship.

USPS workers, your fight is our fight! You are not alone. Do not allow them to sell you the illusion that privatization is inevitable. Stand firm. Organize. Resist. The working class has the power to stop this—if we unite beyond borders and industries, if we refuse to be divided by nation or trade, if we recognize that the real power rests in our hands!

In solidarity and struggle,
Francesca
Postal worker, Italy



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