

NYC Transit Workers Shouldn't Have to Kill Themselves Just to Do Their Jobs!

We reprint below a letter we received last week from the Committee For a Fighting TWU.

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If there is a lesson to be learned from the COVID era, it is the understanding that letting management run our safety is suicidal. We must do things differently!

In RTO [Rapid Transit Operations], the phrase “that’s you to go” is often used by supervisors when they want us at our tools and on the job no matter what. It’s code words for abuse, and it perfectly captures what the MTA is all about: service over safety. The bosses say no lunch, no problem...*that’s you to go!* Trains derailed, but *that’s you to go!* Plenty of union members died from COVID, but *that’s you to go!* A track worker gets struck by a train, but hey *that’s you to go!* The crew office ensures you don’t get enough rest. The barns are poorly ventilated. The MAC [Medical Assessment Center] is always ready to put you out of service. The facilities for women are completely inadequate and on and on, add to this a city falling apart, astronomical rent and crime-plagued streets. That the New York City subway has existed for well over a century and things haven’t been “figured out” *proves* that this is all by design. *The MTA wants it this way* because it wants us so broken down, noses constantly to the grind. Otherwise, we might realize that we have the power to change things.

Everything is designed to divide us: separate division meetings, racial oppression and horrible conditions. The MTA pushes false divisions and the leadership of the union accepts them. By keeping us divided, they prevent us from uniting to take control of safety. The MTA bosses are masters of divide-and-rule. Some would like to deny it, but

this company does not exist in a bubble...*this is America.* Racism is pervasive and is used as a tool to maintain sub-standard pay and conditions at NYC Transit and to keep us divided from Metro North and LIRR. This divide only serves the bosses and is used to bring down working conditions for us all. It is precisely this setup that explains the horror of NYC Transit. *Transit workers acting together to enforce safety would be a real step toward the collective action needed to bring up working conditions and pay to the highest levels for all!*

TWU workers should defend anyone’s use of the Safety Dispute Resolution Form, but the form starts a process that keeps safety in the hands of the bosses who create the dangerous conditions to begin with. It places the fight for safety on individual workers. There are around 40,000 members of our union, yet this setup leaves you isolated and alone against management. At the end of the day, this form is merely a piece of paper. What really matters is having each other’s backs as a union when it comes to protecting our basic right to safety.

This situation in transit can and must end. The place to start is to take safety into our own hands. We pledge to do the following, you should too:

- **We will not do unsafe work!**
- **We will not do work others have refused on safety grounds!**
- **We will defend anyone who invokes safety against management attacks!**

— Committee For a Fighting TWU
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