

UK Royal Mail postal workers speak on their forming a rank-and-file committee

Our correspondent
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The *World Socialist Web Site* (WSWS) spoke to postal workers who took part in the April 2 online meeting hosted by the Socialist Equality Party,

Those who attended included postal workers based in delivery offices and mail processing centres from around the country in London, the south, Midlands, the Eastern region and North West of England.

The meeting included reports from international speakers, placing the eight-month struggle waged by postal workers at Royal Mail in the broader context of the developing class struggle globally, of which it is a part. At the conclusion of the meeting a resolution was passed unanimously to establish the Postal Workers Rank-and-File-Committee, which read in part:

“This meeting supports the formation of a rank-and-file committee of postal workers. The aim of the committee will be to mobilise workers against Royal Mail’s attacks and lead a fight for an inflation-busting pay rise, a defence of terms and conditions, an end to all job cuts and the overturning of victimisations.

“We understand that this fight can only be waged in opposition to the Communication Workers Union leadership and apparatus, which is acting as Royal Mail’s partner. This is the common experience of workers in all industries all over the world, whose unions act as an industrial police force for management.”

Postal workers related their experiences and what they thought of the meeting.

“It was good to learn about the struggles of workers in France and of postal workers in Germany and Australia. We have not been informed about this by the Communication Workers Union. Workers are faced with the same problems and in the same fight. At Deutsche Post postal workers voted for action but their

union did nothing as well.

“The CWU leaders are not putting pressure on the company but on us. We voted for further strikes. It should have been for at least three days, but they went back into talks. The union had a mandate for strikes, not more revisions [changes in working conditions].

“On top of the unachievable workloads they are taking money off us. Before we had a choice if your rest day fell on a Bank Holiday, you would get an extra day or paid overtime for the day. Now it is just an extra day’s leave.

“We have not received any strike pay. I agree the dues should be going to provide support not the six figure salaries of officials like Dave Ward [CWU General Secretary]. The rank and file should decide on these things.

“I agree with the demand that Royal Mail should open its books as they claim they have no money. The GLS [General Logistics Systems] arm of Royal Mail is still making profits and what about the £500 million or so handed to Royal Mail shareholders? The bonuses alone of the chief executives of Royal Mail and GLS and financial officer run to over £1 million.

“We were key workers in the pandemic, we could not sit at home like the big bosses. We are the ones who made the profits. They made that off our backs and yet we get nothing.”

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“I can see what you are doing. It is good idea bringing workers together internationally. It needs to be publicised. We cannot change things individually, if you speak up at your workplace management will come down on you and pick you off.

“The union is with the company. I am breaking my body for around £200 a week.

“The problem is wider than Royal Mail. We go to

school to be turned into the soldiers of industry and we are controlled. They do not like people getting together and speaking about these issues they face, which you cannot find in the media. That is why they want to ban TikTok.

“It seems like we are flogging a dead horse. We voted for strike action, but the union have been in talks for months. What are they talking about? We can’t pay our bills and have not received a penny in strike pay.

“The CWU called off the strike action in 2020 because of COVID, as we were all told ‘We will all pull together’, and postal workers would be rewarded. Now we have been ditched.”

“It was good to know that there are other postal workers who feel the same way. We are not isolated, and we need to do something.

“The union rep at my place just says if you cannot achieve the increased workloads and have undelivered mail, just bring it back at the end of the day. That is not a solution. Postal workers have some pride in their work and this just increases stress. We voted 96 percent for strike action. The company is doubling the workloads and we are no closer to getting a pay rise. It’s all wrong. Royal Mail just want to get rid of the Universal Service Obligation and concentrate on parcels so they can keep on making profits.

“I’ve been discussing this with other workers in my delivery office. We are getting nowhere with those at the top of the CWU. You cannot afford to bury your head in the sand. They are not going to win us anything. They sit around with the company eating biscuits and drinking tea, agreeing to changes in our working practices. It’s OK for Dave Ward on his more than £100,000 a year.

“I think it’s a great idea to bring workers together from different countries to have more people together fighting for a common cause. We must stand up together. I have a lot of respect for the French. They are a law unto themselves, taking on the government to make it back down. I did not realise Macron had not even allowed a vote in parliament over the pensions. This move to such dictatorial measures is part of an unnerving trend across the world.”

To contact/join the Postal Workers Rank-and File-Committee, e-mail us here.



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