

Communication Workers Union attack on WSWS and UK Postal Workers Rank-and-File Committee backfires

Robert Stevens
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Postal workers, send a message to rmpw.rfc@gmail.com to contact and join the Postal Workers Rank-and-File Committee.

On Saturday, April 15, the Communication Workers Union and Royal Mail issued a joint statement, “After almost a year of talks, Royal Mail and the Communication Workers’ Union (CWU) are pleased to announce they have reached a negotiators’ agreement in principle.”

The CWU announced the deal on its own social media, with a statement signed by General Secretary Dave Ward and Acting General Secretary (Postal) Andy Furey. A CWU tweet posted Saturday at 5:29 p.m. read, “The CWU Postal Executive will now meet and consider the agreement on Monday and Tuesday and we are putting in place plans to brief representatives across the union’s structures.”

From what has been made publicly available, the final offer from Royal Mail includes a below inflation pay award of just 10 percent *for a full three years*, with RPI inflation at 13.8 percent. The de facto pay cut is tied to demands for increased flexibility and productivity, later start and finishing times and an extension of a two-tier workforce with inferior terms, including mandatory Sunday working with no premium payment.

A postal worker asked in a tweet posted at 6.27 p.m.—around an hour after the CWU announcement—“Is it time we started looking at alternatives?” He linked to a screenshot of an April 12 *World Socialist Web Site* article by Tony Robson headlined, “Growing support for UK Postal Workers Rank-and-File Committee.”

Seeing this post as an anticipation of a wave of opposition from its 115,000-strong membership, the CWU responded with an attack on the *World Socialist Web Site* and the newly formed Postal Workers Rank-and-

File-Committee—set up by a group of postal workers on April 2.

Responding with vitriol to the postie just 35 minutes later at 7.02 p.m., the CWU said, “That website is ran by absolute cranks that have zero interest in the welfare of postal workers (or any other workers). Stick with the union. It’s your voice. Solidarity.”

This piece of red-baiting would not have been out of place in right-wing Tory rags such as the *Daily Mail* or *Daily Telegraph*. The CWU is attacking not only socialist opposition to its betrayals, but the many CWU members who have written to the WSWS over the last month.

The WSWS’s “interest in the welfare of postal workers” is clear over eight articles, from March 16-26, containing over 10,500 words directly from posties. In their comments they explain in detail the atrocious situation they face, with many denouncing the CWU leadership for allowing such backbreaking conditions and the unachievable targets set by Royal Mail.

The slander on the WSWS and Postal Workers Rank-and-File Committee backfired on the CWU, with tens of thousands of postal workers reading the Twitter threads, with most comments posted pulling no punches in denouncing the CWU apparatus.

At the time of writing the CWU tweet/thread denouncing the WSWS has been viewed nearly 50,000 times (48.8K) and the postal worker’s “Is it time we started looking at alternatives?” tweet, over 53,000 times.

Some of the responses read:

- Anyone remember “the strike fund”?
- Amazing, not a peep from you during that 24 hours and now you can’t shut up. The communication with your members during the last year has been appalling.
- Your handling of this dispute has been shockingly bad.

The CWU responded by isolating this last comment and replying arrogantly, “Yeah, never giving up, refusing to accept offer after offer, returning 3 massive ballot results, producing 18 days of rock solid action, moving the company on every point. No organisation is perfect but together with our members, we’ve done ok here.”

Once again the CWU was met with a barrage of comments, with the thread viewed over 73,000 times and most postal workers expressing scepticism or open hostility toward the CWU. Many raised their intention to vote down whatever rotten deal the CWU has agreed with Royal Mail. Many pointed to the “revisions” in working conditions already pushed through by Royal Mail which the CWU bureaucracy has done nothing to oppose.

Some of the comments read:

- You forgot to mention allowing revisions and also shifting stance on annualised hours.
- I had to leave as all the changes to start times and revisions etc have already come in. Gave you 18 days of strike action and got sod all for it as they changed it all anyway.
- The Communication has been a disgrace apart from when you wanted a Yes vote, seriously considering withdrawing my membership after I’ve voted.
- And colleagues who have been suspended still sitting at home wondering if they have a job... well done indeed...
- £1800 in wages lost... but what do we have... possibility of 9% pay rise over 3 years... and the company still pushing through their changes regardless of any interventions the cwu put forward.
- Never ever blow your own trumpet. The members will decide on the agreement put to them... The members provided 18 days of rock solid action. Let's hope you haven't sold out on what that action was for.
- Let’s see the offer first then we can decide if it’s good enough. I’d say you’re getting ahead of yourself assuming we'll say yes.
- No strike fund, whilst Mr Ward takes home 120k and no doubt youz frequent hotels for important meetings (piss ups) on company card!
- Yes but u sit on your arses watching your members with an unmanageable workload getting more and more work put on them and basically saying get on with it. Give yourselves a round of applause.
- So is it 10% over 3 years? That’s rubbish
- Achieved Nothing, and sold us on core points like later start/finishes.
- We got 28 days notice of our start times changing and going to 1 in 6 weekends off on Wednesday. Does the

agreement change this?? If not I’ll be voting no!!!!

• We’ll see next week how well you’ve done. I sense you’ll be eating a large dose of humble pie when we find out how badly you’ve caved in on some points.

• Done okay? Are you joking pal, do you realise how much money we have lost already? Nice and warm in your ivory towers eh.

• Returning 3 massive ballot results and doing f**k all with it, watching along while your members struggle and not protecting them from the strings we have fought against since this started and we are still struggling financially.

• every RM [Royal Mail] worker that isn't happy with the deal offered, should be like me, and cancel their union membership. for what they’ve achieved for RM workers, why are people still paying them?... when us RM workers see the “deal” you have done, I predict the majority will say you have NOT “done ok.”

• What a joke of a union, RM have basically got 90% of what they wanted while you just watched them do it. I will be voting no to any deal you put forward where executive actions are not reversed. If the membership vote no to this deal I expect CWU leadership to resign.

• Have the Labour Party told you to stop the strikes now it’s damaging them? So you’ll do what all unions do and sell the workers down the road?

The WSWs and the Postal Workers Rank-and-File Committee are attacked by the CWU because they give conscious expression to the real sentiment and interests of posties and propose an organised fightback against the sell-out being prepared. We urge Royal Mail workers to Vote No to this rotten deal and join the Postal Workers Rank-and-File Committee. Write to the WSWs and we will report your views honestly, unlike the CWU.

Send a message today to rmpw.rfc@gmail.com.



To contact the WSWs and the Socialist Equality Party visit:

wsws.org/contact