

Opposition grows to CWU agreement with Royal Mail: “It’s all about profit on the backs of postal workers”

Our correspondents

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The World Socialist Web Site (WSWS) is publishing further correspondence from postal workers in Britain exposing the sweatshop conditions being enforced by Royal Mail, with the full collaboration of the Communication Workers Union (CWU).

The latest comments are from postal workers opposing the CWU’s sell-out joint agreement with Royal Mail announced April 21. The WSWS assessment of the rotten deal and the statement of the Postal Workers Rank and File Committee have provided a pole of attraction for those rejecting the deal and considering the way forward.

CWU leaders Dave Ward and Andy Furey confirmed last week that the agreement signed behind the backs of postal workers and rubber stamped by the CWU Postal Executive Committee will go to a ballot on May 17. The drawn-out timetable is a bid to buy time and wear down rank-and-file opposition among 115,000 Royal Mail workers. The initial attempt to sell the deal as a “win” by CWU headquarters met a storm of criticism across social media, including on the union’s official accounts.

Wimborne, East Dorset: I am voting No. The revisions forced on us recently by executive action have increased workload on each postie. Deliveries are unmanageable and cannot be done in time. I break off and bring it back to the office.

The agreement between Royal Mail and the CWU is a betrayal of postal workers. It changes nothing. More work and less time to complete your duty in the time. Plus, finish times of 16.30 in the winter will mean busier days and working in the dark. And beyond 4.30 pm. Most deliveries are being failed because they cannot be delivered on time. The list goes on.

Work already is pretty stressful. And the last three years has added to mental health issues and sickness. We are no longer delivering a service to the customer. It’s all about profit on the backs of the postal workers to line pockets of the bosses and shareholders.

Swindon, Wiltshire: We are failing 40/50 walks daily in our office as management are focusing on tracked or premium parcels, and no overtime is being paid for us to help complete these walks. Walks are not going out for 2/3 days but management don’t care. We are being bullied into leaving mail in the frames to make way for delivering parcels only, and the union are doing nothing about it.

Bromley, Kent: Bromley postie for years. Seen many changes. Accepting of change, willing to change, understanding the need for changes. What I’m struggling with is how a company can make three quarters of a billion pounds in profit one year and scream poverty the next, and blame the fact that we stood up and refused to be stomped on. Yet not one senior manager has been held accountable.

The fact that the rich keep getting richer off the backs of the hard workers of this country is disgusting. Being told to accept an inferior way of life, by those that have caused it and whom it will have no effect on, is completely astounding.

We have been severely let down by those whom we put our trust in and give our hard-earned money every week to protect our rights, jobs and our company. Fed up and p***** off is an understatement. Stop s***** on the little guy. I’m sure this site gets inundated with comments like mine, but please feel free to use, if necessary, my comments at your leisure.

Orpington, Kent: I pulled out of the union years ago

because they never even fought privatisation of the Royal Mail. I thought this union were socialist. The first step away from socialism is to own a property. I bet all of them own their own houses. I hope this union gets disbanded, they do not represent me or most posties I talk to.

Southport, Lancashire: Royal Mail have given staff an unachievable workload, knowing that mail will fail. They don't care about the customer, just profit.

Sheffield, South Yorkshire: Never known a time like it in more than 20 years on delivery. Absolutely unachievable workload, mail and parcels going undelivered for days. We have a DOM [Delivery Office Manager] who is ambitious to say the least and has forced in these changes at lightning speed to look like golden boy, when it's chaos in reality.

Staff are being suspended for minor things that a quiet word would resolve in normal circumstances. Undoubtedly there is a wider witch-hunt against long-serving full-time staff, as we're considered a ball and chain around Royal Mail's neck. I don't know what kind of future staff they're hoping to recruit, walking for 6 hours and not much more than minimum wage!

CWU have been conspicuous by their absence during the last 5 months. Never saw the back of area reps when they were pushing for a massive yes vote but nothing since. When Royal Mail ignored the first joint statement, agreeing to put on hold all revisions, then carried on anyway, they should have had us out at the first opportunity and sung from the hills to the media about why.

The dire financial situation doesn't wash with me either. I think the Tories are complicit in this as most of them have their fingers in the pies of the hedge funds that are pulling all the strings. Personally, I would have called their bluff, gone into admin and watched all the cockroaches scurry out from under the rocks to see who is really behind all this.

Leeds, West Yorkshire: This is a shock. After all the slogans of a 'back paid wage increase' and 'no change in start times' the agreement is a surrender document for us.

I work in one of Leeds delivery offices, and this is as precise as I will get because of fear of losing my job. The problem truly lies within upper management, and I'll tell you why. We are lucky to have fairly human managers. They are aware of how to get the job done;

you need staff on your side. But this is now a worthless fact. They are being pushed by a regional manager (their boss) to enforce changes and so on.

It's terrible, thinking about the future. Mail is still being left for days in fittings. Because again, their computer planner is telling the regional boss we should have even LESS people. I should be on 25 hrs contract! I mean, how does this work? There are 6-10 duties failing DAILY. And yet they are supposed to be reducing people's contract even MORE?!

About CWU, as a delivery person I feel betrayed. If the start times are changed, I will be forced out (because of school runs) to look for another job. Therefore, I'm not impressed nor scared about the future of Royal Mail if we vote no. Couldn't care less. Literally. Because if it's a YES vote, I will be changing jobs. So might as well see the ship sink along with all the CEO... I mean, officers' quarters and enjoy the show. No surrender. Mercy is a crime! I hope the above statements will prove valuable to you. I'm very scared about my job, but all the above is truthful and correct.

Glasgow, Scotland: I work in a Glasgow Delivery Office and the union has let revisions and new start times go ahead while in dispute. Sell out merchants.

Sign up and support the Postal Workers Rank-and-File Committee and find out more about its work here. The Committee's email address is rmpw.rfc@gmail.com



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