

Postal worker replies to Communication Workers Union spin doctors Dave Ward and Andy Furey

Rank-and-File Postal Worker
12 May 2023

The following article by a Royal Mail delivery worker and member of the Postal Workers Rank-and-File Committee answers the propaganda and disinformation by Communication Workers Union (CWU) officials over their rotten agreement with Royal Mail.

The article examines a three-page briefing by CWU leaders Dave Ward and Andy Furey headlined “Setting the Scene”, and an online Q&A session they held with “Angry Postie”, a postal worker who runs a popular Twitter account.

Tens of thousands of postal workers have been shut out of any direct meeting with the CWU leadership. At Ward and Furey’s online presentations, rank-and-file members are denied their democratic right to speak and put forward an alternative.

We encourage Royal Mail workers to register for this Sunday’s online Zoom meeting of the Postal Workers Rank and File Committee to discuss and organise a fightback.

In their briefing “Setting the Scene”, CWU leaders Dave Ward and Andy Furey claim the agreement addresses the reasons we went out on strike and has “shifted Royal Mail on every single one of their original positions.”

Who do they think they are kidding? We are repeatedly told that neither side gets everything in negotiations, but we are the ones making all the sacrifices. What changes are the shareholders and company executives having to make? After looting the profits from our hard work, have they been called on to sacrifice any of their dividends and bonuses? Of course not.

Under the misleading sub-heading, “What Your

Action has Achieved”, there is no job security beyond 2025. The agreement on no “compulsory” redundancies until then, hides the reality that our colleagues are being driven out in droves “voluntarily” by impossible workloads, and even on reduced Voluntary Redundancy payments accepted by CWU’s top table.

The 10 percent pay award for 3 years is an insult and a pay cut in real terms. There is no victory either against the demands for flexibility: annualised hours are just renamed seasonal hours, with work life balance torn up. A new app will be added to our PDA tracker to monitor productivity every second just like Amazon workers. The CWU will oversee “trials” of its use via their Joint Working Group.

The trade unions were not built to make management trustworthy, but to defend the conditions of workers in a fight against the bosses. Nothing we have gained in the past was won in partnership but in a battle *against* the employers.

No online mass meetings for the members to speak?

The Q&A of Angry Postie with Ward and Furey was produced as a CWU Live event. What happened to the CWU Live event in which 115,000 of us could attend, to say what we think about the agreement? Ward and Furey have avoided this because they know they would be confronted by more than one “angry” postie.

This is the level of “engagement” with members from the CWU’s leadership. That is not the fault of Angry Postie, but in the circumstances, the idea of Ward and Furey granting a select audience with one postal worker could be nothing other than spin and a damage limitation exercise.

This was clear from the get-go with Angry Postie

explaining “you guys allowed me to take opinions from other posties and clean them up and filter them a wee bit.”

Throughout the event, which lasted more than an hour, Ward and Furey sounded like management. Ward defended deliveries being moved back to 16.30 saying it was the only way the company could compete and that 5 or 6 percent will even work later.

He claimed new duties will be “negotiated”. But they are being enforced with the CWU’s blessing, driving out colleagues who were actively recruited into the industry with a promise of family friendly work.

There was no mention during the Q&A about the 400 sacked reps and workers. We cannot negotiate without our representatives and with so many suspended the imposition of duty times will continue. Even where representatives are present, they will have to follow instructions from the CWU-Royal Mail joint working group.

We know that seasonal variation is maximum flexibility. Ward and Furey admitted that the entire wording on seasonal variation was written by the CWU. Furey even revealed that the CWU will “coach our reps” to impose flexibility.

Angry Postie departed from the script at one point, pointing out that the proposed 20 percent profit share for postal workers is a share of nothing as the company was reporting £400 million in losses. As we know from Colleague Share, profit-sharing is a fraud.

Angry Postie said that the agreement on sick pay was the “number one, screaming red hot reasonable question”. Ward replied by attacking sick and injured postal workers saying, “odd absences cost loads of money”. Furey said the CWU will help reduce the historically high sick rate from 8 percent to 5.5 percent in 6 months. As with everything else in the agreement this will be enforced through management-union partnership.

Ward tried to justify the agreement with talk about parcel and letter volumes that “dropped off a cliff after Covid”. But he was silent on the company’s epic pandemic profiteering and looting.

No amount of spin can cover up that this agreement is rotten to the core. It is down to the rank-and-file to ensure it is thrown out and that a fight begins now to defeat the top-down alliance between the CWU bureaucracy and Royal Mail.



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