

British postal workers send greetings to founding meeting of UPS Workers Rank-and-File Committee

The Postal Workers Rank-and-File Committee
13 July 2023

The following statement of greetings was sent from British Royal Mail workers in the Postal Workers Rank-and-File Committee to the founding meeting of the UPS Workers Rank-and-File Committee in the United States last weekend.

Subsequently, on Tuesday, the Communication Workers Union bureaucracy announced the “ratification” of its sellout contract with Royal Mail. This came after a sham vote, delayed repeatedly to bleed off workers’ opposition, and under conditions where the union was already enforcing the terms of the contract. This has provoked outrage among Royal Mail workers, who are continuing their struggle in the aftermath of the announcement.

To contact the UPS Workers Rank-and-File Committee, email upsrangandfilecommittee@gmail.com or fill out the form at the bottom of this article.

Dear Brothers and Sisters,

We send greetings to your meeting, which comes at a critical time. The outcome of a fight pitting 340,000 UPS workers against the largest postal and shipping company on Earth will be felt by workers far beyond the borders of the United States.

Here at Royal Mail, 115,000 colleagues have been locked in a yearlong battle against the gutting of our pay, terms and conditions. After delivering £2 billion in profits during the pandemic, the company repaid us through brutal revisions to workloads, backed by management bullying, that has driven 10,000 postal workers from Royal Mail during the past year. At least 400 reps and other workers who opposed this regime were victimised, suspended and sacked.

Looking at the demands of UPS and the US Postal

Service, alongside those of Royal Mail, it is clear the postal and logistics companies are engaged in a coordinated offensive against the workforce. They want maximum exploitation and profits as they compete for global market share. They must deliver the holy mantra of “increased returns” year on year to shareholders and investors. It is a never-ending race to the bottom.

Here at Royal Mail, our verdict against the company’s diktats was near unanimous in three separate strike votes. But the Communication Workers Union curtailed and then suppressed our mandate outright, entering closed-door talks with the company.

We say to our brothers at UPS: Seize the initiative. Do not allow the Teamsters’ leadership to wear down your fight with empty talk about “concessions won through pressure.” The writing is already on the wall. Why else would Teamsters’ officials sign a Non-Disclosure Agreement on their talks with UPS, while refusing to state any strike demands that address workers’ concerns?

At Royal Mail, workers were thrown onto the back foot after the CWU announced a joint union-company “Business Recovery, Transformation and Growth Agreement” in April, giving the company everything it wants: a two-tier workforce, longer hours and impossible hikes to workload; the gutting of sick pay; introduction of pay-per-parcel; and a performance management regime using PDAs to monitor our every working minute.

CWU officials have insisted the agreement is a victory. This is because it protects their cosy positions on a raft of company-union working groups helping to enforce Royal Mail’s attacks.

On Tuesday, the results of a membership ballot on the

agreement will be announced. But the CWU has made clear our vote is meaningless. They are implementing the agreement already, issuing directives to local union reps to work with managers on productivity checklist items and to identify workers deemed “surplus” to requirements.

The CWU head office faced a massive rank-and-file backlash from April through June. The officials feared they would lose control. But the CWU pressed their two main advantages: They are organised, and they have a worked-out strategy with Royal Mail that is backed by the Conservative government and the opposition Labour Party. Labour leader Sir Keir Starmer has threatened to expel any MPs who visit picket lines. He declares there is “no magic money tree” for health and education, while he commits billions to NATO under a future Labour government.

The task facing workers is to organise our own class strategy to fight back. Rank-and-file committees, run by workers, must be built at every workplace to shatter the influence of the pro-company bureaucracy and transfer power to the union membership.

We are part of a global logistics workforce that produces \$8.6 trillion a year and which accounts for 5-10 percent of the planet’s entire workforce. In China alone, the sector employs 17.8 million workers. The International Workers Alliance of Rank-and-File Committees (IWA-RFC) is providing the platform for workers around the world to plan a strategy and program to fight. We stand with UPS workers in this common struggle.

The Postal Workers Rank-and-File Committee (UK)



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Socialist Equality Party visit:

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