

Victimised union rep speaks on Falconer Review: “I am of the strong belief Royal Mail and the Communication Workers Union are in cahoots. It is a web of lies.”

By our correspondent
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The WSWS spoke with a Communication Workers Union (CWU) rep who has been victimised by Royal Mail on trumped up charges relating to the year-long dispute.

The rep spoke about the Zoom call held on October 4 at 6pm with CWU General Secretary Dave Ward and Andy Furey, Assistant Deputy General Secretary (Postal). This was billed in a letter to branches (LTB) on September 26 as “a meeting with all members and Reps who had submitted consent forms to the Lord Falconer Independent Review.”

Feigning concern it stated, “Obviously this continues to be an unsettling time for Reps and members who have submitted consent to be included in the Independent Review.”

The claim that the first 26 “priority cases” submitted to Falconer is a “momentum” was a desperate attempt to fob off members over the fate of those victimised in the biggest frame-up of workers engaged in an industrial dispute since the 1984-5 miners strike. A total of 400 CWU reps and members have been reported sacked or suspended and just over half—213 have been submitted to review. Thirteen of the “priority cases” are those brought by Royal Mail to dismiss them from the review on the grounds that the company has no case to answer.

Ward and Furey delivered opening reports followed with questions or points directly from the floor or via comments in the chat column. The whole thing lasted for around an hour and a half.

There were 186 on the call at the start but this

declined as the meeting progressed. It dropped down to 144 and then 124. This was a result of the BS coming from Ward and Furey and the feeling they were deliberately swerving awkward questions. There was also anger over some of their answers, which were a total sellout.

The basic line from Ward and Furey was that everything hinged around the first 26 “priority cases” Lord Falconer is to announce a decision on when he meets with Royal Mail and the CWU on October 16. Of these only 13 have been submitted by the CWU. The other 13 are from Royal Mail, to have the cases thrown out. We were never told that this was the format of the Falconer Review—that Royal Mail could determine the cases going to review.

There was no explanation from Ward and Furey as to why only 13 of the 213 cases they had submitted to the Falconer Review had been “prioritised”. They cited General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR) to deflect answering this on the grounds of confidentiality, but what was being asked about was not the details but the criteria. I believe the 13 CWU cases involve dismissals. It was reported by Ward and Furey that Royal Mail was refusing to accept 46 other cases, claiming these are entirely unrelated to the dispute or victimisation but straightforward misconduct cases.

At one point Ward stated that “some cases would need to fall by the wayside”! A victimised rep raised that the CWU was going back on everything. At the rally in London on December 9 Ward had said “no one will be left behind” and the CWU would not accept any agreement without everyone back at work. This is a

complete 360-degree turn.

I am of the strong belief that the CWU and Royal Mail are in cahoots. The Falconer Review ensured militant reps were out of the way during the vote on the rotten agreement, we had no contact with the units which had elected us to call for a rejection. They were worried we would have scuppered the Yes vote.

Ward and Furey were asked why the CWU were not going to the media to highlight the abuses and mistreatment of postal workers by Royal Mail. They were told this was in line with the confidentiality clause agreed at ACAS with Lord Falconer.

The main criticism was about how the CWU has dragged out the entire process over the victimisations and the fact there are still no clear time scales. There were questions over whether the CWU would back Employment Tribunals and compensation cases for those who had left Royal Mail, but all Ward said on compensation was “it is still a discussion.”

It was asked why the stay on ET’s had been pushed back from October 31 to December 31 and whether the CWU would back cases if they were not successful with Falconer. All Furey said was it is a “case by case scenario”.

There were questions about whether the CWU would provide strike pay not solely over action to reinstate the victimised reps and workers but over Royal Mail implementing further attacks not spelt out in the agreement. There was no answer.

I know for a fact that in my region applications have been made for Rule 13 (local industrial action). They have been submitted by Area reps, but these have been blocked by CWU headquarters on the pretext of waiting until we hear back from Falconer. They are not allowing gate meetings to be held, this has been vetoed centrally.

The way the CWU spun the Falconer Review was based on a web of lies. I don’t think the majority know who Falconer is, his history, and its important they do. They would realise this is not an independent review or anything to do with justice. He is a well-known union buster from the miners’ strike. He supported the Iraq War which we all know was about oil, there were no Weapons of Mass Destruction.

We need to get together--all delivery workers at Royal Mail, Amazon and DPD, they need unionising but not by the CWU or other official unions. This is

something the rank-and-file could take up. The “Organising and Recruitment” campaign by the CWU at Royal Mail is a farce. They said it was not a two-tier system they agreed but it is—new entrants on 20 percent less pay and no payment for D2D (door to door flyers). What are they going to offer them, a pint and a packet of crisps?

We are going back to Victorian times before the days when workers had any rights—sick pay, bank holidays, no employment rights. This is happening all over the world. I support anything that increases the power of workers internationally against government and corporate attacks. We should be more like the French.

Ward and Furey don’t give a damn about the victimised. All they care about is their six figure salaries, but as you’ve said, “An injury to one is an injury to all”.



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