



ROYAL MAIL DECLARES ALL-OUT WAR




— VICTORY — TO THE CWU

- Defend postal jobs and public service. Meet these threats with militant strike action
- Fight all attempts at privatisation. Nationalise Royal Mail under democratic working-class control and management
- Build a trade union battle against Royal Mail bosses and the Tories, including the TUC convening an emergency general council to coordinate strike action against this provocation from the bosses
- Demand Starmer to publicly commit to nationalisation under the next Labour government
- All negotiations should be in full view of the membership
- Prepare to occupy Royal Mail buildings in response to any moves towards administration

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As we go to press, there is a strong possibility that serious strike action will be called by the Communication Workers Union (CWU) postal executive, as Royal Mail senior management threaten to take the company into administration.

This is clearly a major threat to the jobs of the 115,000 CWU members, but also to the other staff in Royal Mail, including managers who are represented by Unite, and who have been used by senior management in the dispute. The CWU must now call an urgent meeting with Unite for a united battle against Royal Mail bosses and the Tory government that is backing them.

WHOLE TRADE UNION MOVEMENT

We can't allow the parasitic privateers to put Royal Mail into bankruptcy, putting 150,000 jobs at risk along with the complete destruction of a 500-year-old national service.

This is clearly an attack aimed at smashing the CWU as an organised force in Royal Mail and must be met by militant industrial action. The union must up the ante by re-launching and escalating strike action by postal workers.

But it must go further, and issue an immediate appeal to the whole of the trade union movement to come to the aid of the CWU. The posties have a proud record of refusing to cross the picket lines of other unions and their members, and have received huge support in our eleven-month struggle.

The union leadership must demand an emergency TUC General Council to coordinate strike action with CWU members, and to support mass solidarity rallies which the CWU should call in major cities all over the UK. The CWU's strike fund must be publicly launched and used to mobilise fellow unions, their members and working-class communities.

PRIVATISATION

The threat of administration is directly due to the privatisation of Royal Mail. We have seen £1.9 billion given to shareholders in the nine years since the company was sold off. In the last 12 months around £600 million has been given to shareholders and the directors. They also spent millions trying to break the CWU. They paid agency workers to work during strike action, and gave management redundancy payments worth two years' wages and then offered these same managers £40,000 to come back as 'consultants' for nine months to help introduce their changes. This role of the managers has been opposed by the Unite national leadership. Now Royal Mail bosses claim to be making substantial losses. We demand to open the books to show us where the profits have gone.

What limits the bosses' ability to extract profit from the postal service is the Universal Service Obligation (USO), to deliver to every home in the country six days a week. The parliamentary Business, Energy, and Industrial Strategy committee has written to Royal Mail to say it has "systematically failed to deliver" the USO.

How could it be otherwise? Over years, the service has been divided up, separating different sections, such as Parcelforce. Now the bosses plan to hive off profitable parts of the business, such as the GLS international delivery service, leaving the 'loss-making' mail universal service to function on its own – unlike in other countries such as France or Italy, where even privatised services receive government subsidy. Bosses want to abandon USO to concentrate on delivering packets, gig-economy style.

NATIONALISE

The CWU should not only be demanding that the notorious CEO Simon Thompson, who was totally exposed before MPs, be removed, but the whole board. The company should be brought back into public ownership, re-nationalised under socialist democratic control. A publicly owned, integrated service would precisely ensure that essential aspects of a service would be maintained, and defend workers' jobs and communities.

In fact, as the pandemic showed, the service is a tremendous public asset. Imagine what could be achieved with a service that visits every home, with public buildings in every community. This is a weak and divided Tory government, facing the biggest strike wave for years. If governments can step in to rescue banks, then we must demand that they act to preserve and extend a vital public service like Royal Mail.

The CWU leadership is due to meet Keir Starmer and they must demand that he publicly commits to the policy passed at last autumn's Labour Party conference, that the next Labour government will bring Royal Mail back into public ownership.

The threat of administration can have an impact on a section of the membership who will be worried about the threat of compulsory redundancy on statutory terms, capped at the legal rate set by the government of around £17,000, and their pensions put into the Pension Protection Fund at reduced levels.

SUSPENSIONS AND SACKINGS

This brutal threat is par for the course for Royal Mail senior management. We now have around 400 reps and activists either sacked or suspended. It is outrageous that Thompson and co are trying to use them as leverage against the union and the membership to force through a deal.

It should be pointed out that the CWU had a victory against management when a rep won his appeal against dismissal. Yet Royal Mail has refused to bring him back to work. Does this sound like they want a reasonable resolution to the dispute? No deal can be done until we secure a way to get all members and reps who have been attacked back to work.

But a serious strategy, appealing for support across the union movement, can give confidence to members, who just six weeks ago gave a further mandate for action by an incredible 96%, on a 77% turnout, in the rebalot. There must be meetings in every workplace to discuss stepping up the action.

This is not a time to retreat – these attacks must be met with militancy by calling a week-long strike action. Any negotiations should be in full view of the membership and if there are no more concessions by the management then preparations towards an all-out strike must be put in place. If they try and carry out administration then we must be prepared to occupy all Royal Mail buildings, as they belong to us – we are the Royal Mail!