



SUPPORT THE POSTAL WORKERS

Postal workers deserve the support of the whole labour movement in their dispute with Royal Mail management. In many areas of the country there has already been industrial action for many weeks prior to the ballot on national industrial action now taking place.

The cause is simple – management is massively cutting jobs with no agreement at national or local level over how many jobs should go, where they are to go, and how the work should be re-organised in the light of these job cuts. In the process they have not only drastically increased people's workload, but changed the nature of their job and even their hours of working, all without negotiation. None of these changes has meant a better service to customers, on the contrary, Royal Mail has been moving further and further from being a public service for years.

In the course of imposing these changes, management has:

- Stopped the pay of workers who cannot complete their new workload in the allocated time.
- Converted full time jobs to part time.
- locked out the workforce of a delivery office for raising health and safety concerns.
- Allocated jobs by picking names out of a hat.

And they
constantly
refer to this as
modernisation!

The roots of the dispute lie in the "liberalisation" of postal services imposed by the government. This has meant Royal Mail providing the infrastructure for door to door deliveries for its competitors at a loss-making price, with the result that it is attempting to cut its costs by attacking the jobs, terms and conditions of the workforce. Instead of addressing this problem, the government wanted to make the situation even worse by privatising Royal Mail. After all, that did improve the railways! Since Mandelson had to shelve his privatisation proposals because of the opposition of large sections of the movement and Labour MPs, he has "taken his ball away", refusing to address the other issues facing Royal Mail – the effects of competition and the pensions deficit (a large part of which is caused by Royal Mail paying profits to the government instead of the pension fund). Rather, he has given a green light to management to attack the workforce. Postcomm, the industry regulator is even holding off fining Royal Mail for any shortfall in its "quality of service" standards while the industry "modernises", something previously unheard of.

Postal workers have every right to say that they should not bear the cost of the government's failed policies and Royal Mail's subservience to them.

All trade unionists and socialists should give them every support they can, in both local and national strikes.

It is only by such action, linked to a fight within the labour movement, that we will reverse such crazy policies!

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