

Scottish Socialist Party



Party

POSTAL WORKERS VOICE

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BUILD ON THE STRIKES TO WIN

The Scottish Socialist Party offers continued solidarity with postal workers forced to strike against Royal Mail's attempts to butcher jobs, pay, pensions and the very public service they are supposed to deliver.

The first strike day was a resounding success, with the biggest picket lines for years - processors, delivery, engineers, drivers, customer service staff and others not even balloted joining a brilliant display of workers' unity. The service shuddered to a halt - with only scab managers driving vans in an attempt to break the power of the union. Health and safety was ignored by these scabs, in their drive to put on a show of 'business as usual'. Nobody was fooled - even Royal Mail had to concede business was hit on the day.

The strike is of course about paltry pay offers compared to inflation, but it's about a lot more as well. The massacre of 40,000 jobs. Wholesale closure of Mail Centres, Delivery Offices and Crown Post Offices. The generalised cutting back of terms and conditions. The horrendous job insecurity. And underlying all these issues, the drive by Royal Mail bosses, egged on by the New Labour privatisers, to slash the public service and eventually hand over the fat juicy profitable remains to private companies - with a much weaker union and far worse working conditions.

Royal Mail has shown no interest whatsoever in negotiating a settlement. The only conclusion the CWU leadership can and should draw is that hard-nosed management will only shift in the face of escalated action by a united workforce. The roaring success of the first two strikes should now lead to a serious consideration of increased action, for longer periods, to make the bosses sit up and take notice.

The only power we can rely on is that of the union membership - and the hundreds of thousands of other workers who support anyone fighting back - especially other public sector workers. Action coordinated with civil servants or others would bite deep. **Royal Mail fatcat bosses are no friends of the CWU. They have no common interest in defending this as a public service.** The rigged market means Royal Mail workers and the taxpayers are subsidising TNT and other competitors - Royal Mail losing £millions in delivering the mail dumped on it by TNT and others - whose profits leapt up 69% in the second half of 2006. Royal Mail is hacking the jobs and conditions of its workers, and preparing to abandon the Universal Service Obligation, in a futile attempt to compete in the rigged market. The union needs to crusade for full public ownership, with re-nationalisation - whilst fighting to defend jobs, pay and pensions. **Stand firm and united!**



postal workers' voices

"The strike is about Royal Mail as a public service rather than a profit driven enterprise. Senior managers constantly want everything to stand on its own two feet as profitable enterprises, and they cut back the unprofitable parts. We want to defend it as a public service, like the NHS."
A Glasgow postie

"They advertised in Galashiels for posties on a one-hour a week contract! The one hour would be the only guaranteed work, and then management would ring you up at 24 hours notice to

do other duties. How the hell could anyone fit their lives round that? It's pure craziness."
An Edinburgh postie

"Royal Mail want to replace full-time staff with part-timers. In my place they start people on a 22 hour contract, and it's not even cost effective because everyone has left, as they can't afford to live on it. They brought this in because when automation is fully introduced, full-timers will be able to prep up several shifts, and part-time delivery just walk in and deliver."
A Falkirk postie

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"The first strike was a big success; nobody worked in our Delivery Office apart from managers. And it did have an affect. Royal Mail said it affected business, so that shows the strike worked.

The main issue is that they want us to work harder for less money, cutting back on all sorts.

We used to be paid up until the shift was officially meant to finish, even though some more experienced posties manage to do the work in an hour or so less. Now they want to cut back payment until when we actually finish.

Merging of routes means posties have to work a lot harder, with no extra money - apart from the

2.5%, which is an actual pay cut when you allow for inflation.

I think an overtime ban should be considered alongside strike action. And if we rely just on a series of one-day strikes, the danger is that Royal Mail get much the same work done over a week or so but without having to pay us for one of those days. **So I think escalation into a few days of strike action would have more impact.**

The public would certainly notice it more that way. In most cases there is not much mail that is so important that one day's delay has a big impact. "

A Glasgow part-time postie

"Royal Mail want to impose later starts - at 6am. That would lead to a loss of shift allowance, £14 a week. It doesn't sound a lot, but for a postie aged 22 or 23, it would add up to a loss of about £25,000 by the time they retired.

Royal Mail bosses try to justify this by saying the HGV vans now have to drive below 56mph compared to 60mph previously. But their sums don't add up. Most delivery offices are within an hour of the Mail Centres, and the vans never went at 60mph for the whole journey. So cutting the speed limit by 4mph would only add another 5 or 10 minutes to the journey at most, yet Royal Mail wants to move the posties' shift back by an hour. It doesn't add up. It's just about cutting wages."

A Central Scotland postie



"The CWU should have fought competition a couple of years ago. Now competition is a fact. The union leadership say they accept there will be some job losses through automation, but full automation won't come for 2, 3 or 4 years. Yet Royal Mail wants cuts of £350m a year meantime.

The problem is partly the link between the union and the Labour party. We got stuff from the union recommending Alan Johnston as Labour's deputy leader. But he was one of the people who stitched us up, accepting the opening up of the Royal Mail to market competition. So by sticking to New Labour the union limits its ability to fight competition and job losses."

A member of CWU Scotland no 2 branch



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- an independence referendum
- an independent, nuclear free, socialist Scotland

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