

# CWU leaders break promises as shop-floor attacks continue - vote no!

Under massive pressure from workers and reps, the Dave Ward leadership was forced to demand that either managers pull back from their shopfloor offensive around revisions or the CWU would not put the deal to a ballot.

Now the ballot is underway, but unfortunately so are revisions. The bosses aren't scared of the union leaders, who have turned out to be paper tigers.

The result is a sell-out deal that abandons every single goal of the bitter dispute.

It is so bad that for the first time in 15 years, several branches are recommending a no vote, mainly in Scotland, or refusing to recommend a yes vote, while a lively grassroots campaign of reps and members has taken off.

## An insult to workers

Members fought like lions, losing 18 days of pay, but the union's leadership dropped industrial action because they didn't have a strategy to escalate and win. They paused the strikes and put the workforce on standby for months of secret negotiations. Then Ward & Co surrendered to Royal Mail's threats of administration and bankruptcy.

The agreement talks about "mutual interest solutions to turn the fortunes of the Company." Considering what's in the deal and the union-busting dispute that preceded it, where bosses victimised 400 workers and reps, that language isn't just worthless, it's an insult.

The deal means a real terms pay cut and slashed terms and conditions, while allowing digital data from parcel devices and other sources to be used for conduct. Worst of all it agrees a two-tier workforce. All this is to refloat the profits of Royal Mail's millionaire shareholders.

## Illusory gains

The officials' main selling point is that voting yes means the union is 'back in the room, back at the table'. What they really mean is their jobs are safe – the whole pyramid of full-time officials especially those at the top – and they can continue to negotiate change.

They point to guarantees on compulsory redundancies or mail centre closures,

and limits on owner-drivers, as gains. But these only last till April 2025 (if that long) and with so many leaving Royal Mail doesn't need them.

Worse, the agreement sees the union helping restructure Royal Mail around a single large parcel network that could well see moves to break the company up. Only a strong, militant union could stop that – the Ward leadership won't.

The only incentive for workers to vote yes is an extra £900 lump sum, tapping an old pension reserve that should be used to stabilise the current pension, not as a bribe to vote yes. It still leaves real pay 10% below what it was in 2021.

## Working "harder, faster for less"

Dave Ward last Autumn stated that workers need to fight the cost of living crisis because 'work has become all about working harder and faster for less'. But that is exactly what this deal has delivered.

One of the 'pillars' of the previous agreements was a shorter working week. That's gone in this deal, with workers saying they will have to leave the business – many already are – due to longer, crippling outdoor spans. More will leave as later finish times ruin family-friendly hours.

Royal Mail's imposed new contracts have new starters working six hours more than the rest of us per week, effectively for free. This creates a two-tier workforce that will weaken the union and our shop-floor strength.

This rotten deal is a surrender by the union bureaucracy, for which workers are already paying the price. We should throw it out

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## What's Plan B if we Vote No?

After all the grassroots organising against the deal, a no vote would be a victory by the workers. It will pose the question, what next? Workers should not leave Ward & Co to provide the answer. We need a change of direction if we are to win the fight of our lives.

Workers should demand our union stands up for our terms and conditions, and calls escalating strike action up to all-out. The CWU can revive Enough is Enough into a movement providing the support and solidarity, including hardship funds, that we need to fight back.

Such a movement would be able to fight alongside us for renationalisation, to build links with other striking workers, and organise the whole working class to fight against Tory austerity and stagflation. It is a scandal that the bureaucrats in every union have not organised such a movement already.

We need to organise the militant no-voting wing into a rank and file network capable of pushing these actions forward, building shopfloor organisation and strike committees capable of going ahead with or without the leaders if they delay or drop action again.

Whatever happens in this ballot, workers have learned real lessons of this dispute: the strikes proved we have the power, but the bureaucracy blocks it.

The ultimate solution is a rank and file movement to democratise the CWU, take control of our disputes and build a new, fighting leadership for future battles.

