

## thesocialistpostbag

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We reserve the right to shorten letters. Don't forget to give your name,  
address and phone number.  
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### Still a diamond geezer

Barclays boss Bob Diamond, Britain's richest banker, has told MPs that he thought that "the time for remorse and apology" for bankers was over. Last year, Diamond was down to 'earn' over £60 million in a complex pay and profits package. How much he will ask for after being relieved of the need for humility is anyone's guess. The people of the world involuntarily paid trillions of pounds bailing out the failing banking industry with our money but the bank bosses still get millions for themselves to buy plush apartments with private cinemas and private jets, as Diamond does. As luxury jeweller Piaget's chief said when explaining why luxury goods firms like his are still thriving: "The poor are getting poorer, the rich get richer."

**Kathy Winter  
Lewisham**

### Not welcome home

Probably the last person ordinary Haitians, struggling to cope with the ongoing aftermath of the devastating 2010 earthquake, wanted to see was the country's former dictator Jean Claude 'Baby Doc' Duvalier. The 59 year old former despot arrived on the flattened island last week. Like his father before him Baby Doc ruled Haiti with an iron rod, brutally repressing dissent through his notorious Tonton Macoutes militiamen until a popular uprising sent him packing in 1986. What the former strongman hasn't brought back in his baggage is the \$4.6 million embezzled under his rule and now languishing in a Swiss bank pending court proceedings to establish legal ownership. In the meantime perhaps the poor and dispossessed Haitians will embrace the same revolutionary spirit as their brothers and sisters in Tunisia and dispatch the tyrant to another period of exile.

**Simon Carter  
East London**



**Socialists marching against climate change.**

### Red or green?

I am an active member in Plymouth Socialist Party. Recently a woman approached our weekly stand to discuss a dilemma she had in choosing between the Green Party which in her words "places the environment first" or socialism which she felt places people first. Until capitalism is overthrown it shall always be the case that profits are placed before all else. The government

is presently kindly asking bankers to show 'restraint' with their bonuses, achieving nothing. The same can be applied to the approach of asking oil companies and other businesses to take serious action on climate change at the expense of their profits. I would argue that a truly socialist government would actually be greener than green, as until people and the environment are put in front of 'the market', no substantial change can take place.

**Tom Taylor  
Plymouth Socialist Party**



### Private spooks

Every now and then you read something in the national press that leaves you asking is it April Fools Day? That was my reaction when I read a very illuminating article in the Guardian by Simon Jenkins about the nefarious activities of a number of dubious state agencies. He points out that Mark Kennedy, a police spy in the green movement, was also an employee of the private sector. Kennedy worked for the National Public Order Intelligence Unit (NPOIU), a branch of the National Domestic Extremism Unit (NDEU) which works with the National Extremism Tactical Organisation Unit (NETCU). Kennedy's bosses work for the Association of Chief Police Officers (ACPO). Jenkins says that ACPO is not a police officers' club but a private company involved in 'counterterrorism' and 'anti-extremism'. Sadly, like many of these articles, Jenkins points out the need for reform but does not give a realistic strategy to achieve it.

**John Blackall  
Liverpool Socialist Party**

### Law and order?

Agents provocateurs actively incite people to commit crimes so that they can be arrested. A strange way to keep "law and order". A body with the snappy title National Public Order Intelligence Unit employs the likes of Mark Kennedy and an unknown number of other spooks not to track down terrorists or master criminals but to spy on and criminalise protesters. Trade unionists organising peaceful legitimate protests against the government's cuts will find the only thing the government has not cut is money for people like Mark Kennedy. The government's priorities are clear. No money for hospitals and schools but plenty for agents provocateurs.

**Derek McMillan  
Brighton Socialist Party**

# Cameron 'thanks' postal workers by axing their jobs and pensions

**T**WO DAYS after MPs voted through the Postal Services Bill, postal workers received Royal Mail's employee newspaper, the Courier, carrying a letter from the prime minister on page three thanking us for our "excellent work" in ensuring that Christmas letters, cards and parcels were delivered.

#### A postal worker

'Dave' Cameron was joined by our new CEO Moya Greene in praising the workforce for continuing to provide an essential public service in the face of "the worst start to winter in living memory", as snow and ice disrupted the country for several weeks. How unbelievably hypocritical of that pair to lavish praise on us while planning to rob us of our jobs and pensions by privatising Royal Mail!

Greene was formerly head of Canada Post and appointed by the previous New Labour government in May last year, with the sole intention of delivering privatisation, whichever government was in charge. This is a task she carried out while in charge of Canadian Railways, which has been mired in scandal over a series of lethal accidents and corruption over the sale ever since.

*We just want to go to work and deliver a great public service but are hampered by management committed to cutting costs to the bone, resulting in mail undelivered.*

I can't begin to describe the anger of the people I work with, or the depths to which morale has sunk. We just want to go to work and deliver a great public service but are hampered by management at the highest level, who are absolutely committed to cutting costs to the bone, resulting in mail being left in the office, undelivered.

At my office last Saturday, line managers, who are mainly exposties so know the job we do, were expected to cover eight rounds between five or six of them. This would



**50,000 Royal Mail jobs have already been cut.** Photos Paul Mattsson

mean them working from 6am well into Saturday afternoon or 'lapsing' rounds, ie no deliveries. I know some may have no sympathy with managers in these circumstances but they are Royal Mail workers too, doing a job in which they aren't given any remit to manage, only carry out instructions.

#### Cost-cutting

COST-CUTTING IN Royal Mail has been going on since I started over ten years ago. The service has been gradually eroded with the cutting of 50,000 jobs, services including second post, and the closure of mail centres in Warrington, Milton Keynes, Coventry and elsewhere which has led to a worse service in terms of later deliveries and backlogs of mail.

Workers do more for less and are constantly told that privatisation is the only option for Royal Mail because we are not profitable enough. Yet us workers created over £700 million in profit for Royal Mail, ie the government, in the last two years. But apparently, this is not enough.

We lost our final salary pension scheme two years ago because Royal Mail neglected to pay into the scheme for 13 years as there was a

*Privatisation will lead to compulsory redundancies, a part time and casualised workforce, the decimation of delivery services and the raiding of pensions.*

surplus but now, surprise surprise, there is a deficit. And the 2010 'Business Modernisation' agreement actually delivered a pay cut for more work!

All this has gone on while we remain a publicly owned company with a fairly militant workforce who have taken national strike action twice in the last three years in defence of our terms and conditions with very mixed results.

Privatisation will lead to compulsory redundancies for workers and managers, a part time and casualised workforce, the decimation of delivery services - especially in rural areas - and the raiding of our pension fund assets. Not to mention the weakening of our trade union.

#### Must be stopped

THIS GOVERNMENT must be stopped in its tracks because the plans for cuts in, and privatisation of, public services as well as tax rises will result in a massive reduction in the living standards of millions of ordinary people in this country.

The CWU must link its Keep the Post Public campaign to the myriad local anti-cuts campaigns which are springing up around the country. Local branches should support local campaigns and the CWU nationally should support the National Shop Stewards Network's proposal for a national anti-cuts campaign. It is, after all, affiliated to the NSSN.

I would also urge everyone to try to attend any CWU Keep the Post Public marches and rallies in their area. These include Birmingham on 29 January and Beeston, Nottinghamshire, on 19 February. Further details can be found at keepthepost-public.org.uk. These are supported by some New Labour MPs but don't let that put you off. No to ALL cuts and privatisations!



**A postal worker at a demonstration in 2009.**