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# SOLIDARITY WITH POSTAL WORKERS

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## FIGHT FOR AN RPI INFLATION-PROOF PAY RISE WITH NO STRINGS

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# VOTE YES TO STRIKE ACTION!

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*local details:*

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## RENATIONALISE ROYAL MAIL

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### 2022 National Shop Stewards Network Conference

**Saturday 2nd July**

11am-4.30pm Conway Hall, 25 Red Lion Square, London WC1R 4RL

**Workers fight the cost of living squeeze  
Trade union lead never more needed!**

speakers include: **Sharon Graham,**

**Unite general secretary**

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# POSTAL WORKERS HAVE BEEN LEFT WITH NO ALTERNATIVE

## A postal worker writes

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### **Pay insult**

The Royal Mail board has insulted all CWU members with a pay offer which is really a pay cut, with huge strings attached.

Now is the time once again for all CWU members to rise up and fight for what we deserve.

- The Communication Workers Union (CWU)'s social media is filling up with photos of defiant gatherings of postal workers all over the country holding up posters saying "vote yes" to action.

Negotiations over the 2022 pay deal have broken down. The CWU has activated the official four-week process, so that, unless a resolution can be found, the union can take industrial action.

Leaflets and posters are being distributed and gate meetings taking place.

### **Pathway to Change**

In 2021 the CWU agreed a new 'Pathway to Change' agreement which was overwhelmingly endorsed by CWU members in an individual ballot. The agreement included a pay deal for 2020 and 2021, but not 2022.

The work of CWU members has transformed Royal Mail finances. In 2019, the bosses believed their losses would be around one billion pounds. Instead, Royal Mail made significant profit.

We were key workers during the pandemic, continuing to serve the public on the front line. Many members suffered from Covid, possibly caught while working. We also suffered at the start from lack of PPE.

We had to implement changes to the work, which often meant the job was harder to perform. This included staggered attendance times to improve social distancing,

and getting public transport to first delivery points. In fact, we introduced the biggest number of revisions in decades.

### **Profit and pay-outs at the top**

And Royal Mail achieved a pre-tax profit of £311 million in the six months to 26 September 2021. Revenue rose by 7% year-on-year to £6.1 billion.

On the back of this, Royal Mail awarded £400 million to shareholders!

Simon Thompson, CEO of Royal Mail, wrote to the CWU to say: "Our people have been exceptional through the pandemic to deliver for the country in such challenging circumstances and the cost-of-living pressures they face are real. We also acknowledge that our people have worked hard and have earned a pay rise."

And the offer? Nothing at all, unless we accept strings!

### **Pay cuts and strings for us**

If we accept all the strings, we will get 2% backdated to April 2022. Once all the strings have been introduced, we would get a further 1.5%, but not backdated.

RPI inflation is 9.4%! We have national insurance rises this month, energy prices have more than doubled and fuel is also increasing to record levels.

The strings include Sunday working no longer being voluntary, increased flexibility and annualised hours – so you work different hours depending on the volume of work, and overtime and finishing times are removed. They include a reduction of sick leave and a review of all allowances and supplements. They also include a two-tier workforce, with new starters on inferior pay and conditions.

The Pathway to Change agreement is clear that any proposed changes to working practices should be

discussed with the union and should not be linked to pay.

This fight has to be linked to the long-standing demand of the CWU to renationalise Royal Mail.

### **Independent political voice needed**

And that means that our industrial fight cannot be separated from the need for a political party that will fight in our interests.

In the recent council elections, following years of Labour councils implementing Tory cuts, there was a huge sense of 'all politicians are the same' amongst working-class people.

Labour Party members, including CWU members, who have supported CWU policies, have been suspended and kicked out of the Labour Party. This includes Jeremy Corbyn, who supports nationalisation of BT and Royal Mail, which Starmer's leadership does not have in its manifesto.

Discussion has taken place in several unions about what to do since Jeremy Corbyn's anti-austerity stance was ditched from Keir Starmer's Labour Party.

The bakers union, BFAWU, has voted to disaffiliate from the Labour Party. Unite, under Sharon Graham's leadership, has adopted the policy of calling for no-cuts needs budgets. The experience of the brutal bin strike in Coventry has led Unite to withdraw support from councillors who attack their members.

It is therefore disappointing that at the recent CWU conference, five motions were not admitted to the agenda that raised the key issue of the union's relationship with the Labour Party.

It is clearly vital that the CWU also tackles this issue of working-class political representation.

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