

# ***Workers need control of the struggle***

The result of the ballot held by the Communication Workers Union – over 77% in favour of industrial action in a two-thirds turn-out – is an indication that there is a great deal of anger amongst postal workers about the latest attack on their pay and conditions: a 2.5% pay offer which is well under the rate of inflation, and plans for ‘modernising’ Royal Mail which will mean job cuts and deteriorating conditions at work.

Despite top level negotiations, the first one-day national strike has now been called.

Many militant workers feel that a series of one-day strikes is a not going to be very effective and that the best alternative is to demand an all-out, indefinite strike. But the tactics and methods of the struggle is something that workers themselves need to debate. The ballot system, in fact the whole hierarchical union structure, does not allow such a debate to take place, still less does it enable the workers to make and carry out their own decisions. In virtually every struggle in the post office in recent years, workers have ignored the official union procedures and voted in mass meetings to come out on strike. Such mass meetings need to be held again now, to discuss the best means for waging this struggle, and to coordinate directly with other workplaces.

Obviously any action in the Royal Mail needs to involve as many postal workers as possi-

ble, regardless of workplace or category. But the strength of any movement of the working class does not reside in its ability to hold out for as long as possible against the bosses, who will always have the support of the rest of the ruling class, their media and their state. It resides above all in the ability of the struggle to spread, to become a mass struggle that builds a balance of forces against the bosses and the state.

It is not only postal workers who face attacks on their pay and conditions. There is growing discontent in the NHS, in the civil service, in education, in the Airbus factories, in transport and many other sectors. Postal workers discussing industrial action should also discuss how to make links with other sectors, how to win their solidarity, how to act together. And here again they cannot rely on the unions. They need to go directly to other workplaces and sectors, sending delegations to the nearest factory, hospital or school, holding joint meetings, raising common demands. These are the methods of struggle that alone can make our exploiters think twice about exploiting us even harder than they are already. And they are also the methods that allow us to seriously pose the question of how we can do away with exploitation altogether, and re-organise society in the interests of the vast majority of humanity.

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