



POST WORKER



As Royal Mail apply to the DTI to privatise the postal service...

IT'S TIME TO GO ON THE OFFENSIVE

After months of speculation, Royal Mail bosses have made a formal request to the Department of Trade and Industry to implement a share scheme.

Despite the resistance from the public, workers and MPs, they want to push forward with the privatisation of Royal Mail.

And how do we hear about it? Through the press. This is an absolute disgrace. It shows what utter contempt Royal Mail have for postal workers and their union and that they are not to be trusted. It seems that the recent efficiencies deal—which will see thousands of jobs go—has only sharpened RM's appetite for attacks.

The CWUs policy on share schemes is clear—even one share is privatisation. Members voted unanimously at last years conference to move to a ballot for strike action should there be any move towards a share scheme. There was also a sharp debate about linking continuing support for Labour to winning a commitment from the government that there would not be privatisation, including share schemes.

We have to ask our leadership—why do we continue to support Blair and New Labour in the face of these attacks? Why do we waste hundreds of thousands of pounds helping them to sell our jobs, services and conditions?

The Unison Labour Link has just agreed to suspend all funds and support to the Labour Party for the May elections because of the government's attacks on the Local Government Pension Scheme.

We should follow their lead and suspend all money to the Labour Party immediately while the question of privatisation remains on the table.

We should also make sure that at this year's conference we mandate our branches to vote to democratise the political fund so that we have the power to decide which parties and candidates to support in elections based on whether or not they support the policies of our union.



Postal workers marching in Belfast against management bullying (left) and local government workers on strike to defend pensions, 2006.

But there is more we can do. The strike last week over pensions involving over a million workers shows how workers can make the government sit up and listen. It seems to be the only language the government and our bosses understand.

Royal Mail management have laid their cards on the table. Allan Leighton openly supports the share scheme and Blair and New Labour's track record is one of continued privatisation and attacks on public services and workers' rights.

We have to go on the offensive, reinvigorating the campaign at branch and office level and moving to a national ballot if any share scheme is approved by the government.

We also need to withdraw our support for Labour in the coming elections until we have a binding commitment that the share scheme, and any attempt at privatising Royal Mail, have been completely rejected.

We need to send a clear message to Royal Mail and the government—we will fight to defend jobs and services.

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