



Postworker bulletin 18/11/09 • Workers' Liberty •
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Don't turn this truce into surrender!

The following is an article written for Workers' Liberty by a London postal worker:

With nearly two weeks gone since the return to work on the basis of the “interim agreement”, we can see just where we are. Management in many areas are continuing their bullying and harassment as before, charging people with wilful delay for not completing their deliveries in time and taking them off pay, they are keeping casuals in many mail centres and delivery offices, and they are refusing to review the changes brought in by Executive Action over the year. Rather they are making plans for their next round of job cuts. Some areas have almost walked already.

When the union announced it was calling off the planned strikes in exchange for an agreement to keep talking, the immediate response was “what the f**k”, and “we’ve got nothing in exchange for our strike action”.

Now we’ve had a chance to read the “interim agreement”, we can see precisely what we’ve got.

The agreement amounts to a wish-list from the union – it contains lots of good things we want to see coming out of the dispute, but only in the form of “reviewing” and “examining”. On the other hand, management has got its wish of calling off the strikes. The agreement commits management to reviewing changes they have introduced through executive action. Reps have been asking for that - a serious review of duties they have taken out, of walks they have collapsed, of shift times they’ve changed. It says work should return to its proper mail centre – we have to monitor that.

It says “normal resourcing” – for us that must mean casuals are only used in the usual way in the run up to Christmas.

The agreement states that there will be an independent review every two weeks of progress, and the union insists that strike action can be re-instated at any time if management are stalling.

Management are doing worse than stalling, they are not even pretending to stick by the letter of the agreement. They must be hoping that the calling off of the strikes means they can string us along with promises that mean nothing until we feel it is too late to do anything. And all that without any agreement, beyond talking, about the future.

We need the strikes reinstated on a national basis. People will be reluctant to go out again given we have lost momentum, but the alternative is to roll over and accept what management want to do to us.

We need to keep the pressure up on the Postal Executive to reinstate the strikes, and to call a national meeting of branches in favour if they refuse.

But we also need to assert control over the dispute, electing strike committees in every workplace and sending delegates from them to regional and national meetings. The disastrous “interim agreement” shows control has to be in the hands of those affected on the ground.

**This bulletin was produced by activists in the Alliance for Workers' Liberty. We are a socialist group fighting in the labour movement for a democratic working-class revolution against capitalism. Get in touch: awl@workersliberty.org
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