

# Support the Postal Workers!

**No Privatisation! No stealing of pensions!**

## Break the Link with Labour!



The CWU has inevitably been considering breaking the link with Labour. Now the decision by the Labour Government to concretely move ahead with privatisation of the Royal Mail has brought matters further to a head.

In the run-up to Christmas, the government revealed moves in the campaign to privatise the Royal Mail by stealth: plans to invite an infusion of private capital. To sweeten the brew still further, former Communications Workers Union (CWU) general secretary Alan Johnson, now reincarnated as the Health Secretary, defended these back-door privatisation plans in Cabinet, insisting that they represented the postal service's only hope of survival.

This put the CWU on a collision course with Labour, given that the union's annual conference had already reaffirmed its opposition to any kind of privatisation, including *"outright privatisation, joint ventures, splitting the business and allowing private companies to take over parts of it or infusions of private capital"*.

The union is committed to ballot its quarter of a million membership to disaffiliate from Labour if Business Secretary Mandelson does not back down and it is now clear that he is not doing so. The Labour Government plans to put an at least part privatisation bill through the Lords, apparently to give time for MPs opposed to part privatisation to be brought into line.

In addition, Mandelson has released a letter from the Royal Mail pension trustees warning that if part privatisation does not go ahead, the value of pensions will be slashed in half. The massive 'hole' that the trustees say there is in the pension fund is yet another example of how there has been robbery from pension funds for the benefit of monopoly capitalism, whether this be direct theft in the case of private companies or indirect in the public sector. The truth is that the monopoly capitalist class is not only threatening but is actively attempting to push the burden of the current crisis onto the backs of the working class.

We are faced with a real battle to resist encroaching unemployment, mortgage foreclosures, pensions insecurity, and deteriorating public services. The working class has no option but to use its collective strength to make capitalism pay for its own crisis instead of imposing a crushing burden on the working class. But to do that it needs resolute leadership and that is a scarce commodity among our present union leaders.

### Barber's New Year message

One year on from his last New Year message (telling everyone not to panic about the credit crunch because it wasn't really anything to do with the 'real' economy), Brendan Barber conceded in his latest papal bull that 2009 will be *"a grim year"* with unemployment set to rise every month.

The fact is that Barber's advice didn't even amount to a state capitalist 'solution' to the capitalist crisis. Sooner than call for failing businesses to be nationalised and funded and controlled by the state, he wanted to see yet more public money poured into the private sector.

And sooner than demand guarantees that such public largesse will be accompanied by a corresponding degree of public control and accountability, he attached only the empty proviso that there must be no *"return to picking winners and easy hand-outs, but strategic support to the sectors where we are already strong but could do better. Some will be in manufacturing, but others will be in services and parts of the economy often neglected in such discussions such as the creative sectors."*

He gave the routine slap on the wrist to the bankers and regulators for their lax behaviour, but lavished praise on the government for *"setting the international pace on the bail-out of banks"* and foresaw the need for yet more funds to be pumped into the banking system!

### No capitalist 'solution' for capitalist crisis

Any capitalist 'solution' of the capitalist crisis will necessarily rely upon the working class carrying the heaviest burdens, leaving the rich to hunker down in the hope that 'something will turn up' further along in the business cycle.

The emancipation of labour, however, remains the work of the working class itself, which must prepare to overthrow capitalism, expropriate the capitalist class that owns and controls the important means of production, and take charge of establishing and running a planned economy to meet the needs of the people for food, clothing, shelter and culture.

That is a massive task and in addressing it we must stand firm against privatisation and attacks on pensions, immediately in the case of the Royal Mail and its workers. And one of the first things that we have to do is break the link with Labour, a link which shackles the working-class movement to the interests of monopoly capitalism.

Labour's loss of support from the RMT and the FBU in 2004 was important progress in this direction. For Labour to lose the CWU in 2009, representing many more workers, would be even greater progress. Thanks to the subs of its long-suffering membership, the CWU has poured over £5m into party coffers since 2001, including half a million in the last 12 months alone. Not only would the Labour Party lose this finance, the working class would make a tremendous political gain by further shedding illusions in social democracy and facing up to the task of overthrowing the whole system of imperialism.

24 February 2009

---

## Communist Party of Great Britain (Marxist-Leninist)

PO Box 110, Normanton, WF6 1XZ Tel: 01924 218737 Email: info@cpgb-ml.org Website: www.cpgb-ml.org