



# POST WORKER



## ***Belfast postal workers strike, 40 offices balloting for action...***

### ***POST WORKER* says: **BACK THE BELFAST STRIKERS****

In Belfast a battle has been taking place which is crucial for all of us. It began as a response to a relentless round of bullying and harassment by managers against workers. At the BT13 office (Shankill) a worker began keeping a diary of these attacks. A manager found out, confiscated the diary and accused the worker of harassment! His office walked out.

Management refused to have an independent review and instead said workers would have to accept a whole range of new, much worse, conditions when they went back. So the strike spread, first to other delivery offices and then the main sorting office at Mallusk. Then, even worse, managers sent letters to four CWU officials accusing them of inciting the action and holding them personally liable (financially) for the strike. They could lose their homes.

Management say the strike is about Catholic-Protestant sectarianism and hatred which the union is trying to cover up. In fact, the strike has united Catholic and Protestant better than a thousand instructions from management to get on with each other. Strikers marched through the Protestant Shankill Road and the Catholic Falls Road united. Both communities have given their full support.

If Belfast loses then Royal Mail will feel much stronger to attack us all and our union elsewhere. We need to give full solidarity to Belfast. Some people say it was wrong to walk out without a ballot. Were Belfast workers supposed to see their mates disciplined and wait weeks before they did anything, or to accept a regime of harassment? How many of our present agreements would we have won and defended if we had always gone through every tortuous requirement of the anti-union laws?

This strike goes to the heart of a host of battles facing the CWU nationally. It is a critical test of the union's ability to defend members from a management hell-bent on breaking resistance in order to ram through cuts, job losses and to smash union organisation.

Management tried to get Glasgow and Edinburgh to process Belfast's mail. Quite rightly they refused. We need more such support. Why should other offices help bullying management do their dirty work? It's time to stand up against Royal Mail's onslaught. Bullying, harassment, job cuts, changes to working hours and local agreements. You name it they are doing it. And all this over the head of the CWU. A national attack deserves a national response.

Postal workers have fought a long, hard campaign against privatisation and pushed the government on to the back foot. Now we need to rev the campaign up a gear to tackle the battles over liberalisation, mechanisation and changes to terms and conditions.

Across the country workers are standing up to management attacks. There are currently strikes coming in North West London and Dundee and 40 offices are being balloted for strike action across Britain including ones in Oxfordshire, Somerset and West Wiltshire, Cornwall, Merseyside and parts of London. The ballots are all over similar issues, and while it is vital to encourage branches to ballot in response to management attacks, it isn't enough.

Management's tactic is to divide and rule - trying to force through changes at local level, completely ignoring local agreements and without any negotiation with the CWU. That is why it is vital that there is a united, union wide response.

A national strike ballot would cut through the divide and rule tactics and unite postal workers behind the union and the campaign over pay, job cuts, terms and conditions. It would send a message to Royal Mail that the union is strong and that postal workers are united and prepared to fight and win. Belfast has started the ball rolling. It is vital that we do everything we can to support them and to build the campaign that will stop Royal Mail in its tracks.

We should be organising messages of support, collections for the strikers and invite strikers to come and address branch meetings. United we can stop Royal Mail in its tracks.

#### **SEND MESSAGES OF SUPPORT TO BELFAST POSTAL WORKERS:**

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