

WHO WON?

The struggle for the shorter working week has now been settled following the ballot result in which 58% of those who voted to accept the offer of a 1½ hour reduction in the working week. Even this pathetic offer was coupled to concessions by the Executive.

What has been gained is minimal to what could have been gained. A 1½ hour reduction still means we work longer than many people in this country. Meanwhile POs and PAs haven't even gained that.

To gain this cut we have given up the IWM bonus in exchange for a new scheme, the Performance Based Initiative Scheme (PBIS). The PBIS will rationalise the bonus payments, but whilst 22,000 will be included for the first time, for over 30,000 workers it will mean taking a pay cut, hardly a good deal. The deal also promises more 5 day duties, but this has still to be negotiated. And as 'The Post' says; 'Although the Safeguarding the Future of the Mails Business agreement reached in 1985 continued a clause which was designed to increase the number of Monday to Friday 5-day weeks from 30% of total duties to 60%, virtually no progress has been made...' What's to say the same won't happen this time?

The situation for Postal Officers and Assistants is just as bad, if not worse. Whilst they get no reduction, they were promised that their Incentive Scheme was to be sorted out, yet two months later nothing has happened.

What Could Have Been Won?

For a start we voted to strike for a 3 hour reduction for all grades, not 1½ hours for some, there should have been no compromise, the full

demand nothing else. If the bonus scheme was to be ended all well and good, we have argued in previous editions of this paper that IWM was a divisive scheme, designed to set worker against worker, and office against office. What should have been demanded was that any bonus monies should have been consolidated into an across the board wage increase. There should also have been real moves towards the 5 day week, not these vague negotiations.

So what went wrong? What went wrong is that we let Tuffin and the Executive stitch us up. We voted on a fair and just demand, but Tuffin, fearful of a strike from the very beginning, did his best to avert a strike and makes great play of this in the special edition of 'The Post'.

So what of the future? Recent strikes in London, Leicester and Northants have shown that the only way to fight the PO is by striking, not by doing deals. It is now becoming clear that whatever the deal eventually results in the struggle for better pay and conditions will continue.

QUOTE OF THE STRIKE (taken from C.W.6)

The secret talks have been a farce, why are the E.C. wasting time negotiating anyway. Our demand is simple, 3 hours of the working week, nothing less. It doesn't take two weeks of talks for management to say yes or no. And why have we been kept in the dark over the talks. We could of course, tell you ourselves, but we thought you might like to hear it from Tony Clarke, Deputy General Secretary:

"The Post Office have got a reputation in recent years of saying the most outrageous things in negotiations, and that would be rather silly if those sort of things got out to our members. We don't want any spontaneous reaction".

LBC Radio programme (November 23rd)

Once again the UCW bureaucrats have shown exactly the type of fight they want, one that's firmly controlled by them.

1988 PAY CLAIM.
WHATEVER THEY OFFER-IT'S NOT ENOUGH.

The annual pay farce is coming round again, but an increasing number of postal workers are not finding jokes like last years 5.1% funny anymore. Let's face it, our pay is low, our hours (even after the 1½ cut) are still longer than workers in any major industry, and job conditions are getting worse.

Many groups of workers are fighting pay claims at the moment. Ford workers got 7% after a union stitch up. Land Rover workers are fighting against the management 14% offer (spread over two years) and ambulance drivers are demanding a £20 a week rise.. These are just a few examples, all are more than we got last year, when the Post Office made a record £170 million profits on our backs.



Whatever the management offer, and whatever the union demands it is not enough. To be able to take home a decent wage, we need to do overtime, which is getting harder and harder to get. The pathetic figures that will be banded around are insufficient, but more importantly not as much as we could win..



The union will again put in a claim, not expecting to get it, and if everything goes smoothly they will then sell us another shit deal...that's if everything goes smoothly for them.

Last year when the mangement offered us 3.9%, 'Communication Worker' rightly told them that they were 'taking the piss.' This year we say the same thing. We will not get the pay rise we need by just asking nicely for the management to see reason. The PO have no interest in listening to reason, they want to squeeze us for every penny that they can. The only thing that will make them listen is industrial action.

Tuffin after the closeness of the recent ballot on the shorter working week, said that the number of people who rejected the offer shows that there is dissatisfaction against the Post Office. Considering he recommended the offer it also shows a lot of people are also dissatisfied with the crap they get from Tuffin and co.

THE BRITISH DISEASE

It was only a few months ago that Thatcher was telling us how she'd cured 'The British Disease', and that strikes are no longer a problem. Then just weeks later began the biggest wave of industrial discontent since the miners strike. The media began to talk of the possibilities of a 'winter of discontent' and the bosses began to worry.



In the past couple of months strikes involving many different groups of workers have dominated the news. Car workers, seamen, nurses, miners, postal workers, civil servants and many others. No one group of workers can beat the government on their own, the miners proved that in their year long strike, but together we are unbeatable. In 1979 the government was brought down by strikes in 'The Winter of Discontent.' the same can be done now.

Whose Side are the Unions On?

Well in 1979 they weren't on our side for a start, it was the social contract, made between the then Labour government and the TUC which introduced the wage freeze. We fought them then and must fight them now.

Seamen's leader Mcluskie for all his brave words about going to jail, quickly ordered strikers back to work when a judge told him to.

The Ford workers' unions got them a 'historic deal', well that's what the unions called it. In fact it was so historic that the workforce rejected it, only to get a better deal a week later.

IS BACK

~ LETS MAKE IT FATAL!

The NUM, Britain's most 'radical' union, called off it's overtime ban, just as pit deputies began to take action. Just a coincidence? Well where was Scargill during all this, not on the picket line that's for sure, but conveniently keeping his mouth shut, whilst local officials sabotaged the strikes.

Meanwhile the government is attacking the NHS. The response from health workers is to strike, but can the health workers win on their own. No, but with support from other groups of workers they undoubtedly have the potential to do so. And after all it is in the interests of all workers to be able to receive a decent standard of health care.

Miners in Yorkshire, Vauxhall workers, firemen, teachers and EMI workers have all struck in support of the nurses and other hospital workers.

But for a start you can forget about calling on the TUC for support. TUC 'Days of Action' have only one purpose, that of demoralising any sort of a fightback. Time spent demanding the TUC take action could be time spent organising. In the 1980 steel workers strike, a day of action was called by the TUC. It's main purpose was to get miners back to work who were already out on strike...it worked.

DON'T TRUST THE UNIONS, TRUST NOBODY BUT YOURSELVES AND OTHER RANK AND FILE WORKERS.

Don't cross picket lines...join them.
Press forward with our own demands now, whilst the bosses are worried.
The nurses' strikes were organised at the grass roots, not by bureaucrats, we should do the same.
Support all other workers demos.

WE'RE BACK!

Many regular readers will be wondering what had happened to us, some may have thought we'd given up the fight—No way! So why have most of you not seen an issue since last November, and if this number seven then what happened to six.

Well, number six was brought out in early December when the dispute over hours was on, about a hundred of these were distributed at SEDO on the picket line.

Then with the strike being stitched up we were left with 4900 out of date copies. So if you've got one it's a collectors item.

Then after Christmas everyone was recovering from the pressure and nothing really got done for about a month.

This is the first issue of 1988, hopefully the first of many. We still want your letters to tell us what's going on in your area, we also want to get more people involved in the production and distribution of this bulletin (why not take some to give to your mates at work) and if you'd like to make a small donation make the cheques payable to Peter Blake.

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