



COMMUNICATION No. 9. 12th September, 1988. WORKER

Postman Pat Says Don't Let Them Stitch Us Up Again!

As we go to press, union boss Alan Tuffin is making a deal with P.O. management. Any postal worker with a memory which can stretch as far as last Christmas will remember what UCW deals are like. The changing of the bonus system into a supplement was one of the things that led to this strike in the first place and ten months on we still haven't got our 1½ hour cut let alone the 3 hours we wanted.

Tuffin said at the TUC conference that the "record of my union is there for all to see - a responsible union with a responsible membership. This official stoppage is the first in 17 years." Last year postal workers were involved in 219 local wildcat strikes. With the union officials stitching up deals with the management behind our backs at every opportunity and telling us to get back to work on various occasions.

The union bosses have done their best to fuck us up over as long as anyone can remember. From the 7 week strike in 1971 to Xmas 1987. There's no reason for them to change their attitude now. The dispute must continue until we get a decent deal. Now we are out nationally we cannot go back licking Bill Cockburn's boots. The way for US to control this dispute is through mass meetings at every office. These meetings should decide on a strategy to win the dispute.

- * THE REFUSAL OF ANY CRAP DEAL WHICH THE EXECUTIVE COMES UP WITH.
- * THE SPREADING OF THE STRIKE TO THE REST OF THE POST OFFICE - COUNTER STAFF AND ENGINEERS MUST JOIN THE STRIKE. FLYING PICKETS ARE THE WAY TO MAKE THIS HAPPEN.

Also we must decide on what we want:

- * THE WITHDRAWAL OF THE DECLARATION TO WORK NORMALLY, WHICH THEY WANT US TO SIGN ON OUR RETURN.
- * THE LIFTING OF ALL SUSPENSIONS.
- * THE SCRAPPING OF DRAS AND THE PAYMENT OF THE SUPPLEMENT TO ALL WORKERS.
- * A THREE HOUR REDUCTION AND A FIVE DAY WEEK - IMPLEMENTED IMMEDIATELY - NOT NEXT YEAR.

This is the best chance we've had in years, lets win something and not throw it away!

Send any mail (!!) to:

COMMUNICATION WORKER,
BM BOX 3644, LONDON WC1N 3XX

What's Going On

Wednesday 31st August saw the first national strike in the P.O. for 17 years. It was over the introduction of bonus payments (DRAS) to new recruits in areas where there are recruiting difficulties (parts of the S.E.).

If the scheme were to succeed it would prove to be a very devious measure, not only creating greater pay differences between different areas but also causing competition and division between new recruits in the same office - the bonus will only be paid to those individuals the supervisors recommend.

This is the first step towards office by office pay bargaining. The demise of national collective bargaining is something the union would naturally dread, it would weaken its national position with management and also it would make the UCW even more irrelevant to the members. More importantly it will tend to divide workers in different offices and will mean offices with little power will get an even worse deal than they do already.

For the UCW the manner of the introduction of these payments was more alarming than the payments themselves. Twice this year P.O. management has decided to impose new national conditions on the workforce without the agreement of the union. The first was Team Briefings, the second was this new bonus. The UCW is shaking in its boots because it is being excluded from the power-structure of management. In the past everything management has decided upon has been discussed and agreed with by UCW bosses before implementation. The UCW is very proud of its record of negotiation instead of industrial action to solve problems - this must be the reason why there are regularly many more unofficial strikes in the P.O. in six months than there is in any other industry in a year!

The original dispute over DRAS has now been superseded by a virtual national stoppage over the aggressive attitude of management after the one-day strike and the hiring of casuals.

Management have forced us out by several means. They have mucked workers about since the one-day strike by changing peoples duties and applying even more rigid regulations, making working intolerable. One of the first offices out (Coventry) came out for this reason - not over casuals. Casuals were not needed to clear the backlog from the one-day stoppage, casuals are not brought in after bank holidays, so there was no reason to bring them in after the one-day. Management have suspended all workers who refuse to cross picket lines or handle blacked mail.

We know that all this has been planned in advance and that the dispute has been created in order to discredit the union (which doesn't matter) and us - and finally to crush our resistance as further shake-ups, or privatisation, looms.