Communication Workers' Network

bulletin of the communication workers' network (CWN)

#5

Free/Donation

Get involved -Anti-bullying Campaign -Networking with like-minded communication workers -Spreading Information

Do you work in the postal service or communications? Do you want a fair deal for all workers?

To join a network of like-minded communication workers, or simply find out more, write to one of our regional addresses;

CWN-SF, PO Box 29
SWPDO
***Manchester** M15 5HW*

CWN-SF, Room 13
Muspole Workshops
Muspole St
***Norwich** NR3 1DJ*

CWN-SF, PO Box 1681
***London** N8 7DN*

TELEPHONE HOTLINE:
0161 232 7889

This bulletin is about two things currently going on in Royal Mail offices up and down the country. Firstly, new threats to our jobs and conditions, and secondly, the growing incidence of harassment, bullying and intimidation from management (what's new?).

Starting with job-threats, one is the introduction of the IMP machines in the new mail centres. The clear implication is a massive cut in staffing levels - i.e. job losses. The CWU appears to have little or no national strategy to safeguard jobs or help with people who might want to take early retirement (EVR). They have copped out by saying any problems need to be dealt with locally. But this is clearly a national issue. The Royal Mail has said they will be making no redundancies, and they can't afford to let people take EVR. The reason for no redundancies is because of the huge number of workers on casual and temporary contracts. In some regions, some people have been on these for the last 10 years or more.

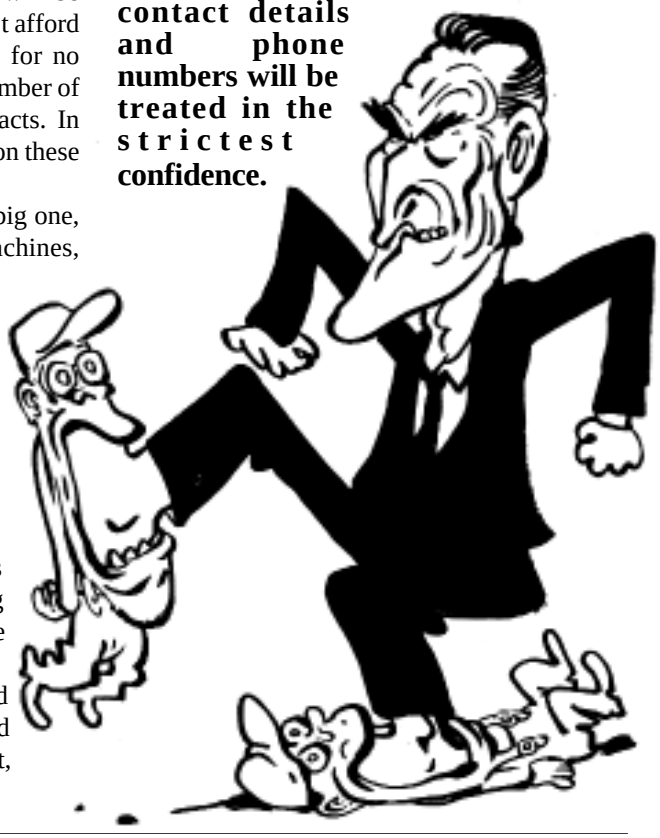
In automation terms, IMP is a big one, with billions being spent on new machines, massive staff cost cuts, and new higher profits for management in the offing. Postal workers' livelihoods are at stake here.

At the same time as IMP, we are seeing the introduction of 56 box fittings in place of the current standard 48 box fitting sorting frames. This means more work for the new centres - and higher work rates for postal workers in them. But it also means less sorting in the Districts - and it is here where the main job losses will occur.

This threat is something we need to respond to, as postal workers. And why not nationally? While we are at it, why not take the opportunity to demand a shorter working week. Let's start with, say, 35 hours - like the agreements recently made in Italy, France and Denmark. What makes a shorter working week more achievable there than here?

On to bullying - this is a big issue up and down the country (see over). CWN has had a number of letters and calls from postal workers who have been harassed, bullied or threatened by management, or who know of such acts taking place in their workplace. The first thing that needs doing about this spreading disease is to stop the rot NOW. Any bullying - be it physical or verbal - should mean instant dismissal.

CWN is gathering information and resources to mount a campaign against the bullies. Our goal is to rid Royal Mail of harrassment and bullying. We won't be going into tactics here, but needless to say, if you have any information - we want to know about it! If you prefer, phone us and leave your number. ALL correspondence, contact details and phone numbers will be treated in the strictest confidence.



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Communication Workers' Network - Solidarity Federation - International Workers' Association

POST OFFICE BULLY BOYS

The case of Mr. B and Mr. C (by Ms PW)

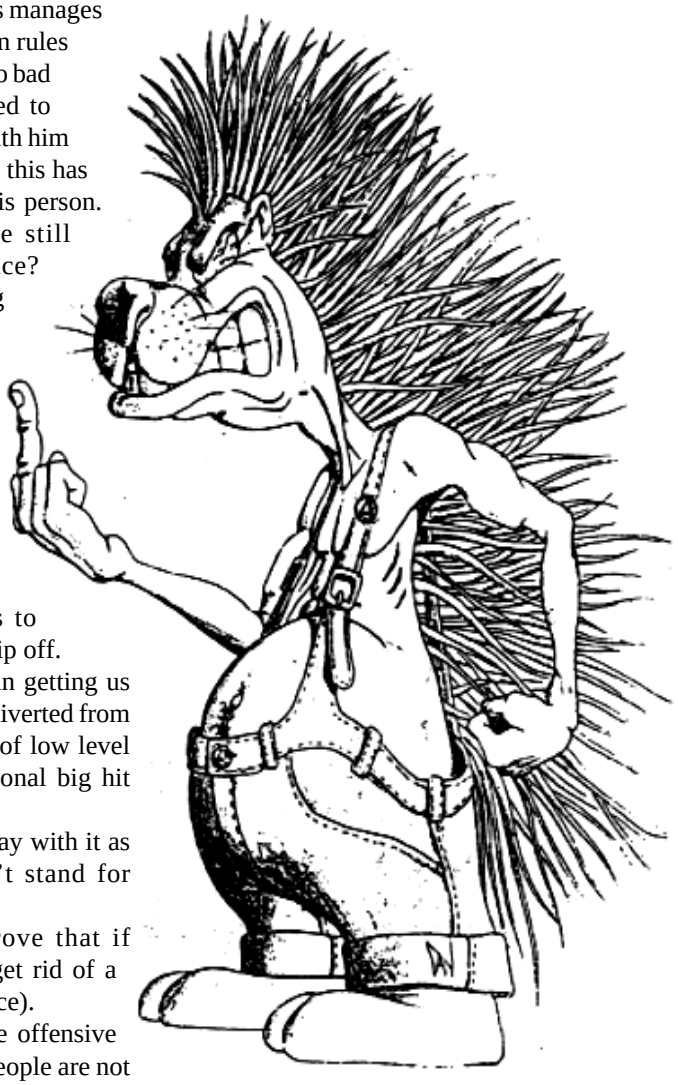
Most of us have had some experience of bullying managers. Here's two cases from my area (the Midlands) which are fairly typical.

Firstly, Mr.B. He has been a Manager for over 10 years. He started in our office as a notorious skiver - shitting on his work mates at every opportunity. A short stint as a PHG and plenty of arse licking got him a Supervisor's job. One of his favourite 'jokes' was to grab an unsuspecting postman from behind and try to insert an index finger up his arse! He also thought nothing of intimidating a postal worker who had just returned to work after a long absence due to surgery on a brain tumour - typical of his behaviour.

He was transferred to another office in the area having fallen out with the DOM. The next few years saw him moved around as his behaviour proved unacceptable to the staff in the various offices he worked. His last office (before hi came back to us 6 months ago) accused him of racial and sexual harassment - he just can't help himself!

Mr. C. has been a Manager for a little less than 10 years - like Mr. B. he was a well-known gaffer's nark. His first job on becoming a Manager was to stamp his authority on our Office. He went out in his own time to catch people having their breakfast at home between deliveries. His insistence on applying the letter of PO rules was ridiculous - no one was cut any slack. All infringements of the rules, however minor, were punished - at his insistence. Not surprisingly he quickly annoyed his own superiors and us and was moved around from office to office.

He has been responsible for innumerable walkouts in various DO's - his vindictiveness is legendary throughout the area. His favourite trick is to pick on individuals for a length of time - seeing how far he can push them - to see if they will react before moving on to some other victim of his power game. He always manages to do this within the PO's own rules of course! His behaviour got so bad in our DO that we threatened to walk out if we had to work with him - he was quickly moved - yet this has happened repeatedly with this person. So - why are these people still employed by the Post Office? Even when they are doing their jobs without intimidating you, they are impossible to talk to. You can't ever get a straight answer out of them. The obvious answer is that the PO finds these people useful. They are the hard men who soften us up for the smooth talking supervisors to come in and sell us another rip off.



They are also useful in getting us riled up - that way we can be diverted from other important issues - lots of low level intimidation with the occasional big hit thrown in - sounds familiar?

They can only get away with it as long as we let them. Don't stand for bullying and intimidation!

The cases above prove that if Offices can unite they can get rid of a bully (if only to another Office).

We have to go on the offensive and make it clear that these people are not tolerated -ANYWHERE!

AND IN THE NORTH-EAST...

The recent launch of the Royal Mail campaign against bul lying and discrimination in the workplace, which was sup posed to be advertised by posters, has been completely inconspicuous by its absence. Is this just a local or a national oversight? Or is the hypocrisy too much to bare for the Sheffield Royal Mail hierarchy, where known racist and sexist bullies are becoming delivery office managers (DOM's)? The fact that these people are former lazy, skiving and work shy PHG's/Postmen/ Part timers is not important to the Royal Mail, as long as they keep sticking the boot in and making our lives a bloody misery. As recent evidence shows, bullying in the work place is OK by management as long as it is the management doing it.

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