

CWU silent on unofficial strike and witch-hunt at Glasgow G1-5 Royal Mail delivery office

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Do you have any information about the walkout in Glasgow? Help break through the company-union censorship about the brutal revisions and bullying being enforced. Information can be submitted on the form at the bottom of the page and will be anonymised to protect against victimisation.

The Communication Workers Union (CWU) is blacking-out news and discussion about an unofficial walkout of postal workers at Glasgow's G1-5 Royal Mail delivery office in Baird Street, Glasgow in late May.

The walkout was reportedly triggered by management bullying during a dispute over holidays. According to one report, management accused a union rep of being intimidating when the rep was simply requesting a day off for a postal worker! The manager refused to continue the meeting. The rep informed the workforce, which walked out on Friday May 19, returning to work early the following week.

The CWU leadership has suppressed news of the walkout fearful it will trigger similar unofficial action by postal workers amid mass anger over its agreement with Royal Mail that has already ushered in the biggest attacks on postal workers in history.

Postal workers starting their shifts at the Baird Street office told WSWs they had been told not to say anything. They reported that managers and union reps had been pulled in from other parts of the country as workers at the delivery office were being interrogated by management one-by-one. Such "interviews" are reportedly continuing as of June 2, as managers look for names and a scapegoat.

The strike at Baird Street came just as the CWU cancelled a ballot on their pro-company surrender deal

with Royal Mail. One worker said the ballot was cancelled just before the strike, but it was the "icing on the cake". Several CWU branches in Scotland have opposed the deal.

Workers at the delivery office agreed the CWU leadership and Royal Mail are in cahoots, with a postal worker saying this was the general view in the office. Others not immediately involved in the dispute had refused to cross an unofficial picket line set up by the strikers.

The CWU leadership know that any publicity for the strike at Baird St will generate further anger at the CWU's agreement, hampering their ability to push the deal through and risking a wave of wildcat action against brutal revisions and management bullying greenlighted by the CWU.

News of the strike was greeted enthusiastically by postal workers on social media, with comments including, "Well done Glasgow 1-5. Is this the start of something CWU HQ can't control" and "It should happen everywhere, until it's all sorted out".

Another wrote, "I'm surprised that it's not happened sooner in DOs. RM seem to be ramming through revisions up and down the country and they don't seem to be taking any notice of the union." Another asked, "How come this hasn't spread? Late 80s or could have been early 90s an office near us walked out, their mail was diverted to us, we refused to touch it and we were all suspended."

The CWU blackout extended to concealing a strike-breaking operation by Royal Mail during the walkout. Managers from across Scotland were drafted into Glasgow to load and drive vans over the weekend of the strike. The response from local managers was

insufficient with only a small number of vans operational Saturday May 20.

The following Monday, Royal Mail Operations Development Director Ricky McAulay issued a directive to “specific colleagues” that “as a result of unofficial industrial action, we are asking for your support in our Glasgow Delivery Office... for the remainder of the week.” They would be involved in “indoor sortation of mail and outdoor deliveries.” In the event, the strike was apparently over by Tuesday May 23, having been isolated and opposed by the CWU.

On May 24, the CWU announced its second suspension of national balloting on their negotiators’ agreement with Royal Mail. They clearly feared wildcat action could spread. CWU leaders Dave Ward and Andy Furey reaffirmed their support for the union’s surrender document but complained “the environment we are attempting to deliver this agreement in remains toxic”, noting the company had “not stepped back from their attacks in the workplace.”

Aware of their loss of authority, Ward and Furey complained, “Unless Royal Mail Group openly accept that their culture of imposition and the ‘our business to run’ mantra must go - then the integrity of the negotiators agreement will be irreparably damaged.”

A delivery worker from the south of England told WSWS he was not surprised the CWU had kept the walk-out under wraps, “They obviously want to keep everything quiet because they’re now in bed with management. They’re like the police arm of management, aren’t they? They’re trying to push this deal through because it consolidates their own position. I think it’s disgusting. It’s a betrayal.”

A Royal Mail worker in Fife, Scotland, said he was not aware of the Glasgow dispute at all. Every office was being left to “fight its own battles... It’s one of the things I said early on, before the strike. There should have been area meetings to prepare the strike, it would have made us stronger. There was none of that. I used to be one of these flying pickets. If there was a strike, we would go around all the other offices. They are trying to stop that happening now. But unity is strength.”

The Postal Workers Rank-and-File Committee is fighting to break through the disinformation and division being imposed by the CWU’s unaccountable

bureaucracy. The next rank-and-file committee online Zoom meeting is being held on Sunday June 11 at 7pm. Register here.



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