

CWU blocks Royal Mail strike in Craigavon Northern Ireland: Reinstate all victimised reps and workers!

Our reporters
12 June 2023

Dave Ward and the national postal executive of the Communication Workers Union (CWU) have blocked strike action at Craigavon delivery office in Northern Ireland after two reps were suspended there in February.

Postal workers from Northern Ireland contacted the *World Socialist Web Site* last week reporting that their reps were suspended in February for opposing workplace revisions and were hung out to dry by CWU national officials.

The events at Craigavon show how the CWU's unaccountable bureaucracy led by Dave Ward and Andy Furey are working as strike-breakers to push through their pro-company agreement with Royal Mail. We are publishing the resolution adopted at Sunday's meeting of the Postal Workers Rank-and-File Committee and a letter from a former Royal Mail employee at Craigavon explaining the background to the resolution.

Please share this information with your colleagues. Information and messages of support can be submitted using the form below.

RESOLUTION:

Today's Zoom meeting of the Postal Workers Rank-and-File Committee has heard reports from our colleagues in Northern Ireland of CWU reps being frog-marched from the premises in treatment they have likened to Guantanamo Bay.

At Craigavon, where CWU members voted unanimously on February 21 for industrial action to oppose brutal revisions and the suspension of their reps, their democratic mandate under rule 13 was blocked by Dave Ward, Andy Furey and the CWU postal executive.

The situation in Northern Ireland shows the state of siege against Royal Mail workers everywhere. Collusion between CWU head office and Royal Mail is a joint criminal conspiracy against postal workers, and against a universal mail service to the public.

The CWU's negotiators agreement with Royal Mail surrenders terms, conditions and entitlements won in decades of struggle. It hangs out to dry 400 reps and other workers victimised during the dispute, leaving their fate in the hands of Blairite Lord Falconer who provided legal advice to the National Coal Board during the 1985 miners' strike.

This meeting reaffirms our call for the immediate and unconditional reinstatement of all victimised workers as the absolute pre-condition for any resumption of talks. They must be compensated in full for the financial detriment and stress they have suffered. It is time for the rank-and-file to take control of this dispute! Form rank-and-file committees at your workplace and let's defeat this pro-company agreement: An injury to one is an injury to all!

Postal Workers Rank and File Committee, Sunday June 11, 2023

LETTER FROM CRAIGAVON, NORTHERN IRELAND

Dear brothers and sisters,

I am a former Royal Mail employee (OPG) at the Craigavon Delivery Office in Northern Ireland. I wish to make others aware of why I recently felt the need to leave and what is really happening there.

I joined Royal Mail at a time when it was a good company to work for. I was at Craigavon DO for a considerable number of years. Until the past 2 years, I can only talk about good things. However, the job has

become unworkable, with unagreed change, impossible targets, and confrontation. A toxic working environment.

I knew that if I didn't look for an opportunity elsewhere my health would continue to suffer as the chronic atmosphere followed you home.

Around the time of the pay talks in 2022, when a 2% pay increase was imposed without agreement, the writing was on the wall. Employees since then have been living a hell on earth. Changes to terms and conditions through revision activity has made every duty an impossibility to complete and the berating and bullying from managers increased by the day.

That office had two brilliant CWU reps who challenged management and supported every member. However, managers found an avenue to have them suspended within a few days of each other. They were marched out of there like Guantanamo Bay prisoners. The only thing missing was the handcuffs. That was within a week of unagreed revisions being imposed at Craigavon. Our reps were suspended because they challenged this and for no other reason. As the weeks have passed, I have heard that other spurious and dubious charges have been added.

On February 21, less than two weeks after our reps were suspended, CWU members at Craigavon voted unanimously for local industrial action to oppose Royal Mail's revisions and the suspension of our reps. Our branch secretary submitted the paperwork to CWU head office as a Rule 13 ballot for local industrial action. But Ward and Furey have suppressed our democratic mandate. We received no reply to our legally compliant paperwork with all follow-up queries ignored.

Craigavon DO CWU members have now been without reps for approximately 5 months and during their absence the office has become unrecognisable. Unagreed revisions have been pushed through, duties disbanded, OPGs berated within an inch of their lives to achieve near impossible times, prioritising of tracked packets, failing mail and the biggest crime of it all is that good decent staff are leaving the business. This is all taking place whilst Ward and the CWU executive prop up Royal Mail's self-inflicted financial woes with their Royal Mail Benevolent Agreement.

It is the view of every single member I have spoken to that our Reps have been hung out to dry by Ward

and Furey. For 18 weeks they have received no assistance from head office—not even a phone call. They are facing financial ruin. CWU head office has better things to spend our £29 million annual dues money on, such as six-figure salaries for Ward and senior officials.

There are 130 CWU members in the Craigavon office who showed 100% support for the strikes. Not one employee walked through the gate in 18 days of action. However, this support is at a massive risk should our reps not get the justice they deserve and walk back into their rightful place. I am writing because others cannot, without facing interrogation and victimisation.

Sincerely,

A former Royal Mail employee



To contact the WSWs and the
Socialist Equality Party visit:

[wsws.org/contact](https://www.wsws.org/contact)