

Socialist Party says... Support the Dessian Workers!

Defend trade union rights!



Workers at the Dessian Products factory in Apollo Road have been on strike since May 19. The strike began over the sacking of Paddy McCloskey, one of the two T&GWU shop stewards in the plant.

Paddy was sacked for “refusing to carry out duties”. In fact he was doing three jobs at the time! The real reason was to deal a blow at the union by victimising a shop steward. It is no coincidence that the sacking took place just as pay negotiations were opening.

This is a rerun of what happened two years ago when the management sacked a shop steward in order to try and intimidate workers from joining or supporting the union. They got away with it then but this time the workforce has decided to make a stand.

The spark that provoked the strike was the sacking but the grievances of the Dessian workers run much deeper



Dessian are a low wage company and the management want to keep it that way.

The starting rate is the minimum wage. This can rise over five years to a miserly £6.50 per hour! This from a leading and highly profitable manufacturer of PVC doors and windows which has made huge profits over the years. Last year Dessian made £3 million profit!



Conditions in the factory are terrible.

Corners are regularly cut on Health and Safety. The latest move of the Big Brother management has been to install CCT cameras all over the shop floor to monitor every move, including visits to the toilet.



Dessian is an anti trade union company.

They were only finally forced to recognise a union four years ago when a majority of the shop floor workers joined the T&GWU. Since then they have done everything possible to prevent the union from operating effectively. There are no proper negotiating procedures.

Threats and intimidation

Dessian are now trying to sit out this strike so as to effectively break the union and go back to the “good old days” of dictatorial management and a “subservient” workforce.

Dessian’s response to the strike has been to try to threaten and intimidate the workforce back to work. They have refused point blank to negotiate. Instead they have sent out letters threatening substantial redundancies.

Their threats have had no effect. Five weeks on and the strike is still solid. Despite using Agency staff and shifting office workers to production jobs (with no regard for the health and safety implications of allowing untrained workers to operate cutting machinery) production has ground to a halt.

The Dessian workers deserve your support. This is not just a battle against one employer. It is a battle against all low-wage, anti trade union companies. If the Dessian strikers are defeated this will be a signal to other employers that they can get away with paying poverty wages and trampling on workers’ rights. But a victory would be a blow to would encourage other workers to stand up for decent pay and conditions.

Hardship money needed urgently

Dessian management have one tactic to win. This is to try to sit out the strike and eventually starve the workers back to work. Don’t let them get away with this. The Dessian workers need your solidarity and support to help them in this struggle. Above all they urgently need financial support.

The rest of the trade union movement should come behind the Dessian workers. All Dessian products should be blacked until this dispute is settled. Regular collections should be organised in the workplaces to maintain the strike.

If you are a trade union member why not organised weekly collections in your work. If you are not in work you can help by sending a message of support and a donation to the strikers.

Show your solidarity – Donate to the Dessian Fund

Messages of support and donations should be sent to
Stephen Magee, 31 Ava Crescent, Belfast BT7 3DU.

Cheques should be sent to this address or to Transport House,
102 High Street Belfast, and made payable to “Dessian Fund”.

- ☞ Re-instate Paddy McCloskey
- ☞ Introduce proper negotiating procedures
- ☞ Pay a living wage
- ☞ Improve conditions
- ☞ No to bully-boy management

This leaflet has been produced by the Socialist Party to help raise awareness of this dispute and help win support for workers at Dessian. The Socialist Party campaigns for justice for working class people and puts the common interests of working class people first. If you would like more info on the Socialist Party or would like to join, fill in the form and send it to the address provided.

I would like o to Join the Socialist Party o more info

Name _____

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