

# After the huge ballot vote, STRIKE BACK IN ROYAL MAIL



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**WE SUPPORT CWU STRIKERS**  
Re-nationalise Royal Mail now!

- Start the Royal Mail action with 5-day strike over 'Black Friday' - 'Cyber Monday' weekend
- For a Corbyn-led Labour government on socialist policies
- Re-nationalise Royal Mail & BT under democratic workers' control and management

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**Socialist Party Scotland member Gary Clark, who is the branch secretary of the Scotland Number Two CWU branch spoke at the main rally at Socialism 2019, a festival of ideas hosted by the Socialist Party. Below are extracts from his speech about the upcoming national Royal Mail strike.**

“We’re standing on the brink of a major industrial dispute, which we’ve probably not seen in Britain for a number of years.

We have just seen the result of a 97% ‘yes’ vote in the whole of the Royal Mail Group and a 95% ‘yes’ vote in the Parcelforce group, with a 76% turnout, which smashed all the anti-trade union laws to smithereens.

But I’ll tell you what - the mood is so strong in the workplace right now, we’ve got activists who were disappointed with that result! That’s how strong the mood is!

## **BULLYING**

Getting the members out for strike action was like kicking at an open door, because the culture in Royal Mail is disgraceful. Every week of the year, there’s some unit out on strike. And 99% of the time, because of the bullying and the harassment you get off management.

We’ve been preparing to strike for five years now, because we knew, when privatisation happened that this battle was going to occur.

A couple of years ago, we had the ‘four pillars’ dispute, with a massive ‘yes’ vote, and we never had to take strike action, and it was viewed by the vast majority of postal workers as a major victory.

## **115,000 ANGRY POSTIES**

Since then they’ve brought in Rico Back, a horrible anti-trade union manager, to take us on. But he’s taking on 150,000 angry posties, and he’d better be prepared for a fight here.

He wants to bring us into the gig economy, and bring us down to the

lowest terms possible. So this is the fight of our lives.

He wants to break up Royal Mail into small sections, and sell us off to the capitalist vultures.

He wants to change the package strategy, and ditch the letter strategy. What that’ll mean: overnight, anything over shoebox size will be taken by some other drivers. Overnight, 20,000 postal jobs go.

Six-day service: he has refused to give a commitment to actually defend it; another 20,000 jobs will go.

## **JOB & SERVICES**

So what we’re fighting for here is 40,000 reasonably paid jobs, and a public service which people want.

And then the strike ballot happened and had a 97% ‘yes’ vote, so under the rules and agreements we had to go to mediation. Two weeks of mediation; they were not interested.

Mediator’s report comes in; there’s another week for us to review the mediator’s report. We ask for week-long talks with them. They refuse on the grounds it was mid-term and the kids were on school holidays! That was the answer of Royal Mail.

So then they wrote to us on 29 October, asking for urgent negotiations with no strings, they said. Well, hang on, there are strings there. They said we won’t discuss Parcelforce, and you must take strike action off the table until the new year!

And that coincided - it was the same day - as the general election was called. So I strongly believe Boris Johnson’s tipped them the wink and said, ‘I don’t want any fights on the streets, I don’t want any strikes when the general elections on’.

And to make it clear: we will take strike action during the general election.

This is going to be the biggest battle we’ve seen in Britain for a number of years. We have called a special postal

executive committee meeting on 13 November, where the strike dates will be announced.

They’re recruiting 5,500 casual labourers as we speak, to deliver packets between eleven in the morning and seven at night.

## **BLACK FRIDAY**

I’ll tell you something: 14 days after 13 November, that weekend coincides with Amazon ‘Black Friday’ and ‘Cyber Monday’. I’m just guessing here, but I reckon we’ll be out over that whole weekend, for five-day strike action.

We are now faced with a battle. We need every individual in this room to get round and visit your Royal Mail workplaces, get involved with support groups. We’re in for a fight to the finish. We need support from every single trade unionist and socialist in this country.”

## **WHOSE SIDE ARE YOU ON?**

### **TORIES OUT! - CORBYN IN WITH ANTI-AUSTERITY AND SOCIALIST POLICIES**

Whose side are you on? That was the theme of Jeremy Corbyn’s speech that launched Labour’s election campaign.

While the Tories are on the side of the “dodgy landlords” who evict families to make way for luxury apartments, Corbyn has pledged to build 100,000 affordable homes and cap private rents.

While Johnson represents the “bad bosses” who exploit their workers, Labour wants to raise the minimum wage right away to at least £10 an hour, including for young workers, and scrap zero-hour contracts.

Corbyn promises to go after the “big polluters”, “tax dodgers” and “vested interests” - creating green energy jobs and increasing taxes on the rich. He has pledged to stop Tory cuts and privatisation, rebuild the NHS, schools and other public services, scrap Universal Credit and put rail, mail and water into public ownership. Personal care for the elderly and prescriptions will be free and tuition fees scrapped.

This is a clear anti-austerity platform that puts the interests of the working class centre stage.

That’s why we are campaigning for the victory of a Corbyn-led government in this election. But at the same time we recognise that the privileged elite - the bankers, the billionaires and the private profiteers ‘on the other side’ - will do everything they can to protect their “vested interests”.

So as well as fighting to elect a Corbyn government, we are organising now for the socialist programme and future battles that will be necessary to bring about the radical change in the interests of working-class people that is so desperately needed.