

## For a massive YES vote and an immediate strike

The national strike vote has finally landed. Ballot papers will be posted to 130,000 postal CWU members on Thursday 17 September. A national strike could begin in mid-October. We need a massive "Yes" vote and then to move straight to a strike.

Meanwhile, day in day out, offices, mail centres and distribution hubs have continued to strike, pounding Royal Mail. CWU leader Dave Ward says we have built up a backlog bigger than at the height of the 2007 strike - what a tremendous springboard for our action.

The Daily Mail complains: "Tens of millions of letters are sitting undelivered after rolling strikes brought chaos to the system." If the bosses' press think it's bad now, just wait till we're all out!

This shows that our union still has the power to disrupt business and that we can win. But it will be more serious than in 2007 and we need to learn some lessons fast.

### Union busting

Lots of us have been growing angrier and angrier with the leadership as it dragged its feet on the ballot. We've had to sit on our hands and watch as managers descend from as far away as Northern Ireland and Scotland are sent to scab in London! Our sisters and brothers in London have faced bullying, intimidation, suspension and even threats of the sack for standing up to the current drive for "savings" and "modernisation".

As every postal worker knows, savings, efficiency and modernisation are just management-speak for dirty profiteering.

Royal Mail has increased its number of bloated, overpaid managers deliberately over the last few years in order to bust strikes and bully workers. The company's "modernisation" drive (in reality, getting us to work harder for less reward) is about abolishing tens of thousands of posts

and turning full-time jobs into part-time ones in order to hike up workload and profit.

And to do this, management and the government know they will have to bust the union, with the ultimate aim of privatising Royal Mail.

After all Royal Mail just made £321 million profit across all four divisions, a 20 year record, yet they still bang the drum for more efficiency savings, more job cuts, and impose a pay freeze. Its clear the future of our jobs, our union and our industry is at stake. That's why we need every office out on strike.

### Keep the pressure on

Now we have a chance and we'll see a surge of activity to deliver a strong "Yes" vote on a big turnout.

Activists, reps and branches have every right to demand that the leadership's dithering stops and we have a straight march from ballot to result to strike. However the strike ballot leaves a three week balloting period, a week to give notice and the earliest we might be on official national strike is mid-October!

There can be no let up on the pounding the union's big guns are giving postal bosses during this period. Wherever we face unilaterally imposed changes, intimidation and victimisation from the bosses we should walk out unofficially alongside the striking offices. If Royal Mail intensifies its attacks on London and the other striking regions, then don't wait for the national ballot - let's go all out, unofficial and call every office in the country out too.

### Phoney talks

Not surprisingly, as the ballot nears, Royal Mail has decided to have talks and already our CWU leaders are talking about cutting a deal that would suspend strikes, while banning future executive action (imposed changes and cuts). But the CWU would

only insist that changes imposed up to now be negotiated locally!

This would be a gift to Royal Mail, which could just drag things out locally and would get to keep most of the cuts made in offices around the country, while getting the strikes (and the ballot) put on hold.

Royal Mail has not accepted anything like this yet - talks are just a PR stunt for them - but postal workers are right to demand that there is not a single day's delay in the ballot and strike timetable. If Royal Mail is serious, they will talk while we walk.

### Striking to win

The militants and reps in the union now need to start discussing what kind of action is necessary. A key difference with 2007 is many are now saying that one and two-day strikes are not enough; we just end up delivering the mail afterwards.

But today is not the same as 2007. In the recession, many workers have taken all-out indefinite strike action: at Liverpool airport, Leeds refuse collection, Barrow Oil Refinery and Tower Hamlets College.

All out strikes pile maximum pressure onto the employer and raise a banner for all the labour movement to see, rousing support and solidarity. And those are strikes in a single workplace or town - imagine the power of an all-out national postal strike.

A one or two-day strike is Royal Mail's problem. An all-out strike is the government's. And it's a weak government - its hand can be forced by militant action.

If we took determined action it would be a beacon to every section of workers sick of paying for the crisis and wanting to stand up and defend their wages and conditions. If we build solidarity committees to raise hardship funds and jointly coordinate action with other unions, campaigns and strikes, then we can win!

# Not a penny for Labour – For a new, anti-capitalist party!

London division looks like it will now ballot members on whether to continue funding Labour. Other branches should follow this lead - and demand at the same time that the leadership ballots the whole membership.

Labour has been the puppet-master for privatisation and union-busting since they pushed the EU postal services directive, appointed the Alan Leighton-Adam Crozier hatchet-men to head Royal Mail and opened the postal market to private competitors. We had to force them to abandon privatisation.

They are "Labour" in name only. In reality they slavishly serve the interests of the bosses.

We need a new, anticapitalist workers' party that can not only stand in elections, but take forward all the struggles we see today and make the bosses pay for their crisis.

## Sign our petition:

After more than 12 years in office, Labour has proved itself time and again to be a party that attacks workers' pay, conditions, jobs and rights. And now we face the worst capitalist economic crisis for decades, with a massacre of jobs sweeping the country.

The working class in Britain does not have a party of our own to organise and inspire resistance to the bosses' crisis on a daily basis – on the streets and in the workplaces as well as at election times.

Without a new working class party, there is a danger that the racists and fascists will take advantage of the anger and anxiety caused by the crisis and scapegoat migrant workers, asylum seekers, and Black and Asian people.

A new party would fight to force the rich capitalists to pay for the crisis of their system, not the workers.

We appeal to all the trade unions and

socialist organisations, to all activists fighting for resistance from below, to antiracist and antifascist campaigners confronting the BNP, to the trade union leaders and members: let's unite and build a new anti-capitalist party.

Many activists and groups are now discussing left unity. Conferences in the autumn will discuss challenging Labour at the next election.

We want to see a new anticapitalist workers' party take up that challenge.

We call for:

- An open conference – bringing together unions, socialist organisations, workers, youth and left campaigners – to launch a new anticapitalist party
- Local committees for a new party: start building roots in communities
- For a slate of candidates in the general election.

## Rank and file control

While we finally have our ballot, the CWU postal executive and Dave Ward are focusing on talks and there is no guarantee they will not delay further.

In national meetings and the 3 September rally, members roasted the leadership for this. To make sure this does not continue, to ensure the strike escalates quickly enough to hit hard, to prevent any climb-down or sell-out, the rank and file need to organise so that we control the action.

All those who have taken action so far should call a conference to debate out a strategy to make the strike as effective as possible, and to develop an alternative leadership to take the action necessary - unofficial possibly - that Hayes, Ward and co. will not. Our jobs, livelihoods, pensions - there's too much at stake not to do it!

The Socialist Workers Party, which runs the

Post Worker bulletin, and has Jane Loftus on the union's NEC, should take a lead in organising such a conference.

Many SWP members see the need for a rank and file movement in general but don't think it is possible now. But when would it ever be possible if not now – when thousands of post workers are furious with the union leaderships' inaction?

Jane Loftus should be giving a lead but she has barely said anything about these strikes - she hasn't criticised the delay or done anything to develop an activist movement to expand and speed up the action.

This is a mistake.

We urgently need to take steps to greater rank and file coordination in the union, otherwise we'll never develop an alternative leadership to Hayes and Ward.

## PROTEST AGAINST LABOUR IN BRIGHTON

**Lord Mandelson: "Time and again in the past, the CWU has asked ministers to intervene in their disputes and their strikes to frustrate Royal Mail modernisation. I have instructed this will not happen. It is time for the union to wake up to the need for change to stop the Mail's further decline."**

**Come down to Brighton and give Mandelson and his Labour chums a piece of your mind!**

**Support the Right to Work demonstration at the Labour Party conference: 27 September Brighton, supported by CWU, PCS, UCU, NUT and NUJ unions  
To book your place on the Big Red Train (£20) go to [www.righttowork.org.uk](http://www.righttowork.org.uk)**

### ADD MY NAME

- I would like to sign the petition for a new anti-capitalist party

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

Postcode: \_\_\_\_\_

Email: \_\_\_\_\_

Tel no: \_\_\_\_\_

Send to BCM7750, London

WC1N 3XX or email to

[workerspower@btopeworld.com](mailto:workerspower@btopeworld.com)

### JOIN US!

- I would like to join the Workers Power group
- Please send more details about Workers Power

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_  
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