

# WORKERS' fight

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*"The emancipation of the working class will only be achieved by the working class itself" (Karl Marx)*

## THE GUILTY MEN AND THEIR GUILTY SYSTEM WILL BE OVERTHROWN!

**O**n the same day that Starmer faced calls to resign over the Epstein-Mandelson affair, Downing Street was displaying a British Airways flight simulator as part of the government's "Apprentice Week" - right in front of Number 10.

But Starmer did not get into the cockpit and take off, as some expected! For now, he remains in office. Since Labour will inevitably do badly in the May elections, it's likely he'll at least hang on until then, shoulder the blame, and take his exit thereafter...

As for the deluge of email exchanges between Epstein and his friends in high places, they only reveal the reality of women's inferior status in this class society and its built-in misogyny.

Above all, they show once more the contempt of "powerful men" for young working class women. For them, women's "sexual attributes" are a cheap commodity, to buy and sell, like with everything else in capitalist society! That's today's social normality!

So no, misogyny won't be "fixed" by Congressional Committees nor sending selected scapegoats to prison. To root out the abuse of women, the working class will have to take over and root out the class system, and build a new society, where the natural difference between genders can be a matter of choice rather than a determinant of society's division of labour.

### **In Saudi, misogyny reigns!**

At the same time as Starmer was trying to control the Mandelson fallout, "Prince" William's 3-day visit to Saudi Arabia began. And the media reported this without any sense of disgust whatsoever!

William cordially shook hands with his fellow royal, Mohammed bin Salman ("MBS"), known for his brutal and yes, misogynist, regime. We're told how he now allows women to drive, travel



alone and take off the head-scarf. But not how, if they try to "enjoy" these few "rights", they come under the constant scrutiny of the moral police!

Before construction of his futuristic Neom city in the desert was put on hold, MBS presided over a subcontracting system which treated migrant workers like slaves. Many were injured; some died. But the Saudi regime gets away with its violence against the working class, against women; its jailing and killing of dissidents - and still remains "respectable"!

Never mind though - the double standards of British imperialism cover it all! While the "Axis of Evil" is duly condemned, Britain's own loyal homicidal maniacs are accepted as friends, provided they buy BAE's weapons. A blind eye is turned when and where they use them. No doubt that pending Saudi accord with the Israeli government will be signed... while Gaza is still being bombed.

### **Workers know what to do**

Faced with authoritarian regimes, the

working class has a difficult task when it tries to fight for its freedom. But it cannot do otherwise. This was evident in December/January, when the attempted uprising in Iran took place.

The Bazaaris may have initiated the protests when they shut their shops, but workers, many of whom had not been paid their wages, soon followed, with strikes across the country - from steel workers in Isfahan, car workers in Mashhad, to oil workers in Ahvaz petrochemical complex.

In the absence of their own armed organisations to defend themselves, these workers were forced back to work. Some were killed; many arrested. Next time - and there will be a next time - they will, hopefully, be able to use the full extent of their power to overthrow the regime.

However, their situation - and ours, men and women alike - will only effectively change when the working class in the heartland of imperialism sees all these fights as its fight and follows the Iranian workers' example. □

## International

### Can the US really capitalise on Venezuela's oil?

Maria Corina Machado, the Venezuelan opposition candidate who aspires to take over as the country's president, visited Trump in the Oval Office on 15 January to give him her Peace Prize medal.

She congratulated him on his 3 January bombardment of Venezuela's capital Caracas and abduction of President Maduro and his wife who, charged with drug trafficking, are now imprisoned in the US. All of Maduro's 32 Cuban-recruited presidential guard were killed in the attack, as well as 23 military personnel - casualties as a result of the targeted shelling of dozens of military facilities around the capital. Very peaceful.

#### **"Oil, steel, all the critical minerals"**

Trump has grandiosely announced that he'll take control over Venezuela's many resources, starting with its oil - and "run" the country. But for now, it's Maduro's vice-president Delcy Rodriguez who is "running" things... but for sure, only after a long meeting with CIA director, John Ratcliffe!

Everyone now says Trump's raid was all about the oil, since Venezuela is said to have the world's largest "proven" oil

reserves: 300 billion barrels. But they only became "proven" after the price of a barrel of oil shot up in the 2000s, as a result of political events, reclassification and evolving technology. This is because Venezuelan crude oil, deposited mainly in the Orinoco sands is extra-heavy and viscous and thus difficult to extract, and complex to refine.

However, the US does have the technology and refineries to cope with this. It currently imports very similar heavy crude oil from Canada's oil sands via a pipeline to Texas. But this Canadian oil is expensive. Replacing it with cheaper, maybe even free, Venezuelan oil, from just across the Mexican Gulf could prove a much better option!

#### **The sanctions have backfired**

Some of the obstacles to achieving even this, however, are the direct consequence of a decade of US sanctions against the Maduro government - which also coincided with a fall in the oil price to rock-bottom. It meant that Venezuela's nationalised oil company, PdVSA, was unable any longer to afford the maintenance of oil infrastructure, including upgraders which carry out the preliminary refinement of extra-heavy crude. The skilled workforce has long disappeared and the

oil infrastructure is broken.

Oil experts say that to increase Venezuela's crude production to 3m barrels a day - which is what the US would need - would require 16 years of work and investment totalling \$185bn (£137bn). And that money would have to come from oil majors like Chevron, ExxonMobil and ConocoPhillips. Whether they will oblige, is entirely another question, however.

#### **The oil majors prefer light crude**

After Trump's call for investment, 48 hours after his Venezuelan capture, the global oil market barely budged, apparently. The price of a barrel rose slightly to \$60.50, having fallen slightly below \$60 in late December. On the other hand, the shares in the US oil majors Chevron and Exxon Mobil did rise, by more than 3% and 6% respectively!

Trump claims he is going to "reindustrialise" the USA. To fuel his project he's rehabilitating the fossil fuel industry ("drill, baby, drill"...). The possibility of cheap Venezuelan oil, refined locally, was seen as a cheap energy option. However, it looks as if he might have made an expensive miscalculation.□

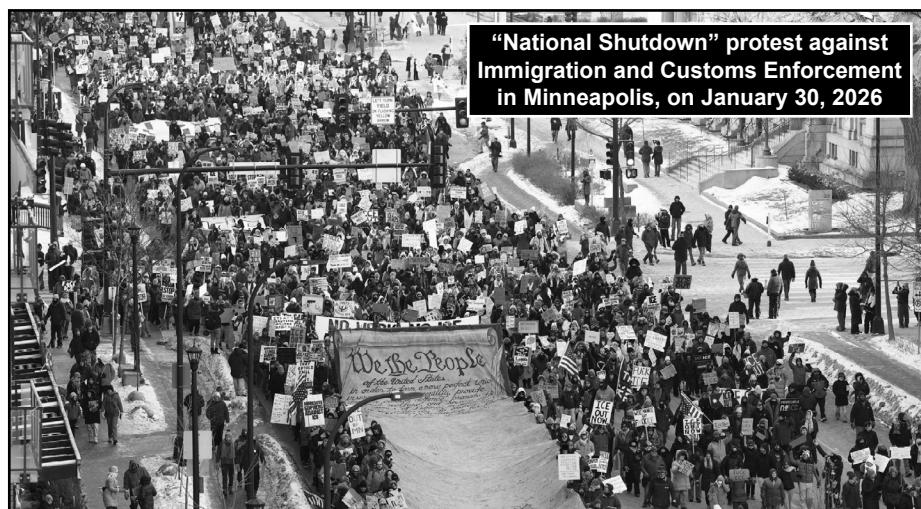
### Britain-USA: Mahmood takes tips from ICE...

The videos showing ICE agents in Minneapolis killing protester Alex Patti went viral - proving that Trump's officials blatantly lied about his murder. Then Trump withdrew some of his most rabid dogs from the city. But not all of them, which has led to growing protests in Minnesota and across the US.

As Trump's approval ratings plummet (-15%), he doesn't want to be seen backing down on his government's anti-migrant policy. So the swamping by ICE of Los Angeles, New York, Aurora (Colorado), and Chicago continues, targeting anyone with darkish skin. This is a terror tactic aimed at the poorest sections of the working class - an "old" strategy of divide and rule.

Trump's so-called One Big Beautiful Bill, passed in July, tripled the immigration enforcement budget to \$170 billion. Over the past year alone, ICE has more than doubled in size, hiring 12,000 new deportation officers trained in just 42 days. Recruitment ads such as "Which way, American man?" - a reference to a white supremacist book and "Destroy the flood", borrowed from a video game about invasive alien parasites, are designed to attract trigger-happy, racist thugs.

However, the US ruling class has a long history of recruiting such forces to terrorise the poorest layers of society. At



the turn of the 20th century, industrial bosses hired the Pinkerton Detective Agency to murder striking workers. For much of the 20th century, the Ku Klux Klan lynched and terrorised Black workers, especially the most militant.

The London Met's Special Patrol Group played a similar role. In Southall in 1979, Blair Peach was killed during an anti-racist protest. In Brixton, black working class youth were targeted when they rose up against saturation policing. Today, Home Secretary Mahmood's proposal for a national police and

counter-terrorism force, aspires to mimic US national enforcement agencies and relaunch local "SPGs".

The targeting of immigrant workers is just the beginning of a renewed attack on the whole working class, which the capitalists require to preserve profits in the face of ever-worsening crisis.

As they and their politicians turn nastier, the working class also needs to get nasty. And prepare to use one of its most effective weapons, namely, the "all-out", general strike, as a first defensive step. □

## Our society

### The working class fightback has yet to begin

The working class isn't asleep, for sure. But the "comeback" which then RMT leader, Mick Lynch declared in 2022 at the Durham Miners' Gala didn't happen. There were strikes that summer and some workers carried on taking industrial action through to 2023. Union leaderships had called them out one day here, a few days there, on and off for months, achieving nothing.

There was never an all-out strike in any section of the workforce, let alone any attempt to co-ordinate action between strikers from different sections of the

working class. Unfortunately, strikers and potential strikers allowed themselves to remain under the thumbs of the union leaderships.

Could they have done otherwise? Yes, but that would have required the initiative of workers who saw that there was another way of conducting a fightback - and of necessity, that it would have to be outside of the union bureaucrats' control. It didn't happen.

That said, the prerequisite for the working class to be able to change society was never to be found in the

trade unions. They are and always were, defensive organisations designed to bargain with the bosses and certainly not built for making revolutions!

Of course, the working class is the only force in this society which has the ability to change it. But, it will need its own revolutionary organisations to do so. Because only then, can its power be unleashed in a co-ordinated and united fightback, aimed at ending this rotten capitalist system for good. □

### Separate, sectional, token: this strike strategy can't win!

Resident doctors in England's NHS have had 11 rounds of strikes since March 2023. Yet they've still not achieved "pay restoration".

The pay offers they've had, leave them ~20% short of making up for the 30-40% they've lost in real-terms pay since 2008. They're also offered only 4,000 extra specialist training places when there's a deficit of 30,000!

So no surprise, 93% voted to extend their strike mandate until August 2026. But what is surprising is that their union still insists they should carry on striking on their own - even though all other medical staff - in fact almost all other workers, full stop, are in the same boat.

Meanwhile, in Birmingham, council refuse workers who've been on all-out strike since March 2025, are now entering their second year of action! Labour's council leaders still refuse to accede to their demands. And Unite union leaders still refuse to bring in other battalions of council workers, who share similar demands, to force the issue!

#### Aerospace and transport workers take action

Then there are the engineering workers at the Warton and Samlesbury BAe plants in Lancashire where they make parts for Eurofighter Typhoon jets, on strike since 2

February against a below-inflation, 3.6% pay offer. Around 1,000 workers are also refusing overtime and a requirement that they move between plants for their jobs. Here again, we see the same problem: the idea of spreading this strike to other engineering workers in BAe and elsewhere, has not "struck" the Unite union officials who're controlling it.

Also due to strike over an even more derisory, 1.5% pay offer(!), are signalling and telecoms staff on London Overground's Windrush line, working for subcontractor, Cleshar.

But all workers on the Overground, where subcontracting has ground down wages and

conditions - have reason to join them. If the workers decided for themselves when and how to strike, instead of leaving it to RMT full-timers, they'd surely choose to go out all together, and stay out.

#### What's at stake

It's obvious that what's needed is a fight that goes beyond isolated disputes: generalising and spreading co-ordinated action - all out, for as long as it takes. It used to be a cliche to say "unite and fight". But today, in the face of the counterproductive sectionalism practised by union leaderships, it sounds like a "new" idea!



### The cost of Brexit, paid by the working class

Six years after Brexit, its economic effects are even more obvious. At the end of last year, a report by the National Bureau of Economic Research concluded that Britain's economy underperformed compared to 33 other advanced countries (including the whole EU, US, Canada, Japan etc.). GDP per head of population was 6-8% lower than it would have been without Brexit, and employment is 4% lower, equating to 1 million fewer jobs than there otherwise would have been.

#### No such thing as a "left exit"!

Brexit hasn't resulted in more jobs, nor higher wages (quite the opposite!), as Brexiteers argued it would. As if leaving the EU would mean leaving the capitalist

system! Yes, it wasn't only UKIP, Farage and Tories like Boris Johnson, who campaigned to "leave". The railway union, the RMT - as well as a fair number of so-called socialist organisations argued for "Lexit" - that is, a left exit from Europe!

Never mind that leaving the EU also meant leaving the (albeit few) guarantees for workers from EU employment law which the British government had been obliged to adopt, like the Working Time Regulations. Of course, the government always ensured it could negotiate opt-outs to protect the bosses' right to exploit us. But if workers wanted to, they could still insist on their rights not to work long night shifts, their right to regular breaks and their right to equal pay for equal work... And then of

course, there was the loss of free movement across all EU borders. As Gary Lineker once tweeted: "why would anyone vote for that?"

#### The revolution will be international!

Brexit has not only made it harder for skilled EU workers to take up the many vacant posts here, like in the NHS, but it's also made it more difficult for workers from Britain to work in the EU. So yes, six years later there's nothing to celebrate and every reason to find ways to join hands in struggle against those who seek to divide us - and not just with our fellow workers across the Channel - but across the world.

## Their privatisation

### Water infrastructure has sprung a big leak

Access to a clean water supply should be something we can take for granted - but since privatisation in 1989, households have certainly paid a lot for it! Indeed, the chickens of privatisation are coming home to roost. 37 years later, the neglected infrastructure is proving inadequate and in some cases is totally collapsing.

#### SEW's stitch-up

Thousands of households suddenly find their water is cut off. The latest such disruption was in Kent and Sussex, in and around Tunbridge Wells. South East Water (SEW) cut its supply to 24,000 properties on 29 November, after contamination by a "bad batch" of coagulants at Pembury water treatment works.

After it restored supply to 23,000

homes, further contamination was found, so it told households to boil water before drinking for the next 2 weeks. In January more homes around East Grinstead lost running water, this time, apparently due to low water levels at SEW's Ardingly Reservoir... In both cases there was no back-up in existence.

No wonder. The last major reservoir built in the South East England region was commissioned in the 1970s. No new reservoirs have been constructed in Britain for over 30 years, with the current Havant Thicket Reservoir project in Hampshire being the first to be built since then, expected to be completed around 2029!

#### Blame the weather

True, the changes in the weather (yes, also predictable!) mean more frequent

droughts and reservoirs running dry. And this is not new, even if the effects of climate change appear to be. In 1996, water to about 600,000 people reliant on Yorkshire Water's Pennine reservoirs had to be rationed. But leaky pipes had lost 34% of its treated water.

In 2007, 420,000 people lost their supply from Severn Trent for more than 2 weeks, after an unprotected treatment works at Tewkesbury flooded.

Water companies still don't invest in prevention, nor do they take climate change into account. The profit system is a system based on short-term gain for the few. Which is why the full renationalisation and removal of the profit motive would be the only way to "build resilience" into the water supply. This side of socialist revolution, however, we can probably forget it! □

## Train crashes in Spain: railway workers say privatisation must stop!

On 18 January, two high-speed trains crashed near Córdoba. A privately owned Iryo train derailed, and just seconds later a state-operated Renfe train ploughed into it. The Renfe driver and 45 other people were killed. Two days later, a commuter train near Barcelona crashed into a retaining wall, killing an apprentice driver. Nothing has been said about the rest of the crews, although the train drivers' union SEMAF says that three drivers were killed.

The worst of it is that there were at least 3 other train accidents reported this January across Spain's network. And rail workers rightly blame the state's cost-cutting along with its policy to privatisate train operations.

#### Opening the market up to accidents

The Córdoba crash seems to have been caused by a broken rail joint. This came as no surprise. SEMAF had repeatedly warned Adif, the state-owned rail infrastructure company, about the poor condition of the track, reporting potholes, bumps and widespread problems with overhead power lines. Last August, the union again flagged severe wear and tear on the exact same stretch where the trains crashed, and proposed a speed reduction. Adif ignored the warning and the track was not

re-inspected.

There has been a huge increase in the number of high-speed trains running on the network: by 2024, 57% more "traffic" than the 2019 pre-privatisation baseline. This inevitably meant a dangerous increase in track-damage. That rise in traffic is thanks to privatisation (so-called "liberalisation") which began in 2020. Private operators such as Ouigo and Iryo were allowed onto the network, driving a surge in journeys. Passenger numbers were 77% higher in 2024 than in 2019. But investment didn't keep up. Spending on the rail network is now only a third of what it was in 2009, after state debt soared following the global financial crisis and the spending cuts imposed by successive governments. Between 2018 and 2022, most infrastructure spending went into building new lines, not into maintaining, renewing, or upgrading, existing ones.

#### Only workers can do it

The day after the Barcelona crash, 134 of the 140 drivers on Catalonia's Rodalies network refused to work, dismissing Adif's assurances that the tracks were safe. The Catalan government, Adif and Renfe had to agree to additional inspections on 13 key routes, carried out by drivers, union representatives and company technicians.

SEMAF's members went on strike on 9

February and now union leaders claim to have struck an historic deal with the government on safety. However, the UGT and CCOO federations representing other rail workers, say this is not the end of their struggle for improvements. In fact, hundreds of Adif and Renfe workers have already protested in Madrid against understaffing, chronic underinvestment and the lack of proper safety regulation. The government, meanwhile, has set minimum service levels of between 50% and 73% to protect profits in the event of strikes.

These "accidents" in Spain only confirm that no country has learnt any lessons whatsoever from the disastrous consequences of privatisation, proven by its failure in Britain. Safety can and will never be guaranteed until the rail workforce controls all operations and the working class owns them. □

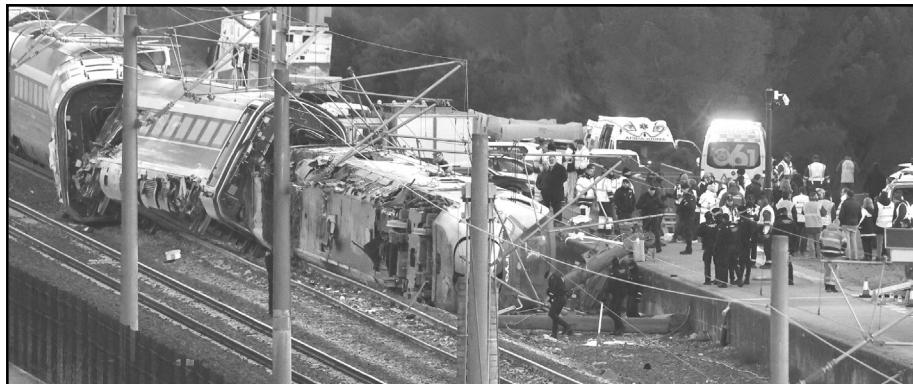
## Class Struggle n° 126

Winter 2025-26

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- Looking back at the 1971 Postal Strike through the eyes of Joe Jacobs
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## Their society

## Their capitalism: system down, shares up?

The Dow Jones Industrial Average of share prices of 30 of the largest companies in the US hit an all-time record high on the 6 February. It went over 50,000 for the first time. Trump duly praised himself for this. It was thanks to his tariff policy, he claimed, and he predicted that the index would surge to 100,000 points before the end of his term. "Remember, Trump is right about everything!" he said. Of course it wasn't thanks to tariffs and, of course, he's certainly not right about very much...

This surge was largely due to an 8%

climb in Caterpillar share prices after a bit of a panic sell-off of AI shares in the middle of the week. Shares in the chip company Nvidia also rose as did Goldman Sachs shares which were up 4%.

On 2 January, the Financial Times Stock Exchange (FTSE) 100 index also broke a record - climbing above 10,000 for the first time ever.

So what's this all about? Isn't the economy in decline? So has capitalism experienced a new boost? Is the economy expanding, after all?

Not at all. What's happening is

that more money is directed at fewer companies and thus fewer shares to buy and sell. Financial experts point to the over-buying and over-valuation of shares - especially in AI companies. It is already leading to overheating in the share market. The threat of another big crash is always present... Which would be fine if only the speculators were wiped out. But the trouble is that the cost is always passed on to the rest of us. Which is why this whole system needs to be wiped out, and ASAP! □

## Now refugees are put back into de facto concentration camps

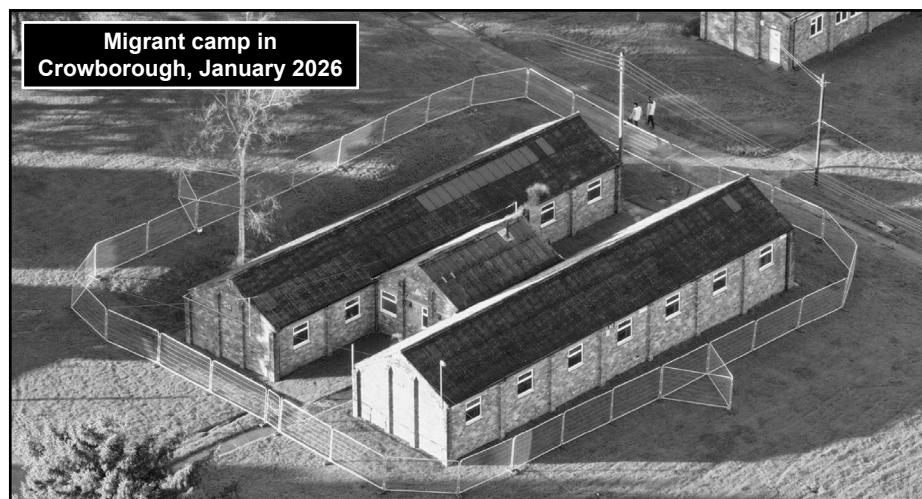
The hysteria against the just over 110,000 asylum seekers in Britain continues. Many have now been moved to repurposed military barracks at Crowborough, which is meant to accommodate 500 refugees - and another 300 refugees will soon be sent to the Cameron Barracks in Inverness, Scotland.

Sending asylum seekers to large sites, which are reminiscent of the concentration camps used during WW2 for German nationals, is part of Home Secretary Mahmood's plan to "close every single asylum hotel" and cut accommodation costs. Never mind that a recent Home Affairs Committee report shows that using large sites is actually more costly!

## Adapting to the far-right

But then of course, Mahmood's preoccupation has nothing to do with cost - the £2.1bn spent on asylum support in 2024/25 is a tiny (0.15%) share of overall government expenditure. No, her problem is to try to undercut the support for Farage's Reform UK party, which has been whipped up by the scapegoating immigrants.

In fact this is happening in many western countries today, where the far-right poses as an alternative to the traditional political parties which have run out of steam. Not that the far-right has answers to any of the grievances of the populations, since it also supports the very same profit system which produces them: the unaffordable cost of living and housing, poor services, etc... Which is precisely why it resorts to racism and scapegoating.



## Refugees need refuge, full stop

In addition to using former army barracks, Mahmood has proposed quadrupling the time refugees must wait before applying for "indefinite leave to remain", alongside cuts to welfare payments and tighter family reunion rules. The right to appeal against deportation has also been restricted, in order to speed deportations up.

Of course, when Mahmood (and Starmer) join with Reform in blaming immigrants and refugees for the ills of the capitalist system, they add wind to the sails of Farage - and Tommy Robinson&Co.

No sooner had the first asylum seekers begun arriving at Crowborough than an

online campaign by the far-right (including an activist who'd organised protests outside the Bell hotel in Essex) had assembled a couple of thousand to protest against the government's plans.

## And then the flags arrived!

Also present were "Operation Raise the Colours" activists, who'd just been banned by French authorities after trying to raise their union jacks on French beaches!

Yes, this anti-refugee movement is not only anti-working class in its divisive anti-social (and anti-communist) nationalism but it's also very, very stupid. And so, it seems, is Keir Starmer's government. □

## Macabre Maccabi football fan mess

Craig Guildford, chief constable of West Midlands Police, who imposed the ban preventing Maccabi Tel Aviv fans from attending an Aston Villa vs Maccabi football match last November, has now been retired early from his job: Home secretary Mahmood declared no confidence in him.

Starmer said the police ban was "bowing to anti-Semitism" - and never mind the record of these fans for exceptional violence, leading the Israeli

authorities themselves to ban them from matches! In fact they were banned just one month earlier - in October 2025 - from attending a match in Tel Aviv itself.

But the West Midlands police had also made a big cock-up - they had asked AI to come up with evidence of violence of Maccabi "fans" and it cited a match against West Ham that never actually happened! Then the government's Chief Inspector of Police, "Sir" Andy Cooke, loyally supporting

Starmer, said the West Midlands Police Report had overstated fan violence and that it had failed to consult Birmingham "Jewish representatives early enough".

There is one sure consequence to the Starmer/Mahmood intervention, however... If Maccabi Tel Aviv is drawn against another English side, the local cops will roll out the red carpet for its fans, hooligans included! It's government policy!

**Mount Pleasant mail centre (London)****From our friends in the North**

Blue and red shirts were unsurprised to hear that the relationship between the employer EP Group and the Communication Workers' Union has fallen apart again. How many times are the CWU leaders going to get smacked in the mouth before they realise that they're never going to be boxers?

You can't open the newspaper, turn on the telly or doom scroll without seeing yet another sorry tale of how the country is not getting letters. We're doing what we can to get the letters out - some of us are even going above and beyond

to provide a decent service. And that's what it needs - above and beyond our abilities... there just aren't enough of us and we don't have 4 arms and 4 legs!

We told the CWU officials we'd refuse for 3 of us to do 4 workers' jobs. Walsh told us there was no other way. He must have a short memory because he turned up in our workplaces regaling us with tales of his new relationship with the big boss. Now Walsh has decided it was never like that. We wonder if he is suffering with Stockholm Hostage Syndrome...

The message to him is we won't put



up with 3 of us doing 4 jobs. We won't put up with new starters being on worse conditions. Now is the time to end the experiments and to get back to doing what we do best - fighting back, and with the aim of delivering a public service, because unlike Walsh, we know how to box...! □

**• We can use our feet!**

According to a CWU letter to branches, Royal Mail has "triggered [the CWU-RM] dispute resolution process over the issue of how the 'Universal Service Obligation' reform is deployed"... and if an agreement is not reached in the next 4 weeks, it says the bosses will impose the USO changes by force. To this declaration of war, the union leaders have responded that they'll "try to persuade" the bosses to follow a different course... Really? [Workers' Fight bulletin 04/02/26]

**• Beyond pluto**

And by the way, we wonder which planet union leaders live on, when DUMs (delivery managers) have been trying to implement their Outrageous Delivery Method changes - attacks on our Ts&Cs - all along, and for months!

Meanwhile on planet Earth, there's no doubt about it: we're going to have to organise our own full-blown counter-attack, and pronto! [Workers' Fight bulletin 04/02/26]

**• Spot the permanent job**

Processing managers told us the "good news": 8 vacant full-time duties are on offer... But when we looked at what we could actually apply for, there was only 1 permanent full-time duty! The rest are temporary duties, so they can be taken away at any time with just 2 weeks' notice. As for the single permanent full-time duty, it includes a Saturday shift from 2-9pm!! We'd call this "bad news"! [Workers' Fight bulletin 04/02/26]

**• Fight the weekend wreckers**

The only other permanent shifts on offer are 5 part-time duties - those with so few hours that no one can actually live on the

wage. And every single one includes Saturdays and/or Sundays! There is one where they expect us to work Saturday 2-7pm followed by a Sunday 6am-2pm... And another has a 7.5hrs night shift on Friday, followed by a 12hrs night shift on Saturday, and then an 8hrs night Sunday. These mad shifts were agreed behind our backs! And we aren't taking them! [Workers' Fight bulletin 04/02/26]

**• Whose sick idea?**

When we go off sick, the peanuts pay for the first two, three or four days of sickness is a starvation rate of ROSP = ~£23.75! Yes, just when we need more money, for medicines, taxis and all sorts of other extras. RM probably thinks they can get us to come to work instead, sick or not, and spread our bugs! But they're wrong, and we intend to fight them on this. [Workers' Fight bulletin 04/02/26]

**King's Cross railway station (London)****• Running late: the new normal**

The new LNER timetable is a fiasco. Trains depart late and therefore arrive late at destinations - and the same applies on their return. It means a whole number of people must re-coordinate all of the operations involved - whether it be signals, controls, announcements, etc., etc. Everything is put out - and in fact we permanently have a "new" timetable incorporating each day's series of delays! [Workers' Platform 04/02/26]

**• Bring back staff trains!**

We're fed up with "planned" engineering delays! Nothing's organised for us: no connections, no staff trains, no reasonable alternative transport. And no, a replacement coach taking 3 hours instead of 45 minutes is NOT "reasonable"! Few of us live near KX; many take GN/Thameslink, EMR, LNER trains. And if we live in London, Essex

etc., we've local engineering works to contend with. Transport workers should have transport. Full stop! [Workers' Platform 04/02/26]

**• Worth fighting for**

Yes, staff transport should be at the top of our GBR (Great British Railways) demand-list, together with levelling "up" of wages, "British Railways" pension for all, travel facilities, etc. And this should include all rail workers currently not included in GBR: the agency and subcontracted workers who need the same T&Cs! [Workers' Platform 04/02/26]

**• Prepare for battle**

Indeed, by now, almost half of the network is under GBR. Yet there's still no plan for the workforce, let alone these outsourced workers! Ministers talk about fixing a "fragmented" railway for passengers, but what about the fragmented workforce? We had better prepare ourselves, because to get everyone back in-house



and on equal Ts&Cs will take a united fight - by every one of us, including train drivers... [Workers' Platform 04/02/26]

**• Not our problem**

Great Northern workers in Hornsey are constantly asked to work overtime. Yes, the bosses run the shop on such a skeleton workforce that as soon as any of our mates go sick, or simply go on annual leave, managers run around panicking, trying to fill the gaps and asking us to step in. Why should we offer them our precious time off? [Workers' Platform 04/02/26]

**Ford Dagenham estate (Essex)****• Breaks when you look at it!**

On Panther machining, when we're not laid off, we get breakdowns... On heads, we had so many of them, that the line was down almost all day on Monday! It's not too surprising though. Ford has cut the maintenance team to the point where it can hardly even be described as a "team" any more. [Workers' Fight bulletin 11/02/26]

**• Leaving the foreman with the broom**

We'd have enjoyed the breakdown, if we hadn't been asked to go around cleaning our area... That said, it's really up to us: next time, we can all take a breather and go and get a cup of tea in the canteen together. [Workers' Fight bulletin 11/02/26]

**• A disservice to the "precious" customer**

Lately on the Chicken Farm, we're producing a lot more "service" engines - to replace defective engines in vehicles sold on warranties. It's no surprise to us that the number of engine defects might have gone up - and that even the service engines have to be re-replaced! Due to Ford's cuts, there's nobody doing proper quality control any more and the engines don't even get tested before they're

wrapped up and sent off. [Workers' Fight bulletin 11/02/26]

**• We can help them to think!**

Our LLL reps reported back to us from a meeting with managers last week: the bosses say that as far as Tiger is concerned, there is "no schedule yet for 2027". We all knew that already. But what we're waiting to hear, is what else is planned for afterwards! And we have ways of making them talk... [Workers' Fight bulletin 11/02/26]

**• Ideas? We have them**

Yes, in fact this week on Monday, Ford's US and Europe management visited DDC, apparently looking for ideas for the future. But ideas aren't what's lacking - as far as we're concerned, we can assemble engines or bicycles - or even the proverbial "washing machines". After all, during Covid, this plant made ventilators! So into the future, the full workforce (and more) could and should be able to continue working here, making something useful! [Workers' Fight bulletin 11/02/26]

**• Do they need "time out"?**

After that visit, we heard that these bosses thought that it wouldn't be "affordable" to produce only Lion engines in DDC, once Tiger is terminated. So they're threatening to shut the Den? They had better give us all



the guarantees we need (as above!), or we can stop the lines right now, to focus their minds. [Workers' Fight bulletin 11/02/26]

**• Never enough of us!**

ISL has brought in a few new workmates! But it seems this is only because there are new batches of parts to check... What will happen to these workers when the checks are complete? We need them all (and more!) to stay! [Workers' Fight bulletin 11/02/26]

**• Skeleton strike?**

Many of us Lineside workers have been moved from Lion to Panther, but despite this, we still feel like a skeleton crew! We're doing 2 or 3 workers' jobs or being asked to do overtime to cover... since our numbers are kept to the minimum! Managers don't seem to understand that skeletons need muscles and connecting tissues to work... If they don't add more "flesh" to us "dem bones are gonna rise"! [Workers' Fight bulletin 11/02/26]

**BMW Mini centre (Cowley, Oxford)****• Let's cancel WTA**

We're glad to hear that the WTA (unpaid overtime) shifts scheduled for March and even April are cancelled, due to a large stockpile of cars. A 5-day week at these speeds and length of shift is even more insane than our usual week! But since management use these stockpiles to shut us out on WTA anyway, our only solution is to slow the line. [Workers' Fight bulletin 10/02/26]

**• Fleeing the psychodrama**

Some of our workmates have left the plant in order to take jobs at the new Siemens factory. BMW is now organising training to replace the leavers - in a frantic panic, as usual. Did they ever think that if this place were less like an asylum run by the lunatics, fewer of us might want to leave? [Workers' Fight bulletin 10/02/26]

**• Arse or elbow?**

G&P supervisors don't give any training whatsoever! We learn on the go. We even noticed that supervisors don't even bother to read the instructions for the job... Still, they blame us for doing the job wrongly, knowing f\*\*\* all themselves! [Workers' Fight bulletin

10/02/26]

**• No to job cuts!**

One Group Leader in Rework had the idea that we were all to be "up-skilled" to cover more areas (so that management could cut jobs!). Supposedly this was "voluntary"... until we said "no" and then we were threatened with being moved out of the area! But now this manager is suspended, the whole thing is put on hold... No doubt they'll try again, but our answer will still be "no"! [Workers' Fight bulletin 10/02/26]

**• Too many chiefs...**

Why are there at least four BMW managers on our backs each shift?! Even on nights! While more and more work is piled up on fewer of us, the number of managers going around doing sweet nothing keeps on rising! [Workers' Fight bulletin 10/02/26]

**• Extra month's pay for all!**

That wait between Staffline (agency) pay cheques from mid-December to the end of January was far too long! With all the extra costs of Xmas, and the still-rising cost of living, money does not go far enough. This is why in some countries workers have won an extra wage for the



"13th month"... [Workers' Fight bulletin 10/02/26]

**• Down with "on call" & zero-hours!**

Planet (another agency) has offered some of us work for 4 or 6 weeks... and this was advertised to us as "long-term"?! We know we could all be permanent on regular shift work, and we want it now! [Workers' Fight bulletin 10/02/26]

**• Share the work**

In G&P, we found out that management and supervisors always choose the same friends and family to come in during non-production days, getting paid to do basically nothing, while the rest of us are left unpaid! It's not only them who have families to support and bills to pay! [Workers' Fight bulletin 10/02/26]

## International

### China: a cash-cow and a punch-bag

The British establishment's relentless anti-Chinese propaganda - recently accusing the Chinese government of orchestrating cyberattacks and espionage in Britain - was briefly put on hold for the duration of Starmer's official visit to the country on 28-31 January. Making the first visit by a British prime minister in 8 years, Starmer took with him business representatives from a host of companies - AstraZeneca, GSK, HSBC, Barclays, Standard Chartered, KPMG, JLR, Rolls-Royce, Airbus, Octopus Energy and others - all keen to cut a new, or larger, slice of the Chinese market for themselves...

#### Intertwined economies

Despite the Torygraph's portrayal of a Britain "at the mercy of Beijing's ruthless communist regime", it's China which is dependent on western investment. All of the major companies accompanying Starmer already have branches and production based in China. AstraZeneca, for instance, announced an £11bn investment to upgrade facilities in 4 Chinese cities and will build a new research centre in Beijing, while Octopus Energy signed an agreement with PCG Power to enter the Chinese market.

Even "Chinese" products such as BYD electric vehicles, portrayed as swamping western markets, are built with the backing of western investment: in the case of BYD, thanks to Warren Buffett's Berkshire Hathaway investment, as well as BlackRock, Vanguard, Baillie Gifford, etc.

This dominance of western investment into China's economy isn't too surprising. After the death of Mao Tse-Tung, the



nationalists leading the so-called "Communist" Party of China tried to ease the worst effects of the West's economic blockade and, in the 1970s, "opened" the country to foreign capital. China was "recolonised", re-entering the World Trade Organisation as a poor country dominated by the imperialist powers - but providing their companies with cheap labour and access to a vast market.

Today, China may have the world's largest economy, but measured by gross national income per head, it remains 4 times poorer than Britain!

#### China, the bogeyman

Capitalists don't like uncertain markets, so Trump's tariff chaos may have made China appear a more stable investment

destination. This could explain why Xi Jinping has recently hosted visits from France's Macron, Canada's Carney, and the Irish and Finnish PMs, with Germany's Merz expected soon - all accompanied by business delegations. They'll be followed by Trump. The USA is still "world boss", after all!

Starmer has announced visa-free travel for British citizens to China and welcomed the construction of a giant Chinese embassy near Tower Bridge. Yet China will continue to serve as a convenient bogeyman, blamed for the decline of manufacturing jobs in the West. While anti-Chinese rhetoric continues to be spread by MPs like Duncan Smith (whose travel ban to China is now revoked!), China will remain western capitalists' milch cow and western politicians' punch-bag. □

### Iran - after the protests: what is - and isn't - Trump's aim?

At the time of writing, the US claims that a huge attack armada is supposedly closing in on Iran. Netanyahu is threatening to attack Iran's missile sites. And so far talks in Oman between Iranian and US officials have not yet achieved the "deal" which Trump claims is their aim - a pledge by Iran not to pursue the making of nuclear weapons. But the Iranians say they have no such intention anyway...

What happens next is anyone's guess. Netanyahu meets Trump on 11 February. Perhaps by now Washington has learnt the lesson of imperialist history, that when attempting "regime change", it usually ends badly. But perhaps not.

As the massacre of protesters on the streets of Teheran and throughout the

country proceeded last month, Trump told the Iranian leaders to stop the killing. He even threatened to "make them" stop. But he did not. Why didn't he act? Undoubtedly he could have. But from his point of view, if and when he and his western allies do achieve "regime change" it would be best if all unruly elements, like angry youth and striking workers, who might lead new protests, are well out of the way.

So to that extent, western imperialist interests coincide with the Ayatollah's regime. However the Iranian Revolutionary Guard and the Basij - the brutal voluntary religious paramilitaries - may have overplayed their hand. Human Rights Activists in Iran (HRANA) have so far verified 6,961 dead from across 675

protest locations in 210 cities and 31 provinces. The total number of arrests so far is 51,591. Executions continue. But the resistance and defiance also continues: funerals are turned into anti-government rallies. Strikes are happening: on 4-5 February workers at the Asaluyeh Refinery in southern Iran went on strike over non-payment of overtime.

So the regime is not safe from its own population and paradoxically, US intervention could even save it! So let us hope that the Iranian working class will build its own - secular - political party in the heat of a new revolutionary furnace. And that unlike in 1979, this time they will hold onto power. □

In addition to this monthly paper, we publish fortnightly bulletins in several large workplaces in the South East, a quarterly journal, "Class Struggle" and the "Internationalist Communist Forums" - a series of pamphlets on topical issues.

If you wish to find out more about our ideas, activities and publications, contact the Workers' Fight activist who sold you this issue of our paper, or write to us either by e-mail, at [contact@w-fight.org](mailto:contact@w-fight.org), or by postal mail at:

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