

WORKERS' fight



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

A WORLD WITHOUT BORDERS - OUR ONLY POSSIBLE FUTURE

When Chancellor John Healey gave his pre-budget speech on 7 September, he said delivery of the government's "hope" agenda would require "growth", which would require public investment...

Immediately questions were raised: would taxes go up? What about the pension triple-lock? Or the NHS? The one million "NEETs", etc?

The optimism of the smiling Healey seemed displaced. Especially since, on the same day, Jaguar Land Rover announced it would cut 4,000 jobs - just so its shareholders could maintain their profits from these over-priced, but underselling vehicles!

We know who is to blame!

Of course, real economic growth is a pipe-dream, given capitalism's chronic crisis worldwide. The cost of living is soaring everywhere.

So no, this government can't offer much in the way of public expenditure and certainly not without squeezing the rich extra-hard. But will it? Hedge-fund billionaire Chris Rokos, who just fled to Greece to avoid his tax bill (last year it was £330m!) seems to think so!

However the capitalist class as a whole will want to keep its grip on the crisis-ridden system and ensure that governments "do the necessary" to keep it going, whatever it takes.

It's no coincidence that history is repeating itself à la 1930s, with the scapegoating of "the other"; and the promotion of hatred against "illegal migrants" - especially Muslims. Diverting attention from the real cause of the crisis - the inbuilt contradictions of the system itself - is the name of their game.

Apparently, devastating Gaza wasn't enough. And now the Israeli army is helping Jewish settlers occupy yet more Palestinian land on the West Bank. Yes - and just listen to the raised British voices, condemning Burnham's and Miliband's attempt to sanction



those same settlers!

Of course, claiming that the settlers jeopardise a "two state solution" for the Palestinians, when this was already unviable, makes Ed Miliband look even more inept. Against this, the Palestinians have long-since put forward a plan for sharing collectively the same soil and rights as all Israelis.

And for all the rest of us on this finite planet earth, the same principle applies! The idea of defending divisions and boundaries ("we must control our borders" say the politicians!), is already obsolete. Unless we rub them all out and decide to share collectively all the planet's resources, how on earth (!) will we survive into the future?

Stop the boats? No, stop capitalism!

The "men in black" in Dover say "stop the boats". Actually, they're just echoing the words of almost all of the politicians. As if stopping immigration is any kind of solution to capitalism's deep crisis!

And it's worth mentioning that there are no longer any "safe and legal

routes" for potential migrant workers from the war-torn regions of Somalia, Afghanistan, Yemen, Iraq, Iran... to get into Britain anyway.

In fact the guys in the balaclavas are witting or unwitting, tools - used by the likes of Farage, France's Bardella and le Pen, the AfD leaders in Germany - etc. These political fraudsters want to turn back the clock to a fantasised, bygone era - but above all, to defend the existing status quo, and their own interests. They have nothing to do with the working class!

By now, we're at a point in history where imposing borders and boundaries is completely retrogressive. All resources quite obviously need to be shared among all peoples, under a system based on production for human need; planned and organised accordingly.

And "there's the rub", as Shakespeare's Hamlet said. Because it won't happen without a revolution, which spreads worldwide. And only the working classes of this world have the means and the unselfish interest to ensure it does... We'd best get to it! □

Education

As if "wrong" education is to blame for youth unemployment!

According to A level results released in August, a record number of 18-year-olds - 263,000 - gained a place at university. This was only (just over) a third of all 18-year-olds, but nevertheless it still caused a stir, with various commentators questioning whether more youngsters shouldn't be going on to do "vocational" courses instead. The context is, of course, the ongoing youth unemployment crisis, with nearly 1 million, or 16% of 18-24 year-olds not in education, employment or training - so-called NEETs.

A *Times Higher Education* journal poll showed that only 28% of its sample thought a degree was "worth the money". The fact that it should cost any "money" in the first place, is not questioned and no surprise there!

Just another brick in the (crumbling) wall

Would more vocational training lead to more youngsters in employment? This reasoning is based on the fact that more and more university graduates are without jobs. But so are youth who do apprenticeships. In other words the quality of candidates is being blamed for a lack of jobs! It seems that economic commentators could do with an education themselves - starting with simple logic! The problem isn't unfilled vacancies, but the absolute lack of vacancies to start with.

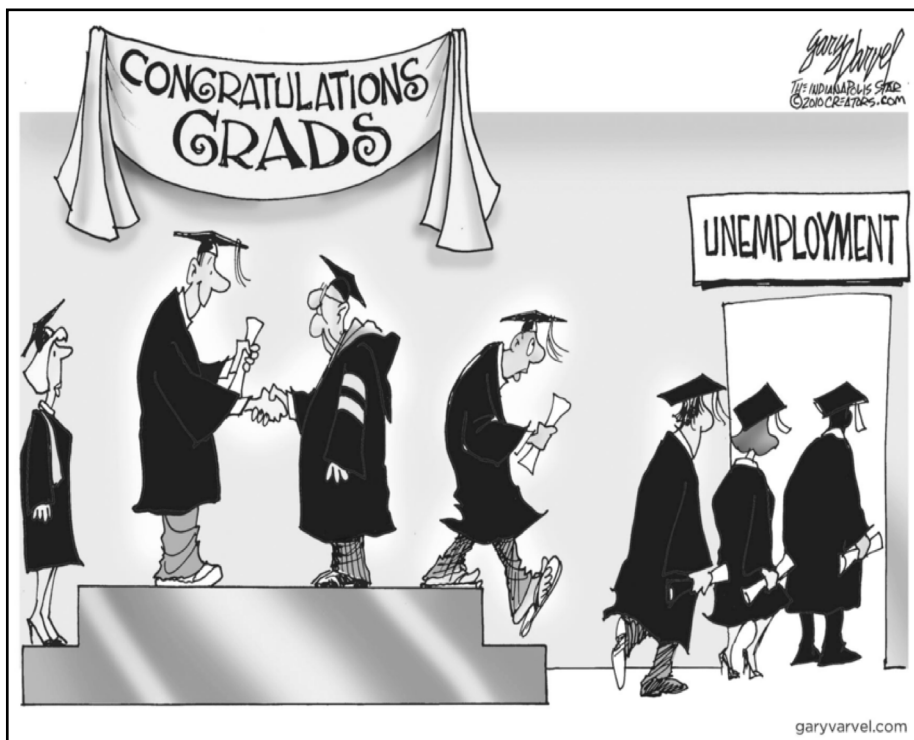
The BMW MINI factory in Cowley near Oxford, runs apprenticeship schemes for dozens of youth each year, but they are not guaranteed a job at the end of it. And even if they do get one, they may end up working on the assembly line, which they didn't need an apprenticeship for in the first place.

The fact is that no kind of "education" or training has or will ever guarantee a job in this capitalist economy, in which bosses are cutting jobs left, right and centre, as a result of the ongoing crisis.

Applicants told they're "underqualified"

Now, on average, when you apply for a job, the boss wants you to have experience. But if you've just finished school (or an apprenticeship, or a degree), just how are you meant to have any? Almost 50% of employers who used to offer jobs to young new-starts no longer do so.

What is most outrageous, is that this is increasingly the case in the publicly-funded National Health Service - which is actually crumbling for lack of workers! For the first time since 2013, the number of NHS staff has fallen, by over 4,000 workers, compared to last year. This comes a year after the government's "graduate guarantee", promising new nurses and midwives a role in the NHS!



Workers are, after all, one of their "costs of production". Far better to have fewer workers doing more, on lower wages. And we all know how the bosses "achieve" that!

So, Andy Burnham's announcement in July that 14-year-olds will be able to have more access to "technical education", to help them get jobs later, is not going to solve the problem; it will just add semi-skilled workers to the queue for a non-existent job!

The education we DO need!

It's certainly true that the current education system is not meeting the needs of youth, that is sure. After 16, they're put into little boxes and denied a comprehensive general education, which would inform them about the world

they live in - the history of humanity - evolution, its thought and philosophy, and the sciences.

The A-Level system means that most 16 year-olds choose just three subjects to study. What's more, these can be a very narrow range, for example, sociology, psychology and art, or double maths and physics. It would be of obvious benefit if they studied a wide range of subjects (6 or 8 at least). But that would mean a large increase in education spending, more teachers, and better facilities. The money for this is there, of course - but it remains in the hands of the corporate giants and the super-wealthy - until that is, the working class reclaims it! □

Class Struggle n° 128

Summer/Autumn 2026

- Andy Burnham's government: "New Labour" revisited?
- Looking back at the Brexit referendum: stupid, divisive, and dangerous
- "Hijacking the American revolution"
- Britain is an island of strangers: we're all migrants!
- China in the sights of US imperialism

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Andy Burnham, PM: Labour's new tee shirt

In Andy Burnham's first sessions in parliament as prime minister, he supposedly committed to increasing spending on public services. That is what the Tories accuse him of anyway. And it's odd (or maybe not!) that *"wanting to spend money on public services"* is now an insult! So Tory leader Kemi Badenoch pressed him at his first "prime minister's questions" at the start of September, to explain *"what he would cut"*, and mocked him when he said the only thing he cut is tax! And of course she continued to counterpose spending on social security and welfare to spending on "national" security and warfare.

In fact, Burnham has been very careful not to promise very much. In the run-up to the government's Autumn Budget (due on 28 October) he explains how his government will always *"stick to the fiscal rules, grounded in fiscal responsibility"*. What's more he has repeatedly assured the House that in the long run he does want to *"get the welfare bill down"*. And according to the *Financial Times*, the financial markets have been duly "reassured".

Money is power...

Burnham has been explicitly critical of the Thatcher government of the 1980s, when privatisation of all the public utilities took off. This is apparently where it all went wrong for capitalism, because she took *"a series of wrong turns, centralising political power, taking control out of the hands of local communities"* - and privatising economic power. He wants to reverse

this. Or so he says! Starting with devolving political power to the towns, cities and regions...

The "centralisation" Burnham emphasises is the "rate cap" Thatcher put on councils, to try to force down their "out of control" spending. But will Burnham's "devolution" restore councils' power over their spending, and provide the central government funding to support it? Can it?

So far, all he talks about is returning to councils the *"control of essential services"*. But councils already have "control" over these: they just don't have the money to exercise it as they wish! And of course, this is much worse in working class areas, which invariably have poorer councils.

Following in the footsteps of Blair, Brown... and Starmer

In this crisis-ridden system, politicians must kowtow to the demands of their lenders - mostly the big banks - who provide them with credit. They are always subject to the ups and downs of the financial markets - and in particular of the bond market (as Liz Truss found out to her cost)... For now Burnham is being cryptic over where the government will find "new" resources. But it probably does involve writing new fiscal rules!

Burnham has been far less reticent when it comes to spelling out Labour's continued 100% backing for Zelensky's policies and the Ukraine war. He says he'll *"change nothing about the approach to Ukraine"*, and has committed to raising defence spending



to 3% of GDP, as required by Nato - and 5% by 2035. He's continuing to support the US war on Iran, as Starmer did, by allowing the US Air Force to use British bases, in Cyprus especially, for their attacks.

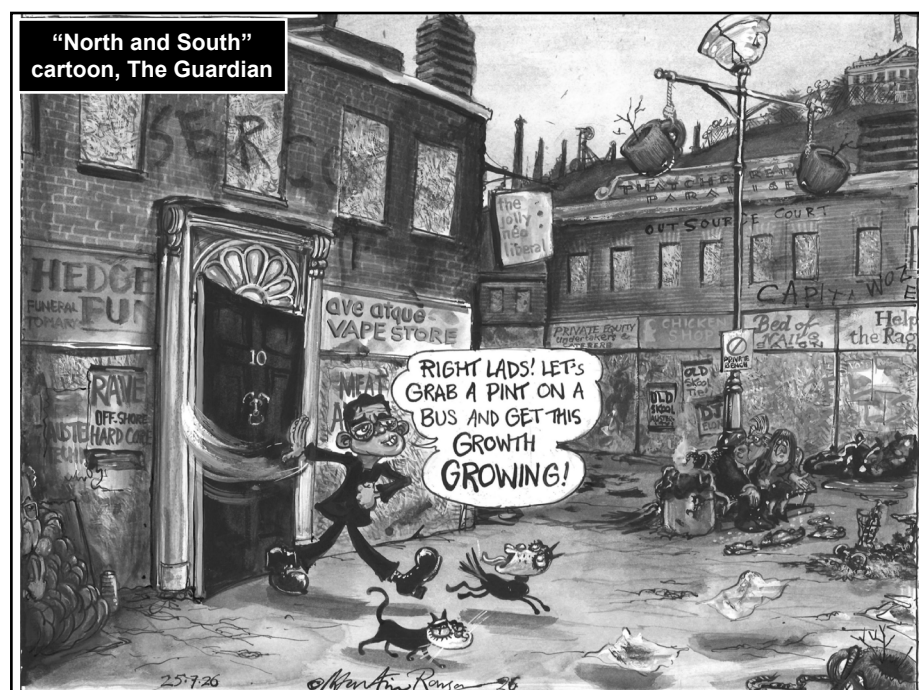
Sanctioning settlers: a gesture which costs nothing

On the other hand he has calculated that he will benefit politically from sanctioning Israeli settlers on the West Bank for their "ethnic cleansing" of Palestinians, which he says, puts the West's precious (and utterly unviable) *"two state solution"* in jeopardy. These are not sanctions against the Israeli government and nor is Gaza even mentioned. And of course all manner of lucrative trade goes on between Israel and Britain, including military goods... which continues. Netanyahu's expulsion of the British consulate from Jerusalem is therefore similarly, just a gesture aimed at domestic public opinion and nothing more, nor less.

In summary, therefore: just as those Labour leaders who went before him, Burnham will try his best for business. Indeed, should he be seen to be "irresponsible", he will be replaced.

The fact that there have been 6 prime ministers in the last 7 years, does, however, show how easy it is to displease the capitalists in these years of their increasing difficulty!

The sooner they are all gone, bosses and politicians alike, the better! □



CLIMATE CHANGE? WE

Heatwaves, wildfires, avalanches: capitalism's hot profits fuel climate change

By mid-August we had experienced 5 successive heatwaves, starting in late May, with temperatures peaking at 38.1°C. It had been the hottest summer on record. But instead of celebrating the prospect of a future "*Mediterranean climate*" as optimistic headlines in the hot summer of 1996 had predicted, we are being warned of the imminent danger of permanent climate change.

...and this heat kills

This year the consequences went far beyond wildfires and the prolonged drought in the south-east: the Health Security Agency estimates that just two of those heatwaves caused 2,877 deaths in England. Nor was this simply an unusually hot summer of the kind Britain has always experienced from time to time. Met Office experts say "*in a climate unaffected by human emissions of greenhouse gases [gases which store the heat of the sun instead of reflecting it], a summer like this would be exceptionally unlikely, i.e. 1 in over 1,000 years*". But now, unprecedented heatwaves are a new normal...

Workers wilting under the sun

Yet Britain still has no legal maximum workplace temperature. On paper, bosses have "*health-and-safety duties*" for indoor temperatures to be reasonable or to provide fresh air... At one London construction site in June, as temperatures passed 32°C, a worker said there had been no adjustment to the work schedule during the hottest part of the day: the shift still ran from 7.30 am until 4.30 pm. No "*siesta*" - as is the case in Mediterranean countries! National Express drivers in the West Midlands reported temperatures of up to 40°C in their cabs. Many workplaces - often hot, even without a heatwave - reached above 30°C.

A bottle of water?

Government advice during the heatwaves was gratuitous: drink water, avoid strenuous activity and stay somewhere cool. Except that millions of workers cannot "*stay somewhere cool*" because the workplace is where the heat is! On an assembly line, carrying heavy loads or doing construction work in bulky protective gear, heat quickly becomes exhausting and dangerous. A five-minute extra break and a bottle of water won't protect from heat stroke - or worse.

But we know better than to expect bosses and the government to provide environmental reforms or a modern, temperature-controlled workplace. Not without a concerted fight by us, anyway!

**Hot profits for some**

In 2025, the world's seven biggest oil and gas companies made around £126 billion in profit. Saudi's Aramco alone made about £69 billion. In the same year, a further £817 billion was invested in fossil fuels worldwide. Having pledged to cut its carbon footprint in 2020, in February 2025, BP (the fifth-largest investor-owned oil company in the world by 2024 revenues, after ExxonMobil, Shell, Chevron and TotalEnergies) announced that it was scaling back on all its green projects, claiming the plans were "*misplaced*" and went "*too far, too fast*". Then again, the potential profits from fossil fuels went up with the war in Ukraine and sanctions against Russian oil...

Tata Steel's Port Talbot steelworks in Wales shows another side of the same problem. Replacing its coal-fired blast furnaces with greener, lower-emission electric-arc technology required major investment in new infrastructure. But Tata was unwilling to bear the full £1.25 billion cost itself. In fact it went ahead only after the government agreed to subsidise it to the tune of £500 million.

And really hot air!

To all intents and purposes, 194 countries are part of the Paris Agreement, the international treaty on climate change, adopted by nearly 200 countries in December 2015. Although the US opted out. Yet in practice, the actual emissions' targets for each country are not legally binding, and there are no penalties if a country fails to meet

them... It's hardly surprising that so many governments have signed up: they can claim the credit for making ambitious climate commitments without any real consequences if they do nothing. In effect, they can have their cake and eat it too!

On the road to hell...

Meanwhile, in parts of northern France and the Benelux countries, the increase in the hottest temperatures has risen by more than 5°C for every 1°C rise in the Earth's average temperature, rather than the predicted 3.4°C.

Long-lasting temperature extremes are appearing earlier and more widely than predicted, with only 4 of 273 climate simulations matching Western Europe's observed rise in extreme heat. So one thing is certain: the politicians and their profiteering corporate friends from the oil, gas, mining, chemicals, shipping and trucking, etc... industries are steering towards disaster.

...and back!

It is not enough to condemn the politicians and their commitments without consequences. The planet will only be "*saved*" if the race for profit is stopped. And only the working class can do this effectively: overthrow this system based on the private ownership, on competition and markets that are a source of chaos and incredible waste. Then and only then, will it be possible to turn off the heat and begin undoing some of the damage which has already been done. □

NEED SYSTEM CHANGE!

Nepal's glacier collapse: unearthing a colonial death sentence!

On 26 August, a "mountain tsunami" ravaged the Rasuwa corridor in Nepal. The inhabitants of this mountain valley in the Himalayas, witnessed a wall of water, boulders and mud 100 metres tall, which crashed down the gorge at 180km/hour - leaving behind towns buried under 10 metres of debris.

The 14,460 people in the valley were caught by surprise. At the time of writing 1,373 deaths have so far been confirmed and 5,417 people were missing. More than 8,000 houses have been destroyed.

A huge block of ice

The surge was caused by the collapse of a glacier sitting on a face of the Langtang Lirung peak (7,234m). The lower part of the glacier, called a "tongue", sheared off and fell by 1,200 metres - almost vertically! - into the valley of Lende Khola, right on the Nepal-China border. This slab of ice and rock was big enough to cover most of Hyde Park. Its impact against the floor of the valley was equivalent to a 5.2 magnitude earthquake. The nearby population felt it, but they had no time to react, since the "melted avalanche" reached the first towns within 7 minutes.

According to scientists, the shearing of the glacier was due to the weakening of the ice "glue" holding the ice tongue to the bedrock, which was due to a heat spike. During the 5 past years, the Himalayas experienced their warmest summers on record - ice melted twice as fast. Due to global warming, the elevation at which glaciers start melting has increased by 486 metres, making these collapses 3 times more likely.

Only worried about the "Brits"?

BBC videos of the catastrophe showed the speed of the disaster and how people fled for their lives in vain. But first and foremost it was the "British nationals", who were stuck on trekking routes, which the BBC was concerned with. Practically nothing was said about the hundreds of Nepalese living in the shanty towns on the river bank - directly in the flood path!

Indeed, 77% of Nepal's land is made of uninhabitable sheer mountain slopes, so 30m people are crammed in the Southern Terai plain or in mountain valleys. The Rasuwa corridor is a 12km² strip flanked by 2,000-metre rock-walls - and is as densely populated as Birmingham!

The legacy of colonialism

To expose this, is to open a colonial can of worms, since it was Nepal's defeat during the Anglo-Nepalese war (1814-1816) which forced it to become a "protectorate" and give up 120,000 km² - a third of its habitable land - to British



India as part of the Sugauli treaty.

This same treaty entrenched the Gurkha system, which steals the best Nepalese youth from the hill villages for recruitment into the British army's "King's Gurkha Rifles". Apparently, this is on account of "their potential for physical endurance".

Gurkha courage, a death warrant

Over two centuries Britain has turned 200,000 Nepalese into cannon fodder as they were thrown into the most suicidal fronts of its imperialist wars - WW1, WW2, Falklands, Iraq, and Afghanistan! And it continues to claim its "flesh and blood" toll of 250 lives each year!

Moreover, at the head of this system, rose a cast of British-Nepalese officers,

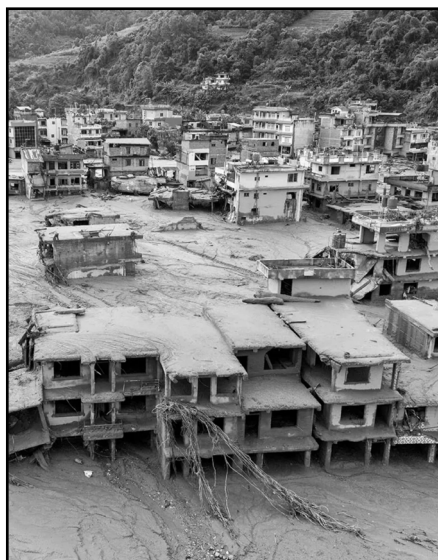
which formed the elite of a feudal military regime. For over 104 years - until 1950 - the British empire imposed the Rana puppet regime on the Nepalese, which made Nepal dependent on imports from British India and froze the country in a state of utter backwardness.

This is why Nepal is the 10th poorest country in the world. Its GDP per capita, at £1,120 is below Haiti's £1,890! Britain's GDP per head is nearly 40 times greater! This is why 2,000 Nepalese workers leave the country every day, forced to become low-paid labour in the Gulf countries, Malaysia, South Korea and elsewhere. The remittances from their wages to Nepal represent 35% of the GDP. But 1,000 of these workers return to their families in coffins each year.

Breaking the land-lock

Since the British partition of India in 1950, Nepal has been caught in between India and China whenever there are border disputes. In fact it is a landlocked "buffer", and fully dependent on trade with both countries.

After this huge avalanche, the Nepalese government will have to rebuild 24 bridges and the 41km of road destroyed in the Rasuwa corridor - Nepal's only route for trade with China. All the more so, because this corridor is meant to become part of China's New Silk Road and has been providing jobs to the many unemployed Nepalese youth - in construction, logistics and hydro-electric plants. This is a cost that the Nepalese government is willing to pay (it provides 75% of its funding) in order to break away from this choking (British) imperialist landlock. □



Ford Dagenham estate (Essex)**The bosses should pay for our strikes - in full!**

There will be a "National Pay Demonstration" later this autumn called by the TUC. The last one was way back, in June 2022! And yes, given the cost of living crisis, pay rises are all the more vital for us to go on strike for!

However, whenever strikes do happen, usually for one token day or two, union leaders wax eloquent over workers' "selfless sacrifices", as Unite's leader, Sharon Graham did in 2022-3, because "it's them going through the real pain" of losing their wages. But why should

we "sacrifice" our wages whenever we go on strike? Nobody seems to ask this question any more!

In fact, not so long ago, strikers would demand that the bosses pay their lost wages. In fact, a striking car worker in France put it in a nutshell (in 1947!) when he said: "*without payment for strike hours, the legally recognised right to strike would, in effect, amount to nothing more than the right to starve to death*".



Back in 1972, in Britain, striking miners forced the bosses to pay for the losses they had suffered during their seven-week strike. It can and must be done! ☐

• The international vulture

We see Ford has bid an adapted Ford Ranger for the Ministry of Defence's £2 billion Light Mobility Vehicle programme (along with General Dynamics Land Systems and Ricardo) - to replace the British Army's retired Land Rover and Pinzgauer fleets... [Workers' Fight bulletin 09/09/26]

• Profit before everything

If it wins the bid, Ford hopes this could be a stepping stone to more NATO contracts. Indeed Ford has a long history supplying the army, going back to WW1. Its German factory supplied Hitler and kept going during WW2. Hitler awarded Henry Ford a medal in 1938... The admiration was

mutual. [Workers' Fight bulletin 09/09/26]

• Complain to the mirror

Management keep complaining that new workmates in machining aren't doing things properly... But where were the "trainers" to pass on their years of experience? "Cut" and retired off! If there are "mistakes", they're entirely down to Ford's job and corner-cutting frenzy and management incompetence! [Workers' Fight bulletin 09/09/26]

• 14 eyes but not a human fly

Managers want some of us (12 in total?) to move to Darkside conversion work on the Explorers, which are in demand by companies like Network Rail. So far, we were only 7 workers doing the job... but

with seven supervisors/managers watching! [Workers' Fight bulletin 09/09/26]

• We say no!

Andr(who?) still wants us cleaners on monthly pay. How dare they try to save the peanuts they spend on payroll on our backs? And BTW, we also want Ford contracts and an end to subcontracting! [Workers' Fight bulletin 09/09/26]

• A licence to use their brains?

Did Transport Ops bosses only just realise that a fully-laden ship won't be able to berth at the Jetty at low tide? These bright sparks are now running around like headless chickens, trying to get a dredging licence to dredge the bottom of the riverbed! [Workers' Fight bulletin 09/09/26]

BMW Mini centre (Cowley, Oxford)**Built-in ballot fraud**

On 2 September, the result of the ballot on BMW's 2%, no-strings pay offer (8 months overdue!) was published: 1,027 voted to accept, 144 to reject, with 2 ballots "spoilt". After no rise last year, this was a cut in real wages. So how could this happen?

There's an easy answer. BMW and Unite the union collude in excluding a majority of the workforce from voting, i.e., those who work for BMW's agency for production workers, called Staffline. These "permanent temps" may even be members of the union, but they cannot vote on anything, or be shop stewards. It's only the permanent manual workers who can vote and they number, out of

the over 4,000 production workers, a mere 1,000! In fact BMW has hardly issued any new permanent contracts in ten years.

Even so, this alone would not explain the very low vote to reject. We've waited for this pay rise for twenty months, and after this year's wrangling and delays, we expected BMW to abandon talks altogether if the offer was rejected. But behind our backs union officials had already ensured it was signed, sealed and delivered!

So yet again we've been betrayed. Indeed, by now we know that the union full-timers will never change their spots. We workers - in or out of the union, perm



or temp - are going to have to take over the responsibility of organising our own struggles - and forget the rules! Going on strike is quite simple. All we have to ensure is that enough of us "vote" with our feet, simultaneously... ☐

• And up the road?

We hear that workmates in Swindon got a different pay deal. Aren't we all one company, or at least one Mini operation? One of the things workers at Swindon refused to accept, was working Work Time Allowance (i.e., unpaid overtime) on Fridays - we can certainly join them in this refusal! [Workers' Fight bulletin 08/09/26]

• When we're ready to call it in!

At least this month there are no Fridays nor VPO/MTA shift extensions on. But since the 35-hour week was imposed, this is also a pay cut. Some of us have worked out we lose about 6%. Yes, BMW bosses' debt to us is getting bigger and bigger! [Workers' Fight bulletin 08/09/26]

• Wages must catch up

In Apex, the cleaning contractor, last year we were given a ridiculous 1% pay rise! And we've still got no news of this year's offer... We've been getting slightly above the minimum wage all these years, but now after the increase in inflation, we are getting just on the minimum! We need a £500 to top up our monthly pay, at the very least. [Workers' Fight bulletin 08/09/26]

King's Cross railway station (London)**Great British Robbers that we need to fight**

Prior to the setting up of "Great British Railways", rail bosses are attacking everybody's terms and conditions. During the summer, LNER drivers were offered a 4-year pay package. But the strings attached amounted to the biggest attacks on Ts&Cs since before the last strike wave in 2022-24! For instance, longer shifts, a compulsory extra hour to work during disruption, changes to sickness absence rules... The bosses also want to replace physical route learning with cab simulation. And ASLEF officials are recommending this deal!

A similar deal offered to Avanti West

Coast and Great Northern drivers, has already been accepted. Avanti drivers get a 3.6% pay rise and extra money for rest-day working, in exchange for agreeing the future use of technology in the cab. Great Northern drivers have accepted a 2-year pay deal - a 5% rise each year and £3,000 in two separate payments. However, this comes with fewer "Route Refresh" days, which are crucial for safe train journeys!

Meanwhile, other sections of workers - including in LNER - haven't yet been offered a pay rise. As for Gate Gourmet workers (LNER's food supplier), many are



on second-tier contracts and don't even get the "UK Living Wage".

Our response as a whole workforce, has to be a cross-sectional fight across all companies and grades - so that we all get the string-free pay rise we need! ☐

EMR strikes: safety is a life and death question for ALL of us!

East Midlands Railways workers have struck on five separate days this summer. Class 810 (Aurora) trains have serious safety issues - and despite the fatal crash near Bedford on 19 June, due to a fault in the automatic warning system, these problems remain!

System blackouts leave drivers, signallers and dispatchers unable to communicate mid-trip for up to 20 minutes. Drivers are struggling to hear

the AWS. Emergency brakes activate without warning. Cab door locks are jamming...

More strikes were planned for September. But only train guards and "customer hosts" in the RMT union were meant to strike. ASLEF, which represents drivers, wasn't even involved, despite the fact that a driver was killed on 19 June. But neither had the RMT involve the rest of the workforce: those working on-board

- "hosts" subcontracted to Rail Gourmet and revenue protection officers - nor the rest of the station-based workforce.

Actually, the narrow-minded sectionalism of union leaders is above all, ineffective. The only way to ensure that the fight for a "safe" railway for workers and passengers alike wins out, is for all workers - regardless of which union (or none) to come together and strike together. ☐

• Guarding our rest days

Avanti West Coast guards at Euston have been on strike for the past 2 Sundays, in our long-running dispute over rosters. Managers are imposing rosters on us, giving us fewer rest days than we're entitled to. We need our rest days! If the bosses don't comply, we'll have to escalate! [*Workers' Platform 22/07/26*]

• "Freedom"?

We've heard that the DfT has banned recruiting for LNER. Never mind the shortages of hands. During previous summers, they increased the number of workers to handle the summer rush. Not this year. So much for the luxury journey they promise the passengers... [*Workers' Platform 22/07/26*]

• Let them eat cake

LNER chefs might have to prepare up to 90 passenger orders, in under 2 hours. We only have 2 ovens available. There are also no sous-chefs or prep-cooks to assist. So, if they can't employ more of us, a lot of passengers are going to go hungry... [*Workers' Platform 22/07/26*]

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

Our new mates who have worked for some of the other delivery companies just cannot believe the levels of exploitation they see and experience since they've started wearing Royal Mail's red shirt.

Not only do they find pay at RM very low, but in the other companies they were used to getting extra payments for helping another route get its packet delivered, or to getting a weekly bonus for delivering everything.

Then they're agog at the sheer

incompetence of management they witness every day. Equipment that doesn't work; vehicles that look like they have been in a banger race; no handheld device to say what the next delivery is.

It's no wonder these workers are not interested in joining the Communication Workers' Union - they don't think the union has anything to offer them. The conditions that union officials have agreed to for the blue and red shirts are some of the most exploitative in the postal industry.



So much for ending the race to the bottom. In fact, we're already there. And while many of our new mates don't stay because the job isn't any better than where they came from, we have to convince them that together we can reverse the trend! ☐

• Not on our time!

During Work Time "Sleeping", managers handed out little slips entitled "Unsafe Act/Condition Log" for us to fill in. They say it gives us the chance to report "unsafe practices" in HMP - but we don't even know where to start! Are managers

going to give us a full shift to sit down and fill in the hundreds of slips we'd need for all the unsafe things we spot around here? [*Workers' Fight bulletin 22/07/26*]

• No agreement to job cuts!

The three-year "no compulsory redundancy" agreement between the

CWU and RM is nearly up... But then again, many workmates have retired without being replaced, which amounts to compulsory job cuts! And we certainly don't agree with this. Less work? Then we share it equally and everyone works less with no cut in pay! [*Workers' Fight bulletin 22/07/26*]

International

Spain: a "progressive government"?

So-called "left-wing" party coalitions have been in government in Spain since 2020, led by the Socialist Party and president Pedro Sánchez - who's held that position since 2018. He wants his government to stand out as a progressive, anti-imperialist force: it's been vocal about Israel's atrocities in Gaza and has criticised Trump's policies, like the war against Iran, or the push to increase NATO's defence spending. But behind this "social" stance, the government represents the interests of the capitalist class, like any other.

This was clear again in July, when over 72,000 migrants entered the Spanish enclave of Ceuta on Morocco's northern coast. At least 100 people died during these crossings. But never mind: Spain's response to migrants risking death for a better life, was to reinforce the military and police and talk about a "violation of Spain's territorial integrity". This has intensified Spain's equivalent of Britain's "stop the boats" anti-migrant scapegoating, which more right-wing, anti-migration parties are using to score political points ahead of next year's general election.

Under this pressure, in August, Sanchez's government announced proposals for a tougher migration law, already under way, to bring Spain in line with new European Union rules. This would make it easier to reject asylum claims and speed up the return of migrants. This makes it all the more urgent to fight for a world without borders!



Airbus workers fight back

Meanwhile the high cost of living, unemployment (almost 10%) and precarious, badly-paid jobs are among the biggest problems facing the Spanish working class.

The working class isn't taking this lying down. Workers in Airbus - who build commercial and military aircraft - went on strike from 1-31 July and have been out indefinitely again since 25 August.

Their demands include a large pay rise to make up for real-terms pay cuts in recent years and better terms and conditions, including better sick pay. Walkouts started with white-collar workers. The trigger was an announcement to reduce working-from-home days. The strike then spread to the

shop floor. From the biggest plant, in Madrid (with 9,000 workers), it spread to five other plants across the country.

Workers organised themselves, creating working committees tasked with communication, documentation, logistics, slogans... These committees began meeting under tents in front of the plants. Resolutions would be voted on in a general assembly. The workers effectively by-passed the official unions when these were too timid to organise a fight. In fact, in July, union officials negotiated behind the strikers' back to try to end the strikes. At the time of writing, it seems the officials are trying this again. We hope they do not succeed! ☐

Afghanistan: 25 years since the imperialist invasion

Twenty-five years ago, the US and its western allies invaded Afghanistan. This was a response to an unprecedented suicide-terror attack by Osama bin Laden's Al Qaeda, using hijacked passenger airliners to crash into the twin towers of the World Trade Centre in New York and the Pentagon in Washington. US leaders claimed that bin Laden had been given sanctuary by the Taliban.

After 5 weeks of bombing, the Taliban government fell. Two decades of NATO occupation followed, at huge cost to the Afghan population, ending in a chaotic withdrawal 5 years ago and the Taliban's return to power.

A legacy of oppression

An estimated 176,000 Afghans died as a result of the war and over 6m were displaced.

In Helmand province, which was the British-occupied zone, 457 British soldiers were killed, mostly by roadside bombs. In 2022, a BBC Panorama investigation described how British SAS special forces detained, tortured and killed detainees on a regular basis, in an attempt to terrorise the local population. According to ex-servicemen, the SAS would "search someone, handcuff them, then shoot them" - including children.

A "new" working class?

Today, just two years after the Taliban returned to power, \$6.5bn worth of mining contracts have been already been signed with western companies, including British ones. In June, the EU hosted leaders of the Afghan regime to negotiate an agreement on the deportation of Afghan refugees - handing

over to the Taliban regime those who are trying to flee it...

In the meantime, the majority of the Afghan population remains almost totally dependent on foreign aid. It is this destitution (thanks, of course, to the regional policy of imperialism) which has allowed an ultra-reactionary "Emir" to rule despotically from his base in Kandahar, forcing women to stay at home and revoking the right of girls to go to school. That said, many, even within Taliban ranks, oppose him. There is also resistance to this brand of fundamentalism being organised in the North-West region. It's therefore not a foregone conclusion that this poor country and its people are condemned to live in the Dark Ages. But that will be down to its working class - both men and women.

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, or by postal mail at:

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