WORKERS' fight

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contact@w-fight.org

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

YES, WE NEED TO "GET PREPARED"... TO OVERTHROW THE SYSTEM!

The government has launched a campaign to encourage *"households to take small, simple steps to stay prepared in an emergency"*... We must *"be ready"* to face a crisis. What kind of crisis, exactly, is not specified, however! It could be a power cut, a cut in water supply, the failure of our phones, or the internet...

We're told to keep a supply of clean water (around 5-7 litres per person!), at hand, as well as *"non-perishable food"*, like tins of baked beans, to last us for at least 3 days.

Why only 3 days-worth? Well, that's a mystery! But it seems that other countries' governments are doing this (e.g., France and the Netherlands) and so the British government is following suit, with its "Be Ready" and "Be Prepared" campaigns.

It's very true that heavy rains, strong winds and floods are more likely these days. Funnily enough though, nobody among these government figures who're sounding alarm bells over climate change today, has demanded an end to NATO's missiles and bombs in Ukraine - nor did they suspend all arms exports to the Israeli state, not even on the grounds that the fire and brimstone of war causes super-large CO2 emissions...



Keep your 3-day emergency pack

Sudden power failures? Sudden water shortages coming to a street near you? As mentioned above, these "crises" are actually preventable.

Indeed, when you know something can go wrong, you build resilience into the system. Or don't you? But that, precisely, is the problem! The privatisation (and thus degradation) of all our necessary utilities took place more than 30 years ago. And it's been public knowledge that profiteering out of these services took precedence over proper maintenance, let alone modernisation.

So now, when there is pressure on supplies - from bad weather, or any other quarter, we're told we need to buy bottles of water and tinned food and to prepare for doing without!

And what helps the government distract our attention even further from where the responsibility for a potential crisis may lie, is the idea that there are all sorts of *"other threats"* lurking in the background which could result in an emergency! These "threats" helpfully cover the ailing backs of water and energy companies - while they still rake it in!

Yes, we're still paying through the nose to private shareholders for our vital energy and water. And then, because they've hiked our bills so high that poorer households have to choose between heating and eating, the government offers subsidies through the tax system. And we pay the Treasury to give us a rebate!

Where's the enemy, where's the spy?

But what about the other scary threats we have to prepare for? We're told they come from AI, cyber hackers, "China", "Russia" and "Iran"...

Sure, AI might allow *"hostile actors"* to get up to mischief. Cyber-hackers already switched off freezers in supermarkets - although the motive (if any) is unknown.

Fingers are pointed at *"the Russians"* (or *"the Chinese"*) even though their governments vehemently deny any interference. But British ministers and the media (especially the supposedly neutral BBC) cannot stop themselves from seeing foreign plots and spies everywhere. When everyone knows that when it comes to "espionage" it's the British secret service who are the past masters!

So no, the working class will not be distracted nor misled. We know who the enemy is and where our interests lie. And if we are going to "get ready" and "get prepared" it won't be for sitting out a black-out - but to cause it! Because it's in the interests, not just of our class, but the whole of humanity, to end this pernicious capitalist system. What we need to "prepare" for, is a revolution. ❐

USA

Oil majors' Iran war windfall

Everyone across the mainstream of politics and the media, including the US Vice President JD Vance, blames the Republican Party's loss of the US mid-term election on the war against Iran. Certainly, the rise in the cost of living for US citizens, and the rising oil price, has led to people voting against Trump and his party. The price of crude oil nearly doubled from $60/barrel at the start of this year, to $118 just before the mid-term elections. In fact, diesel and petrol prices have risen even faster than crude oil prices.

However, there is no direct reason why the Iran war would raise oil prices in the US. The country is a net exporter of oil and didn't rely on any of the oil produced in the Gulf. It is simply down to the profiteering of the oil producing companies. They take opportunity from disruption and instability to increase their prices!



Protest against rising oil prices and against war, Michigan

The big 7 oil companies - Exxon, Chevron, ConocoPhillips, TotalEnergies, Shell, BP and Eni - have doubled their collective income this year, and, of course, proportionally increased their dividends to shareholders. BP, for example, quadrupled its profits to $8.5bn in just three months, an all-time record for the company! So while the oil majors' profiteering has hit the population, the US capitalist class is sitting on record wealth. And of course, the politicians are going to blame *"the war in Iran"* rather than their capitalist friends! ❐

The US war in Iran: the shared policy of Democrats and Republicans

While the Iran war may have contributed to the Republicans' mid-term election loss, Trump says he doesn't regret it: he claims he has done the world a favour by stopping Iran from obtaining a nuclear weapon - and he would do it again.

But what he didn't anticipate was the ability of the Iranian navy and army to block the Strait of Hormuz. And while it may not have a direct effect on the US "oil economy", it certainly does have severe repercussions for US allies in the Gulf and Europe - whom Washington relies upon to take care of its interests. Not to mention the rest of the world since 20% of all oil supplies go through the Strait. Although some say the difficulty this represents for China and the Far East who also rely on this oil works in US capital's favour...

Of course, behind what appears to be Trump's ill-considered war is a US capitalist class which wants Iran, and the world, to surrender to its diktat. Ever since the 1979 Iranian revolution which kicked out the US-backed Shah, US policy has been to punish Iran and get its regime back under its thumb. Democrats and Republicans only differ in the "how". Obama's 2015 nuclear deal with Iran had the same spoken aim of *"stopping Iran from having a nuclear weapon"*. Since then whether Republican or Democrat, Iran has been attacked through strict economic sanctions and embargoes.

Dissenting voices

On the other hand, Trump's vice president, JD Vance, has been quite explicit over his opposition to Trump's "Iran war", saying this was the main factor in the rout Republicans suffered in the mid-terms. Of course, he is also playing a future electoral card, no doubt hoping to take over as a president who sticks to the rhetoric that got Trump elected - putting "America First" and refusing to get involved in "foreign wars".

If Vance succeeds, however, he'll also have to get his hands dirty. After all, the USA is the leading economic power in the world and its corporate bosses expect the regime in Washington - whether blue or red - to maintain their position at the top, whatever it takes!

A peace deal hasn't yet been struck and oil tankers in the Strait continue to be blown up by Iranian mines. The New York Times reported just after the elections that "thousands of US air and naval forces are poised to resume major combat operations against Iran on Trump's orders".

Of course, these are classic negotiating tactics - seeming to escalate, before signing a deal. Making peace in the Middle East - and Ukraine - would allow Trump to score in the polls and that's what he likes to do. It will appease his base. Whether he can achieve this, is not entirely certain, however. For the sake of the peoples under the bombs, at least, we can only hope he does.

The stock market's and Jensen Huang's madness

The 5 November became the worst day on the US stock market since March 16 2020 - the start of the Covid pandemic. The market value of the biggest companies fell by $3.2 trillion in a few hours. Over $400bn was wiped from Nvidia, nearly $200bn each from both Tesla and Microsoft, and tens of billions from Amazon, Apple, Meta and Google (Alphabet).

Whether this is the bursting of the AI bubble is not yet clear, but everyone knows that it is going to burst. The only question is when, and who'll be left holding the baby. November 5 was not the first fall in the stock market in recent months - at the end of October, another $900bn was wiped off the market - but it was the biggest so far, showing that even the capitalists don't trust their own system and are expecting a blow-up any time!

And now, Jensen Huang's extra marital affairs are wiping even more billions off Nvidia's share price. It's very ironic that this boss's dallying with women other than his wife or employees of the company or with his female rivals should be a sacking offence. And caused for Nvidia's stocks to tumble. Of course, this company will probably regain much of its value and pundits are hoping that when it does, it will *"steady the AI sell off"*.

Scattered strikes, same old problem

While November 2026 looks nothing like November 2022-23, when hundreds of thousands of workers across Britain took strike action over pay and working conditions, disputes have not disappeared. All the more so, because the strike wave 3 years ago was not a resounding success. And today, the bosses are renewing their attacks on wages and conditions.

UNITE? But not united!

At Jaguar Land Rover, around 300 DHL lorry drivers working on the company's contract in Birmingham, Wolverhampton, Solihull and Widnes remain on indefinite strike. The dispute follows DHL's offer of a 3% pay rise. Unite is organising the action, but the strike remains confined to the company's logistics operations even if the workforce and other subcontractors right across JLR sites have just as pressing reasons to strike.

Unite members on North Sea oil and gas installations are also taking action. Workers employed by Wood Group are striking this November after the company cut pay and conditions, issuing fire-and-rehire notices.

Yes, different employers and different workplaces, but the same union and the same aims. Yet Unite the union remains stubbornly sectional, playing right into the bosses hands - as per usual.

New rights - old restrictions

Meanwhile, on 30 October 2026, new protections for striking workers came into force under the Employment Rights Act 2025. The law more explicitly protects workers on "lawful" strike. The bosses can no longer accuse (or penalise) workers on the grounds that when they take industrial action, they're breaking their employment contract.

Solidarity strikes are still illegal, of course. No surprise there, they are one of our strongest weapons. And since union leaders always follow the law to the letter, if we want our strikes to be effective, we have to build our own strike committees to organise our struggles and ensure that we really do "unite and fight"! ❐

Urda train crash: the deadly "blind spot" of greed

On 28 October, a train crash on Spain's Madrid-Seville high speed line, near the town of Urda caused 69 deaths and injured over 200 people. The AVE 2080 train which crashed into the rear of a stalled Iryo 6076, was travelling at an estimated speed of 160-200km/hr!

Earlier in the day, 6 trains were forced to stop after the signalling system went down near Urda. In fact, traffic wasn't being monitored in real-time over 69km of track, due to two computer failures at the local signalling central. Shortly afterwards, drivers were instructed by the Atocha control room - which oversees the line from Madrid - to restart at normal speed, and to rely on the track-side signal lights, until leaving the section impacted by the computer failure. However, one train, the Iryo 6076, remained at a standstill, since its onboard computer system wasn't responding. The driver was trying to regain control of the train, when it was hit by the AVE 2080.

Pressurising the controllers

It's quite clear that the accident was caused by two computer failures which forced controllers to handle 6 trains navigating blindly in the busiest high speed corridor during peak hour (8:30am). But instead, it was the controller who was blamed, citing his *"inexplicable 'restart at normal speed' instruction"*… Except that, if the protocol offers the choice between a restart *"at normal speed (160-200km/hr)"* or *"at 40km/hr on sight"*, it's precisely because back in February 2025, the Ministry of Transport told ADIF - state-owned railway maintenance and signalling - to keep "normal speed" in the book! In the words of a controller: *"we work under pressure from management to reduce travel times… to 'avoid at all costs compensation to passengers for delays'"*! ADIF supervisors were sent to control rooms to pressurise the staff, telling them that *"the AVE needs to get there in time"* or *"come on, get it out already"*…

The more, the more dangerous...

Since "liberalisation" - the partial privatisation of the Spanish railways - volumes increased from 60 trains per day to 130! Two additional companies (Iryo and Ouigo) started running more trains. What's more, their agreements require 98% of their allocated "train-kilometres" to be fulfilled each day - hence the pressure on control rooms!

Each controller went from managing 15 trains simultaneously to 40! The SCF (Railway Controllers Union) claims that it's common to work 12-hour shifts without breaks for 6 days in a row…! On top of it all, they're so short of staff, that they often work without support controllers, who handle their calls and take notes.



Emergency staff at the crash in Urda, October 28

There are no safe hands?

The first statement of the transport minister following the crash says it all: *"the unaware public, should realise that there are 150 to 200 of these failures every year, which is within the European average"* adding *"it is mostly due to vandalism and cable theft"*…

Antonio Martín-Carrillo, the engineer who installed the current signalling system in 1995 - 35 years ago (!) answered as follows: *"The LZB* [signalling] *fails more than a fairground shotgun. It's a computer system from the 1980s, from when Windows didn't exist, and we didn't even know what mice were"* ... *"There are no longer any spare parts because the system is no longer in use and they are hard to find.* [They] *are being sourced by cannibalising the system, taking them from one part to fit on another" ... "How dare they talking like this* [about the controller]*? It's madness. The weakest party is being blamed. It's the system that has failed!"*

Yes, we agree 100%. We know this all too well here in Britain, where privatisation and shareholders' greed was introduced in 1996. But under a capitalist system even publicly-owned railways are underequipped, underinvested and unmodernised. This is why we don't just need renationalisation, but we need workers' control. Under profit-free socialism. ❐

Their society

No "neat" solution to NEETs - not under this system!

Just under one million - 981,000 - young people between the age of 16 and 25 in Britain are currently not in education, employment or training - generally referred to as "NEETs".

And given that they aren't working, they're receiving a range of welfare benefits. This is around £125bn out of a total welfare budget of £330bn a year - and because the disability component of their benefits is rising at a faster rate than other welfare benefits, there is great consternation in the corridors of Westminster and beyond, and not just among the government's opposition.

Welfare cuts... postponed?

Prime minister Andy Burnham has been very careful not to propose an immediate cut in welfare - yet... However his ministers are implying that yes, the benefits bill is far too large and must come down - and that the "NEETs" will have to lose some of their payments. Although this may only be imposed by the next parliament.

The Milburn review (not yet officially released at the time of writing), will, it seems, recommend that NEETs should lose sickness and disability benefits - the health element of universal credit and personal independence payments (Pip). Instead, they'll get a lower "youth allowance". The savings are meant to be used to help them find jobs! As if! Because it's obviously the lack of proper jobs out there, which is the real cause of "Neet-dom" in the first place!

It's the bosses to blame, stupid!

Indeed the bosses - who've always employed as few workers as possible at the lowest possible cost, are breaking all records in this respect.

As for contributing their share to social infrastructure like the NHS through what they call the "jobs tax", that is, employers' National Insurance Contributions, they are utterly freaking out about a 1.2% increase (from 13.8% to 15%) imposed by the former chancellor, and the lowering of the earnings threshold for paying NICs from £9,100 to £5,000. Small businesses don't pay this increase and all bosses are exempt from paying it for apprentices younger than 25, or workers younger than 21.

NEETs to the streets!

Perhaps the real question to be asked is why aren't the NEETs rioting in the streets? Why aren't the school and university students blockading their schools, like their counterparts in France?

In fact millions of youngsters in Europe (and India!) have been angrily protesting over being *"left behind"* over the past months and have fought back against the armed riot police and (in some cases) soldiers sent against them. Whether Burnham's acknowledgement that the NEETs crisis is *"an economic catastrophe and a moral failure"*, will succeed in keeping British youth off the streets for much longer, remains to be seen. ❐

"Early release scheme"... or "left stranded and homeless"?

Under the government's "early release scheme", about 5,000 prisoners will have been released by next summer across England and Wales. So the idea is to *"free up prison spaces"* in the context of record overcrowding… Yes, essentially, to put even more people behind bars. As for solving any social problems which put them there in the first place - forget it! And this release scheme hasn't even anticipated the new social problems it causes!



From prison cell to doorway

Indeed, the number of releases into rough sleeping, has more than doubled since 2022/23, from 6,040 to 14,360! The probation service in England has had to hand out over 100 tents to early release prisoners over the past year, after running out of emergency housing!

To make matters worse, since May, 1 in 10 "bail hostels" have shut down due to the lack of properly qualified workers, due to infestations, or due to the lack of running water! Hostel inmates would be better off in a tent! But all this means that one in six ex-prisoners are homeless. And homelessness makes it twice as likely for someone to reoffend - two thirds will reoffend within a year.

Inflated sentences

The prison population in England and Wales has almost doubled since 1990, from 45,000 inmates to 88,500 in 2024. There may not be enough prisons to satisfy British justice, but this overpopulation is largely down to successive governments passing laws to lengthen custodial sentences - so-called *"sentence inflation"*.

The Howard League for Penal Reform says they did so even when recorded crime rates fell. Between 2008 and 2021, the average custodial sentence across all crimes in England and Wales rose by 44%, increasing from 14.5 months to 20.9 months.

No, prison doesn't work

In 2022 the Tories passed their Police, Crime, Sentencing and Courts Act which increased sentences even more - garnering votes from victims of crime as all governments try to do. They also cut parole - so that offenders had to serve at least two thirds of their sentences before being eligible for release.

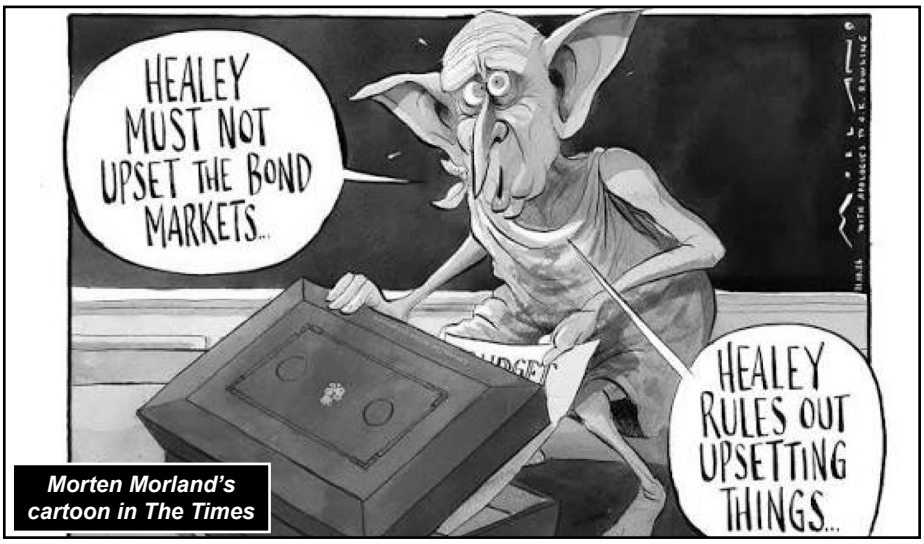
It's obvious however, that locking people up in prison doesn't work to prevent offences. Most "crimes", from murder, to rape, to grand larceny - or even petty theft - can be traced to one or other social cause. But these causes are never addressed. And as the economy continues to falter, deprivation will fuel more crime. This is one of capitalism's most vicious circles. ❐

Healey's budget: doing no harm to the financial markets!

Chancellor Healey behaved like the *"goddess of small things"* when he delivered his first Budget in October. As if he was giving eveyone little bits of relief... *"a breathing space"*, he called it!

And yes, without taxing the wealth of the country's capitalists and financiers, of course there's not much to be done. But no Chancellor of whatever political colour, dares to pile on taxes. And when they do, ever-so-timidly, they never hear the end of it.

One bank chief executive, quoted in the Financial Times said: *"Taxing the engines of growth to reduce VAT on gherkins is end-of-Rome level of stupidity"*. So, for banks to pay a (temporary!) extra 3% surcharge, brings to his mind the fall of Rome. As for calling banks the *"engines of growth"*, with their high and higher (next year) interest rates, that's a joke! More like the engines of penury!



Morten Morland's cartoon in The Times

We need to expropriate them!

Those capitalists who grew (and still grow) fat on the dividends of privatisation - are eminently taxable. They could be forced to pay back all the billions they've literally extorted from households since the 1980s.

It was the government of the day which caused this mess, so in theory, the government of the day - today - could clean it up... But it won't. Healey may have kept repeating how these were "Labour" government proposals: but they were certainly nothing to do with the working class.

Anyway, hanging darkly over Healey's budget was the price of oil and gas. But given the fact that the dual fuel bill for an average household is ~£2,000 a year, the £100 "give-away" to households in council tax bands A-D is mere pennies. There is (timid) legislation to come, to allow the re-nationalisation of "some" water companies (see below). But reversing the privatisation of all utilities - that's never going to be on any government's agenda and no surprise there.

It should be added that the 5% increase in defence-spending was confirmed. Healey, the former defence secretary, who'd resigned because he wanted more weapons, not less, didn't disappoint the military-industrial complex!

As for the rest of us, we have our "work" cut out - or rather, our refusal to work! There's always been only one effective way to get what we need, and that's to go on strike. And not to stop there. Because this whole economic and political system needs to be dumped. And it's only the working class that has the collective strength to make that happen. ❐

Brexit: raking up the old coals?

Andy Burnham's government is meeting EU leaders at the end of November to - perhaps - sign a "reset" deal. In fact, this is just finishing off what Starmer started, when he reopened negotiations with the EU. The decade of governmental wrangling, deal-making, and remaking since the referendum in 2016, is leading back to closer ties with the EU. Of course, how could it not? The EU was and is the main market for British business.

A study published last year estimated that the British economy was 6-8% smaller than it would have been if Britain stayed in the EU, not to mention the lower investment and employment as a result of Brexit. The initial plan is for Britain and the EU to align their agriculture rules to allow free trade of food and animals. In fact, Britain has never carried out checks on food and animals from the EU! Their implementation has been delayed multiple times; while nearly £5 billion of public money has been spent on new port infrastructure needed for checks, on grants for companies to deal with the new red tape and paperwork, and on the "Windsor Framework"/Irish Sea "border" - all of which is now not needed!

Burnham is also hoping to get British industry included in the EU's new "Made in Europe" scheme, which is currently being finalised. It would favour European-made products and European manufacturers for certain subsidies and public contracts. This includes electric cars, which would have to be assembled within the EU to qualify. Bad news for British-based car manufacturers… And with 57% of British car exports going to the EU, their profits are at stake! So, Burnham is preparing to step in and save them!

In exchange, it's proposed that EU students can pay cheaper university fees to attend British universities. Good news for the free movement of students, but as yet, there is no talk about bringing back the free movement of workers - the only true benefit of the EU for the rest of us!

Water companies: renationalise them, without compensation!

The Environment Agency reports that there were 2,666 pollution incidents during 2025 - 53% more than 2016, of which 74 caused "significant environmental damage"! And not one of the nine private water companies met the target for avoiding serious pollution incidents!

In the meantime, Burnham has promised *"more public control"* over water companies. The new Water Bill will remove the 1-3% cap on government shareholdings, meaning that the government can theoretically buy a bigger stake in water companies. But if it does so - and that's a big if since the "cupboard is bare" - it would be buying back shares in these companies with taxpayers' money... which goes straight into shareholders' pockets!

The government also announced the creation of "regional water councils", to give mayors new powers so that *"local people can have a real say over what they need from their water companies"*. So local councils will have to ensure that water companies prioritise *"cleaning up rivers, building new reservoirs, or protecting homes from floods"*... if they have the means to impose this. Clearly they don't, and won't.

These companies have been rewarding shareholders handsomely: since privatisation, they have paid out £78bn in dividends! Working people are expected to cough up an average of £639 a year in water bills, expected to increase by another 14% over the next 3 years (on top of the 40% increase over the past decade). That's the price of privatisation!

King's Cross railway station (London)

It will be up to us to stop the subcontracting



Great British Railways is taking shape, but subcontracting isn't being abolished - even though this is one of the demands of the RMT union.

Since privatisation in the 1990s, private companies have mushroomed, competing for contracts for cleaning, catering, security, passenger service, etc., and imposing two- or three-tier workforces while relying on agency casuals to make up numbers. Among the worst are the two catering suppliers - Gate Gourmet (GG) for LNER trains, and Rail Gourmet (RG), for LUMO, TransPennine Express, EMR, Caledonian Sleeper, Eurostar, etc. DHL took over RG's contract with Virgin back in 2014 and supplies Avanti trains.

Last year, the combined turnover of RG and GG was £5.16 billion. Yet despite this, our workmates are paid wages just above the Minimum Wage, and get neither sick pay nor travel allowances. Last month, GG workmates in the RMT union took strike action, for the first time ever! However, our other subcontracted mates are not included in this campaign, even if we're all in the same boat and belong to the same RMT union. And since it seems beyond the RMT leadership's ability to see the point of united action, this is something us railway workers - whether contracted or subcontracted - will have to organise ourselves. ❐

- ***Still in the dark...***

One year after the Huntingdon train stabbings, we're still waiting for the safety upgrading of LNER train carriages, appropriate training for everyone on board and most importantly, the fitting of steel-reinforced lockable doors. It's likely that similar crises will arise in the future, so these vital improvements need to be in place, ASAP. LNER bosses discussed with H&S reps straight afterwards, but we're still waiting for action. *[Workers' Platform 11/11/26]*

- ***...with no safety***

In fact, aside from guards and drivers, who gets proper safety training on board? The rest of us have so-called "team engagement days" (TEDs) which "engage" with very little. We don't get physical evacuation training, fire extinguisher training, or training on how to release a fire door. Genuine safety may not be the bosses' priority, but it is ours! *[Workers' Platform 11/11/26]*

- ***Annoyed right now***

The LNER drivers' leave allocation hasn't been increased for years, despite the increase in the number of drivers. It's still the case that only 4 can be off at the same time. And whenever we apply for leave, we get a message saying it's "pending". Well, our annoyance isn't "pending"... And why can't we carry over more than 4 days' leave to the next year? *[Workers' Platform 11/11/26]*

Spain's Urda crash and Bedford

The train crash in Spain was in many ways similar to what happened near Bedford in June. Both were collisions into a stationary train, triggered by a signal failure. But since the EMR Desiro 360 class which hit the Aurora 810 was approaching relatively slowly (80 km/hr instead of 160-200km/hr!) only the driver was killed - although 120 people were injured.

The Aurora had made an unscheduled stop because a track side magnet wasn't fitted at the right height. As a result, it indicated (wrongly) to the cab that the track ahead was occupied. While the driver was informing the control room, the train was hit by the class 360, which had passed a red signal.

In this case, the driver of the Desiro, was considered responsible for continuing at "normal speed" - not the fact that there was no Automatic Warning System.

It was shortly after John Major's Railways Act (1993) - which tendered British Railways (nationalised) to the private sector - that automatic emergency brakes for speed enforcement (TPWS) was introduced track by track on the basis of the statistical probability of a fatal crash… This left 58% of the network unprotected - in exchange of £1.4bn "savings"! So there was no automatic braking to stop the Desiro 360 when it went through the red signal; that part of the track had been assessed as "low risk". It turns out it was not.

BMW Mini centre (Cowley, Oxford)

- ***Why would we...***

Now BMW tells us it's shutting the plant next week, and possibly for two more weeks. The bosses now want to carry on until 23 December and demand that we all confirm whether we're available or not, from Thursday 10 December.

They took £1000s from us this year and now have the cheek to ask for our *"support to recover the lost production volume"* - from the shutdown that they're imposing! *[Workers' Fight bulletin 03/11/26]*

- ***...believe a word of it?***

They're telling us that it's all because there's a current disruption of parts supplies from, surprise, surprise, Ukraine! Yes, incredibly they're sourcing parts from a country that's in the middle of a war - and which won't be a war zone by mid-December? Do they know something that Trump, Putin, Zelensky and NATO don't? *[Workers' Fight bulletin 03/11/26]*

- ***Coming together as one!***

At the Swindon press-shop, we're also being shut out! The only difference is, that if we reach -200 WTA (Work Time Allowance, i.e., unpaid overtime BMW says we "owe" the company) BMW is compelled to find us work, which does at least reduce our WTA debt.

The question is, why on earth is this not the case in Cowley? We used to have collective agreements involving both our plants. So when was Cowley sold down the river? Maybe the time has come to have a big across-plants meeting to figure out what to do about it? *[Workers' Fight bulletin 03/11/26]*



- ***Not available, visiting Santa***

Anyway, some of us have already booked tickets home for Xmas, so whatever BMW decides, is BMW's problem and not ours. *[Workers' Fight bulletin 03/11/26]*

Mount Pleasant mail centre (London)

Letter from our friends in the North

Many of us have been horrified at having to prepare and deliver racist and anti-migrant propaganda for Nigel Farage and Reform UK. Of course Royal Mail is quite happy to take their tainted pounds! True to form, the union leaders had nothing to say about it.

History will record and remember those who did nothing to stop the divisions in our ranks. But we have our own ways and means to sabotage such mailings...

As for the bosses' Delivery Method 2026, we said it didn't and wouldn't work. It took union leader Walsh a long time to catch on, but he did eventually (he's always the bridesmaid and never the bride). However, instead of joining us in opposing this Deluded Madness, he immediately jumped into bed with the bosses. We all know what comes next, because there is nothing new under the sun: the birth of DM27… and more attempted sellouts... So: it's time to



change history and fight together - blue and red shirts, permanent and casuals - against the bosses' attacks! ❐

- ***Intervention!***

Last weekend, Royal Mail bosses, union officials and the government held an urgent *"three-way meeting"* to discuss *"the DM26 failures"*. Trade and Industry Secretary Jonathan Reynolds was asked by PM Andy Burnham to try to sort out the mess, given the fear (by businesses!) of a serious *"Xmas mail crisis"* caused by the failing roll-out of this absurd "new delivery model". So it's (partly) rolled back... for now... *[Workers' Fight bulletin 11/11/26]*

- ***Drive more, deliver less***

DUMs (Delivery managers) have made a complete pig's ear of our walks and duties. Parts of EC1 have been added to EC2/3 walks now..? And we're expected to drive from one side of the City to the other? That's what happens when these dumb-DUMs sit on their backsides in their offices, having no idea what these "reshaped" routes actually mean on the ground! *[Workers' Fight bulletin 11/11/26]*

- ***Not AI robots***

Managers are bringing casuals to help with the Processing workload, making them work long shifts. And what will they ask from casuals when Black Friday and Cyber Monday kick in? Stop sleeping and work 24/7? *[Workers' Fight bulletin 11/11/26]*

- ***Poverty pay!***

Cleaners received a WhatsApp union poster suggesting that we should demand a miserly 7p increase in our wages - from £13.38 to £13.45 an hour. But who can live on £13.45/hour? The message says *"this should make us angry"* - and damn right, it does! *[Workers' Fight bulletin 11/11/26]*

- ***And if we stop cleaning?***

But what makes us just as angry, if not more angry, is union officials sitting down with the bosses to negotiate a 7p-an-hour increase in the first place. Us letting the shop floor get cluttered, dusty and dirty, is a far better way to "negotiate"... *[Workers' Fight bulletin 11/11/26]*

- ***Some music and chairs?***

We're tired of standing for hours on end in (almost) every Processing duty. Managers say we can't afford even half a second's rest, but they can go and tell that to our backs, knees and sore feet! There's no two ways about it: we'll sit down to "take a load off" when our bodies demand it. *[Workers' Fight bulletin 11/11/26]*

Ford Dagenham estate (Essex)

- ***Weekends aren't for sale!***

Panther engine production is through the roof and Darkside managers are "offering" Saturday and Sunday overtime. Apparently they're thousands of engines behind schedule. This overtime is them admitting that they haven't got nearly enough workers to cover the workload, of course... So why should we help them out by giving up our weekends? *[Workers' Fight bulletin 04/11/26]*

- ***Bumbling from one cock-up...***

In fact, managers decided to try to run trailers full of Panther engines straight to Turkey by road, because the Jetty vessel can't cope with the extra workload. Yup, these are the same bright sparks who, only recently, cut the number of vessels from two to one per day! *[Workers' Fight bulletin 04/11/26]*

- ***...to the next***

And by "trying to run trailers" straight to Turkey, we do mean "trying": the one subcontracted Mars trailer transporting Panther engines got stuck in customs at Dover...

- ***Try, try, and try again...***

The derailment of the GB freight train near Barking station on Friday 23 October also disrupted all port trains, including Ford's... It was a major operation (still ongoing) to clear the tracks. But TOPs managers nevertheless thought they could run 11 train services this week! Only 2 made it. Do they not read national rail reports? Can they read? *[Workers' Fight bulletin 04/11/26]*

- ***A bucket-full over the head?***

On *"Thank You Cleaner Day"* (yes, it's a real thing!) in mid-October, managers gave us cleaners a "thank-you" card and a bottle of sugary fruit juice! We're not sure if this is better or worse than last year's offering, which was a bar of soap! Next year, on *"world manager's day"* (also a "thing", on the 3rd Friday in September), let's show them our appreciation. Suggestions on a postcard please... *[Workers' Fight bulletin 04/11/26]*

- ***In lalaland-side***

So finally, Lineside employed a number of new forklift drivers... but they are still at least 10 short! Many mates have left over the years, (not least, because of the low pay) and we're still expected to cover their jobs? Nope, we won't be putting ourselves



and others in dangerous situations to fill the gaps management has made! *[Workers' Fight bulletin 04/11/26]*

- ***For workmates' sake***

In fact, there's an accident waiting to happen. But LLL bosses don't seem too worried about it. They only tell us that they'd *"discipline"* us if we *"damage material"*! As for running over workmates on DDC/DEP, they couldn't care less. But we do, and we refuse to rush! *[Workers' Fight bulletin 04/11/26]*

- ***Decent OSP for all of us!***

We've heard Lineside managers complaining that since we started getting Occupational Sick Pay more of us are staying off sick. Five miserable days of OSP per year, and if we are off work, the first 3 days are unpaid "waiting days" (to see if we die??)? We need OSP paid from day one - and for as long as we need to recover from illness! *[Workers' Fight bulletin 04/11/26]*

Protests across Europe

Protests in Europe: only a revolutionary perspective can take these further



Since September, Europe has been swept by protests. They began in France as a high-school movement demanding more teachers and roofs which don't leak, and within weeks, young and old were in the streets protesting - against the general deprivation and deterioration in living standards, or against much-hated governments.

However, some of these movements claim to be "apolitical" or even leaderless... They certainly lack political direction (despite being blamed by French President Macron on the "far left"!). Even anti-capitalist slogans are not much in evidence, although at least in France, students held placards referring to the mass protests of 1968. And when there are "general strikes" - like in France, Italy, or Spain - they're one-off "protest strikes", which seem to be decided on by the trade union leaders, without the say-so of rank-and-file workers.

The police brutality and their high velocity weapons which shoot shock and tear-gas grenades just increased protesters' anger. The newspaper Le Monde reported that in France by 30 October, dozens had required surgery for severe injury - at least three hands had been blown off, and four young people had lost an eye.

In France, this has been one of the biggest movements seen since May 1968. Back then, it was also the youth who sparked a general revolt. But at the time, workers organised their own strikes, without waiting for their union leaders. At the peak there were as many as 10 million workers on strike. However, the reformist leaders of the Stalinist Communist Party and the unions prevented a potentially revolutionary situation from going further. Nevertheless, Marxism and revolutionary communism were effectively re-awakened by these events. If nothing else, that would be a positive outcome from the protests today. ❐

France: workers join students in the street!

On 5 November, many public-sector workers, as well as railway, postal and industrial workers, went on strike across France. On that day, more than 600,000 people took to the streets - and 150,000 came out during the follow-up protests on 7 November. To date, the protests continue.

Prime Minister Lecornu has been forced to promise more resources for education and announce a *"social conference"* on wages with union leaders. But these are just empty promises and an attempt to divert workers' anger into endless negotiations.

In fact, it was only after weeks of successful protests by students and young workers, 300,000 to 800,000-strong, that union leaders felt they had better give the movement some sort of "direction". Now they're talking about negotiating a meagre monthly pay rise equivalent to £85, or a 10% increase, nowhere near enough to catch up with rising prices. In just one year in France, diesel prices have risen by 44%, petrol by 26% and fresh food prices by 9.5%.



Protests in the streets of Paris, 5 November

Workers are being told to wait for company-by-company annual pay negotiations with the bosses, which usually take place at the end of the year. Yet another way of diverting workers' collective anger is the dead-end of sectional negotiations! In fact, Sophie Binet, head of France's biggest union, the CGT, says the mobilisation is useful insofar as it will *"determine the dynamic of next year's presidential and legislative elections"*. In other words, she is expecting workers to channel their anger into the electoral circus.

But workers and young people in France face the same cost-of-living crisis as here in Britain and everywhere else. They can only rely on their own strength, take the struggle into their own hands and fight to get their demands met!

Germany: Gen Z takes to the streets!

On Saturday 31 October, young people took to the streets in 34 German cities, including Berlin, Frankfurt, Hamburg, Cologne and Munich. Organisers of Gen Z regelt (*"Gen Z takes charge"*) claimed that around 120,000 people joined the demonstrations nationwide. Their demands? More money for education, affordable living, better mental-health services, action on climate change, no to compulsory military service!

Of course, politicians and most of the media were quick to focus on the disturbances which followed the protests. Water cannons were deployed in Hamburg and Cologne, while 54 people were arrested in Frankfurt alone. But what about the issues which brought so many young people onto the streets in the first place? They are told money is tight and they must make sacrifices. Yet billions can be found for military spending and defence against the *"Russian threat"*, just like here!

Germany's Education Minister, Karin Prien, acknowledged that *"the concerns raised by the young people are justified and extremely relevant"* hoping her empty promises of "dialogue" will pacify the protesters.

They clearly will not. Another day of youth demonstrations is planned for 20 November...

Protests across Europe

Spain: strikers and protesters show their anger

In Spain, protests had already started in September over the dire housing situation and had grown into encampments and demonstrations against the high cost of living. During the nationwide "general strike" on 11 November, around four million workers walked out. At the Seat factory near Barcelona, for instance, 12,000 workers, completely stopped production. There were no trains running on several lines until the early evening - despite Spain's law to guarantee a "minimum service".



The call for a general strike over the housing crisis, was driven by Spain's tenants' associations. The leaders of the CCOO and UGT (two major unions historically linked to the Communist Party and the Socialist Party), broadened this to a protest over the high cost of living.

Under pressure, Pedro Sanchez's "Socialist" government rushed to pass legislation intended to slightly improve tenants' rights, ahead of the upcoming snap election on 29 November. This is very similar to the bill his government failed to pass in October, when the conservative opposition blocked it. However, due to the pre-election dissolution of parliament, the interim parliamentary committee which has a slim socialist majority, was able to get it through.

That said, this might prove too late to save Sanchez's political skin. His party has already discredited the word "socialist". ❐

Serbia: snob intellectuals "to the rescue"?

In Serbia, on 25 October, the "Student List" party won the election with 52.7% of the vote.

This new party came out of anti-government protests, initially sparked by the 2024 railway station collapse in Novi Sad, which killed 16 people. Since then, protests have been spreading. It must be said that trade unions also participated in these, and there were strikes by different sectors of workers - mostly in education, but in a few other sectors too. Against these protests, the government used police, tear gas, etc.

When elections were called this September, the student movement called upon a very narrow group of people to run for candidates: their own university professors, doctors, writers, architects and other "professionals". They're very proud that over half of them have PhDs! Liberal politicians and media outlets across the world praised the Student List for beating "authoritarian" president Vucic in the elections, but in reality there's little to celebrate.

"Brave New World"?

This "leaderless" and "non-ideological" movement, claims to bring *"right and left wing candidates together"*. But among its top electoral candidates, are people like the ex-Governor of the National Bank of Serbia, a fine representative of the capitalist class! Indeed the working class is completely absent from Student List's campaigning and programme. It calls for *"A Knowledge-Based Economy With Support for Domestic Entrepreneurs and Farmers"*!

An article in the *Financial Times*, provides an excellent portrait of the elitist, petty bourgeois minority who are running the show: "[Ksenija Đorđević] *spoke to the FT from her architecture studio in central Belgrade next to the presidential palace, wearing her signature red lipstick, monochrome suit and Dior necklace"*. Those who produce everything in society - including the lipstick and necklaces - are entirely absent from the minds of this small privileged layer of intellectuals and individualists who merely want to take their turn in government... So let's hope that in Serbia, as everywhere else, workers manage to push their way to the fore and that they begin to talk about revolution...



Professor Saičić, prominent figure of the Students' List at their HQ, October 2026

Albania: protestors aren't ready to give up

Since May, thousands of Albanians have been demanding the resignation of Prime Minister Edi Rama, who has been in power for 13 years. The protests - which peaked at 250,000 people in June (in a country of just 2.4 million inhabitants!) - began over a luxury hotel project on the protected island of Sazan, linked to Donald Trump's son-in-law, Jared Kushner, and daughter Ivanka. Rama had even changed environmental protection laws to make it possible!

Initially peaceful, this so-called "flamingo revolution" has since been joined by thousands of students and young workers. And no wonder: unemployment is over 8%, youth unemployment has reached 18%, and the median monthly wage is just £620!

On 18 October, the capital, Tirana, became a battlefield. Demonstrators clashed with police, who fired tear gas and rubber bullets. More than 1,000 people were arrested. Now Rama's government has introduced fines of up to £4,550 for anyone attending a protest that turns violent. That's nine times the country's £520 monthly minimum wage!

This social explosion is the result of 35 years of accumulated anger after the promises of *"capitalist democracy and prosperity"* turned out only to mean more poverty, while a minority of oligarchs enriched themselves.

Rama, backed by the EU and doing business with the Trump family, says he won't leave. The protesters may yet prove him wrong. But getting rid of Rama won't be enough. To change things for good, workers and young people will have to take on the capitalist system!

International

70 years ago: the Hungarian workers' revolution

On the 23 October 1956, an armed uprising began against the Hungarian state. The main force behind it was the working class - which formed its own "councils" of workers - namely, strike committees - under the leadership of a Budapest Central Workers' Council. Their aim was to build *"a new power opposed to the executive institutions of the state"* - to quote Janos Kadar, who was appointed head of state by "Communist" Soviet leader, Nikita Krushchev, after the Soviet army had defeated the insurrection.



Workers in Budapest handing out strike leaflets from a lorry during the revolution, 1956

A caricature of "socialism"

The uprising in 1956 did not come out of nowhere. Hungary was part of the Eastern European bloc, handed over to the USSR's Stalin by the imperialist victors of WW2. Stalin was tasked with restoring order in this potentially volatile region, given the power vacuum left by the departing German occupiers.

Although characterised by western leaders as "Communist", Hungary's political economy was a kind of dependent state capitalism, serving as a conduit for the USSR to obtain western goods, despite the Cold War "Iron Curtain" which had been drawn around the USSR since 1945.

However, despite these precautions, when Stalin died in 1953, a wave of revolt swept right across the region, starting with a general strike in East Berlin in 1953, spreading to Czechoslovakia, Poland and eventually to Hungary. What was significant was that these were not anti-communist uprisings as such. They were reactions against the violently repressive regimes that the Soviet Union had forcibly put in place against East Europe's populations. And this repression affected workers in particular - who were forced to work under extremely harsh conditions.

The uprising begins

On 22 October, ~5,000 Hungarian students, most of them members of the communist students' organisation, came together to call for Soviet troops to leave and for the Soviet appointee, Ernő Gerő, to resign as head of government. They demonstrated in Budapest on 23 October, joined by at least 250,000 workers as they came off their shifts. The police opened fire outside the radio building, where they'd gathered to broadcast their demands. Five people were killed and at least 30 wounded. Soldiers, called in as reinforcements against the population, instead handed their weapons to the demonstrators. The protest had become an armed uprising!

Gerő then called in Soviet troops. Young students and workers, sometimes only 14 or 16, formed groups to fight them and attack the political police. A general strike spread across the country. Workers elected councils in their factories, demanding Soviet withdrawal and a new popular government. The reformist-minded Imre Nagy and his faction - who had been dismissed from government in 1955 by Moscow, now returned, forming a new "revolutionary" government. But in fact it quickly capitulated, calling on the insurgents to hand in their weapons. However, the insurgents refused.

A short-lived victory

Under pressure from the workers' councils and armed militias, Soviet troops began withdrawing from Budapest on 28 October. But the "victory" was short-lived. On 4 November, 200,000 Soviet troops returned. Workers fought back in the factories, while the general strike continued. On 13 November, the Central Workers' Council of Budapest brought together nearly 500 delegates elected by workers across the city. But by mid-November, the Soviet troops had prevailed.

Janos Kádár, who broke with Imre Nagy, was now selected by Moscow to lead a new government. Thousands were arrested. Out of 26,000 who were taken to court, 13,000 were interned, and 229 were executed - including Imre Nagy. Isolated and without a revolutionary policy capable of directing their struggle, the workers' councils were ultimately defeated by Krushchev's tanks and guns. But that was never a foregone conclusion. The existence of a true, revolutionary Communist International would have made all the difference. That's what needs to be rebuilt! ❐

Netanyahu's last days? But the war against Palestinians goes on!

On 11 November 2026, Israeli forces struck the Nasser Medical Complex in Khan Younis, destroying the operating block, killing 6, including a surgeon and injuring 25 others. As we're used to hearing by now, the IDF claimed it had targeted a *"Hamas commando operating from the hospital"*…

Despite the October 2025 ceasefire, attacks on Gaza never stopped. Since then, the IDF has killed at least 1,593 Palestinians and injured 5,748. On 6-8 November, a rainstorm flooded Gaza's tent camps, reminding the world that 1.4 million people - or 65% of the population - still lives in makeshift shelters.

On the West Bank, the situation is no better. During the olive harvest, settler attacks escalated to levels not seen in twenty years. On October 7, Ali al-Bazzari, was shot dead, as settlers and soldiers opened fire on olive pickers in Nablus. At the same time, the ban preventing Palestinians from entering their land was extended to cover 60% of the territory!

Election stalemate

This was the context of Israel's 27 October election. Arab parties received around 15% of the vote; the main Israeli opposition, Yashar, got 38% and Netanyahu's Likud bloc, 42%. Netanyahu lost 9 seats and didn't get the majority needed to form a government.

This wouldn't have happened without an increased turnout of 80% (compared to 53% in 2022) of Arab-Israeli citizens, who make up 21% of the total 10.3m population.

Now Yashar's leader, former IDF chief of staff, Gadi Eisenkot will try to form a government - but will need to ally with Arab parties. On 1 November, 2,000 people rallied in Tel Aviv calling for a "Jewish-Arab coalition" to oust Netanyahu.

Eisenkot is no liberal. He defended the massacre of civilians in Lebanon after he took charge of the war in 2006, saying, *"What happened in the Dahiya quarter of Beirut in 2006* [carpet bombing] *will happen in every village from which shots will be fired in the direction of Israel"*. He'll make no apologies for the killing in Gaza and the West Bank. However, his own political interests dictate that he closes the door on 19 years of Netanyahu's rule. And the price for this may be concessions to the Palestinians.

Slave trade: apologies, reparations, forget it! Off with all their heads (metaphorically speaking)!

This article is based on the fortnightly bulletin editorial we wrote on 2 November 2026



The British prime minister, alongside the doddering King Charles lll, attended the annual meeting of the Commonwealth heads of state on 1-4 November - held this year on the Caribbean island of Antigua. Yes, it's a "commonwealth" with no wealth in common, and which is, nevertheless officially described as a *"voluntary association of 56 independent and equal countries"*. When most former British colonies are dirt-poor and so indebted to global financial institutions that the relationship means life-long dependence!

This year leaders of the Islands were asking that the British King finally apologises for the transatlantic slave trade. They are also demanding reparations. But the poor old - and *"personally sorry"* - King, is constrained by history! Parliament, which rules his tongue thanks to the English revolution of the 1640s, has not given him permission to apologise formally - precisely because it could turn out very costly.

Andy's dilemma

Anyway, Andy Burnham was left to decide whether finally, ~200+ years later, he should take responsibility for the misdeeds of the rising British bourgeoisie and the monarchy in whose hands enormous wealth accumulated in this period. Even today, the king's personal wealth is £680m, his Duchy of Lancaster is worth £1.8bn and the Crown Estate £15.6bn!

Actually, Burnham himself, writing in the Guardian, helpfully singled out the main factor in slavery's abolition back in 1807. It wasn't do-gooders like William Wilberforce or parliament, so much as the refusal of Manchester textile workers to make cloth out of the cotton picked by slaves!

Anyway, reparations - if there are any - are unlikely to reach those who really need them - i.e., the modern wage slaves (and unemployed) of the islands. That money will be available for use at the discretion of the local political leaderships, who gratefully preside over that fake independence "awarded" a few decades ago by imperial Britain. And while they gain personal advantage from it, their economies are still locked in a state of dependence (just like all other former colonies) on their former colonial masters. Which is why there was - and indeed still is - no alternative to "Windrush": emigration to the "motherland" to find a wage and a decent future...

Shabana Mahmood's peanut gallery

That's the true legacy of slavery. So when Shabana Mahmood stands up in the House of Commons playing to the hypocritical anti-migrant gallery with her new rules for settlement, she gives the game away. Because as many as 280,000 care workers have come over the seas to work for a pittance looking after the sick, elderly and disabled. Plus several million health workers... As they always have in the past. Because there are not enough British-born carers. And there never will be, as the population ages further. So despite her many concessions to the racist, anti-immigrant lobbies, Mahmood has to allow "key" workers, at least, the right to settle.

As it happens, Mahmood's own origin is another former colony - Pakistan - which along with Afghanistan, the Middle East and North Africa has the most people living in extreme poverty today - and is the only region where such deprivation is on the increase. Whose legacy is that? Do we even need to ask?

Afghanistan never recovered from being bombed back into the stone-age during the US and Britain's so-called *"war on terror"*. Gaza, the West Bank, Lebanon and Iran are all still under siege and under fire - with all British governments (including Burnham's) supporting the ongoing Israeli/US terror against their populations.


Slave cotton pickers

Reparations or reverse history?

So reparations for slavery? Meaning something which repairs damage? There is no such thing in this world order, forcibly imposed, as it is, by the rich imperialist powers. Slavery has merely evolved into new forms of oppression and exploitation.

It's only a revolution which can change this. And the revolutionaries will come out of the ranks of today's wage slaves. They won't be fighting for "sovereignty" or "compensation", but for an entirely new social order, based on an economy organised to produce for need - where the wages' system itself is abolished! It's called international communism... ❐

An anti-Modi rebellion begins in India

In March this year, as the Iran war made the news, rumours of acute gas shortages were circulating in Delhi - amidst government (and media) claims to the contrary. In one of the railway colonies on the outskirts of the city, an old woman mentioned how she was collecting firewood to feed her family, as LPG cylinders are no longer available in the poorer colonies.

Just a couple of weeks later wildcat strikes broke out in the multiple industrial centres that surround Delhi. With slogans like *"Whatever your difficulties, fulfil our demands"* calling for higher wages. In fact, workers seem to have interpreted the coming of a New Labour Code in their own way, expecting it to raise their wages!

This wave of strikes soon spread to different industrial regions across the country, and in total involved around 200,000 workers in 257 strikes. In many cases, workers won quick wage rises, and in the northern states Haryana, Uttar Pradesh and Uttarakhand, strikers forced increases in minimum wages.



"Cockroaches" can swarm!

It was in the context of this unrest (mostly unnoticed by international press) that another explosion was taking shape, and it first made an appearance on social media when a party launched by a Dalit student, Abhijeet Dipke in Boston, turned an insult by the Chief Justice of India into the name of a new party, Cockroach Janata Party (CJP). The Chief Justice had remarked that all the unemployed youth who are opposing the government were "cockroaches".

The CJP gained 2 million followers within a matter of hours, more than the ruling BJP! It then launched a movement to demand accountability for the leaked exam papers of the National Eligibility and Entrance Test - one of the few avenues for young people to find stable government jobs and thus make a decent living. In fact these papers have been leaked more than 100 times in the last 10 years!

Modi caved in

On day 1, CJP protestors in Delhi were spontaneously joined by more working-class youth from the suburbs and from nearby cities. The protest was unlike anything seen since the 1970s, not least because of the government's initial attempt at brutal repression. The largest protests took place in Delhi and Bombay, involving hundreds of thousands each day for almost 5 days. Smaller protests followed in several cities.

The atmosphere turned electric and carnivalesque. Placards read: *"Pillars of Democracy, Killers of Democracy"*, *"Believing Modi will help you is like believing that a stripper likes you"*, *"Neem Leaves are Bitter, Modi is a pimp"*, *"We are not loud enough, we are not mad enough"*. The irreverence and defiance of the protestors shook the regime. Modi and his home minister Amit Shah were left speechless. The education minister had to resign. A government that had seemed so formidable had caved in! Those who were arrested had to be released.

"No future"?

One crucial factor behind the social explosion is that India has one of the largest numbers of youth unemployed in the world - 367m between the ages of 19 and 29 (close to the total population of the EU!). According to one statistic, almost 11m college graduates under the age of 25 have no jobs and see no stable future for themselves. In other words, a whole generation feels betrayed and does not believe Modi's rhetoric any more. It is desperate to find the means to get rid of this highly corrupt regime.

A new wave of protests was launched in October. The main demand is the resignation of the Chief Election Commissioner, Gyanesh Kumar, perceived to be responsible for helping Modi win election after election by systematic fraud. The most blatant was the deletion of the names of millions of voters in one region after another. There is widespread anger, including among BJP supporters, that the government is turning the right to vote (still much-valued by the poor) into a joke, by its rampant election-rigging.

Revolutionary possibility?

Modi is just not credible any more. Gas and oil price-induced inflation has completely rocked his government. The opposition is now growing from all quarters, from the ranks of the poor and the working class, sections of the lower middle classes and the university students. Erstwhile Modi supporters are joining the protests.

Multiple local movements in primary schools, against construction of infrastructure projects, and in the many workplaces, have been given a fresh impetus. Of course, mainstream parties have thrown in their weight, hoping to capitalise on the discontent when the next election comes around. But the potential that these protests hold is so much greater - they seem like a real break with the past, even promising the possibility of a revolutionary transformation. ❐

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:

BM Workers' Fight - LONDON WC1N 3XX.