



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

Brexit, trade war, a world in crisis, DANGERS AHEAD!

It has become usual for economic experts to talk about a "US-driven" recovery after 10 years of capitalist crisis - supposedly thanks to the massive tax cuts awarded by Trump to his fellow American capitalists. In August, however, this illusion was exposed for what it was, when a single tweet by Trump was enough to cause financial mayhem, first in Turkey and then in a string of other countries across the world.

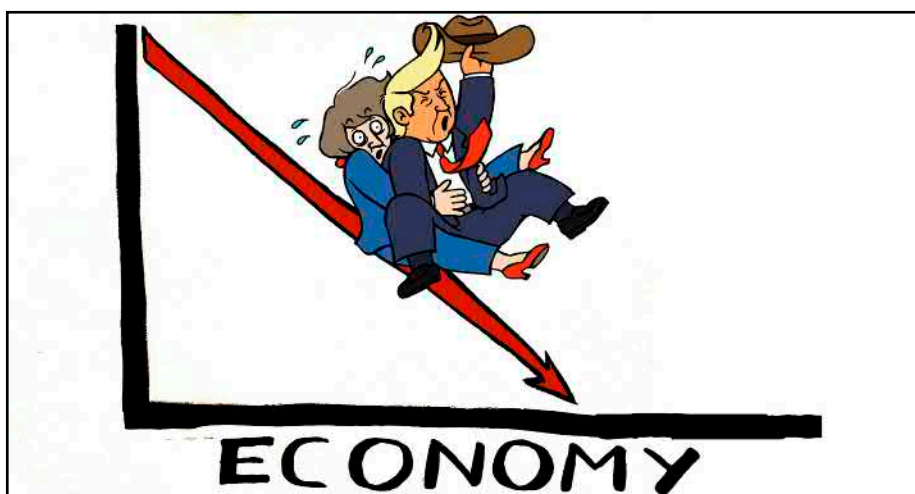
So, no the capitalist crisis is as severe as ever. And far from "pulling the world out of the crisis", as so many pundits have claimed, Trump's boisterous posturing and alleged "radical thinking" (sic!) are proving to be yet more destabilising factors for the planet's economy, which certainly could do without that!

The politics of tension

Of course, this should not come as a surprise. These days, the capitalists are so terrified by the prospect of their beloved money suddenly failing to produce the high level of returns that they have got used to, that they respond to any hint of political instability by taking their money and running - as they did in August.

By creating tensions all over the world, from his trade war with China and Iran to his rhetorical war against North Korea, Trump's strong-arm policies are creating tensions which can only aggravate the economic crisis - at an intolerable cost for the affected populations and with unpredictable consequences. But Trump is not the only aggravating factor in today's situation, by very far, even if he has more leverage than most.

In a world littered with on-going civil wars, so brutal that they force millions to risk their lives by travelling



thousands of miles through hostile territories in search of a safe haven, political stability is already a mirage for the majority of the planet's population. That politicians, like Trump and so many of his European colleagues, from Italy's and Hungary's far-right governments to our very British hard-Brexiters, should create even more tensions, by fanning the flames of nationalism in order to bolster their own political careers, is nothing short of criminal.

Back to the Brexit saga

It is against the backdrop of this deep capitalist crisis that Brexit is supposed to take place. And no matter how much our British Trumps play down its consequences, they do not know what destabilising economic impact it will have, not just in Britain, but in Europe and beyond.

The issue is not whether there will be a deal or no deal, a hard or a soft Brexit - nor whether there will be another vote in a referendum or in Parliament! The only real issue is that breaking existing

economic ties across national barriers, which have long been obstacles to the development of the economy, cannot be a way of marching forward - but only a way of stumbling backward! And whatever the Westminster Brexiteers of all shades may claim, from Rees-Mogg to Corbyn, turning the clock backwards always comes at a high price for the working class.

Of course, these economic ties were never really functional. But it wasn't because they bypassed obsolete national boundaries. It was because they operated in a capitalist system which, itself, is dysfunctional - a system in which nothing is ever consciously planned or built as a function of real social needs and where the only driving force is the capitalists' uncontrollable greed for profits. If human society is to march forward, it will have to get rid of all the obstacles to its development - borders included - but on the basis of a new social organisation, free of private profiteering - a communist society! □

Subcontracting

As if Carillion disaster wasn't enough, more chunks of the public sector are being subcontracted out to private companies just like it. Never mind that when Carillion went into liquidation in January, it had liabilities of almost £7bn and sent thousands of workers onto the dole!

In August, the Department for Education awarded a new £109m contract to Capita to manage the "administration, processing and support for all primary school national curriculum assessment tests." And another £35m contract was handed to Interserve to manage "facilities services for the Barking, Havering and Redbridge University Hospitals NHS Trust." Yet not only are

Public sector for sale

Capita and Interserve's records in delivering services known to be very poor, but they have both already been in serious financial difficulty!

In April, Capita's CEO reported a £500m loss for 2017 and Interserve had to negotiate a borrowing extension deal with creditors to avoid collapsing. Government policy is however, to keep afloat the small number of big companies who monopolise the public sector subcontracting – regardless of the consequences! When in fact the obvious answer would be to take the profit motive out of the equation and bring all these services and their workforces back into state ownership. □



• Bankrupted by outsourcing

Northamptonshire County Council is bankrupt. It has cut all bus subsidies, nearly half of the trading standards budget and closed 21 libraries, but still cannot make ends meet. So the ruling Tory majority plans another £70m of cuts this year. Social services for the most vulnerable children and adults are already described as dangerously underfunded, yet face even further cuts, while a quarter of social workers' jobs remain vacant.

Of course Northamptonshire's not the

only one: over the past 7 years, central government funding for local authorities has been cut by 49% and nearly half of England's 353 councils are in financial difficulty. But the current situation in Northamptonshire exposes the populist policies of its Tory leadership (which took Tory-led, also-bankrupt Barnet as its "model"!)

They froze council tax rates and then to pay for this they reduced directly employed staff drastically, and outsourced as many of council functions as possible. But with little income, they

quickly got into trouble.

So already this March the government sent in commissioners to take over the council's finances. Council leader, Matt Golby, now says: "We will meet our statutory duties and I'm happy to say that. We're not putting anyone at risk. That's not what we're about. We're not going to give up." And of course that's the problem. They need to be forced to give up! Because the only sense of duty they have is to their profiteering, subcontractor friends in private business.

• HS2: cash for the boys!

In August, the chairman of the government's infrastructure commission, Sir John Armitt, announced that the HS2 rail project, which will link London to Birmingham, Manchester, Sheffield and Leeds, would cost £90bn or 3 times the budget estimated by the Treasury in 2013. And while "publicly-owned" HS2 Ltd has already committed £10bn of

taxpayers' money to the project, only 20% of the land needed to lay the tracks has been bought - and not a single yard of track has been installed!

Yes, while a high-speed train between these major cities in Britain would make sense, in the hands of the government and private sharks it has just become a financial black hole – but one which props

up too many private interests for the project to be stopped! The top execs of HS2 Ltd earn more than £250,000 each; private consultants were awarded a total of £600m in contracts last year alone; £1.6bn has been pocketed by landowners who sold their land for the project and already £6.6bn in construction contracts has been handed to private companies!

• Monsanto still licensed to kill

In August, a successful lawsuit against Monsanto over its weed-killer Roundup, saw the US company forced to pay groundsman Dewayne Johnson the equivalent of £226m in dollars. Johnson was diagnosed with lymphatic cancer in 2014, after he had used Roundup over the course of 2 years, while working for a school in California. Roundup, which is used throughout the world to spray on weeds, contains glyphosate, which the World Health Organisation considers a "probable human carcinogen".

During the fight against Roundup, internal documents indicated that Monsanto already had doubts about the product back in... the 1980s! And the documents further revealed that at the end of 1990, the company kept secret a scientific study that showed that glyphosate was a mutagen – in other words, it could cause cancer!

Of course, after Johnson's successful lawsuit against Monsanto, the company said it would appeal. And no wonder,

when there are 4,000 other people suing Monsanto for similar reasons. But more importantly, Monsanto wants to defend a product that is in global use without restriction including in Britain, where 5.4m acres of farmland are still treated with glyphosate every year and where it can be bought in supermarkets to spray in your garden!



Poverty on the rise

After a decade of austerity, households are turning more and more towards credit cards to make ends meet: they've borrowed 9.5% more in June 2018 compared to the same month last year. In fact, the latest numbers recorded in June show that the total credit card debt in Britain has skyrocketed to £72.1bn!

Of course, households have no choice but to rely on borrowing, since average incomes have (officially) fallen behind spending for the first time in 30 years. And the poorest 10% of households struggle the most, spending 2.5 times more than their incomes – while the richest 10% spent less than half of theirs!

So now, according to Resolution Foundation forecasts, the poverty rate has increased from 22.1% in 2016 to 23.2% in 2017 – the biggest single year rise in poverty since the Thatcher years! Yes, with borrowing skyrocketing and consumption stagnating, poverty is skyrocketing too!

Still forced to wear the NHS pay cap

The NHS pay freeze was supposed to be over with the announcement in March by Theresa May that an 8-year long pay cap would be lifted and that "hard-working NHS staff" were now to be rewarded with an immediate 3% rise. Fourteen NHS unions and professional associations agreed to the pay deal. Only the GMB, which represents the lowest paid, refused. But a rise wasn't even forthcoming. A complicated system of increments has meant that only the highest paid staff got an immediate 3% rise - and in fact that included only half the nurses. Having promised a rise for all, the head of the Royal College of Nursing has had to resign. Many workers lost out because of proportionately rising pension contributions which wiped out all benefits. Not to mention the rising prices, with inflation at 3.2% in July, which makes this "rise" a real pay cut, anyway! For the time being only GMB workers said no - and now a consultative ballot has



been organised, but no strike ballot yet. In fact union leaders want pay talks to be reopened. But who among the 1.5m staff, whether in the GMB, Unison, Unite

NHS

or the RCN, can feel pleased about this pitiful increase? There's good reason for all NHS workers to be fighting together for more. □

• Against slave wages in the NHS!

As for the critical staff shortage, NHS bosses have decided to use apprenticeship schemes to train workers on the cheap - and on the trot - so they are working from day one on "wages" that do not deserve to be called wages.

Indeed, apprenticeship pay is aligned to the pittance which the government has introduced as a minimum - £3.70 per hour in the first year and £7.83/hr

thereafter. This, when the "living wage" which is meant to allow for the real increase in the cost of living is £8.25 across the country and £10.20 in London...

So no wonder that the NHS is finding it hard to recruit the nurses and other workers it so desperately needs. There has been a 36% drop in the number of people taking up NHS apprenticeships between 2015/16 and 2017/18, and

despite pledges to train 1,000 apprentice nurses a year, in January 2018 just 20 apprentices started the registered nurse degree apprenticeship while just 10 people signed up for new "nursing associate" training! If there is an issue over NHS pay, surely this apprentice slave wage should be priority number one - for abolition?

A new version of... smoke and mirrors

Theresa May's foreword to the government's green paper on social housing promised a new generation of council homes by getting construction "to a scale that will deliver a real difference". Yet as housing professionals immediately noticed, there is no new funding provided, only tweaks to the conditions under

which councils may spend the money from Right to Buy sales on replacements. The biggest obstacles to spending on new homes remain in place, for instance, the cap on spending receipts from sales of 30% of the cost of each new home and restrictions on borrowing!

The government may have dropped

Housing

its plans to oblige councils in England to sell all their highest-valued homes, but its revival of Right to Buy and its extension to housing associations means that social housing provision will have little or no chance of meeting the housing needs of the most vulnerable, let alone the unemployed or low-paid workers. □

• A fault in the system

Terminations of private tenancies more than trebled from nearly 5,000 to more than 16,000 between 2009 and 2017, becoming the largest single cause of homelessness in England. "No-fault evictions" where landlords evict tenants accounted for more than 90% of this rise and are now making 216 families homeless each

week, according to the housing campaign Generation Rent.

Landlords are allowed to do this under the Housing Act 1988 and house price and rent inflation have given them even more incentives, either to sell at a big profit, let to a new tenant at a higher rent or even to subdivide. It also provides

cover for landlords to victimise tenants who complain about poor conditions. The government may be "consulting on" three-year minimum tenancies (what's to consult about?) but if it does anything, it will only be to try to cut the £845m spent by local authorities on temporary accommodation each year!

• Grenfell: a catalogue of criminal negligence

Fire doors of a similar type to those in place in Grenfell Tower have been withdrawn from sale by the manufacturer, after government tests showed that they only withstood fire for 15 minutes, that is, half the specified fire resistant time. In May, Kensington and Chelsea council, owner of Grenfell, announced it would remove about 4,000 similar doors from its properties; nationally, as many as one million doors could need replacing.

In the year before the fire, Grenfell Tower failed two so far unpublished safety inspections. The London Fire and Emergency Planning Authority inspection had demanded remedial action by May 2017, the month before the disaster. An independent fire risk assessment in 2016 listed 43 issues of high risk alongside faulty doors and vents. Some residents died on the single staircase which the fire doors had failed to clear of toxic smoke and an extraction system

for the lobbies was not working.

Fourteen months after the event, and 11 months into the official inquiry under "Sir" Martin Moore Bick, not only has no-one been held accountable for the huge catalogue of failure and criminal negligence which caused this disaster, but 100 victims of the fire have not even been rehoused, despite the promise of the prime minister herself that this would be sorted within weeks!

Brexit**Deal or no deal – there's nothing to expect from it**

With the end of the summer break, the Brexit horse-trading is about to resume - and with it, the frantic overbidding between Tory factions, which has been driving these negotiations over the past two years.

Over the summer, the latest game in town has been to speculate on whether there would be a deal or not. As if this was even an issue! As if Little Britain, its capitalist class and its companies, could afford to even consider breaking away from the European continent - their largest customer and supplier by very far - without some sort of a deal, whichever form it takes.

British capital is getting ready

To be sure, behind the politicians' bickering, British companies have been busy doing everything they could to ensure that they will not suffer. So, for instance, while vocally remonstrating about the need to preserve their free access to the EU market, a growing number of City institutions have set up shop in EU capitals, thereby ensuring that there would be no hiccups in their financial dealings. Meanwhile, around 20% of British companies have already rewritten their commercial contracts in order to ensure that they will be valid - and enforceable - under the legal jurisdiction of the countries with which they trade.

For their part, the big retailers seem to have found a trick to offset the cost of whatever tariff barriers may be raised by Brexit - like Tesco which has formed an alliance with the French retail giant Carrefour, in order to get the EU supplies it needs through Carrefour's own



network of suppliers.

As to those companies whose profits have been largely dependent so far on tariff-free exports to the EU - like the car industry, in particular - they have long sought assurances that their losses will be compensated, one way or another, by the British government - which seems more than happy to oblige.

In other words, Britain's capitalists are getting ready for the B-Day, each making his own private "bespoke" deals with his EU trading partners, regardless of what happens at the Brexit negotiating table.

The working class needs to do as much

However, the working class can expect nothing whatsoever from these developments - neither from the capitalists' fireproofing of their profits against the heat of Brexit, nor from May's horse-trading to reach a deal with the EU. Whichever form Brexit finally takes - in fact, even if it does not really happen - this whole

saga will just provide the bosses with another pretext to turn the screw of exploitation on workers.

Of course, they will find all sorts of "imperative" reasons. They will whine about the "unaffordable cost" of the new tariff barriers and complain about Britain's "low productivity problem" - as they already do. They will tell workers that they have to agree to all kinds of "sacrifices" - in terms of wages and conditions - in order to make British companies more competitive against their Continental rivals. And, of course, no matter how much they complain today about the risk of a shortage of skilled foreign workers, they will try to make the most of May's "hostile environment" against foreign workers - in order to weaken the working class, by splitting its ranks along the lines of nationality.

Deal or no deal, Brexit or not, the working class has no option but to prepare for a fight back, as one single class, using all its collective strength. Then, and only then, will it have a chance to impose a deal of its own, on its exploiters. □

• Behind the Irish border issue

Anyone who wonders why the border with Northern Ireland has taken such a huge importance in the Brexit negotiations should read an article published by the bosses' newspaper, the "Financial Times" on 15 July. This is what it said: "There are 1,283 funds or sub-funds domiciled in Ireland that are run by 173 managers based in the UK... These hold a total of £480bn." Yes, £480bn belonging to the British wealthy - this is what is really at stake behind May's strenuous efforts to keep a "smooth" relationship with the Republic of Ireland despite Brexit!

But what is exactly the nature of this colossal sum - equivalent to 60% of the

government's annual expenditure - and what is it doing in Ireland? According to the same article, these are "assets... held in Irish products on behalf of UK investors". In other words, this colossal bounty has been invested by British capitalists in euros, in order to make financial profits out of the eurozone economy - but also, no doubt, to benefit from the Republic's rock-bottom tax rates.

We also learn from this article that the (British) Financial Conduct Authority and the Central Bank of Ireland have been in discussions - behind the scenes, of course! - "to sign a memorandum of understanding, which would let UK

companies continue to manage Irish-domiciled funds" after Brexit. And the "Financial Times" adds that: "There will be a sense of relief in the City that the FCA is having these conversations".

"A sense of relief"? Yes, of course, given the sum involved. But while May's officials are thus putting in place the necessary buffers to ensure that Brexit will change as little as possible for the British wealthy, so they can truly "have their cake and eat it", there will be no such buffers for workers - except their own capacity to fight back against any attempt to make them pay for the politicians' Brexit chaos!

Tory Mail to turn its coat?

The Daily Mail is getting a new editor after 26 years. Paul Dacre, who has brought the Mail's circulation to not far behind the Sun's, will be succeeded by Geordie Greig, who opposed Brexit as editor of its sister the Mail on Sunday. So will this mean a softer line from the daily, which branded Tory Brexit rebels

"saboteurs" and the judges who insisted on a parliamentary vote to authorise leaving the EU "enemies of the people"?

Lord Rothermere, the Mail's owner, gave Dacre free rein to whip up xenophobic, anti-immigrant sentiment and egg on Tory ministers to the edge of a no-deal abyss, while playing to a different, "Remain" gallery in his Sunday

paper. He hedged his bets to make the greatest possible profit. Now he fears, not the dire consequences for the population of a strangled economy, but the prospect of readers blaming the Daily Mail and turning away from his paper in droves and is readjusting the paper's line accordingly!

The Tory cat-and-dog fight carries on

The resignations of Boris Johnson and David Davis from government at the beginning of July - followed by Brexit minister, Steve Baker and two vice-chairs of the party - put paid to May's attempt to unify the Tory party behind her Chequer's deal and the Brexit White paper that came out of it. In fact the deal may have been a dead duck from the start, but now it's a certified corpse and the White Paper may as well be thrown in the bin.

Neither have the warring Tory factions been appeased by the appointment of the somewhat less controversial Dominic Raab as the new Brexit secretary to replace Davis and Jeremy Hunt as Foreign secretary to replace foot-in-mouth Johnson..

In fact, May's rocky balancing act meant supporting Brexiteers in parliament, in a vote against Remainers' attempt to keep Britain in a customs union

• Behind their stockpiling bluff

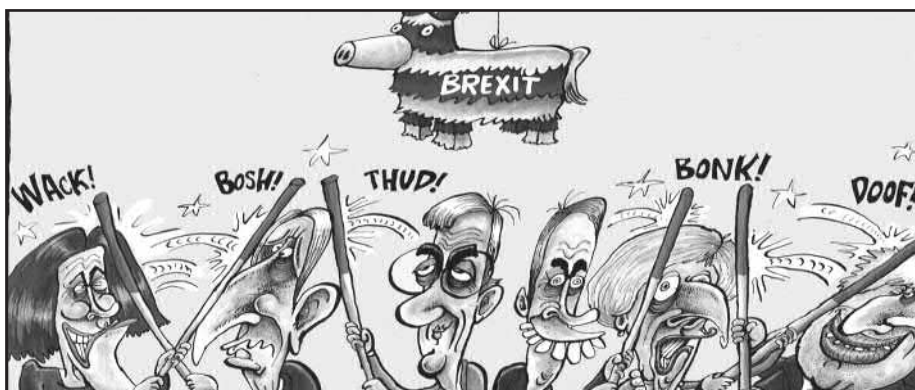
With 6 months of negotiations to go before Brexit, the government has now published its "guidelines" which set out preparations for a "No Deal" Brexit. Stockpiles of food are to be built up and the newly appointed Health secretary Hancock has announced that extra supplies of medicines will be stored.

But the "No Deal" frenzy really got out of control when planned works to

• The vicious retail circle

According to the credit card company Visa, retail outlet sales fell by 1.2% in July compared to the same month last year. In fact, High Street spending has been plummeting for years, resulting in the total collapse of Toys R Us, Maplin and more recently, PoundWorld - while many other retailers have already announced plans to close hundreds of stores.

So for instance, the DIY retailer HomeBase announced in August the closure of 42 stores, putting at risk 1,500 jobs. And while House of Fraser was taken out of administration by Sports Direct's notorious boss Mike Ashley for a mere £90m, how many of the 5,000 jobs will be terminated or transferred to



with the EU. She saved her neck by just 7 votes - 4 of which came from from Labour MPs! And now, just 2 weeks after Raab's appointment, May has declared that she'll be taking charge of the Brexit negotiations herself - leaving Raab on the sidelines...

expand the M20, which had nothing to do with Brexit, were "exposed" as plans to turn Kent into a giant lorry park to cope with the consequent disruption at Dover in the event of a "hard Brexit"!

Of course, this "No Deal" frenzy is based on a cheap bluff. Indeed, just one month's stockpiling of food and medicine would cost £4bn - or more than the entire budget dedicated for a No Deal

the infamous 0-hrs contract, the abuse of which has already seen Sports Direct's Ashley in the dock??

During the first seven months of 2018, 25,000 retail jobs have gone, with a further 8,300 jobs under threat at suppliers. And the majority of workers who are "lucky" enough to keep their jobs, have seen their working conditions and pensions cut to the bare bone. Yes, when High Street retail fails due to the falling purchase power of workers, the only thing retail bosses find to do is to cut workers' incomes further!

• Another Brexiteer hedging his bets

Billionaire "Sir" Jim Ratcliffe, the richest person in Britain and owner of

even launched a boycott of French cars when Peugeot closed its Coventry factory in 2006. Gordon Brown (and the GMB union) notoriously called for "British jobs for British workers" in 2009, echoing the far-right National Front of the 1970s.

Corbyn's 3,000 word speech at the end of this July, to the EEF (manufacturers organisation) in Birmingham, nevertheless called for government investment in job creation here in Britain to counter Britain's reliance on imports. Corbyn made an almost Brexit-friendly point on the "missed opportunity" of the fall in the pound for British exporters - if only they had existed

Brexit

There is no doubt that further tooth-and-nail conflicts are brewing, fuelled by right-wing blasts from the past like Rees-Mogg, who just cannot contain himself, as the proposed deal deadline, already "slipped" from October to November - draws near. □

scenario.

Nevertheless the government no doubt hopes to convince the EU that Britain is prepared for "No Deal", while at the same time it makes the Hard Brexiteers appear irresponsible for embracing it. But behind the scenes, the soft deal will have to be struck, because business and the City depend on it.

petrochemical company Ineos, is a prominent supporter of Brexit. He claimed Britain would thrive outside the EU. So why would he be preparing to shift his base to the micro-state of Monaco on the French Mediterranean coast? Well for one thing, his personal fortune, estimated at £21bn, will be entirely untaxed! Moreover, in Ratcliffe's dream project to develop a successor to the Land Rover Defender vehicle from scratch, Ineos has teamed up with Mercedes Benz for the engineering. And they are considering several sites in Germany, one in eastern Europe and one in Britain for the assembly location. Scratch a big name Brexiteer and find a small-time opportunist...

in significant numbers... And of course they don't, because it's far cheaper for them to manufacture in places like China.

But that's the problem. Corbyn asks: "Are we promoting economic nationalism?" and answers, "No, what we're promoting is an investment in manufacturing in this country." But under this profit system the bosses want big returns - and they can only get them at the expense of workers' wages and conditions. And Mr Corbyn is not only not wanting rid of the capitalist system; he's actually wooing the capitalists... So yes, he is promoting "nationalism" of all kinds - and that's both crass and dangerous.

Corbyn's "build it in Britain": old nationalism, new clothes

Jeremy Corbyn denies that he is being protectionist or nationalist with his "build it in Britain" campaign. But in the context of Brexit and the isolationist protectionism of its advocates, as well as the overt racism and xenophobia that has risen to the surface of society as a result, this kind of talk can only feed such prejudices.

Of course it is not anything new to point to the lack of British manufacturing firms, and call on governments to address this. Unite the union has been doing so for decades and

King's Cross railway station (London)**Rail "timetable" chaos highlights system chaos**

On the 15th of July, the third "new" timetable in as many months was produced by Govia Thameslink Rail (GTR) which also runs the Thameslink, Great Northern and Southern services. It promised a more reliable service. But "reliable" apparently means forty services per day are still slashed, not to mention the multiple daily cancellations across the network. There is still severe overcrowding. Last year a Southern train into London Bridge crammed 267 passengers into two carriages designed for 107 people!

And who does GTR blame for this

fiasco? Certainly not itself. Apparently it is due to "industry-wide factors" including Network's Rail failure to upgrade tracks and signalling on time. Never mind the fact that GTR failed to train enough drivers in time for their new schedule!

What is to be done? GTR claims it's impossible to revert to the old timetable since other train operators using the same track are already running according to the new timetable. So for now, GTR services continue to be hit or miss and the severely cut workforce is left to face passengers' very bad mood music daily.

These privateers small or big like GTR,



which only exist thanks to state subsidies and protection, cannot be reformed or restructured for the better. For passengers and the workforce, the only way forward is to fight for the control of the railways to pass into their own hands! ☐

• The unaffordable ticket to ride

In August, the government announced that as of January 2019 regulated rail fares will be increased by 3.2%, that is by the RPI inflation measure. This RPI-matching increase has become an annual event even if the Department of Transport could decide to freeze fares, given they are among the highest in the world and that the privatised rail system is an unreliable mess, despite being highly state-subsidised. The rise in

2018 - by 3.6%, was already the biggest rise for 5 years. These increases have led to calls for the fare rise to be instead linked to the lower CPI measure of inflation. But why increase fares at all? In fact they should be cut - and drastically!

As to "unregulated" fares, since these are determined by the greed of train operators, they have become exorbitant: the Office of Rail and Road

has published a report showing that in 10 years since 1995, first and standard class "unregulated" tickets had increased by 61.7% and 32.9% respectively. In 2017, Northern rail increased its "unregulated" fares 3 times in the year, each time by up to 10%! Of course its workers did not even get an inflation-matching wage rise: this year they were "awarded" just 2.5%.

• Not our delay

No way! Why should we signallers tolerate delays being attributed to us individually?? Over the last 2 months we've had no coherent timetable to work by; ghost trains with no schedules; trains left on running lines for hours on end; and schedule alterations that we're not told about. If GTR/NR bosses are looking for scapegoats, they should try looking in the mirror! [Workers' Platform King's Cross 18/07/18]

• R.I.P. timetable?

Indeed, how can anyone know what's going on in the signal box? The panels are just plastered with amendments! So now do we rip them all off and start again? [Workers' Platform King's Cross 18/07/18]

• A hat-trick

We're now on timetable number 3 within 2 months and there are cancellations galore! Time to award GTR the

Unceremonious Boot? We'd be happy to practice our footy... [Workers' Platform King's Cross 18/07/18]

• Revision or relegation?

In fact we hear the 3rd revision of the GTR timetable is going back to the pre-May 20th one - in other words, how things were before. And the "new" one in Dec is just going to be a re-introduction of the post-May 20th mess! You couldn't make it up. [Workers' Platform King's Cross 18/07/18]

BMW Mini centre (Cowley, Oxford)**• Down tools and down arms!!**

Shouldn't underbody have special extra breaks and extra rotation of jobs given the fact that we are having to work with our arms above our heads the whole time? This is not a very natural position for a human being, is it? And the speed-up and the cuts in jobs are making this job even more impossible. [Workers Fight BMW Oxford 18/07/18]

• Turning us into crocks...

If BMW doesn't want anybody from Autoscan and all the other overexploiting subcontractors to disappear after the shutdown, they had better set up a whole department of the NHS in here. Our wrists, necks, backs, shoulders, varicose veins need urgent attention. [Workers Fight BMW Oxford Mini 18/07/18]

• ...we need to be repaired!

Yes we need a team of specialist orthopaedic surgeons, physiotherapists, radiologists, MRI scanners, etc. After all, BMW didn't have any problem in setting up all the agencies in here, so this should be easy for them. [Workers Fight BMW Oxford Mini 18/07/18]

• We need to make ourselves expensive

Near Unipart is UYS, which makes exhaust systems to supply Honda Swindon. Workmates there are fed up at the speed they're expected to deliver 7kg bricks to the welding robots. Can't be good for shoulders or backs - so why can't lifting robots do this job? But of course, we all know why: robots are expensive and workers are cheap. [Workers Fight BMW Oxford Mini 18/07/18]

**• V.P.O or N.A.P?**

Overtime has got to go - but especially on nights where managers have been forcing it!! Medical research says that our bodies are most vulnerable between 3am and 6am, i.e. it's time to be in bed! If BMW chooses this time to extend the shift, our bodies might just choose that they need a nap instead, and we'll have no choice but to listen to them! Doctor's orders trump bosses' orders! [Workers Fight BMW Oxford Mini 18/07/18]

Mount Pleasant mail centre (London)

Golden goodbye and golden hello

While Moya Greene is still in the process of stepping down as Royal Mail's CEO (she only leaves in September) - with an estimated golden goodbye worth £1.3m - the newly appointed CEO Rico Back has already been awarded a £5.8m golden hello. And in case Back couldn't manage to make ends meet, RM's board of directors is handing him an additional £2.7m this year - that is 120 times more than the average wage of a full-time

postal worker.

Despite all the noise made around the "revolt" led by RM's big shareholders against Back's huge award, this didn't go further than a non-binding vote against it at their annual conference in Sheffield and a vague resolution to "reflect very carefully" during the company's remuneration policy review in the autumn.

If this so-called revolt petered out with no consequences, it is because Back's



pay and golden hello is just a drop in the ocean compared to the £2bn accumulated profits that big shareholders have sucked out of postal workers since privatisation in 2013! ☐

• CDC: they take Mick, we take risk

So finally the Work and Pensions Committee reported on Collective Defined Benefit (CDC) pensions, urging the government to now consider making the necessary regulatory provisions. Yes, it's still up in the air!

Of course, they insist on promoting the CDC as different from DC schemes. But they have to admit it isn't, really: "the risk and uncertainty" in the CDC scheme is still there - it's

just that instead of being borne by the individual worker, it's shared... that's all. [Workers' Fight Mount Pleasant 18/07/18]

• Even if it materialises...

But of course a CDC pension, just like any DC pension, doesn't promise a defined regular payment. The amount may be a surprise or a disappointment... But one thing's for sure - the "employer" is not disappointed and bears no risk nor uncertainty. And that was the whole point.

BTW: worth an anxious gaze: point 37 of the report: "The Minister told us that Royal Mail and CWU 'seem to be on the same page absolutely and as joined up as any employer and union organisation that we have seen for a very, very, long time'."

They said it! But of course for "CWU" we say "union leadership". Here on the ground, no way are union activists "joined up" with management! [Workers' Fight Mount Pleasant 18/07/18]

Royal Mail tracking the workers

In the new, so-called 'Four Pillars' agreement on pensions, pay and conditions between Royal Mail and the CWU, the company's commitment to the pillar of a 'Shorter Working Week' (SWW) (meant to shave just one hour off the 39-hour working week by this October, the aim being 35 hours by 2022!), was presented by the union as a huge concession.

But this was just the CWU leaders' way of covering up for RM bosses. Because these bosses are now justifying

the increased surveillance of the workforce as being "necessary" for the implementation of this "SWW".

So, for instance, in Greenford Mail Centre (West London), pass-card scanners have now been installed, which will collect data on when RM workers enter and leave the building, as well as when, and how often, they use the canteen and toilets! Although the CWU claims that managers cannot "track individuals", they state in the 'Four Pillars' agreement itself that an individual worker's pass-card data could be used in disciplinary procedures "in exceptional

circumstances"... But what these circumstances are, they don't say!

This is nothing new - managers already try to use data from workers' PDAs against them. These so-called "personal digital assistants" can track where and when workers are doing their jobs and how fast - using GPS. But recent walk-outs at St Helens and Grimsby delivery offices over disciplinary action taken against workers on this basis show the response that will continue to be needed to counter such tricks, wherever and whenever this happens.

Ford Dagenham estate (Essex)

• More job in-"efficiency"

Now we hear the Parts Recall Centre is closing - with the loss of 12 jobs. How many more decent jobs will Ford try to destroy (these were some of the last few left for restricted workers)? What's more, no special leaving package! In our book, the jobs must stay! And if mates want to go, then it should be Southampton terms. [Workers' Fight bulletin Ford Dagenham 11/07/2018]

• Oh that time of the year!

We in Dunton R&D don't feel like it's shut-down as we continue to work throughout July and August... and to make matters worse, we're well pee'd off over how Ford carried out the Redundancy Programme here.

It was a shambles. Ford gave high hopes, but only a handful - those with

38+ years (imagine!!) could apply - and even then, some salaried staff who fall into this category were denied VR at the very last minute! "Fiasco" isn't the word! [Workers' Fight bulletin Ford Dagenham 11/07/2018]

• Ford's "permanent" inequality, part 1

Also, we hear fixed term (Tier 2) workers' contract at Dunton ends in few weeks time. They're meant to be released, but if Ford wants to keep them, it was previously agreed they'd get permanent contracts.

Ford wants them for another 6 months due to extra work coming into the Emissions Dept - but won't make them permanent. We heard union reps said OK? Can't be, in fact, better not be!! [Workers' Fight bulletin Ford Dagenham 11/07/2018]



• ...inequality part-2

And here at Dagenham, some temps just got a "renewal" for 12 months.

Bit-by-bit extensions of contracts, but no permanent jobs! We know Ford's excuses: uncertain about the future, etc., but frankly we don't give a damn. How can we go on allowing Ford to insert all these inequalities within our ranks? For us there can be no half-measures: equal pay and conditions for equal work for all - Lineside Logistics subcontract workers included! [Workers' Fight bulletin Ford Dagenham 11/07/2018]

Turkish crisis

Trump's doubling of tariffs on steel and aluminium US imports from Turkey, on 10 August, sent the Turkish lira into a tailspin. It lost 22% of its value against the dollar in just three days.

These sanctions were officially aimed at forcing Turkish president Erdogan to release Andrew Brunson, an obscure Evangelical pastor detained since 2016. But, Trump, who never objected to Turkey's imprisonment of tens of thousands of political opponents over the past two years, hasn't suddenly become a human rights champion. In fact, Brunson has long been a "cause célèbre" among America's Evangelist Christian fundamentalists, who form the backbone of Trump's core electorate. With the November mid-term Congress elections now appearing much too close for comfort, Trump is obviously trying to rally his most loyal troops.

However, Trump also wanted to send a warning to Erdogan. Indeed, not only has Erdogan been pushing his own pawns in Syria, against the US-backed Kurdish-led alliance, but he made friends with Russia and Iran in the conflict. What's more, Erdogan ostensibly took Iran's side when Trump pulled out of the Iranian nuclear deal, pledging to carry on importing Iranian oil, come what may. Of course, while

Imperialism's strong-arm tactics



Turkey is one of the West's favourite allies in the Middle East, this does not mean that it is allowed to do what it wants. This is the message that Trump has sent to Erdogan.

And never mind the cost for the Turkish population, with prices shooting up overnight after the fall of the lira. But what do the strong men of the imperialist world care? Never mind either that the mayhem triggered by Trump's sanctions in Turkey, began to spread to other parts of the world, thereby threatening the planet's economy with a domino effect, which may well not be over yet.

In the imperialist powers' scheme

of things, a population's fate does not count, nor even does the fate of their own capitalist economy matter. Rhetorical war and trade war are the weapons used, for the time being, by the leading capitalist warlords in their rivalry over power and their competition for profits - until the day arrives when they decide that it is time for them to use the real weapons, which they keep ready behind the scenes. Because war, in one or another shape or form, is the only future capitalism has in store for the working class. This is why capitalism is unaffordable for mankind and why it needs to be overthrown. □

• The trail of the capitalist crisis

If Trump chose to impose more drastic sanctions on Turkey, it was because he knew that it was already in deep trouble: Trump used the tried and tested bully-boy tactic, striking a victim who is already on his knees!

Indeed, since the 2008 banking crisis, the so-called "emerging economies" have been targetted by what financial experts call the "carry trade": vast sums of money are borrowed in the rich countries (at record low interest rates) to be lent on a short-term basis, but at a much higher interest rate, in the "emerging economies". For the rich countries' speculators, this is far more profitable than to invest long-term in the real economy!

But has this massive inflow of loans resulted in useful production and infrastructure? Of course not! The money was primarily used in real estate and prestige projects, for businesses and the wealthy. For instance, in Turkey's

economic capital, Istanbul, 69 skyscrapers taller than 100 meters were built over the past decade. Meanwhile, the number of shopping malls has more than trebled across the country, to over 400 today.

But, just as in every poor country, this construction boom eventually reached a point where more and more flats and office blocks remained empty or unfinished. The construction bubble came near to bursting point, prompting western investors to have second thoughts: this year, the flow of capital from the rich to the poor countries has gone into reverse, creating a vicious circle. As the value of the dollar goes up in parallel with the rich countries' interest rates, so does the cost of repaying these loans. And as the "emerging economies" are weakened by the weight of their foreign debt, so is the value of their own currencies, thereby increasing the cost of servicing their debt, and so on...

No wonder, therefore, that Trump's sanctions had such an immediate, drastic impact in Turkey. But then Turkey's financial turmoil quickly spread to other countries which were in a similar situation (even though they were not targeted by any sanctions): from South Africa to India and the Philippines, from Malaysia to Indonesia and Brazil, speculators began to bet on a fall of the local currency while foreign investors scrambled to withdraw their funds.

It was precisely the same mechanism which produced a financial crisis, back in 1997. At the time, however, it remained confined to South-East Asia. But what happened following Trump's sanctions against Turkey shows how a localised imbalance could spread like wildfire across a world economy which is still in crisis, ten years after 2008.

In addition to this paper, we publish bulletins in several large workplaces in the South East, a journal, "Class Struggle" and a series of pamphlets on topical issues. If you wish to know more, contact Workers' Fight by e-mail, at contact@w-fight.org, or by postal mail at:

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