

WORKERS' fight

No 166 - 10 Sept 2025
price 50p

<http://www.w-fight.org>
contact@w-fight.org

ISSN 2040-400X

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

THE LONDON TUBE STRIKERS' DEMANDS SPEAK FOR ALL OF US!

The increasing horror in Gaza, Yemen, Sudan and beyond - and the current clamp-down against immigrants and asylum seekers - concerns the whole of the working class. But for now addressing these issues effectively remains beyond our grasp. What we can do, is fight the system at home, where the still-rising cost-of-living, the increasing turn of the screw at work, and the rotten state of housing and public services, is making day to day life more and more unbearable.

So the strikes on London Underground this month called by the RMT union were - of course! - fully justified. We would all have done well to join them, and for the very same reasons. Because it's not just a below inflation 3.4% pay offer that Tube workers rejected, after the Retail Price Index topped 4.8% last month. No, to the bosses' utter dismay, they were demanding shorter working hours: they want a 32-hour week!

It's about time!

The well-known "trick" of the bosses in whichever industry or service - in fact the measure which most illustrates their greed - is their attempt to operate with the smallest possible workforce and on the lowest wages possible. Of course this makes conditions for the workforce well-nigh impossible!

But it also means that overtime becomes virtually mandatory: the bosses are obliged to offer it and the workers are obliged to work it. So today it's again becoming "routine" to work 12 hours, if not longer - whether as contractual working hours, or to top up low wages by adding hours of work in the same job, or a second, or even a third one.

In the NHS there may be 120,000 vacancies in theory, but in reality, NHS Trust managers can only be trusted to keep these vacancies vacant! Blaming



underfunding, they expect doctors, nurses and other staff to cover gaps by doing extra overtime - yes, in excess of their already far too long, "routine" 12 hour-shifts! How did that happen? Quite obviously, it's neither safe, nor healthy, and these cynical penny-pinchers who're in charge of running essential public services, know it!

Long shifts kill

Indeed, most of the shift variations worked throughout "industry" today, include consecutive 12-hour night shifts, despite the fact that health experts have been publishing research for at least 50 years about - in particular - the harmful effects of consecutive night-working on shifts longer than 6 hours max!

How did such long shifts become the norm? How come union leaders, across the board, signed up to them? It has laid open workers and passengers in today's public transport companies - whether the tube, the buses, the trams or the railways - to the danger

of fatigued workers making mistakes! And yes, the individual worker pays with his or her life - or a jail sentence - for the lethal accidents which result.

Nevertheless, bosses in the essential services continue to cut labour costs by cutting jobs and extending hours of work. And never mind rising unemployment - with the youth unable to find decent, permanent, skilled jobs or training!

Some years back the 12-hour-144-shift was actually promoted by union officials in the car industry, where they argued without any shame that it would save the company (in this case, Ford at Dagenham) the cost of labour of a whole extra shift!

Today, should anyone be working such hours? And of course, if hours are to be cut to say, 30 or 32 a week, or fewer, we need higher hourly rates (until we abolish the wage system altogether!). Double, or nothing! Tube workers started the ball rolling. The rest of us need to kick it into goal. ☐

International

Ukraine: the coalition may be willing but the people aren't

After a volley of drones was shot down over Poland in early September, Putin was accused of violating NATO airspace - and "testing Europe" to see what NATO might do if he did. If it was possible to get to the truth behind such incidents, it would probably turn out that this was a big-cock-up by the Russian and Belorussian militaries. But they would never admit it. So now European leaders led by the Polish PM Tusk, are able to use this "incursion" as even more evidence that Putin wants to invade Europe and threatens "us all". Again, if the truth could be got at, this nonsense would be put to bed for good.

Escalating for territorial gain

In fact what's evident is that the Russian army's fight for the domination of eastern Ukraine and Crimea (which is and always was its only objective), has escalated

over past weeks so that if a peace deal is eventually made (at some point this is inevitable) it can argue that as much as possible of the Russian-occupied area must be ceded by Ukraine.

In the meantime, NATO leaders (including Trump) are promising future guarantees to protect Ukraine if a peace deal is signed. This would involve tens of thousands of "peacekeeping troops", supplied by the EU and Britain and backed up by the US, which already has 84,000 troops stationed across Europe, including 10,000 in Poland.

The population wants peace - on both sides

Despite Trump's meeting with Putin in Alaska during August promising yet again that a ceasefire was imminent, the war drags on and the Ukrainian population

is more and more weary of it. Zelensky holds on to his "red-lines" for a peace deal with Russia and his aim of NATO/EU membership. But a Gallup poll in July showed that few Ukrainians still support "fighting on until victory". The protests which broke out against Zelensky's change to the anti-corruption laws in July, show how much frustration there is with his regime. His officials continue to make money out of this war, while sending recruitment officers to pick up young men in the street and send them to die at the front.

Unless Zelensky backs down, Russian bombs and drones are going to keep coming. That much is obvious. What keeps the patriotic yellow and blue flag flying today, is the encouragement of Starmer and his "Coalition of the Willing" and above all, the profit-hungry western weapons' sharks. ☐

80th Anniversary of the A-bombings: a peace ceremony... on a (nuclear) powder keg!

On 6 August, a peace ceremony was held in Hiroshima, for the 80th anniversary of the dropping of atomic bombs on Hiroshima and Nagasaki by the US air force in 1945. During the event, the mayor of Hiroshima, Kazumi Matsui expressed his "growing concern for the acceptance of nuclear weapons", referring to: "developments [in Ukraine and the Middle East which] flagrantly disregard the lessons from the tragedies of history".

The devastation of Gaza's cities and the relentless bombing of civilians has been compared many times to Hiroshima and Nagasaki's mass destruction. Including by Netanyahu himself, when he justified the IDF's offensive to Biden: "You [the US] carpet bombed Germany, you dropped the atom bomb, many civilians have died". Not to mention the risk of nuclear catastrophe which resulted from the IDF's bombing of the Iranian nuclear facilities of Natanz and Isfahan, which was followed by the US operation "Midnight Hammer" - the "bunker-buster" bomb raid!

Their "modern" nuclear stockpile

As for the threats of nuclear escalation during the Ukraine war, NATO has geared up its nuclear "deterrent" in Europe. There are an estimated 100 to 150, B61 thermonuclear gravity bombs (nuclear-fusion fuelled and ground-penetrating) stockpiled by the US in bases across Britain, Belgium, Netherlands, Germany, Italy, and Turkey. And this arsenal is being replaced by the next generation B61-12 (35 times more powerful than the A-bomb) and nuke-competent F-35 fighter jets - in line with NATO's 2014 "Deterrence and Defence Posture Review"

when Ukraine's civil war began.

In Britain, the Trident nuclear "deterrent" - a fleet of 4 nuclear submarines carrying 120 thermonuclear warheads, with at least one continuously on patrol - is also being renewed. The 2021 "Integrated Review", announced an increase by 44% of its nuclear arsenal (225 nukes) instead of the initial 20% decrease, which it blamed on "the threat posed by Russia"... Moreover, in June 2025, Starmer committed to an additional £15bn for the "Astrea project" - the upcoming British nukes!

Their effective "cold" weapons...

This is probably why, the politicians delivering speeches in front of the A-bomb

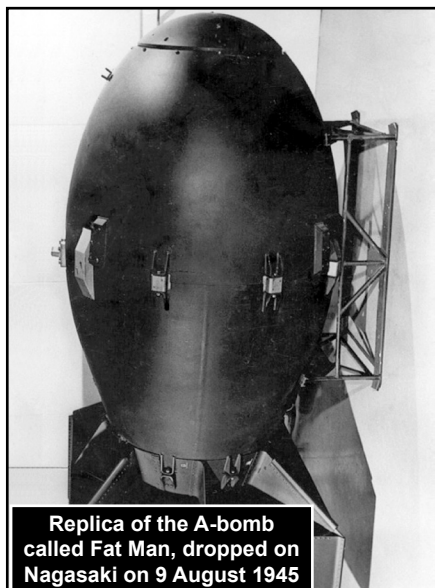
victims' cenotaph (255,000 deaths in Hiroshima and 195,000 in Nagasaki), insisted upon the need for "cold" deterrents. But "hibakushas" (atomic bomb survivors), like Satoshi Tanaka, questioned: "how can we influence, even by a millimetre, a handful of leaders holding the atomic button?".

Indeed, the hibakusha generation witnessed the carpet-bombing of Tokyo, considered the most destructive air raid in human history on 9-10 March 1945 - 4 months before the bombing of Hiroshima and Nagasaki, over 300 B-29 Superfortress bombers dropped 1,665 tons of incendiary bombs, burning more than 16 square miles of the city and killing up to 100,000 civilians, leaving 1 million homeless. The same B-29 fortress bombers would carry the A-bomb a few months later.

...and their inhuman experiment

The US and Britain claim, to this day, that the A-bombings of Hiroshima and Nagasaki were necessary to avoid the "need" for a ground invasion of Japan. Never mind the fact that the "conventional" incendiary raids (and the advance of the Red Army in Manchuria) had already made the Japanese surrender inevitable.

The historical narrative has been suitably twisted - de facto blaming the Japanese for the "necessity" of obliterating two of their cities and their populations... When in reality the "Allies" were using them as a live experiment to test the hitherto unknown effects of the A-bomb. And not once, but twice: the second A-bomb - the "Fat Man" with a new plutonium core - was dropped. ☐



Replica of the A-bomb called Fat Man, dropped on Nagasaki on 9 August 1945

Strikes

Maximum Effect, Minimal Unity: London Underground Strikes

The RMT's 7 days of rolling strikes on the London Underground and Docklands Light Railway from the 5-11 September were certainly effective in disrupting London's transport system and, no doubt, the bosses' profits, too... Transport for London and behind it the mayor were offering just 3.4% on pay - well below RPI inflation which was 4.8% in July. But the real issue for the workforce is shift work and fatigue. They want working hours cut from 35 hours to 32 hours. As it stands, low-paid station staff are made to work back-to-back early and late shifts with hardly any time to rest.

Over 96% voted to strike (on a 60% turnout). But instead of one London-wide all-out stoppage, the action was spread out over the week, with sections of workers striking in succession, starting with Ruislip depot controllers on the 5th and ending with signallers on the 11th. Since only 40% of train drivers are in the RMT and since the main train drivers' union, ASLEF didn't join in, some trains did actually run...

The RMT's idea of "maximum effect with minimal effort", comes at a cost: workers never strike together, never feel the real power of the union, and miss the chance to see what collective strength can achieve.

As for ASLEF officials who are also



meant to be negotiating with TfL, one can only wonder when the rivalry between RMT and ASLEF will end? Both unions have new leaders of course - but even if they are big pals, the only sure way for the workforce to act together in

future will be if the initiative comes from them - the drivers and other staff on the ground who are quite capable of taking control themselves, and organising a true collective strike leadership. □

• A Birmingham-only refuse workers' strike can't really win

The Birmingham bin strike is now into its sixth month. Trade union law dictates that strike mandates must be renewed every six months, which the bin workers have just done, with 99.5% voting to continue, on a 72% turnout. In other words the strikers' will remains strong.

Their action began back in March, when 200 bin workers were told their pay would be cut with a loss of up to £8,000 a year. Another 120 lorry drivers then joined the strike, over the council's plans to make redundancies.

Officials from their trade union,

Unite, the second largest union in the country, have said that this attack on the Birmingham workers is "all about austerity", and that "it's going to happen in other councils". But despite that, it has not organised other workers to join the Birmingham strikers, nor the workers in industry facing the exact same problems of wage and job cuts. It is of course this "secondary action" which is needed for a victory. And it could even be perfectly legal, given that ballots could be held over countless common grievances.

A long and isolated strike is only in

the interests of the employers. But a strike which spreads (whether illegally or legally), can bring quick resolution to any dispute as anxious employers are confronted by a growing wave of angry strikers. But Unite officials run strikes as if they are generals commanding obedient troops. The strikers themselves could however (even this late in the day) take control of their own strike and spread it. Many of them are old enough to have heard of "flying pickets"!!

• Resident doctors' strikes: everybody's business!

Resident (formerly called "junior") doctors in England went on strike from 25 to 30 July in their dispute over pay. In the ballot, the turnout had been 55% - but 90% of those voting said YES to strike. Their demand was a 26% pay rise - since their pay has not yet caught up with the RPI rises they should have been getting since 2008. Instead, Health Secretary Streeter offered just 4% for this year - a below inflation offer with no element of "catch up".

A doctor's starting salary in the first year of ward work is £32,398. But doctors' main grievance is overwork due to understaffing despite the "on paper" vacancies. The British Medical Association (BMA) reported that after the

first two years, resident doctors struggle to secure a place in the NHS in order to continue with specialist training, due to the government's chronic underfunding: "this year there were more than 30,000 doctors applying for around 10,000 specialty training places".

Sectional NHS strike... after sectional NHS strike?

But despite the fact that the state of the NHS concerns everyone, BMA leaders have ensured that the doctors' fight remains isolated. Union officials are very eloquent in explaining doctors' "pay erosion", but at no point do they mention the rest of the working class when they

talk about "exploitation" and being "overworked"!

In fact a separate NHS pay dispute was underway in July, this time led by UNISON: phlebotomists (who take patients' blood samples) have been walking out intermittently over pay since March. They're evidently on the wrong NHS pay band, earning £12.36/hour and are demanding £13.13/hour, plus the back pay for up to six years to make up for their losses. Their low pay means many need to take second jobs to make ends meet.

This is just an example of two disputes which could potentially win, were they not led by "sectionalist" union leaders... But winning is still possible!

Their society

Starmer's solution to his 17% popularity score

Keir Starmer has been very busy since he got back from his holiday. He has had to sack his deputy and reshuffle his cabinet - and then he had to admit that his trusty US ambassador, Lord Peter Mandelson, whose love for wealth "trumped" all known scruples (*"we are intensely relaxed about people getting filthy rich"*) and who was thus a good pal of the late and notorious Jeffrey Epstein, also had to go...

And what has he done about the bosses' complaints about Rachel Reeves' March Budget which imposed a minimal National Insurance increase, but which they have never stopped complaining about? Well, he is preparing to please them this time round: in the run-up to the next one - due on 26 November, we read in the *Financial Times* that *"Sir Keir Starmer has tightened his grip on economic policy with the creation of a powerful 'Budget board' linking top ministers and officials from Number 10 and the Treasury, with a remit to boost*

growth and avoid another bust-up with business".

And guess who has popped up as Starmer's new economic advisor? It's the economist Minouche Shafik, who Boris Johnson sent to House of Lords and who is erstwhile Chancellor of Columbia University - where she clamped down on the student peace camp for Gaza, setting up an "anti-Semitism taskforce" to "deal" with anyone criticising the ultra-Zionist Netanyahu Cabinet slaughter... No wonder she crossed the bench to give proto-Zionist Starmer a hand...

Co-chair is Torsten Bell, Treasury minister, formerly chief executive of the Resolution Foundation, who was shoe-horned into a parliamentary seat in Wales to ensure he won... The Board of course also comprises key business voices to avoid *"straining relations"* with corporate Britain. Tim Allan, former Blair press aide is the new Number 10 communications chief, of whom Blair once half-jokingly said: *"Tim's even more*

Starmer's shuffled cabinet



right-wing than me". Well that's a relief! No risk then of squeezing the rich until the pips squeak... ☐

Data centre growth: heating up the stock market and the planet

In January 2025, Starmer launched his *"AI initiative"* announcing that *"data centres are central to growing our economy"*.

As artificial intelligence advances, the need for storage of data and more powerful technology to operate IT systems grows accordingly. And this means that more and more gigantic warehouse-like buildings are needed to house all of this "machinery"... even if its basic unit is a tiny microchip!

In Britain there are currently 477, but with the increasing need for processing power, 100 more are due to be built in the next 5 years, funded by tech giants and major investment firms.

The biggest will be the £10bn AI data centre in Blyth, near Newcastle, for the American private investment and wealth

management company Blackstone Group - involving 10 giant buildings covering 540,000 square metres - the size of several large shopping centres - on the site of the former Power Station. Microsoft is planning four new data centres at a total cost of £330m, with an estimated completion between 2027 and 2029 and Google is building a data centre in Hertfordshire, an investment worth £740m.

Nothing intelligent about it

Of course all of this needs to be powered - and that's the biggest problem. Already data centres use as much as 12% of the total electricity supplied by the national grid. Cooling systems add to the energy requirements - but also consume (and

heat up) a huge amount of water... So Starmer has ensured that they will have privileged access to power sources. And never mind the heat generation which ultimately adds to global warming, either!

Accordingly, one of the first *"AI growth zones"* is located in Culham in Oxfordshire, on the site of the soon-to-be-decommissioned Joint European Torus (JET) project. There is huge irony in this. JET was a ground-breaking experimental project aimed at obtaining energy from nuclear fusion as opposed to nuclear fission, which creates dangerous radioactivity as a by-product. In contrast, nuclear fusion would be virtually clean, and if achieved, would solve humanity's energy supply needs for good!

Data centre Alcatraz

Sadly, however, this fusion project is being decommissioned and so its 575MW power supply - equivalent to the energy needs of the city of Leeds - will be used for powering commercial data centres instead. And no doubt any excess energy will be sold back to the National Grid as is already the case for IT companies like NTT, Telehouse and Equinix, which operate as parasitical third-party "power dealers", on 5, 20, or even 30-year (!) supplier contracts.

Today Britain's "data centre market" is already returning £4.6bn in profits and hi-tech investors (including Google and Microsoft) expect returns of £13.5bn/year within 5 years. Little wonder that these prospective new goldmines are like fortresses, surrounded by checkpoints, barbed-wire fences and alligator teeth!☐

Google data centre in Hertfordshire



Defending our class

Migrant workers and asylum seekers are a vital part of our class

Over the summer, the British media has been reporting - and stirring up - anti-migrant and at times blatantly racist feeling against immigrants and refugees, after protests against asylum seekers started on 13 July outside the Bell Hotel in Epping. This sparked a wave of protests in other sites where asylum seekers are housed. London's Evening Standard very helpfully published maps and information showing how many asylum seekers were living where, precisely, so that protesters could know where to gather, just in case they didn't know already!

So who is protesting?

But as the more honest reports pointed out, these protests were mostly only attended by a few hundred (3 men and a dog, as one put it) and were obviously orchestrated by the hard far-right - with links with the now defunct English Defence League, the British National Party, Britain First, UKIP, and Reform UK. Mostly they were met by slightly larger counter-demonstrations organised by groups like Stand Up to Racism.

In mid-August, Tory-led Epping Forest District Council secured a High Court injunction to remove asylum seekers from

the Bell hotel by 12 September, but this was revoked after appeal to the Supreme Court. Without these migrants, Somani Hotels in Epping would probably go bust: like most of these "hotels" - downgraded to packed hostels - it was rarely doing any business before it received contracts and money from the government in order to house asylum seekers, from 2020 onwards.

Down with these flags

After this successful appeal, the Tories and Reform jumped on the opportunity to claim that "*migrants have more rights than British people*"! So to prove that isn't the case, on the very first day of Parliament after recess, Home Secretary Yvette Cooper announced that refugees won't automatically be allowed to bring family members to Britain any more. She also hinted at asylum seekers potentially being housed in "*industrial sites*" (whatever these are) instead of hotels in the future. Since then, with the new right-wing rising Labour star, Shabana Mahmood's take-over of the Home Office, disused army barracks are again to be used and deportation orders are being stepped up.



Starmer&Co have also joined in the far-right's "*raising of the standard*" campaign - no doubt hoping to take the wind out of their sails (or flags) - which has seen the flag of St George and the Union Jack appear at roundabouts and even in cemeteries... Which starmerwould be a good place for them to be buried for good. ☐

• Belfast: sectarianism not far behind...

Reactionary loyalists connected with UDA paramilitaries in Northern Ireland have also been riding the bandwagon of anti-immigrant hysteria since violent protests in Ballymena and Larne in June, and asserting their sectarianism too.

On the large Rathcoole estate in Newtownabbey north of Belfast, one mixed-race couple had their cars burnt

out in June. Both NHS workers, they decided to move away after the loyalist thugs had threatened to burn down their house. A young Catholic family in North Belfast was also forced to flee their home after sectarian threats and abuse.

In mid-August, around 40 loyalists protested outside the Chimney Corner hotel in Newtownabbey, after DUP local

councillors and Traditional Unionist Voice had been stirring the anti-asylum pot, demanding that councils check the hostels' planning compliance. Even if the shadowy thugs on the fringe of the UDA cannot mobilise in numbers in Rathcoole, it's clear that they can terrorise, and that Northern Ireland's social conditions still breed poisonous sectarianism.

USA: Trump's attacks on migrants are an attack on all workers

This article was adapted from the 1 September editorial of "Spark" - the newspaper of a fraternal American Trotskyist group.

First Trump sent US Army reserves - the National Guard - into Los Angeles in June, then Washington DC last month. Now he's sending them to Chicago.

Trump has used all kinds of pretexts, from "*guarding federal buildings*" to "*controlling crime*". But the real reason is to protect the ICE (Immigration and Customs Enforcement) officers during their raids against immigrant workers.

In June, in LA, the big raids carried out by ICE officers met resistance from locals, prompting Trump to call in the National Guard. So in Chicago the National Guard is on standby, should resistance from the population emerge, as it did in LA.

The raids targeted any and all

migrant workers - people who've been part of their communities for decades. They pay Social Security taxes that they may never even benefit from. They show up every day and are relied upon to do their jobs - just like any other member of the working class.

Those LA raids in June sent shockwaves through many communities. Families were deprived of breadwinners, arrested by ICE and deported, or disappeared into the ICE detention system. Many immigrants had to go into hiding, while ICE continues to carry out smaller raids in the streets and in workplaces. It just arrested Korean and (mainly) Latino contract workers at a Hyundai plant, and never mind that this might damage relations with the US Far Eastern client state!

Businesses have to operate with fewer employees. Hospitals and nursing homes are even more short-staffed.

Restaurants are shuttered. Work at some construction sites has ground to a halt. And, as the school year begins, many students are still absent.

These are attacks on the working class as a whole. Trump and the corporations behind him know full well the power that a unified working class can wield, and they fear that power. They're trying their damndest to crumble that power even before it shows itself. That's exactly why they are working so hard to poison this well, to divide the working class.

Just as the bosses and politicians know a divided working class can't win, the same is true of the recent vigilante attacks carried out by individuals against ICE. The working class has its strength in its overwhelming numbers and capability for organisation. It's this strength that must be brought to bear in society, to start shifting the balance of power. ☐

Ford Dagenham estate (Essex)**Not one job cut - anywhere!**

Management at Ford Dagenham sent us a letter announcing that Lion assembly will remain on a single shift, despite their earlier suggestion of increasing production to two shifts and reinstating our shift "premium". Instead, the "incremental assembly volume" of Lion engines worldwide will be "sourced" to the Struandale Engine Plant in Gqeberha, South Africa.

They chose to announce this just a few days before our Summer shutdown holidays. The penny-pinching bosses shamelessly explained the decision was made because Lion production in Struandale is 43% cheaper than in

Dagenham! Yet this company published a gross profit for the 12 months ending June 2025 of £18.14bn!

As usual, they try to pitch us against each other. The fact is that Ford management is cutting jobs in South Africa. At the end of August, they announced 470 job cuts - 391 in the Silverton car assembly plant in Pretoria, and 73 at... Struandale Engine Plant, which employs 850 workers.

In fact, not only do our South African workmates face the same Ford bosses, they also face the same spineless union leaders. The officials of the National Union of Metalworkers of South Africa



just signed a 3-year pay deal - which doesn't even catch-up with inflation on year one. Whether there will be any reaction against real pay cuts and job cuts among the workforce in South Africa remains to be seen. But what is certain, is that they are in the same boat as us! □

- **It's always too much!**

While we're told in the Den that we're staying on 1 shift, Ford has been pushing Lion engine production like it's going out of fashion. And now bosses are adding 10 weeks of Saturday overtime! So less work, but more work?! [Workers' Fight bulletin 10/09/25]

- **Having cake and eating it?**

After Panther (mini) C-shift, production had been ramped up to 600 engines for 2 days - it was suddenly back down to 200 and we heard we were going to be sent to Lion assembly! It seems Ford is trying to "squeeze in", de facto, that 2nd Lion shift after all - by using us Darksiders' hands and by adding overtime! But what if we dug our heels in? [Workers' Fight bulletin 10/09/25]

- **3rd tier drivers?!**

Some of TOPs Fleet drivers have retired - and we hope they'll enjoy themselves, far from Ford's Lalaland. But now on some days, 20 to 30 trailers can be spotted sitting idle on the estate, because there aren't enough drivers. And while we couldn't care less about what Ford does with its trailers, we will not accept that the "inbound" work should now be subcontracted to cowboy companies with drivers on much worse Ts&Cs! [Workers' Fight bulletin 10/09/25]

- **Can't get their kit on**

And why were we asked to come to work? To implement changes in Lion's sub-assembly kitting loop so that it can be operated by one worker instead of two! Yup, managers are trying to cut jobs... But in fact they've discovered they can't and one of us has to go help

there anyway... [Workers' Fight bulletin 10/09/25]

- **The answer's in plain sight**

What we know in LLL, is that they've increased the work without recruiting more drivers! And when we asked how this was going to work, managers said "we're looking into it"...! Well, in the meantime we're "looking into"... applying our brakes. [Workers' Fight bulletin 10/09/25]

- **No kidding!**

On Panther machining, we were laid off because we'd overproduced! Then, we were laid off due to supply problems... So how come we've been called to come in on weekends?! What's happened to the pile of overproduced parts? Did management "mislay" it? [Workers' Fight bulletin 10/09/25]

King's Cross railway station (London)

- **Rather suspicious**

The LNER pay deal (a below RPI inflation 3.4% rise with many strings) was accepted by the majority, but how many of us got to vote in thee-referendum? No union meeting was organised to discuss the conditions or the meaning of the pay deal. It's not too late for us to meet and discuss what we want we want to do about it...

- **Daylight robbery!**

For us on-board workers, one of the strings was losing our entitlement to afternoon food... This pay deal adds just £7 a week - £1 a day. Not enough for a chewing gum, let alone a proper meal during our too-short LNER breaks. Unless LNER managers are now handing out £1 lunches on the trains?

- **Peak fares scrapped**

Nationalised Scotrail has scrapped peak

fares for good - it's now same price to travel any time of day. But now the big question: will the government extend this in England, since they are "nationalising" the English and Welsh railways? Cheaper fares shouldn't stop at the at Hadrian's Wall!...

- **Our safety vs. theirs**

OCS managers in Euston expect us to carry on using broken and inadequate cleaning trolleys containing all of our equipment, including chemical products. Many of them have broken or missing parts and some have faulty wheels. Since OCS won't replace them, we can't carry the necessary tools, for the job... so... dirty trains it is?

- **What about the workers?**

During the heatwave, the lifts as well as the escalators were taken out of service. There was probably a good H&S reason. But, did managers bother to inform us? Did they even think how we'd have to take

a much longer walk to get from platform to platform and back - exhausting in the heat and even more exhausting at the end of a long, hot, shift..? [Workers' Platform bulletin 09/07/25]

- **Everyone needs a scooter!**

...but there would have been - and is - a solution! For all of us working on trains and at the station, but in particular for cleaners, who have to pull trolleys across and along sloping, uneven platforms:



BMW Mini centre (Cowley, Oxford)

Turning the screw keeps Mini in profit

BMW's annual pre-tax profits for its manufacturing plants in Britain, published at the beginning of August, fell from £121m in 2023 to £90m in 2024. The Oxford Mail reported this at length, including gloomy statistics about low electric car sales and a reminder that BMW suspended its £600m investment in electric car production at the Oxford Mini Plant. But the story left out the new model launch last year, for which the plant ran only one shift from March to June inclusive.

Most Mini workers were laid off half

the time, all of which was deducted from our "working time accounts". BMW also deducts 6 hours' pay per week to "restore our balances"!

That new model transition largely accounted for a 40% drop in the number of cars produced last year, from 185,400 to 110,939. But bosses had turned up the line speed - which resulted in a large number of cars needing "rectification" and the night shift had to be reinstated accordingly! Despite this labour-intensive cock-up, profits are a predicted £66m after tax - nearly £600 profit on



each car. To make sure of even higher dividends, BMW went on imposing the cost on the workforce this year, cutting 180 agency jobs (at least), and freezing pay! ☐

• Contracting out its doomfest?

According to Unite's "members brief" before the shutdown, even a government-subsidised discount on EVs of £3,750 has "had more negative than positive impacts on our [?!] plant". No word of why, though! Unite "anticipates building fewer units than the predicted volume". So Unite runs the factory now? At least it's doing management's bidding, trying to get us to accept more job cuts and more shutdowns before they even happen! [Workers' Fight bulletin 09/09/25]

• Let's make our jobs secure!

Apparently Unite was in talks with BMW

about shift changes to "keep the entire workforce" here. But no mention of the hundreds of jobs that have already gone! And anyway, we know BMW will only change shifts to suit its production plans. And do we assume Unite means BMW, Staffline, contractors and all their agency workers? Because we're "the entire workforce"! [Workers' Fight bulletin 09/09/25]

• What's changed?

Just three days after we came back from the summer shutdown, we're told we'll be shut out again for a week in October! And we've heard the rumours about a shift change afterwards. If the union officials are already agreeing to all this

behind our backs, we can only rely on ourselves to put BMW's plans in the bin! [Workers' Fight bulletin 09/09/25]

• Less hands, yet more work?!

Everywhere in the plant (BMW, R&H, G&P, etc...) we're missing many of our workmates - unsurprisingly, some of them didn't come back after the shutdown due to the lack of job stability in here. But even if our numbers have shrunk, managers still expect us to work as normal, to produce the same number of cars as when we were more! And on top of this, we hear that jobs are still being cut...! [Workers' Fight bulletin 09/09/25]

Mount Pleasant mail centre (London)

From our friends in the North

Does anyone have a clue what's going on? It's absolute chaos in the letter carrying department. This Outrageous Delivery Madness plan (or ODM, as it's called) has fallen to pieces. The letter carriers said it would. But of course, management does not listen. Every last bit of capacity has been used. Even the letters have increased. We're not surprised, since we're the only workers out there who deliver letters.

These gaffers get paid a lot of money, so they must be the sharpest tools in

the box? Well, they keep thinking the letters are going to just magically stop. Do these sharp tools think that they will come to work one day and all the pesky letters will have gone away? It's not going to happen.

When the job's gone to pot, workers can usually expect the union leaders to at least pretend to do something. Yet here we are surrounded by mayhem and there's absolutely nothing from the union officials. They can't even get members to turn out to vote for a pay rise! Is it



any wonder that workers don't and won't join the union? Red shirt or blue, we're having to sort it all out for ourselves - by using our feet. No one else is going to do it for us! ☐

• A 66% no confidence vote

The results of the so-called "ballot" on part 1 and 2 of RM's latest proposed deal on pay and conditions (a never-ending series of "parts"!) came out late August. It was presented by the union as a vote just on the pay offer though - a 4.2% rise when RPI is 4.8%. Less than half of us bothered to vote: the turnout was 43.5% and out of that 79.5% voted to accept and 20.5% voted to reject. And endorsement by only a third of the membership is hardly the "overwhelming acceptance" - which CWU leaders claim and which they dare to call

our "support for them".

• Why we voted no

In fact, the online ballot procedure was so complicated (we're not all tech-savvy, so QR-codes aren't our thing!) that those of us who went to the trouble of voting NO did so to send a message to the union: we do not agree with multi-year pay deals, we do not agree with linking pay increases to the lower CPI inflation rate and we do not agree with real pay cuts!

• We want the interest too!

But of course, if many workmates voted yes,

is also because the bosses and the union have been dragging out negotiations for far too long - we were meant to have our pay increase in April and bills can't wait! That being said, these negotiations are always "late" - for the bosses, the longer the money we're owed sits in the bank, the more interest they get!

• Permanent contracts for all!

And given all the job cuts, the promise to end the use and abuse of casual workers has also been broken. For the foreseeable future, they'll still have to cover for the lack of hands.

International**Gaza: for Netanyahu there are no holds barred**

Those of us opposing Netanyahu's war against the Palestinians thought that the worst possible scenario was already being enacted. That his final solution - the ethnic cleansing and destruction of Gaza city and systematic killing of civilians across the Strip by bombs and starvation - was as far as he could or would possibly go. But no. He sent his jets to bomb buildings in Qatar where Hamas spokesmen were staying in order to attend peace talks organised by the Qataris and by Trump himself! And as if it were possible, his Cabinet has voted a further escalation. Five Israeli military (IDF) divisions and a supplementary 60,000 Israeli reservists were called to march on Gaza City and its 1m inhabitants to "defeat Hamas" and establish "an alternative civil administration that is neither Hamas nor the Palestinian Authority".

Where 1 falls, 10 will rise

The inhabitants of Gaza City are meant to evacuate to what the IDF cynically calls the "humanitarian zone" of Al-Mawasi - an overcrowded camp of more than half-a-million refugees, which is repeatedly targeted by air strikes.

Netanyahu knows very well that Hamas cannot be defeated nor exterminated. He is just creating more resistance fighters throughout the Middle East - and everywhere else.

**The evacuation of Gaza City**

Anyway, according to a classified military intelligence report only 8,900 Hamas and Palestinian Islamic Jihad activists are verified as having been killed out of 47,653. Most of the Palestinians killed are civilians.

Reasons for hope

This endless butchery is causing real discontent inside and outside Israel. In Tel Aviv doctors have demonstrated and families of hostages continue to protest,

condemning Netanyahu for "killing" their sons and daughters. An estimated 50 to 60% of Israeli army reservists refuse to report for duty.

Indeed, hope lies in the courage of the Palestinians who refuse to yield, but also in that minority within Israel, who refuse to be complicit in Netanyahu's policy of extermination. But also lies in workers' action: dockworkers in Italy (Genoa and Venice) said they'd go on strike if the IDF attacked the Flotilla of 50 boats attempting to bring aid to Gaza. □

France: this must be just the beginning!

On 8 September, French PM Bayrou lost a vote of confidence and had to resign, after failing to get parliament to vote for his austerity budget, which included £38bn-worth of cuts. He was replaced by Macron's Defence Secretary who is meant to implement the cuts by December. In response, popular "bloquons tout" (block everything) protests erupted on 10 September. And while the union confederations did not join in, most union leaders have called for strikes on the 18 September. We print a translation of an appeal from our French sister organisation Lutte Ouvrière written on 11 September.

With Bayrou gone, the path that big business is pointing to his successor remains the same: exploitation of workers will have to increase. To ensure that billions of euros

of public money continue to fill the pockets of large corporations in the form of subsidies and arms dealers, they say that workers must make new sacrifices - whether employed, unemployed, sick or disabled.

All those who seized the opportunity on 10 September to come out to the streets were right to take this first step. But it must only be a beginning. The protest planned on 18 September, called by the union confederations, will undoubtedly be another opportunity for many to protest. But for these protests to be effective, we need to decide our own objectives and organise ourselves, by taking the struggle into our own hands.

There is no question of accepting more cuts in public services, or fewer rights for the sick and unemployed, or unpaid workdays; we must also

demand an increase in wages, which are currently too low to live on, and the sharing of work: no to job cuts! We also need control over production and company accounting.

Since workers make everything run, but we control nothing, not even what determines our existence, the least we can do is to decide the objectives of our fights, how to organise them, and how to control them. Relying on political parties that simply ask us to trust them, or on the decisions of union leaders who reject any mobilisation they don't control, would lead only to a dead end.

In the aftermath of September 10, all these questions will need to be debated among workers, in workplaces, and wherever the mobilisation has been organised! □

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.