

WORKERS' fight

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

REVOLUTION? YES! BUT ONLY WHEN THE WORKING CLASS LEADS IT!

Everywhere, workers and the poor are facing economic, social and political crisis. For sure, there's a difference between us here in Britain and our counterparts in the poorer countries - like Iran. For now.

Yes. Because no matter how much the backward-looking nationalists try to close borders or raise ancient flags, what's happening in one part of today's world affects the rest. Which means the working class can only be "internationalist"!

We saw in the past weeks how the Iranian people yet again took to the streets against their reactionary Islamic rulers, despite the risks. Thousands were killed, wounded and arrested. Their wave of protest was said to be the largest since the 1979 revolution.

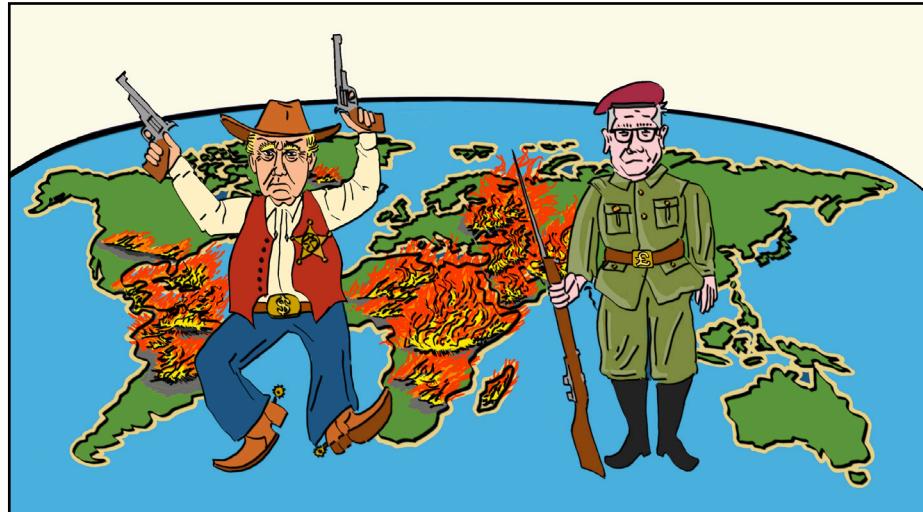
Then, the crucial factor in the overthrow of corrupt playboy, Shah Pahlavi (a US/British puppet), was the mobilisation of the working class - led by the oil workers. In those days there were political organisations on the ground, standing for a secular and socialist workers' republic.

However, this revolution was hijacked by the Islamic "parties" who, like all who fought against the Shah, faced his jails and torture chambers. Unlike the left parties, they had prepared and organised their forces from exile.

Ayatollah Khomeini was able to return from France to lead a new government. Secular parties, including the "Communist" Tudeh Party, foolishly agreed to participate. As the Islamic regime tightened its grip on power many of their leading activists were tortured, jailed and executed. Today, anyone who, in the regime's opinion, "insults God" is sentenced to death.

The enemy's enemy isn't a friend!

Yet the Iranian people (most don't want a return to the days of the Shah) aren't



so naive as to think that their enemy's enemy - whether Trump, Netanyahu, Starmer or Merz - is their friend.

Designated as part of an "axis of evil" by George Bush at the time of the Iraq war, Iran is the most sanctioned country in the world - which is why its economy is on the floor and why its currency crashed, triggering the latest protests. It's been the policy of the rich powers, above all, the US and Israel, after their bombings in June and strikes on Iran's nuclear sites, to bring the regime to its knees. And never mind the mullahs' repeated offers to "negotiate".

"The days are numbered for any regimes which rely on violence and coercion" says German Chancellor Merz, who was 100% behind Netanyahu's violent coercive government, which is today putting the finishing touches on its mass slaughter in Gaza.

Their hypocrisy knows no bounds.

Starmer's culpability

There's cynical irony in Trump saying Iran shouldn't "kill protesters" while presiding over the shooting of American protesters by ICE, which is licensed to carry out violent arrests against

anyone dark-skinned in cities across the USA, under the pretext they might be "illegals"!

So Trump, Merz, and Starmer are going to "help" achieve regime change in Iran? Any regime resulting from their intervention would certainly not serve the interests of the Iranian population - as Iranians well know!

Foreign Secretary Yvette Cooper condemned Iran's intolerance of dissent and protest and its internet blackout, but as Home Secretary she proscribed the protest group Palestine Action, calling it "terrorist". Arrests and jailing of pro-Palestine protesters followed.

There was a virtual media blackout over the treatment of these prisoners. Who heard of the hunger strike of Heba Muraisi, who refused food for 73 days in prison until her death was imminent?

This brings us back to the crucial factor which can turn a protest into a revolution. Numbers, certainly; but it is the presence of a conscious, mobilised working class which tips the balance. That's what all of us can and must work towards. □

International

Venezuela: Maduro's "arrest" and Washington's latest western "empire"

The raid on Caracas by US forces and the capture of Maduro and his wife on 3 January were reported like a livestream movie. It wasn't "regime change". And it's not Trump who's running the country... Vice President Rodriguez, along with the same government continues to rule.

As for Starmer, ever consistent with double standards, he says the British government never recognised Maduro as "legitimate" anyway. But there's little doubt that British navy presence in the Caribbean/on-board the General R Ford aircraft carrier, facilitated this "special operation" as Trump called it. Then on 8 January, a rusty, empty oil tanker bound for Russia, linked to Venezuelan oil exports, was seized in waters north-west of Scotland by combined US/British forces to much applause...

Donroe rules?

A "new world order", say Trump and Rubio, as they now decide to threaten Cuba, Colombia, Mexico and Greenland (and maybe Canada, again) - and Iran, even if it's in the wrong hemisphere.

Yes, because Trump's "Donroe" Doctrine - after the 1823 (President) Monroe Doctrine has claimed all of the Americas, i.e., the "Western Hemisphere" - as the US "sphere of influence".

But it's 2025. And while history might repeat itself, its consequences don't necessarily. Today capitalism is in serious decline. It's a period of chronic, worsening crisis. And there's method in what seems to be Trump's "madness". With shrinking markets and increasing instability and war, it's obvious that US capital needs to take



what it can to try to revive profits. And where better than in its backyard - via a de facto direct, or indirect, recolonisation.

Trump is blatant over his motives: to grab Venezuela's oil industry, which had been nationalised in 1976, to US dismay. There are abundant minerals, too: bauxite, coltan, gold, and rare earths. Maduro and Chavez before him were no socialists, and it's to socialism's discredit that they've been portrayed as such. However, even the most timid nationalisations can prevent imperialist-backed companies like Shell, BP, Exxon-Mobil or Conoco from feeding their shareholders' greed... Trump intends to fix that.

For a communist world order

Today, European and British politicians wring their hands over the end of a "rules-based international order" - as if any of them ever followed it. Most recently,

against these rules, Gaza was reduced to rubble. Before that, Iraq and Afghanistan were invaded and Syria's regime toppled. The only rule in their handbook which they haven't broken so far, is the agreement not to drop another nuclear bomb.

Trump isn't even special among US Presidents when it comes to flexing US muscle. Under Bush Senior in 1990, Panama's General Noriega was kidnapped, jailed and sentenced in the US. Under Nixon in 1973, brutal military dictator Pinochet was helped into power in Chile, ending Allende's "socialism" and his life.. In 1983, Ronald Reagan sent troops into Grenada to end "socialist" rule... etcetera...

The capture of Maduro is just the latest proof that a "new world order", under workers' socialist rule, is urgent, so that we can use this world's precious resources in the interests of all. □

Cambodia and Thailand at war: what's to gain?

A "war" between Cambodia and Thailand may appear to be inexplicable. We might not even have known about it, if Trump hadn't claimed to have ended it. But hostile military exchanges between these two countries aren't new. The dispute over the border goes as far back as the 1907 treaty between French colonial Cambodia and Thailand/Siam when it was decided using poorly-drawn maps.

But the real reason for establishing "ownership" over the territory boils down to simple profit. Firstly, ancient temples dating back to the powerful Khmer - or Angor - civilization and secondly, the critical minerals in the region's soil.

Some temples, like 11th century Preah Vihear, in Cambodia, claimed by the Thai regime, are a huge source of wealth. It was recently revealed that 40,000 of these temples had a collective £9.7bn in their treasuries, thanks to tourism and religious extortion.

Civilians caught in the crossfire

In May 2025 a 10-minute exchange of fire resulted in the death of a Cambodian

soldier. The Cambodian defence ministry claimed the "Thai army first opened fire on a trench that had been a Cambodian army base for a long time", while the Thais claimed that their soldiers were "trying to negotiate with Cambodian troops to withdraw from a disputed area, before coming under fire".

Taking a leaf from the Myanmar Junta's play-book, across their other border, Thai forces began bombing indiscriminately. In response, Cambodian forces fired mortars into Thailand.

A 5-day surge in fighting erupted on 24 July. Hundreds - mainly civilians - have been killed or wounded and almost 1m people from border areas are in refugee camps where there are shortages of water, food and medicine. Of the ~1.2m Cambodian workers in Thailand, ~900,000 fled after Thai extremists began targeting them.

On 28 July, "Peacemonger" Trump's "ceasefire" was meant to come into force. He admitted that the US "happened to be, by coincidence, currently dealing on Trade with both Countries, but do not want to make any Deal, with either Country, if they are fighting

- and I have told them so!" This ceasefire broke down on 7 December.

It's rare earths again

The border regions are rich in Neodymium, Praseodymium, Dysprosium, and Yttrium. North-East Thailand is the 6th largest producer of rare earths - its Neo Magnequench plant produces magnets - including for electronic vehicles. Chinese EV giant BYD is investing \$486m in a new manufacturing plant.

Besides the US, others also want in on the act. So French President Macron has offered to provide historical colonial documents regarding the border, as a "neutral and constructive mediator" committed to providing peace in the region! It's just "coincidence" that French company TotalEnergie has exclusive rights signed with Cambodia over the oil reserves in the Gulf of Thailand!

Since these imperialist robbers can only operate against the interests of the deprived workers on both sides of the border, they'd do well to join forces and fight their own generals. □

Our society

Impoverishing the working class

In the five years since the pandemic, workers have seen a massive fall in their living standards. The cost of everything has gone up, as everyone knows, while wages haven't kept up. Workers have less money to spend: 7,500 shops closed down in 2024 - more than at the peak of the 2008 financial crisis.

The cost of living is still rising, even if the media and government want to pretend it's not. They say inflation is "coming down", but they are deliberately confusing the facts. The inflation rate may have fallen from its (official CPI) peak of 11.1% in October 2022, but prices are still going up. And no-one bothers to point out that after the huge rises 3-4 years ago, prices never "came down" again!

The cost of food went up by nearly 20% in early 2023 relative to 2022, and it's still increasing at a faster rate than CPI inflation (3.2% in December, while RPI was 3.8%). Anyway, for poorer families, who spend a larger part of their incomes on food, "real"

inflation is always much higher!

And of course, wages never track prices. Real wages haven't grown since the 2008 crisis - that is, for almost 20 years! It's the longest period of wage stagnation since the late 19th century - which means a double-whammy for workers!

So where are the jobs they expect the unemployed youth to "take"?

Official unemployment (which excludes the 20% of people who are "economically inactive") rose to 5.1% at the end of last year. To save on labour costs and keep profits up, the bosses continue to cut as many jobs as possible.

A smaller workforce is meant to carry out the same work, so the bosses turn the screw: work intensity and working hours are increased. And workers are obliged to do overtime because they can't live on their wages. They're also working longer

because they can't afford to retire - the early retirement rate is at its lowest since it started being measured in 1993!

Getting rid of the 2-child cap won't lift families out of poverty

The fact that 4.5 million children live in poverty - one in every three children - demonstrates the precarious situation of millions of working class families. When Reeves backed down over the 2-child benefit cap, the government was de facto admitting the dire situation.

Apparently 60% of kids who'll benefit from the lifting of the cap have a parent in work! There are 2.6 million workers in employment who're relying on Universal Credit, ~33% of all UC claimants! Incredible isn't it? Scrooge bosses paying low wages and refusing to employ enough workers - the root cause of the need for welfare - aren't under fire. But those who're already in poverty are targeted for welfare cuts! □

Privatised social care: the super-exploitation of workers - and patients

The Health Foundation, back in July, published a report on poverty among care workers in England and Wales. It found that 20% of residential care workers live in poverty. But among migrant care workers, who make up one third of the total, the poverty rate is even higher, rising to over 33%!

In fact, these are underestimates for poverty rates, due to the difficulty in finding accurate statistics about the hundreds of thousands of home care workers, who

travel around to clients' houses. But as many as 20% are on zero-hour contracts, compared with 3.5% of all workers in the economy.

The sector has always underpaid and overworked its workforce - particularly migrant workers - who report employer abuses such as not being paid for months or having their wages deducted illegally.

Unison, the largest union in social care, says that since 2020, when the health and care visa was introduced, there has been a

surge in cases of modern day slavery. Since the care visas are issued to employers and not to migrant workers, these employers threaten workers with deportation if they refuse to accept their appalling conditions.

It's obvious that this level of super-exploitation of workers (and those they care for) is inevitable in a privatised social care system which is run "for profit". Even Boris Johnson considered merging social care into the NHS and de facto renationalising it. But not Starmer?

Some workers are striking over pay... why not all together?

It's less than three years since the 2022/23 strike wave over the cost of living crisis and

many workers could soon be back on strike.

In the last pay round, university workers rejected the offer of a (way below inflation) 1.4% "rise" from the employers' body, which also announced it aimed to cut 15,000 jobs!

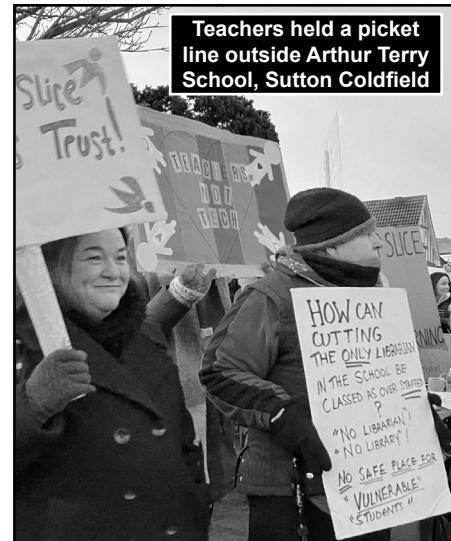
In January, 30 sixth form colleges will be striking against a 4% pay offer, after a 91% vote for action on a 60% turnout. Some Further Education colleges already took strike action in November-December.

And teachers and teachers' assistants are already striking in some schools over impossible workloads, in advance of a strike over a pay offer of 6.5% spread over 3 years.

At the end of 2025, bus workers were on strike in West London, Cambridge, South Wales, and Manchester over pay. And though all in Unite union, their strikes weren't coordinated. The same is true in the NHS. Doctors have been on strike by themselves, when wages and workload are a problem for all workers in the NHS.

This sectional approach was one of the main reasons why the strikers in 2022-3 did not win the above-inflation wage rises they were fighting for. To win, the working class has to use its only advantage - its strength in numbers and shared interests

- to defeat the wage restraint of the bosses, and the government's austerity - and go all out together for as long as it takes to win. Union leaders have long since shown that they have no interest in organising this kind of fight. So this next time we have to be prepared to organise it ourselves.



Class Struggle n° 126

Winter 2025-26

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 - 2) The Rachel Reeves budget
 - 3) Mahmood adapts to Reform
- GenZ: the revolution will not be on Discord!
- Looking back at the 1971 Postal Strike through the eyes of Joe Jacobs
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Their society

This government "is for turning"

A big fuss is being made over Labour's 11 U-turns (so far!). And of course the media - including the "unbiased" BBC - have certainly got it in for Starmer's Labour. They call this "weak and incompetent government" and are already speculating on Starmer's replacement.

Of course, the only question of real interest is how these supposed "U-turns" might benefit the working population. And we can answer in advance: if we want to improve our lot it's surely time to take advantage ourselves and "turn" things in our favour, which can only happen through our strikes.

Still a cold winter!

So for instance, the means-tested winter allowance meant that 10.3m pensioners lost out in 2024-25. But last year's government "U-turn" consisted of setting a yearly earnings threshold for its restoration - £11,344 for a single pensioner and £17,314 for a couple - well below the "Minimum Income Standard" (£17,200 and £27,800, respectively).

And never mind that many pensioners simply can't apply online!

Lifting children from poverty to poverty

Under pressure from backbenchers (7 MPs lost the whip), the government "U-turned" on the question of the two-child benefit cap. It will be gone by April. However, an extra £17.26 per week, per child, might help the poorest families to keep the heating on longer, or put more food on the table. But it won't lift children from poverty, when food prices have increased by 40% in the past 5 years - milk by over 50%!

Turning for the better-off

In December, the government also announced a "U-turn" on farmers' inheritance tax. So far, agricultural/business assets could be passed on without paying this tax. Reeves' budget then set a threshold of £1m-worth of assets, above which a 20% tax rate would be imposed.

And while a small minority of those impacted were farmers on low incomes, the backlash from richer landowners (like "poor" Jeremy Clarkson) was such that Reeves decided to increase the threshold to £2.5m. Now, apparently, only 185 farms will be affected.

Of course the very real struggle of "small" farmers, who joined the anti-government protests, isn't because of government policy, but because they're exploited by agribusiness and the big supermarkets.

"We are talking to the hospitality sector"

It's also possible that Reeves' plan to cut business rate discounts (introduced during the pandemic) from 75 to 40% is another "U-turn" in the making. But here again, while big multi-billion businesses cry for the discounts to be maintained, the small businesses (like individual pubs and restaurants) will continue to be milked by landlords and big industry suppliers... □

Their new Employment "Rights" Act: needs another teabag

On 18 December, the Employment Rights Act became law. It strengthens some entitlements and makes (statutory) sick pay and parental leave mandatory from day one, starting this April. We have 6 months, instead of 3, to bring a tribunal claim, and may claim unfair dismissal to a tribunal after 6 months' service, reduced from 2 years. But how many agency jobs even last that long?

Anti-strike rules cut but not killed

Some rights around strikes are improved. From February, sacking a worker for taking part in industrial action will be deemed unfair dismissal.

A simple majority will be enough to authorise a strike in a ballot, and this will mandate action for 12 months instead of 6. The required notice of a strike is cut to 10 days, from 14. And the minimum services bill which prevented "all-out" in

transport and public services is abolished.

They won't end precarious work!

For workers stuck in a cycle of short-term, insecure jobs, through agencies or bogus "self-employment", the changes are quite minimal. And they're delayed until January 2027!

Measures to stop "fire and rehire", were watered down. It will be illegal if bosses want to impose changed working hours, pay, pension and leave entitlements, or times and lengths of shifts. That may close most loopholes, but bosses can still plead "severe financial distress". The right to stay in business comes first!

And what about zero hours contracts? Who will benefit from the right to guaranteed working hours, "reasonable" notice of shifts and compensation for late cancellations that are supposed to make

casual contracts "less exploitative"? Actually it's still not decided! There's a consultation with the bosses who get to push for their "need" to screw casual workers!

Fair work under capitalism? Not likely!

A "Fair Work Agency", to launch in April, will have inspection and enforcement powers. The 51 year-old Health and Safety Executive, always had such powers, but it never had the resources to make them count. Why would the FWA be different? Especially since it will report to the Department of Business and Trade! No, it has to be said that the only way to U-turn things in our favour is to launch an organised general fight. It's way overdue (like 100 years!).

And what about housing?

One thing that won't be "reformed" is low-paid workers' inadequate housing. Angela Rayner's replacement in charge of housing and local government, Steve Reed, is already preparing for Labour's likely failure to provide the 1.5 million new homes it promised by 2029. That would be 3m a year.

So far, not good: the number of new homes started was just 139,000 in Labour's first year. To get more built in London, Reed and Sadiq Khan agreed to water down the target for "affordable" and social rented homes from 35% to

20%. When of course, what's needed is social housing, because that's actually what's lacking! And has been for 45 years - since Thatcher allowed council houses to be sold off.

Rough sleeping, the sharp end of homelessness, is at record levels, and tent cities have continued to spread in London and elsewhere. Government figures say that nearly 90% of known rough sleepers have some sort of income from the state. Some of them are actually working! Yet they still don't even have the money to pay for a bed for the night.



NHS

A balance sheet of the doctors' strikes, so far...

For now, resident doctors have called off their strikes while they re-ballot to renew their strike mandate. It means that if the vote is positive, they can start striking again in mid-February.

In the meanwhile the Department of Health and Wes Streeting, Health Secretary, along with the doctors' union, the BMA, say they are going to try to negotiate "intensely" this month.

In England the resident doctors struck from 17 to 22 December, after rejecting the latest offer from Streeting by 83% to 17%, with a 65% turnout.

This offer included no pay rise - despite the doctors' main demand being pay restoration - and proposed just 4,000 more "training posts" to add to a total of 10,000, when applications stand at 30,000, and rising! The government also tried to divide doctors by suggesting a law change to give British-trained doctors priority for jobs, under the slogan of putting "*home-grown talent first*". British Medical Association (BMA) officials, in fact, went along with this proposal...

And in Scotland...

Scottish resident doctors were set to strike from 13 to 17 January (92% had voted in favour of walkouts, on a 58% turnout). But now these strikes are cancelled, after a new pay offer. Their NHS offered a 9.9% rise for 2025/26 and 9.4% for 2026-27.

The previous offer for year 1 was for a 4.25% increase and 3.75% for year 2. So yes, this is an improvement. Scotland is the only country in Britain where resident doctors haven't walked out since disputes first started in 2023.

Who puts patients' lives "at risk"?

Over the past year, the government has accused resident doctors of being "greedy" and irresponsible. It says



they put lives at risk. The doctors say rightly, that no, on the contrary, it's this government and its predecessors who constantly put patients' lives at risk.

Tens of thousands of NHS vacancies remain unfilled and doctors are absolutely exhausted. They hardly ever get proper breaks. They can work up to 72 hours at a stretch. A resident doctor's average annual pay of £38,000 is 25% less than an average Ford car worker and just over half of what a train driver gets paid. No wonder there's a retention problem in the NHS.

Joining forces is the only way

BMA officials say doctors, because of their professional status and the nature of their work, are a "special" case. It seems that's part of the reason why they've been left to strike alone for over two years now. Even worse, there was no indication that the BMA would have co-ordinated the strikes in England and Scotland!

But doctors' grievances, and the state of the NHS, is a problem shared by the whole of the working class: by the start of 2025, there were 4.2m people on health-related benefits - the highest ever

recorded and 1m more than before the COVID pandemic!

... and it's been done before!

The fight against the understaffing and underfunding of the health system, will need all other sections of workers standing up for the doctors and the whole of the NHS workforce. And in fact, there would be a common interest in fighting all the bosses for decent wages and conditions. Solidarity strikes - also called "secondary action" - made illegal by Thatcher - have happened before: in the 1950s, the dockers went on strike for the then non-unionised nurses. This resulted in a flood of nurses joining a union!

And by the way, the bulletin that Workers' Fight publishes at King's Cross station ("Workers' Platform"), was co-founded in 1987 by Steve Forey, a train driver who was sacked for trying to organise a drivers' stoppage at King's Cross, in support of the nurses' strike, despite the fact that Thatcher's anti-strike laws had just been passed. It's this fighting spirit which is so urgent to revive. □

Covid Inquiry exposes the politicians' faces, but covers their backs

Covid-19 was responsible for the deaths of 230,000 people in Britain. The Covid-19 Inquiry (second module), led by Baroness Hallett published its results in late November 2025. It concluded that the government's response to the first wave of Covid-19 was "*too little, too late*". No surprise there. We all remember this. Hallett confirms that deliberate delay in imposing preventive measures cost many lives. And worse, even the government's Chief Scientific Advisor and Chief Medical Officer went along with this. Had a lockdown been introduced just one week earlier in March 2020, around 23,000 deaths in England alone, during the first viral wave, could have been avoided.

At the beginning of March 2020, Boris Johnson insisted that "*for the vast majority of the people of this country, we should be going about our business as usual*". The Inquiry found that his government displayed a "*lack of urgency and collective complacency*".

In fact the Cheltenham festival was allowed to go ahead as well as a football match against a Spanish club in Liverpool - both events where crowds of people in close contact could mix their breath and their saliva! It's surprising that there weren't more deaths. But of course the number of infections rose exponentially thereafter.

Then in addition, there were the 40,000 deaths among the elderly, due

to panic in the NHS to clear beds and discharge sick, untested elderly patients, who passed on the infection when they returned to their residential care homes.

In the context of what was already known about the virus, choosing to delay lockdown was a decision to treat death as an acceptable risk - a calculation made repeatedly during this pandemic.

The Inquiry has made these failures explicit: names were named and mistakes catalogued. With 19 recommendations and a final report not due until 2027, this Inquiry follows a familiar script: investigate long after the damage is done and acknowledge error. But will it be different next time? Under this degenerate system, that's not likely.

King's Cross railway station (London)**GBR: we're sure of one thing – a fight is needed!**

What are we supposed to make of the Railways Bill, which has just passed its second reading? It talks at length about fixing a "fragmented" railway, and the problems this causes for passengers, but says nothing about the workforce, nor the effect of fragmentation/multiple different contracts on us.

We shouldn't be surprised. Under privatisation, fragmentation meant that each of the franchised and sub-contracted units could drive down wages and conditions - and they did so. For cleaning and onboard catering, for instance, they drove them down to the absolute minimum!

There's no doubt at all that "Great

British Railways" will want to maintain this aspect of fragmentation! Which is why it's a huge problem for us when unions - like the RMT - which are meant to be representing our interests, are doing nothing concrete to pre-empt it!

Right now, the RMT has a "safety campaign", but its focus is to demand more British Transport Police on stations - and also on trains! This won't do. Neither is it enough to politely mention the need for a guard on every train. We need to organise a real fight for this - and for an end to lone working, 12-hour shifts and a total ban on job cuts! That will go some way to making



the railway "safe" even if it will only be really safe when we, the workforce own and control it.

The system only works because we do: we're the ones who keep it running - and we're the ones who can bring it to a halt! □

- **Born yesterday?**

The train operating companies - including LNER - knew very well that there was going to be bad snow and ice this week. It happens almost every year. Yet were they prepared? Did they ensure that all the staff can get to work - knowing full well there'd be local travel disruption? Did they, hell! [Workers' Platform 07/01/26]

- **Snow clue**

So trains were late, cancelled or stuck.

Points got frozen, etc. Since already-nationalised LNER didn't anticipate the problems and put in place preventative measures, we can also forget about hoping things will improve when GBR is established... And why? Because they'll still refuse to pay the price: a large-enough, well-paid, well-trained workforce with free staff transport provided. Unless we force them to? [Workers' Platform 07/01/26]

- **The safety refrain**

On GN stations, safety keeps getting

worse. Lone working is imposed as "normal", most ticket offices are shut, jeopardising safety, especially early mornings and late nights.

The RMT says it's running a safety campaign... They say safety is a priority and that our concerns are being raised. But on the ground, nothing changes. The more we're told safety matters, the more cuts the managers seem to get away with... [Workers' Platform 07/01/26]

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

That's another Christmas done for us all, red shirt, blue shirt and no shirt. We all thought the red shirts got treated badly, but the no shirts had it worse. Working well into the night on delivery thanks to the Communication Workers Union leadership's 9pm finish agreement, made above our heads. It was so bad, we heard stories of workers delivering until midnight on the now infamous "double bubble" Sunday.

Loads of our mates weren't around for the chaos of Christmas, having been made poorly by their work. We send a

heartfelt "get well soon" to all of them who were unable to attend. They tell us tales of receiving messages from management saying that sick workers are costing "millions". We could easily save those supposed "millions" by making our work safe, healthy and putting our mates' welfare first.

Management points its finger at workers off sick. No worker wants to be unable to work. In a properly organised, worker-controlled industry, our mates would be able to take part without fearing for their health. We are all asking how



the CWU leaders let it become so awful that workers are told they are costing so much money. We fought for the right to sick pay, but we never expected that so many of us would need it! Let's make 2026 the year when we win our fights - and when we can all return fit and well to a healthy work environment! □

- **Super-nonsense**

The Processing "Mount Pleasant Local News" leaflet from the union officials distributed before the New Year tells us that there is "almost no one" left who's "supernumerary"... but even one of us would be one too many! And all the more so, at a time when management's busy trying to make us each work 2-3 jobs to clear the Xmas mess they've created! [Workers' Fight bulletin 07/01/26]

- **Headless chickens**

Managers have had to extend some of

the casuals' stay in Mount Un-Pleasant, thanks to the shortage of hands. The logical thing would be to offer them decent permanent jobs, but management has not done the logical thing for a long time, if ever. It's going to be down to us to drill some sense into their heads... [Workers' Fight bulletin 07/01/26]

- **Collective refusal**

We do agree with the union's leaflet when it says that "H&S has entirely gone out of the window". Managers try to cover their backs, showing us Work Time Sleeping H&S videos so that if someone gets hurt,

they can try to wash their hands of any blame... Another reason for refusing to lift/drag any of these too-heavy parcels. [Workers' Fight bulletin 07/01/26]

- **Back-door wage cuts**

Managers are at it again, telling us that we will have to work weekend duties. As for us part-timers, they've said that the only way to get more contracted hours is to accept weekend work on flat rate. Of course, when we work this as overtime, they have to pay that slightly higher rate... [Workers' Fight bulletin 07/01/26]

Ford Dagenham estate (Essex)**Ford's latest attempt to "conceive": cuddling up to Renault**

Ford announced a new "strategic partnership with Renault Group" in December last year. The aim was to "deliver affordable, innovative (small) Electric Vehicles". In fact, Ford has had to revisit its "Model-e" strategy due to competition in an already reduced market. It had got it wrong. The medium-sized Ford Puma Gen-E starts at a price of £30,000. But the smaller Chinese BYD Dolphin sells at £19,000 and the Renault Group's Dacia Spring starts at around £15,000...

At each of its production strategy

"turns" and new "partnerships" Ford has tried to make the workforce pay. When production of the smaller, more affordable Fiesta model was terminated in Cologne (Germany), the factory was supposed to become Ford's main EV production centre in Europe. Around 2,900 "Ford" jobs were cut. Ford is now cutting another 1,000 jobs due to the "weaker than expected demand for EVs". In total by 2027 it will mean 4,000 Ford jobs across Germany will have disappeared.

By teaming up with Renault, Ford bosses obviously want to revive their EV



fortunes. It seems there'll be no return to clean diesel (at least for now and maybe never), despite the continuing demand for the diesel engines built here at Dagenham. This (quite surprising) demand, however, means we still have considerable muscle as a workforce to turn off their profits tap - if we decide to use it! □

• **This is etched in our memory**

It's already 2026, entering the third year of the 3-year pay deal and we're still waiting for the extra holiday which we were meant to be granted as per Ford's written agreement after the ballot. So where is it? [Workers' Fight bulletin 14/01/26]

• **No more B-S!**

In fact we accepted the one day holiday as offered in 2024, clear as day, and at face value. It was, and is not, negotiable. So, do we now take it? As in the 19th century meaning of "holiday", which in those days meant "strike"? [Workers' Fight bulletin 14/01/26]

• **Nope. All, or all out**

The "cherry on top" of this debacle is the rumour that only those with 25 years' service are going to be entitled

to this extra holiday!? Yes, after telling us clear as day we'd all get it! If this is so, it confirms what we suspected all along. The already foolish bosses have now completely lost it. [Workers' Fight bulletin 14/01/26]

• **Taking away instead?**

Yes, and just to make matters worse, Ford took away one day's holiday pay instead! Yup, many of us (all?) found out last week that we'd been paid for only 30 hours - i.e., paid a day short for Xmas shutdown.

HR is apparently meant to rectify this and put the money in our next pay slip. But with added tax. They'd better compensate us for that as well. [Workers' Fight bulletin 14/01/26]

• **A mess in all directions**

And the cock-ups continued: some of us got paid an extra holiday... which was taken from our 2026-2027 Xmas holiday allocation! And now we have to pay

this back? You couldn't make this up! [Workers' Fight bulletin 14/01/26]

• **Our top priority**

And how about taking in all the temps as permanent?! The previous pay offer - although rubbish, at least included that one "commitment" which we were, and are, definitely in favour of. We want to see it written in again, before the next pay deal, for all temps. That should go without saying! [Workers' Fight bulletin 14/01/26]

• **This is hardly essential work**

When some of us on Lineside were moved from nights to permanent mornings - and kept our night premium - we suddenly felt we had a life again! It makes you wonder what's the point of making engines overnight anyway? [Workers' Fight bulletin 17/12/25]

BMW Mini centre (Cowley, Oxford)

• **Time to pull the handbrake**

Despite the Xmas shutdown being extended, we've come back to WTA (unpaid overtime) Friday shifts! BMW has called two Friday WTA shifts per month for the coming three months. BMW may wish to carry on this year as they ended last year - with their rush-and-stop production - but we've had enough! [Workers' Fight bulletin 13/01/26]

• **Spanner in the rumour mill**

No sooner are we back from shutdown, than we're hearing some rumours that "volumes" are going to go down... and some that they're going to go up! Whatever management is planning for us in 2026, we need our own plan to derail them. [Workers' Fight bulletin 13/01/26]

• **Big meeting needed**

By the way, we haven't heard anything about our 2026 pay rise! We all know what we need, but union officials haven't even told us what they're asking for. Why not organise a meeting where we can put together our demands? [Workers' Fight bulletin 13/01/26]

• **Just when we need it most...**

All of a sudden, it's like BMW can't get enough Minis, and still can't be bothered to organise to rotate the jobs. We'll organise it ourselves, if we have to. Doing the same task over and over will only guarantee more injuries! [Workers' Fight bulletin 13/01/26]

• **And slow the line down!**

As for the idea that "volumes" are going down... we don't see it, with the line going full speed (and still nearly 800 cars a day)!



Where's the STOP button? [Workers' Fight bulletin 13/01/26]

• **New boss, same as the old boss**

Part of the logistics contract is now going to be operated by Unipart. Did Unipart undercut R&H (which apparently was asking for more money)? So, we wonder what it is they think they can cut? If they were hoping for a bit of extra profit on our backs, they can think again! [Workers' Fight bulletin 13/01/26]

International

Trump-Netanyahu: another butchers' meeting - and further dirty tricks against Iran

During Netanyahu's US visit last month, Trump claimed that "*Israel has lived up to the [ceasefire] plan, 100%*". Yes, at a time when the IDF had already killed 414 Palestinians and injured 1,145 in daily truce violations. And as far as the violent settlement expansion on the West Bank goes, Trump added that Netanyahu "*will do the right thing*" there. Oh yes, sure... In reality he is putting the final touches on his plan for Gaza - i.e., preparing it for Israeli settlement.

In fact it was surprising, to say the least, when on 14 January, the special envoy Steve Witkoff announced that Phase Two of the Peace Plan was commencing. This, when Phase One cannot be said to have finished - or even begun, since it stipulated an end to "hostilities".

At this same meeting Trump also congratulated Netanyahu's stance against Iran, where Mossad (and the CIA) have undoubtedly been active in the protests which threatened the downfall of the regime. They are certainly banking (literally) on a return of the son



of the former Shah to Teheran - Reza Pahlavi, named after his father. In the meanwhile, the Israeli state continues to make incursions into Syria, Lebanon and also Iraq, where they carry out regular bombings.

Yes, this war on Gaza has opened a

new colonial era in the Middle East for the fraternity of western imperialists. Starmer, Macron, Merz, all hanging on to Trump's coat-tails and hoping for a slice of the action. They are all on the same side. And so do the Middle Eastern working classes need to be. □

Ukraine: Starmer's war deal, for a bountiful harvest!

On 6 January, Starmer's "Coalition of the Willing" (CoW) made its first formal declaration in Paris, introduced as: "a partnership led by Britain and France that will give Ukraine [...] a multinational peace-keeping force once a ceasefire is in place".

It was this "boots on the ground" commitment which got everyone excited. How many troops? Does "Britain" have enough soldiers? Etc...

But behind this was a huge amount of financial wheeling and dealing over weapons acquisition and loans to Ukraine's war effort - which could keep the fighting going for years to come!

Indeed the CoW declared in advance that anyway, "Russia" wasn't going to agree to their peace offer. They'd made sure of that! Maria Zakharov, a Russian government spokesperson, commented: "[the declaration] is aimed not at achieving peace, but at continuing militarisation and escalation of the conflict".

Yet an end to this 4-year war is urgent. Some official sources estimate Ukraine's war death toll at 1.4m, including both soldiers and civilians. The destruction has

left 7m people homeless due to bombed buildings and 13m displaced. As for Russia, nobody really knows, but the figures are large.

Unwilling to talk and it's obvious why...

The CoW was set up in response to Trump's peace talks with Putin in December 2024, after the Oval office meeting, in which Trump told Zelensky: "you're gambling with WW3. [...] If you don't accept a settlement that gives Russia the territory it wants, you're playing with the lives of millions". Two weeks later, the CoW, came up with a counter-proposal including "no forced cession of any part of Ukrainian territory" and a "NATO-membership pathway", to compensate Zelensky for his Trump-humiliation!

Unsurprisingly the CoW hasn't spoken with Putin. Its stance (like Biden's, when he refused a meeting with Putin to avert the invasion) is that it will not accept Putin's demand that Ukraine be denied entrance into NATO. It's a very clear indication that they don't want this war to stop. It's important for them to portray

Putin as an aggressor who is coming for "us" next, after he's dealt with Ukraine.

As for Putin, he has good reason to worry, given the slow, but sure encirclement by NATO of what used to be "Russian" territory. For him, the mainly Russian-speaking Donbas is an essential "buffer" against NATO encroachment. He will not back down on that.

The arms' payment loop

Agreed at this Paris Peace summit, was a massive £70bn interest-free EU loan (on top of £45bn in 2024!) for Ukraine to buy weapons and for infrastructure/reconstruction. The bulk of the weapons will come from US Raytheon and Lockheed Martin (50%) and 15% from other US firms. CoW arms-makers will supply 35%.

So where did the EU (or indeed Britain, which loaned £600m) get this money from? In fact they raised it on the bond market. And who bought the bonds? Most are now owned by investment fund BlackRock - which holds the major share in Raytheon and Lockheed Martin!

Yes, this is what "peace" looks like in the world of the capitalist class! □

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

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

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