

# WORKERS' fight



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

## WHO IS THE REAL ENEMY, AND WHO IS THE TERRORIST?

While Iranians were dying under US and Israeli missiles and bombs, or choking on the black smoke created by the fires ignited in fuel depots, the main focus in Britain was the price of a barrel of oil. Yes, to coin a phrase, economics "Trumps" politics - and war!

So, never mind the victims of the US/Israeli attack, but mind the fossil fuel market... Initially, the price went up to over \$100 a barrel, before coming down again, to a still high ~\$80... definitely inflationary.

That said, the talking heads also got excited over the criticism Starmer received from Trump for not offering his whole-hearted support for the war.

But of course, despite the rhetoric, US planes were using British bases as they always do. Just as the Akrotiri base in Cyprus is "a little bit of Britain" so are the 12 US bases here, a little bit of America... So Starmer was already an "accessory before the fact" in Trump's war.

As an afterthought, BBC Persian broadcast some personal accounts of the horror which ordinary Iranians experienced. Gone for now, are their reports of people in Iran's streets cheering as the bombs hit. Those opposed to the repressive Islamic regime may have remembered the lessons of history: your enemy's enemy is highly unlikely to be your friend.

Likewise for the Kurdistan Freedom Party's militia, which was reportedly ready to provide ground troops against the Islamic Republic. They prefer to wait and see.

### **A caricature of imperialism**

But guess who dared to add his tuppence to the Starmer-Trump hoo-hah? None other than former Labour PM Tony Blair, labelled by some as a war criminal, who was visiting pal Donald, as nominee to his Gaza "Board of Peace"! And by the way, there's still no peace for the people of Gaza, the



Palestinians of the West Bank, not to mention for the people of Lebanon.

Starmer should have stood "shoulder to shoulder" with Trump, said Blair, just as Blair had stood with George W Bush in 2003, when British and US forces invaded Iraq.

At the time, nobody believed "Blair"'s justification that Saddam Hussein had weapons of mass destruction. So too, with today's lies about Iran's "nuclear bomb".

What is more, Bush's Iraq war opened the current period of instability and ongoing war in the Middle East, and Trump and his fanatical religious crusaders are hardly likely to end it. And certainly not when these caricatures of imperialism are the clearest expression of the rottenness inside the head of this degenerating system.

### **A mouse against a mammoth**

Trump's Secretary of War, Pete Hegseth, boasted of the USA's heroic "warriors" proving victorious over Iran's

"barbaric savages", thanking "Jesus"... One could, for a minute, forget which century we're in. He and his Israeli counterpart both claimed that the proof of the Iranian state's "terrorist" nature was its targeting of the Gulf states. But of course these states have always harboured US/British bases: according to the rules of their game, they're legitimate war targets for Iran.

Anyway, the "mouse" has no option but to use all weapons in its small arsenal against the "mammoth". And its disruption to the world oil market caused Trump to take a step back...

Nobody can predict what form the defeat of the mouse will take and what the consequences will be. But what's certain is that the winners are the oil, financial, and stock market capitalists - those at the imperialist system's pinnacle. Knocking them all off and killing their system - that's the "regime change" which the working classes here, in the US, in Iran and the rest of Middle East, indeed in the rest of world, need urgently... □

## Ukraine

### Ukraine: 4 years of a fratricidal war

The war in Ukraine hit its 4th year "anniversary" on 24 February marking the day Russian troops crossed the border into Ukraine. But of course the war started way before this. In fact one could say that it goes all the way back to the break-up of the Soviet Union in 1991, after which most of the former Soviet republics became "independent".

Ukraine was different from the others because of its deep integration into the former USSR, its shared culture and shared language - 62% of its words are similar due to a common Slavic root, and it has a similar alphabet and grammar. As a result, close ties remained up until the 2010s and certainly it was in the Russian bureaucracy's interest to nurture them. Especially given that even though the Cold War was officially over, "Russia" was still denied entry to NATO and the European capitalist club, and was still threatened by NATO missiles lined up in eastern Europe and pointed in its direction.

Indeed, EU/US leaders were unable to manipulate - according to their own capitalist classes' interests - a still "strong", in their terms, post-Soviet Russia. On the other hand it was much easier to pull Ukraine's political strings. Their success came in 2014, when an anti-Russian, pro-EU and pro-US government took over power. It was then that a full-blown civil war broke out in the East - pitting pro-Russian nationalists against anti-Russian Ukrainian nationalists, sparked by the re-occupation of majority Russian-speaking Crimea by Russian troops.

#### **WW2/Cold War warriors, for what?**

Not mentioned by the enthusiasts for this war today "against Putin's threats" is the period of overt anti-Russian law-making



("De-Russification") by supposedly enlightened pro-EU Ukrainian politicians in the run-up to February 2022. Today, the Russian language - and Russian books (!) - are banned, thanks to the reactionary and retrogressive "Slava Ukraine" nationalism, so encouraged (if not invented) by the British government and EU leader, Ursula von der Leyen. On the other side, of course, was the reinforcement of pro-Russian nationalism in Donetsk and Luhansk in East Ukraine, where self-styled leaders with Russia's support insisted on Russian citizenship and compulsory military training to defend a "Russian" Donbas.

On Ukraine's side, among those leading the initial fighting were neo-Nazi groups, long-standing protagonists of a complete break with Russia. EU and US leaders encouraged these elements, fully aware of their violent, anti-ethnic and racist politics. Anyway, the generally lingering (and convenient!), Cold War anti-communism directed at Putin and the rest of the Russian bureaucracy placed them all in bed together.

#### **A river of blood!**

Much water has flowed under the bridge since 2022. However, what's certain is

the "success" of western imperialism's political and economic aims on two fronts. First, it has successfully "glorified" the most reactionary anti-Russian nationalism in Ukraine, which now seems to eclipse any dissent. And martial law prevails to keep the population in line. Secondly, it has weakened the current Russian leadership: there have been harsh economic consequences of this war for the Russian population. Russia's GDP per head puts it in the poor country bracket. This will certainly take its toll on Putin's presidency. Since many Russians have emigrated for fear of military call-up, recruiting soldiers for the front is now a highly controversial "international" operation.

Worst of all, a river of blood now separates ordinary Ukrainians and Russians - two working classes which in the past were always brothers and sisters together, freely crossing the respective borders. So, for now even as the war carries on - and some speak of a "forever" war - reactionary nationalism has scored a victory. But it's no "victory" for the estimated 55,000 Ukrainians and 160,000 Russians who have died since 2022, for the sake of this lethal, backward, separatism. □

## War austerity for the populations

In Russia, war industry takes priority while living standards collapse: inflation rates on food exceed 9%, while real incomes for some working families have fallen by as much as 42%.

Official unemployment stands at just 2.2% - but only due to military mobilisation and 1m emigrants. Western sanctions halved oil and gas revenues, and 76% of Russia's £110bn "sovereign wealth fund" has been spent in the first 3 years of the war, paving the way for austerity measures: cuts to welfare, education and healthcare.

As for Ukraine's economy, it survives only on Western life-support: an estimated £172bn in loans, grants, and diverted Russian assets have been poured into state coffers during the first 3 years of war. Yet the government runs a large deficit, with public debt soon to reach 120% of GDP. And

if job vacancies have returned to pre-war levels, it's not from economic "recovery", but forced conscription and 6m emigrants. Unemployment still stands at 12.7%!

#### **Profits over corpses**

Washington has secured a Ukraine-US Mineral Resources Agreement and is quietly negotiating trade deals with Moscow reportedly worth "\$12 trillion in return for sanctions relief".

As for Europe's "Coalition of the Willing", it brags of having stepped in with military loans to Ukraine, such as the latest £78bn package agreed in February - to be repaid through austerity imposed on Ukrainian workers.

In the meantime, arms manufacturers' profits soar: BAE Systems just posted a 5%

rise in net profit to £2.8bn, with a record order backlog of £83.6bn. The cynicism of Western powers reaping the spoils of war knows no bounds! There is good reason for them not to push too hard for a peace deal!

#### **The Iran war effect**

On the other hand, with natural gas in short supply and the oil price jumping up to levels not seen since the 2003 Iraq war, western companies have a new incentive, not only to end the Ukraine war, but to get the Russian occupation out of the Donbas, where most of the untapped oil and natural gas and rich deposits of critical minerals are located. In the meantime, the rise in the price of oil and partial lifting of some sanctions against Russia could, on the contrary, allow its army to dig in...

**Their politics****Labour's Green with envy?!**

The Green Party victory in Gorton and Denton was the first by-election win for the Greens. And it was one of the biggest swings away from Labour in this historic seat where it was pushed into 3rd place with just 25.4% of the vote. Reform, which had expected to win, came second with 28.7% - but the Greens got a decisive 40.6%, a 4,400 vote majority.

Clearly, part of the Labour electorate shifted its vote to the Greens, whose leadership is unequivocally pro-Palestinian. Starmer's initial support for Netanyahu's war on Gaza tarnished his

party's image, especially among usually Labour-supporting Muslim voters. But that was already evident in the general election in 2024.

Farage's Reform may have doubled its 2024 score, but most of these votes came from the Tories who were wiped out - lost their deposit - with just 706 votes. And maybe some former Labour voters gave their vote to Reform as well, after Starmer unwisely blocked Manchester's popular Labour Mayor, Andy Burnham from standing.

Of course, it's hard to draw conclusions

from elections when more than half of electors don't vote. Under Zack Polanski's leadership the Greens have shifted to the left, and now even support open borders. If that was a winning demand, compared to Reform's racist, "close the border" politics, that might at least be a cause for some optimism. That said, elections will change nothing in our lives. Only a collective working class fight, aiming to overthrow the whole rotten system - and under our own class's revolutionary leadership - will achieve that!

**Starmer's end: sooner or later**

Does the Gorton and Denton result mean the end for prime minister Starmer? In Gorton, Labour hadn't lost an election since 1931. Some say Labour could have won the seat if Greater Manchester mayor Andy Burnham had stood. And that Starmer refused Burnham's candidacy because of the possible challenge to his leadership. Just as with the Mandelson affair, his judgement has been put into question.

But one thing's for sure: that his

strategy of trying to out-Reform Reform by attacking immigrants' rights and posturing over the small boats, hasn't worked out for him! Anyway, the crumbling of Labour's support among working-class voters is nothing new. Starmer may have said he would go on "*fighting for people who need change*" here at home, but he much prefers to posture as leader for the "Coalition of the Willing" abroad, in order to keep the war in Ukraine going in the face of Trump's (apparent) lack of enthusiasm.

And now he claims he is taking the "responsible" decisions a "war" prime minister has to take by "allowing" the US to use British bases for its war against Iran... As if he really had a choice! The "special relationship" has always meant kowtowing to Washington, whichever US president is in office.

For now Starmer remains in his place, but everyone is saying that the predicted poor performance of his party in the May local elections will seal his fate.

**The stench of sewage and corruption**

Channel 4's docu-drama "*Dirty Business*" exposes the scandalous negligence of the privatised water utilities. It starts in 1999 with 8 year-old Heather Preen stepping in raw sewage containing human faeces which was discharged from a pipe on a Devon beach. She died 2 weeks later of virulent E coli 0157 infection. The local council and the Environment Agency - the so-called "regulator" - closed ranks with South West Water, denying that a

raw sewage discharge had anything to do with Heather's death. They even suggested she might have stepped on dog poo. Anything but admit liability, close the beach and revoke its "blue flag".

Fast forward to today and two neighbours investigating the pollution killing fish in their previously pristine river, discovered that understaffed, outdated and malfunctioning sewage treatment plants are routinely dumping raw sewage into rivers.

Both in 2020 and again in 2024, the Environment Agency's own figures revealed that "0% of river, lakes and streams are classed as in good health in

England, despite a target for all waters to be in good health by 2027". Yes, that's how bad it is!

But the Environment Agency itself is filthy: the C4 docu-drama also shows how there's a revolving door between private water companies' and the agency with the same bosses popping up in both! No wonder it no longer even investigates sewage spills!

Yes and all this thanks to privatisation. The actors in the docu-drama rightly insist that the profit motive must be removed and that water needs to be renationalised. It would be a start.

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Winter 2025-26

- Editorial:
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  - 2) The Rachel Reeves budget
  - 3) Mahmood adapts to Reform
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**Dead fish in Silchester Brook (Hampshire) after released sewage into the water**

## Their society

### Epstein, Thiel and the "Surveillance State"

While media and politicians chase after those who knew Epstein, they gloss over his links to big capital and the hidden networks of power backing him. Take Peter Thiel, a billionaire investor and co-founder of Palantir, a company that makes software - used by governments, including this one - to sift through police records, phone data, and databases in order to track and connect people, places, and events. They could well use it on Epstein himself... or perhaps they have already!

So what about Palantir? Founded in 2003 with CIA-linked funding, it can connect to any AI model - from Anthropic to OpenAI. So, in February, when Anthropic resisted pressure from the US Department of Defence/War to allow the use of their models for mass surveillance or autonomous-weapon-related applications, it didn't actually matter: another model could easily replace it. Indeed, OpenAI stepped in and agreed to the deal.

In Britain, Bedfordshire Police used

Palantir's technology to process 1.4TB of phone data and decode around 100,000 messages in just one single case. The force claimed to be the first in Britain to be "policed by AI". Palantir also has huge contracts with the NHS and the Defence Ministry. So, there's another story here: the one which reveals just how far the "tech-government" reaches into the lives of ordinary people; watching, tracking, and incriminating. Big Brother is "AI-ive" and kicking. ☐

### The Amos report: the NHS midwifery scandal continues



Busy NHS workers at the Queen Mary maternity unit, West London

In late February, a provisional report by "Baroness" Amos, into NHS maternity services in England was published. It covers 12 NHS trusts and follows scandals in several others where mothers and babies received "poor care". The report confirms that problems such as unsafe NHS infrastructure, staff shortages, and racism and discrimination towards workers and families are not confined to a few hospitals, but are an issue across the country.

#### Poor working conditions...

The report highlights the heavy workload and the chronic understaffing in obstetrics units. Appointments allow little time to discuss fully with mothers. If temporary cover is organised in the wards, there is

no time for staff induction. One midwife said: "We're called into a busy delivery suite [...] because it's gone bonkers and it's not our familiar area. So half the time we're having to ask people what to do [...]".

These conditions inevitably lead to mistakes. In 2023-24, NHS Resolution paid £1.15bn for maternity-related deaths and injuries, representing 41% of its total payouts, despite maternity care being only about 8% of a trust's daily activity.

#### The predicament of black mothers

What was particularly shocking was the report's findings regarding black and ethnic minority mothers. Black women are almost three times more likely to die

during pregnancy or childbirth than white women! And neonatal mortality rates are 50-60% higher for black and Asian babies than for white babies!

Why is this the case? Is it pure racism? Or poverty combined with racist prejudice? In fact overall maternal and neonatal mortality rates are twice as high for women living in the most deprived areas of England compared with women living in the "least deprived" - and black and ethnic minority mothers are far more likely to be poorer than their white counterparts.

#### More paper, less funding

Many of the issues outlined in the report have been known for over a decade. Over this period, 750 recommendations were made to address them, but few have ever been implemented. Senior professors and midwives have said that "another inquiry will find exactly the same things that we find at the moment [...] we know what the problems are"...

Indeed, the "problems" are a chronic lack of resources and a lack of well-trained empathetic staff, first and foremost. Massive investment might allow NHS midwifery to recruit and train a new generation of midwives, but it sounds more like it needs a revolution. Health Secretary Wes Streeting said he'd set up a "maternity taskforce" by this June to implement the report's recommendations. Who can really believe him?

### Netflix documentary "investigates" Lucy Letby

"The Investigation of Lucy Letby" is a new documentary released by Netflix. It doesn't try to prove her innocence, as one might expect. Instead, it presents what it calls a "balanced" view, leaving the audience to make up its own mind. Never mind that the system of British justice regularly prosecutes the innocent, particularly when there are vested interests involved - as there certainly were in this case.

This specialist neonatal nurse was sentenced to "15 whole life terms" after a jury convicted her of the murder of 7

premature babies and the attempted murder of another 6, in 2015 at the Countess of Chester Hospital - on the basis of circumstantial evidence. Her right to appeal was denied twice.

The prosecution offered a narrative of "evil madness" presented by a professional expert witness for the prosecution - which the jury was led to believe and found Lucy guilty. That would be enough to drive anyone to desperation. But the notes Lucy wrote in this frame of mind were also used against her. The film makes much of this "proof" of malign intent. But in fact

24 medical experts concluded that the babies' deaths were due to "either natural causes or just bad medical care".

It's obvious that Lucy was made a scapegoat for serious failings at this hospital. Bacterial contamination was found in the taps in June 2015. Staff asked management to close the unit down. They didn't. When babies started dying, Lucy was blamed. It seems however, that this time the medico-legal authorities may have gone too far. For Lucy's sake, let's hope her conviction is reversed.

**Their society**

**NEETs need work, but where are the jobs?**

If you're young in Britain right now, it's fair to ask: where are the jobs? Today 957,000 16-24-year olds aren't in employment, education or training - roughly 12.7% of all youth. Officially, 16%, i.e., nearly 1 in 6 can't find work. This beats the EU average, which is 14.7%.

Then there's the postcode lottery. Youth unemployment is much worse in the North East, the Midlands and old industrial towns where it exceeds 20% - way above much of southern England.

And here's the hypocritical part: bosses still complain they "can't find workers"!

The ONS reported around 729,000 job vacancies in late 2025. Sounds a lot, but vacancies have been falling for the past 3 years. This year there are 77,000 fewer than last year and there are 580,000 fewer than in 2022 (a post-Covid peak). In fact bosses are cutting jobs and increasing work intensity.

They aren't training workers in order to address the "skills shortage" they endlessly complain about, either. Only

24-25% of workers get job-related training annually. In the EU, 60% still do.

Businesses here spend about £1,700 per employee on training, which is down from £2,634 in 2005 - a 36% drop! The latest excuse is that employing workers is too expensive because of last year's increase in their National Insurance payments. We say, if they find it "too expensive" to employ workers (and to pay their social share!) then they aren't fit to be employers! ☐

**• "Unite" behind the government's drive to war!**

Unite general secretary Sharon Graham is one of the biggest cheerleaders for the government's increased defence spending. In February she urged Rachel Reeves "to invest in British defence and British jobs". And she got her wish when the government confirmed it would spend £1 billion on 23 new military helicopters, to be built at the Leonardo factory in Yeovil.

This factory has been producing helicopters since 1915, and employs 3,000 workers on site, and up to 7,000 more in the supply chain. Certainly, this advanced site and skilled workforce could produce plenty of socially useful technology and equipment, but Graham doesn't mention that, nor even discuss the point.

Apparently for her, spending more public money on deadly weapons is a

good thing for workers in Britain, and never mind workers elsewhere who

might be on the receiving end of these weapons.



**AW159 Wildcat helicopters assembly at Leonardo**

**Labour's education reforms - another case of passing the buck**

Labour's new white paper on education, including the reform of the "Special Educational Needs" (SEN) system, is designed simply to cut costs. Local councils, which are responsible for paying for the extra help for SEN students, will have an £8bn deficit in their education budgets by next year, so the government's decided to pass this deficit on to schools...

But of course it has dressed this up as a "reform", which will reduce the number of students who qualify for the highest (most expensive) level of help under

their "Education, Health and Care Plans" or EHCPs. These EHCPs guarantee in law that local councils will provide students with the support they need, which could include placing them in more expensive special schools, where there are currently 160,000 pupils.

**Return policy to sender**

Since 2018 the number of students qualifying for EHCPs has risen by 80%, to nearly 500,000 pupils. This is a huge increase. But instead of trying to find out

why this could be, the government's first objective is to limit the number of EHCPs, and place more special needs students into mainstream schools. This means that SEN specialist staff in schools will be replaced with regular classroom teachers, who have had only the most basic SEN training, or they will be replaced with unqualified "learning assistants" on the minimum wage! Teachers and assistants are already taking official and unofficial strike action all around the country over their drastic workloads. This latest policy will spark more of it, for sure!

**Measles outbreak: society is going backwards!**

In the two first months of 2026, 195 confirmed measles cases were reported in England (two thirds were in London) - 25% more compared to the same period last year. And yet there is an effective vaccine against this very contagious and dangerous virus, which can be stopped from spreading when at least 95% of the population is covered.

In fact Britain had gained "measles-free" status from the World Health Organisation in 2016. And then lost it after the outbreaks of 2019, 2024 and

now 2026 - which killed 20 (mainly) children over this period. And this, when measles' deaths should be a thing of the past!

Most politicians and the media blame parents for not vaccinating their children and for holding anti-vax views. But if the new measles, mumps, rubella and varicella (MMRV) vaccination rates are at a low 83.7% (less than 55% in Hackney!), it is no doubt also because of the drastic cuts in NHS vaccination programmes.

The responsibility for following children's vaccination records has been passed from primary care trusts, to the now defunct NHS England, to the UK Health Security Agency (UKHSA). But since the aim of these "reorganisations" of the NHS has been to cut costs, fewer means are now available to operate a centralised system to keep proper track of children's vaccination records. It's not parents to blame for their kids getting and spreading measles; it's chaotic disorganisation and cuts.

## Mount Pleasant mail centre (London)

## From our friends in the North

Everyone loves a good old fashioned Hokey cokey, or as we like to call it the "votey pokey" - "we asked for a vote, we got told no, yes, no, yes, no...". We wanted to say clearly that we are against the bosses' attacks on deliveries with their Optimised Delivery Model (a.k.a. Outrageous Deluded Madness) before it even got trialled. Union officials pretending to give us a choice by offering a vote after the trials was pointless.

The vote we got was like asking a turkey to vote for cooking on Boxing Day

instead of Christmas day. This horrible and ludicrous alternative called "Heavy and Light Model" dreamt up by the Communication Workers' Union leaders, didn't even get a mention. Why the union officials are convinced that less of us can do more work, is the question we are all asking.

And there they go. Back into more secret talks about precisely that. More talks about how hard up the employer EP Group is and how it's one fine away from insolvency. None of us believes the



"independent" Ofcom is going to demand the billions that we make for the bosses to pocket. Let's stop the party games and let's start the fights to make our jobs the half-decent jobs they used to be!! ☐

- **Exposing the real problem - for once!**

The BBC's Monday morning exposure of the breakdown in postal deliveries, started with 20 workers phoning in, but soon there were many, many more, and all saying the same thing: there aren't enough of us to do the job!! So no, undelivered letters piling up isn't due to "storms and higher rates of illness among staff" as RM bosses claim, blaming the workers instead of themselves, for their job cuts and the "parcels first" policy! [*Workers' Fight bulletin 18/02/26*]

- **We aren't cooling off!**

Union leaders are in no rush to give us feedback on their "cosy chats" with the bosses regarding the attacks on USO. Yet we hear through the grapevine that the "dispute resolution process" has been "superseded" by the new talks between the government and RM! CWU leaders say that there'll be another 2 weeks of intense talks followed by 4 more weeks of talking? When it really takes 10 seconds to say that we refuse their Outrageous Delivery Madness and their attack on the USO. And that we want every worker on the same, best, Ts&Cs! [*Workers' Fight bulletin 04/03/26*]

- **Renationalisation!**

Oh, but union leaders are glad to see "how seriously the government is now taking this issue". By asking CEO Kretinsky to "explain" himself? Really? When we all know the answer: public service run for profit does not work and is thus incompatible with the USO. So the question really is, when are we going to put renationalisation back on the agenda? Because the union officials have no intention of doing so, busy as they are, performing for the "parliamentary select committee" circus! [*Workers' Fight bulletin 04/03/26*]

## King's Cross railway station (London)

## Not so great GBR

Rail Minister, "Lord" Hendy, explains on the cover of the March edition of *Rail Director*, how "optimistic" he is about Great British Rail (GBR): "*It will produce a better operating industry and better infrastructure...*"

If this is measured by the amount of engineering work going on since last Christmas, one would expect some serious improvement! Especially, considering Network Rail's boast regarding the amount of infrastructure works: the 2,454 "possessions" (i.e., closures) during the Christmas period alone! And never mind that some rail journeys became 3 times longer, or that

both the West Coast and the East Coast had engineering work at the same time.

Of course, the infrastructure work is needed to bring a very outdated system into the modern world... digital railways, modelled on the European Rail Traffic Management System. But that was 10 years ago! And it's still far from being completed thanks to different rail companies working with different systems. Yes, one of the great "achievements" of privatisation!

Now, on the East Coast Mainline, almost every other weekend Kings Cross station is closed for engineering work. So when rail minister Hendy says that



it "...will be a better railway for those using and working in the sector", it seems that doesn't include rail workers and passengers getting from A to B in the meantime. But he's spot on when he says that "*nobody's had a clue about where the railway is going*". ☐

- **It's unsafe!**

The Driver Advisory System (DAS) on some Hitachi trains is a real danger. Sometimes it tells us to speed up when we should be slowing down, and vice versa! It seems that the bosses and the DfT just wanted a cheap alternative to the systems which operated before and which worked just fine. Well, we're not ready to pay the price! [*Workers' Platform 04/03/26*]

- **"Rises" far short of need**

LNER wage rises so far (if we can call

them "rises") aren't keeping up with the price increases. And now there's this bloody war against Iran, which will push all prices up even further, (not just oil prices!), we're going to need a very hefty adjustment upwards! [*Workers' Platform 04/03/26*]

- **Discounts now!**

How come all railway workers don't get proper discounts when we buy food and drink on the stations? Some of the outlets offer a tiny discount, but this isn't offered universally, across the board. This used

to happen in the old BR days - so if the government wants us to believe in their "GBR" we suggest they sort this out, speedily! [*Workers' Platform 04/03/26*]

- **Depot or sweatshop?!**

At the Siemens depot in Hornsey, we work 12-hour shifts for 5 days in a row - that amounts to 60-hour weeks! No one should have to work 12-hour shifts. Did we just time travel back to the Victorian Age? [*Workers' Platform 04/03/26*]

**Ford Dagenham estate (Essex)****Ford Valencia on strike and we need one too!**

On 8 March, Ford workers at the Valencia plant went on strike for 48hrs against Ford's "restructuring" plans.

Production was brought down to zero, as hundreds of workers gathered in pickets at all the plant's entrances. Ford had announced that it was intending to cut 1,600 jobs from the total 4,600 workforce. It claimed that the demand for the hybrid Kuga had turned out to be

lower than expected!

In fact when Kuga production had started in 2024, it was talked up as a big deal - despite the discontinuation of the Mondeo, Galaxy and S-Max models in Valencia... Ford added that the automation they have introduced also means they "need" to cut jobs.

Ford is now trying to blackmail Valencia workers into accepting a pay freeze (same as at Dagenham), 15



minutes of unpaid overtime every day, and a total of 140 days of lay-offs! Obviously, workers are not taking it. Ford has already been forced to reduce the job cuts tally to 626 - and with more action it will go down to ZERO! ☐

**• Empty "glossy" package**

We've been checking the Early Retirement/Voluntary Redundancy packages on Ford's "Blue Oval" app - and they're rubbish! With 35 years seniority, Ford says it offers ~£220k lump sum, but around £150k comes from our pensions... i.e., our own money! And of the ~£70k that Ford's really offering, more than half is taxed! [Workers' Fight bulletin 11/03/26]

**• Equal pay for equal work!**

These packages were all about replacing grade 4 workers on tier-1 wages with grade 2 workers on tier-2! When all workers doing the same

job should be paid the same! These tiers need abolishing, urgently! [Workers' Fight bulletin 11/03/26]

**• The jobs they'd like to cut**

Engineers coming all the way from Germany were calibrating machines in Lion assembly at the end of Feb, to synchronise them with the assembly line and make them "autonomous". Ford wants to cut jobs of course. But we know how "well" these "autonomous" machines work, so let them try! [Workers' Fight bulletin 11/03/26]

**• No can do!**

Yes, just look at the driverless AVGs, meant to move racks of engines by

following tape on the floor. This was also to "save jobs". But the AVGs have so many problems that Lineside workers are asked to take over, using old-fashioned tow-tugs - except, due to automation-job-cuts, there aren't enough of us! [Workers' Fight bulletin 11/03/26]

**• Bosses can stay back...**

LLL (Logistics) and ISL (quality control) mates are fed up with this "timekeeping" nonsense! We're threatened with disciplinaries if we're a few minutes late to work, but when we're kept for longer or asked to work overtime that's supposed to be "normal"?! [Workers' Fight bulletin 11/03/26]

**BMW Mini centre (Cowley, Oxford)****• Time to get things moving!**

The Unite convenor's brief on the pay talks suggests it will be a long time before we get an offer! Despite "several months" of talks, BMW and Unite haven't even agreed on what they're talking about! Unite wants to stick to pay; BMW wants to link it to a 35-hour week. We can't wait all year, with oil prices shooting up again and all other prices sure to follow! [Workers' Fight bulletin 10/03/26]

**• We aren't paying!**

But while BMW is holding back on the pay offer, it's crying crocodile tears over the "economic outlook"... What we know is that we're in the midst of a cost of living crisis and the current/upcoming energy crisis will probably make this worse. We need a pay rise which makes up for all the previous years of real wage cuts! [Workers' Fight bulletin 10/03/26]

**• Can't trust a word they say**

BMW claims a 35-hour week would be enough to meet planned volumes for the rest of this year. Which is odd, since it just released a schedule adding

two Fridays to A-crew's shifts in April... [Workers' Fight bulletin 10/03/26]

**• Not just a few "bad apples"**

The recent article in the Oxford Mail exposed one example of what actually appears to be BMW policy - i.e., to threaten and "bully" us. When individual complaints are "investigated" managers are inevitably found blameless. Of course, if we stand up together when they try it on, they'll soon learn not to mess with us. [Workers' Fight bulletin 10/03/26]

**• Their backroom deals**

Unite put out a bulletin for R&H in the plant a few weeks ago, about our transfer to Unipart in July. But they didn't have anything to say except "we have asked for negotiations to continue regarding outstanding issues of pay and WTA [unpaid overtime]". Nothing at all about what is actually being said in these negotiations! And they claim to be "accountable" to us? [Workers' Fight bulletin 10/03/26]

**• In it for the dues...**

The only thing the bulletin was clear about, was that if we want to be involved in what they dare to call "the collective consultation process" on TUPE (how our contracts will be moved from R&H to



Unipart), we have to be in the union! They even said "any proposals on pay or TUPE will be shared with members only, and this includes any votes". But obviously, what is happening affects all workers, whether in the union or not, and actually we insist that everyone is informed, regardless! [Workers' Fight bulletin 10/03/26]

**• Half the workers... half-made minis?**

In many areas of the paintshop and wax, they've cut the number of workers so much that we're left with just one person doing both sides of the car! But why should anyone have to work harder running around the car in this way?! What would happen if MINIs came out with just one side done? [Workers' Fight bulletin 10/03/26]

## International

### US-Israel war on Iran: what price?

Trump's joint war with Netanyahu finally "opened" on Saturday 28 February when a huge bunker-buster-type bomb was dropped on the compound of Iran's Supreme Leader, Ayatollah Ali Khamenei. US generals call this "decapitation bombing".

Several top officials of the Iranian Revolutionary Guard Corps were also killed. And it seems that the Ayatollah's son - Mojtaba Khamenei - who has succeeded his father as Supreme Leader was also injured. At the time of writing, the bombing of the country has been going on for 2 weeks, day and night, and there is as yet no let-up. Trump says the war will stop when he decides. But he's already been forced to modify his aggression because of the effect on the oil supply from the Gulf states and the effect on the world oil market.

#### **Rotten leaders, rotten language**

Trump's reckless and uncontrolled comments, tweets and statements have reached new lows in the past days - matched only by his so-called Secretary of War, Pete Hegseth - a former Guantanamo guard and former serving soldier in Iraq and Afghanistan.

The fact that Hegseth makes official speeches about the war's progress as if he was describing a game on his Playstation says it all about his mentality.

For instance, after a US Tomahawk missile hit Minab Girls' Elementary School, killing 168-180 schoolgirls and staff, both Trump and Hegseth claimed that "the Iranians did it", until independent video evidence proved otherwise.

#### **It's not about nukes**

Of course this war has nothing to do with nuclear weapons, nor Iran's missile capability and even less to do with giving a helping hand to the protesters against the regime. A peace agreement was on the table, ready to be signed between the US and Iran's negotiators in Oman when the US abruptly broke off talks.

US Secretary of State, Marco Rubio's statement that Trump's hand was forced by Netanyahu, who wanted to start bombing Teheran on 28 February, is probably true. Of course Trump had been threatening to try to impose regime change all along. He'd called it a "horrible regime made of bad people"... And he



Smoke and flames over Teheran after US airstrikes on an oil depot, Saturday 7 March

had already ordered a large military build up in the region - in the middle of negotiations - with 2 aircraft carriers, 12 warships, more than 500 aircraft, along with 50,000 soldiers.

#### **So what's the aim?**

For western imperialist leaders regime change in Iran is certainly desirable... as long as they can choose the new leader. But the Israeli regime needs far more than that. The only solution which would guarantee their Jewish statehood, apartheid and annihilation of Palestinian lives would be to turn the clock all the way back to the time of puppet Shah Pahlavi's rule.

Not only were there no threats from Pahlavi's Iran, but in 1960 he fully recognised Israel's statehood. In those days, Iran was Israel's main supplier of oil. Israel and Iran collaborated on defence and the Israelis helped train Iran's security apparatus, including assisting in the formation of the Shah's brutal SAVAK secret police - a "worthy" forerunner to today's Ministry of Intelligence and the Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corps.

All of this said, for now, Trump's endgame is still not clear.

#### **Two asymmetric wars**

There is of course a second Israeli war taking place deep inside Lebanon. And this time round, the Israeli air force is bombing buildings in central Beirut and even the beach in its ruthless pursuit of Hezbollah. And let's repeat here that Hezbollah is no more a terrorist

organisation than the Israeli Defence Force is. It's merely opposed to the Israeli regime.

The death tolls in both these wars are climbing steadily: by 12 March, 1,444, Iranians had been killed and 18,551 injured. In contrast, 15 Israelis had been killed and 2,000 wounded. So far 11 US soldiers have been killed and 140-150 injured. There have been some deaths and injuries in the Gulf states. So yes, this is indeed a situation of a mammoth versus a mouse - even if the mouse is quite resilient and controls the Strait of Hormuz...

#### **The price of war...**

Since 2022, the US has spent £3.74 trillion on its military budget - equivalent to the GDP of Germany! Moreover, 60% of the war budget is raised as loans on the bond market and in the case of "emergency borrowing" for Ukraine and the Middle East, 100%. This military spending accounts for 15% of the increase in US national debt between 2022 (121% of GDP) and 2026 (126.8% of GDP!).

In fact the amount allocated for interest payments alone has surpassed the US budget for defence and Medicare! This is already being paid for by the population at large, and is projected to lead to further austerity cuts (education, health and infrastructure budgets) and rising inflation. The US working class can of course put a stop to this. Wars in history have always bred revolutions. This one could too! ☐

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](mailto:contact@w-fight.org), or by postal mail at:

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