

WORKERS' fight

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

WAR READY? NO, WE NEED TO BE REVOLUTION-READY!

Right now, it's obviously very useful for government ministers to talk up the threat of war, when they're under pressure to "grow" the economy. They can justify funnelling large amounts of public money into big British defence contractors like BAE Systems, Babcock International, Rolls Royce Holdings, QinetiQ, Leonardo and MBDA - among others. It certainly will provide a feel-good factor for their shareholders, if nobody else!

And of course, it is hoped that frightening the public over an imminent attack by Putin's Russian army, from "China" or even Trump's favourite demon, "Iran", no matter how far-fetched, will distract us all from the very real threat we face as the cost of living forces more and more of the working class into poverty and near-destitution.

No, Putin hasn't threatened London

The current head of Britain's armed forces, General "Sir" Roly Walker has now added his voice to that of retired General Richard Barrons, who has said the country needs to get "war ready".

Barrons claimed, in an interview in early October, that it had been justified to allow the armed forces to "run down" over the past 35 years, because there was no real danger of attack from anywhere. So, to use his expression, they had been "hollowed out". But now, according to him and Roly Walker, "the geopolitical situation in the world has changed dramatically" and today "we" face an "existential threat"!

They argue that huge investment in defence is now needed, to modernise the army, navy and airforce - and recruit a lot more soldiers... In fact Roly Walker knows something about government ministers that they don't even know about themselves: they are about to start a "frank conversation" with the public about the need to prepare for war, since "every citizen



will be asked to make sacrifices and to play their part in the defence of the nation"!

We need to smell a rat

Every working class person is already making sacrifices. The cost of living crisis has already driven 13.4 million people below the poverty line - that is 20% of the total population! This includes 4 million children, 7.7 million working age adults and 1.7 million pensioners.

And then there is the scandal of the one million young people between the ages of 18 and 24 who are not in employment, education or training - the so-called NEETs... Already there have been suggestions from certain quarters that they should be "sent to the army!" so that they can be "sorted out".

Yes, at times like these, when the capitalist class has become too decrepit to create useful jobs, and their system can only decline further, the militarisation of youth is a very convenient "solution". And what next? Forced labour?

All politicians, from right to left, apparently agree that the military budget must increase from 2.5% to 3% of GDP by 2030 (an estimated £100bn per year) and 3.5% by 2035 (~£150bn per year). That's more than a 100% increase in the next 9 years!

The "benefit" of profits?

Yes, and since implausible "global threats" justify unaffordable weapons, the money is going to be taken out of the welfare budget.

Labour's Wes Streeting, now defence secretary, is selling the "benefit" of his new Defence Ministry, which he says will "boost British jobs and British industry". He just forgot to add, "and boost private profits"!

All of these parties show how far they're ready to go in order to "defend" the interests of the capitalist class, by promising more public money straight into their pockets. And this money, they intend to take from the poorest section of the working class - unless we refuse to allow it! ☐

War on the Houthis: another imperialist crusade

The Houthi regime in northwestern Yemen has, in the past week, been launching attacks across the Saudi Arabian border. It attacked Riyadh international airport and hit the headquarters of Saudi Aramco, the world's largest oil company using drones and missiles - it has no aircraft.

These attacks are in response to the ongoing offensive against the Houthis by the Saudi-British and US coalition, which is attempting to re-install an imperialist-friendly Yemeni puppet government. So Labour's Defence Secretary said the attack on the airport was "... a completely contemptible action and it's one of the reasons why the UK is providing support to Saudi Arabia". Unsurprisingly, and like all previous British PMs, Burnham allies himself with Saudi's blood-soaked Salafist monarchy - in the name of "protecting civilians".

Except this does not apply to the Yemeni civilians of Sanaa, Yemen's capital, which has been governed by the Houthis ever since 2014. When Saudi airstrikes targeted Sanaa's airport on 13 July this year, the BBC claimed it was because "The terrorist Houthi militias, backed by the Iranian regime, [...] allowed an Iranian plane to violate Yemeni territory, so consequently, the airport runway was targeted". This strike hit a flight from Teheran carrying Houthi officials - but also 200 Yemeni patients who'd been receiving medical treatment in Iran.

A necessary reliance on Iran

British governments and their imperialist allies characterise the Houthis as "terrorists" and do not recognise that they represent the "self-determination" of the Shia minority in Yemen and their established government in the North-West. Indeed, ever since the move towards independence from colonial rule in the 1960s, successive British governments, along with the Saudis, have sponsored western-friendly regimes in Yemen to ensure that this strategic territory - which guards access to Suez from the south - remains in imperialism-friendly hands.

As a result all Houthi-controlled territory has been under international blockade for a decade - and hence their reliance on Iran's assistance. By now, 43,000 civilians have died waiting for medical treatment. Sanaa airport is the only air route for international aid, which is often halted due to raids by the Saudi-led coalition. The main route for food supplies is actually Hodeidah port, but the latter has been destroyed several times over by US, British, Saudi, and Israeli bombing.

Imperialists massacre civilians

In 2024-25, the 2022 truce which had ended an 8-year civil war was broken by the extensive bombing campaign



undertaken by US-British aircraft (Operations Poseidon Archer and Rough Rider). This was in response to the Houthi missiles sent into Israel in support of Gaza's Palestinians. Israeli airstrikes followed. In all, more than 3,500 Yemenis, mainly civilians, of course, were killed.

Breaking truces is a habit when it comes to US-British forces: more than 2,000 civilians were killed across Palestine, Lebanon, Yemen and Iran by US-Israeli and Saudi airstrikes after the signing of the 7 June 2026 Islamabad Memorandum, which established that 60-day "ceasefire" between the US and its allies, and Iran.

Taking back the Red Sea route

On 30 July, Houthi leader, Abdulmalik al-Houthi explained what this was really about: "Attacks on the Islamic Republic of Iran, Lebanon, Palestine, and Syria are all calculated efforts to remove any obstacles standing in the way of a hegemonic plan". And of course what he means is the full restoration of imperialist hegemony over the region, with the help of proxies and puppets.

In early August, the Houthis expanded their control to Yemen's strategic West coast and took the coastal cities of Dhubab and Mokha, on the Bab-el-Mandeb strait - vital for Red Sea trade. They struck 8 oil tankers, hit Aramco oil refineries in Jizan and Riyadh, and the East-West oil pipeline - which allows the Saudis to bypass the still blockaded Strait of Hormuz by loading oil at the Yanbu Red Sea port.

The combined disruption to trade as a result, amounts to losses of \$40bn/day (~3% of world GDP!) and a 40% reduction in Saudi oil production! The effect on worldwide price inflation is expected to be at least +6%.

British "defence"

While the US announced it wouldn't intervene directly this time, it called upon

a Mecca Joint Defence Agreement which binds Turkey and Pakistan to support Saudi forces. As for Britain, Burnham "agreed to the request for defensive air-to-air refuelling to secure the interests of Britain and the wider region [...] we need to keep those pathways open".

This "defensive" use of an RAF Voyager from the British base in Cyprus, actually refuels Saudi jets involved in the offensive "Operation Dawn" bombing campaign, launched this October. It involves 385 Saudi fighter jets, including 81 Tornados and 72 Typhoons made in Britain. Hence the RAF refuelling so they can drop their British-made Paveway and BL-55 cluster bombs! These are courtesy of BAE systems, Raytheon UK and Hunting Engineering. Indeed, 300 British army personnel and 7,000 BAE staff are employed across 7 locations in Saudi Arabia to serve regional imperialist interests.

...and its consequences

During the first week of "Operation Dawn", 3,260 Houthis were "neutralised" by strikes on detainees in Al-Hazm prison, Sanaa Hospital buildings, Taiz girls' school, and Hodeidah and Marib displacement camps. Today, 217,000 Yemenis are trying to cross the Red Sea on little boats to reach Djibouti's refugee camps. They are not fleeing "the Houthis".

Over the past 64 years (dating back to 1962), Yemen, one of the poorest countries in the world, has rarely been free of conflict and famine. But deaths, displacement and starvation have escalated exponentially since the Saudi-led intervention in 2015. More than 150,000 people have been killed directly by military action, airstrikes, shelling, and frontline fighting. Over 227,000 people have died from the consequences of the war and 4.5m are displaced. Today 18m - more than half the population - live on the brink of starvation and 2.2m children have acute malnutrition - all victims of this imperialist-sponsored war. □

French youth don't just demand better education!

Protests by French high school students against the systematic under-funding of schools by the state started at the end of September. And at the time of writing these protests continue - and many more workers have joined them.

The protests began in the working-class suburbs of Paris and then spread like wildfire. On 6 October, more than half of all high schools were blockaded and almost all universities were shut in solidarity. Between 260 and 450,000 protesters took to the streets that day: school and university students, teachers, parents and public sector unions, standing in solidarity with the school students' demands. And now the movement has spread to Belgium and even to French Guiana and Mayotte!

No future!

The youth are exposing the government's slogan of "equal opportunities" as empty hype: resources for education have been cut drastically, hitting the poorest areas, not the rich. In the working class districts, schools lack teachers, with overcrowded classes of at least 35 pupils. School buildings urgently need renovation, with leaking and collapsing roofs, etc... There aren't even enough toilets!

The French teenagers have been facing unprecedented attacks on their school blockades by armed riot police. Many have been severely injured and over 5,060 arrested - which is also unprecedented. In fact, the protests started in areas like Paris Saint-Denis, where youngsters already have to

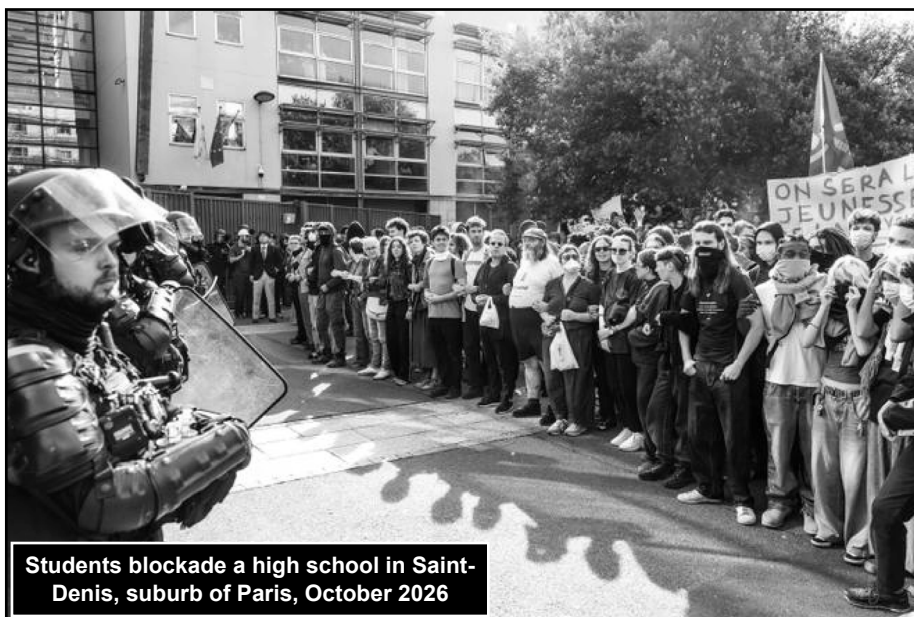
face police harassment and racism. In Carcassonne, police officers were caught on video referring to the protesting youth with racist slurs.

A general strike?

But French government ministers are just like ministers everywhere else - they systematically duck their responsibilities! Education Minister Edouard Geffray initially said it was impossible to respond to the school students' demands because there were "too many of them" and because they were "too local"! In fact, he complained that there needed to be

"national" demands!

Well, the school students know what they want. And by now, their demands for better education also include the general demands of the workers who are joining their protests - and helping defend them against the police: jobs, training, decent wages, a cut in the cost of living and cost of housing and transport, lower fuel prices... Indeed these were the same demands put forward in 2018-2020 during the blockades mounted by workers in "Yellow Vests" - and today, the yellow vests are back! ☐



Students blockade a high school in Saint-Denis, suburb of Paris, October 2026

Sadiq Khan's made London's traffic problems worse

Ten years after the arrival of "dockless" e-bikes in London, the Mayor Sadiq Khan wants to regulate them. Various private companies have launched these bike schemes, and the bikes clog up the pavements in certain areas, blocking access for pedestrians. Not to mention the reckless riding of many of the users, as the bikes can travel much faster than the average pedal bike rider will go!

But at the same time, Khan's policies have been clogging up London's roads.

His "pro-cycling" policies (in the name of "the environment") have made all other journeys longer. These cycle lanes have not been created with the proper infrastructure which would make them safe and compatible with other road users. Often they are simply a new white line painted on the road, sometimes with flimsy bollards ("wands") cutting the road width in half, in places!

The effect is that bus speeds in London have fallen and journeys slowed down. Yet

buses remain the most-used form of public transport, with 1.8 billion journeys last year compared to 500 million bicycle journeys.

The road conditions are a curse for drivers of all kinds of course. Especially delivery drivers - including Royal Mail deliveries but also ambulances! Creating a London road system that works for everyone cannot be done on the cheap, but requires proper planning and serious infrastructure. That is certainly not on Khan's, nor any mayor's, "to do" list.

In this society, politics and sport must mix!

It's official policy that politics and sport shouldn't mix. So Irish football players and fans were criticised for considering to boycott Ireland's two matches against Israel last month. In the end, the team voted 14 to 8 to play the matches. But the fans staged protests of their own - so officials decided to move the match out of Ireland to Serbia!

Of course, officials have no problem mixing sport and politics when it suits them. The International Olympic Committee banned Russian and

Belorussian athletes from competing under their respective flags after Russia's invasion of Ukraine.

The "beautiful" game may well be an industry ruled by the law of profit, but without the fans and supporters, there'd be no need for players... And so too in the music industry. In September, Ed Sheeran tried to remain aloof from the views not only of his fans, but of his support acts. He claimed "not to be a political commentator of any kind", after the owner of the concert venues

gave an ultimatum to him to either drop Macklemore from his line-up for saying "Free Palestine", or have his concerts cancelled.

Sheeran wanted to remain "impartial" to the plight of the Palestinians, and his concerts went ahead - but without any support acts after they all pulled out... as did many fans. So yes, in this world of crisis and conflict, money may talk, but fans can often talk louder.

Their politics

Politicians' promises about pounds in (empty) pockets

Party conference season saw more promises to "grow the economy". But nobody knows how.

Labour primed the media to expect a budget from John Healey aimed at "providing breathing space" for the struggling majority in the working class. But with the budget due at the end of October the Chancellor wouldn't spell anything out.

Kemi's advice: make war!

Tory leader, Kemi Badenoch repeats at every PMQs that the budget for war must be increased and that the money must be taken from welfare. QED! And Laura Trott, Tory shadow education secretary, attacked Labour's plans for greater technical education from age 14 as a way of "blaming schools for the NEETs crisis".

But she herself blames the 1 million 16-24 year-olds not in education, jobs or vocational training - a number which ballooned under 14 years of Conservative rule - on the reluctance of the youth to work. It's the old refrain: they would rather live on benefits!

This myth should be put to sleep

The myth that youngsters are staying in bed so that they can get £84.63 a week



Badenoch and shadow defence secretary Cartledge, in a Boxer armoured army vehicle

- and if diagnosed with a disability, an extra £50-£100 (depending on severity) is precisely that - a myth. But the minimum wage at £12.71/hr (which would pay around £500/week) is hardly worth getting out of bed for either! Anyway, what few vacancies there are, require experience any NEET cannot possibly have and are often only part-time! And there is no question of the bosses providing meaningful training at their own cost. In the past this has only been offered when the government provided them with generous subsidies!

Tax the scape-goaters!

Trott said it must be "made easier" for bosses to employ youth. But what she meant was that the bosses' national insurance contributions - a "tax" shared by both workers and bosses - must be cut.

So, it's business as usual - unable to resolve the crisis of their system, the bosses are happy that politicians point fingers at one section or another of the working class: the young, the elderly, or "migrants". When in fact, the real problem - cause and effect - is them! □

The Green Party's swing to the "left"..?

The Green Party conference this year voted for the motion "Zionism is Racism" by 1,022 votes to 813, which means this is now official party policy. Cue horrified outcry from all the media, calling for Zack Polanski to resign as leader and blaming him for the party's failure to win the Holborn by-election in Keir Starmer's old seat: Labour got 12,292 votes to Polanski's 8,928 (turnout was only 38.76%).

Zionism is racism

The "Zionism is racism" resolution was not an invention of Green Party delegates. There is a long history of proposals using this exact same formulation. In 1975, in the middle of the Cold War, the then USSR managed to get a "Zionism is Racism" motion passed at the UN. This remained in place as ostensible UN policy until the collapse of the Soviet Union in 1991, when it was revoked.

But in fact anti-Zionism has always been the position held by socialist and communist parties - including the Bolsheviks - who stood for international working class unity, while taking into account the persecution of the Jewish people on the grounds of their religion and the possible need for a "Jewish" homeland. That said, they had no time for Zionism, which stood for an exclusive Jewish state,

with rights only for Jewish people.

Benefiting from Labour's "shift"

It's true that the reason such a motion ended up being voted for at the Green Party conference, has a lot to do with Polanski's leadership. His explicit support for Gaza and the Palestinians, under attack by the Israeli army under Netanyahu's far-right ultra-Zionist government was (and is), all the more significant because he is Jewish.

This certainly resulted in an influx of pro-Palestinians - especially from the Muslim community - but also the "left", which was reacting against what it saw as Labour's shift to the right under Starmer. Some were former supporters of the anti-Zionist Jeremy Corbyn - still accused by the political establishment of anti-Semitism. This conflation thus continues!

And beating Reform

But it wasn't only this issue which led to an increase in the Greens' popularity. For a short while, while Labour was floundering under Starmer, the Greens were seen as the party best-placed to stop Reform winning, as was the case in the Gorton and Denton by-election on 26 February this year. Reform lost with 28.7% of the vote to the Green's Hannah Spencer, who got

40.7% - and she was elected.

Now that Andy Burnham has managed (maybe) to revive Labour's image, perhaps some of the former Labour "left" will abandon the Greens and return to Labour's fold! The Green Party old guard, who voted against the resolution, will hope so!

Class Struggle n° 128

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Housing

Spain's housing crisis spawns an election

In September, the eviction of Maricarmen Abascal sparked massive protests across Spain. The 87-year-old was forcibly removed, on a stretcher, from the home she'd lived in for 71 years, after the landlord increased her rent from the equivalent of £428/month to £2,247/m. Even the landlord's reduction to £1,399/m was still £254 more than her monthly pension! Two weeks later, she died in the hospital she was taken to after the eviction, adding to the protesters' anger.

The "landlord" is the private investment company "Urbagestión", which has been buying up properties in Madrid since 2005. Such companies have become more common since the 2008 financial crisis, when investment funds bought up repossessed homes and took over unpaid mortgages from banks at low prices. As is the case all over the world, the housing situation has deteriorated; rents and mortgage costs have sky-rocketed - and particularly from 2015 onwards. By 2022, only 1.1% of households lived in "social housing" - in contrast to the EU average of over 6%.

Sánchez fails to save the day

Students, unemployed youth, pensioners, workers who can't afford decent housing, are just some of those who have been taking to the streets. They have erected tent cities, in a context of general discontent towards the cost-of-living crisis, and anger against the government and local authorities (which also have responsibilities for housing).

The protests were reinforced further by the failure of the coalition government - led by Spain's Socialist Party President Pedro Sánchez, to pass emergency legislation which was aimed at protecting tenants in rented

accommodation... Although protesters said it was too little, too late, anyway. And no surprise there, either!

It is certainly too late for Sánchez, who presides over a parliamentary minority, and who has now had to call a snap general election for 29 November, one year earlier than scheduled.

Attempting to rescue his political career, with Parliament dissolved, he's now reissued those housing decrees, but which still require parliament's approval. He has made "affordable housing" a key election promise. Never mind that his government had just approved more cash for defence, than the total promised for housing over the next 4 years.

Where are the workers?

Now, the leaders of two major trade unions in Spain (CCOO and UGT, which represent workers from many different

sectors) have called for a "general strike" on the 11 November, for wage rises and rent controls, among other things. On 14 October, teachers in Madrid's state secondary schools and colleges will have started an all-out strike for higher wages, less workload, smaller classes... Some university workers in Madrid are also taking strike action. And nationwide, doctors are getting ready for an all-out strike.

When the working class fights for its own interests - this is the best antidote to the right and the far right, like Vox for instance, who hope to capitalise in the snap election, out of the failures of the "left" reformists to tackle the crisis. So let's hope that this new activity on the part of the organised working class opens up the possibility of truly radical change. □



Protesters in Madrid, October 2026. One banner reads: "Looking for flat - selling my kidney"

...and ours, right here in "Old Blighty"!

Of course, there is a housing crisis in just about every country - across both the developed and under-developed world. There has never been adequate investment in social housing, but as the crisis has dragged on and got worse, cash-strapped governments have allowed private landlords and large investment funds to "enter" the market with little or no regulation, and as a result rents have shot up.

Here in Britain, we need to ask ourselves why we aren't also out on the streets protesting, just like the Spanish! In our big cities, rents are just unaffordable, and it's created an exodus of young (and old) workers... and thus pushed up rents everywhere else. The homes shortfall nationally here in Britain is between 4-6m (!!) and over 1.1m in London alone (compared to Spain's much

lesser shortfall of 700,000).

No ray of hope?

Re-instated housing secretary Angela Rayner said there's only a "slim chance" that the promised 1.5m new homes in England can be built before the next general election. Since July 2024, 437,900 (29% of the promised total) have been built. But out of those, only a minority are "social" or "affordable" housing.

In fact, Labour's chair of the Housing Committee is urging the government to spend its planned £39bn fund for affordable housing as soon as possible, rather than wait until after the next election. Whether it will do so is another question, given the government's priorities...

And nevermind the 135,580

households who are homeless and in temporary accommodation - up 4% in a year. Among them, there are 177,500 children - a 5% increase. Both, are all-time records.

Go live in a skip

Meanwhile, those who can afford rent, are crammed into shared flats and studio rooms. Channel 4's "Amazing Spaces" (with over-the-top joy) shows how tiny spaces - toilet blocks, skips, buses, boats, etc., are being "transformed" by those who can't afford any other roof over their heads!

Of course, the housing rot in Britain started earlier than in Spain, in fact since Thatcher opened up council housing to private ownership in the 1980s. But that's even more reason to get out on the streets and protest for decent housing!

Ford Dagenham estate (Essex)**Ford fingers in the militarisation pie**

The government is spending £4bn replacing 13,000 old army vehicles. And Ford, in collaboration with US defence giant General Dynamics and engineering company Ricardo, is bidding for the £2bn contract to produce "light mobility" vehicles.

At Dagenham, four Rangers have already arrived and been sent to the Engineering Centre at Dunton. There, they will be turned into military prototypes, so that Ford can try to prove that it should get the money - and that production, including the 3-litre diesel engine and potentially the bodywork,

should come to Dagenham.

This is being presented by Ford management at Dagenham as a way to "save" jobs - which, by the way, is the same argument used by the other companies selected for the bidding: JLR, Ineos, Toyota, Mercedes, Chevrolet/GM and Renault/Arquus! Yes, all these companies are trying to ride the wave of increased military spending and siphon more of taxpayers' money - while telling us that it is for our own good!

The bosses have never "saved" jobs, they only "save" their greedy shareholders' profits. We know very



well that the only way jobs are "saved" is when we fight against the bosses' turn of the screw. As for the production of useful goods for society, instead of deadly machines, we will have to take over the running of society from the bosses altogether! ☐

- **95 years of profits taken out of us!**

It was the 95th anniversary of Ford Dagenham last Friday: managers issued Ford workers (only) with "tickets" for a free BBQ'd meal in Darkside - so that no "outsiders" could sneak in? Nor get that celebratory T-shirt with Ford's (iconic!) logo on it (which might sell well on e-Bay!)? One good thing: we got to go home early... [Workers' Fight bulletin 07/10/26]

- **We can stop too**

Ford's mean streak was glowing brighter than ever, with their exclusion from this cheap "celebration", of all the cleaners,

security, Lineside, quality control and all other contract workers! Worse, the contract bosses told us to carry on working (despite no production going on!). Should we remind them that without us, the works would grind to a halt? [Workers' Fight bulletin 07/10/26]

- **There is a lake somewhere...**

Managers tried to recoup the early finish on Friday by speeding up assembly on Monday and Tuesday... Fortunately, we were still in a "celebratory mood" and told them where to go jump. [Workers' Fight bulletin 07/10/26]

- **What's cooking?**

A group of top HR managers, surrounded by the usual blue-eyed boys and girls,

were visiting the Jetty and the engine plant this week... which makes it the 3rd week in a row that bigwigs have visited the plant. Something must be cooking when Ford royalty queues up to pay us a visit! [Workers' Fight bulletin 07/10/26]

- **They should "disappear" more often**

It's been total chaos on the Panther mini-shift - a few days ago, 700 heads went missing... How can managers just "lose" 700 heads? Or did someone make them disappear? Anyway, we had a good long break instead of working overlaps... And if more chaos means more breaks, bring it on! [Workers' Fight bulletin 07/10/26]

BMW Mini centre (Cowley, Oxford)**"Working time account" - a system on borrowed time**

In May, BMW imposed a "35-hour" week to start in June. In practice, the working week at Cowley remained identical till the end of September, with the first half hour on the early shift and the last on the late/night shift paid as hours to our individual "working time accounts", which must be kept within certain limits to ensure payment for BMW's frequent plant closures. The only thing that went down by two hours a week was our wage!

Now, we're actually working a 35-hour week - as those extra half hours have been taken off the day. But only, we

are told, until the week-long shutdown beginning on 28 October. But the extra hours "banked" by August could not even cover one of the two shutdown weeks! BMW already anticipated this and has forced permanent workers to "buy back" 6 hours a week by docking our wages.

Yes, BMW makes all of us work extra hours under the threat of going unpaid during factory closures which happen above and beyond annual leave. In the meantime the lines are going faster than ever. It's rumoured that October's "week off" will be followed by another, thanks to this drive for (over-) production. In



December and January another 3 weeks are already scheduled for closure. BMW makes no attempt to hide the purpose of its working time banking - to force us to work extra time at our own expense. It's a system long out of credit. We need to call in the debt! ☐

- **Stopping the shutdown stockpile**

We are already hearing that there will be extra weeks of shutdown this year, and yet the line is running faster than ever! For BMW this is killing two birds with one stone - more cars, while paying us for fewer weeks. So yes, we all want longer breaks away from the plant, but BMW should pay in full for them - no WTA

(unpaid leave)! - and the pace must slow down! [Workers' Fight bulletin 06/10/26]

- **Do as I say...**

Workmates learning new jobs on the line are struggling, which is not surprising since they start on the job with the line at full speed! Managers say "this is the best way to learn". Not that they've learnt anything themselves! [Workers' Fight bulletin 06/10/26]

- **Not just for Xmas!**

Both here and in Swindon, managers are telling us that BMW doesn't have money to pay the Xmas bonus. Really? Well we don't believe a word of it. However if they don't want to pay this money as a bonus, - they can consolidate it into our pay, no problem! [Workers' Fight bulletin 06/10/26]

King's Cross railway station (London)**Bedford crash report: long list of failures**

The preliminary investigation into the June 2026 Bedford crash confirms that the driver of the EMR train from Corby, which hit the Nottingham train (a new Class 810 Aurora) did pass a red signal. Why he kept accelerating is still not clear. But that is only part of the story. This signal wasn't fitted with a Train Protection Warning System, which can automatically brake a train passing at red.

Surprisingly, the regulations allow an exception for signals which, if breached, could lead only to a rear-end collision with a train travelling in the same direction. Exactly what happened here!

The unscheduled stop made by the Nottingham train, (the "cause" of

the crash) was due to an undetected fault in the warning system: the AWS electromagnet was mistakenly set 16mm below the railhead, so the train most likely failed to detect it and received a warning as though the signal were yellow or red even though it was green.

Behind this inconsistent fitting of warning systems is Network Rail's cost-cutting target of £100m/year. One target for cuts are the old fashioned lineside signal-post telephones which drivers have to climb down to use. But one of these proved to be the only way signalling could be called after the crash - both trains lost electrical power, so no railway emergency calls from the cab could be made. Staff also had to go out onto the



track and physically protect neighbouring lines using track-circuit operating clips.

This crash which killed a driver and injured 160 passengers was caused by a chain of missing, failed and inadequate safety devices, out-of-date signalling and disjointed, belated modernisation-on-the-cheap. It wasn't driver error. ☐

• Our strike is on!

Gate Gourmet is trying to get us to call off our strike over pay! Their offer of 42p/hr for the lowest grades, up to 48p/hr for team leaders in London, means we'd still be paid less than the London living wage! For up the line, the increase is even less: between 32p and 46p for the highest grades! And what about sick pay and free travel?

So... everyone is welcome to come and say "hi" to our first (ever!) strike pickets this Friday/Saturday: 8am to 12pm!! [Workers' Platform 14/10/26]

• And we need payment!

GG bosses also wanted to remind us that we won't get paid during those strikes. As if we didn't know! But why shouldn't they pay us? They force us to go on strike to get the pay rise we are due. Payment for strike days should be part of our (and everyone else's!) pay demands. [Workers' Platform 14/10/26]

• Negotiate in front of us!

For gate line workers, LNER's offer of a 3.6% rise (for all workers except drivers) includes a provision that some of us can agree (volunteer!) to sell tickets at the

gate. We're not sure if that would mean we're upgraded to RPOs, paid as RPOs, or some other "arrangement". Apparently the RMT is already negotiating over this, but we don't know any of the details. Why is that? [Workers' Platform 14/10/26]

• Let's turn this around!

Avanti OCS bosses keep deducting a full hour from our pay, even when we're only a few seconds late clocking in! Most of the time, this is due to delays on public transport! So, when the train is delayed by a few seconds, will they pay us for an extra hour? [Workers' Platform 14/10/26]

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

The blue shirts in Mail Centres tell us red shirts and no shirts (temps) in Delivery Offices how things used to be: work came in to MCs and the work went out to DOs. Nothing came back from DOs, unless you "snuck it in it yer kack's" (trousers!)!

All we see now, thanks to Royal Mail's slack Universal Service Obligation delivery targets, is Delivery Offices full of work - and some of it sent back with no reason to Mail Centres! And that's

where the whole new "Delivery Method 2026" (DM26) plan falls apart. Managers end up delaying the work, which simply means more work the next day. Gaffers knew that for years. It's not rocket science.

Thanks to the greedy owners of the postal service, letter carriers are underfunded and the whole thing is teetering on the verge of collapse. There's not one part of the job that doesn't need improvement. The fittings,



the vehicles, the offices, the technology. And yet, the bosses expect the shirts to deliver 21st century standards, with 18th century conditions? So that shareholders get their dividends? Not bloody likely! ☐

• The stable door and horse come to mind...

CWU leaders have finally given up their charade that everything was hunky-dory in Delivery-Method-2026-land, and announced on Friday "a pause" to the "DM26" attacks on our conditions. In fact, DUMs have already implemented DM26 in the vast majority of DOs - and we've already been "pausing" it - by refusing to work it! [Workers' Fight bulletin 14/10/26]

• Pause... and rewind!

Why are delivery rounds with just one

worker per van becoming the rule? We used to be two, not just so that we could share the work, but also because of safety issues. So, more than a "pause" to DM26, what we want is a total "rollback" of the bosses' attacks - which only we can enforce! [Workers' Fight bulletin 14/10/26]

• Working better, or just more?

DUMs are "revising" walks, making them longer. While one day half the frame gets priority and the next day the other half, 1st class and tracked will still have us walking almost the whole route. Cue more late finishes, with it getting dark

in a couple of months? Or simply (a lot!) more undelivered mail coming back to the office?! [Workers' Fight bulletin 14/10/26]

• Resting lorry

On the Platform, a 7.5T lorry from last century broke down on Monday... which meant that, for two hours, we were supposed to work around the broken lorry on the busiest day of the week. But some of us took a leaf out of the lorry's book and just took a rest. [Workers' Fight bulletin 14/10/26]

International

Iran: bombed and sanctioned, the workers still fight!

Nowadays if there's any kind of attack or hoax to do with the military a finger is pointed at "Iran". But it's the Iranian people who are the ones under constant attack - from outside - and inside.

On 8 October, Washington announced more sanctions against Iran's oil fleet. This follows the US blockade of Iranian ports and the renewed bombings in August and September - mainly targeting tankers and the workers on board - after a failed ceasefire agreement. These attacks are part of Washington's "Operation Economic Outcast", aimed at strangling Iran economically.

The Gulf states comply

Washington is also pressuring other countries to implement these sanctions. On 23 September, the UAE's central bank had to block transactions involving the Iranian Bank Melli. The UAE, as well as Oman, Iraq, Azerbaijan, Georgia and Turkmenistan, had to suspend flights operated by Iranian airlines.

Egypt's Banque Misr branches in the UAE were also threatened with closure, supposedly because they were involved in transactions linked to Iran. The US administration has even threatened sanctions against Chinese banks and businesses - but China hasn't complied and has accused Trump of acting illegally.



Healthcare workers protest low wages, poor working conditions and rising prices, Tehran, June 2026

The population pays the price!

It is, of course, working people who are paying the price of the West's economic warfare against Iran. The regime is rationing fuel and long queues can be seen at petrol stations. In September, petrol prices, for fuel over and above a 110-litre monthly allowance, doubled. Food prices are also soaring: inflation reached 84%! The collapse of the currency and restrictions on imports are making basic necessities increasingly unaffordable.

But, squeezed between Western sanctions and Iran's repressive regime,

workers have gone on strike in hospitals over wages and working conditions, including in Tehran and Nishapur. Other strikes over delayed wages and job cuts have taken place in the oil subcontracting sector in Ahvaz. In Mahshahr, in Khuzestan, workers at TJPC (Takhte Jamshid Petrochemical Complex) have led protests against job cuts, having already gone on strike in December 2025 and July 2026.

Conscious workers are fighting for their demands and confronting the regime's repression, while at the same time denouncing Western bombings and sanctions! □

The diesel crisis and Trump's politicking

Diesel is the vital backbone of the global economy, powering essential infrastructure such as heavy freight, agriculture, construction, manufacturing, and public health systems due to its high energy density and efficiency.

On 2 October, its price hit a record £2 a litre. When the war against Iran began on 28 February, it was £1.42 per litre. That is a rise of more than 40% in 7 months. For a typical 55-litre car, a full tank now costs around £110 - nearly £32 more than before the war. Diesel prices are rising even faster than crude oil prices, largely because of a shortage of refined fuel. Gulf crude oil exports are now around 91% of their pre-war levels and refined-fuel exports are at 60%.

Obviously, it's Trump's war on Iran

and the closure of the Strait of Hormuz that's the problem. However ahead of US elections on 4 November, Trump has blamed the shortage of refined diesel on the bombing of Russian refineries by Ukraine. Nothing to do with him, apparently!

Suppliers' and refiners' bonanza

What's more, as Gulf supplies collapsed, Britain and the rest of Europe increasingly turned to the US for fuel. US exports surged to around 1.3 million barrels a day, more than 20% above their 2025 level, while US diesel stocks fell to their lowest seasonal level in over 40 years. And with demand vastly outstripping supply, US refiners coined it in! Marathon Petroleum, Valero and Phillips 66 made around £9.5 billion between them in 2026, up from about

£2.2 billion a year earlier!

Politics and war are economics

Yes, the bosses selling into the shortage are enjoying bumper profits, despite the release of oil reserves by governments (in March, the International Energy Agency authorised a record 400-million-barrel release). Now the G7 has agreed further releases of crude oil and diesel. But there is an obvious problem. Releasing more crude oil does not automatically mean more diesel. And with scarcity driving up profits, why would refinery bosses increase supply? Well actually they might. Because otherwise global trade relying on diesel to move it, comes to a halt. This is another reason why Trump has rowed back on the sanctions on Russia, which remains the main supplier of diesel to the US.

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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