

WORKERS' fight



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

NO, THE WORLD HASN'T CHANGED; IT'S THE SAME ROTTEN, BLOODY, SYSTEM - AND IT NEEDS TO GO!

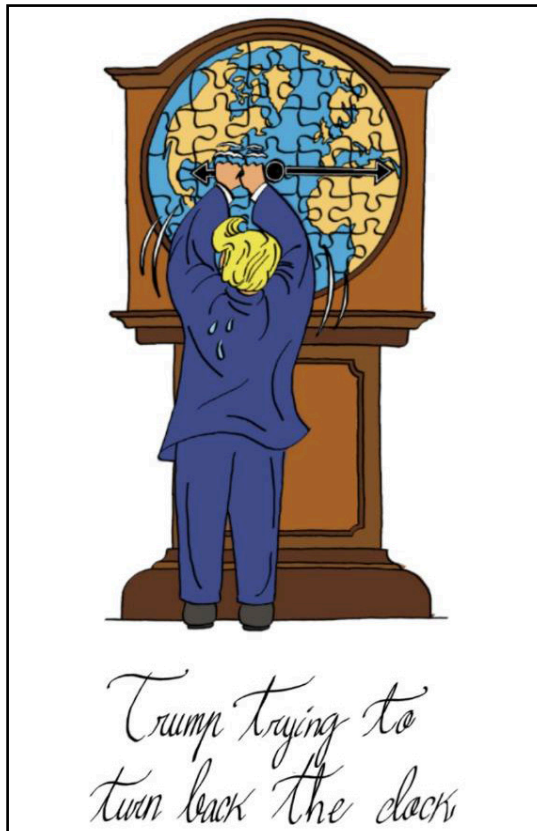
President Trump's "senior counsellor for trade and manufacturing", Peter Navarro, was chosen because he'd written a book called "Death by China...". An ideal "anti-China" candidate for Mr Donald's Mickey-Mouse cabinet, which has now decided to declare all-out "Trade War" against the Chinese economy - applying ever-rising tariffs, now reaching 145%!

As would be expected from anyone close to Trump, Navarro believes in conspiracies. He explained in an article printed in the *Financial Times* that the USA is in "a state of national emergency" and all because of a "broken system of international trade... rigged against America". The mighty US is a tragic victim - attacked and beaten up by the rest of the world: "cheated, looted, raped, pillaged, and plundered".

Never mind that it was the USA which wrote the rules of world trade and which is the dominant force behind the World Trade Organisation and the International Monetary Fund - which have certainly plundered and pillaged many poor countries over the past decades.

Neither does Peter Navarro explain how it is that the US has still somehow managed to be the wealthiest country in the world, with dominant industries in tech, finance, and social media: Google, Microsoft, Apple, Amazon, Nvidia, Meta, Alphabet, Oracle, etc... And by the way, many of which have large parts of their production located in... China! As, of course, does Elon Musk's Tesla...

China may have the world's largest economy, but what counts is how this is spread over its 1.4bn people. Compared to the gross national income of the US, which works out at \$89,678 per head of its 340m population, each head in China has just \$13,873; meaning the "poor" US is six times as wealthy...



*Trump trying to
turn back the clock*

They have our backs? Oh sure!

The mayhem on the world's stock exchanges that followed Trump's tariffs announcement, to the capitalists class's utter horror, would have been a reason to fall about laughing, were it not for the fact that when trillions are wiped off the markets, workers' pensions and livelihoods are at risk.

Here in Britain, Keir Starmer and Rachel Reeves treated workers to a pop-up at the Jaguar Land Rover factory where they made soothing noises about how they "have got our backs"... Yes, as in Reeves' warfare, not welfare, cutting pensioners' fuel allowance, and abandoning the NHS and elderly social care to the dogs.

For good measure, another spectacle they treated everyone to was the Tories calling for the nationalisation of "British Steel", while Starmer's Labour opposed them, insisting it should remain in commercial hands. Anyway, since the factory is owned by the Chinese multinational Jingye, anti-Chinese feeling on the Tories' part no doubt played a part in their desire to Make it British Again...

No, it's the same, rotten, bloody, world!

There was worse to come from the Oval Office, however when Trump "entertained" Israel's Netanyahu, who has now gone in for the kill in Gaza, bombing, burning and maiming emergency and medical workers, journalists, men, women, children; everyone is a target; there is no safe place.

The Trump-Netanyahu joint plan to "relocate" the population of Gaza is obscene. The US/Israeli bombing of Yemen, Syria, Lebanon - these are all an imperialist obscenity which the working class everywhere (and in Israel itself) cannot countenance and will never forget.

Starmer told workers at JLR that "this is a changing and completely new world". But no, it isn't! In fact the blood-soaked Trump and his Israeli puppet Netanyahu, are just the naked expression of the "old world" of degenerate imperial capitalism, led by buffoons like Trump today, who, aided by the likes of Starmer, blight the world - and will continue to do so, as long as the working class allows it.

So, while there is no "state of emergency" for the capitalists, there is definitely one for the working class, which has the historical task of throwing them out. Workers everywhere need to "get political" urgently, in order to prepare for this! ☐

Protests in Turkey

Since the 19 March, when President Erdogan arrested his main political rival, Ekrem Imamoglu, the Republican People's Party (CHP) mayor of Istanbul, protesters have been demonstrating in huge numbers calling for his release.

Imamoglu, who was leading the polls ahead of the coming presidential election, was jailed, along with 96 other CHP activists, accused of criminal activity, corruption, and "aiding terrorism". Earlier the same week Imamoglu's university diploma was cancelled - which would disqualify him from standing in the election, since all presidential nominees must be university graduates.

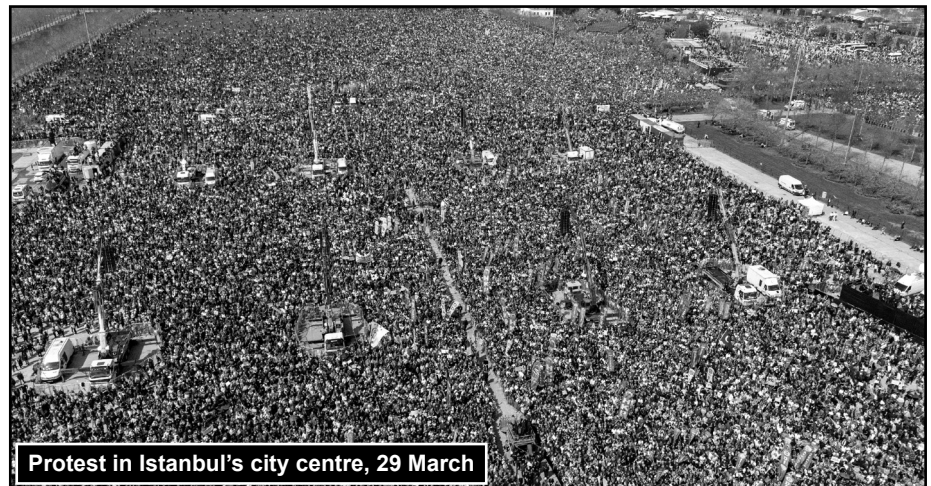
The arrests sparked outrage across Turkey, and not just among CHP supporters - many youth joined nightly rallies and demonstrations, which spread to 55 of Turkey's 81 municipalities, with students, workers, pensioners and many other political parties and organisations coming out in solidarity, chanting "Rights, Law, Justice" and "General Boycott, General Strike, General Resistance".

Despite Erdogan's ban on demonstrations and the tear gas, plastic bullets, and water cannon let loose on protesters - as well as over 2000 arrests - people continued to gather in the streets.

The jailer's bankrupt state

Erdogan's AKP (Justice and Freedom Party) is in a crisis. Last March it failed to win the nation-wide local elections - losing to the CHP, which won 35 provinces and 35% of the popular vote, compared to the AKP's 24 provinces and 32%.

The plundering of the Turkish state by Erdogan on behalf of his political allies and the bosses close to him, has added to skyrocketing government debt, and inflation, "officially" at 44%! Since Imamoglu's arrest the purchasing power



Protest in Istanbul's city centre, 29 March

of the Turkish Lira has shrunk by a further 10%. The working class in Turkey is faced with a rising cost of living and wages and pensions dwindling in real terms.

Of course it's not entirely the government's fault. The Turkish economy first took a blow under Trump's first term, in 2018, when 50% tariffs hit Turkey's iron and steel exports to the US - which is its second biggest export market, behind the EU. The tariffs were followed in 2019 by further political sanctions and threats of ripping up a \$100 billion trade deal, unless Turkey complied with US orders to agree a ceasefire with US-backed Kurdish fighters in Syria. Today, of course, Turkey faces Trump's tariffs Mark 2...

Since he first came to power in 2002, Erdogan has made a habit of arresting and jailing his political opponents. In 2000, Turkey had 50,000 prisoners. Today, there are 398,000! And this number has increased by 50,000 in the last 6 months. Erdogan can boast of the highest incarceration rate in Europe (456 per 100,000). And tens of thousands are political detainees, many of

them journalists.

"General boycott, General strike, General resistance"

While the protests today centre around the CHP and student-led movements in the universities, there is a general call for the working class to intervene and go on strike. CHP chairman Ozgur Ozel addressed the left-wing DISK (the Confederation of Revolutionary Trade Unions of Turkey) - asking it to "aid us when we need you, with a general strike" and thanked DISK for showing support at the rallies. KESK (Confederation of Public Employees' Trade Unions) alongside TMMOB (Union of Chambers of Turkish Engineers and Architects) and TTB (Turkish Medical Association) have also come out in support of a general strike.

As of yet, however, no general strike days have been announced. We can hope that the working class does decide to take on the regime - not to "help" the CHP into power, however, but in its own name. □

Palestine-Israel: the relentless war on Gaza

Since Netanyahu broke the ceasefire on March 18, 1,482 Palestinians have been killed in Gaza - a total which increases daily. The Israeli "Defence" Force is re-occupying "security zones" and creating new corridors restricting Palestinians' movement: the Netzarim Corridor which splits Gaza in half and "Philadelphia Corridor 2", which creates a strip of Israeli military occupation along the southern Rafah border with Egypt. By now, Gaza's 2.3m people are squeezed into just 60% of Gaza's 141 square miles of territory, now strewn with the rubble of broken infrastructure and collapsed buildings. And since all aid has been blocked by the IDF since 2 March, food and medical supplies are running out.

New horrors unfold: like the discovery of the bodies of 15 medical workers buried in the sand, some with hands tied, summarily executed by Israeli soldiers. A video on the phone of one of the victims, this time at least, proves precisely what

happened...

Anger in the streets

But Israeli demonstrators are also desperate for the government to negotiate a new ceasefire, since this is the only way to ensure that the remaining hostages held by Hamas, are released alive.

It's in this context - the final push of the Israeli army to finish the job they started - that its spokespersons like Defence Minister Katz, tell ordinary Gazans to "return the hostages and banish Hamas" or face "complete destruction and ruin"!

Their cynicism is blatant, and especially in the context of a new scandal which has blown up over the fact that the Netanyahu's regime - just like its predecessors - has been exposed as helping to fund Hamas via the Qatari state, in order to build it up as a rival to the Palestinian authority on the West Bank.

It turns out that Netanyahu's dismissal of Ronen Bar, his intelligence chief, which

triggered mass protests across Israel, was linked to his investigation of this so-called "Qatargate" scandal.

Saving his own neck

A letter signed by 1,000 current and retired Israeli Air Force pilots has called for an immediate end to the war, pointing out that it only serves Netanyahu's own political interests.

However, backed explicitly by Trump and invited to the Oval Office on 8 April, Netanyahu sees no reason to withdraw his army. Indeed it seems as if the joint Trump-Netanyahu plan to expel the Gazans in a second "Nakba", is on course.

All this means is that objectively, Israeli and Palestinian workers have a common enemy: the Israeli regime and its imperialist backers. They will need to find a way to build a bridge over the bloody torrent which, through no fault of their own, separates them today, in order to confront it. □

Scunthorpe steelworks: the railways need it!

Even before Trump's tariffs were announced (25% on all steel imports to the US!), the future of Scunthorpe's "British Steel" plant was in doubt. Primary production of steel from iron ore, was set to end, since its owner, the Jingye Group of China claimed losses of £700,000 per day and was not even sure it would go ahead with plans to replace its blast furnaces with an electric arc furnace for steel recycling as was the case in Tata's Port Talbot plant.

Since British Steel was privatised in 1988, Scunthorpe has had a long series of owners. In 2016, private equity asset strippers Greycap Capital bought its "long products" division which makes rails for Network Rail, as well as the rolling mill near Redcar. Renamed "British Steel", it went insolvent in May 2019 before being "saved" 6 months later by Jingye.

Jingye invested £1.2bn, with the possible added incentive of using the

plant as a Trojan horse to get past tariff barriers in the EU and US markets. At the beginning of this year, however, it announced unsustainable losses and asked the government for a £1bn subsidy to keep the plant open and "save" its 2,700 jobs. But Starmer's business secretary, Jonathan Reynolds' offered only £500m. For Jingye this was "no deal".

However, given the high media profile this plant has always generated (the "last" steel manufacturer in Britain... etc...) even the Tories and Nigel Farage suddenly turned themselves on their heads and called for it to be nationalised! For now the government is paying for the fuel to keep one of the blast furnaces going. Given the need to be seen (like Trump!) as supporting "manufacturing industry" no matter how threadbare, Starmer might well be forced into choosing nationalisation, like it or not.



• The US-Taiwan anti-Chinese microchip bonanza

On 31 March, Trump launched the Investment Accelerator (IA), a scheme to facilitate the access to government grants by hi-tech companies - particularly microchip manufacturers. This, after Taiwan Semiconductor Manufacturing Company (TSMC) - which makes microchips for 61.7% of the market and 90% for high-end microchips - announced an expansion of a third microchip plant at their Phoenix, Arizona, site, a total \$165bn investment.

During a meeting between Trump and CC Wei, TSMC's CEO, Trump stated: "We must be able to build the chips and semiconductors that we need right here. It's a matter of national security for us". Referring to the supposed "threat" of China taking over Taiwan.

Building in Arizona

In fact, this January, Trump threatened tariffs on the import of microchips from Taiwan - where TSMC's industry is based - if they did not relocate to the US. Never mind the fact that TSMC had already begun to build its chip plant in Phoenix back in May 2020, in response to the

production disruption due to the Covid pandemic and the escalation in demand that followed...

Trump would of course not want to admit that his IA scheme is just an add-on to the Microchip Act set up by Biden, thanks to which TSMC got a handout of \$52bn in state funds and 25% tax credit! Given that TSMC makes 25% of its profits (\$88bn per year!) supplying US tech giants Apple and Nvidia, and the US Army (for "advanced weapons") it quite happily accepted Trump's "blackmail"!

Sorry, but no return to the 1960s

As for the 6,000 new "American" jobs which are meant to result, these are mostly in packaging, since the factory is highly-automated. It will produce mostly cutting-edge microchips aiming at the expected doubling of profits from AI!

As for Taiwanese "national security", the Taiwanese state calls TSMC "the sacred mountain defending Taiwan" and "the silicon shield". Indeed, its exclusive and vital chip-making ability certainly means that no army from anywhere else

would have an interest in endangering its production - since more or less the whole world relies upon it! So TSMC rightly calls its facilities an "aggression deterrent". For this reason it has decided to keep and expand its main production and R&D in Taiwan. However, since 2021, a joint-venture plant was set up in Kumamoto, Japan, and a \$100bn investment was made for a plant in Nanjing - in China itself!

Robots, not humans

Trump hopes that the new artificial intelligence "revolution" will somehow save US capitalism's worm-infested backside, and so is aiming at "relocating" manufacturing in the US. In fact, he's trying to turn the clock back to the years of the postwar boom, when - before automation cut them - jobs in manufacturing occupied 30% of the workforce - compared to around 10% today. Obviously this cannot work and even less so, given that today's industrial production requires fewer and fewer workers thanks precisely to the advances in technology!

• The car industry finding its way round Trump's tariffs

While Trump announced tariffs on every country in the world, the car industry was singled out for "special treatment". Cars imported into the US now have an extra 25% tariff applied, on top of whatever the general tariff is on the country where they are exported from, while car parts will also be tarified next month. So, the 100,000 cars exported from Britain to the US will cost 35% (10%+25%) more there. And given that pretty much all the car exports to the US are already premium, expensive cars (like BMW's Mini), if you're already paying silly money, you'll probably pay even

sillier money! Anyway, this increase is lower than the tariff on cars from the EU, which will cost 45% (20%+25%) more - although this is paused at the moment.

Ford in the US has been quick to make the most of Trump's "patriotic" tariffs, already releasing an advertising campaign with the slogan "From America, For America", boasting how it's the largest auto employer and manufacturer in the country! What it doesn't say is that more than 50% of the parts for cars which are finally assembled in the US, actually come from abroad, and will attract tariffs!

One thing the car industry is united on, is the desire to avoid tariffs on car imports from Mexico. Pretty much the entire global auto industry has plants in Mexico, including Ford and BMW, and the country is the biggest exporter of cars to the US with 2.77m a year, not to mention the huge parts industry. So far, imports from Mexico are exempt, but while Ford publicly supports Trump's policies, behind the scenes (just like the other car-makers) it is furiously lobbying him not to threaten its profits - wherever they are made!

Their politics

Reeves opens fire on the working class

As "awful" April started with increases in energy, council tax, and water tariffs, what did Chancellor Reeves offer to alleviate these in her Spring Statement? Absolutely nothing. In fact quite the contrary! Under the pretext of "strengthening" Britain's security (she confirmed the increase in defence spending to 2.5% of GDP by 2027 and £2.2bn of funding for the MoD) she declared war on workers and the unemployed. And this was before Trump's tariffs interfered with her growth plans...

She intends to save £4.8bn over 5 years by cutting the welfare budget: health-related Universal Credit for new claimants will be cut from the already-miserly £97/week to just £50! And these payments won't rise with inflation until after 2030. As for Personal Independence Payment claimants, who need this additional allowance to cover costs of aids like wheelchairs, they'll have to pass more stringent tests to qualify.

And it gets worse: she is attacking youth. Under-22s won't be allowed to claim incapacity benefit any more. Reeves claims this will encourage the 1m NEETs (youth Not in Employment, Education or Training), to enter the workforce. Never mind that the vast majority of employers aren't prepared to take on workers with disabilities and offer only temporary, low



paid, part-time work with no training to go with it!

The government's own impact assessment estimates that 250,000 people will be pushed into poverty as a result of these cuts. The less-massaged figures from charities push that number up to 400,000. But lo and behold, Reeves says that by raising the National Living Wage to £12.21/hr (£10/hr for the under-21s), millions of workers across the country will get a "pay rise".

Maybe, but an increase in peanuts is still peanuts: workers on the National Living Wage would still earn less than the estimated minimum needed to live - the so-called "Real Living Wage" rate of £12.60/hr (£13.85/hr in London)!

In the meantime, corporation tax on big companies remains at 25%, the lowest among similar economies in Europe. As long as the wealth of the rich is untouched, Reeves can claim: job done! ☐

• *It's literally warfare not welfare!*

The cut in Personal Independence Payments (PIP), which is meant to pay for aids and equipment which help the disabled with mobility, access the toilet, to get dressed, etc., will mean that between 800,000 and 1.2m disabled people will lose support ranging from £4,200 to £6,300 annually by the end of the decade. And a total of 516,000 people who rely on the Limited Capability for Work and Work-Related Activity (LCWRA) component of Universal Credit, but not PIP, will be £390/month worse off!

So for instance, take the example of a 45 year-old worker living in private rented accommodation who can't work due to osteoarthritis which restricts her mobility. She currently receives the LCWRA and has scored enough points to be supported in many of her daily activities to qualify for PIP (preparing food, monitoring her health condition, bathing, etc.). However, she has not scored more than 4 points in any of these many activities, which means that under the new restrictive assessments, she would lose £818 per month! That is a reduction of 58% of her income! Reeves is literally raiding the pockets of the most vulnerable to pay for her increase in defence spending!

• *Cutting £2.2bn - but no jobs?*

Reeves is also axing jobs - 10,000 in the civil service which, together with other departmental spending cuts, she says will save £2.2bn annually, by 2030. So far she has not specified which civil service jobs exactly, however.

That said, government ministers all speak of how the civil service "grew" during the Covid pandemic. Indeed, 53,000 full-time (equivalent) posts were added between 2020 and 2022. But civil service numbers have grown every year since 2016, when there were 384,000, to a total of 513,000 full-time equivalent posts by June 2024.

If Rishi Sunak scrapped Boris Johnson's pledge to cut 91,000 jobs in his first month as prime minister, saying he did not believe in "top-down targets", there was probably a good reason for this. That is, that the "Covid" recruitment was essential to fill vacancies and make up for previous cuts - and therefore that these workers are not at all dispensable. Nevertheless, since civil servant jobs remain the traditional target for government cuts, most departments run with minimal staff and these days, with less and less expertise. Which is probably why Reeves can't specify who and what she intends to cut: there is nobody with the know-how to advise her.

• *Labour austerity 2.0*

In fact what Reeves has outlined for the coming period is an "austerity" budget. Similar measures were taken by George Osborne when he became Chancellor in May 2010, shortly after the Conservative-Liberal Democrat coalition government took office following the 2007-8 crash.

Back then, the sick and disabled were also singled out for attack - and in almost exactly the same way: cuts were made to their support, with more stringent tests to qualify. It was under Osborne that the Personal Independence Payment (PIP) replaced the old Disability Living Allowance (DLA). At the time, the aim was to cut allowances by 20%!

Rachel Reeves is copy and pasting Osborne's austerity. In an interview, she explained that when current PIP recipients are reassessed, the government wanted them to "be seen face-to-face by a trained assessor to make sure they get the support they need, whether that is support in terms of benefits or support in terms of getting into work". But in fact what she really means is that she wants them to be seen by an assessor trained specifically for the purpose of catching them out and removing their benefits on pain of taking a job which they are not fit to do. We have seen it all before. Nobody can forget the harrowing 2016 Ken Loach film "I Daniel Blake" which exposed Austerity 1.0 and its lethal consequences...

NHS

NHS England to go... but not the healthcare crisis

In March, the government announced the scrapping of NHS England, which plans and delivers healthcare. Integrated Care Boards across the country will continue to operate, but about half of their 25,000-strong workforce will be axed, along with thousands of jobs in the Department of Health and Social Care. In total, at least 43,000 workers will lose their jobs, and services will be cut, without any doubt, making the crisis in the NHS even worse.

A&E 1,000X worse!

Chronic understaffing (currently with 120,000 vacancies) remains the major problem in the NHS nationally. So

for example, in A&E departments the number of patients waiting over 12 hours in the first quarter of 2024 was 1,000 times (!) worse than the same period ten years earlier (up from 150 to 150,000!). In January and February 2025, the number of patients stranded in A&E for over 12 hours was 10% higher than the same months in 2024.

What's more, a growing number of A&E patients are attending because they need mental health services, but can't access the chronically overcrowded and (always!) underfunded sector.

Dire cancer prognosis

Even more serious is the fact that the

NHS hasn't met its target of ensuring that at least 85% of cancer patients start treatment within 62 days of diagnosis - which is already too long!

Today, only 69% start treatment in under two months. Such delays obviously lead to more deaths - the risk increasing by 8% for each four-week delay.

Little wonder that in 2024, just one in five British adults (21%) were satisfied with the way in which the NHS runs. This is the lowest level of satisfaction recorded since the survey began in 1983. Given the priorities of the current government the very dire situation in the NHS can only get worse. ☐

• A deadly crisis

Delays in admitting patients who seek help in A&E departments are obviously dangerous. In January, the Office for National Statistics reported that patients who wait in A&E for more than 12 hours are twice as likely to die within 30 days compared to those who are treated, admitted or discharged within two hours. This is regardless of other factors such



as patients' general health or age. The Royal College of Emergency Medicine estimated that in 2023, almost 14,000 deaths were related to long A&E stays before admission.

Despite these facts, so-called "corridor care" - where patients are stranded for hours or even days at a time without a proper bed, food or anything to drink, access to toilet facilities, or regular care - has become normalised. For example, in January, the Whittington Hospital in Archway posted several adverts for nurses to do 12-hour "corridor care" shifts. In February, for the first time, a hospital in Sussex advertised for a "corridor doctor"!

The Royal College of Nursing reports what this is like: "Demoralised nursing staff report caring for as many as 40 patients in a single corridor, unable to access oxygen, cardiac monitors, suction and other lifesaving equipment". They report female patients miscarrying in corridors. Crash teams say they cannot provide adequate or timely CPR to patients having heart attacks. This situation - which is now the rule rather than the exception resembles conditions in what used to be called the "Third World". Yes, in the 6th richest, "First World" country!

• When normal patient numbers become a "problem" for NHS chiefs...

NHS bosses are planning to close the maternity unit at the Royal Free Hospital in North London due to... "a low birth rate"! The government claims that it's perfectly justified because the number of births in the borough of Camden has dropped by nearly 30% since 2019/20. Patients will be redirected to one of four nearby hospitals, most of which are already over-stretched!

Last year, dozens of consultants and specialist midwives at the Royal Free, opposed the closure, explaining that the hospital has unique specialist services, such a haemophilia care unit, 24-hour radiology, renal and liver services, unavailable at any other hospital in North Central London. For over 30 years, the Royal Free has been providing care for high-risk pregnancies.

Quite obviously this is nothing but a money-saving operation using a lame and dishonest excuse. The result will be the loss of one of the very few centres of excellence left in the deteriorating NHS. Let's hope the campaign to prevent this closure succeeds.

Birmingham bin strikes: final victory?

Around 400 refuse workers in Birmingham began strike action back in January 2025. The council had decided to get rid of the Waste Recycling and Collection Officer (WRCO) role which meant workers would be demoted and lose part of their wages. When the council refused to reinstate the role, workers decided to take all-out action, beginning on 11 March.

The removal of the WRCO role means that over 150 out of the 736 directly-employed workers will face pay cuts of up to £8,000 per year. The anger of the refuse workers is totally justified! After 10 years of austerity, real wages had already fallen by over 15%. This was the last straw.

Birmingham City Council's decision to eliminate the WRCO role is part of a

broader attack on workers' conditions and pay that has been going on for years.

One cut after another!

In 2017, the council attempted to downgrade "Grade 3" refuse workers. They fought back and as a result kept their existing roles and wages. Then in 2018, the council tried it on again: it cut the jobs of 122 refuse workers who were responsible for operations and safety at the rear of the vehicles were cut.

To try to end the current strike, Starmer's deputy, Angela Rayner has intervened to try to get union negotiators to accept the Council's latest offer. In the meantime, a "major incident" has been declared as nearly 200,000 tonnes of rubbish are piled up on Birmingham's

streets to the delight of "rats as big as cats"!

The longest bin strike ever?

This strike is the second longest bin strike in history - and may soon become the longest: in 1970 a London bin strike lasted for around 7 weeks. At the time the army was sent in to clear away the huge mounds of rotting rubbish.

Birmingham's workers obviously have great leverage given the impact of their strike - but in their own interests, a swift victory is always preferable. Spreading their strike to fellow council workers - all of whom are under attack from the council - could only strengthen it. It's not too late to do just that...

Mount Pleasant mail centre (London)

From our friends in the North

How everyone laughed when we heard from the union leadership that anyone daring to say that the "Optimised Delivery Model" (aka "Organised Deluded Mayhem") - aimed at cutting the Universal Service Obligation and changing the way we do our jobs - is rubbish, "has no life"!

We're all getting fed up with hearing that the only dangerous part of our job is "fatigue". Whatever happened to the scales for weighing our bags? Now parcels that are injuring our backs are turning up without their weight written on them. There's no warning of how heavy they are.

We're all misty eyed for our light-weight trolleys. Those days of delayed letters resulting from the bosses' ODM, that we're going to have to take out, aren't going on our backs - no way!

The latest way to cut costs and maximise profit is to monitor how much gas and electric we are using in Delivery Offices! Even the worst 18th century employers didn't stop the workers using the lights to see in the dark!

We're all guessing that there's no way they'll want to pay for us to use our light-weight trolleys to save our backs. Apparently they think that's a cost that



we'll have to burden our bodies with...

As for these ODM trials, we're not that daft. We all know that a trial and a pilot are two very different things. And that the pilots are the start of a change that won't stop. The brains planning the changes have done all the planning for the changes. But we're the ones that will throw a spanner in their works! ☐

- **Too early for halloween...**

Last week, the chaos in here reached ridiculous levels! As soon as there are a few workmates off at the same time, everything falls apart. Surprise, surprise: we're permanently operating with a "skeleton" workforce... Managers think they can just plug the gaps with casuals... but they can't and they know it! [Workers' Fight bulletin Mount Pleasant 05/04/25]

- **In what world are there "too many" of us?**

Despite all this, managers are still

threatening to send the few of us they still call "supernumeraries" (meaning "surplus to requirement") to fill "vacancies" in Delivery Offices. As if we didn't have vacancies here! Even these blinkered managers can see that. [Workers' Fight bulletin Mount Pleasant 05/04/25]

- **What goes around comes around!**

The "supernumerary" overseer has become supernumerary himself! After cutting lots of jobs, now he's wandering around like a lost sheep, trying to "manage" the platform late shift, but he hasn't a clue what he's doing... [Workers'

Fight bulletin Mount Pleasant 05/04/25]

- **The officials' empty refrain**

The union tells us in a recent Letter to Branches that "realignment revisions" in Mail Centres will be starting, and apparently, "a key priority... is the reduction in agency use and the creation of... fully resourced duty sets".

Again, they're claiming that agency work will be phased out - but the more they talk about ending temps the more casuals we see coming in to be used and abused! [Workers' Fight bulletin Mount Pleasant 05/04/25]

King's Cross railway station (London)

Safety is a striking issue!

The RMT union has decided to have a safety campaign - addressed to government ministers in the first instance it seems, no doubt in anticipation of "renationalisation".

It's true that health and safety has been deteriorating for a very long time. The decline began in the 1980s already when the second driver was taken out of the cab, and then proceeded apace when guards were taken off trains.

Today, right across the railways, safety is getting worse and it's directly linked to job cuts, and above all, lone working. How else could there be 3,330

recorded assaults on workers? This is 25% more than the year before and double the 1,681 attacks recorded three years ago.

But these are not new issues - on the contrary. The closure of ticket offices, once safe places, leaves station workers and passengers vulnerable at night and in the early hours. And with so many already shut the remainder are also due for closure. So yes, there are ample reasons for the RMT union to have a safety campaign - but it will have little or no effect unless the "oomph" of a strike across the whole network is behind it.



Because that's what it would take to get guards back on trains, 2nd drivers back in the cab and ticket offices reopened! ☐

- **An attack on one is an attack on all!**

After a strike calling for the reinstatement of our Hull Trains workmate, the anti-worker, anti-strike Daily Wail claimed (28 March) that he'd been fired because he "fell asleep while operating a 125mph service". Such lies are no surprise coming from that rag. But the safety concern which this driver raised in a safety meeting(!) and which led bosses to sack him was indeed about fatigue - and at a time when drivers everywhere are routinely asked to work on rest-days!

That he lost his job is an outrage against every single train driver. But why did ASLEF's leaders keep the rest of us in the dark? A strike across the whole network involving all of us would have settled this matter in no time at all! [Workers' Platform bulletin Kings' X 05/04/25]

- **100% solid**

What's more, the article carried on saying that "the lack of support for the strike means only around 20% of its [Hull Trains] services have been cancelled"... Yes, only 20% of the trains were cancelled, maybe! But only because managers are driving the

trains... There are only 7 Hull direct trains a day. All the more reason for all of us drivers (LNER, GN etc...) to strike alongside our Hull mates. [Workers' Platform bulletin Kings' X 05/04/25]

- **Where's our pay rise?**

None of us has heard a peep about a pay rise. Yet the pay rise anniversary for all workers across-the-board is April! On Awful April Fool's Day everything went up: energy bills, water, council tax... Maybe this year we should tell the blood-suckers "can't pay, won't pay!" [Workers' Platform bulletin Kings' X 05/04/25]

BMW Mini centre (Cowley, Oxford)

Let's impose our own "tariff" on BMW!

Oxford East MP Anneliese Dodds pretended to speak for us workers in Parliament last week, after Trump announced his 25% tariffs on cars explaining that: "Workers at BMW Cowley are deeply concerned by recent news". Yup, echoing her boss Starmer, who told Jag-Land Rover workmates that he "has their backs". She didn't even pop down to talk to us first!

It's true that we're "deeply concerned". But it's not a recent thing. What we've been "deeply concerned"

about, for many years, is how BMW has ripped up all our Ts&Cs and turned the workforce in to a dispensable precarious temp "army" which it uses and abuses at will. Yes, after "introducing" the famous WTA which means we de facto pay for the overtime they impose! Does Dodds even know about about the 300 workers who have lost their jobs since January?

BMW might complain that its profits are likely to fall to "only" £9 billion this year. But what a bonanza! And all thanks to the screw they keep turning on



the 155,000 workers they employ in their 33 factories around the world. High time for us to "retaliate"! And turn the screw back on them! ☐

• Real pay rise need for all!

What happened with the vote on the R&H pay offer? We barely heard there was an offer on the table before we found out it had been voted for, but when and where did this happen? Yes, most of us didn't even have a say, and why not? Because a below inflation 2.5% and a next-to-useless one week of WTA (Working Time Account, i.e., enforced overtime), certainly isn't what we want! [Workers' Fight bulletin BMW Mini Oxford 08/04/25]

• Down with tiers

And of course agency workers (whether members of the union or not) didn't have a vote anyway, and are on lower pay. And since this "rise" is a percentage,

it only increases the difference between R&H's multiple "tiers", from 2 years+ permanent to new agency... [Workers' Fight bulletin BMW Mini Oxford 08/04/25]

• Turning up for nothing!

Barely a week goes by without G&P sending some of us home, after we've turned up to work! Our minimum wages do not go far enough, even when we work a full week. When we turn up, we want pay! [Workers' Fight bulletin BMW Mini Oxford 08/04/25]

• Whatever next?

These extra 3 days of shutdown last month, and now 3 more in May, come with all kinds of excuses from the bosses, whether that's "managing

external influences" or "stock targets" or whatever. We don't care about the reason, why should we "pay them back"? [Workers' Fight bulletin BMW Mini Oxford 08/04/25]

• Robbing peter to pay paul...

When our last three-year pay deal was "agreed", there was meant to be a plan to get our negative WTA balances back to zero! We had to pay 1.5hrs out of our pay each week. But BMW kept shutting us out, so of course we didn't get back to "zero"! Now this year's deal has "no strings"... except those strings from the last deal, including this "buy-back", which continue to hit us in the pocket! [Workers' Fight bulletin BMW Mini Oxford 08/04/25]

Ford Dagenham estate (Essex)

• Farley playing trump's toady

So Ford Motor Company, along with Donald Trump, has exited the rest of the world? CEO Farley is offering employee discounts for all US buyers "From America, for America"... and a free electric charger if they "choose an EV". Let's hope it doesn't catch fire and Make America Burn Again. [Workers' Fight bulletin Ford Dagenham 09/04/25]

• Playing with fire...

Yeah, another dangerous cock-up from Ford: 26,000 letters were sent to owners of the new Kuga plug-in Hybrid in March, saying... "do not plug car into charger"! Apparently the batteries might catch fire. And if a "stop safely now" warning appears on the dashboard while driving, drivers and passengers should exit the car immediately! [Workers' Fight bulletin Ford Dagenham 09/04/25]

• ... And lives

So what's the solution that Ford's offered so far? Just drive your car on auto-EV mode and wait until the end of

June, when "we might have a solution"... But this isn't a new issue! Ford's had problems with batteries since 2020, when the first recalls were issued after 7 cars caught fire while charging! So what are they waiting for? A serious accident and deaths?! [Workers' Fight bulletin Ford Dagenham 09/04/25]

• Their cock-ups keep coming

The Den couldn't be busier! We've been working non-stop to catch up with the 14,000 engines which were recalled... And it's obviously a bit much, with OT and overlaps! At least we have our mates over from the Darkside who've come down to help... Certainly, as we always say, "the more, the merrier". [Workers' Fight bulletin Ford Dagenham 09/04/25]

• Not merry here!

But the promised "more" has not been seen on Darkside, where the mini-shift is making 170 engines per shift and where managers said 50 Temps would be taken on. We only have 2 hands each. Same goes for LLL mates... Seems production will need to come to a halt so that we can make our point? [Workers' Fight bulletin Ford Dagenham 09/04/25]



• A secret pay rise?

When G4S workers asked "where's our pay rise?" managers answered "we can't disclose it, you will see it in your payslip"... We'll "disclose" though, that we're expecting a pay rise well above 2.8% inflation and well above the 6.7% minimum wage increase... And we also demand 8-hour shifts with no loss of pay. These 12-hour shifts must be ditched. [Workers' Fight bulletin Ford Dagenham 09/04/25]

• Double it, or else...

Us cleaners made it clear to Andrwho? that a 6% pay increase is not enough! We're still waiting for a better offer, and we're ready for a strike ballot. Especially since Andrwho? admitted that it actually meant to offer only the statutory minimum wage increase of 6.7%... [Workers' Fight bulletin Ford Dagenham 09/04/25]

International

Myanmar: the earthquake exposes the dirty civil war

The 7.7 magnitude earthquake which struck central Myanmar on March 28 re-exposed the civil war being waged by the brutal ruling Junta since 2021 against a multi-pronged insurgency. While the quake has killed an estimated 3,500, the civil war had already, within its first year, killed tens of thousands, including 13,000 children - and has displaced 13m people out of a population of 54m. Already half the population was living in poverty and millions were at risk of starvation. Today, the Junta has invited foreign aid organisations to help with the earthquake emergency - while it continues to bomb the insurgent "enemy"...

Turning a blind eye

Over the past 4 years, western imperialism has turned a very deliberate blind eye, as the Junta systematically targeted minorities

- including Rohingya Muslims from Rakhine province, burning their homes, raping and killing, and sending them fleeing across the Indian and Bangladeshi borders.

But there's been method in this approach and the token "sanctions" applied to the regime. Myanmar is the 3rd largest exporter of rare-earths - mostly to China, where 90% of the world's production ends up being processed. The largest deposits of heavy rare-earths are located in Kachin state, including 39% of the world's dysprosium and trepium, used for wind turbines, electric and hybrid engines but also as battery components.

Rare-earths by hook and crook

While the token sanctions prevented US/British/EU companies from dealing directly with the Junta, they do so indirectly,

via "third-party companies" usually incorporated in the Caymans or the British Virgin Islands. The earthquake left the border regions - including Kachin state, where Kachin insurgent army took control in October last year - mostly untouched.

Conveniently, the China-Myanmar Economic Corridor along the border with Kachin allows seamless transfer of mined minerals to China. What follows is the incorporation of semiconductors, magnets and chips containing "blood rare earths" into all the western big brands like Apple, Tesla, General Motors, Toyota, Nissan, BMW, Audi, etc... And never mind either, the toll on the 900,000 miners (400,000 of who are artisanal) who face landslides and poisoning from the chemical washing pools in the rare-earth mines. □

Letter from India: Modi's BJP playing the communal card again

With an election in the state of Bihar later this year, Modi's BJP is stirring up communal hatred against Muslims yet again, in order to mobilise its right-wing electorate. All the more so, because of the ongoing - and worsening - crisis, for which Modi and his government are held responsible.

The Nagpur riot

On 17 March the VHP and the Bajrang Dal, right-wing Hindu organisations affiliated to the BJP, organised marches in the Maharashtrian city of Nagpur, demanding the demolition of the 17th century Mughal ruler Aurangzeb's tomb. Marchers attacked Muslims, leaving one dead and 40 injured. This was just the latest violence organised by Modi's BJP thugs. In fact there have been at least 10 rallies in Maharashtrian cities calling for the creation of a "Hindu Nation" - with local BJP leaders threatening to deport anyone who opposes them, to Pakistan!

On 30 March, explosives went off in a village mosque in Maharashtra's Beed district. BJP affiliates are also campaigning to demolish mosques in the state of Uttar Pradesh. During the upcoming Hindu festival of Navratri, BJP-led city administrations intend to play Hindu religious sermons on loudspeakers throughout the day and Muslim traders have been told to keep their shops shut.

The middle class sinks ...

A recent economic study shows that in the last 10 years, middle class annual earnings have halved. *Times of India* analysts report that the distribution of national income is back

to what it was in 1820, when India was ruled by monarchies and the East India Company! Today, the richest one-third of the population receives 77.8% of the national income, the middle one-third receives 15% and the lowest one third, 6.4%. Modi's "shining India" only shines for the rich!

Obviously this anti-Muslim incitement has a purpose; to distract the electorate from the hard facts of the cost-of living crisis and government graft, by scapegoating "the other". But it's all the more sinister today, given the level of orchestrated Muslim-hatred.

Diamond workers on strike!

On 30 March, Surat's diamond cutting and

polishing workers declared an indefinite strike for a 30% wage increase and the reinstatement of laid-off workers, after their wages were slashed by 50%. Such is their distress that 50 workers are reported to have committed suicide. The strike has now spread to the neighbouring city of Navsari.

This industry, which employs 100,000 workers, mostly in small "units", processes 90% of the world's diamonds, 80% of which are exported to the US. Bosses claim demand has slumped and will no doubt add Trump's tariffs as another reason to refuse workers' demands. Spreading the strike even further - across all of Mumbai's industries - would certainly make them think again. □



Diamond workers' strike in Surat, 30 March

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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