



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

Brexit bailout WE WON'T PAY!

Two months after the Brexit vote, Theresa May's "pro-Leave" ministers are at great pains to paint the economic situation in rosy colours. They claim things are "improving as Britain is beginning to loosen the EU strait-jacket". Except that they're not and the Bank of England itself keeps calling the ministers' bluff, by issuing more warnings and taking additional measures in an attempt to restore some sort of order in a financial system gone mad.

In fact, with the exception of the most hysterical "pro-Leave" politicians, it was always generally accepted that a Brexit vote was bound to trigger some sort of speculative mayhem. And it did. Despite the Bank of England pledging to provide the banks with all the cash they needed to withstand the predicted turmoil, share prices went into a tailspin - especially those of the largest British banks, which took a 20% plunge - while the pound fell by around 15% against all major currencies. So much so that, within just two weeks of the vote, on 5 July, the Bank had to take a new series of measures in an attempt to reverse the tide.

Another bailout for their system

After that, we were flooded with official figures meant to show us against all evidence that the economy was improving. We were told that every indicator on the economists' dashboard, had now turned green. Even share prices were regaining their pre-Brexit level, although the pound was still stubbornly lagging behind.

But if things were improving, why did the Bank of England feel it necessary to stage another intervention on 4 August? And why, this time, unlike in July, did it go much beyond tinkering around the edges? Indeed, what the BoE announced was its biggest bailout of the financial system since 2012: in



addition to halving its interest rate, the BoE said it would be injecting another £70bn of cash into the system, while subsidising another £100bn worth of bank loans to the economy.

Once again, just as in the years following the 2008 bank crash, the BoE has come to the rescue of big finance by splashing out tens of billions in public cash on the banking system, in an attempt to get bankers to lend, capitalists to invest, consumers to borrow and the productive economy to come out of its chronic stagnation - in short, to get this unworkable capitalist system to generate enough profits to feed the greed of the capitalist class.

Let them pay for their havoc!

Indeed, Brexit did not generate the present financial chaos, but it has substantially increased the capitalist system's on-going chaos.

No-one can say whether this bailout will stop the post-Brexit financial

turmoil - least of all the BoE itself. But, from past experience, there is one certainty: this government or another will try to get workers to pay the bill for this bailout of capitalist profit.

As if the working class had not paid enough for the 2008 bailout already! Real wages are still well below their pre-2008 level, local and public services have been drastically cut. As to jobs, they dare to tell us that employment is at a "record high". But what this really means is that over the past 3 months, 88% of the 118,000 "new full-time jobs" have been "self-employed" - meaning, on the whole, casual, underpaid and requiring overwork. This is how the capitalists and their politicians have been making the working class pay for their 2008 bailout. So, no, there is no way workers should be made to pay for another bailout. It's time the capitalists and their politicians took responsibility for the havoc they create. ☐

Housing

Since Thatcher's Right-to-Buy policy was introduced, 30 years ago, giving tenants the possibility of buying their own council houses at the cost of indebtedness to the banks, Scotland has lost 500,000 council homes. Meanwhile, only one house was built for every three sold, leading to an acute shortage of

• Benefits for private landlords

The severe shortage of social housing means the government is lining the pockets of private landlords with the housing benefits of their tenants. This social housing shortage has increased dramatically in

NHS

The junior doctors did not agree with their union's recommendation to accept the new contract - to be foisted upon them this October by Health Secretary Jeremy Hunt - with its 7-days-a-week working at reduced unsocial hours payments. After their strikes earlier this year produced only minor tweaks in the agreement, 58% have voted for another round of strikes in September.

The British Medical Association leader, John Malawana, who negotiated this contract has had to stand down, replaced by Ellen McCourt, new Junior Doctors' Committee

• Prejudice and cost savings

Despite the approval of the NHS' expert clinical body, "NICE", drugs which can actually cure the previously incurable Hepatitis C infection (which leads to liver failure and death) are being deliberately limited due to cost. Like all expensive treatments, including new treatments for cancer, NHS England, in particular, is instituting rationing of potentially life-saving drugs. This isn't new. But in this

• The Grosvenors' gross wealth

Hugh Grosvenor has inherited £9bn (yes, billion!) on the death of his father, the Duke of Westminster. In true aristocratic fashion, the Grosvenors acquired their fortune as rural and urban landowners. They own 500 acres of the most exclusive parts of London, like Mayfair and Belgravia near Buckingham Palace and the Houses of Parliament. After these properties became part of the Grosvenor estate in 1677, the family also "acquired" thousands of acres in Scotland thanks to clearing poverty-stricken rural tenants off their land!

Today their empire stretches all over the world. Their London properties alone are worth £11.8bn. Their rural properties in Britain are registered under a company called Wheatsheaf, which operates

Scotland: social housing back on the agenda?

affordable housing.

With higher rents, the cost of housing benefit for the Scottish government soared. So in 2014, the Scottish Parliament legislated an end to Right-to-Buy, with a 2-year deadline for tenants to buy their properties. The deadline ended this July, and since then, it's been

the past decade: the number of tenants renting in the private sector has grown by 42% since 2008!

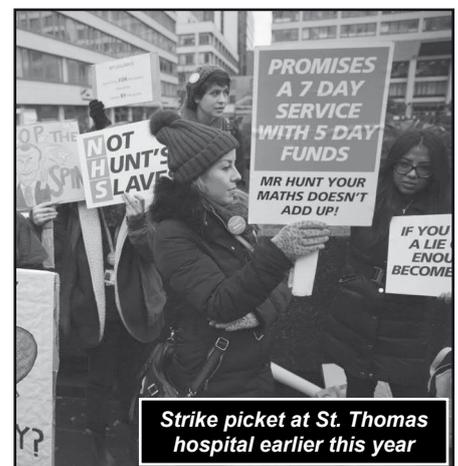
Before this, £4.6bn worth of housing benefit payments went to private

landlords. But last year, this figure had almost doubled - to £9bn! As a National Housing Federation study points out, with this amount nearly 50,000 new, affordable, homes could have been built. Says it all!

More isolated doctors' strikes?

leader. Of course the new contract is untenable. And a leaked document from the Health Department has underlined this: it says that 7-days a week working does not stand up to risk assessment and Brexit has made the main issue - understaffing - even more critical.

But there is another issue of concern to health workers and patients: will the junior doctors once more "go it alone" on strike against the government or will the other health workers (and not just health workers!) who face the same "risks" every day, join them? □



case, when it applies to people who have mainly contracted the disease through intravenous drug use - it has taken a charity, "Addaction", to highlight the choice of NHS executives to single out this marginalised "at risk" group.

The same approach applies to prescribing so-called PrEP on the NHS - "pre-exposure prophylaxis" for people at high risk of contracting HIV - prevention being

better (and much cheaper) than cure! The NHS isn't prepared to fund it. It'd mean taking just one tablet a day of an anti-HIV drug or a few tablets before and after sex - providing an 86% reduction in infections. A lot better than tablets for life, after infection! But it seems it's not just cost, but prejudice and moralism, which is NHS executives' basis for exclusion, in both these cases!

Grosvenor Farms, one of the largest farms in the UK with more than 6,000 acres in Cheshire. It also controls rural land holdings in Lancashire, Sutherland and Wales and the family seat at Eaton Hall near Chester, in addition to a series of cash investments. All that 25-year old Hugh has to do, is sit in his armchair and get more gross, while rack-rents, agricultural subsidies and dividends roll in.

• University: only the rich need apply

Students from working class families are being priced out of higher education by government policies. Universities can already charge prohibitively high tuition fees to compensate for the drastic cuts in government subsidy. And now, the

government has given the go-ahead to the "better universities", to increase their current prohibitive £9,000 fees, in line with inflation. If this rises at the (projected) rate of 2.8% for the next year, this means fees will reach double figures - £10,000 and rising!

At the very same time, the government is axing maintenance grants, which at least helped working class students with their living expenses while studying. As part of a £2.5bn budget cut, these grants are being converted into loans, which will saddle them with even more debt - given they already need loans to pay for tuition, anyway! In London, the total debt could reach over £50,000 for a 3-year degree. This, in effect, will close the door to higher education for the next generation of working class youth.

The challenge to Corbyn: a foregone conclusion?

It remains to be seen who'll come out winner in the dirtiest Labour leadership challenge in the party's history - the result is due on 24 September.

Jeremy Corbyn's surprise election as leader last year seriously shook his rivals. Straight away they resorted to "Corbyn-bashing" and Labour became, de facto, two parties. One Labour party comprised rank-and-file Labour members approving of Corbyn's "non-style", reinforced by 100,000 mainly young new members. The other consisted of most Labour MPs (the Parliamentary Labour Party or PLP) and full-time

• **Smith, a generic for Blair?**

The first Corbyn challenger was of course former Blairite, Angela Eagle, insisting tearfully that she was motivated only by Corbyn's "failure to provide leadership". The PLP's final choice, the relatively unknown Owen Smith, unlike Eagle, hadn't had a chance to blot his copybook. He was only elected to parliament in 2010, so

• **A party apparatus at war with its leader**

To discredit Corbyn in front of the "public" is one thing - but to do the same in front of 250,000 members who voted for him last time and the 130,000 who joined since the post-Brexit offensive against him began, is quite another.

So the Blair-Brown-Miliband-Kinnock faction of the Labour party is trying every trick in the book: from the Eagle-instigated 172 to 40 vote of "no-confidence" against Corbyn in the PLP, to trying to exclude him from the leadership challenge ballot and preventing new party members from voting in the leadership election, while suspending and expelling others.

So in the end - after several court interventions - who was allowed to vote for leader? It's complicated! Those who paid the £3 membership fee in 2015 could do so, but only provided they re-registered as

• **The "harassment" of being... accountable**

Another tactic used against Corbyn by his opponents has been complaints of "bullying and harassment". Even some of his young former shadow cabinet seem to have been persuaded to "go public" with Eagle-like tears over nasty tweets and Facebook entries.

More seriously, Johanna Baxter, who represents constituency parties on the National Executive Committee, accused Corbyn himself of "bullying" when he (rightly) proposed that the vote by NEC members over his acceptance on the leadership ballot should be open rather than secret. As if members of the NEC shouldn't be accountable to those who elected them!

officials, who most certainly didn't approve.

Both PLP and party machinery form a largely entrenched cohort, shaped by a 13-year-long period in government under Blair and then Brown: supportive of the Iraq war, privatisation of public services and above all, characterised by ambitious and opportunistic political careerism. For them, challenging Corbyn was never a matter of "if", but "when".

But it still looks as though all their best efforts and those of the media establishment - to thwart Corbyn - may still prove fruitless. ☐

wasn't there to support Blair, nor vote for the Iraq war.

However, Smith's past as a top lobbyist in Britain for two pharmaceutical giants, Amgen and before that, Pfizer, haunts him still. In this role, he endorsed a report advocating greater access to private healthcare for NHS patients. And when he

supporters and paid an additional £25. But January the 12th this year was decided on as a cut-off date for "voting" membership and anyone joining afterwards - which included the 130,000 or so who joined when Eagle initiated the leadership challenge - would have to re-register online within a time window between 18th and 20th July, and pay £25! As for affiliated trade union supporters, or Co-op members, they also had to have joined by 12 January, but in addition, to have registered to vote before 8 August...

As if this set of hurdles was not enough, the NEC is now resorting to suspending Corbyn supporters from the party - like the leader of the 20,000-strong Bakers' Union, apparently for his regular pro-Corbyn tweeting! One can only wonder what they will try next, with nearly one month still to go!

The other bogeyman raised by the anti-Corbyn lobby was infiltration of the party by "Trotskyites" as they call them. Never mind that the few hundred Trotskyists who may want to "enter" the Labour Party these days are unlikely to swing any vote. Nevertheless the NEC has ruled that all meetings at branch level are "suspended until the completion of the leadership election", allegedly to curb potential intimidation of "loyal" MPs - but more likely to curb any kind of real discussion!

• **Playing with union members' votes**

The anti-Corbyn faction's desperation to show that it represents working class opinion was exposed by their commissioning

Labour



became an MP he still spoke, for instance, against allowing cheaper generic drugs because this would bite into the companies' assured profiteering from the NHS!

So it is quite unlikely, as some commentators claim, that many of the 130,000 new members joined Labour just to vote for Smith against Corbyn.



of a YouGov poll in July which suggested that Unite union members were unhappy with Corbyn's leadership and thought he'd lose the next election - thus implying that Unite's leadership was undemocratically excluding members' opinions by backing Corbyn. Yet the number polled was just 775 out of the union's 1.4m members!

On the other hand, the GMB union last month backed Owen Smith, claiming the support of 60% of its members in a ballot. What the GMB leaders didn't reveal was that only 43,419 out of 639,000 members actually voted. Moreover, even fewer of the GMB's members will have a vote in the election, since just 30,000 pay into its political fund. But, never mind: for these bureaucrats, it's not the truth that matters, but the headlines!

After Brexit

By declaring her intention to implement Brexit "for real", former "Remainer" Theresa May has embarked on a convoluted balancing act.

On one side, her brief from big business can't be clearer: Brexit, maybe, but without undermining the profits of British capital. So, behind her government's official "tough" language (for public consumption), there will be a lot of horse-trading behind the scenes - for instance, to ensure that British banks can carry on selling their financial services across Europe (a very big chunk of their profits, at present) - and it will take time. Which is why yesterday's leading Brexiteers are now happy to promote Britain's departure from the EU for some time around 2019.

On the other side, May has to police the ranks of her own party and their chronic factional in-fighting. While the Tory Eurosceptic right-wing may

• EU Budget - it's complicated

Although it was so central to the Leave campaign, the future of Britain's contribution to the EU budget is far from clear. EU budgeting is planned over time, with funds being spent often years after they have been committed. The current budget cycle runs from 2014-20 with Britain committed

• City's post-Brexit blues?

The coming trade negotiations may take years to conclude, but the City is already ringing alarm bells over possible losses.

What, for instance, will be the future of London's euro clearing system which specialises in finalising financial transactions in euros, while offering protection against all sorts of risks, such as insolvency or sudden fluctuations in interest rates and currency exchange rates? Due to its low regulation and tax environment, the City has become the world's main centre for euro clearing. But what if the City institutions were to lose their free access to the EU market? Wouldn't they lose the big profits they make out of euro clearing as well?

Brexit minister, David Davis has already sought to reassure the City, and in particular its clearing houses, by

• Rising prices on the agenda

Immediately following the referendum, the pound dropped by 15%, hitting a 31-year low against the dollar. Of course, Brexiteers claim that the loss of value of the pound is good news for companies exporting goods and services. But they forget the resulting increase in prices on supermarket shelves, where many of the most common items come straight from the EU.

May's balancing act



have been temporarily put to rest by the outcome of the EU referendum and the many government positions awarded to its members, it remains plagued with rivalries. And who can tell what overbidding these rivalries will lead to? After all, wasn't the EU referendum itself a by-product of

to a net contribution of £65.7bn.

Cameron was in favour of meeting this commitment in full, but with Leave campaigners now in charge of the exit negotiations, the £40bn plus yet to be paid, could well be put into question. However, any change to the current budget would need

promising that in order to face up to the financial competition of Frankfurt and Paris, "deregulation" would be put on the



For instance, according to Anglo-Dutch giant Unilever, which makes products like the Magnum ice-cream and Dove soap, "anybody who is importing things from Europe - raw materials, not only finished products - will have to eventually reflect that pricing" and "someone has to pay for this" - and that "someone" is of course the working class consumer!

such overbidding, in the first place? For the time being, the likes of Boris Johnson, Ian Duncan-Smith, Liam Fox, Andrea Leadsom, etc.. may have been bought out with cushy ministerial jobs. But for how long will this be enough to satisfy their political ambitions? □

a unanimous vote of member states, each of which would either have to contribute more, or receive less. Which is a tall order. And that's without even considering what an economy this size would be charged to stay in the single market - which is one of the City's bottom lines!

agenda. What they lose on the swings they will gain on the roundabouts, says he. But, so far, the City is not convinced.

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NHS: from "£350m a week more" to drastic cuts

After Brexit

"We send the EU £350 million a week; let's fund our NHS instead", read the slogan on Johnson's Leave campaign's red bus. Who knew before that the likes of Boris Johnson, Michael Gove and Andrea Leadsom considered the NHS underfunded by their own government? But in Gove's Tory leadership manifesto, this £350m had already shrunk by 70% to a promise of £100m a week by 2020 and his swift elimination from the race buried it entirely.

In fact, two months on, NHS England is in a full-blown crisis of funding. Now Theresa May plans to close more acute units and even hospitals. These "sustainability transformation plans" (STPs) drawn up by divisions of NHS England include closing one of the two general hospitals in the Black Country and one of three acute hospitals in the region around



Leicester. In north-west London, the STP proposes cutting four out of nine acute hospitals, with Charing Cross and Ealing most threatened; and using online services and "coaching" patients to reduce face-to-face consultations with patients by 40%! By

contrast, Andrea Leadsom as the new Environment Secretary immediately reassured the landed gentry that their farming subsidies, paid under the EU's common agricultural policy, are entirely safe in her hands. □

• EU residents: their right to stay

What's the status of EU migrant workers to be, post-Brexit? Theresa May still refuses to guarantee their right to remain - sticking to her line that this depends on negotiating reciprocal rights for British migrants in the EU. Worse, she's deliberately refused to rule out deporting EU workers, though this is no doubt pure "nasty party" politicking to help keep Tory Brexiteers on her side!

Nevertheless Labour MP Andy

Burnham's Commons motion to guarantee existing migrants' rights (voted on 6 July) was passed after the government abstained, with just 245 votes "for", including 5 Tory rebels led by Boris Johnson (to distinguish themselves from May's government?) and, more bizarrely, Ukip's only MP, Douglas Carswell. But then again - this vote was explicitly "non-binding" so in itself was mere politicking.

Of course for the time being, under EU law, anyone from the EU who has worked and lived in the country for 5 or more years already has the right of permanent residence. And given the employment need fulfilled by so many migrant workers wherever they come from, if and when the "Brexit date" is decided, May will be obliged to devise her own legal loophole to guarantee their right to stay. And in this case it will be "binding".

• A crucial role in a squeezed NHS

So how will the NHS run, if all EU workers had to leave? Could the 5% of posts they currently fill, be filled by "others"?

The fact is that the NHS is such a poor employer given its lack of resources (chronic under-funding and post-cutting) that it cannot even attract qualified staff

from countries outside the EU any more.

Even British-trained staff (few though they are) try to find employment abroad - especially newly-qualified doctors, and even more so after the latest move to stretch them even further over "7-days working". And immigration law now excludes medical staff from the poorer Commonwealth countries like India who formerly made up for the lack of British-trained staff.

It was a conscious policy to get doctors and nurses on the cheap by getting the poor (former "British Empire") countries to train them, prior to EU freedom of movement. But of course now it's much easier to fill the posts in outlying hospitals where the relatively few British aspiring specialists don't want to work, with doctors from the visa-free poorer EU countries, instead. So a hospital like Yeovil District, filled 153 permanent clinical posts out 1,112 (14%) with staff recruited directly in the EU. And of course this is also much "cheaper" than relying on the ubiquitous agency contracts (worked by the existing workforce mostly on overtime!) to fill vacancies at over ten times the cost!

• From government to business career

So, how hard will life after government be for George Osborne and David Cameron? Well for one thing, Cameron didn't even have to worry about where to live after he hastily despatched himself from Downing Street: although his own deluxe house in Notting Hill was rented out, his old mate Sir Alan Parker (suitably knighted by Dave himself) stepped in with a lovely little £16m mansion in Holland Park for free - though it would normally rent out at £8,000 a week!

George Osborne is set to make hundreds of thousands of pounds in a new career as an after dinner speaker - joining Gordon Brown and Tony Blair who are paid around £50,000 a speech plus expenses, by the Washington Speakers Bureau... Anyway he still has his 15% share in Osborne and Little - the wallpaper firm founded by his father, Sir Peter Osborne - which is worth between £2.25 million and £4.5 million. So despite his salary cut from £134,500 a year to £74,962 it looks as if he will manage quite comfortably...



Mount Pleasant mail centre (London)

RM plans to cut pensions

When Royal Mail announced in May this year that its pre-tax profits had fallen by 33% to £267 million, it declared that this fall reflected "transformation costs and pension charges". So no surprise that, after securing from the union a derisory 1.6% "pay rise" agreement, RM now declares its intention to switch 90,000 postal workers out of their current pension scheme to one that will pay

less. At the same time, cuts in the separate Post Office pension scheme will mean its retirees could lose up to half their pensions!

These attacks are not new. Back in 2007, when RM was still a public service, it used the excuse of "insufficient funds" to close the defined benefit scheme and replace it with a poorer, defined contribution scheme. It also managed, with a little help



from union officials, to uncouple pay and pension negotiations, which allowed RM to attack workers on two different fronts. At the time, workers met these attacks with strikes. And this is what they will need to do again.

• **In the best of all possible worlds**

Yes, the 1.6% pay rise finally agreed this July, which smacks rather of a pay cut, given the slide in the value of the pound, has been accepted... 43,986 YES votes against 5,423 NO votes. The CWU officials congratulate themselves (and us!!) for "achieving such an excellent result". But what is excellent about this tiny rise? Inflation will soon overtake it. [Workers' Fight bulletin Mount Pleasant 13/07/16]

• **Official blind eye**

Anyway, these ballot figures indicate that 50% of the membership didn't vote. So that means that one eighth of us who positively rejected this insult, plus 50,000 or more (how many active members are left?) did not endorse

it. The CWU machinery would do well to avoid such overconfident exaggeration. And we know the worst is yet to come with "one" tidal "wave" - drowning us and our jobs in its wake, unless we build defences right now, on the ground! [Workers' Fight bulletin Mount Pleasant 13/07/16]

• **Feeling sorry for her**

In the meantime, RM's CEO, Moya Greene got a shockingly low pay-package rise of 0.4% - she has now to survive on just £1.529m this year and we really wonder how she's going to make ends meet! If only she had joined the union... [Workers' Fight bulletin Mount Pleasant 13/07/16]

• **Emergency brake**

It's a worry that rumours are still circulating that for us drivers, night shift times will change if deliveries are pushed

to later on in the day... And what about the rumour that we'll be asked to start at 4am? We hope it is unfounded! We may be used to being on wheels, but we know also how to walk.. out! [Workers' Fight bulletin Mount Pleasant 13/07/16]

• **Our man & woman power**

And by the way, we see that some of our driver mates are still coming in via the agency, Manpower, when we've been told long since, that agency recruitment was a no-go by the union!

Of course we need more hands everywhere, but why has this been going on so long, when all of these mates need decent permanent jobs and they're working "permanently" for RM anyway?! [Workers' Fight bulletin Mount Pleasant 13/07/16]

Ford Dagenham estate (Essex)

• **Hot as hades**

Did Ford put any special measures in place in the old non-air-conned old factory, for the hottest day(s) in the year? Like hell it did. Meaning no. And as a result, we work in hell. [WF Ford bulletin during the heatwave in July 20/07/16]

• **Machines cost more**

Oh sorry - our mistake - there was a special measure: a fan to cool down one of the machines on Panther. (It still broke down.) As for us, well Ford knows that we can be replaced, and for no extra cost. So why try and cool us down? No need. Let our dead bodies pile up. [WF Ford bulletin during the heatwave in July 20/07/16]

• **Even the TUC says 27° is the limit**

And yes mates do die from the heat. It's no joke. In 2013, after 3 soldiers died in Wales, during military exercises on the hottest day of the year, it was proposed in parliament that all workers should be sent home if the temperature

goes above 27°C. Just proposed, mind you, as these MPs would never vote in such a measure, but at least they admitted the need!

This Tuesday and Wednesday temperatures were 30° and above. We should have been sent home. [WF Ford bulletin during the heatwave in July 20/07/16]

• **And another mate fell...**

In fact already before the heatwave, last week, yet another mate (from Lineside) had collapsed on Panther and stopped breathing.

A First Aider did CPR and probably saved his life (thanks Carl!). But then this week another Lineside mate collapsed! So what about our breaks, drinks and cooling down? How many more times must this happen? And BTW, is air-con on Panther even on Ford's agenda? [WF Ford Dagenham bulletin 20/07/16]

• **Bring back this cool blast from the past!!**

As to the abnormal heat - well yes, we used to have "heat reliefs" as a matter of course when temperatures went up (remember them days, anybody?).



A mate would swing a thermometer on a ratchet over the lines (and inside the cars) and if the temp was above 78°F (25.5°C) we'd get an extra 10 minutes break and above 82°F (27.7°C), this would be 15-20 minutes, or 5-10 minutes every hour. And we'd get plentiful iced drinks, to ensure we didn't get dehydrated. [WF Ford Dagenham bulletin 20/07/16]

• **Their officials control the weather**

How's this? Unlike here, in China, there's a legal max factory temperature - a sweltering 38°C! But they say their State Met Office will never report a temperature above 38°... [WF Ford Dagenham bulletin 20/07/16]

King's Cross railway station (London)**East Coast rail workers under attack**

The anger expressed by VTEC workers against a so-called "delivery plan" aiming to cut 195 jobs was clear. 84% voted for strike action. After only 1 year into the Virgin/Stagecoach franchise, workers were already struggling with too few hands. This was the last straw. The RMT called for a series of strikes beginning on 19 August - but as soon as VTEC agreed to talk, these strikes were called off.

The strategy of the union full timers and company council representatives was to ensure their own bargaining position was respected first

and foremost. So if there was to be a restructuring - they should be the ones to deliver it, with their own "6-point plan"! Calling for no compulsory redundancies and all agreements to be respected - they did not even explicitly reject the 195 job cuts! Under the pretext that VTEC was not providing details (which it in fact was, quite clearly!) these officials inserted themselves into a series of negotiations over alternative "delivery plans".

The union's line for now is that they can't reveal any info as regards the talks but that workers will have



the "final decision" once they have come to an agreement. Never mind that it can't be an informed decision if they've had no information. It's this undemocratic contempt for members which illustrates yet again the failure of the RMT to act like the "member-led union" it claims to be.

Rail workers striking separately for the same things

The fight by guards against Southern Rail's attempt to get rid of them and introduce "DOO" - driver only operation - is ongoing at the time of writing. They resorted to five consecutive days of strikes from 8-12th August, while drivers drove the trains and managers attempted to stand in - with chaos ensuing. After Southern tried to introduce its plans nevertheless, the RMT called two more strikes in September - but are now back in "negotiations".

Did Southern drivers ever get balloted, since this affects them too? No. Have other guards, or on-board staff on the other companies facing

similar attacks been called out at the same time to strengthen the fight? No. The RMT union has, as usual, decided to call different sections out on different days and treat each dispute as a separate, and thus far weaker, case...

Scotrail workers' strike against DOO had more success: apparently conductors will at least remain on newly electrified services. But Eurostar train "managers" had their strike suspended the day it began (against rostering changes, also mooted for drivers) and so was VTEC workers' strike "posponed" - despite the real issues remaining

unresolved.

Now, against the same company running Southern, GTR, the RMT has called another strike against plans to close GTR ticket offices and cut station jobs (introducing the so-called "station host") - despite similar plans by almost all other train companies!

Actually workers know already how ineffective these uncoordinated actions are likely to be. But things will only change if those on the ground decide collectively to move beyond the limits of this sectional trade-unionism.

BMW Mini centre (Cowley, Oxford)**• Either way we're being short-changed**

As our old pay date approaches, so does the 11 day gap until the new one. How can we stretch June's salary out? Even with BMW's loan, we'll be hard-pressed! And all because BMW wouldn't do the obvious - either pay us in two stages on the 15th and the 26th last month, or switch to paying in advance! We can be sure they'll benefit from the extra 11 days that money's sitting earning interest - which must be what the whole scheme's about. [Workers' Fight BMW Oxford Mini 13/07/16]

• Yes, we should all be paid in advance!

In fact why shouldn't we demand payment in advance? After all, BMW can draw up its schedules and make its plans knowing full well that we will be

coming to work tomorrow and the day after. We have contracted our time in advance and we need to feed and clothe ourselves just to be ready for BMW's benefit. Instead, we usually work for wages deferred by a month; but this time, it's 41 days. Or should we just impose our own "shutdown"..? [Workers' Fight BMW Oxford 13/07/16]

• A Day off

Saturday 2 July's Open Day was reported in the press as a day for us to bring our families here. Maybe car production is interesting to see for those who don't work here, but for many of us it was the last place we wanted to be during our free time (or in effect encourage our sons and daughters to come to)... Perhaps that's why the press picture couldn't find one of us car-makers in the on-site Mini shop to sign one of the cars - and had to ask someone's relative to do it? [Workers' Fight BMW Oxford 13/07/16]

**• Razzle-dazzle reined in**

BMW has been ordered to withdraw a radio ad for the Mini 1 series. The Advertising Standards Authority upheld a complaint that BMW's full beam headlight technology, (which uses sensors to detect oncoming beams and dips the beam automatically in response) was exaggerated by the claim that the car's headlamps would "never dazzle oncoming drivers". That will teach them. Never say never... [Workers' Fight BMW Oxford 13/07/16]

Casualisation

The big picture

These 'shocking revelations' as some journalists like to call the few high profile cases of flouting of the minimum wage and employment law which they choose to expose, don't represent just a few rotten apples.

In fact casual work and bogus "self-employment", which on average pays

• *The fox that guards the hen-house*

HMRC, the government department responsible for implementing the National Living Wage (NLW), doesn't care if the workers cleaning its buildings are paid according to it or not! In Merseyside their cleaning is subcontracted to the notorious ISS multinational. In order to offset any 'losses' due to the implementation of

40% less than regular employment, are becoming more and more the norm. The total number of self-employed, which stood at 4.7 million (according to latest ONS figures) in April 2016, grew as much in the seven years after the crisis as it did in the three decades before. Worse, part-time "self-employment"

the so-called "National Living Wage" of a non-liveable £7.20/hr, ISS decided to cut workers' hours. When approached by the workers for an explanation, HMRC washed its hands, saying that this was not its responsibility!

So the 30 ISS workers went on a 2-day strike in July - and have planned

grew by 88% between 2001 and 2015, compared to the much smaller rise in full-time self-employment, of 25%. It is this general picture which shows the depth of the crisis of the whole economy, and the way workers on the lowest rungs of the employment ladder are paying the heaviest price for it. □

another 2 days of action on 5th-7th September. And they're right! Only direct action will push companies such as ISS to change its ways. As for HMRC, representing the government and therefore the bosses' interests, it did no more nor less than expected!

• *Deliveroo strikers tell it to go hop*

Deliveroo, a UK-based meal delivery company, tried to impose a pay-per-delivery system (or piece-rate in the old vocabulary!) on its employees. Apparently it considers its employees' current pay package - £7/hr plus £1 per delivery - excessive! In effect this could mean that its bike-riders would earn, at times, as little as £3.75/hr or even nothing at all.

Riders in London responded with a six-day strike and this forced the company to back down. New contracts are thus not compulsory in the case of London, although they are being implemented in others parts of the country bit-by-bit. For instance, in Birmingham. But Deliveroo riders now know how to make Deliveroo listen!

• *Deliveroo's clone*

Hermes, Britain's second largest parcel delivery company, with clients like John Lewis and other major retailers was another one that caught media attention recently for paying some of its couriers below the minimum wage. In the end it turned out that this company doesn't need to comply with the national living



wage since it classifies its couriers as "self-employed". So, they may end up earning as little as £5.50/hr, working just 3 to 6 hours per day, and of course, they

do not have any sick pay, parental leave, pension contributions nor paid holiday. This is called "employment" in today's terms!?

• *Byron burgers - cockroach capitalism*

At the beginning of July, raids organised in Byron Hamburger restaurants across London, led to the arrests of 35 workers. Their "crime"? Trying to earn a living.

Byron had set them up by organising a fake briefing, where immigration officers turned up to question and arrest these workers and put them in detention centres.

Twenty-five of them workers were subsequently deported!

Some had worked for this company for years! But Byron bosses had no qualms about having them uprooted, without them being allowed to see their families before their forced removal. Byron's excuse for all this that they might have to pay a fine

for employing "illegals".

Protests have been organised against the company and cockroaches and locusts in its restaurants. But that's hardly a punishment against criminal bosses who've been knowingly abusing the precarious status of their workers, the better to turn the screw on them!

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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