

# WORKERS' fight



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

## Elections can't deliver real change BUT OUR FIGHTS CAN AND THEY WILL!

With just over four weeks to go before the 12 December, the main parties still have to release their election manifestos. Indeed, they all want to be free to tweak their election promises up to the very last minute, so as to be able to respond to opinion polls and unexpected events. No wonder: these parties aren't fighting for ideas, but only for votes!

For the working class, this election is in no way different from so many others in the past: its class interests are just not represented by any of the contending parties. So whoever workers vote for, their ballot papers are designed to be used, one way or another, to justify getting the working class to foot the bill for bailing this corrupt capitalist system out of its own chronic state of crisis. And the fact that there are more, or less brutal, ways of organising this bailout, depending on which party is running the show, won't make it less crippling for society as a whole.

### **The Corbyn illusion**

Would it be different under a Corbyn government, as suggested by the media stories about British billionaires queuing to move abroad, if Corbyn makes it into 10 Downing Street? But why should it?

For instance, the £400bn investment in infrastructure pledged by McDonnell, would mean hundreds of billions worth of contracts for private shareholders, without them having to fork out a penny!

Of course, the word "nationalisation" is supposed to be a dirty word these days. But this is only because the bosses are crying wolf, in the hope of squeezing even more money out of a Labour government. After all, Labour says it will buy the nationalised companies' shares! But what did



their shareholders ever do, apart from waiting for workers to sweat out their dividends? Why should they be compensated at all?

What's more, by buying these shares, Labour will allow their owners to invest in far more profitable industries than Britain's ageing privatised utilities! In this respect, we're back to the post-WWII situation, except that instead of being crippled by a war, today's British privatised utilities are crippled by decades of criminal underinvestment! However, just as Attlee did in 1945, Corbyn is offering British capital a new lease of life, at a time when it is weakened by the world crisis.

### **Back to the class struggle**

In fact, Corbyn is just offering to save British capital from its own reckless greed and from the world crisis. As he pointed out himself in front of the CBI: "It's sometimes claimed that I'm anti-business. That is complete nonsense." And then he proceeded to convince them that his primary concern is to

make the economy work for business.

But if it works for business, it won't work for workers: opposite class interests can't be reconciled. It is not a question of policy, nor a question of party, but a question of social organisation. As long as the capitalists have a monopoly over the economy, society will be crippled and forced into decay.

So the capitalists have everything to expect and nothing to fear from a Labour government. In fact, the only thing they fear is a resurgence of working class militancy, which might threaten their profits - and, potentially, their stranglehold over the economy. Predictably, this is the one thing that Corbyn is careful not to even hint at in his campaign! But, for the working class, there is only one way forward after this no-stake election, whoever gets into No 10: to defend its class interests, it will have to rebuild its collective militant strength and go on the offensive against the capitalist profiteers, by using the weapons of the class struggle. □

## NHS

**The real danger of privatisation is known**

The political nonsense and over-bidding over what's going to become of the NHS after the post-Brexit deal, already began on day one of the December election campaign. To Corbyn's accusation that the Tories are "plotting a deal with Donald Trump", which would allow private American companies to cash in on the NHS, Johnson responded with a denial and cited record sums being invested into 40 new hospitals under his government. Trump, meanwhile, just pretends that it's all business as usual. In a way it is: NHS outsourcing to private US companies has been going on since the 1990s.

In fact today, 25% of the NHS budget is already siphoned off by private companies. US companies like

### • **No vaccine against cuts!**

After the outbreak of measles earlier this year due to the low measles, mumps and rubella (MMR) jab rates, the government's National Audit Office (NAO) found that the numbers of children vaccinated against 13 other diseases - including whooping cough, diphtheria and meningitis - were also in decline!

### • **The "Orkambi" scandal**

To great fanfare, NHS England finally this October, made available the life-changing cystic fibrosis drug, "Orkambi", after doing a "strictly confidential" deal with its US manufacturer, Vertex. Orkambi and related drugs which tackle the cause of cystic fibrosis were already approved for use 4 years ago. But at the time, Vertex's price for providing this treatment was £104,000 per patient/year. And since 5,000 sufferers would have benefited from it, this would have come to £520m. So the NHS said "no". Never mind that it would have saved many sufferers from premature death and cut down drastically their use of the multiple other drugs/treatments they rely upon to survive. What made this exorbitant cost even worse, was that Vertex had made use of public researchers' work in creating the drug - and this year it is set to make £2.7bn in revenue out of Orkambi alone.

Because of the NHS' prior refusal, in June this year a cystic fibrosis "buyers' club" was formed, aiming to purchase a generic form of the drug from an Argentinian company (not subject to



Nasdaq-listed Acadia Healthcare, and NYSE-listed Universal Health Services, provide 13% of inpatient beds in the England. This "sell-off" may have begun under the Tories,

but Labour enthusiastically continued it and it's gone on ever since. And so Brexit or not, deal or no deal, the NHS will have to be taken off the hands of all profit sharks. □

The NAO blamed the drop in Britain's vaccination rates on the 2013 "reorganisation" (i.e., cuts) of the NHS, when the responsibility of following children's vaccination records was shifted from primary care trusts and service providers to NHS England. But since the aim of this "reorganisation" was to cut costs, NHS England was not given the means

to operate a centralised system to keep proper track of children's records - particularly in GP practices.

So the government's report puts an end to the myth that it is only the parents, influenced by the media, who are to blame. But it stops short of exposing the root of the problem: decades of NHS cuts!

patent law), which offered it at £20,000/patient/year. It is possible that this "buyers club" provided the impetus for health officials - who chose not to pursue a cheaper generic themselves - to do their secret deal, just months later, with Vertex. But in so doing, they also chose to protect the pharmaceutical giants' monopolistic profits, respecting the 20-year patents which allow these companies to charge extortionate prices for drugs which remain their own "private property" for up to 20 years after their discovery - no matter the cost in terms of patients' lives.

### • **Cuts which rule out cutting**

You might get an appointment for your NHS surgery, but the odds are that it won't even take place. Thanks to staff shortages (100,000 too few across the NHS), as well as equipment failure, 79,000 operations were cancelled last year. This is an increase of 32% in the last 2 years. Almost 4,000 more operations were cancelled in 2018 than in 2016. The Nuffield Trust estimates the amount needed to repair faulty equipment alone, across the service, at as much as £6bn. Let's hope that the rival

contenders in next month's election at least add that to their one-upmanship pledges on NHS pending... Because the only reason this state of affairs prevails is thanks to constant budget cuts and failure to increase spending with inflation, not to mention the refusal to take into account the growing health needs of an ageing population.

**WORKERS'**  
fight

**PUBLIC MEETING**

**Capitalism is a threat  
to society  
and to the planet  
WE NEED  
A SOCIAL  
REVOLUTION!**

Saturday 23 November 2019, 1.15pm,  
Wesley's Chapel  
Kwanglim room  
49, City Road - EC1Y 1AU  
tube: Old Street

BM WORKERS' FIGHT - LONDON WC1N 3XX - contact@w-fight.org

## A market that isn't working

Most private rented family homes in Britain are unaffordable for housing benefit claimants. Three local authorities only had one property each that a housing benefit tenant could afford to live in. Of 663 private rented homes advertised in Leicester, only 10 were affordable on housing benefit. Eighty of these explicitly barred housing

benefit claimants from applying; others demanded huge deposits or even a week's rent just to talk to the landlord!

Much of the former council housing bought by tenants under Thatcher's right-to-buy legislation is now in the hands of "buy-to-let" landlords who charge top rents, treating these homes purely as

### • **Millionaires on the backs of the homeless**

As many as 8.4 million people (just in England!) are living in "unaffordable" houses or have become homeless after evictions, rent rises and benefit cuts. So little wonder that the homeless have become a target for landlord's profiteering, with the help of the state!

In 2017, the "Homeless Reduction Act" introduced a duty for councils to prevent homelessness by giving homeless people temporary accommodation. In so doing, the state avoided any investment in wider affordable housing projects and provided local authorities with funding to hand over to private landlords. By October this year, 66,910 households in England were eligible for temporary "studio-flats" or B&B's. A market worth more than £215m!

And what does this amount to? Placing families in temporary slums! Whole families are allocated just one room to live in, in overcrowded buildings often on the brink of collapse, without proper heating, electricity or water! And that is not to mention the hygiene problems, cockroaches and rats... This "Homeless Reduction Act" has amounted to nothing more than to a huge lucrative state contract handed to private landlords - while the homeless poor are

pushed into a downward spiral. Yes, this is what this rotten system presents as a "solution"!

### • **Landlords set the rules**

Last month Johnson was (rightly!) accused of backing rich landlords at the expense of private renters, when he failed to include Theresa May's promised housing bill in his Queen's speech. The bill would have ended the misery of "no-fault evictions" - landlords being able to evict tenants without giving any reason for it - which has left people homeless and on the street. At the time, May said *"this is wrong - and today we're acting by preventing these unfair evictions"*. Of course, this was before she herself was evicted from 10 Downing Street - in her case, "with fault"!

The Residential Landlord's Association continues to justify these evictions: *"with the demand for private rented homes continuing to increase, we need the majority of good landlords to have confidence to invest in new homes. This means ensuring they can swiftly repossess properties for legitimate reasons"*. In fact, these type of evictions alone account for a 27% rise in homelessness.

Johnson's refusal to legislate against them is hardly surprising even if it escalates the housing crisis. He's always made clear which side he is on.

## Housing

investments. Meanwhile, council rent caps only apply to the benefit paid, not to the rent charged. So for a growing poor section of the population, there is just no suitable housing available, aggravating an already dire shortage. Only huge investment in social rented housing could begin to rectify this. □

### • **B&Bs for the homeless**

Last month, the government gave figures for the number of households in temporary accommodation between January and March 2019. They show an increase of 77% since December 2010, when the number of households in temporary accommodation hit its lowest point (!) of 65,249. This includes as many as 7,040 families being crammed into single bedroom B&Bs.

In 2004, the "Homelessness (Suitability of Accommodation) (England) Order 2003" came into force specifying that *"homeless families should not be placed in B&B accommodation except in an emergency, and even then, only for a maximum of six weeks"*. After 15 years, the number of households facing this "emergency" has hardly changed. In fact, homeless households will inevitably increase since no social housing is being built. And even more so, since 97% of areas in England are unaffordable for renters who are entitled to housing support.

In the last year, B&B owners received a total of £93.3 million from local authorities. Which begs the question: why couldn't all these millions have been used to invest in proper social housing for struggling workers and their families?

## Grenfell fire

### • **The real criminals**

The first part of the enquiry into Grenfell, published at the end of October, explicitly limited itself to looking at the events on the night of the fire in June 2017. A second part is due around the middle of 2021, looking at "the remainder of the issues".

This first report criticised the "stay put" policy of the Fire Service, and their leadership and training for dealing with such fires. Never mind that fires such as the one that broke out in Grenfell, are a direct result of years of deregulation, cost-cutting and contracting out. Grenfell Tower was a building in which people were living without a working sprinkler system, in which the fire doors didn't close, and in which a key fire-protection measure - fire-proof lobbies in each flat - had been done away with, in order to squeeze more flats into the building to boost profits.

The Fire Service did not even know about

all these failed safety measures, since overall responsibility for fire safety in residential buildings was taken out of their hands in 2005, and the statutory safety inspections were privatised.

So, when will the real criminals - the local politicians and ministers who presided over the deregulation of fire safety - be held to account for the deaths of 72 residents?

### • **Still using death-trap cladding**

A few days after the release of the first part of the Grenfell Inquiry, it was revealed that for two whole years after the disaster, the government was still giving work to Rydon, the company responsible for the lethal cladding on Grenfell Tower. Yes, when it was already known without a doubt that it was the cladding which was responsible for the rapid spread of the fire - acting like a chimney - or, as a fire safety expert said, *"it's like cladding your home in solid petrol"*.

The Inquiry only confirmed what was already known: the cladding didn't comply

with building regulations and *"the polyethylene-cored panels were the 'primary cause' of the rapid spread of flames"*. Never mind. According to the Cabinet Office, as long as the company hadn't been convicted of an offence, *"we are not legally allowed to preclude Rydon Construction from bidding for government contracts"*.

Rydon was only banned from carrying out housing works on the 7th of November this year! Given that 144 private tower blocks and 102 socially-rented blocks are still covered in dangerous cladding, this is yet another demonstration of how little has been done to address the causes of the Grenfell fire. And it's not just Rydon. Arconic, which manufactured the cladding, and Celotex, which made the insulation, are also getting away with murder. Unsurprisingly, governments protect the interests of private companies, and in this case, cover their backs, despite the utter carnage they have caused.



## Election watch

## Another no-stake election for the working class

All the parties standing in the 12th December general election insist on how good their policies will be for the economy - and, by this, they mean, for business! And all of them are offering their loyal services to the bosses, by proposing their own "fast-track solution" out of the Brexit conundrum and promoting the fact that theirs is the "best solution for Britain" - i.e., for British capital.

But no policy can be both "business-friendly" and "worker-friendly". At one point or another, especially in a period of deep crisis like the present one, something has to give - and these parties have long decided that they will do whatever it takes to protect the capitalist class, its profits and its order, whatever the cost to the working class!

The fact is that no party standing in this election seeks to represent the interests of the working class against its exploiters. No party is prepared to assert unambiguously that any attack against



migrant workers, any restriction on the free movement of workers, wherever they may be coming from, is an attack against all workers. And no party is using this election campaign to expose the damage caused by the capitalists' private ownership of the means of production.

So, once again, the working class has no voice in this election and nothing to expect from it. To really change the course of events, however, it could use

much more effective weapons than the ballot box - those of the class struggle: mass action in the streets and industrial action at work. And, Brexit or not, the working class will need to mobilise - and organise - all its forces, beyond all divisions, industrial or national, in order to make the most of its collective strength, so as to reclaim the ground lost to the Johnsons of this world and their capitalist masters. □

### • Top marks for xenophobia

In the Queen's speech, Johnson confirmed plans to introduce "an immigration bill, ending free movement...". And Home Secretary Patel has announced an "Australian style" points-based, immigration system, to be implemented once Britain leaves the EU.

So how would it work? Essentially, the entry to Australia is regulated by points assigned according to "merit" and applicants need 85. This has just been increased from 70 (which wasn't too difficult to achieve) by "Australia First" rightwing PM Turnbull. If you're aged

between 25-32 you get 30 points; if you're highly proficient in English, 20 points; skilled work experience in Australia of at least 8 years - 20 points; skilled work overseas, 15 points; equivalent education - if PhD level, 20 points; if professional training done in Australia, 5 points; skilled partner, 5 points; other language proficiency if accredited, 5 points... and so on. In fact it's very difficult to achieve 85 points.

The difference between this system and the British Tier 2 visa for non-EU migrants is that migration isn't linked to a job offer, on the

one hand and on the other, migrants immediately get permanent leave to remain, unlike here, where you can only apply after 5 years of living and working in the country. In fact, an Australian job offer actually allows migrants to bypass the points system.

How exactly Johnson & Patel's points system would work, they don't say. In the interests of the election they may have promised special NHS visas for doctors and nurses, but behind that, we can be sure that the Home Office's 'hostile environment' is set to continue.

### • The bosses' favourite meal: Tory "manifeasto"

At the time of writing, even if the Tory manifesto hasn't yet been published, we know very well what will be in it. For a start, a great deal of lies. Like on public service spending - and especially the NHS.

So Johnson is promising 6,000 more GPs by 2024-25 in England. Not only had the Tories' previous "pledge" of 5,000 more GPs by 2020 (made by Jeremy Hunt in 2015) not been met, but their number went down by 1,500 to the current total of 42,000 - not helped by Hunt's attacks against junior doctors at the time.

Moreover, increases in NHS spending from £121bn to £149bn (Tories) - or £155bn (Labour) - by 2023-2024 would be far too little, and far too late, to resolve the current NHS

emergency. The only effective policy would be to make the capitalists pay for the health service, but no party would dare to propose this. On the other hand, what we will see in the manifesto is more tax cuts, "investment" to hand out lucrative contracts to their friends in the capitalist class (to manufacture yet more military hardware!) and a pledge to come down like a sledgehammer on workers' rights!

### • What lies, damn lies!

November's data from the Office for National Statistics (ONS) shows a reduction of the unemployment rate! Of course! They calculate in their own sweet way that only 3.8% of the workforce is jobless. But of course, for the ONS, anyone over 16 having worked at least an hour a week or more is "employed" - as if

someone could live on 1 hour work per week! So the number of employed workers tends to keep increasing. Never mind that this includes almost 5m "self-employed" (or should we say bogus self-employed?), 1.5m temporary workers, 870,000 on zero-hours contracts and 77,000 agency workers!

Apart from rampant casualisation, another major cause of rises in the employment figure is the huge increase (by 138%!) over the last decade in the number of people working over the age of 70 years. These workers instead of retiring are often compelled to take part-time jobs to fill the gap left by ridiculously small state pensions of £129.20 per week!

Whether the politicians end up in the ditch or not, what is for sure is that with their golden pensions and their recycling of seats in parliament THEY will not end up in the dole!

election. But others, like the party's donor Arron Banks, argued that the Brexit Party should not split the Brexit vote and only "go for the 40 or so Labour seats where the Tories haven't got a hope". Judging from Farage's latest turn, this latter position has prevailed - thereby showing, once again, that, much as its predecessor UKIP, the Brexit party is primarily an external, nastier faction of the Tory party!

### • Farage's twists and turns

On 11th November, Nigel Farage announced that his Brexit Party would not stand in the 317 constituencies won by the Tory party in 2017. This, said Farage, was meant to "prevent a second referendum from happening" by "giving Boris half a chance".

In fact, after Johnson's flat refusal to form a hard-Brexit front with the Brexit Party, Farage

was probably hoping that, in return, the Tories would withdraw in favour of his candidates in some Labour constituencies, this time in the name of an anti-Corbyn front. But so far, this hasn't happened.

Farage's party, however, was divided over this issue. Some were in favour of raising the profile of the party by standing everywhere - so as to position themselves for the next general

## Could Johnson still end up in a ditch?

Johnson's election campaign has been a torrent of gaffes and lies. Having refused to consider the floods in the North East as a "national emergency", he was forced into a spectacular U-turn, calling an emergency Cobra meeting and sending the army to the flooded areas... after the end of the Met Office's flood warnings! Then, during a visit to Northern Ireland, he told local businessmen that, under his Brexit deal, they will be able to "bin" customs forms. Except that it simply wasn't true!

So, predictably, the response Johnson gets from voters during his visits, can be chaotic. Like, for instance, when he finally turned up in Yorkshire, five days after the

### • Tories' open show of contempt

The Tory Party is dropping the "caring Conservative" mask that Cameron and May tried, but often failed to hold in place. So first, there was Jacob Rees-Mogg's callous remark on the radio that those who died in the Grenfell Tower fire did not use "common sense" and leave the burning building.

### • Johnson's true love for his capitalist masters

In his rant in the Daily Telegraph on 6 November, Johnson compared Corbyn to Stalin and denounced his "hatred of wealth creators"! All that, because Corbyn had been exposing the ostentatious wealth of the small ultra-rich minority. Of course, for Johnson, as for all the members of his class, the only wealth "creators" are the capitalists! Never mind that their profits come solely from the value they steal from the working class and that the only wealth which is actually "created" in society is produced by workers!

In fact workers, who, unlike Johnson, haven't been to Oxford or Cambridge, know full well that it's they who create

### • Using women's oppression for PR

The secretary of the Department for International Development, Alok Sharma, has launched a programme that he claims will help end violence against women across Africa, the Middle East and Asia.

Following the alleged success of a very small-scale, low-cost, pilot back in 2014, Sharma said that this time the government would be spending £67.5m over 7 years! Is this derisory amount really supposed to help the 1.3 billion



floods, to be greeted with jeers of "Where have you been?". In fact, to avoid being barracked by angry

Then Johnson said that a month's rainfall in a single day over already-saturated South Yorkshire was "not something we need to be escalating to the level of a national emergency". Two days later, after villages below Doncaster flooded and Fishlake was cut off, he had to call in the army and arrange a

society's wealth. They also know that their enemies are Johnson's parasitical capitalist masters - those do-nothings, who live a life of luxury out of robbing the working class of its labour. So if Johnson has resorted to playing on prejudices concerning the former Soviet Union or even the Russian Revolution, it only exposes his deep fear that the working class may well decide to get rid of him and his million- and billionaire friends at some point!

### • Johnson's stones unturned and unfracked, for now..

Whether the government's "ban" on fracking is an election stunt, or a gesture towards climate change, at least for now, on the advice of the Oil and Gas

women worldwide who have experienced physical and/or sexual violence?

But while Alok Sharma claims that Britain is "leading the world" in tackling violence against women, he also thinks that "UK aid is vital, but our ultimate goal is to help countries support themselves". In other words, he echoes the right-wing factions of the Tory party, which would like to get rid of the international aid budget altogether, after Brexit. So much for the government pretending to do something about the conditions of women!

## Election watch

protesters, Johnson often sneaks out of his public appearances. And it's just as well! □

Cobra meeting, since this definitely was a "national emergency"! These two instances tell us all we need to know about Johnson, his clique and their attitude to working-class people: bad things that happen to us are either our own fault, or just don't matter!

Authority, all operations have been suspended. In fact fracking was only taking place at one site in Lancashire, where it had been wound up after minor earthquakes occurred over the summer.

But Cuadrilla - and behind it the big energy producers - is unlikely to give up if there are profits to be made. Johnson's Business Secretary Andrea Leadsom, praises the advantages of fracking and certainly as one of Johnson's chief Brexiters would dismiss the science (which she said is "not clear" and "will change!"), in favour of business interests and Britain's energy "independence"! And of course Johnson, when he was London Mayor declared that he'd leave "no stone unturned or unfracked". So it's highly unlikely that his latest "anxieties" over fracking will last very long.





## Immigration

## 39 reasons to fight the government mafia!

As this issue of our paper goes to press, the 39 Vietnamese workers who were found dead in the back of a lorry in Essex, on 23rd October, have all but disappeared from the news. Apart from their identities, which were released in the first week of November, nothing more has filtered out about them, not even the cause of their deaths.

But then, of course, revealing the horrifying conditions in which these migrant workers died in their desperate search for a decent life, would have exposed the abysmal hypocrisy of an election campaign in which the main parties argue, more or less overtly, for even more stringent immigration controls!

Of course, ministers were quick to point the finger of blame at an unknown mafia of "human traffickers". But would these gangs even exist today without the so-called "hostile environment" created by Theresa May, so as to divert attention from



the Tories' drastic cuts? Or without the anti-migrant demagoguery which has become an integral part of the Brexit saga? All this has resulted in even more senseless border controls - making it virtually impossible to live and work legally in Britain. It leaves migrants no option but to put their lives into the hands of gangs of traffickers.

So, behind the trafficking gangs, the ultimate responsibility for these murders lies with the mafiosi who choose to whip up anti-foreign, anti-migrant fears in order to bolster their careers. And they are all well-known - they are called Cameron and May, Johnson and Patel, Gove and Farage, among others! These are the real criminals! □

### • **Hate crimes: a result of the politicians' games**

The number of recorded hate crimes increased by 10% over the past year, up to over 100,000 - more than double what it was in 2012. More than three quarters of all hate crimes were race-based.

Among the causes of this increase are the rise in poverty and the general degradation of social conditions. But behind this, is the politicians' whipping up of prejudices, designed precisely to deflect

the blame for this degradation away from their profit system, political institutions and policies.

So for instance, like many past politicians in her position, Priti Patel warned in a press release on 14 November, that without controls "*immigration would surge and put huge strains on schools and our NHS*". As if the strain which schools and the NHS face was not due to

the Tory cuts over the past decade!

Already, the systematic use of such xenophobic rhetoric at the time of the Brexit referendum, had resulted in a spike in hate crime. If this trend continues, it will be those like Patel, but also Gove and Johnson, who embark on anti-migrant overbidding during the present election campaign, who will be responsible.

### • **Migrant workers – an integral part of the working class**

Fanning anti-migrant prejudices is part of the "normal" political armoury of the Tory party. But it should not be tolerated in the working class movement. Yet Len McCluskey, Unite general secretary and a backer of Corbyn, warned Labour that they should not "*extend free movement rights*", since the "*only beneficiaries are bosses of unscrupulous companies*", who are "*using [migrant workers] to undercut pay and conditions.*"

This is not the first time that the Unite leadership has taken ambiguous - if not overtly hostile - positions towards migrant workers. But at a time when the majority of the political establishment is involved in systematic xenophobic overbidding on the question of border controls and immigration, the working class movement should be facing up to its

responsibilities by taking the side of all workers, whatever their nationality, when they are under attack.

As if McCluskey, as a union general secretary, did not know that this story about migrant workers undercutting pay and conditions is utter nonsense. And that the real problem is the greed of bosses who are constantly trying to cut their workers' wages and conditions. The point is that every attempt by the bosses to reduce wages and cut conditions has to be resisted, if the working class is to succeed in protecting its material conditions. But what is the record of union leaders like McCluskey in this respect - when they've allowed wealthy multinationals to make systematic use of casual labour and multi-tier systems in their British plants, without even attempting to organise

any sort of fightback? And now, after years of crisis and deterioration in workers' pay and conditions, McCluskey is trying to cover his back by blaming migrant workers?

In any case, McCluskey's union organises industries in which millions of foreign workers - European and others - are employed and exploited alongside British nationals. Whether these workers are able to fight off their employers' attempts at screwing more profits out of their labour, depends entirely on the balance of forces. And this balance of forces depends on the workers' ability to mobilise their numbers - all their numbers - despite the divisions that the bosses keep trying to create in their ranks. By taking this stance, McCluskey is effectively undermining the unity of the working class and siding with its class enemies.

## The Home Office's profiteering

Since March 2019, immigrants have been expected to pay hefty fees to the Home Office for getting a UK visa or citizenship. "Indefinite leave to remain in the UK" costs £2,389; a Tier 2 visa for skilled workers with a job offer, costs up to £928 in "shortage occupations" (eg., chefs or paramedics). The cost to register a child born here has more than doubled in the past decade, from just above £400 in 2009 to £1012 in 2019.

But the Home Office cash machine has also been making a loud "ka-ching" out of private subcontracting: the overseas and in-country visa-processing system has been outsourced to companies like VFS



and Sopra Steria and the Home Office takes a cut from their profits. Last year, it made around £500 million this way!

However, the Home Office's latest system of streaming visa applicants, based on an AI algorithm, so as to

## Immigration

avoid paying human beings to do it, may well be curtailed... And end up costing them. Legal action, entitled "*Deported by algorithm*" is being taken on the grounds that the outcome of this process could be construed as racist. No surprise there. □

### • "Hostile environment" against rough sleepers...

Human rights charities have revealed the fact that 21 Home Office immigration surgeries have been embedded within community centres and churches in London, Birmingham, Slough and Manchester. Through these surgeries, the Home Office aims to attract migrants in distress, most of whom are rough sleepers, round them up and deport them if they don't have the "right"

documents!

And while charities are only meant to approach this cynically-named "Rough Sleeping Support Service" on a voluntarily basis, the Home Office has in fact granted them funds in return for being given access to individual migrant's information.

This is yet another aspect of the "hostile environment" instituted by Theresa

May when she was Home secretary, and continued by her successors Amber Rudd, Sajid Javid and now, Priti Patel. After hospital staff, teachers, employers and landlords, who are already meant to report "illegal" immigrants to the Home Office, it seems that charities and community centres are now also added to the hostile environment network!

### • ... and for victims of crime

It's business as usual at the Home Office, under Priti Patel, who was recently caught trying to deport a victim of trafficking and modern slavery. The man concerned is from Poland and was brought to Britain by two men promising him work. After he lost his job, they took away his papers and evicted him from his accommodation while still demanding

that he pay them back. He was detained after being arrested for shoplifting. Yet despite recognising him as a victim of forced labour, the Home Office continued to detain him and tried to deport him.

In October, an immigration judge ruled the detention illegal and the Home Office settled the case out of court by paying £25,000 compensation. This

is only the latest in a string of similar cases where the Home Office has been stopped by campaigners from removing trafficked slaves. Priti Patel's promise to throw the book at the traffickers, after the discovery of the Essex 39, clearly did not signify the slightest empathy with their victims.

### • Asylum: it's become mission impossible

The asylum "system", isn't just "hostile" against refugees. Long before Theresa May's "hostile environment" policy, provoking the Windrush scandal, it had already become almost impossible to get refugee status. Moreover, competent help with the hugely bureaucratic and complex application process is no longer at hand. Blair and Brown's Labour governments already changed legal aid, so that lawyers were only paid when a case was finished, which effectively shut down, in 2010 and 2011, two of the biggest free immigration and asylum centres, Refugee and Migrant Justice and the Immigration Advisory Service. But today, further legal aid cuts mean that refugees end up in the hands of unscrupulous lawyers, who deliberately prey on their vulnerability.

As a result, asylum applications are refused multiple times, leaving refugees

locked into an appeals process which can take years, without the right to work. And that's if they're lucky enough to avoid being locked in one of the Home Office's "immigration removal centres" or worse, a prison cell. Their "best" alternative is to be sent to live in subcontracted (to the likes of G4S) rooms in the poorest areas of the country under the "forced dispersal policy" (introduced by Labour). Many end up on the street, destitute and likely to be picked up and deported, no questions asked.

One volunteer advisor even anticipates that at some point the government may well legislate against those who attempt to give support to undocumented people: so not just hostile against migrants, but also anyone who wants to help them.

### • Home Office stalls doctors' visas

Everyone knows how bad the staffing situation in the English NHS is. More

than 10,000 unfilled vacancies exist for doctors alone. One way to fill the gaps, which was proposed back in January, was to increase the number of trainee doctors who come from outside the EU to learn their trade for a 2-year period, under the Medical Training Initiative, from 1,000 to 3,000 a year.

Already these trainee doctors help alleviate the medic shortage by taking their place on hospital staff rotas. So whatever the demerits of getting partly-qualified staff to work as if they were qualified, all the official medical bodies, as well as the dubious Health Secretary Matt Hancock, want the scheme expanded. For them "needs must".

The trouble is that the Home Office, which is responsible for sorting out Tier 2 visas for these medics is, as one commentator put it, doing "diddly-squat". So for the time being, the staffing gaps can only grow...

**Crisis watch****Sky-rocketing dividends and diving wages**

Despite the on-going economic crisis, shareholders pocketed a combined £410bn in dividends across the world, in the second quarter of 2019 - an all-time record!

In Britain, thanks to the pound's ongoing Brexit-related fall, shareholders in large companies making their profits abroad enjoyed an 8.6% rise in payouts - to a record £29bn. Huge "exceptional" dividends were also paid by some of the richest 100 companies quoted in London - for instance, Rio-Tinto, Micro Focus International and RBS. In fact, these "exceptional" dividends are just another way of distributing unusually high profits to shareholders. And the profits made by these companies have been so fat lately that this year, they have increased their "exceptional" dividends



by an average 18.5%!

By contrast, workers' wages never caught up in real terms since the 2008 financial crash: today, male workers' wages are still 7% lower on average than 10 years ago. According to fact-checking charity, Fullfact, self-employed incomes (which would include

the so-called "gig-economy") fell by as much as 26% between 2008 and 2016. They don't give more recent figures, but that is enough to expose Britain's soaring inequality! Yes, while the poor get poorer, the rich carry on adding absurd numbers of zeroes to their wealth. □

### • **Car mega-mergers: why should workers foot the bill?**

Last year, the world car industry saw its first drop in sales since 2008, and so far this year, sales have fallen again, in every single major market, except Brazil and Japan.

The causes of this, as given by experts, range from Trump's trade-war with China, to governments' harsher emission laws. But the wider context is a system in crisis, and a shrinking market as workers wages fall all over the world. Workers spending less, shrinks

the market further, which in turn exacerbates the crisis threatening the world economy.

In this context, all the car companies are looking for ways to protect their shareholders' profits. A tried and tested method is through mergers, such as that announced at the end of October between Fiat Chrysler and French company PSA, worth £35bn. Merged companies find "efficiencies" by combining their production and distribution; what

this really means is cutting jobs and increasing the exploitation of the remaining workforce.

But the bosses' current squeeze is their own problem. For decades, car giants have made colossal profits off workers' labour. So today, it's payback time. Instead of job losses, all available work should be shared out with no loss of pay, paid for out of the long-accumulated profits and dividends of these huge companies.

### • **The retail crisis is the crisis of capitalism**

The list of high street retail companies biting the dust is piling up. At the time of writing, Mothercare, in administration since 5 November, is only the most recent. It followed Regis/Supercuts, Bonmarché, Watt Brothers, Links of London, all of which collapsed in October; then there was Forever 21 in September, Jack Wills and Spudulike in August, Select in May, Debenhams in April, Pretty Green and Office Outlet in March, etc... Altogether, 44 retail businesses have collapsed; thousands of stores have closed and 85,000 employees have lost their jobs in the past year alone!

The causes are many. With Brexit dragging on, the low pound has pushed import prices up. Some shops chose to increase prices and others to "absorb the

cost", which cuts into their profits. That meant borrowing in order to keep goods on the shelves. To minimise the harm to themselves they pushed the burden onto the workforce - cutting jobs and conditions. Asda, for instance, just told its 120,000 workers that they had to sign a new contract by 2 November or be sacked. This new contract includes, among other things, unpaid breaks, and being "on call" for work without proper notice.

It's a vicious circle: as wages fall and jobs disappear, workers' spending power diminishes and even more shops go bust. There is an alternative, of course: employ more workers and pay good wages. But the bosses won't do that until the working class forces them to.



### • **Brexit already bearing rotten fruit**

One consequence of the Brexit mess, is the difficulty for farms to recruit EU workers for seasonal work. As a result, thousands of tonnes of fruits and vegetables have been rotting in orchards and fields. Farmers reported an over

30% shortfall of workers in September. One fruit farm in Herefordshire said that it had wasted 87,000 punnets of raspberries in just a fortnight, because it was short of 100 pickers.

In fact in 2013, the government stopped a seasonal visa scheme for workers from outside the EU, which, for instance, excluded workers from

Russia. But now EU workers are leaving early, before Brexit-day, or have decided not to come to Britain at all. And no wonder. Why should they feel any enthusiasm for entering this hostile environment against migrants, in order to be super-exploited by British farmers, as they certainly are?



## Is "Project Fear" coming true?

Remember the glorious future of a Britain with £350m a week more to spend on the NHS? Predictions about the cost of Brexit were dismissed as "Project Fear" by the Brexiteers now running the government. Yet they go on. One report estimates that Brexit has already cost £440m a week to the economy, which is now 2.9% smaller than if Brexit hadn't been on the cards. A CBI survey reported the lowest expectations for manufacturing exports for 18 years. Optimism among bosses as low as it was just after the referendum.

The number of people in work dropped by 56,000 in August, the largest fall in four years, as companies stopped hiring ahead of the 31 October Brexit deadline. The small rise in purchasing by manufacturers in October was attributed to stockpiling before the same deadline. A TUC comparison of 35 rich countries

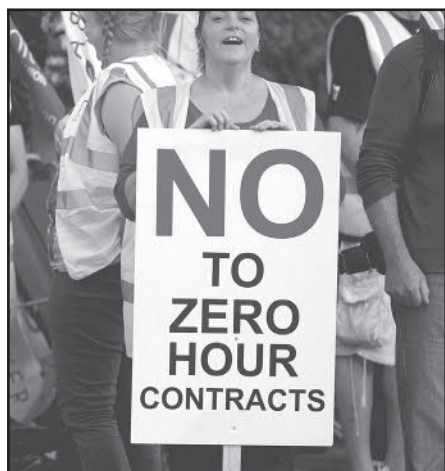


found Britain performing worse than 30 of them, with annual growth less than half the average rate of 2.7%.

The government's own behaviour confirms the trend. First, Sajid Javid cancelled his November budget: its economic analysis was expected to show a deterioration since March. Then the government

refused to publish the shortened analysis prepared by the Treasury's own forecaster, the Office for Budget Responsibility, on the grounds that it would contravene civil service impartiality during an election campaign! Not because it would expose Johnson's upbeat boasts and bluster as outright lies? ☐

## • What would Brexit do to workers rights?



Much of the improvement in British employment law in recent decades was the result of EU regulation. Even if this did not result in optimal working conditions. Before this, workers had precious few rights and in the most part, these were the result of the balance of forces which existed at workplace or company level.

The EU brought in the "Working Time Regulations (1998)" which limited the working week to 48 hours. The rights for agency temps to equal pay and conditions after 12 weeks passed into law in 2004.

Of course, the EU was never "designed" to protect the interests of the European working class and it would

have been absurd for workers to expect it to do that. This is illustrated by the number of loopholes which exist in EU regulations and which have been systematically abused by British bosses (Swedish derogation, averaging of working hours, etc.). But it would be just as absurd to allow Johnson and his capitalist masters to run roughshod over existing rights under the cover of Brexit.

Mobilising its ranks to oppose any attack on these rights, is the best way for the working class to pre-empt the other attacks that the bosses are preparing in order to protect their profits against the crisis.

## • Just-blame-it-on-the-EU

A bigot will always be a bigot whether in the Conservative Party or in the Labour party. Take Caroline Flint, Labour MP for the Don Valley, who campaigned for "Remain" in the referendum, but has turned hard Brexiteer - to the point of supporting Boris Johnson's withdrawal deal, along with several Labour MPs whose constituencies voted for "Leave". She claims Johnson has undertaken to protect workers' rights, when even the

bosses' Financial Times questions this, and she blames "the EU" for that very British invention, the zero-hours contract!

In a muddled statement she attempted to explain this: "*local authorities up and down the UK have to outsource contracts to the European Union at the detriment of workers in their local communities*"...and... "*We have seen a rise of zero hours contracts and poor conditions*

*partly because of that!*" Strange idea she has, that the "EU" somehow undertakes to carry out contracts... Perhaps that's not what she meant. Anyway, she didn't bother to check her facts. If she had, she'd know that, in most of the EU, zero hours contracts are banned or not used, except in certain limited circumstances.

As the saying goes "*Honesty pays, but it don't seem to pay enough to suit some people.*"

## • Coins ditched

It seems Boris Johnson really did believe he could "get Brexit done" by the 31st October. He'd already asked the Treasury to order special 50p coins from the Royal Mint, to mark Britain's departure, stamped with the ill-famed date,

and with the inscription "*Peace, prosperity and friendship with all nations*" (of course, the "EU" is not a "nation")! So when Johnson failed to get support for his "dead in a ditch" pledge over Brexit, the Mint was told to scrap the thousands of coins already produced, melt

them down and recycle them. This, it will apparently be doing at its own expense - or so we're told. But we're also told that any of these coins which just "happened" to escape the ditch could be sold to collectors for as much as £800 a piece...

**King's Cross railway station (London)****Atalian-Servest: a new cowboy**

On the 19th of November, the contract for cleaning and tanking LNER trains passes over to a new company, Atalian Servest.

Nobody expects Atalian to be any better than ISS - the facility services giant which has held this contract for 17 years. Whether over the "London" living wage, too few workers, or the heavy backpack hoovers ISS wanted us to wear, it's been one fight after another against them. Most recently, ISS tried to change our pay cycle from weekly to bi-weekly, forcing us to take loans to survive. And

with their contract ending, issues like their refusal to pay sick pay remain unresolved.

After buying Servest in 2018 in order to expand into Britain, Atalian (with 125,000 workers worldwide and a revenue of £2.31 billion) has been taking over contracts in universities, train stations, government departments, hospitals, you name it! And it's already provoked several strikes, as a result.

Here at KX, Atalian is already trying to throw its weight around, announcing that it intends to switch us onto monthly pay, even if it's



bound by TUPE rules not to do so. If it gets its way, not only would we have no pay between 9 December and 9 January, but we'd also be on emergency tax of 32%! Atalian should know that we don't accept that and that we're more than ready to teach them a lesson! ☐

- **A lethal trap**

These Azumas are dangerous: we heard there was an accident on 18th Oct which damaged the cab and therefore the Train Management System - which meant all controls were out. It took over 5 hours before passengers were evacuated and 48 hours before the train could be moved - by two locos. This bi-modal Azuma apparently couldn't even be switched over to run on diesel, so that it could run. This raises serious questions that

must be answered - urgently! [Workers' Platform King's X 6/11/19]

- **Eyes to the side**

Yes, we wonder who designed these Azuma trains? The TMS - CCTVs, everything except that stupid iPad, has been fitted to the side of the cab rather than in front of the driver. It means we could possibly miss important visual signals, visual alarms, etc. Is something going to be done about this? [Workers' Platform King's X 6/11/19]

- **High standards, hahaha...**

So the LNER MD in his usual newsletter announced that they had to refuse a new Azuma 9-car from Hitachi, as it wasn't up to their "high standards". Considering what they accept on a daily basis: blocked toilets, leaky ovens, broken this and that, etc. we can't imagine what they would "refuse"? Did the train have no wheels...? [Workers' Platform King's X 6/11/19]

**Mount Pleasant mail centre (London)****Injunction or not, we need to fight!**

So the High Court gave Royal Mail bosses their injunction to prevent a national strike in the run-up to Christmas. No real surprise there. The judge said that union officials had orchestrated a "*de facto workplace ballot*", against the rules, to maximise the turnout and the vote. True, these were a record high: 76% turnout and 97% yes vote. But this merely reflects our anger and readiness to strike! Ironically though, the union leadership hadn't even announced any strike dates yet.

As for tampering with the ballot process, we've always had the possibility (in some offices) of filling in our ballots at work. What's more, if RM really thought we'd "subverted the ballot process", then why only contest it now, after 4 weeks of mediation? The result has been out since 15 October!

The obvious reason was the general election - and the judge said as much, citing the 8.4m votes cast by post in 2017. But what's interesting in this judgement is how important the bosses and their courts



still think voting in the privacy of our own homes is - as opposed to doing so collectively at work. One reason to carry on subverting this law!

What happens next? Well, the union is appealing the judgement and will probably win. But that means an official strike in January if at all. Unless we take our own unofficial action before that. ☐

- **What about Parcelforce?**

One question we have is what on earth is happening with our ParcelForce workmates? They had a valid and uncontested strike ballot. And it seems that the TUPE process was started without anyone's agreement, so surely they should be on strike already, and we should know what's going on? And join them? [Workers' Fight Bulletin Mount Pleasant Mail Centre 6/11/19 - updated]

- **Collective meals?**

If a strike happens, injunction or not, we need to prepare for all eventualities: for instance, the casuals being forced to stay inside and do our work and the fact that RMPFS and Quadrant workers are not asked to join us - and may well be asked whether they have a driving licence! Because if we close down this workplace, it should be closed down for everybody. And then we need to make sure that we all support each other, and build the solidarity required to keep going. [Workers' Fight Bulletin Mount Pleasant

Mail Centre 6/11/19 - updated]

- **All out?**

And by the way, we welcome all the Christmas casuals who started their induction last week. We know very well that Black Friday + Cyber Monday + election + Xmas, will be a nightmare. Even without the election it would have been near-impossible. So who knows what will to happen this year? The best outcome would be that we'll all be out on the picket lines together! [Workers' Fight Bulletin Mount Pleasant Mail Centre 6/11/19]



**BMW Mini centre (Cowley, Oxford)****Working-time extortion racket**

After the four-week closure of the Mini factory in April, originally scheduled to coincide with the Brexit-which-didn't-happen on 29th March, BMW announced a four-week shut-down in December/January plus seven more weeks for the rest of 2020. Two more days of downtime were added, on 1 and 4 November this year, for another "no-deal Brexit" false alarm.

This wouldn't be a problem, if BMW were simply to pay us all for this imposed "leave". Instead, we're meant to use up a combination of our annual leave which

covers about half the downtime, and "working time account" credits, in order to get paid. That is the hours we're expected to "bank", by working extra time at weekends or in the time between the night and early shifts. And the more of these down-days they impose, the harder it gets to accumulate credits. It also means in practice, that BMW is choosing when we take our holidays.

Agency temps and those of us working for BMW's contractors are in a worse position, because we have lower limits on the working



time "deficits" which we can accumulate. So we're even more likely to lose pay than permanent BMW workers. None of this is acceptable. This multi-billion company needs to be forced to pay all of us in full. Nobody should lose out because of BMW's production whims! ☐

- **Hold the line**

The line's got to stop! The other day we made 380 cars on the night-shift. BMW are milking the fact their Xmas lockouts threaten us with going unpaid, so there's more of us pushed to do overtime. Why should we pay like this? It's their lockout, so it's their cost! [Workers' Fight BMW Oxford Mini 23/10/19]

- **Break night-shift chains**

And we hate nights! Which makes it worse that they use the coming lockouts and the WTA situation to get us to do overtime on nights! Easy solution: no night-shift at all. [Workers' Fight BMW Oxford Mini 23/10/19]

- **Play by our own rules**

BMW's games are really making us angry.

This Xmas "lockout" doesn't have anything to do with Brexit, it's just so that they can set everything up for the electric car. Once we're back, with all our negative Working Time Account, they will then try to force us to work whatever overtime they want, to make these new cars - longer shifts, weekends etc. Not one of us would be ok with that! [Workers' Fight BMW Oxford Mini 23/10/19]

**Ford Dagenham estate (Essex)****Production limps on**

Since summer shutdown engine production's been at best, patchy. Brexit, shrinking markets, "demonisation" of diesel, may all be to blame, but even when Ford announced lay-offs for 31st October, the Brexit day which wasn't, it refused to say why. And lay-offs mean we lose shift premiums/allowances amounting to £100-200 a week, while having to remain "on call" at home...

Even mates on the "Panther" EcoBlue 2-litre diesel engine line, supposedly the jewel in Dagenham bosses'

crown, have been laid off. But at least we know why! A huge batch of faulty fuel injectors, fitted (by us!!) between February and September meant that as many as 90,000 vehicles (Transits, Rangers, and others) across Europe risk going into "limp home" mode if they don't get new injectors fitted. So injectors are in short supply and we keep grinding to a halt.

However there's also talk of ending Panther's night shift, which only just started. Temps have been sacked and



jobs among Transport ops workers and higher grades are being cut. On top of it, Ford postponed our pay negotiations, with union agreement. Rumour has it they want to clear the way for a new, even lower-paid, 3rd tier of workers. A reason for US to "lay off" production, all together. ☐

- **Ford's attacks are stepping up**

We were briefed on Ford's proposed Transport Operations (TOPs) job cuts this Monday - finally, after months of not knowing what was coming; they say they now want ~130 of us in Dagenham to go. We're all meant to get our VR/EVR figures - and of course they say it's not compulsory and we can choose to leave... But no, this is not what we want. We choose to have decent jobs - well into the future! [Workers' Fight bulletin Ford Dagenham 13/11/19]

- **We vote against!**

So now we're asked to vote on whether

to accept Ford's TOPs cuts or not. We're told Ts&Cs will be "protected"... but only for 5yrs; Ford will keep the vehicle distribution centre here (for now), won't out-source work (unless agreed with the union officials!), Central Repairs, rail terminal, a smaller Auto Tech will remain (for now!), but "enhanced" separation packages are offered (and how "enhanced"?).

All these cuts on our backs are meant to "save" Ford ~£156m. For Ford, that's actually chicken feed, whereas for us, it's a question of seeing our jobs and our conditions disappear out the window, into a future fog! Why on earth would we vote for that? [Workers' Fight bulletin Ford Dagenham 13/11/19]

- **Sentence "postponed"?**

We've heard Ford Southampton has been given a respite... Instead of shutting down the depot in order to move its shipping further north, Ford's keeping it, but cutting it. It isn't hard to guess what will happen in the long run, if Ford has its way...

PS: By the way, Ford claims that the \$50m savings they didn't get from closing Southampton will have to come from changing our "work processes"! Really? That's surely a joke!? \$50m is loose change in the pockets of Bill Ford&Co! Go shake 'em! [Workers' Fight bulletin Ford Dagenham 13/11/19]



## Berlin

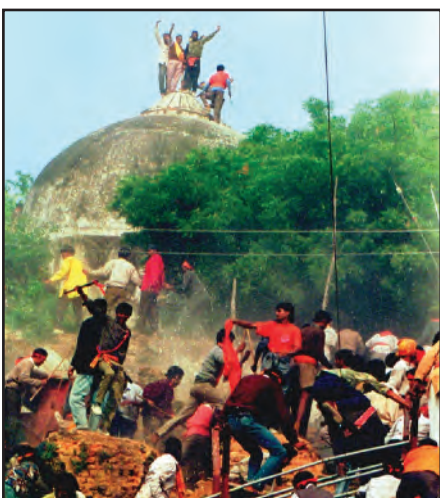
The fall of the Berlin Wall on the 9th November 1989 - 30 years ago - wasn't really a "fall" as such. But on that day a permanent breach was opened in the so-called Iron Curtain, which had shielded the Eastern European countries inside the former USSR's Soviet Bloc, from the rest of the world.

For the first time since the building of this wall in 1961, people from East and West Berlin were permitted to pass from one side to another, as they pleased. This opening-up of the Soviet Eastern Bloc would rapidly extend to all of the East European People's Democracies - Poland, Czechoslovakia, Hungary, Romania, Yugoslavia, Albania and Bulgaria, as well as the Baltic countries of Latvia, Lithuania and Estonia. Formal German reunification took place on 3 October 1990. By 1992, all of these countries had been extracted from the sphere of influence of the Soviet Union by their ruling elites.

The way this happened in each case was not exactly the same, nor was it always a "peaceful transition", but in each case the Soviet Union failed to intervene militarily, as it had in previous instances of rebellion against its rule, for instance in Budapest in 1956, or Prague in 1968. Indeed, the whole process was a consequence of a political crisis inside the former USSR which had begun in the 1980s and which expressed itself in the attempts at reform by then President Gorbachev. These in turn encouraged centrifugal forces

## India

On November 10th, the Supreme Court of India chose to condone a 27-year old provocation which marked the beginning of a huge wave of communal massacres, while paving the way for the rise to power of Modi's Hindu



## 30 years after the end of the Wall



Youth on the Berlin Wall the day after its "fall"

in the East European satellite countries, among the privileged layers of the regimes - which had never been "communist" except in the Cold War propaganda of the imperialist powers. They rushed to grab the new privileges opened up by the establishment of the market economy and their countries' reintegration into the world capitalist market. At the same time these forces reverberated within the Soviet Union itself, leading to its break-up in an orgy of nationalism.

For revolutionary communists then and now, even if we are opposed implacably

to the degenerate, Stalinist, caricature of communism which pertained in the Soviet Union and the repressive "state socialism" of the Eastern Bloc, this was nothing to celebrate. It gave a new lease of life to a capitalism which had been in near-terminal crisis for a long time, while allowing its protagonists to proclaim a final triumph against "communism" and "the end of history". And that was a huge set back, even if today, 30 years later, this "victory" wears the down-face of a Trump or a Johnson - and is increasingly ragged around the edges... □

## Modi's gangsterism endorsed

nationalist party, the BJP.

The scene of this provocation was Ayodhya, a small town in the northern state of Uttar Pradesh, where Hindu revivalists had long claimed that a local 16th century mosque covered a 12th-century Hindu temple, which was supposed to have been built to mark the birthplace of Rama, the 7th incarnation of Hindu deity, Vishnu. As to the year, it was 1992 - when the Hindu nationalist leaders were seeking to take advantage of the Congress Party's growing discredit. They chose Ayodhya to make a show of strength against the Muslim minority, to whip up support for the BJP and terrorise its political opponents. On 6th December 1992, a hysterical mob led by Hindu revivalist thugs demolished the Ayodhya mosque.

Over the following 6 weeks, communal raids targeted poor, Muslim-majority districts, across the country. These raids were organised by units of the BJP's satellite organisations or even by the police itself. An estimated 2,000 were killed

and over 80,000 injured.

After these pogroms, the BJP finally came to power in 1998 and has remained in office for just over half of the past two decades. Significantly, none of its leaders has ever been brought to justice for their criminal role in these communal massacres. Instead, India's highest court has just bowed to the BJP's demands, by allocating the disputed site for the construction of a Hindu temple, while Muslims will have to move elsewhere. Ironically, the court's judgement, supposedly based on "evidence", even states that it is in this particular spot that the mythical 7th incarnation of Vishnu was born! Superstition has conveniently displaced facts!

This judgement not only condones the massacres orchestrated by Modi and his partners in crime in the past. It also gives respectability to Modi's present anti-Muslim policies and may help him to unleash communal violence in the future, again, as a diversion, should the economic crisis deepen. □

In addition to this paper, we publish bulletins in several large workplaces in the South East, a journal, "Class Struggle" and a series of pamphlets on topical issues. If you wish to know more, contact Workers' Fight by e-mail, at [contact@w-fight.org](mailto:contact@w-fight.org), or by postal mail at:

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