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AURORA

The World May Be on Fire…
But There Is An Alternative

Whenever we switch on the TV, listen to the radio, or look at our phones, we see more bleak news from yet another war, yet another atrocity, yet another row between heads of state that brings humanity closer to the precipice. The world appears to be spiralling out of control and the warning signs that a more generalised conflict is on the horizon are now difficult to deny.

A World at War

US and Israeli attempts at regime change in Iran have failed, and instead the war continues. The Strait of Hormuz — one of the world's most important trade routes — remains effectively blocked, impeding the transport of oil and gas, and driving up prices around the world. In Palestine and Lebanon, despite alleged "ceasefires", Israel continues to kill, targeting children in the Gaza Strip. In the West Bank, the IDF openly supports the settlers who now dominate the Israeli security cabinet which approved over $430 million to establish 34 new settlements in their attempts to expel or murder Palestinians. Meanwhile in Sudan, Congo and Myanmar, protracted civil wars between ethnic groups, proxy forces and failed states are bringing disease, death and devastation to whole areas of the planet. International institutions like the UN now talk openly of genocides and crimes against humanity already having been committed or in the process of being carried out in places like Gaza, Sudan or Myanmar. Such is the nature of imperialist war. In Ukraine, Russia's invasion pivots between stalemate and escalation, as guns, tanks, artillery and increasingly drones obliterate conscripts and infrastructure on both sides. And the war fronts are joining up – Ukraine's recent attacks on Iranian merchant vessels bound for Russia in the Caspian Sea are matched by the revival of the Houthis' war with Saudi Arabia in the Strait of Mandeb in aid of Iran, thus choking another key world trade route.

These are only some of the more prominent of the many ongoing conflicts that bring misery to millions around the world.

Bidding for World Supremacy: US vs. China

At the root of many of these conflicts lies a scramble for world domination between two empires. China sees the US as a declining power and senses an opportunity to overtake it, both economically and militarily. In light of this, the US has been desperately clinging to its spot atop the international pecking order by systematically undermining or attacking Chinese interests and Chinese allies around the world. We see that in Iran, Ukraine, Venezuela, Cuba.

And yet, the prospect of another financial crash is shaping the plans of all the contenders…

Capitalist Crisis: The Elephant in the Room

Why are all these conflicts intensifying now? Since the end of the post-war boom in the 1970s, the capitalist system has gone from expedient to expedient. The collapse of the USSR happened without a world war but it did allow for the rise of China as a cheap manufacturing hub. Millions of workers in the West lost their jobs to outsourcing, deregulation and general globalisation, whilst financialisation, automation and now the AI mania allow capitalism to stagger on. None of these have resolved the central contradictions of a system built on the exploitation of the many by the few, nor have they been able to bring back the kind of profitability that could produce another economic boom. Instead, everywhere we see stagnation and what's been popularly dubbed "enshittification". The ruling class is running out of options, increasingly turning on each other to protect their spoils.

At the altar of profit, the capitalist system sacrifices our physical and mental health, the arts and culture, and the natural environment. Instead money and resources are increasingly being squandered on the drive to war. For working class people still lucky enough not to live in open conflict zones, everyday reality means collapsing health services, an overwhelmed education system, dying high streets, fewer jobs on the mockery 'job market'. No wonder so many are desensitised and depressed. No wonder so many are angry, tragically buying into the divisive lies of the populist right and directing that anger against migrants, especially those "of colour", instead of against a capitalist system that's no longer working for humanity.

The Working Class Holds the Key to a New World

As the flashpoints of capitalist crisis come together in one immense conflagration, we are hurtling towards what Marx and Engels once termed the "common ruin of the contending classes". The chasm that separates the rich and poor has never been so vast. We cannot expect the ruling class to wake up one day, see the error of their ways, and give up their endless pursuit of profit so we can all finally start fixing the world. So it's up to the working class — the vast majority of the world population on whose labour the whole global system of profit production is based — to take matters into our own hands.

It has never been more obvious that the working class is one global class, coming under attack from one global system that one way or another is destroying the basis for life on earth. We all share the same interest — an end to capitalism and the creation of a new world based on solidarity, cooperation, and production according to need. Uniquely placed at the very heart of commodity production, we the workers hold the power to bring the system to its knees through our resistance in our workplaces and communities. Even today there are signs of such a fightback in the form of strikes (as in Bolivia and Portugal), mass protests (as in Chile and India), and resistance to conscription (as in Ukraine), to name a few. Though these have remained isolated and thus fleeting, exhausted of their energies or channelled back into capitalism's reformist quagmire, they have hinted at a challenge to the powers-that-be. What is still lacking is more extensive class unity and self-organisation, and a common political goal. We can't conjure up the sparks of class struggle, but the more of us who are already politically prepared for revolution, the sooner the working class as a whole will be able to get rid of crumbling capitalism. In this sense, the future of humanity everywhere belongs to the working class.



Race Riots: A Product of Capitalist Scapegoating

The 2024 riots following the Southport stabbing were a sign of things to come. At the time, we said that the situation in post-industrial, post-Brexit, run-down Britain was like "a tinderbox which only takes a spark to set it on fire". In 2025 we saw sporadic protests continue, particularly outside hotels housing asylum seekers, like the one in Epping. In June 2026, the murder of Henry Nowak, the misguided response of the police, and a sustained far-right media campaign to capitalise on it, led to clashes in Southampton. That same month, a brutal stabbing in Belfast triggered arguably the most serious outburst of violence yet. What followed was essentially a pogrom, lasting days, during which any homes, cars and businesses suspected of belonging to migrants were being smashed and set on fire.

Historical Context: Sectarianism in Northern Ireland

There are some historical reasons why this happened in Belfast of all places. Several times over the past few centuries, neighbours from one part of Belfast have entered neighbourhoods close by, sometimes less than a mile away, and burnt down houses to force families living there out, leaving them as refugees living in tents. The last time it happened on a mass scale was the 1970s. So pogroms are in a way nothing new, and it's little surprise that Loyalist paramilitaries are suspected of having played some role in coordinating them this time around. What is however new is that the violence didn't take place along the old Protestant vs. Catholic dividing line, but instead targeted recent migrants — from Sudan, Romania, Ukraine, etc.

The Real Motive: Drive Down Workers' Conditions While Blaming the "Other"

There is no shortage of stabbings and rapes also being committed by white British men. But these don't produce the same kind of response. At the end of the day, it is young men, regardless of nationality or ethnicity, who are disproportionately more likely to commit violent crimes. There are various social reasons which help to explain this. But these riots and the politicians who stoke them have no interest in addressing the root cause of such horrific everyday violence. They're only interested when "foreigners" are held responsible.

These race riots are a classic case of divide and rule. Especially at times of crisis and war, politicians, bosses and the rich all try to fool workers into fighting for scraps amongst each other. It is why even billionaires are now funding the parties of the far-right and helping to spread their poison. From the point of view of the ruling class, it is better that workers blame their workmates or neighbours who happen to have been born somewhere else than direct their anger at those actually in power. Millions of pounds each year are pumped into producing propaganda — previously distributed by tabloids and now increasingly also through social media — which blames migrants for all manner of social problems affecting the working class.

What's happening in the UK is not unique. Whether it's street violence in South Africa targeting migrants from Malawi, Mozambique and Zimbabwe, mass protests against Indian migrants in Australia, or attacks on Ukrainian refugees in Poland, the rhetoric everywhere is the same, and everywhere it points to a false enemy.

Low wages, housing shortages, strained health services, and of course crime: these are very real issues, but getting rid of migrants won't resolve them. Only by organising together as one class — beyond the artificially imposed divisions of race, gender or even union membership — can we hope to improve our common lot.

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Class Unity: Starting Point for Defending Workers' Interests

Migration is not going away. It has characterised humanity from the very beginning of our history as a species, when the first homo sapiens left Africa. Today, the capitalist system — with its economic crises, imperialist wars and climate catastrophes — is destroying large sections of the planet and forcing more and more people to flee, looking for a better life elsewhere, whether they want to or not. Ultimately, the only way to put an end to this forced migration is by creating a worldwide society fit for our needs, not one run in the interests of profit. And only a mass global movement of the working class can make that happen. This process starts at work, at school, in our neighbourhoods, when we stand together and defend our common interests as workers. Wages, housing, and health are issues that affect us all, whether we are "foreign" or "local". So let's fight together.

Capitalist "Democracy": A Joke Taken Too Far

The British state is in something of a pickle. Its democratic façade, the notion that politicians are public servants and ultimately we have the power to determine how the country is to run, is starting to slip.

The Labour Party in Trouble

Andy Burnham, taking over from the vastly unpopular Keir Starmer, is now the fifth prime minister in four years, the seventh since the Brexit referendum 10 years ago. For those who already forgot, Starmer initially ousted the faltering Conservative administration elected in 2019 under Boris Johnson, who was replaced by Liz Truss, who was replaced by Rishi Sunak. At the time, Labour took advantage of the complete collapse of the Tory party, which went from 14 million votes, 43.6% of the vote, under Johnson to 6.8 million votes, 23.7% of the vote, under Sunak. Now it is Reform UK which is aiming to capitalise on this collapse, by replacing the Tories as the new party of the right.

Since the 2024 general election, there have been five by-elections – these have been won by Reform UK from Labour (Runcorn and Helsby in May 2025), Green from Labour (Gorton and Denton in February 2026), an SNP hold (Arbroath and Broughty Ferry in June 2026), Conservatives from SNP (June 2026) and a Labour hold (Makerfield in June 2026). Two of these were due to MPs also serving as MSPs, which is now against the rules of the Scottish Parliament. Two others were due – at least in part – to the misbehaviour of MPs. One was blatant political manoeuvring to get Burnham (blocked by the Labour machine from standing in Gorton and Denton in February) into Parliament so he could be anointed successor to Starmer. This has, subsequently, happened, and on Monday 20 July, Burnham became Labour Leader and Prime Minister.

Only two years after his victory, Starmer is out. Only two Prime Ministers have survived an election since the Brexit referendum – May (just) in 2017 and Johnson in 2019 – and no British PM has served a complete term since Cameron in 2010. British democracy, often held up as being among the most stable, has been in a crisis for some time.

A Farcical By-Election

And now, Nigel Farage has resigned as MP for Clacton, triggering another by-election. This was to try and draw a line under investigations by Parliamentary watchdogs into undisclosed 'gifts' of £5 million pounds from crypto-millionaire Christopher Harborne. We've all had those sort of gifts, no need to declare them, obviously. Since his resignation – and announcement that he will re-stand – the main parties (and the Greens) have announced they will not stand against him. The main challenger is a character called Count Binface, a joke candidate, who may actually win – though there is a cavalcade of 32 other candidates standing.

There is a tradition of outsider candidates standing against disgraced MPs – Martin Bell did it in Tatton in 1997, winning against Neil Hamilton – and also of joke candidates standing for election. In Hartlepool, H'Angus the Monkey (the local football team's mascot) was elected mayor three times between 2000-2013. Neither acted in office particularly differently to other office-holders. H'Angus the Monkey, as mayor of Hartlepool, gave bananas to schoolchildren, but didn't tackle in any meaningful way poverty among children in his town. Martin Bell ousted a corrupt MP but as we have seen in the 25 years since he left parliament, it was only one particular symptom he was fighting – Westminster is just as corrupt now as it was in the dying days of the Major administration.

We Need a Workers' Democracy!

Workers can't use the electoral circus to advance their interests. The enthroning of Burnham after his by-election stunt will not change things materially for workers in Britain. It's not about finding better policies, it's about spinning a new face for a Labour government in deep trouble. The farce of the by-election in Clacton will give the media something to talk about over the summer, but nothing substantial will change whether Farage is re-elected or Count Binface unseats him. The problem for our rulers is they have no answers to the ongoing capitalist crisis – shifting the personnel in charge will not save the sinking ship. Whether the new captain worked in the engine room, the purser's office, or was the comedy act in the passengers' lounge, the ship is in serious trouble.

Only the working class has the power to change the system and end the ridiculous pantomime at Westminster. When it does so, it will need its own decision-making organs. Throughout the history of the working class movement we see the same organisational forms emerge: mass assemblies, strike committees, and ultimately workers' councils. It is through such bodies that workers can truly take back control from the politicians, bosses and the rich who take us for fools. That is workers' democracy. But we also need an organisation of class-conscious revolutionaries across the world – not to engage in political games but to put forward the perspective of a new society and how to get there. We are not that organisation nor its sole nucleus but we hope to be part of the process and urge those who agree with us to be part of the dialogue now that can bring about the tool that the working class will need in its task of radically reconstituting society.

European Heatwave: A Deadly New Normal

Some may still remember the infamous summer of 1976, when for 24 days the UK baked in temperatures exceeding 30C, harvests failed and food prices soared. The summer of 2026 has already surpassed that record number of days exceeding temperatures of 30C from 50 years ago. What was once something of a rarity that might occur once in a generation has now become a regular event. Temperatures for 2015-2024 have been on average 1.2C warmer than the 1961-1990 average, and in 2022 the UK first recorded an instance of 40C.

Heat Deaths and Wildfires

Beyond inconveniences like getting accidentally sunburned or sweating excessively, the impact of this current heatwave has already contributed to the deaths of thousands of the most vulnerable in the UK. The Met Office has reported approximately 2,700 excess deaths across England and Wales in May and June alone. Heat deaths can affect anyone, but it's particularly those aged 65 and above, or those with underlying health conditions, who are at risk. What compounds this effect, is that individuals within the most deprived areas are also likely to be affected the most. Whether it's extreme heat or extreme cold, adverse weather conditions take their toll on those experiencing fuel poverty, living in ill-equipped housing, or struggling to access healthcare and support.

Another consequence of record-breaking heatwaves is of course wildfires. Fire and rescue services in England and Wales have responded to over 200 wildfire incidents over just two weeks in July, and, at the time of writing, the Cairngorms National Park in Scotland is still burning. Hundreds of people have been evacuated as a result, but the damage and loss of life extends to our surrounding environment and wildlife as well. Many of these fires have been occurring in already sensitive areas (the Cairngorms, for example, contain 25% of the UK's endangered species).

The situation is even more extreme on the continent, with record temperatures of more than 40C being reached in multiple countries, and vast wildfires in France and Spain forcing over 300,000 people to evacuate.

No Capitalist Solution in Sight

The UK state has done very little when it comes to programmes or systems to help those struggling with the heat, beyond simple advice like drink more water and stay indoors (not an easy thing to do when you have to work!).

The response has been hardly any better at the global level. The COP30 conference in 2025 proclaimed that they intend to keep the 1.5C goal alive, but a 2024 UN Emission Gap Report found that current policies mean temperatures could rise as high as 3.1C by 2100, and even if pledges are adhered to, which they historically have not, then warming will still likely exceed 2.6C. The consequences for life on earth would be catastrophic. Despite all this, the phasing out of fossil fuels was dropped from the agenda during COP30 in light of opposition from oil producing nations. Clearly, as long as humanity is divided by competition between rival capitalist states, coming up with real global solutions to global problems is off the table.

And let's not forget another aspect of the puzzle. Imperialist wars, like those currently raging in Ukraine or the Middle East, are making the problem much worse. The production of weapons, as well as their actual use, contributes massively to greenhouse gas emissions. Wars poison our bodies, our land and waters, for generations. And to make matters worse, the new AI arms race depends on servers that produce toxic waste, and data centres which require massive amounts of water consumption for cooling.

So, what can be done? It is understandably a bleak and depressing situation. The world stands on the precipice of generalised war, ecological collapse and suffering for all, yet the politicians, bosses and the rich seem fine with that. Under such circumstances, it remains up to the international working class to save the planet from a capitalist system that leads us towards self-destruction.



What We Stand For

Aurora is published by the Communist Workers' Organisation (CWO), the UK affiliate of the Internationalist Communist Tendency (ICT).

The CWO stands for a global society where production is for need and not profit (and is therefore sustainable), where the state, national frontiers and money have been abolished, where collective power is exercised through class-wide organisations like workers' councils. This has to mean the active, daily participation of the majority aiming for the interests of all. Only then can the world be rid of the capitalist offspring of poverty, hunger, oppression and war: we call it communism but this vision has nothing in common with Stalinist state capitalism and the old USSR.

In order to get there we are working to create a world working class political organisation – a 'party' for want of a better word – not a government in waiting but a guide in the struggle for a new world. We by no means claim to be that party but we do aim to be one of the elements which will need to come together in its formation. As the working class is more and more faced with the consequences of a crumbling capitalist system it will have to unite and confront capitalist power.

We are not in competition with other organisations but seek to unite on a clearly agreed political programme to prepare the way for the majority of the world's population, the exploited of the earth, to overthrow the capitalist system and its bloody imperialist appetites.

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