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Unite votes to suspend Rayner

'No friend of the workers': Union members vote to sanction MP over failure to support bin workers

by Christophe Domec

UNITE overwhelmingly voted yesterday to suspend the Deputy Prime Minister Angela Rayner's membership and announced it was re-examining its long-standing relationship with the Labour Party.

Delegates supported an emergency motion at the union's policy conference in Brighton, citing the government's mishandling of the Birmingham bin strikes as the reason for cutting Ms Rayner loose.

Unite said her membership was suspended alongside Birmingham council leader John Cotton and other city councillors represented by the union.

But Labour Party sources claimed that Ms Rayner, who is also housing, communities and local government secretary, had already withdrawn from the union several months before the motion.

Yesterday's decision marked a new chapter in bin workers' struggle for better conditions and pay, as Unite claimed a deal cham-

pioned by Ms Rayner would have resulted in real-terms pay cuts of up to £8,000 for some sections of the industry.

On top of Ms Rayner's suspension, Unite also pledged to "discuss" its relationship with her party.

The union was on record as the biggest donor to Labour MPs in the lead-up to last year's general election, as 88 candidates and MPs were given more than £500,000.

However it has restricted funding since Sir Keir Starmer became leader and moved it significantly to the centre.

Unite is Britain's second-largest union, with its latest membership figures standing at 1.2 million.

The motion was carried by 800 delegates at the congress from across various industries, including the NHS and automotive sector.

An end or suspension to their official association to Labour could mean a significant loss in the party's finances, potentially wiping hundreds of thousands of pounds of funding.

General secretary Sharon Graham said: "Unite is crystal clear it will call out bad employers regardless of the colour of their rosette.

"Angela Rayner has had every opportunity to intervene and resolve this dispute but has instead backed a rogue council that has peddled lies and smeared its workers fighting huge pay cuts.

"The disgraceful actions of

the government, and a so-called Labour council, is essentially fire-and-rehire and makes a joke of the Employment Relations Act promises.

"People up and down the country are asking whose side is the Labour government on and coming up with the answer: not workers."

Members voted on a motion which condemned Birmingham council "for its threat to effectively fire and rehire, on pain of redundancy, the Unite Birmingham bin workers."

It also went after PM Sir Keir's government for its "support to the council and the commissioners, originally appointed by the Tories and maintained by Labour."

The motion officially suspends Ms Rayner, Mr Cotton as well as other Labour councillors on grounds of "bringing the union into disrepute."

Unite's leadership announced the launch of an investigation into their behaviour with a "view to expelling them from the union."

Refuse workers in Birmingham walked out indefinitely in April but have been conducting strike actions since January.

Birmingham City Council appointed negotiating commissioners, who Unite claimed never joined discussions and blocked deals which they claim could have ended the strike.

Ms Rayner visited the city's waste depots and told striking

workers to accept a deal which Unite says would have seen their wages slashed.

The move comes as independent MPs Zarah Sultana and Jeremy Corbyn announced they were starting a new party to Labour's left, distinguishing itself on issues such as workers' rights.

Unite's public break with the government could become a threat to Sir Keir's premiership, if it was to move towards funding a more left-wing party or convince their members that Labour is no longer defending their interests.

The union has also been highly critical of the government's abandonment of workers at Port Talbot steelworks and Grangemouth oil refinery.

A spokesperson for No 10 said that the government had held Birmingham residents as its priority during the disputes.

Ms Graham will be addressing the biggest celebration of working-class culture in Europe, the Durham Miners' Gala, today.

Labour is unlikely to be flavour of the month at the Gala, which will also be addressed by its expelled ex-leader Mr Corbyn.

Durham Miners' Association general secretary Alan Mardghum, speaking to the Morning Star ahead of the gala, said Labour should replace Sir Keir or it would be trounced at the next election.

news@peoples-press.com
Star comment: p20



DISAPPOINTMENT:
Labour's Deputy PM
Angela Rayner

■ POLITICS

Regional mayors to get boosted powers in new devolution Bill

by Berny Torre

REGIONAL mayors will get new powers and be elected by the “preferential” voting system again under the government’s new devolution Bill.

MPs and campaigners welcomed the plans to scrap the current first-past-the-post voting system to instead have voters indicate multiple candidates in order of preference, with these choices weighted or used as contingency votes.

Mayors’ new powers under the Bill include responsibility for developing local economic plans and will gain control over licensing for e-bikes and planning decisions to “set the direction of growth.”

They would also be able to impose “development orders” to speed up developments, while new “mayoral development corporations” are intended to streamline implementation and attract investment.

Alex Sobel, chairman of the all-party parliamentary group for fair elections, said: “Since

the Tories imposed first-past-the-post on mayoral elections, it has failed to fairly represent voters, undermined the ability of mayors to speak for their whole communities, and therefore eroded trust in politics.

“By committing to changing this, the government has wisely taken a step in the right direction, but first-past-the-post is just as flawed when it comes to general elections.

“The government should set up a national commission on electoral reform to find a fair, representative way forward.”

The Bill would also introduce a “community right to buy” through which communities have the first option to purchase local assets such as pubs and shops that are placed on the market.

Clauses in commercial leases, which enforce “upward only” rent reviews, will be banned in a bid to keep small businesses afloat, helping to end the “blight of vacant high streets” and anti-social behaviour.

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LONDON: Former Conservative MP Craig Williams leaves Southwark Crown Court, south London, where he is one of 15 people charged with offences under the Gambling Act 2005 following an investigation into alleged cheating related to bets placed on the timing of the 2024 general election

■ CIVIL LIBERTIES

Britons gather in defiance of ban on Palestine Action

by Elizabeth Short

PROTESTERS across Britain are preparing to call on the government to reverse its decision to ban Palestine Action today.

Defend Our Juries are co-ordinating three actions: at 1pm by the Gandhi statue in Parliament Square in London; at 2pm outside BBC Cymru Wales New Broadcasting House in Cardiff; and at 2.30pm by the Emmeline Pankhurst statue in St Peter’s Square, Manchester.

Protesters are due to hold signs reading: “I oppose genocide. I support Palestine Action.”

The action follows the arrest of 29 people under the Terror-

ism Act for holding the same signs on July 5, the day the government’s proscription came into force.

“This is what happens in modern-day Britain if you’re opposing genocide,” said Tim Crosland, a former government lawyer, as he was led away by police last Saturday.

The demonstrators were detained for around 12 hours before being released without charge on police bail, Defend Our Juries said.

Two people were also arrested under the Terrorism Act after holding signs saying “We are all Palestine Action” at a Friends of Palestine event in Bradford.

Similar protests have also taken place outside British

embassies in Copenhagen and The Hague.

An independently organised demonstration is also due to take place outside the Guildhall in Derry from 3pm today.

The ban on Palestine Action, a group known for targeting arms factories connected to Israel, was imposed after its members broke into an RAF base last month.

On June 20, activists entered RAF Brize Norton and sprayed red paint onto two refuelling planes to protest Britain’s support towards Israel in Gaza.

The group’s ban is subject to a legal challenge, with the High Court set to consider an application for judicial review on July 21.

The Met Police warned that

proscription makes it a criminal offence to invite or express support through chanting, wearing clothing or displaying articles such as flags, signs or logos.

Showing support for a banned organisation can result in a prison sentence of up to 14 years.

A Defend Our Juries spokesperson said: “Are these people holding up signs serious criminals committing terror crimes, who should be locked up for 14 years?”

“Or are they ordinary, decent people, exercising their democratic rights and taking a stand against corruption, injustice and genocide? Make up your own mind.”

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■ COST-OF-LIVING CRISIS

Workers still struggling to pay the bills, says survey

WORKERS are still struggling to make ends meet, with many struggling to pay bills, according to research yesterday.

The Work Foundation said its study suggested that the government’s pledge to raise living standards faces a “substantial challenge.”

Its survey of almost 4,000 workers found that one in six said they struggle to pay their bills each month, and two in five revealed they have little income left for savings or holidays.

Years of wage stagnation and the cost-of-living crisis mean that for many, wages still do not cover basic living costs, the

report said. The Work Foundation noted recent ONS figures indicating that 1.35 million people have second jobs – an increase of 121,000 on the year and the highest level since records began in 1992.

Ben Harrison, director of the Work Foundation at Lancaster University, said: “Raising living standards is not just about figures on a spreadsheet, it’s about workers feeling more financially secure.

“Four years on from the start of the worst cost-of-living crisis in a generation, our analysis shows workers continue to feel the impact of nearly 20 years of stagnating pay packets.”

■ MEDIA

Wallace is banned from the BBC for life

DISGRACED presenter Gregg Wallace has been reportedly banned from ever working at the BBC again due to a lack of “confidence” he can change his ways.

The broadcaster sacked Wallace, 60, as MasterChef presenter on Tuesday after an inquiry into his alleged inappropriate behaviour by production company

Banijay. Eleven women accused him of inappropriate sexual behaviour, such as touching, and 50 or more people claimed he made inappropriate sexual comments.

A senior BBC boss wrote in a letter seen by the Telegraph: “Given my conclusion, I do not believe that the BBC should make plans to work with you in the

future on any of its productions, whether directly or indirectly.

“Having reviewed the 2025 findings, I do not have the confidence that you can change what seems to be learned behaviour for you to make what you perceive to be jokes in the working environment, without understanding the boundaries of what is appropriate.”



DISGRACED: Gregg Wallace

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■ POLITICS

PRESSURE GROWS ON REEVES AFTER ECONOMY TAKES UNEXPECTED DIP

by Berny Torre

LIVING standards continue to be squeezed as official figures yesterday showed the economy fell unexpectedly in May rounding off Rachel Reeves's problematic first year as chancellor.

The Office for National Statistics (ONS) revealed gross domestic product (GDP) contracted by 0.1 per cent in May, following a 0.3 per cent drop in April.

Ms Reeves said that the figures were "disappointing" but renewed her pledge to boost economic growth.

She said: "Getting more money in people's pockets is my number one mission.

"While today's figures are disappointing, I am determined to kickstart economic growth and deliver on that promise."

TUC general secretary Paul Nowak said that turning around the economy was "never going to be an overnight job."

"After a positive start to the year our economy remains fragile," he said.

"Global pressures and high household costs are both hitting growth.

"Turning things around

was never going to be an overnight job. But this government is taking the right steps by investing in public services and infrastructure.

"The Bank of England must play its role too by cutting

interest rates faster, to give families and businesses the breathing room they need to spend and invest."

Experts said the weak May figure reinforces views that the Bank of England will cut interest rates again in August.

The ONS data shows that GDP was weighed on by the manufacturing sector, which suffered another steep decline in activity and falling construction output.

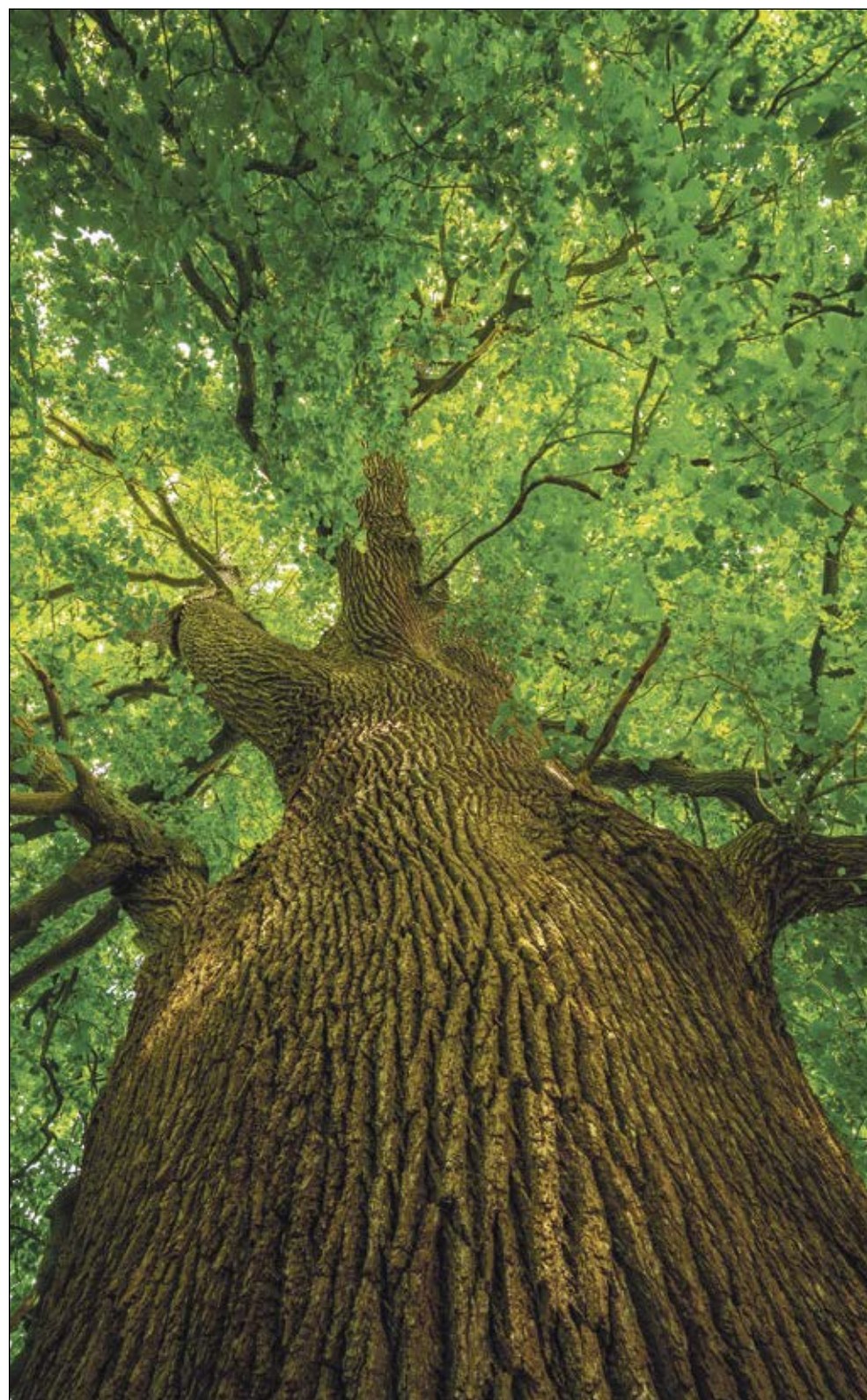
Activity in the manufacturing sector dropped by 1 per cent – the biggest decline since July last year – following a steep 0.7 per cent fall in April, having surged earlier in the year as US importers stocked up before US President Donald Trump's tariff rises, which came into effect at the start of April.

The construction sector also contracted by 0.6 per cent in May in a sharp reversal of 0.8 per cent growth in April.

ONS director of economic statistics Liz McKeown said that "notable falls in production and construction" were only partially offset by growth in services in May.

She added: "While services grew overall in May with a strong month for legal firms, which recovered from a weak April, and computer programming, these were partially offset by a very weak month for retail sales."

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BRANCHING OUT: The Knole Park Oak in Kent, thought to be Britain's tallest at 135 feet, has been nominated for Tree of Year, as the tree believed to have inspired an epic poem in Virginia Woolf's novel Orlando. Voting opens on Friday for the Woodland Trust's annual competition, which aims to celebrate and raise awareness for rare, ancient or at-risk trees across the country. Ten nominees from across the country have been chosen to meet this year's theme of 'Rooted in Culture,' which seeks to highlight how trees inspire creative minds and become ingrained in our cultural landscape.

■ HERITAGE

Huge job cuts loom at National Trust

by Berny Torre

HUNDREDS of job cuts at the National Trust (NT) will put the safeguarding of Britain's heritage at risk, Prospect union warned yesterday.

The conservation charity has informed staff that it will cut 6 per cent of its 11,000-strong workforce – the equivalent of 550 full-time jobs.

Launching a 45-day consultation, it said that the cuts aims to save £26m after Chancellor

Rachel Reeves's spring budget led to a more than £10m rise in costs in employer's national insurance and the minimum wage in April.

The National Trust looks after 500 historic houses, castles, parks and gardens, as well as 780 miles of coastline and 250,000 hectares of land.

Prospect deputy general secretary Steve Thomas said: "At a time when Prospect members at the NT are hard at work welcoming the public to Britain's historic venues over the busy

summer months, this news will cause huge uncertainty and worry for staff.

"We understand the cost pressures the trust is facing but management decisions, as well as external factors, have contributed to the financial situation and once again it is our members who will have to pay the price. Our members are custodians of the country's cultural, historic and natural heritage – cuts of this scale risk losing institutional knowledge and skills which are vital

to that mission. Prospect will be working with NT to try to minimise the negative impact of these cuts on both workers and on the operation of the trust."

The NT said in a statement: "Although demand and support for our work are growing with yearly increases in visitors and donations; increasing costs are outstripping this growth."

The cuts are to affect front-line roles including staff working in cafes and shops, as well as conservation assistants.

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Unite Bristol Retired Members Branch SW/001999

Retired from Work

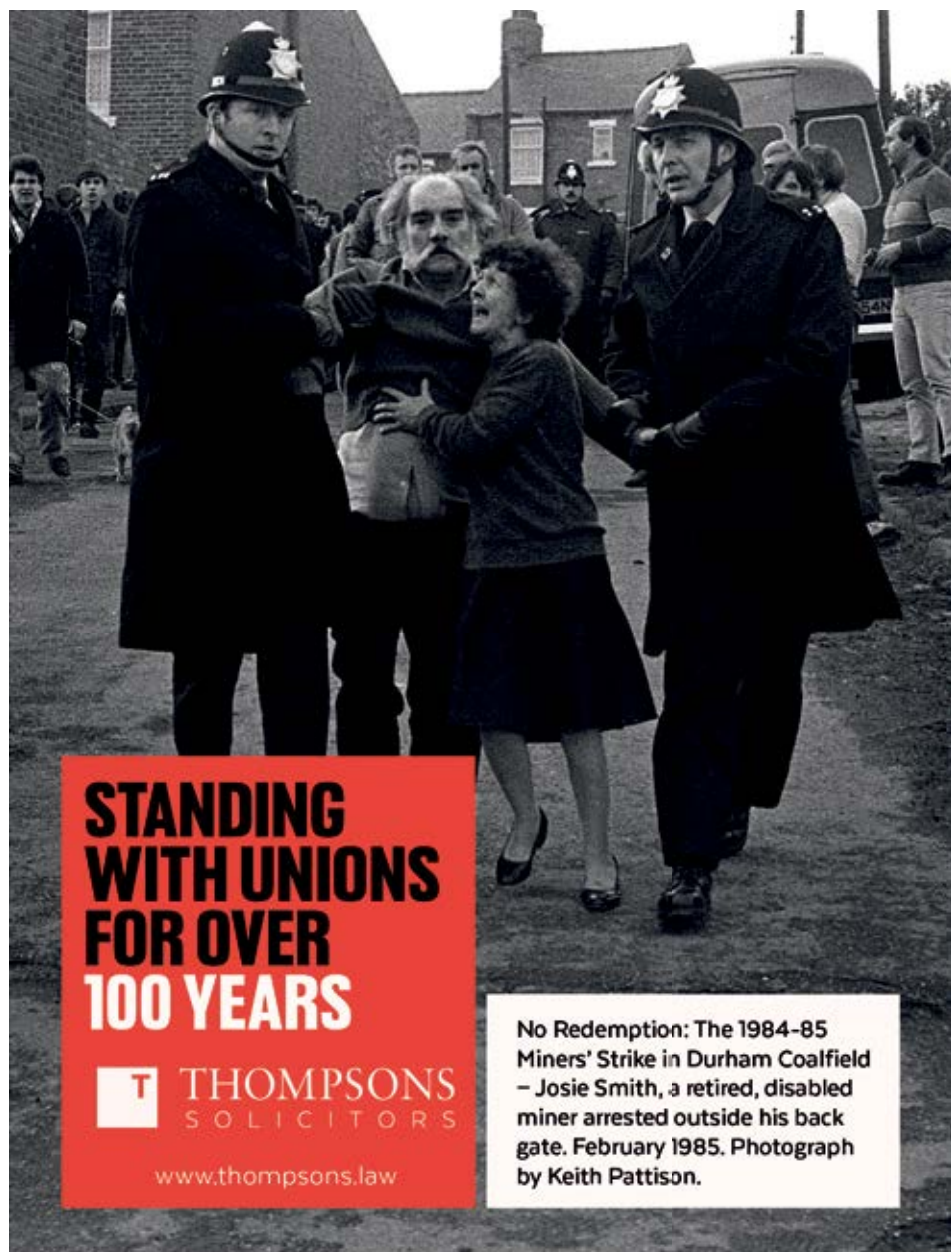
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Joe McPartland
Chair





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No Redemption: The 1984-85
Miners' Strike in Durham Coalfield
– Josie Smith, a retired, disabled
miner arrested outside his back
gate. February 1985. Photograph
by Keith Pattison.

UNITE London & Eastern Region

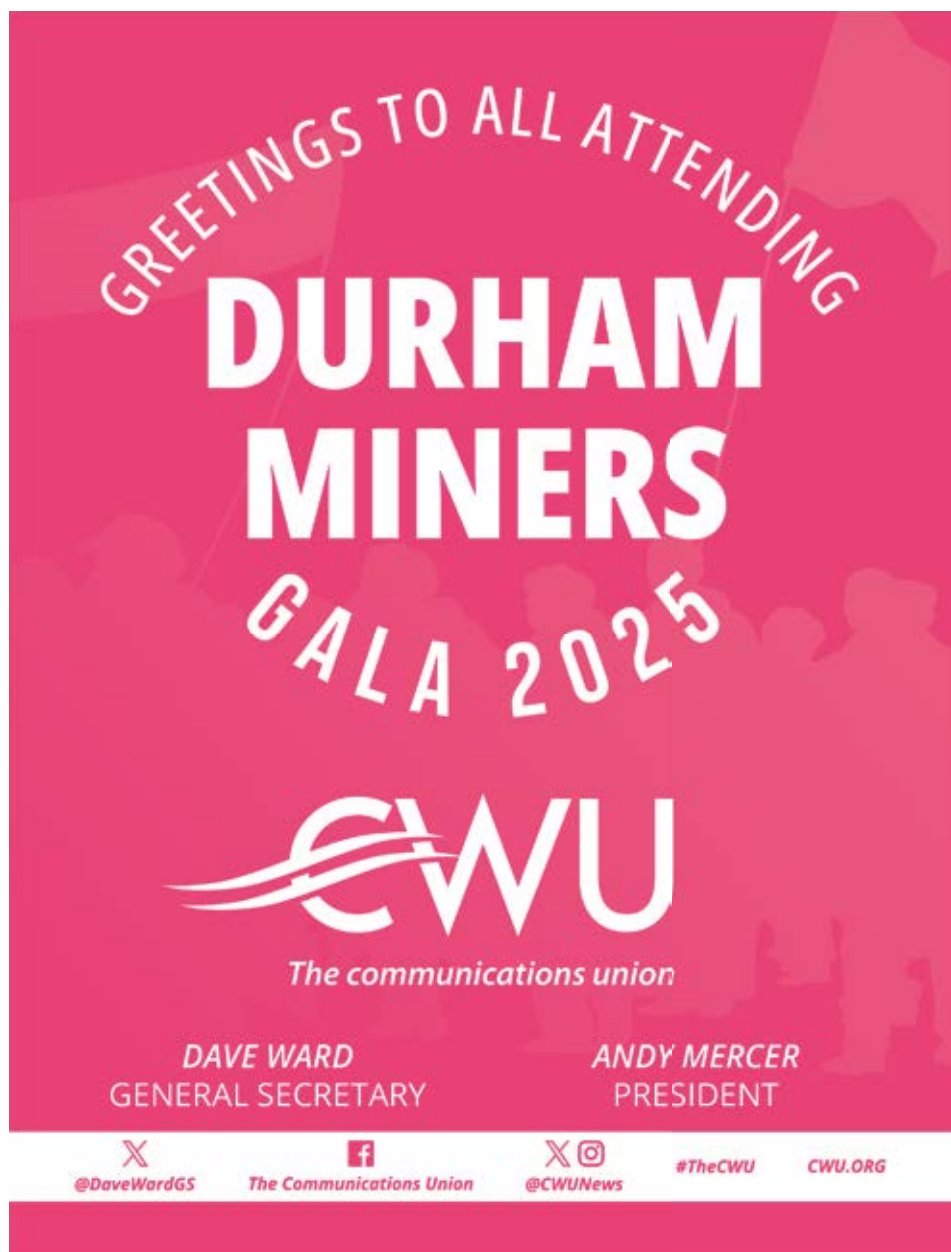
Greetings and
Solidarity to
all involved
in one of the
greatest celebrations
of our movement's
values!



Durham Miners' Gala

Steve O'Donnell
Regional Secretary
Paula Brennan
Regional Vice-Chair

James Mitchell
Regional Chair
Gary Reay
Regional Vice-Chair



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THE DURHAM MINERS GALA

CLIMATE CHANGE

Workplaces are 'ill equipped' for heat waves in future

by Christophe Domec

WORKPLACES nationwide are not equipped to deal with heatwaves and are putting workers at risk as extreme weather becomes more frequent, a new report warned yesterday.

Research from the Institution of Occupational Safety and Health (IOSH) showed employers are pushing staff to their physical limits across Britain.

The data revealed this to be the case for most workers, from delivery drivers to farmers, to builders.

A key factor in the lack of preparations for hot weather is that there is currently no legal maximum temperature for workplaces, the institution said.

Dr Ivan Williams Jimenez, senior policy manager at IOSH, said: "Businesses don't have to wait around for formal upper limit rules.

"As heatwaves become more frequent and intense, the lack of no upper limit, together with a culture of poor preparation, adaptation and mitigation for heat stress in workplaces, is an

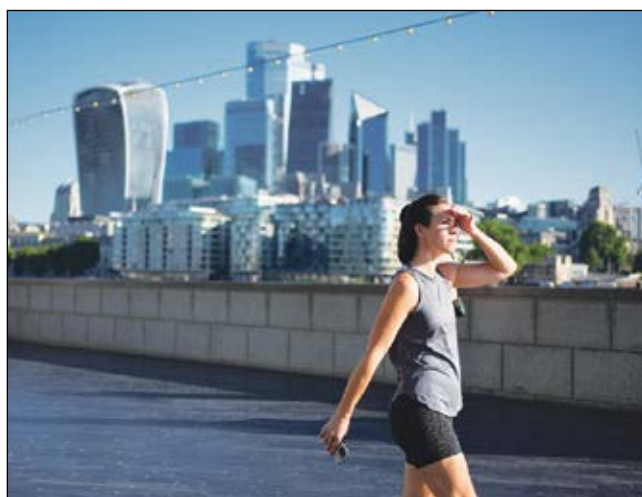
issue that needs to be addressed at different levels.

"If the risk assessment process – with controls identified and implemented – is not undertaken, many workers may be left to work in conditions that are not only uncomfortable but potentially harmful to their health and safety."

The report comes as temperatures topped 30°C yesterday and amber heatwave alerts were issued in parts of the country, with the UK's Health Security Agency warning of a potential rise in deaths for those aged over 65.

Residents in Yorkshire, Kent and Sussex were hit with a hosepipe ban which could see them fined up to £1,000, after months of record low rainfall.

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PUBLIC SECTOR

UNIONS SLAM 'PENSIONS FOR WAGES' SWAP OFFER

FALSE TRADE-OFF: Controversial proposal follows review from senior civil servant Catherine Little

by Christophe Domec

UNIONS have hit back at Whitehall plans to cut public-sector pensions by offering workers wage increases in exchange for lower retirement payments.

Calling it a "false trade off driven by austerity," the Fire Brigades Union slammed the suggestion, which could lower pensions for firefighters, nurses and teachers.

Public-sector union Unison also warned it could result in a "race to the bottom" with private-sector retirement benefits.

Catherine Little, permanent secretary to the Cabinet Office, has been leading talks on the subject before officially proposing the reforms to ministers, according to the Telegraph.

The FDA union, which represents civil servants and public-sector workers, confirmed



Pic: Neil Terry

it was aware that the Cabinet Office was exploring changes to the retirement system.

Ms Little, who is also the chief operating officer to the Civil Service, announced a review of "the balance between pay and pensions" in December.

She had previously said the Civil Service was facing a "whole set of issues around pay."

Unison head of policy Sampson Low told the Star: "Low pay and recruitment problems in

the public sector won't be solved by offering to make people poorer in their retirement.

"Getting involved in a race to the bottom trying to match inferior pensions in parts of the private sector benefits nobody."

FBU general secretary Steve Wright (pictured) said: "It would be outrageous to raid our pensions again and the FBU will fiercely resist any attempt to attack the pensions of firefighters and other public-sector workers.

"Workers will not accept a false trade-off driven by austerity.

Since 2010, public-sector pay and pensions have been hammered by austerity.

"Firefighters are already being forced to work to 60, for a downgraded pension – and on around 12 per cent less pay in real terms.

"The Labour government must urgently introduce a wealth tax to properly fund public services and provide a substantial pay increase for all workers.

"That is the only way to drive up growth and living standards."

A government spokesman said: "We are focused on supporting the Civil Service with the necessary tools it needs to deliver change for working people."

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GLASGOW

Unite calls 24-hour strike in airport wage dispute

UNITE confirmed today that summer strikes will go ahead at Glasgow airport later this month, as a dispute over pay escalates.

Staff including engineers and managers will walk out for 48 hours from July 24, after they rejected a 4 per cent pay deal.

Unite industrial officer Pat McIlvogue said:

"Glasgow Airport Limited is making the lowest pay offer despite it being the most profitable company at the airport.

"It is the only company escalating a dispute and they seem to be spoiling for a fight rather than trying to resolve it."

A spokesman for the airport's parent company AGS said: "We have been in talks with Unite since March, during which time we have made several improved and fair offers against a backdrop of a challenging operating environment.

"Despite reaching agreement with 80 per cent of our staff across AGS Airports over pay, our offer has been rejected by 75 members of staff at Glasgow airport who, through Unite, have informed us they wish to embark on strike action."





**UNISON SENDS SOLIDARITY GREETINGS TO THE 139th
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Durham Miners' Gala 2025



**Fraternal Greetings to everyone
attending the 2025 Durham Miners Gala,**

**The NUM welcome the actions of the
Labour Government on our MPS
pensions, there is more to do to fully
implement the Manifesto commitments,
and a similar deal for BCSSS pensioners.**

The Flame Still Burns

UNITE CONFERENCE

Construction crisis 'needs reform to aid apprentices'

BRITAIN is facing a construction crisis, the Unite union's policy conference heard yesterday, amid calls for better wages for apprenticeships.

Unite delegate and construction worker Jimmy O'Malley moved a motion on behalf of the the union's construction sector that demanded improvements to apprentice wages.

He warned "construction is in crisis" and highlighted the scale of the challenges faced by government, which must address the housing crisis and meet needs on infrastructure and flood defences.

"Good luck with that when there is absolutely no incentive for young people to become construction workers," Mr O'Malley said.

Calling the government "out of touch with the construction industry," he said Unite has repeatedly warned that the skilled workforce is ageing and investment in the industry is vital.

He concluded that by calling on the government to "get real" and put legislation in place to improve apprenticeship wages.

The motion was carried.



GLASGOW BLISSSED: Revellers arrive at the TRNSMT festival yesterday

TRANSPORT

Poverty of Tyne and Wear Metro cleaners exposed

by Elizabeth Short

A NEW survey by RMT exposed the devastating impact of outsourcing on Tyne and Wear Metro cleaners yesterday.

The survey of workers employed by Churchill, which holds cleaning contracts across the rail network, revealed poverty pay, lack of sick pay and increasing workloads are widespread.

Seventy per cent of those surveyed said they sometimes or regularly struggle to make ends meet, while 87 per cent said they were worried about not having enough to live on in retirement.

Sixty-seven per cent said they couldn't afford to take time off if they're sick, while 85 per cent admitted they had worked while sick.

And 90 per cent of respondents said their workloads are increasing, while the same pro-

portion said Churchill does not employ enough staff to do the job properly.

The firm boasts 22 per cent gross profit margins and paid out a £43.9 million dividend last year, RMT says.

The union is calling on North East Mayor Kim McGuinness to end the outsourcing of Metro cleaning services immediately and insource once Churchill's contract ends in 2026.

RMT general secretary Eddie Dempsey said: "Metro cleaners are being exploited by a private contractor that prioritises making huge profits over the interests of our people who keep transport clean in the region.

"We are in dispute with the company and are not ruling out calling for strike action if bosses do not start to treat cleaners properly."

Churchill and the North East Combined Authority have been contacted for comment.

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HOMELESSNESS

Black families are left out in cold over social housing

by Elizabeth Short

INSTITUTIONAL racism in housing must be tackled seriously and urgently, Black Activists Rising Against Cuts (Barac) warned yesterday.

The campaign group's demand came after new research revealed black families facing homelessness are less than half as likely to get access to social housing in England compared to white families.

Academics from Heriot-Watt University's Institute for

Social Policy, Housing, Equalities Research analysed 750,000 records of official English statutory homelessness data, from 2019-22.

They found that 10 per cent of black families in the statutory homelessness system ended up in social housing, compared with 24 per cent of white families.

Only 11-12 per cent of most other minority ethnic groups in the same circumstances were able access social housing.

Researchers conducted focus groups with individuals who experienced homelessness, who

also shared their experiences with private landlords.

"Strikingly, there was evidence of minoritised people feeling compelled to disguise their ethnic identity and migration status in an attempt to gain fair access to employment, housing and public services," the report said.

"This included changing, or hiding, their name, nationality, accent and even aspects of their appearance such as their hair."

The study also found that black families were six times more likely to live in overcrowded conditions, while Pakistani and Bangladeshi households were over seven times more likely.

Lead report author Professor Suzanne Fitzpatrick, said: "The evidence is stark: black people are almost four times more likely to become homeless and when they do access the statutory system, they face dramatically worse outcomes.

"We have quantitative evidence that their outcomes are worryingly poor, and qualita-

tive evidence that they face racial discrimination."

Barac UK co-founder Zita Holbourne said: "This report puts to bed the myth that racists and the far right try to spread of black and brown people 'coming over here and taking all the social housing.'

"There is institutional racism in housing and it must be tackled seriously and urgently. The physical signs of 'No Blacks, No Irish, No Dogs' may no longer be displayed but the sentiment is still there."

"The EHRC should be carrying out an investigation and using its enforcement powers to address housing organisations that are supporting systems of racism."

A Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government spokesperson said: "Racism in our housing system is illegal, and we urge anyone who has suffered from discrimination to report it so it can be investigated and we can put an end to this disgraceful behaviour."

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SOLIDARITY TO ALL AT THE DURHAM MINERS' GALA

REMIND THE BOSSES - THE WORKERS STILL POWER THE WORLD

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UNITED NATIONS

UN report details harm done by US axing of aid funds

by Our Foreign Desk

THE loss of United States funding for aid programmes has “already destabilised supply chains, led to the closure of health facilities, left thousands of health clinics without staff and set back prevention programmes,” according to a new United Nations report.

Published on Thursday, the UNAIDS report says the sudden withdrawal of US money has also “disrupted HIV testing efforts and forced many community organisations to reduce or halt their HIV activities.”

The Trump administration’s decision has caused a “systemic shock,” the UN agency says, adding that failure to replace the funding could lead to more than four million Aids-related deaths and six million more HIV infections by 2029.

UNAIDS also said that it feared other major donors would scale back their support, reversing decades of progress against Aids worldwide, and that the strong multilateral co-operation had been put in jeopardy by wars, geopolitical shifts and climate change.

The \$4 billion (around £3bn) that the US pledged for the global HIV response for 2025 disappeared virtually overnight in January, when US President Donald Trump ordered that all foreign aid be suspended and later ordered the closure of the US aid agency.

In 2024, there were about 630,000 Aids-related deaths worldwide, per a UNAIDS estimate – the figure has remained about the same since 2022 after peaking at about two million deaths in 2004.

Even before the US funding cuts, progress against curbing HIV was uneven. UNAIDS said that half of all new infections are in sub-Saharan Africa.

Tom Ellman of Doctors Without Borders (MSF) said that, while some poorer countries were now seeking to fund more of their own HIV programmes, it would be impossible to fill the gap left by the US.

“There’s nothing we can do that will protect these countries from the sudden, vicious withdrawal of support from the US,” said Mr Ellman, who heads the charity’s South Africa medical unit.

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DIPLOMACY

Chinese minister tells of ‘positive’ talks with Rubio

CHINESE Foreign Minister Wang Yi had a meeting with his US counterpart Marco Rubio in Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia, yesterday, their first in-person encounter since the US secretary of state took office in January.

It took place as the White House continues to stoke tensions between the two nations and against a backdrop of global and regional unease over US policies, notably on trade and heavy tariffs that US President Donald Trump has threatened to impose on friend and foe alike.

Mr Trump has warned that he could impose massive tariffs that on Chinese exports to the US, but preliminary discussions between the two sides have so far led to agreement on a framework for future talks.

Mr Rubio described the meeting as “very constructive and positive,” saying that there were “areas of potential co-operation” between Beijing and Washington.

Mr Wang is reported to have expressed the hope that the US would begin to view China



EXPRESSING HOPE: Wang Yi

with “an objective, rational and pragmatic attitude.”

Mr Rubio also indicated that Mr Trump was likely to visit China, saying: “I think both sides want to see it happen.”

On Thursday, Mr Wang met Russian Foreign Minister Sergey Lavrov, with Moscow’s Foreign Ministry saying: “Russia and China are wary of certain major powers creating divisions and instigating confrontation in the region.”



REFUSING TO BE COWED: Israeli peace activists protesting in front of a branch of the US embassy in Jerusalem yesterday

PALESTINE

ISRAELI STRIKE KILLS 10 AT SCHOOL HOUSING GAZANS

BLOODBATH: Eyewitnesses describe horrific scene of carnage after attack left many wounded

by Roger McKenzie

AT LEAST 10 Palestinians, including children, were killed by an Israeli attack in the early hours of yesterday while they were sheltering at the Halimah al-Saadiyah school in Jabalia, northern Gaza.

Many more were injured in Israel’s latest bombardment of a shelter for displaced Palestinians.

The survivors of the brutal attack gave harrowing eyewitness accounts of the attacks to Qatar-based news outlet Al Jazeera.

Abu Haitham Khalla said: “I saw the whole area filled with dust – that’s when I realised the strike had hit this place.”

“The panic, fear and terror that swept through the school was overwhelming. There were about 1,000 displaced people sheltering here.

“So far, 10 people have been confirmed killed in addition to many injuries, all of them women and children.”

Ahmed Khalla said: “Children were torn apart and charred. Women who had done absolutely nothing. The scenes were horrific.”

He added: I saw a little girl without a head – literally without a head.”

There was no immediate

comment on the killings from the Israeli authorities.

In response to the killing of nine children and four women on Thursday as they lined up for food supplements in the city of Deir el-Balah in central Gaza, Philippe Lazzarini, posted on the X social media platform that Gaza has become “the graveyard” of children and starving people.”

He wrote: “No way out. Their choice is between two deaths: starvation or being shot at – the most cruel and Machiavellian scheme to kill, in total impunity.”

Meanwhile, the UN has hit back after the United States slapped sanctions on UN special rapporteur Francesca Albanese on Thursday.

Stephane Dujarric, spokesman for secretary-general Antonio Guterres, called the measure a dangerous precedent.

Member states are perfectly entitled to their views and to disagree with the reports by the special rapporteurs, Mr Dujarric said, “but we encourage them to engage with the UN human rights architecture,” adding: “The use of unilateral sanctions against special rapporteurs, or any other UN expert or official, is unacceptable.”

Washington announced the sanctions against Ms Albanese



PLEA FOR UNITY: UN special rapporteur Francesca Albanese

on Wednesday over her role in investigating alleged Israeli human rights violations against Palestinians.

Ms Albanese said the US action against her was “not a sign of power, it’s a sign of guilt.”

She added: “We need to reverse the tide and in order for it to happen, we need to stand united.”

“They cannot silence us all. They cannot kill us all. They cannot fire us all.”

rogermckenzie@peoples-press.com



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SOLIDARITY TO ALL ATTENDING DURHAM MINERS' GALA 2025

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Sharon Graham, General Secretary
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TO WIN FOR WORKERS

■ SUDANESE CIVIL WAR

ICC deputy prosecutor says Darfur war crimes won't go unpunished

by Roger McKenzie

THE International Criminal Court (ICC) believes that war crimes and crimes against humanity are continuing to take place in Sudan's vast western Darfur region.

Deputy prosecutor Nazhat Shameem Khan told the United Nations security council on Thursday that the depth of suffering and the humanitarian crisis in Darfur "has reached an intolerable state," with famine escalating and hospitals, humanitarian convoys and other civilian infrastructure being targeted.

"People are being deprived of water and food," she said. "Rape and sexual violence are being weaponised. Abductions for ransom or to bolster the ranks of armed groups have become common practice."

"And yet we should not be under any illusion," Ms Shameem Khan warned the council. "Things can still get worse."

Sudan plunged into conflict in mid-April 2023, when tensions between its military and the paramilitary Rapid Support Forces (RSF) turned violent in the capital Khartoum, with the fighting then spreading to other regions including Darfur.

At least 40,000 people have

been killed and nearly 13 million displaced, including to other countries, according to UN agencies.

US president Joe Biden's administration, just before it left office in January, determined that the RSF and its proxies were committing genocide.

Ms Shameem Khan said that in recent weeks the ICC has closely tracked reports of the situation in North Darfur, whose capital El Fasher is besieged by the RSF and its affiliates.

The RSF, which holds the capitals of all other Darfur states, has also attacked famine-hit Zamzam and other camps for displaced people in North Darfur.

"On the basis of our independent investigations, the position of our office is clear: we have reasonable grounds to believe that war crimes and crimes against humanity have been and are continuing to be committed in Darfur," Ms Shameem Khan told the council.

This conclusion, she said, is based on documentary, testimonial and digital evidence collected by ICC investigators during the past six months.

Ms Shameem Khan said the court considers the situation in Darfur "of the utmost importance," insisting that it will not be deterred until the perpetrators face justice.

Two decades ago, Darfur became synonymous with genocide and war crimes, particularly by the notorious Janjaweed Arab militias, against populations that identify as central or east African.

Up to 300,000 people were killed and 2.7 million were driven from their homes.

Ms Khan said those in Darfur now "inflicting unimaginable atrocities on its population" should know that, while they may feel a sense of impunity, Janjaweed leader Ali Kushayb is currently on trial and the ICC hopes his prosecution will be the first of many.

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■ ARGENTINA

Ex-president accused of corrupt deal on insurance

PROSECUTORS in Argentina have formally accused former president Alberto Fernandez of irregularities in contracting insurance for the public sector during his administration.

Federal Judge Sebastian Casanello, however, ruled on Thursday that Mr Fernandez can remain free while the case against the left-wing leader former proceeds.

This is the second case brought against Mr Fernandez since he left office, but the first related to alleged corruption.

Earlier this year, he was charged with committing gender violence against former first lady Fabiola Yanez.

In the insurance case, prosecutors are charging Mr Fernandez with carrying out negotiations incompatible with holding public office, which could lead to between one and six years in prison.

Mr Casanello also ordered the freezing of some \$11 million (around £8m) of Mr Fernandez's assets.

The judge noted in his order that, in December 2021, in the middle of his presidency, Mr Fernandez issued a decree that forced the entire public sector to contract exclusively with Nacion Seguros, an insurance company then led by his friend Alberto Pagliano.

It resulted in tremendous growth for the company. Mr Fernandez did not immediately comment on the case, in which 33 other people are also named.



SETTING THE STAGE: Forces of the regional Kurdish administration securing an area in Iraq's Sulaymaniyah governorate where journalists had gathered yesterday ahead of a symbolic disarmament ceremony by the separatist PKK group as part of its peace process with Turkey

■ MIDDLE EAST

PKK fighters begin surrendering arms

by Our Foreign Desk

FIGHTERS of the Kurdistan Workers Party (PKK), a separatist resistance group that has waged a decades-long insurgency in Turkey, began laying down their weapons in a symbolic ceremony in northern Iraq yesterday.

The disarmament is a key step in months of indirect negotiations between PKK leader Abdullah Ocalan and Ankara.

The process began in October with the blessing of Turkish President Recep Tayyip Erdogan and was facilitated in Turkey by

the pro-Kurdish Peoples Equality and Democracy Party (DEM).

The PKK announced in May that it would disband and renounce armed conflict, ending four decades of armed struggle, following an appeal from Mr Ocalan for this to happen.

He has been held in solitary confinement on a prison island near Istanbul since 1999.

The ceremony took place in the mountains outside the city of Sulaymaniyah in northern Iraq's semi-autonomous Kurdish region.

Although only limited details about the ceremony

were revealed, a PKK source told reporters in advance that around 30 fighters would destroy their weapons and then return to the mountains.

In a video message released on Wednesday, Mr Ocalan said: "I believe in the power of politics and social peace, not weapons. And I urge you to put this principle into practice," pledging that the disarmament process would be "implemented swiftly."

President Erdogan has predicted that peace efforts with the Kurds will gain momentum after the PKK began laying down its weapons.

"The process will gain a little more speed when the terrorist organisation starts to implement its decision to lay down arms," he said last weekend.

"We hope this auspicious process will end successfully as soon as possible, without mishaps or sabotage attempts," Mr Erdogan added on Wednesday.

Last year, the Iraqi government announced an official ban on the PKK, which has long been prohibited in Turkey.

The separatist group took up arms in 1984 with the objective of securing an independent Kurdistan.

international@peoples-press.com

in brief

Bonfire probed as possible hate crime

NORTHERN IRELAND:

Authorities said yesterday that they are investigating a bonfire that featured effigies of migrants in a boat and a banner reading "stop the boats" to determine whether it was a hate incident.

Church leaders and politicians complained about the display in the Co Tyrone village of Moygashel before it was set alight on Thursday night. Parts of Northern Ireland were gripped by anti-immigrant rioting last month.

Reparations bid may go to Privy Council

CARICOM: Caribbean

Community leaders have backed a Jamaican initiative to take the regional reparations fight to Britain via the Privy Council.

The idea, an initiative of the Jamaican cabinet and reparations commission, is to ask the council to rule whether slavery and the forced transport of enslaved Africans to Jamaica and other territories amounted to a criminal act and a crime against humanity.

MPs back plan to strip citizenship

CAMBODIA: MPs passed a constitutional amendment yesterday allowing the government to draft legislation to revoke the citizenship of anyone found guilty of conspiring with foreign nations to harm the national interest.

The change would apply to lifelong Cambodian citizens, people with dual citizenship in Cambodia and another nation and people from other countries who have been granted Cambodian citizenship.

Over 1,300 sacked by State Department

UNITED STATES: The State Department sacked more than 1,300 employees yesterday in line with a dramatic reorganisation plan initiated by the Trump administration earlier this year.

The department sent lay-off notices to 1,107 civil servants and 246 foreign service officers with domestic assignments, a senior State Department official said on condition of anonymity.

From the South to the North

Solidarity to all at The Big Meeting

Southampton Readers and Supporters Group

Newcastle Upon Tyne TUC

sends solidarity greetings to
all participants in the 2025

DURHAM MINERS GALA

*Stop the genocide!
Defend the right to protest!*



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WELFARE NOT WARFARE



*TSSA stands proudly
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justice, dignity, and
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Greetings to all attending the 2025 Durham Miners' Gala



Tom Murphy
Branch Secretary

Tim Colgan
Branch Chair



Join us this autumn
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Bradford & Shipley Trades Council



The Bradford and Shipley Trades
Council sends fraternal greetings to the
Durham Miners' Gala.

Solidarity sisters and brothers.

The miners united can never be
defeated !



WORTLEY HALL
The workers' stately home
www.wortleyhall.org.uk



Wortley Hall sends greetings to
all those attending this year's
Durham Miners Gala.

We wish you a successful
day highlighting the legacy of
working people, especially the
mining community.

politicalsecretary@wortleyhall.org.uk

Sending greetings and solidarity to all at the Durham Miners' Gala 2025

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Greetings to the
139th Durham
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Free, free Palestine!

Marc Wadsworth
Chair

Deborah Hobson
Secretary



The Professional Trade Union for Prison
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The POA sends
fraternal greetings
and solidarity to the
Durham Miners' Gala

Steve Gillan
General Secretary

Mark Fairhurst
National Chair

Solidarity from the Communist Party to all at Durham Miners' Gala!

The past we inherit,
the future we build.
Join the fight for peace,
democracy and socialism!



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COMPETITION

Win a night at the workers' stately home



WORTLEY HALL

AS WE celebrate this year's Durham Miners' Gala the Morning Star is delighted to team up with Wortley Hall, the workers' stately home, offering our readers a chance to win a free break at the historic venue.

One lucky reader will win a voucher entitling two people to spend a night at Wortley Hall, with breakfast. Second prize is cream tea for two.

So how do you win our fabulous prize? Just answer the following question: **Where is the Miners Festival Service held?**

Send answers to competitions@peoples-press.com or write to Gala Competition, Morning Star, Ruskin House, 23 Coombe Road, London CR0 1BD. Please include your full address and contact details.

The competition closes on Monday July 21 and the winner will be announced on Friday July 25.

Your details will only be used for the purposes of this competition.

ABOUT WORTLEY HALL



Wortley Hall is situated in South Yorkshire, just off the M1 at junction 35a/36.

This hidden gem sits within 26 acres of picturesque formal gardens and woodland, and is affectionately known as the workers' stately home.

It invites you to relax in a warm and welcoming venue. The hall consists of 55 en-suite bedrooms, two unique dining rooms which have original wood paneling, magnificent fireplaces and frieze ceilings.

The bar and restaurant offer a spacious and relaxing atmos-

phere. The lounge is also a comfortable spot to treat yourself to afternoon tea — with free wi-fi for those who just have to stay connected.

The perfect venue for a short break, the hall also hosts weddings, conferences and events.

Originally the ancestral home of the earl of Wharnccliffe it is now a company in its own right, a member of Co-operatives UK and the Register of Friendly Societies.

A grand venue steeped in history, its heritage and socialist values shine through.

TERMS & CONDITIONS

1. This competition is open to residents of the UK, Channel Islands, Isle of Man and Republic of Ireland except for employees of the People's Press Printing Society, their families or anyone else associated with this competition. **2.** All information detailing how to enter this competition

forms part of these terms and conditions. It is a condition of entry that all rules are accepted as final and that the competitor agrees to abide by these rules. The decision of the judges is final and no correspondence will be entered into. Submission of an entry will be taken to mean acceptance of these

terms and conditions. **3.** Only one entry per person. Late, illegible, incomplete, defaced or corrupt entries will not be accepted. **4.** The winning entry will be drawn at random from all correct submissions. The winner will be notified within four days of the closing date of the competition and a voucher entitling two

adults to one night B&B at Wortley Hall dispatched to them. The voucher expires on March 31 2026. **5.** The winner's name and county may be disclosed to anyone who writes within one month after the published closing date, stating the date of publication and enclosing a stamped

addressed envelope, to Ruskin House, 23 Coombe Road, London CR0 1BD. **6.** The prize as described is available on the date of publication. It is non-transferable and there are no cash alternatives. **7.** Events may occur that render the competition itself or the awarding of the prizes impossible due to rea-

sons beyond the control of the Promoter and accordingly the Promoter may at its absolute discretion vary or amend the promotion and the entrant agrees that no liability shall attach to the Promoter as a result thereof. *Promoter: PPPS, Ruskin House, 23 Coombe Road, London CR0 1BD.*

Unite North West

Sending greetings to all those attending the **Durham Miners' Gala 2025**



Richie James
Regional Secretary

George White
Regional Chair



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As the trade union for retail workers, Usdaw represents hundreds of thousands of workers across the UK retail sector. We continue to make a crucial difference for retail workers.



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Chartered Society
of Physiotherapy

Proud to be representing the UK's physiotherapy workforce at the Durham Miner's Gala for the first time this year.

We are delighted to be coming together to celebrate Durham's rich history of community and solidarity, and to bring a strong message about the importance and value of rehab as a core part of our profession.

GREETINGS TO THE DURHAM MINERS' GALA



www.rmt.org.uk

General Secretary: Eddie Dempsey

President: George Welch

Durham Miners' Gala 2025

The Big Meeting is testament to the resilience of our mining communities

Durham Miners' Association general secretary **ALAN MARDGHUM** speaks to Ben Chacko ahead of Gala Day 2025

ALAN MARDGHUM, pictured, expects another bumper crowd for the Durham Miners' Gala this year – despite some run-ins with Reform councillors miffed to be left off the platform.

The whinging was led by Durham County Council deputy leader Darren Grimes, who provoked a flurry of news stories with claims members of his party wouldn't be welcome at the Big Meeting.

"It's a total lie," the Durham Miners' Association (DMA) general secretary tells me. "We're not banning anybody. We welcome everyone to the Gala."

"All we've said is that people who do not share our values – community, labour movement, social justice values – will not be invited onto the platform, or the balcony" (of the County Hotel, past which the pit bands march).

"When we invite official guests as speakers, they're people we have something in common with as trade unionists."

"Not everyone will agree with everything said from the platform, but any right-minded person would agree that they are messages of unity, about respect for our fellow human beings wherever in the world they may be."

"We've got a long history at the DMA of inviting people from around the world, we've had people from every continent speaking at the Gala as our guests. We believe in international solidarity."

That's prompted the invitation to Husam Zomlot, the Palestinian ambassador to Britain, to address this year's crowds as Israel continues its genocidal

assault on the Gaza Strip with backing from the British state.

Mardghum believes it's especially important to give Palestinian voices a platform following Establishment uproar at pro-Palestine chants at Glastonbury, and the recent ban on Palestine Action as a "terrorist" group after some of its activists poured paint on RAF planes at the air force's Brize Norton base.

"The security forces need to be questioned seriously about that," he feels. "How did they get in? Imagine if they'd been proper terrorists! They could have put bombs under those planes, blown them up."

"So there ought to be an investigation into how people got into a military base, but what did they do there? They sprayed some red paint representing blood on the planes."

"That's not terrorism. It's like saying the artists spraying graffiti on town walls are terrorists."

"And the people proscribing that organisation aren't saying a dicky bird about what the [Israel Defence Forces] are doing – luring people in for food and water and shooting them indiscriminately. That's murder."

Eyes at the Gala will also be on Jeremy Corbyn, another guest speaker this year, given current excitement over a potential new party of the left. There was a time when Labour leaders were a regular presence at the Big Meeting – a tradition Corbyn revived when leading the party. But Mardghum doesn't pull his punches when assessing the record of current Labour Prime Minister Keir Starmer, or apologise for promoting his expelled predecessor as a truer friend of the labour movement.

A year into the Labour government, Mardghum sums up his attitude in a word: "Disgust."

"They have done some good things, but those have been overshadowed by the way they have attacked the most vulnerable in society." He blames Starmer's right-wing strategist Morgan McSweeney – "you'd



almost think he's a plant to have done so much damage to a government elected a year ago in a landslide victory."

Labour's attacks on its own included the raid on pensioners' winter fuel payments, the betrayal of the Waspi women ("not one of them on that front bench lost an opportunity [when in opposition] to stand with the Waspi women, get a photoshoot and say, 'we'll put this right. And they didn't,") and the recent attack on disability benefits, which resulted in a humiliating climbdown on most of the original Bill because of the scale of MPs' rebellion.

He salutes the MPs who "had the courage and guts to stand up and say, 'we're not having this.'" But he slams the compromise, too, since telling future claimants they will get less money than current ones is clearly unfair.

Nor is he convinced Starmer will learn anything from the episode. "They need to get rid of him in my view. If they don't get rid of Starmer, and

these unelected people like McSweeney, they will deliver a trouncing to the Labour Party at the next election."

As Mardghum has related to the Morning Star before, he's no longer a Labour member, though he was in the party for 46 years, having left when being asked to explain himself for speaking alongside former North of Tyne mayor Jamie Driscoll.

He had been angry enough that the central party machine had decreed Driscoll, the only elected Labour mayor in north-east England at the time, wasn't deemed good enough for a short or even long list of candidates for the enlarged North East mayoralty, in a "totally undemocratic" middle finger to local Labour opinion. When they targeted him for continuing to back Driscoll, he thought "good riddance to the Labour Party."

"I can totally understand the disillusionment with Labour.

They do not represent the values that we do, and it's their actions that enable the growth of Reform." Reform swept the board at County Durham's last elections, now dominating the council – historically Labour's first-ever county council, and one it held for a century, but on which it is now reduced to a paltry four of 98 seats. If Labour doesn't change, it will see more councils go that way next year, he believes, including that in Sunderland where he lives.

"Relying on big business to bail us out isn't going to work," he warns, advising Labour to stop fawning on corporations and mass media outlets that will stab it in the back. People will only stop flocking to Reform if Labour gets serious about delivering high-quality jobs, on secure contracts, with decent pensions at the end and a social safety net to look after you when things go wrong – the welfare state gutted by successive governments, driving anxiety and social tensions.

But if he understands why people are turning against Labour, he stresses that voting for Reform in consequence is a big mistake.

"A government led by Reform is not an idle threat. I hear people praising Reform all the time. But what policies do they have, really?"

"Stop the boats? That's not going to help us. Actually if you had a fair immigration system that might stop the boats. And if you stopped bombing people in these countries and causing famines maybe people wouldn't need refuge." The spread of wars across the world, with Britain allied to aggressive leaders from Trump to Netanyahu, concerns him: "It's like John Lennon said – society is run by insane people, for insane objectives."

For all their recent success, Mardghum feels Reform are fundamentally alien to the traditions and culture of the working class.

"The Gala, still going strong decades after the last pit closed in the Durham coalfield, is tes-

tament to the resilience of our mining communities."

"Because we've always promoted a message of hope, of sticking together, that unity is strength." Reform councillors moaning about not being invited to address the crowds don't understand that: "It's not a jamboree, or a historical re-enactment. It's about the labour movement."

The newly renovated Redhills – the magnificent "pitmen's parliament" built for gatherings of every lodge in the Durham coalfield – is an example of how that labour movement continues to invest in the local community, with the DMA having led efforts to raise money, most of it from trade unions, to turn it into a "a hub for the people of Durham."

"For everybody to appreciate the heritage and culture of the Durham miners through a vibrant, living building. Not a museum, but one which gives future generations a centre of our culture, one that has produced singers, songwriters, artists, musicians and will keep doing so."

"I'm massively proud to represent this marvellous organisation, one which has done so much good for the communities of County Durham and elsewhere."

“

The people proscribing Palestine Action aren't saying a dicky bird about what the IDF are doing – luring people in for food and water and shooting them indiscriminately. That's murder'

“

If you stopped bombing people in these countries and causing famines maybe people wouldn't need refuge

Durham Miners' Gala 2025

Teachers are being pushed to the brink in forgotten communities

With 170,000 children living in poverty in north-east England and teachers leaving in droves over 20 per cent real-terms pay cuts since 2010, all while private companies siphon off billions, it is time to unite and fight for education, writes **MATT WRACK**

AS we return to north-east England for the Durham Miners' Gala – a proud celebration of working-class unity and trade union values – we do so not just to honour the past, but to fight for the future.

The banners carried by those marching through the city to The Big Meeting don't just remember the past; they are rallying cries for a better future, for hope and for optimism.

Today in Durham, NASUWT teachers are marching not only for themselves, but for every child, every family, and every community that has been neglected and forgotten during 14 years of Tory rule, by a government that had no understanding of the concept of solidarity, of community, of

trade union values and frankly despised the working class.

Across the north-east and throughout the country, teachers are being pushed to the brink as they work tirelessly for the children in their care.

In that proud region, 170,000 children – 31 per cent – are living in poverty. In Middlesbrough and Thornaby East, that figure rises to a staggering 52 per cent. In Newcastle Central and West, it's 43 per cent. That's nearly one in every two children growing up without the basics that everyone should have as a minimum.

Teachers in these areas are more than educators. They are mentors, social workers and lifelines to the children and young people they teach and their families.

They are the ones who notice when a child hasn't eaten. They

stay late to run after-school clubs. They buy missing supplies from their own pockets. They give hope to families and motivate and inspire their children.

In many forgotten communities, education can be the only way out of intergenerational poverty, and it is our schools that all too often are the difference between hope and despair.

But too many teachers are leaving the profession, driven out by overwhelming workloads, stress and a feeling they are not being paid fairly for what they do.

Recruitment targets have been missed year after year. Retention rates are plummeting. Talented young teachers are walking away from the profession within five years, burned out and disillusioned. And who can blame them?

When pay has fallen by more than 20 per cent in real terms since 2010, when workload is spiralling, it is no wonder that morale is at rock bottom.

The consequences are stark. Children in deprived communities are being taught by a revolving door of supply staff. Specialist subjects are being dropped. SEND provision is stretched to breaking point. And as our report, *Where Has All the Money Gone*, exposed, this is happening as private companies are siphoning billions from the education budget.

Teachers are being told their pay award will not be fully funded, and a quarter of it will have to come from school budgets already stripped to the bone because there is no more money.

Yet in the education sector,



academy trust chief executives are earning more than the Prime Minister.

Supply agencies are pocketing hundreds of millions in fees. Private SEND providers are charging cash-strapped councils up to £61,000 per pupil. This is public money meant for children – not for shareholders' bulging pockets.

We need a new settlement for education. One that includes a fully funded pay award, a

national pay scale to restore fairness and transparency, investment in recruitment, retention, and workload reduction, and a commitment to public provision over private profit.

The Durham Miners' Gala reminds us that change is possible when we stand together. Teachers, nurses, firefighters, rail workers – we are not part of isolated struggles. We are part of one wider trade union movement with one

EVERY second Saturday in July something huge happens in Durham City. It's not just a get-together, it's a powerful event. It's the Big Meeting – or the Miners' Gala as some call it – and it's ours, it's our day.

It belongs to the working class, to workers of the world. It's an international celebration, it's an outpouring of solidarity and togetherness that's second to none.

It's a celebration, a protest, a reunion, a declaration. It's the biggest event in the socialist calendar.

It's the day when we come together, when folk from all over the world come to celebrate, to commemorate and to show we are still here.

Folk come with family, with friends, with trade unions, with banners and with bands. It's a day when we show the world that solidarity matters, that standing together is the way forward.

The Big Meeting isn't simply nostalgia, it's a happy day, a day to show resistance, it's a day to enjoy but it's also a day to listen, to learn and to plan for the future. It's a day when we say to our children, this is who we are. We are proud of our heritage.

We're still here, and Durham Day is our day

The Big Meeting isn't simply nostalgia – it's a happy day and a day to show resistance. **HEATHER WOOD** explains why

We march through the narrow streets of Durham, arm in arm, shoulder to shoulder with comrades.

We march proudly, heads held high behind our banners; our beautiful banners, they are another source of pride, they tell our story, they fly high as we march behind them to the music, the powerful music of our brass bands.

Durham Day, the Gala or the Big Meeting, whatever we call it gives us inspiration, it gives us courage to continue the fight, our fight against the capitalist system.

We dance, we laugh, we sing. The bairns marching with us, they are the future, we nurture them, we show them the way.

It's the day we meet folk we might only see on Durham Day, but it's like we've never been apart, distance does not mar our friendship. It's the day when new friendships are



A DAY FOR PRIDE: Heather Wood of Women Against Pit Closures

formed, when we meet folk who are fighting the same battles as us wherever they live. It's the day when folk come from all over the world because they

know what the Gala means.

The warmth, the colour, the sounds, they lift my spirits, they remind me I'm not alone, there is an army of foot soldiers

out there fighting the same battle. The battle for fairness, for justice, for equality and for freedom.

My Durham Day starts the week before the actual second Saturday in July. It's the events in that week that fill the heart, that prepare us for our day, the biggest day in the international workers' calendar.

I'm in the marketplace from around 7am watching and waiting. Slowly the crowd builds, the banners come forward, the bands strike a tune as we all line up ready to go.

It's palpable, the feeling of love, of comradeship, it's a feeling I get nowhere else, it's emotional as friends approach, as comrades wave across the marketplace, as we shout our anthem, "Here we go." Then the big bass drum sounds boom-boom, that's when the tears come, that's when I look at John, my partner, and he's

“

It's a celebration, a protest, a reunion, a declaration. It's the biggest event in the socialist calendar

Durham Miners' Gala 2025



proud voice. We are asking for fairness. For dignity. For the resources to do our jobs properly. For the right of every child, in every community, to be taught by a qualified, committed teacher who is paid a decent wage.

That is not too much to ask. That is the very least our children deserve.

■ Matt Wrack is acting general secretary of the NASUWT.

crying too. Not tears of sadness but tears of pride, of joy. We get in line behind our banner, the sound of cameras clicking, recording the day, the bairns laughing. It can be the hottest day of the year or it might be pouring with rain, but we march, we stand, we wait.

It may take us hours to reach the racecourse where the main event takes place but we do it and we will continue to do it.

The atmosphere on the field is electric, there's candy floss, there's ice cream, there's food, there's good craic then there's the speeches. I've sat and listened to the speeches since I was a small child, instructed by my mam to sit still and listen, sit quietly and learn. I learned so much from those speeches, they helped me decide what I want from life, not just for me but for everyone.

I want equality, freedom, justice and so much more. We can reach our socialist goal if we try to live what Durham Day teaches us, live as socialists, care for all.

As my great aunt May Barker used to say in the 1980s: "It's our day. You can do what you like today, you can stand on your head if you like. It's Durham Day."

AM a former miner and, not surprisingly, the Durham Miners' Gala is one of my favourite days of the year. The trade union banners, the brass bands, the thousands of trade unionists marching together – always uplifting for me as lifelong socialist and trade unionist.

It is a reminder of the amazing support from other trade unions that striking NUM miners received during the miners' strike of 1984-85, a potent memory of feeling empowered by working-class solidarity. After each Gala I reflect on the message of solidarity it conveys and the immense potential such solidarity could have to fuel social and economic progress.

This year we have been confronted with the tragic reality that working-class voters are turning their backs on such sentiments. Since May Durham County Council has been controlled by the hard-right, viciously anti-union Reform UK.

A county which 40 years ago was at the heart of working-class resistance to the Thatcher's onslaught on trade unionism has overwhelmingly voted for her most ardent fans. The families of miners who fought so hard for a year have voted for those who celebrate Thatcher's victory and her legacy of deprivation.

Many political commentators imply that the working-class voters who have turned to Reform must be ignorant or, essentially, racist. How, they ask, can anyone with any sense vote for a party that is blatantly in favour of policies that are against their own self-interest, led by a millionaire stockbroker, Nigel Farage, who favours privatising the NHS, who opposes better rights at work and wants to further cut public services to fund tax cuts to benefit rich people such as himself?

The answer is simple – they wrongly think he cares about them while other politicians do not. They are angry, feel forgotten and are lashing out in desperation.

Of course these working-class voters are being conned by Farage, but for 40 years they have essentially felt ignored, especially by the Labour Party which they voted for loyally for decades with little to show for it.

The Blair and Brown administrations did not do everything possible to replace the well-paid jobs Thatcher's scorched-earth deindustrialisation had destroyed. Especially since the financial crisis of 2008-09, areas such north-east England have stagnated. Working-class families have seen their standards of living decline and they feel little optimism for the future.

With the exception of the Corbyn years, Labour's adherence to a slightly softer version of neoliberalism has meant it has not sufficiently addressed these problems.

Of course the Blair/Brown

Durham Miners' Gala – the perfect place to learn how to fight Farage



The Gala's core message of working-class solidarity offers renewed hope and provides the antidote to the anti-worker policies of Reform UK, argues **IAN LAVERY MP**

governments did improve health and education and reduced child poverty, benefiting from what appeared to be a booming economy, but the failure to provide the amount of investment needed to rebuild the economies of former industrialised towns has left a more lasting impression.

In 2017, there was some hope that the Corbyn-led Labour Party through ditching neoliberal orthodoxy did have an answer, but Labour's problematic Brexit politics and the toxic factionalism within Labour's headquarters effectively destroyed any appeal that the more progressive Labour leadership may have had for the deindustrialised former Labour heartlands.

Nevertheless, I firmly believe that the answer to the rise of Reform can be found in the Labour manifestos of 2017 and 2019. Polling consistently showed that the more socialist policies themselves did have support – it was the image of the party itself that was being rejected.

Working-class voters, for example, want utilities in democratic forms of public ownership, a properly funded NHS free from creeping priva-

tisation and fair taxation of the super-rich to end the gross levels of inequality neoliberalism has created. Similar policies linked to a renewed emphasis on class politics would certainly threaten Reform's appeal.

We will not succeed by dismissing any concerns working-

class people have regarding immigration as simply being racist. We have to remember that people living insecure lives can fear anything they think will make their lives even less secure. We must listen to such concerns, use a class-based analysis to destroy misperceptions, and build a consensus around an immigration policy that is just for all concerned.

We on the left must take a critical look at ourselves when facing the question of why we are failing to convince working-class people to support a socialist alternative. For years we have not found an effective means of destroying the grossly unfair perception propagated by the right-wing press that we place more importance on fighting discrimination against minorities than anything else.

How do we convince them that we are fighting against exploitation of all working-class people and that Reform's racist anti-immigrant message is designed to divide the working class, allowing the ruling class to continue to exploit all workers with impunity? The Durham Miners' Gala's core message of working-class soli-

darity could well be the answer.

One thing is certain, if the Starmer government does not return to basic Labour values many in the crowd at the Gala who voted for Reform in May could do so again at the general election.

Labour's good policies such as increased spending on housing and infrastructure, public ownership of the railways and the first steps toward better employment rights are not enough to overcome the damage done by policy debacles regarding pensioners and the disabled that have led many to conclude that its leadership does not care about ordinary working-class people. A good first step would be for them to come to Durham this Saturday and listen to the powerful messages of working-class liberation and solidarity that are heard from the platform every year.

Maybe then they would understand what Labour should stand for and create a Labour government that everyone at the Gala would support.

■ Ian Lavery is Labour MP for Blyth and Ashington.

“

We have to remember that people living insecure lives can fear anything they think will make their lives even less secure

Durham Miners' Gala 2025

THE Orgreave Truth and Justice Campaign (OTJC) is honoured to be at the Durham Miners' Gala again this year and delighted to be invited by the Durham Miners' Association to speak on the main platform.

This is a day to celebrate mining communities, comradeship and unity, to reaffirm our dedication and commitment to the class struggle, a day of love and solidarity. It is also a time to celebrate the fantastic strength and resistance of the trade union movement, campaigns and the National Union of Mineworkers (NUM) and remember the incredible gains and employment rights that the NUM fought for and obtained for the workers who powered Britain and the rest of the world.

We look forward to gathering with our banners, comrades, friends and supporters, old and new, the sounds of chatter and laughter, the hugs, the greetings, the smiles and the waves and marching to the wonderful sounds of the brass bands.

This 41st anniversary year of the miners' strike reminds us that we must never forget the importance of that great strike to defend an industry, jobs, trade unions and communities and the fight for all our futures. We are indebted to the striking miners for their dedication to that year-long struggle that changed our lives forever.

Thank you to everyone who has campaigned with us over the last 13 years for an Orgreave inquiry. It has been a long, hard and sometimes lonely journey, but we are determined, persistent people, and we have been unrelenting and consistent in our campaigning. However, without the support and solidarity of the labour and trade union movement, we would never have been able to come this far.

Our campaign started 13 years ago in events related to Orgreave on June 18 1984, during the '84-'85 miners' strike. What happened at Orgreave is key to understanding what happened throughout that strike.

Events relating to this day can provide answers to how and why paramilitary violent policing across mining villages and communities all over Britain was taking place throughout the strike. The injustice faced by the miners and communities has never been acknowledged by the state, and instead, they have lied and covered it up.

We know that the Tory government of the 1980s was directly involved in the strike while professing "non-involvement." The Tory Ridley plan of the 1970s had planned for it, and the 1980s Tory government put public resources into the implementation of this plan.

This was state state-sponsored organisation against the miners and their livelihoods.

PRESSURE PAYS OFF: An OTJC march on June 14 2025 and (below) Kate Flannery
Pics: Neil Terry Photography



After 41 years of lies, an Orgreave inquiry inches closer

The Home Secretary's recent letter suggests the Labour government may finally deliver on its nine-year manifesto commitment, writes **KATE FLANNERY**, but we must move quickly: as recently as 2024 Northumbria police destroyed miners' strike documents

“

The raw footage that the media companies have of police attacking miners at Orgreave and other footage of police violence and harassment must be handed over to an inquiry

The Tories' own archives confirm Parliament and the public were knowingly lied to, but their involvement in the strike and the policing of it has never been publicly acknowledged. Their involvement needs an inquiry.

The right-wing mass media colluded with the Tories by lying in their reports about what was really happening or not reporting at all. Their involvement in these lies and cover-ups continues to this day. The raw footage that the media companies have of police attacking miners at Orgreave and other footage of police violence and harassment must be handed over to an inquiry.

The 1980s Tory government planned to destroy the British coal industry and organised labour, the NUM and its great leaders Arthur Scargill, Peter Heathfield and Mick McGahey and the British labour and trade union movement. However, the



movement is still here, organising, campaigning, resilient and winning.

Orgreave marked a turning point in the policing of public protest. Government interference in operational policing and industrial relations continues to this day. We see trade

unionists, social justice, Palestine, environmental and peace campaigners being arrested on demonstrations just for being there. The right to protest should be a fundamental human right.

With no accountability of policing at Orgreave, a message was sent to the police that they could employ violence with impunity. This set a culture that enabled the police to cover up in 1989 after the Hillsborough disaster – and the Hillsborough campaigners are still fighting for justice to this day.

We want answers to questions about the systemic violent and lying behaviour of the

police. We need to know how police officers on the ground were briefed and how that briefing came about, why the police were not held to account by the director of public prosecutions or by their own employer.

We need government and police papers that have been embargoed until 2066 and 2071 to be released. This is of great public interest and concern, and is about a government that actively worked against its own population and handed the police paramilitary powers and destroyed an industry in the process.

The Tories rejected an Orgreave inquiry. However, in October 2024, we held a positive meeting with the Home Secretary to discuss the Labour government's commitment to an inquiry. A commitment that has been in the manifesto for nine years because of the work of consistent, well-organised grassroots activism from our

campaign and supporters.

Arrested miners, their wives and supporters told the Home Secretary that an Orgreave inquiry needs to start urgently to ensure it happens in their lifetime. Since that meeting, the Home Secretary has met with a number of people, including politicians, lawyers and the NUM, to discuss plans.

Last month, the campaign received a letter from the Home Secretary indicating that they were considering the appropriate next steps for setting up an inquiry and would contact us again in the coming weeks with more information. This is extremely positive news. However, we are not complacent. We recently discovered that Northumbria police destroyed miners' strike and Orgreave documents in 2024. Everything we achieve, we have to fight for.

We know that police at protests can violently attack and arrest people. We hope that an Orgreave inquiry exposes what has happened and is happening in Britain to suppress protest and stifle dissent.

What is important is that, due to the age and health of many miners, we quickly secure a public acknowledgement of why and what the state did to the miners and our communities. We have to have hope that an inquiry of full disclosure should influence the future behaviour of the state and public officials. We look forward to celebrating an Orgreave inquiry in the near future with you all.

■ Kate Flannery is secretary of the Orgreave Truth and Justice Campaign – otjc.org.uk.

Durham Miners' Gala 2025

THE Miners' Gala is special for incoming Usdaw general secretary Joanne Thomas – as she grew up in an mining community in the Durham coalfield.

“The Gala is so significant – it's the biggest trade union event in Europe,” says Thomas, who will become the first woman to lead the retail workers' union on July 28, succeeding Paddy Lillis.

“It's an opportunity for trade unionists to showcase what we're all about, what we bring to workplaces and communities.

“It's fantastic each year to see the banners, the people coming together and celebrating it.”

Thomas is enthusiastic to be taking the helm a year into a Labour government, after so many years of Conservative ones.

“Under the Conservatives we weren't respected, we weren't listened to. That restricted our ability to present our members' opinions and their needs – what they wanted from government.

“Now we've got a seat at the table, a government that engages us and wants to know what our members' problems are.

“There are occasions where we disagree certainly. But we're talking to people that respect us, and that makes a difference, especially when forming legislation.

“For me, the Employment Rights Bill is absolutely monumental.”

There have been some criticisms over delays to the Bill, including concerns that a ban on fire-and-rehire may be watered down.

“There will always be push-back with big Bills like this. I want to continue the dialogue with government and influence the legislation as much as we possibly can, so we can get areas of concern dealt with.

“Everything we can do to press Labour to make as few concessions as possible [to opponents of the Bill] we have to, because this Bill is so important.

“The way it reforms the Low Pay Commission, for example” (so the commission must consider the cost of living when recommending minimum wage rates). “That's so important for retail workers – it's all about the pounds, shillings and pence in the end, isn't it?”

“People will be paid more, and as negotiators we then need to work on raising standards higher still, knowing in our negotiations with employers that a higher national living wage provides a higher threshold for us to build on.

“And if you've ever worked in retail you'll know that full-time contracts are rare as hens' teeth. So ending exploitative contracts is key – having a proper contract affects your access to mortgages, your ability to rent, loans,

‘The Employment Rights Bill is a monumental opportunity for unions’

Incoming Usdaw general secretary **JOANNE THOMAS** talks to Ben Chacko about workers' rights, Labour and how to arrest the decline of the high street



MAKE SHOPWORK SAFE:

(Right) Joanne Thomas; and (left) Labour's Home Secretary Yvette Cooper, Chancellor Rachel Reeves and deputy leader Angela Rayner visit Sainsbury's in Yarm, Teesdale. Labour announced in April 2024 a five-point plan to 'breathe new life into high streets which includes reforming business rates and tougher laws on shoplifting



and actual violence – nobody should have to go into work and face that, certainly not on a regular basis.

“What's driven that is the cost-of-living crisis, the cuts to front-line services and to municipal services. People have nowhere to go, they turn to drink or drugs, and to crime to fund those things.

“We've always had it but it's been different of late. The pandemic was horrendous. People were getting abused simply for trying to implement mandatory safety measures.

“We never thought it would rise on the pandemic levels but it has done.” Britain has been misgoverned, and the social crisis feeding crime and anti-social behaviour is part of that.

Thomas welcomes Labour measures aimed at crime, including the recruitment of 20,000 community support officers for the police, but stresses a wider turnaround for communities and high streets is needed to tackle the problem at its roots.

“First and foremost we're about delivering higher rates of pay and better terms and conditions. But our members have lives outside of work. We've got to be talking about social housing, about the NHS, and unions are a vehicle to get workers' voices heard on all those things.

“Paddy has left this union in a great place, we're growing, and I'm ready to continue that great work – and to work with all the unions, getting out there, getting to the unorganised workplaces, so unions can be a powerhouse for change – loud and proud of what we do.”

car finances ... all of people's outgoings. Fair contracts will make a massive difference.”

She is also determined to ensure the Bill maintains its commitment to day-one rights. “Protection against unfair dismissal is so important when something bad happens.

“There's nothing worse than when someone rings you and they've been unfairly terminated, and you have to say ‘well you have a good case but you haven't got the right to take it anywhere because you haven't got the length of service’.”

Access to workplaces is also a priority for Thomas. Many retailers are hostile to trade unions, and she sees improved access rights as an opportunity to win many more recognition agreements, even if the Institute of Employment Rights has warned access rights in the Bill lack real enforcement provisions.

“Well, there's lots of employers who currently don't even want a conversation with us, and that will change.

“The opportunity for unions is monumental here. What's union density in the private sector, 12.5 per cent? That's crazy.

“We've got to work together as unions to increase density. That's actually an issue in the public sector too now, but even more so in the private sector and we solely organise there.

“Discussions are already

under way to give non-members access to the union. I'm really excited to start work on that. An organised workplace has higher rates of pay, better health and safety standards.”

The Employment Rights Bill is the key piece of legislation for Thomas, but she's clear Labour has a much bigger job to do. Usdaw has repeatedly highlighted the death of the British high street with its Save Our Shops campaign.

It's all connected, she stresses, since one reason the high street is in decline is because we're a low-pay economy – that means fewer people can see shopping as a social activity, a half-day out that might involve meeting a friend for a coffee or lunch.

“We need a proper industrial strategy that includes a strategy for retail if we're to save shops from the rise of online shopping.

“We've already presented government with proposals on a fairer deal for shops when it comes to the bricks and mortar, the business rates, so they have a more level playing field. That will encourage employers to come back to the high street.

“We need to sort out public

“

If you've ever worked in retail you'll know that full-time contracts are rare as hens' teeth. So ending exploitative contracts is key

A strategy for the high street doesn't just make economic sense for Thomas. “It's good socially for people to be in the heart of communities, it brings people together and social interaction is important for people's mental wellbeing.

“It's so tragic to see once vibrant towns and cities in decline.” She is encouraged by the work of Labour's elected mayors in rationalising public transport and offering opportunities for small businesses to come back.

The connection between Britain's social and economic crises is clear too in the shocking rise in abuse of shopworkers, shoplifting and violence.

“It's scandalous and unacceptable, the abuse our members have to put up with on a daily basis.

“The majority of shopworkers get verbally abused daily. The statistics are startling. Then there's threats of violence

★ Star comment

Unite suspending Rayner over bin betrayal is a sign of changing times

IT is a bad time for the Keir Starmer/Angela Rayner/Rachel Reeves leadership of the Labour Party.

Perhaps, given the manifest lessening of ministerial collegiality, we should use the designation “leadership” with some caution.

The number crunchers tell us that the British (capitalist) economy suffered yet another reduction in GDP in May. With Starmer decidedly lackadaisical in his support for his Chancellor, we can see an early victim of the tendency for deputy heads to roll when things come unstuck.

Of course, the nominal deputy head is Deputy Prime Minister Rayner. Where Starmer and Reeves, and most of the Cabinet, from the outset of this administration, seemed intensely focused on depressing working-class expectations about policy and progress, Rayner hinted at a somewhat different offer.

But now delegates to the Unite conference have voted overwhelmingly to suspend Rayner from Unite membership and re-examine the union’s relationship with Labour.

The Birmingham bins dispute – where a nominally Labour council is intent on a programme of wage cutting more vicious than any 1930s employer cutting costs in the face of the Slump – is the issue which brought to a head the widespread anger that Unite members feel at Starmer Labour’s serial betrayals.



Birmingham City Council’s financial problems have a decidedly capitalist genesis. Firstly, the council is cash-strapped because for years, decades actually, local government has been defunded. Secondly, it has to find an enormous sum to pay compensation to women workers who, for years, decades, actually, were discriminated against by being paid less for work of equal value.

In her role as Communities Secretary, Rayner is perfectly positioned, as a former low-paid public service worker and as the relevant minister, to put pressure on her ministerial colleagues, particularly Reeves, to find a funding solution to Birmingham’s cash flow problems.

Instead of taking action to resolve the dispute in the interests of Birmingham’s rubbish-engulfed residents, she appeals to the bin workers to accept a pay cut and said her department was backing the employer in “clearing the backlog” of accumulated rubbish – i.e. strike-breaking.

From a working-class standpoint, she could be hardly less Miss Collegiality.



Unite is among the biggest of Labour’s affiliated unions, and if it backs away from Labour, it could deepen a trend that has seen at various times RMT, the FBU, and the Bakers, Food and Allied Workers disaffiliate.

Some on the right would welcome an even greater weakening of union influence on Labour, although even the most committed of supporters for the Labour trade union link can hardly find evidence of a fundamental shift in the power and influence of unions on Labour government policy.

Of course, simple disaffiliation could lead to a retreat into a sectional and non-political syndicalism, which would effectively abandon the battle for working-class power to be exercised at the level of the state.

The present trajectory of the Labour government illustrates the reality that without a political majority of working people committed to a programme of economic and social policies which tackle the entrenched class power of big business, the banks and the bourgeoisie then any government will be at the mercy of the bond markets and the global financial institutions whose *raison d’être* is the defence of capital.

Whether the route to working-class political power lies in a determined trade union effort to shape Labour government policies; a revival of the Labour left at constituency level and in the PLP; in a new socialist formation challenging Labour for working-class support, or a combination of these factors is up for discussion.

What is clear is that things cannot remain as they are.

Durham Miners’ Gala 2025



“THE only weapon we have as working people is to demonstrate, is to strike.” These are the words of Mike Masters, striking Birmingham bin worker at the joint Sussex Morning Star Readers, Unite Brighton and Strike Map fundraising social this week, a social which raised over £1,640 for the strike in one night, as delegates from Unite’s conference flooded in to hear from the heroic bin workers.

To date, Strike Map has been involved in fundraising over £3,600 of financial support for this strike, which has also seen bin workers travel the country on a solidarity tour, as union after union has welcomed speakers from this dispute as part of the many conferences and events over the last few months.

Hardship during long disputes is inevitable and the role of financial solidarity key. Strikes like the one in Birmingham are increasingly reaching long periods of action, with the bin workers joining the Gloucester phlebotomists at well over 100 days of action each.

Financial solidarity matters. But it is not enough.

That is why this Gala, we will be promoting our partners Strike Map and their Megapicket 2 on July 25, which will cover all five sites included in the Brum bin strike. This action follows on from the successful Megapicket on May 9, that shut down the Lifford Lane depot.

At the GFTU we often talk proudly of our founding principle of education, nurtured through our educational trust, delivering high-quality independent trade union education for the whole movement. This educational work throughout the union movement provides more than just education, it provides spaces of solidarity. Whether this is online or on

Solidarity means turning up

This ‘Big Meet’ our focus is building the next ‘Megapicket,’ say **HENRY FOWLER** and **GAWAIN LITTLE** of the General Federation of Trade Unions

HIGH-STAKES BATTLE: Striking refuse workers outside Perry Barr depot in Birmingham in a long-running dispute over jobs and pay, June 10 2025

residential, our programme brings together different sectors and unions, encouraging solidarity and unity in action. Don’t just take our word for it, come and see for yourself. Our new programme launches this weekend (gftu.org.uk/education) and solidarity is at the heart of it.



Strikers [are] being subjected to all the excess of state power: legal sanctions (like Section 14), arrests, and now an injunction from the courts

This link between our education and solidarity is deliberate. Education, solidarity and unity in action are our guiding principles. These principles are interlinked, forged through the history of the best of our movement, when it wins for workers, providing the ability to deliver a better future for us all.

It is through our partnership with Strike Map, a worker-powered and funded digital map of action in Britain and the island of Ireland, that we can co-ordinate support across our movement. In supporting the comrades in Birmingham, we have co-ordinated visits of striking workers to conferences/events, produced easy to use digital actions for the public and recently co-ordinated a letter to Angela Rayner MP signed by unions representing over one million workers.

The Megapicket later this month is another great example of our solidarity work. We have brought together many non-GFTU-affiliated unions with those within our federation, to promote and support workers in this struggle. These unions have recognised the political significance of this dispute for the whole working class.

Birmingham is like so many battles of our past, with strikers being subject to all the excess of state power: legal sanctions (like Section 14), arrests, and now an injunction from the courts. These tactics are all to prevent effective picketing in this dispute – empowering the council, their rotten commissioners, all backed by a Labour government committed to “Making Workers Pay.”

As Mike ended his speech to packed venue full of Unite delegates earlier this week, he reminded us of all the importance of solidarity – through showing up – not just because it increases the chance of a successful outcome for this dispute, but because it strengthens our movement as a whole, helping build our collective power to change the world.

“This strike has been compared to the past; let it be the strike that shapes our future.”

Enjoy the gala! And make sure to let the Birmingham bin workers know you will be joining them on July 25 here: <https://bit.ly/Megapicket2RSVP>.

■ Henry Fowler is head of education, campaigns and organising and Gawain Little is general secretary at the General Federation of Trade Unions (www.gftu.org.uk).

AS I WRITE this on Wednesday night, the disability cuts Bill has just passed through the House of Commons. I'm so angry at the £2 billion cut imposed on 750,000 low-income sick and disabled people.

These are exactly the people a Labour government should be supporting and protecting – not pushing further into poverty.

As cruel as these changes are – and I opposed them every step of the way – the past few weeks have also shown us something positive: when we build alliances and when we campaign together, we can get the government to shift in the direction people so desperately need.

When the government first introduced this Bill, it proposed nearly £7 billion in cuts to disability support. But thanks to a broad campaign – uniting disability rights activists, social movements and trade unions, and a broad coalition of MPs – we forced £5 billion in concessions.

Our movement also stood firm against the planned cuts to Winter Fuel Payments. After disastrous local election results for Labour in May, the government was forced into a major U-turn there too.

These concessions show what is possible when we bring people and campaigns across our movement together. The government may be lobbied constantly by big money and powerful interests, but we have people power – and we must use it.

Now should be the moment when we commit to broadening and deepening those alliances – bringing together the broad left, trade unionists and grassroots campaigners – to push for a real alternative to cuts and austerity.

That can form a powerful alliance that would reshape the argument, offer alternatives and shift the government on to a better path. That is urgently needed.

Following the disability cuts concessions, ministers claimed they could no longer afford to scrap the two-child benefit cap – a policy that has pushed hundreds of thousands of children into poverty – because the money has now been used to fund changes to disability support.

We must reject such cynical pitting of one group of struggling people against another. The idea that, in the sixth-richest country on Earth, we must choose between help with heating for pensioners, support for disabled people, or lifting children out of poverty is not only false – it's morally indefensible.

The government continues to claim that these decisions are about closing a "black hole" in the public finances. But no Labour government should ever try to balance the books

Only mass pressure from below will secure the change we need

RICHARD BURGON MP points to the recent relative success of widespread opposition to the Labour leadership's regressive policies as the blueprint for exacting the changes required to build a fairer society

which would only deepen the crisis facing working people – the Labour Party must offer a genuinely different path. It must learn the right lessons and be prepared to reject the failed politics of the past.

A wealth tax must be at the heart of that vision for the future. That can fund public services, tackle inequality, and rebuild our broken welfare state – not by hitting ordinary working people, but by finally making the super-rich pay their share.

A modest annual wealth tax of just 2 per cent on assets over £10 million would raise an estimated £24 billion a year. And it would affect just 20,000 families – a tiny 0.04 per cent of the population.

Despite the fear-mongering of the rich and powerful, the public overwhelmingly supports change. According to a recent TUC poll, two-thirds of people back an annual wealth tax on estates over £10 million. A similar number support a windfall tax on the big banks. The media and elite voices will try to scare people. We've seen it before. Remember the barrage of headlines warning of a millionaire exodus if Labour scrapped the non-dom status for the super-rich?

According to the Tax Justice Network, in 2024 there were an average of 30 stories per day pushing that claim. The truth? Just 0.3 per cent of the UK's 3 million millionaires left the country. That's not an exodus – it's a rounding error.

This is a political fight against the rich and powerful. But it's one we can win. The wind is in our sails.

We can secure a wealth tax and build a fairer, more equal society – one where the wealth created by working people is used to benefit the many, not enrich the few.

Securing such change starts with us putting forward bold ideas like a wealth tax but also organising the broad alliances we need to win them.

■ Richard Burgon is Labour MP for Leeds East

HITTING THE STREETS:

A People's Assembly anti-austerity demo in London last month



by forcing disabled people into hardship or condemning children to hunger.

There is always a better alternative, as every trade unionist, Labour member and progressive campaigner knows.

So, I'm also encouraged that a wealth tax, something I've long campaigned for, is finally rising up the political agenda. More and more MPs are taking it up, trade union leaders are backing it and even former Labour leader Neil Kinnock is calling for it.

This idea is popular because it addresses the deep inequality in our society. For nearly two decades, workers' wages have

stagnated, public services have crumbled, and our social security system has been dismantled piece by piece.

At the same time, the ultra-wealthy have seen their fortunes soar. Since 2010, billionaire wealth in the UK has surged by 150 per cent – from £250 billion to over £620 billion. Ever-growing inequality means the top 50 richest families in the UK now hold more wealth than the bottom 50 per cent of the population.

More than half of UK billionaires made their fortunes not through productive work or job creation, but through rent

extraction – property, inheritance, or financial speculation. That tells you everything about our economy.

Their growing wealth has little to do with success for the wider economy or ordinary people and everything to do with a rigged system. It's not just that trickle-down economics doesn't work, the opposite happens: wealth is hoovered upwards.

People have had enough of all this. They see how the ultra-rich exert too much influence over our politics and democracy. They see how wealth is hoarded at the top, while the rest are told to accept cuts.

They know the system is broken. They are angry. And they're ready for change.

But just because people are fed up doesn't mean progressive change will happen automatically.

Those clinging to the rotten status quo – or trying to drag us further backwards – are already organising, trying to direct people's anger against disabled people, against migrants, and against whoever else can be blamed to distract from the real causes of the crisis people face.

To defeat the threat of a Reform UK government –

Durham Miners' Gala 2025

Pic: Majority



We all want a mass party, but how will it win?

JAMIE DRISCOLL explains how his group, Majority, plans to empower working people to empower themselves

FAST FORWARD to next May. England has just elected city councils. Wales has elected a new Senedd. Scotland a new Parliament. When you wake up and see the results, what would make you happy?

Giving Starmer a bloody nose? The warm, dark schadenfreude of him being booted out by his own MPs?

Perhaps you dream of stopping Reform UK dead in their tracks? Someone has to. Although despite their concerted efforts at self-sabotage, their propaganda is well-funded and enabled by the mainstream media.

But is replacing one neoliberal party with another enough? Utility bills are rising. Housing costs unaffordable. Social care channels people's modest life savings to private equity firms. Are there any youth clubs near you? The idea of public luxury is a distant dream.

We must take state power ourselves. Zarah Sultana and Jeremy Corbyn's new party announcements have fired the starting gun. Note their wording. They "will co-lead the founding of a new party, with other Independent MPs, campaigners and activists across the country." That tells you two things.

One, it's not yet ready for

launch. You can't just order a new party off Amazon on next-day delivery. And two, this will not be a two-person show. We need layers of leaders at every level. Yet if we want to win next May, we must start now.

Majority is already established. Our founding conference was in Newcastle last September. We've grown, and have members from Aberdeen to the south coast, from the Welsh Valleys to the Durham coalfield.

We're a social movement, so you can have dual membership with a party. Whether you're in Labour, the Greens, or the Communists, you can join Majority for as little as £1. So long as you agree that Britain should be run in the interests of the people who do the work, including those in unpaid work, those unable to work, or those retired from a lifetime of work.

We have better membership software than I ever saw in Labour. We have bespoke doorstep apps – no more wet paper sheets when campaigning. We have the electoral data and the marked registers.

We've run huge assemblies to shape our manifestos. With food poverty campaigners, transport user groups, disability rights and anti-racist, trade unionists and Palestinian solidarity groups. Their front-line experience brings a concrete reality to

what's needed. Its authenticity resonates with the public.

We network with independent socialist councillors and community groups across the country. We train people – in campaign skills, in public speaking and preparing for public office. Political education is the heart of our movement.

Dragging the Establishment to the left is not the aim. We intend to replace them with people who don't need lobbying to put working-class people ahead of corporate interests.

Power matters. Nothing inspires belief like victory. Imagine if next May you wake up to see we have taken control of a major British city. And not just to hold office, but to break the mould. No more handwringing and managing decline.

When Labour blocked me one journalist said: "The reason they're so terrified of you is you showed socialist policies can work." We built eco-homes, created thousands of jobs on trade union terms and conditions, and recycled millions of pounds with community wealthbuilding. It proved socialists are not just nice people. We are capable of running the country well.

A radical programme of community wealthbuilding can transform lives. When you run up against central government, campaign hard. Before I was a

DETERMINATION: Majority members out campaigning in Newcastle

councillor, Newcastle Labour cut the school patrol crossings. Inside the chamber, they blamed the Tories. Outside, they did nothing. I said at least put a 40-foot banner down the side of the Civic Centre. And all get on a bus, dressed as lollipop men and women, and hold up the traffic outside Parliament.

Your electorate know you can't win every battle, but they respect you if you stand and fight for them. Actions speak louder than words.

In Newcastle in 2024, I got 25,000 votes across the city. Labour got 26,000. They know they're going to lose this time. Either we fill the void, or Reform UK will. Majority's subtitle is "500 leaders." That's what it takes to win a region. Five hundred people who between them can speak with confidence. Who can listen to the public and articulate their concerns. Who can use a membership system or design an eye-catching graphic for social media. Who can make a new member feel welcome. Is that you? If not, every leader needs a support team. Even if that's just paying your subs and "liking" on social media.

We don't have the billionaire press on our side. Our strength is grassroots campaigning. Whatever shape a new party of the left takes, it will be democratically chosen. Democracy takes time, and I'm working with Zarah and Jeremy on that. In the meanwhile, Majority is cracking on.

Let's stop dreaming of the Establishment's failure, and start building for our success. Join Majority today.

■ Jamie Driscoll was the elected North of Tyne metro mayor, and is elected leader of Majority (MajorityUK.org).

Caroline Shelton: a life unwaveringly dedicated to trade unionism

VETERAN health and safety campaigner Caroline Shelton died on Saturday June 28 after a long and painful battle with cancer.

Shelton came from a trade union family. Her mother was a book binder and Mother of Chapel in Sogat and her father was a lorry driver and in TGWU.

In the 1990s she herself was a MSF, and later Amicus, workplace rep at Welcome Dartford (later Glaxo Welcome), an officer of the MSF/Amicus Glaxo Welcome South East branch and a delegate to the MSF/Amicus London Regional Council and regular annual conference delegate.

Her mum and dad were so proud of her when in 2010 she became a Labour councillor in Gravesend.

More recently she was an active member of the Unite Clerkenwell and St Pancras branch for many years attending nearly every meeting and branch activity and was the branch's H&S officer keeping us up to date on all things H&S and ensuring H&S stayed on the agenda.

Shelton was a branch delegate to Kent and Medway Trades Council and also a Labour Party delegate to Gravesend CLP. She was also delegated from the branch to sit on the London Hazards Centre management committee since 2018 and to attend the National Hazards Conference at Keele. She took all these positions very seriously and reported back regularly at branch meetings.

She attended at protests, demos and pickets with the branch banner whenever she was able and was firmly committed and dedicated to ensuring the value of having an active union branch.

London Hazards Centre board of trustees elected Shelton as honorary president in May in their grateful appreciation for her many years' service as a determined fighter for a safer London.

She was a long-standing widely respected TUC tutor at the Workers' Educational Association, and at other TUC education providers, tutoring and encouraging new and more experienced H&S reps to build the union and challenge their employers to ensure healthy and safe workplaces as well as tutoring workplace reps from a range of unions.

Shelton was one of the pioneer women trade union tutors making a difference through her strong caring concerns for working people. Her influence will still be felt by many trade unionists and those who worked with her.

The fact that she had previously taught children guitar and music theory as a peripatetic teacher must have given her a head start and affinity with teaching.

She was a big force for workers' health and safety and so kind and caring. She had a good sense of humour, was a good listener, and was amazingly modest, humble and unassuming, and was liked by everybody she came into contact with.

She was softly spoken with important things to say which she always did with clarity and conviction.

And a committed socialist who had a strong sense of justice and who wanted to see a more passionate and equal society and she absolutely did what she could to contribute to this happening and to make our communities and the world a safer and more equal place.

The words and appreciation of Shelton that have been shown from across the trade union community since she died demonstrates what sort of a woman we are remembering and what sort of a difference she made in our fight for a fairer world.

She is survived by her younger brother Craig.

You will be missed, Caroline, by us all.

■ For funeral arrangements please email monicagorta@hotmail.com.



COMMITTED: Caroline speaking on behalf of Unite branch at the Camden Unison traffic wardens' strike in 2018

AFRICA is not a country. It is a vast continent of some 54 nations. It is also a continent that is rising phoenix-like from the ashes of neocolonialism.

Aside from being the literal birthplace of humanity, it is in fact a continent that has hosted great civilisations.

Not just the Egyptian one that appears to be the only one allowed to be taught in our schools. But also the likes of Mali, Great Zimbabwe, Kush, Carthage, Axum, Numidia, Ashanti and Kongo, to name but a few.

These great civilisations were brutally overcome and colonised by a small rump of the planet's population who possessed the military hardware and know-how to subjugate and enslave Africans.

It is also a vast continent of enormous wealth.

The fact is that the overwhelming number of people on the planet live neither within the borders or under the formal control of the former colonial rulers. But they have been nevertheless dominated by them for most of the last 500 years.

The good news is that we are now at a major geopolitical tipping point and Africa is at the heart of the construction of a new multilateral world order.

No part of Africa is asking permission to leave the plantation. Many on the continent – and many of us linked by blood – are fighting back and determined to build something new.

This minority, once led by Britain, Spain, Portugal and France – and now themselves overtaken and largely colonised by the US – are facing a challenge it has never before experienced.

New global alliances, such as the Brics bloc and the Group of 77 plus China know that the prospects for successfully navigating what will inevitably be a dangerous route out of colonial subjugation depends heavily on Africa.

Trade and the development of new win-win relationships will be at the heart of the arduous road ahead for Africa.

It will be a dangerous journey because there has never been

“

Land holds a spiritual value to Africans. This relationship was disrupted by enslavement and colonialism

The African awakening

ROGER MCKENZIE expounds on the motivation that drove him to write a book that anticipates a dawn of a new, fully liberated Africa – the land of his ancestors

OPPORTUNITY BECKONS: Brics member states family photograph, in the shadow of the Sugarloaf Mountain, during the 17th Brics Summit in Rio de Janeiro, Brazil, on July 6 2025



a time when people in power have simply stepped aside and ended their exploitation out of the goodness of their heart. But their power is vanishing in front of our very eyes.

Alliances such as Brics explicitly counter the small number of powerful warlike nations that have cast themselves as “masters of the universe.”

These wannabe political “geniuses” regard Africa, in a mixture of arrogance and racism, as mere collateral damage in their quest to boost the profits of the already unimaginably wealthy puppet masters.

The largely faceless oligarchs who control how high, when and where politicians jump, are not used to being challenged so will demand swift and brutal action against anyone daring to question their authority.

All of this provided me with the impetus to write *The Rebirth of the African Phoenix – A View from Babylon*.

It is a book of both geopolitical analysis and personal reflections on how this descendant of Africa has been impacted by the trials and tribulations of this magnificent continent.

I set out some of the main challenges that Africa faces in forging a new path that removes the dominance of the former colonial powers once and for all.

I look at the crippling debt

burden faced by African nations and make the case for a payment strike. I also argue for reparations to be paid to Africans across the globe for the evils committed during the transatlantic slave trade and under colonialism.

Land holds a spiritual value to Africans. This relationship was disrupted by enslavement and colonialism. I argue that re-establishing this relationship is critical to the rebirth of the continent.

I question how a continent so abundant in food is now forced to import most of its sustenance from abroad and, at times, reduced to begging for emergency food rations when famine hits.

This leads into a discussion about the impact on the continent of the largely Western-caused climate emergency.

I discuss how the availability of water is likely to be even more of a flashpoint than it already is.

I explore the centrality of the trade union movement in Africa's anti-colonial movement and offer some pointers towards how this can play out again in future struggles.

Migration is a key factor in any discussions around work. While most migration across

the globe takes place within national borders, the book explores the drivers behind why some Africans attempt to reach Europe and why the former colonial rulers attempt to stop them.

The wars instigated and sustained by the former colonial powers have had a major role to play in creating a desire for migration from Africa. I look at the way the military-industrial complex continues to make huge profits out of African misery.

I use the examples of the Suez crisis, the Congo and Libya and the current conflict in Sudan to point the finger at the continuing damage caused by the interference of Western powers in African affairs.

The resilience and adaptation of African culture has enabled us as Africans to survive, I would argue, against all the odds.

I contend that, rather than a quaint relic of the past, African culture will play a central role in the 21st century African renaissance.

As we people of African descent find ourselves in all parts of the globe, the building of the new African century requires the participation of the ancestors of those forcibly removed from the continent during the periods of enslavement and colonialism.

But this is also a very personal book. I begin it by looking back at my first physical encounter with Africa when I visited Ghana in the early 1990s.

Throughout I talk about some of my experiences of racism in the heart of “Babylon” – the term historically used by Rastafarians to describe corrupt capitalist governments and

“

The wars instigated and sustained by the former colonial powers have had a major role to play in creating a desire for migration from Africa

institutions, as well as the colonial world.

I end the book with some proposals for a new movement for African unity that celebrates our past, draws strength from our trials and tribulations but recognises that there is a bright future ahead.

The book was written from the relative comfort of the beast known as Britain. The beast is one of a herd that has tormented Africa for centuries but whose influence is now thankfully coming to end.

This is an optimistic book with the foundational premise that Africans, wherever we are on the globe, must stand up as one people if Africa is to ever rise phoenix-like as a continent to herald in a new world.

What that world will look like does not just depend on the people of Africa and its diaspora. It also relies heavily on unity of the working class and peasant communities – black or white – across the globe.

But I wrote this book with the firm conviction that another world is already emerging.

As the great Arundhati Roy once said: “Another world is not only possible, she is on her way. On a quiet day, I can hear her breathing.”

■ *The Rebirth of the African Phoenix – A View from Babylon* is available from www.manifestopress.coop.

★ Morning Star

Southampton Readers & Supporters

ONLINE PUBLIC MEETING: THE WARS OF THE ROSES - A BRIEF HISTORY OF THE LABOUR PARTY, IMPERIALISM AND RACISM

Wednesday July 16, 7pm (online)

Tom Sykes will lead a discussion on Labour's history in respect of foreign policy and how this relates to imperialism. Tom combines theory with practice as he was closely involved with organising an event in Portsmouth supporting Palestine which brought together artists and activists about which he wrote for the Star. You can read more about Tom by visiting his website: tomsykes.wordpress.com

Zoom meeting link:
<https://tinyurl.com/3n3fmcvb>

Unite Clerkenwell and St Pancras



In memory of

Caroline Shelton

(11th June 1958 - 28th June 2025)

A true socialist, trade unionist, and campaigner for Health and Safety
She will be very much missed



The Irish Communist Party sends

Solidarity greetings to the Durham Miners Gala

End genocide in Palestine

*And our demands most moderate
are we only want the earth
James Connolly*



Communist Party of Britain
Northern District

Extends comradely greetings
to everyone at the 2025

DURHAM GALA AND BIG MEETING

*Build the united front
against war
and austerity!*



Whittington
Services Branch

Solidarity to all at the Durham Miners' Gala

*Keeping up the fight against all the
Anti-Trade Union Laws*

Roy Dunnett
Secretary

Liam Pollard
President

Midlothian Trade Union Council

Solidarity with all
trade unionists
today and every day.
La lutte continue
Venceremos



INDIAN WORKERS ASSOCIATION GB (est. 1938)

Welfare not warfare. Employment for all.
Equality, Peace and Freedom for Palestine.
End the Cuban blockade now! Solidarity!

Harsev Bains
National President

Leyose Paul
General Secretary

Dyal Bagri, Avtar Singh & Mohinder Farma
(Leicester)

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KEEP OUR NHS PUBLIC 20TH ANNIVERSARY



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ORGREAVE

TRUTH AND JUSTICE CAMPAIGN



GREETINGS AND SOLIDARITY TO ALL ATTENDING THE DURHAM MINERS' GALA

Thank you for your ongoing solidarity and support for an Orgreave inquiry for truth and justice.

OTJC.ORG.UK

The Official Shrewsbury 24 Campaign

To Overturn a Miscarriage of Justice
We Never Gave Up

The Shrewsbury 24 Campaign send greetings to the Durham Miners Gala.

Thank you for supporting us over the years in our efforts to achieve justice for the Shrewsbury pickets.

We never gave up. We won!

The Labour Government must set up the Orgreave public inquiry to bring truth and justice for the miners.

Eileen Turnbull
Secretary & Researcher

Harry Chadwick
Chairperson

www.shrewsbury24campaign.org.uk 24@shrewsbury24campaign.org.uk



Diane Abbott MP

Starmmer's Labour: cuts for everything except Trump's war machine

The BBC and OBR claim that failing to cut disability benefits could 'destabilise the economy' while ignoring the spendthrift approach to tens of billions on military spending that really spirals out of control

THE Labour leadership is adopting a scorched-earth policy to social programmes and public spending, with no section of society safe from their cuts. The consequences will be very grave for some of the poorest in society, for society as a whole and for the Labour Party.

In the first year of a Labour government, we have had cuts to the winter fuel allowance, a refusal to budge on the two-child benefit cap, cuts to sickness and disability benefits, and a tightening of departmental spending overall, which means cuts for some and a squeeze for the NHS.

This list is growing longer all the time. The latest target is the provision of special educational needs (SEN) spending in our schools, which ministers claim is spiralling out of control. There is also the beginning of a concerted PR campaign to abolish the "triple-lock" on the state pension, even though the meagre amount provided is one of the lowest in western Europe and insufficient for a decent retirement.

The main exception to this all-round austerity drive is military spending, which is really spiralling out of control. In fact, the pace of spending cuts elsewhere is designed to fill the real hole in government finances caused by the commitment to raise military spending to 5 per cent of GDP, a promise given to placate Donald Trump by Keir Starmer at the Nato summit.

All of this is being backed up by a concerted campaign of propaganda. The BBC, other media and even official bodies such as the Office for Budget Responsibility (OBR) are all being deployed to promote the argument that existing levels of state spending and support in all areas of social and welfare policy are "unaffordable."

So we are treated to the ridiculous spectacle of the media claiming that a failure to push through the full £5 billion in welfare cuts is causing a crisis, while a spendthrift approach to tens of billions on the military does not raise a murmur. The OBR even claimed the failure to push through all but £2 billion of the planned welfare cuts could be "destabilising to the economy."

This is an outlandish claim from a public body when set alongside the minimum of £32bn annually added to the military budget. It can only bring the OBR into disrepute. That £32bn rises to an extra £65bn a year in the unlikely event that Starmer really meets the target of 5 per cent of GDP he promised Trump.

In either event, these are unfeasibly large sums in a period when austerity is already being imposed.

Extremely harsh cuts are increasingly being announced in an effort to fund the war drive. The government is "making a tough choice" of warfare over welfare.

The latest attack on SEN provision is emblematic of the series of attacks on workers and the poor. By definition, SEN is needed by some of the most vulnerable in society. Yet the calls for "reform" are not to improve that service but to make cuts that will damage the most vulnerable, in some cases severely. It is a cost-cutting exercise divorced from morality.

The argument is made that costs are soaring out of control. This too has echoes in the NHS, the social care sector and right across the public sector provision of public services. A very large proportion of SEN provision is done by the private sector on behalf of local authorities. The proportion has grown over time.

It is this growth and the profiteering of private firms which is driving the cost base of the public sector higher without any improvement in services. It is also frequently the same ministers who complain about spiralling costs who are happiest to outsource and privatise our services at significant additional cost and who are not shy at taking donations from private-sector providers.

Across the public sector, private-sector providers are enjoying a bonanza for shoddy services. Courts not functioning properly? Try getting Serco to deliver the prisoner to court at the appointed time. NHS waiting times rising? Try getting staff back from the booming healthcare private sector.

The chronic underfunding of welfare and public services has now become acute because of the war drive. In the eyes



of government ministers, the funding for missiles must come from somewhere, and that somewhere is the most vulnerable in society.

There are clear signs that the government is preparing to widen the net even further, and public-sector pay could be

next on the chopping block for cuts. The resident doctors' strike ballot shows that there may well be resistance to these attempts.

There is also likely to be continued political resistance in parliament. Labour's nose-dive in the opinion polls, now

down to the low twenties, has swathes of Labour MPs looking nervously at the nearest challenges in their seats. The possible loss of their seats tends to concentrate the minds of my parliamentary colleagues wonderfully.

These are very different

in each constituency. On current polling, Labour MPs can lose seats to Reform, the Lib Dems, the Greens, Independents, the SNP and Plaid Cymru. On current polling, only a freakish set of circumstances would see a Labour seat lost to the Tories.

With that polling and with current policies, Labour is on course for its worst-ever showing in the modern era. Waiting, Micawber-like, for something to turn up is the Labour leadership's sole, unrealistic strategy.

This means that, right across the Parliamentary Labour Party, MPs feel under pressure from all sorts of directions. For some, apeing Reform UK will be their instinct, even if we know that voters always prefer the genuine article rather than an imitation. For others, it will mean adopting a more leftist posture and opposing at least some cuts. Activists and campaigners will need to differentiate between them.

Yet the Labour leadership, despite a series of forced, partial U-turns, remains on the same disastrous course. After the drubbing at the May elections, Starmer told us he would go "further, faster" in the same direction. For once, he has been as good as his word, along with the bonanza for (mainly US) arms manufacturers. He is leading Labour to disaster.

He and his aides seem quite impervious to the damage he is doing to the most vulnerable, the wreckage he will leave the Labour Party, or the sinister threats from Labour's successors. They seem too busy scorching the earth to notice the welfare state, the party and the country going up in flames.

■ Diane Abbott is MP for Hackney North and Stoke Newington. Follow her on X @HackneyAbbott.

WEATHER OUTLOOK



TODAY

Widely sunny, humid and hot, even hotter than the previous day in the north. Eastern coasts, particularly Scotland, may hold on to low cloud and mist for a large part of the day.

NEXT FEW DAYS

A continuation of hot and humid conditions. Eastern coasts may see low cloud and some mist or fog. The heatwave will be eroded from the west early next week with potential for cloudier, windier conditions.

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Fighting Fund with Keith Stoddart

19
days left

YOU'VE RAISED: **£5,164** WE NEED: **£12,836**



TWO little ducks' worth of contributors sending £402 is enough to take us past another milestone to 30 per cent of the month's target.

From Lanarkshire came £30 along with: "While us three cronies can't meet up at moment, our paper is always foremost in our minds. We only wish that more Labour MPs would stay true to social-

ist beliefs and not hammer the disabled poor." few will disagree with this, I'm sure.

Of a couple of £1s, four £5s, and £50 nothing is known, of ten £10s four were from Edinburgh, Manchester, Newcastle under Lyme and Paisley, while an Ellesmere Port reader sent £50.

A sister and comrade in Southampton sent £120 as

"the paper is an essential part of our day, thank you for being there - and congratulations on your continued survival." The praise is welcome but as to our survival, it's down to you and all who support the Fund. Please note we need more folk to join those who already do.

If on the way to march in Durham or travelling home from Unite's conference in Brighton

I hope it's not too hot a journey.

There's something that both groups have in common as all week attending the Unite conference they were provided with a copy of the Morning Star daily and today in Durham complimentary distribution is thanks to trade union support. I hope you like what we offer, if so look out for us on the newsagents' shelves.

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Commie Chef

Refreshing beetroot, cheese and pear salad

A GREAT summery combination of fruit and vegetables with cheese to provide some bite and some protein.

Honestly, what's not to like about it?
■ This recipe first appeared in the July 11 2015 edition of the Morning Star.

Ingredients

■ 220g/8oz mixed salad greens (mesclun, lettuce, spinach etc)
■ About 220g/8oz beetroot, peeled and grated
■ 2 pears peeled and pips removed, cut in quarters lengthwise
■ 110g/4oz Wensleydale cheese, crumbled

■ Bunch chives, finely chopped
■ Few sprigs mint, finely chopped
■ Clove garlic, crushed or grated
■ 3 tbsp olive oil
■ 1 dsp balsamic vinegar
■ Pinch of freshly ground pepper

What to do

Spread the pears out on a large serving plate and sprinkle the salad greens around them.

On to this, arrange spoonfuls of the beetroot mixed with the cheese.

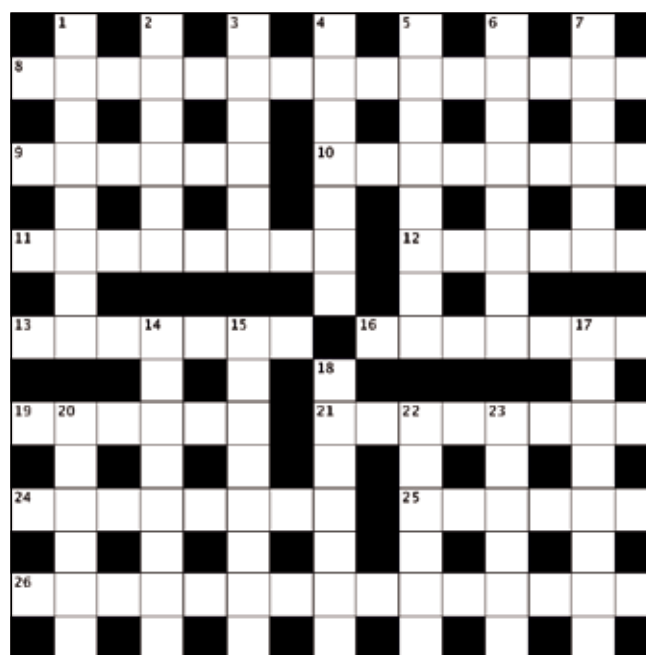
Mix the last six ingredients in the list above together and blend thoroughly, then pour

them all over the beetroot.

How much of the dressing you need will depend on the size of your pears and there may be too much here, so be careful not to make your salad too oily. Serve with good bread or as an accompaniment or part of a buffet or picnic.



CROSSWORD 1,599 set by Alamet



ACROSS

8. On Twitter howl, "He stupidly has to admit defeat!" (5,2,3,5)
9. Tore around church late (6)
10. 20 13 16 said to be a stingy type (8)
11. Easy-going about official rejecting drug (8)
12. Repay Geneva revolutionary (6)
13. National team is able to follow this writer (7)
16. What is found in bog outside hospital by rustic? (7)
19. Complain and, in Paris, dress down (6)
21. Huge moon sure to explode (8)
24. Grieved about energy efficiency starting descent (8)
25. Plain tough guy in the east end returns (6)
26. Delighted with winning frequently, cut lord out (2,3,2,3,5)

DOWN

1. Small tool, spike or fastener (8)
2. Consolidate company in this place (6)
3. More healthy machine worker (6)
4. The sad criminal under suspicion initially put away (7)
5. Tell commander to get in and move (8)
6. Arrive without electronic newspapers to condense (8)
7. Relate to live pine (6)
14. Intern for independent politician is working to admit, "Keir finished" (8)
15. Repair or retain front (8)
17. Sun later restated they sit on the fence (8)
18. Put wine into river for easing of relations (7)
20. Getting on a horse to welcome scientist dropping beer mug (6)
22. Start on unfashionable group (6)
23. Ornament originally a hiding place for guru (6)

QUIZMASTER with William Sitwell

TODAY'S QUESTIONS

- Did the late Welsh opera singer Stuart Burrows sing tenor or baritone?
- 25 years ago, a major road bridge opened linking Malmo with which Scandinavian capital city?
- Did the Dalesbred sheep

originate in England, Scotland or Wales?



YESTERDAY'S ANSWERS

- Kolhapuri sandals were originally made in which Indian state? **Maharashtra**
- Tower Bridge was opened recently to let a replica of which 15th century ship pass through? **The Santa Maria, used by Columbus**
- Which wild flower is known by the Latin name Myosotis? **The forget-me-not**

DAILY SUDOKU (hard)

4			2	8	5			
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	5		2	3		6		
		8		4	6		2	
	3						5	6
		2	3					
		9	6	5				8

Solution on Monday...

Solution on Monday...

A real united front must come before a new party

It would be great to have a better option to vote for in elections, but a coalition of proven working-class organisations built from decades of real struggle offers stronger foundations than patched-together parliamentarianism, writes **BILL GREENSHIELDS**

WASN'T it Karl Marx who said: "The history of all hitherto existing society is the history of left-wing political parties?" Well, no, it wasn't.

Marx recognised and proclaimed that societies' histories have been and are "the history of class struggle" – and though many socialists nod profoundly in agreement with him, too many of them in fact remain wedded to the wishful-thinking idealist notion that the road to the next stage in the development of society – the socialist stage – is a parliamentary road ... playing what is effectively a game of anti-capitalism using the capitalist system's rules.

Of course, it would be a real bonus, come the next election, to have an opportunity to vote for something half decent. But, in fact, world history is littered with the dying and decaying remains of parties that offered themselves as a route out of exploitation and oppression, only to succumb to, or be crushed by, the state machine

of the ruling class of exploiters and oppressors. Labour is the latest for us in Britain.

But, is the answer to go on reinventing the wheel in the hope that, this time, our latest version won't be bent out of recognition, punctured and shattered by the state's destructive devices embedded in the political rocky road they have prepared for us.

Of course, we, as a class, need a mass-membership political party, but it must be one that arises directly out of, and is created directly by the protagonist organisations and leaders of resurgent working-class struggle ... to be the servant of that struggle – no more and no less.

It must not be seen or promoted as a replacement of that day-in-day-out struggle.

It must not be the trophy-party for which the many messiahs of the left will inevitably engage in a life-and-death struggle for control, while the ruling class use their power to undermine and destroy it.

So we could say that we should "wait and see" whether

any new party quickly creates the internal environment that not only encourages working-class organisations, fighters and leaders not only to join it, but which directly and deliberately turns its leadership, structures, policy, strategy, action and parliamentary candidates, over to those class forces ... rather than to the figures of the professional parliamentary left – no matter how attractive and charismatic they may be, or may have been in previous political lives.

The former might give it a good chance of making progress – the latter would prepare it as a rebellious sacrificial lamb to the ruthless God of Capital.

But much better than "wait and see" is "analyse and act." Britain is right now on a slippery path to fascism and war. These are realities, not fears. There is no time to lose – and much has been lost already.

The immediate priority is to bring together a "coalition of the willing" of our own – a united front of all those bona fide working-class and progres-



COALITIONS CONFRONTING CAPITALISM: An alliance of social movements, activist groups and trade unions bring over 500,000 to the streets of London to protest austerity economics, March 26 2011

sive campaigning organisations that have been proven in action over recent years and decades.

A united front that recognises that the crises of transnational monopoly capitalism are the toxic ground which throws up the poisonous weeds of poverty, mega-profits, superexploitation, climate disaster, racism

and misogyny, oppressive laws, fascism and war.

It is from the strong and secure foundations of the experience in action of building such a united front that a new party could really emerge that would directly reflect and serve the working-class movement, rather than trying to control

or replace it.

The ruling class would find it much more difficult to successfully combat a party built out of the material experience of real class struggle – Marx's motor of society – than they would a new party patched together from the flimsy fabric of parliamentarianism.

TV Weekly Preview



Sunday
The Last Musician of Auschwitz, 10.10pm BBC4
The juxtaposition of music and horror, particularly the unsettling use of upbeat tunes, is often thought of as a modern phenomenon.

Jaunty jingles set next to news of murder and mayhem can feel unreal and dystopian.

Yet orchestral music was part and parcel of the deprivations that took place in concentration camps.

Documentary

Sunday
Jimmy Doherty's Big Bear Rescue 8pm Channel 4
The rehomed polar bear settles in and a new project is already on the go – providing a secure home to a pack of Arctic wolves.

Drama

Sunday
Suspicion 10.40pm ITV
Under pressure from the police, Eddie and Aadesh team up to clear their names.

Entertainment

Saturday
Live Aid at 40 6pm BBC2
Look I get it, Beeb, in the absence of Glasto you're

having to scabble around for summer programming and 40 years is a nice round number. But when Live Aid itself was 16 hours long and your selection is more than six this is less a highlights reel and more an editorial cut.

Film

Saturday
28 Days Later 10pm BBC3
Clearly resurrected to coincide with the release of the third movie in the zombie franchise, a youthful-looking Cillian Murphy wanders through a seemingly empty London six years before such scenes became all too real.

Sunday
Butch Cassidy and the Sundance Kid 3.10pm BBC2
The thing about outlaw Westerns is they stay

with Ann Douglas

evergreen. This classic of the genre is 56 years young and still rockets along with its comic heist plot.
My Beautiful Laundrette 11.45pm Film4
Notable in part for launching the career of Daniel Day-Lewis, two young men try to make work in the upheavals of 1980s Britain. With one being Asian, the era's blunt, violent racism intervenes.

Sport

Saturday-Sunday
Wimbledon (various times, BBC1 and BBC2)
It's the end of the tournament this weekend, with the wheelchair finals at 11am, men's doubles at 12.15, Amanda Anisimova v Iga Swiatek in the women's finals at 4pm and then on Sunday, the women's doubles and men's finals.

What to miss

Saturday: The Mechanic, 11.30pm Channel 4

The joke goes that Jason Statham has done every blue-collar job going in his paint-by-numbers action movie career, but, my God, does the repetition get tedious. You know the drill – quiet stoical working man hits things until he wins.

Yesterday's sudoku

9	1	2	8	5	3	7	6	4
3	4	7	2	6	1	5	9	8
5	6	8	9	7	4	2	1	3
2	9	4	1	8	7	6	3	5
1	5	3	4	2	6	9	8	7
7	8	6	3	9	5	1	4	2
4	7	1	5	3	9	8	2	6
6	2	9	7	4	8	3	5	1
8	3	5	6	1	2	4	7	9

ATTILA THE STOCKBROKER | DIARY



Warming up for his Durham gig, the bard pays attention to the niceties of language

A DIFFERENT sort of column this week.

Words are my currency and language is important. If words are misused, weaponised or euphemised, they start to lose their meaning and therefore their power – and when that happens we are all in trouble. I want to give you very different examples of this in verse.

Firstly: as an anti-fascist and anti-racist it breaks my heart to see the incredibly powerful word “anti-semitic” thrown around like confetti by the far-right government of Israel. In my opinion they are devaluing the term in a way which insults the memory of the Holocaust victims and turns the word for a heinous and unspeakable crime into a general insult applied to anyone who criticises them. This is tragic and very dangerous. Anti-semitism is very specific.

DICTIONARY DEFINITION

Our language must have meaning to be any use at all – If you take away that meaning then the truth goes to the wall. If you're antisemitic, it means you hate all Jews. Yes, every single one of them, not just those in the news. You loathe them for existing, not for what they do or say. The left wing ones, the right wing ones, at work or rest or play. It's not about their actions, their thoughts, their aspirations. This really should be made quite clear at the United Nations.

And on a completely different tack, the concept of assisted dying has been the subject of much debate recently, inside and outside the Houses of Parlia-

ment. Here I contrast the absolutely justified soul searching applied to the introduction of the measure as usually understood, with the blithe acceptance of its literal meaning throughout human history in the context of that well known epithet: ‘War is an continuation of politics by other means.

ASSISTED DYING

Assisted dying is an abomination a desecration of the human spirit an insult to Life itself No civilised society should tolerate it and measures should be put in place to ensure those who advocate it in their media and profit from it in their factories are removed from circulation and humanely restrained in specialist “gamer” facilities where they can indulge their fantasies in endless video battles without harm to wider society.

I am of course

not talking about those who wish to end their own lives at the time of their own choosing in dignity and peace surrounded by those they love – with proper safeguards that should be their sovereign choice – but about those who wish to end others’ lives way before their time in the terror of war or the war of terror alone and defenceless surrounded by those they fear and screaming for their mothers in the name of profit, or country, or prophet, or god.

On to happier things. Yesterday I was honoured to be invited to Durham (alongside wonderful young singer-songwriter Jess Silk) to be part of the entertainment at the pre-Gala gig organised by Durham NEU. Today I shall be taking part in the Durham Miners’ Gala itself, a wonderful celebration of working-class history and culture at its best.

And I shall be honouring the memory of Durham Miners’ Association president Davey Hopper, who invited me to be the after-dinner speaker at a pre-Gala event some years ago and, most memorably, to be the entertainment at the party he held at Easington colliery club on the day of Thatcher’s funeral. That was some day!

I’ll also be thinking of Barry Chambers, a DMA legend in his own right, as I share a few pints with his son Ronnie, whom I’ve known for many years. The event is the best possible riposte to Reform, who have sadly taken Durham County Council with their billionaire-sponsored division and lies, profiting from the Labour leadership’s abject refusal to govern in the interests of the people who brought the party into being.

Horrendous times. But, as the wonderful Muddy Summers and the Dirty Field Whores put it:

“Yeah yeah it’s all shit

But some of us are trying to plant roses in it”

And we’re not going anywhere.

BOOK REVIEW | RESEARCH AND ACTIVISM: RUTH FIRST & ACTIVIST RESEARCH

EDITED BY SALEEM BADAT AND VASU REDDY | ESI PRESS, FREE DOWNLOAD

Ruth First: the legacy of a South African freedom fighter

SALEEM BADAT and VASU REDDY introduce a new book about an outstanding interpreter of the world, and an activist scholar committed to changing society

RUTH FIRST, born 100 years ago, was a South African freedom fighter, journalist and scholar who worked against the racist system of apartheid during white minority rule. She was assassinated by apartheid forces in her office at the Eduardo Mondlane University in Mozambique in 1982.



three children left South Africa for England on an exit permit, where they joined her partner, the activist and politician Joe Slovo. She would not set foot again in South Africa. Continuing with her activist research in England, she taught at Durham University and then joined Eduardo Mondlane University until her death.

The mid-1940s to early '60s were tumultuous years in South Africa. With the rise of formal apartheid in 1948, racial segregation was intensified.

First's intrepid and penetrating journalistic research exposed her to the brutality of labour exploitation and control on the mines and the farms. It reinforced her understanding of South Africa in Marxist terms. She wrote: “Silence in the face of injustice is complicity.” For her: “The will to fight is born out of the desire for freedom.” She was confident that: “The power of the people is greater than the power of any government.”

First believed that ignorance is “the enemy of progress and justice” and that knowledge and education are “key to empowering individuals and challenging oppressive systems.” These words ring true in today’s global events driven by right-wing authoritarianism, US imperialism and acts of genocide.

As authors, we revisit First’s life, work and ideas and its relevance for the current context. We focus especially on the nature of her scholarship and how she navigated the tensions between her activism and her research – whether journalistic or for her books on South West Africa (today’s Namibia), Libya or Western investment in apartheid. Other of her acclaimed books included *The Barrel of a Gun: Political Power in Africa* and *The Coup d’etat* (Allen Lane, 1970) and, during her Mozambican sojourn, *Black Gold: The Mozambican Miner, Proletarian and Peasant* (Harvester Press, 1983).

Inspired by First’s contributions, the book considers how universities

and scholars engage with institutions and social movements beyond the university.

For example, in the book a research group from Durham University in Britain considers how to balance objectivity (showing no bias) with more politically participatory research methods and how objectivity can be enhanced despite the difficulties faced by activist research.

Other scholars reflect on the work of the assassinated South African anti-apartheid activist scholar and lecturer Rick Turner; on climate change; and on the complexities of undertaking activist research in Marikana with a women’s organisation, Sikhala Sonke.

Marikana was the site

where South African police opened fire on and killed 34 striking mineworkers in 2012.

There is examination of a research partnership between University of Cape Town activist scholars and some Khoi-San communities, reflection on the challenges of legal practice and education, and critical analysis of the decolonisation challenges of the KwaZulu-Natal Society of the Arts.

The book shows that there is a difference between engaged research, critical research and activist research.

Engaged research tries to connect knowledge produced by academics with institutions, movements and experts outside the university to collaboratively address issues, and promote co-operation.

Critical research uses radical critical theory to critique oppression and injustice, to show the gap between what exists today and more just ways of living. However, it does not necessarily connect with political and social movements.

First’s research was not only engaged, but also critical in orientation, and activist in nature. As activist research it challenged oppression and inequality. It both critiqued the status quo in South Africa and elsewhere and tried to change it. It was linked with movements and connected to political activism that was anti-colonial, anti-imperialist, and committed to socialism.

First’s activist research did not confine itself to the academic arena but engaged with larger, wider and more diverse publics. It used this experience

to critique dominant and often limited thinking at universities and promoted other ways of producing knowledge. The expertise developed was used to improve scholarship in various ways.

Today, there is much talk about the “engaged university” and engaged research. However, only certain connections and engagements seem to be valued.

Prior to democracy in 1994, South African researchers connected with social movements for change. Now this is seldom the case. Universities and scholars largely engage with those with money – the state, business, elites and donors.

This raises questions about the roles of researchers in South Africa, whose interests are prioritised and the place of critical and activist research in the engaged university.

Ruth First must be honoured for her intellectual and practical activism. What matters is not just her knowledge archive, but also her example as both an outstanding interpreter of the world and an activist scholar committed to changing society in the interests of the downtrodden, marginalised and voiceless.

First was a critical and independent thinker who refused to accept anything as settled and beyond questioning. But that intellect was committed to loyalty to the national liberation movement of which she was an invaluable cadre.

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Plaque commemorating Ruth First and Joe Slovo in Camden Town, London

Pic: Simon Hamvatt/CC



Pics: Courtesy of Narbi Price

EXHIBITION REVIEW | **GOING BACK BROCKENS: MONUMENTS AND RHETORIC AFTER THE MINERS' STRIKE**
★★★★★ | MINERS GALA, DURHAM

Coalfield community symphony

MIKE QUILLE applauds an excellent example of cultural democracy: making artworks which are a relevant, integral part of working-class lives

COMING BACK BROCKENS is pit slang for when the pillars of rock supporting the roof are broken by the retreating pitmen, after the coal has been dug out. It can also apply to the pitmen themselves, returning from the pit exhausted or injured.

Going Back Brockens: Monuments And Rhetoric After The Miners' Strike is the title of a brilliant exhibition which is being shown in the field at today's Gala in Durham.

Through a combination of paintings, spoken word and short films, it explores the memories, reflections and feelings of local people living with the collapse of the coal industry in the 1980s and '90s, and the resulting breakdown of coalfield communities.

And although it's firmly rooted in the history and lives of people in the Durham coalfield, it would work just as well in the central belt of Scotland, south Wales, parts of Yorkshire and Nottinghamshire – and, for that matter, Lorraine, Silesia or Kentucky. These are the "left-behind" neighbourhoods of late capitalism, brutally "brocken" and with high rates of unemployment, sickness, poverty, crime and drug and alcohol abuse.

Marking 40 years since the miners' strike, local artist Narbi Price has painted 40

Pics: Courtesy of Carl Joyce



(Top) Three paintings by Narbi Price; (above) Resilience: Joseph from Horden, a still from a film by Carl Joyce

everyday scenes across the Durham coalfield – empty landscapes, bricked-up windows, fences and railings, and barbed wire.

The paintings evoke emptiness and blocked opportunities, broken dreams and painful memories. The emptiness expresses deindustrialisation – the sudden flight of capital from the area, leaving whole communities without much employment, income or purpose.

Perhaps the emptiness also expresses the sad lack

of leadership by the Labour Party – its failure to represent working-class hopes and aspirations, and the palpable sense of being abandoned by investors and politicians which has helped far-right parties like Reform UK breed and flourish, locally and nationally.

As Price says of the traumatic effect of the pit closures: "Its ghost is unavoidably there in the places we live, in the layout of the streets, in the ubiquitous half winding wheel monuments, in a peculiar mix-

ture of anger and sentimentality. I think that globally the left is crying out for charismatic leaders, figureheads that people can invest their hope into."

The paintings have titles which are taken from the accompanying sound installation created by Mark Hudson. It comprises snatches of interviews conducted for his 1994 book *Coming Back Brockens* (Vintage, 1995), written at a time when the pit closures were still very raw in the col-

lective memory. The voices are from Horden, a large pit village which at one time employed several thousand men and was one of the biggest and most productive pits in Europe.

As Mark Hudson says: "They're real people talking about important stuff that happened to them, at a time when ordinary people were effectively taking on the British government from their kitchen tables, a few years after the event and they're trying to make sense of it."

So as you look into the paintings, you're also hearing the raw, emotional voices of local people relating stories and feelings which mesh with the visual art. These stories are the "rhetoric" of the subtitle, accompanying the "monuments" of empty landscapes and blocked views depicted in the paintings.

The striking absence of people in the paintings is immersive – it draws you into the paintings, and they become settings for the memories, thoughts and feelings of the people in the interviews that you're hearing. And those memories combine with your own memories of the past, of the busy and lively working-class communities before their devastation by Thatcher and the untamed market forces of late capitalism.

Alongside the paintings and spoken words are six short, poignant films by local film-maker Carl Joyce, about present-day inhabitants of pit villages. The characters and their stories vary, but common themes emerge, most notably a deep, aching sense of sadness combined with a certain resilience – a determination to look forward as well as back, and to cope as

positively as possible with a troubling situation.

As Carl Joyce says: "That sudden absence of industry led to a lack of jobs, which then triggered a chain reaction – poor housing, rising crime, drug use and a general sense of decline. That lack of investment has lasted for 40 years and it's created a cycle that's very hard to break. But with real, sustained investment, change is possible."

Overall, the paintings, spoken words and films work in your imagination like a ghostly play, weaving themes of brokenness and partial healing across time and place. The paintings and the voices from the past illustrate each other, and both are echoed by the contemporary images and voices in the films. It is a moving, imaginative symphony, as tender and truthful a piece of community-based art as has ever been made about coalfield communities.

Credit must go to the curators from No More Nowt, a community arts project which is encouraging communities across Co Durham to host their own exhibitions, capturing more stories, memories and reflections about life in a post-mining era.

It is an excellent example of cultural democracy, of making artworks which are a relevant, integral part of working-class lives, without patronising or twisting the truth of the lives, memories, and struggles of our class.

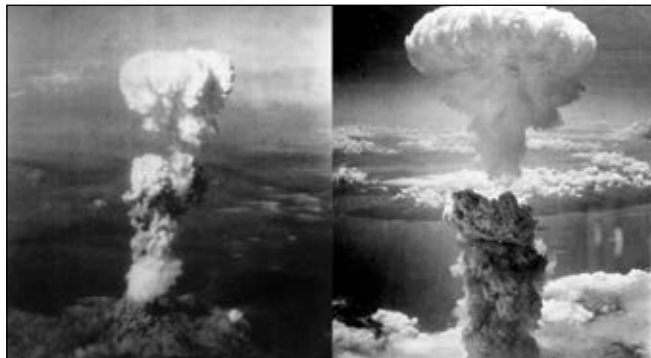
After exhibition at the Gala, Going Back Brockens will be shown in Horden, at St Mary's Church, the "Miners' Cathedral."

■ For more information see: nomorenawt.org.

■ An extended version of this review, including interviews with the artists, is available at culture-matters.org.uk.

“

They're talking about important stuff at a time when ordinary people were taking on the British government from their kitchen tables



HIROSHIMA AND NAGASAKI

Bombings were war crimes

EIGHTY YEARS on from the atomic bombings of both Hiroshima and Nagasaki, we must still state that there was no need to use those bombs as

the Japanese were ready to surrender, and that the usage of those weapons was a war crime.
PHIL BRAND
London SW17

TRADE UNIONS

It's time for Unite to dump Labour

WHY is Unite or any decent trade union supporting the Labour Party which is basically a Tory party?

The Labour Party is not serving the interests of the workers.
PAUL DORAN
Dublin

★ Readers & Supporters

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AWAITING NEW DETAILS

NEW WORKERS' PARTY

Why can't the left be more positive about new party?

THANKS to Andrew Burgin (Features July 7) for his very positive welcome to Zarah Sultana's resignation from Labour and founding, alongside Jeremy Corbyn, of a new working-class party of the left.

Why can't everyone on the left give this brave initiative the warm welcome it is due?

The left in this country has too long a tradition of criticising other potential colleagues, just because they are not doing things exactly as they would do.

Most are full of hot air and very rarely any practical action.

"It's too secret." "It's not secret enough." "We must have a programme before we start getting

organised" etc etc.

In doing so they provide the mainstream, corporate, right-wing media with the ammunition to pick these initiatives apart and suggest the left are incapable of organising anything.

We have to start somewhere, and Zarah has shown great courage in sticking her neck out and, together with Jeremy, giving those of us on the left a huge boost.

Nevermind stumbles along the way, the "movement" is in the process of forming into a party - we all need to get behind it, NOW.

PIP and KEVIN
SHILLINGTON
Gillingham

SYRIA

Wrong to assume that Amnesty is independent of the Establishment

IAN SINCLAIR persists in his naive belief that Human Rights Watch and Amnesty International are independent bodies: "reputable human rights organisations."

In fact, Amnesty International still parrots the US line on Palestine armed resistance. These bodies are as independent as the US allows them to be, aided and abetted by a compliant Western media, as Chris Natural reminds us in his excellent letter of June 17.

This gross defamation of Bashar al-Assad's Syria is no exception.

Tragically, Assad failed in his

attempt to prevent his country from being conquered, partitioned and handed over to terrorists, misogynists, jihadists and genocidists by "the greatest purveyor of violence on Earth" in Martin Luther King's words.

In fact, in relation to human rights and democracy, the US, Saudi Arabia, and Israel have a far worse record than Syria. In Syria, for example, a girl could dream of becoming a doctor, an engineer, a teacher, a pilot, a scientist. Its record on women's rights was a century ahead of Saudi Arabia's.

JOHN TILBURY
Deal, Kent



HUMAN RIGHTS WARRIOR? A protester holds an Amnesty placard

PALESTINE

This is not war on Gaza; this is global slaughter

THIS is not war — this is industrial-scale slaughter carried out with foreign-backed money and weapons.

Every bomb that reduces a Gaza neighborhood to rubble carries the fingerprints of powerful nations, and every bullet that tears through a child's body was financed by taxpayers around the world. Our inaction is our signature on the execution order.

They tell us these are "precision strikes," but where is the precision in bombing a refugee camp to kill one man and murdering 126 civilians instead?

Where is the accuracy in shelling a UN school sheltering displaced families, leaving the walls painted with children's blood? These aren't military operations — they're extermination campaigns. Day after day, body bags are stacking higher as they methodically dismantle an entire people, house by house, school by school, life by life.

Israel's "self-defence" looks like this: Children butchered with shrapnel, while backpacks were still on.

Babies baked alive in incubators turned coffins. Elderly people were shot in the face while surrendering. What defence needs to kill 15,000 children? What security requires bombing hospitals full of wounded

THE WORLD WATCHES ON: Nidal al-Nouri with his daughter Sara mourns over the body of her 13-year-old sister, Sama, who was among 10 people, including two women and five children, killed in an Israeli strike while they were waiting to receive nutritional supplements at a Project Hope-run medical clinic in Deir al-Balah, Gaza Strip



patients? Tell me again how this is justified? A thousand "accidents" in the same direction isn't collateral damage — it's a death march.

What is happening in Gaza cannot be explained away with speeches or softened with political language, because there is nothing complex about dropping bombs on starving children, nothing confusing about

blowing up hospitals, schools and bakeries filled with families who have nowhere else to run, and nothing justifiable about destroying an entire population while claiming it is for security.

In Rafah, Israeli bombs hit a tent camp filled with families who fled there because the IDF told them it was "safe." The fire melted children alive. Rescue

workers found babies cooked inside their mothers' arms, their tiny bodies fused together by the heat. This happened on May 26 2024. And all our leaders did was sanitise bloodshed with press-conference smiles.

At al-Shifa Hospital, doctors performed C-sections on dead women because the bombs came too fast to save them. In Jabalia, Israeli tanks rolled over wounded civilians begging for help, crushing them into the dirt like cockroaches.

In Khan Younis, Israeli tanks bulldozed through residential blocks, crushing entire families as if they were debris. When survivors dug through the rubble days later, they found a mother clutching her three children, their bodies crushed together so tightly that rescuers had to bury them in a single grave.

The world's hypocrisy stinks worse than Gaza's overflowing morgues. The same politicians who cried over Ukrainian children now justify Palestinian children's deaths. The same outlets that blast Kashmir's resistance are silent when Israel starves babies. This isn't deception — it's the open slaughter of equality, where racism decides which children get to dream and which ones get buried.

YUMNA ZAHID ALI
Karachi, Pakistan

RIGHTWINGER ROCKER

Stewart may be successful, but he's still a nasty Tory

I WOULD like to support Comrade Morgan's position in the Star on "Sir" Rod Stewart (Letters July 10) and add some personal info. Over 60 years ago, on Brighton beach, he taught me – a 16-year-old wannabe beatnik – my first three guitar chords to tunes like Midnight Special and Cocaine.

He went on to become a pop colossus and I to carpentry, spending 20 years on the tools and a further 20 as an elected official of Ucat (now Unite).

Although I was in awe of him, our divergent paths and subsequent experiences have led us to opposing worldviews.

He has become a right-wing reactionary money-grubber, who toured apartheid South Africa and fascist Israel ...

He also expressed support for Thatcher in the 1980s, and is now touting for Reform and its Little Englander spiv leader, Farage. When he lived in Florida, his neighbour and "good friend" was the subhuman, racist gangster, Trump!

My circumstances, conversely, led me to Marx and,

eg, while I was in AA we campaigned for a total boycott of SA, and now, with PSC, through BDS, am involved in a similar campaign against Israel.

I, too, went to the US, but was arrested and tried there for "visa violations" after my Norwich ex-employer phoned the US embassy and told them they had let in a "dangerous communist." (I had been involved in the bitter '72 national building strike before I left.)

Fortunately, US comrades organised a pro bono lawyer who helped me "beat the rap."

In 2016, Stewart took a knighthood from the Tory regime, a reward for being an Establishment arse-maggot.

Last year, I was the proud recipient of a 50-year membership badge from Unite, marking a working-class milestone.

In short, I am as content being a wisened-up, hard-up commie as he is being a thick, rich racist.

PETER TOBIN

Norwich

PS And, as an Irishman, don't get me started on his Celtic affectations!

LIBERATION

A few points worth making of review

IT WAS interesting to read the review of Liberation, the play about the 5th Pan African Congress in Manchester in 1945 (M Star July 5).

However, there are some factual points regarding Paul Foley's review. George Padmore, the one-time communist who left the international communist movement in 1933-34, was a Trinidadian not a Jamaican.

To describe WEB Du Bois as a US civil rights activist is an understatement. He was the father of the Pan African movement in the early 20th century where he stated: "The Colour Line" was the most important issue of the new century. Along with Paul Robeson, he was the leading figure in black liberation until his death in 1963, and one of his final actions was to join the Communist Party of the USA. Len Johnson, the black boxer and communist did indeed attend the 1945 congress and he was accompanied by his comrade Wilf Charles – a leading anti-racist.

Also present was Pat Devine, representing the Lancashire and Cheshire Communist Party.

DAVID HORSLEY

London SW4

LIBERATION

Much more to Padmore's vital contribution

I WAS intrigued to read Paul Foley's review of the new play, Liberation, about the men and women involved in the 5th Pan-African congress and about black Trinidadian communist George Padmore (Morning Star 5 July). He writes that: "On the defeat of fascism in 1945, African nations began to organise for the fight for independence." I wonder if the play mentions any of the key events that happened before this, in which Padmore was also involved? French Sudanese radical Tiemoko Garan Kouyate was secretary of the League for the Defence of the Negro Race and had already been organising Africans in Berlin through the influential communist organiser and propagandist Willi Muenzenberg during the 1920s. In 1927 Muenzenberg staged the first conference of the

League Against Imperialism and for National Independence in Brussels which brought together a whole number of leading black and African anti-colonialists. Padmore was involved in the organisation under the auspices of the Comintern. It was attended by such leading figures as: Jawaharlal Nehru, Ahmed Sukarno, Augusto Sandino, and Tiemoko Garan Kouyate from west Africa, among others. It was the first such international gathering to address the issue of anti-colonialism globally and within a context of anti-capitalism and anti-fascism.

It was an important forerunner of the 5th Pan African

Congress in Manchester in 1945. In 1930 the First International Conference of Negro Workers took place in Hamburg, organised by the International Trade Union Committee of Negro Workers (ITUCNW). Padmore was the editor of its journal, The Negro Worker. Its formation represented the Comintern's commitment to mobilise and liberate black workers worldwide. It brought together some of the most prominent black activists in the anti-colonial movement, including James Ford and Padmore, who became a mentor to Joseph Ekwe Bile from Douala, Cameroon.

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READING

We need to talk about illiteracy in Britain

IT'S BEEN announced that 2026 will be the National Year of Reading and while in Britain there are seven million adults who are functionally illiterate, along with 4.5 million children living in poverty, it's worth remembering that back in March, the BBC reported how 190 libraries have shut in the past five years. I think it would make for an interesting conversation for us to discuss illiteracy in Britain and how there is a need to kick-start a reading revolution.

After all, it was JB Priestley who warned in An Inspector Calls: "We don't live alone. We are members of one body. We



are responsible for each other.

And I tell you that the time will soon come when if men will not learn that lesson, then

they will be taught it in fire and blood and anguish."

HUSSEIN AL-ALAK

Manchester



SIMON RENTON explores the Star archives

80 YEARS AGO TODAY...

Polish workers building socialism

ON JULY 12 1945, the Daily Worker reported on the representation of workers and trade unions in factories and in mines in the new socialist Poland. The Worker described the efforts being made in coalmines and steelworks to increase production, to rebuild the Polish economy, after the destruction wrought by Nazi occupation. The Worker stressed the importance of trade union representatives in the management of nationalised industries and the role of patriotic Poles, who had fought with the Red Army, in the making of a socialist Poland.

Workers Help Run Polish Pits & Mills

Seen from the air, Katowice and its outskirts form a sea of smoking chimney stacks.

With its shops, clanging trams, red-brick factories and miles of red brick houses, it might easily be any industrial city in Britain. Indeed, with its great iron and steel mills belching smoke and with overhead cables carrying coal-tubs from pit-head to railway trucks, the Katowice district is the 'Black Country' of Poland.

In the neighbouring town of Chorzow, I visited the Batory Plant – formerly the Bismarck Iron Mills – now employing 5,000 men. Sheet iron and steel tubing are the main products of this works which, due to its excellent equipment, turns out high-quality material with a minimum of labour-power.

The plant, which is state-owned, is run by a director and two assistants appointed by the government. A workers' council, consisting of trade union delegates, acts as an advisory body to the director.

They consult daily on matters affecting production and have regular weekly meetings with the directorate...

Miner-Governor

I was able to interview the governor of Silesia, 46-year-old General Zawatski, who started life as a miner and was one of a group of Poles who fought with the Red Army at Stalingrad...

Transport is his main worry. The Germans carried away thousands of wagons and locomotives and wrecked bridges wholesale.

They were nine-tenths of the way to recovery, he told me, and thanks to generous gifts of food from the Red Army, starvation had been arrested.

Travelling through this country I judged that the devastation was second only to the wilderness created by the Germans in Russia.

Yet Marshal Koniev's swift thrusts preserved intact what must now be the only large-scale iron, steel and coal industry left undamaged between the Channel coast and the Volga.

■ Simon Renton is a trustee at the Marx Memorial Library & Workers' School in London, the leading research and education centre on Marxism and socialist history.

You can read editions of the **Daily Worker** (1930-45) and **Morning Star** (2000-today), online at mstar.link/DWMSarchive. Ten days' access costs just **£5.99** and a year is **£84**.

The Red List

July 12-19

▶ SATURDAY 12

Fourth Annual 24-Hour Peace Wave

Online all day
A 24-hour global event featuring live peace actions, including rallies, concerts, art creation, peace pole installations, blood donation drives, public demonstrations and cultural performances, to emphasise the global demand for the abolition of nuclear weapons. For details and to register to join via Zoom, go to ipb.org/peace-wave-2025.

Free Palestine: BDS at 20

10.15am at Central Hall Westminster, Storey's Gate, London SW1
A conference on how to escalate boycott campaigns against complicit corporations, continue to win divestment from councils and universities and step up the call for sanctions against Israel. For tickets, priced £13, solidarity £20, unwaged/concessions £7, go to tinyurl.com/bds20conf.

Ceasefire Now - Stop Genocide Profiteers!

12pm at the Cathedral, Victoria Street, Manchester
Protest against Israel's genocidal actions in Gaza, the government's clampdown on legitimate resistance and direct action against Israel and the companies padding their pockets with the blood of the oppressed masses. Called by Greater Manchester Friends of Palestine.

Book event: The Rebirth of the African Phoenix

2pm at Marx Memorial Library, 37A Clerkenwell Green, London EC1

Morning Star international editor Roger McKenzie launches his new book in a discussion with Molly Dhlamini of the South African Communist Party, Professor Radhika Desai and Carlos Martinez from Friends of Socialist China. Find out more and register at tinyurl.com/MMLMP1207.

Talking with Arms Dealers

3pm at Parish Hall, High Road, London N11
Peace Pledge Union council member Matt Harbage runs a free workshop on starting conversations with arms dealers attending the DSEI fair in September. Find out more at tinyurl.com/talkingarms.

The Vi Gostling Memorial Lecture

8pm (doors open 7.30pm) at St John's Church Hall, High Road, London E11
Representatives of the the Communist Party of Britain, the Green Party, the Labour Party, the Lib Dems, the London Anarchist Communist Group, the Revolutionary Communist Party, the Socialist Party, the Socialist Party of Great Britain, the Socialist Workers Party, Workers Liberty and the Workers Party of Britain exchange views on how to build a better future. Hosted by the News From Nowhere Club.

▶ SUNDAY 13

Kick for Sudan and Palestine: Manchester charity football match

2pm (doors open) at Belle Vue

Leisure Centre, Kirkmanshulme Lane, Manchester
Sudavision aims to raise £10,000 to support people in Palestine and Sudan, two nations going through unimaginable hardship. For tickets, priced £10, go to eventbrite.com/e/1363902191169.

▶ MONDAY 14

Edinburgh Left Book Club meeting

7pm at Tollcross Community Centre, 117 Fountainbridge, Edinburgh
A discussion of Natives: Race and Class in the Ruins of Empire by Akala. Please note the new venue. Views on the next book selection will be sought at the end of the meeting, followed by an online poll. All welcome.

▶ TUESDAY 15

Employment Law Is Changing: The Future of Workplace Rights

10am at the Dalton Building, Chester Street, Manchester
With the Employment Rights Bill introducing the most significant changes to workers' rights and employment law in decades, experts from Thompsons Solicitors guide union reps through the key elements of the legislation, including how it will affect your ability to represent members, negotiate with employers and uphold workplace rights. Find out more and register at tinyurl.com/employchange.

Turning the Tide on Genocide

7pm at SET Woolwich, Beresford Street, London SE18
Holocaust survivor and Palestine activist Stephen Kapos is joined by Chris Nineham of the Stop the War Coalition and Yasmine Adam of the Muslim Association of Britain to discuss current developments in Palestine, the wider Middle East and Western imperialism and how we should respond. Hosted by Stop the War Greenwch. Register at eventbrite.com/e/1467551067749.

▶ WEDNESDAY 16

Handling WRULDs at Work: What Union Reps need to know

2pm online
A TUC and Thompsons Solicitors webinar for union reps on the prevention, identification and legal support available around work-related upper limb disorders. Find out more and register at tinyurl.com/handling-wrulds.

Lewisham Council, Divest Now

6.30pm at Lewisham Town Hall, Rushey Green, London SE6
Join Lewisham Palestine Solidarity Campaign, Lewisham Stop the War and Lewisham & Greenwich CND to call on the council to divest its pension fund from companies complicit in Israel's genocide and apartheid against Palestinians.

No More Hiroshimas: Building a Nuclear-Free Future

6.30pm (doors open 6.15pm) in Committee Room 11, Palace of Westminster, London SW1
Join Kyoko Gibson, a second-generation hibakusha, South African high commissioner Jeremiah Nyamane Mamabolo, Parliamentary CND chairman Jeremy Corbyn and vice-chairwoman Bell Ribeiro-Addy and Jess Barnard of the Labour Party national executive to discuss the human cost of nuclear war and how we build a nuclear-free future. Register at eventbrite.co.uk/e/1383715001819.

Film screening: Israelism, plus discussion

6.30pm at Chorlton Central Church, Barlow Moor Road, Manchester
This film exploring how Jewish attitudes towards Israel are changing dramatically, with massive consequences for the region and for Judaism itself, is followed by a panel discussion with Ehab Omar of Children Not Numbers, David Vickers of Jewish Action for Palestine, Helen Shenton of Christians for Palestine and, in the chair, Mike Reed of Amnesty International Manchester. Register at eventbrite.co.uk/e/1458489484309.

Trump, Imperialism and the Middle East

7pm at the Old Library at Zellig, Gibb Street, Birmingham
Holocaust survivor and Palestine activist Stephen Kapos is joined by Chris Nineham, Salma Yaqoob and Belal Stitan to discuss current developments in Palestine, the wider Middle East and Western imperialism and how we should respond. Register at <https://www.tickettailor.com/events/stopthewartcoalitionbirminghambranch/1768447>. Hosted by Birmingham Stop the War Coalition.

Book event: Basic Income — The Policy That Changes Everything

7pm at Five Leaves Bookshop, 14a Long Row, Nottingham
Kate Pickett talks about the new book that she has co-authored with Matthew Johnson, Daniel Nettle, Howard Reed, Elliott Johnson and

Ian Robson, which, using real-world examples, reveals how basic income breaks the cycle of poverty and reshapes lives, paving the way out of our age of crisis and towards a fairer society. For tickets, priced £4.50, with book £9.99, go to tinyurl.com/basicin.

Until 25th: The Collectors, The Cameraman, The Poets and the Pits

1-4.30pm on Wednesdays, Thursdays and Fridays at the Working Class Movement Library, 51 Crescent, Salford
An exhibition exploring the 1984-85 miners' strike through contemporary artefacts, photographs and poetry.

ers, welfare not warfare and fighting the far right and oppression.

Book event: Transfemme Futures

7pm at Five Leaves Bookshop, 14a Long Row, Nottingham
A reading event with Nat Raha and Mijke van der Drift, discussing their book Trans Femme Futures: Abolitionist Ethics for Transfeminist Worlds, which shows how social change can be achieved through transformative practices that allow queer life to thrive in a time of climate, health, political and economic crises. Mandatory registration at tinyurl.com/transfut.

▶ FRIDAY 18

18th-20th: Tolpuddle Martyrs' Festival

From 3pm on Friday until 8pm on Sunday across the Dorset village of Tolpuddle
An annual event commemorating the six agricultural workers who were transported to Australia in 1834 as punishment for setting up a trade union, the festival features a march through the village, political talks, live music, DJ sets, comedy, theatre and stalls. For more information and tickets, go to tolpuddlemartyrs.org.uk/festival.

Until April 10th 2026: Keep The Flame Burning

1-4.30pm on Wednesdays, Thursdays and Fridays at the Working Class Movement Library, 51 Crescent, Salford
An ambitious exhibition, co-produced by working-class volunteers aged 16 to 25, of material from libertarian socialist group Big Flame (1970 - 1985) held in the library's archives. Find out more at tinyurl.com/flameburning.

▶ SATURDAY 19

Northern Pride: Union Brunch And Pre-March Meet Up

10am in the TUC NEYH office, Unite building, John Dobson Street, Newcastle Upon Tyne
Join LGBT+ trade unionists from across the labour movement at a brunch hosted by the Unite union, with safe and private changing facilities, face painting and plenty of fun, before heading off to Newcastle Civic Centre to join the rest of the march. Find out more and register at tinyurl.com/premarch.

National March for Palestine

12pm from Embankment Tube station, Villiers Street, London WC2
March to demand an end to the genocide and to the government's support for it through arms sales and other means. Called by the Palestine Solidarity Campaign, Friends of al-Aqsa, Stop the War Coalition, Muslim Association of Britain, Palestinian Forum in Britain and Campaign for Nuclear Disarmament. For coaches from Manchester, go to tinyurl.com/mancpalcoach or tinyurl.com/mancfoacoach.

▶ THURSDAY 17

Trump, Imperialism and the Middle East

6.30pm at Hamilton House, 80 Stokes Croft, Bristol
Holocaust survivor and Palestine activist Stephen Kapos is joined by John Rees of the Stop the War Coalition and Lama Qidan of Bristol Palestine Solidarity Campaign to discuss current developments in Palestine, the wider Middle East and Western imperialism and how we should respond. Register at tinyurl.com/kaposbristol.

From Sylhet to Spitalfields: Bengali Squatters in 1970s East London

6.30pm at Hackney Museum, 1 Reading Lane, London E8
Dr Shabna Begum shares the findings of her research on the Bengali squatters movement and considers how it relates to anti-racist struggles today. Register at eventbrite.co.uk/e/1333696144069.

Red Friday and the Road to 1926: Class Struggle, the State and the General Strike

6.30pm online (in-person tickets sold out)
The library launches its centenary programming marking the 1926 General Strike with a panel discussion featuring library director Meirian Jump, Professor Mary Davis and RMT general secretary Eddie Dempsey. Register at eventbrite.co.uk/e/1364420822409.

People's Question Time

6.30pm (doors open 6pm) at Lightwaves Leisure Centre, Lower York Street, Wakefield
Following their initial contributions, Normanton and Hemsworth MP Jon Trickett, Stephen Bell of the Stop the War Coalition, Debbie Kahl-er of the National Education Union, Andy Brammer from We Demand Change, Samira Ali of Stand Up To Racism and bakers' union general secretary Sarah Woolley respond to questions from the audience on the themes of supporting striking work-

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Racing Guide

with Farrington

■ NEWMARKET, YORK AND ASCOT

Top class meetings to provide thrilling action this afternoon

THIS afternoon is a deep day of racing with top class meetings at Newmarket (July Cup), York (Magnet Cup) and at Ascot with the Summer Mile.

The first of those events, a Group One at Newmarket, may have a big field of 15, but very few of the runners are in reality genuine top class performers at Championship level or even close.

The exception is surely the supplemented favourite **NOTABLE SPEECH** (4.35) who was added to the field last week after putting in a sparkling piece of work last week at Headquarters.

He may be a 2,000 Guineas'

winner, but there is plenty in his blood lines to suggest that a drop in trip will not prove a hindrance to him. The fact that the six furlongs of this event is run on a stiff track on fast ground are two further reasons to believe he will deal with this drop in distance more than adequately.

The best of his 14 rivals is probably Whistlejacket, trained by Aidan O'Brien. Winner of the July Stakes at this meeting 12 months ago, the son of No Nay Never hasn't really taken a big step forward since then, his outstanding run a Listed success in the Committed Stakes at the beginning of the season. He was however unlucky in the run in the Commonwealth Cup at Royal Ascot, although I suspect that wasn't a great renewal.

The big supporting race is the Bunbury Cup, a handicap over seven furlongs and many will be putting More Thunder in their multiple and acca bets as he steps back up to seven furlongs after finishing well from miles off the pace in the Wokingham Handicap at the Royal meet.

There is little doubt in my mind that he needs a bit more give in the ground and in any case I would be happy to see him win at around 13/8 and not be onside.

It is rare that there are less runners in this handicap than in the July Cup, but that is the case this year with 13 set to go to post and in **BILLYJOH** (2.50) at around 20/1 we have a nice each-way player in our possession. Riding this five-year-old

GOING FOR GLORY:
Jockey William Buick aboard Notable Speech



is a fine art as he has to be delivered at exactly the right time, as he has one short run to put that rapid turn of foot to good use.

His regular partner Frederick Larson is on board again and I think he was outridden by David Nolan on Akkadian Thunder two outings back at Doncaster but will have a 4lbs

turnaround for a length and a half defeat. The selection arguably has a better draw in six, his rival is in 12, and if Larson times his run right I suspect he will be a massive player in this class two handicap.

Elsewhere on the card, **RAAFEDD** (3.25) can make up for a moderate run in the Britannia Stakes at Royal Ascot by

landing the Mile Handicap off the same mark. Thought of as a possible 2,000 Guineas horse at the beginning of the year, he can start making up for lost time here.

There is a cracking card at York today and the big betting race will be the Magnet Cup at 3.10. Archivist will be the choice of many following his strong staying success over a mile here last month. His breeding suggests this extra two and a half furlongs won't be a problem and a 5lbs penalty probably underestimates his ability.

However, with the enhanced place terms from most bookmakers, I think the value call has to be with **HAVE SECRET** now that Richard Fahey's stable have hit form. The five-year-old simply didn't handle the undulations at Epsom last time out and he is taken improve on his staying on fifth in this race 12 months ago.

The likes of Hand of God (down in trip after travelling well over 12f at Royal Ascot last time out) and Fox Legacy are respected. The last named is only just reaching his physical maturity being a big fine specimen of a race horse. The former had a rushed preparation for the Duke of Edinburgh Handicap and looked likely to be involved in the finish, turning for home before a mix of lack of condition and the mile and a half trip took its toll on him. He has reportedly worked well in the lead up to this big handicap.

SAMUI (3.45) may land the

Group Three Silver Cup for Irish trainer Gordon Elliott. He got going way too late in the Queen Alexandra last time out, but a strong pace over this trip, probably made by himself will suit down the long home stretch here.

The biggest field of the day is the 20-runner six furlong handicap which ends the card at 5.25. Juan Le Pins is arguably the best treated horse in the race and showed his turn was around the corner when eye catching fifth last time out, but in an ideal world I think he would prefer at least some give which leads me in the direction of **ROCK OPERA**.

Nicely drawn in stall five, he was drawn on the wrong side of the course 12 months ago and showed last time out at Haydock Park he was ready to strike. He gets the nod over the veteran Aberama Gold who runs off his lowest handicap mark since way back in 2019.

At Ascot, **NEVER SO BRAVE** (2.22) can win the battle of the big handicap winners at the Royal meeting. The Buckingham Palace hero is given the nod over the Royal Hunt Cup winner My Cloud as he tries this trip for the very first time in the Group Two Summer Mile Stakes.

CLOCKMAKER (2.57) didn't stay two miles last time out, while arguably the best bet on the card could come in the form of **JAKAJARO** (4.50). He is taken to reverse recent Newcastle form with Paddy Turn now that he has a 10lbs turnaround in the weights for being beaten a length and three-quarters.



WEEKEND TIPS

Farrington's Doubles

Saturday

FOX LEGACY

York 3.10 (nap)

NEVER SO BRAVE

Ascot 2.22

Sunday

TILTED KILT

Southwell 4.05 (nap)

SAINT ARVANS

Perth 3.43

Attlee's Choice

Saturday

ECLAIRAGE

Dundalk 1.20

Sunday

MR LE PHILOSOPHE

Stratford 5.35

WOMEN'S CRICKET

Capsey admits England have no quick fix for struggles

by Our Sports Desk

ALICE CAPSEY (pictured) accepts there is no quick fix to England's struggles following a trying past 12 months.

England's T20 World Cup group stage exit and Ashes whitewash loss last winter led to Charlotte Edwards' appointment as head coach but their woes have continued with three losses in four T20s to India.

They head into today's dead rubber at Edgbaston dogged by scrutiny on their fielding after several dropped catches,

while their batters have looked especially susceptible against India's spinners.

England, though, have been accused of winning bilateral series and crumbling at global events so Capsey sees the upshot of being put under pressure now by India, even if she knows there are no quick fixes.

"We're not going to flip a switch and suddenly we've got a 100 per cent catch rate or we're nailing our wide yorkers or we're having 80-run partnerships every single game," she said.

"It's not going to happen

overnight but we're doing so much work behind the scenes to create that second nature where we do go out on to the pitch, we've got experience we know we can fall back on.

"To be put under this amount of pressure is great because it means we're talking about it, we're coming up with different ways to be better. It's only when you're put under pressure, you're going to learn."

England have repeatedly put down chances in the field in the past year which have proved costly and young all-rounder Capsey admitted it is

an aspect of their game that must improve.

"There's no hiding away from the fact that our fielding hasn't been up to standard," she said. "Stats don't lie, we've dropped a lot of catches at really pivotal points in important games."

"It could be that we're feeling the pressure or we're putting too much pressure on ourselves after what has been a tough 12 months."

"We're on a journey and we all know exactly how much work we need to put in and we are putting that work in."



in brief

Ipswich Witches crush Belle Vue

SPEEDWAY: Danny King top-scored with 13+2 points as the Ipswich Witches crushed defending champions Belle Vue 56-34 on Thursday night to gain the extra aggregate point and move four points clear at the top of the Premiership. Max Fricke and Ryan Douglas both bagged 17+1 points as Leicester thumped Oxford 54-36 in the evening's other fixture. Second-placed Sheffield, who have two games in hand over Ipswich, were not in action.

Wales take on Japan in Kobe this morning

MEN'S RUGBY UNION: Wales will be without Taulupe Faletau when they face Japan in Kobe this morning. The Welsh lost out 24-19 in Kitakyushu last weekend, slumping to an all-time low 14th place in the world rankings and now face the ignominy of becoming the first "tier one" nation to lose 19 games in a row. Japan have never won consecutive games against a top-level team.

Campher first man to take five in five

MEN'S CRICKET: Munster Reds all-rounder Curtis Campher became the first male to take five wickets in five balls in a professional match when he finished off the North West Warriors in Wednesday's Irish Inter-Provincial trophy match. Campher finished with 5-16 from just 15 balls as Munster won by 100 runs to climb above the Warriors at the bottom of the table. Runaway league leaders Leinster beat the Northern Knights by two wickets.

Buick rides 2,000th winner at Newmarket

HORSE RACING: Oslo-born William Buick became only the seventh active jockey to have ridden 2,000 winners in British racing after steering El Cordobes to victory at Newmarket on Thursday. He went on to claim a treble at the west Suffolk track with success on Crimson Rose and Opera Ballo in the next two races. Buick, who rode his first winner in 2006, was champion jockey on the flat in 2022 and 2023.

Questions remain over football's global future

Joao Pedro's emotional goals against Fluminense captured the magic of international club competitions. But even as fans bring colour and passion, the Club World Cup's deeper issues loom large, writes **JAMES NALTON**



EMOTIONAL: Chelsea's Joao Pedro (20) is congratulated by Enzo Fernandez after scoring his side's second goal during the Club World Cup semi-final

STRIKERS scoring against their former club is a story as old as time. Many would have expected Joao Pedro's (pictured) first such moment for his new team, Chelsea, to come against Brighton, in one of the many games English football serves up in its three domestic competitions each season. But, instead, it came against Fluminense, the team with whom he played in Rio De Janeiro as a youth and where he made his senior professional debut aged 17.

"When I was young, I had nothing. They gave everything to me," Joao Pedro said of Fluminense after scoring twice against them. "They showed me to the world. If I'm here, it's because they believed in me."

The goals meant Chelsea progressed to Sunday's Club World

Cup final in New Jersey, and in doing so, knocked out the only non-European team left in the tournament.

Though the final will be contested between two European teams, the successful elements of this tournament have been due to the teams from other regions.

Joao Pedro himself likely never thought he would be in a situation where the obligatory non-celebration after scoring against a former team was against Fluminense, so rare it is that a European team plays one from Brazil.

"I've got mixed feelings," Joao Pedro told Fifa. "I apologise for the two goals. This is my job. I'm sad to see some of the players I played alongside, and some of the staff I know are upset. Seeing their sadness is difficult because I know this was their dream."

The striker hints at the fact that many non-European teams hold this tournament in much higher regard than their Uefa counterparts. While Uefa has its own behemoth of a tournament in its Champions League, which is one of the most popular and most watched football tournaments in the world, teams from other regions, especially the winners of South America's regional championship, the Copa Libertadores, set their sights on testing themselves against these Uefa sides in Club World Cups.

As a result, the newly expanded Club World Cup has been boosted by its South American presence, and indeed by teams from other non-Uefa confederations. It showed the positives of bringing these clubs together for competitive matches.

Ahead of the semi-final, the

tricolour shirts of Fluminense filled New York's public transport systems en route to New Jersey. Their combination of analogue colours, naturally retro, rustic, but producing something distinctive when the burgundy, dark green, and white combine, blended in with the subway and transit system, which itself retains a retro feel in parts, and nods to its history.

Palmeiras brought something similar with their distinctive green in the quarter-finals, while during the group stages, teams from around the world brought their own diverse style in a celebration of this global game.

But there are negatives to go alongside those positives, and the Club World Cup has deserved the criticism aimed in its direction.

Issues including player workload, dynamic ticket pricing, an unhealthy association with the politics of Donald Trump (which have at times bordered on endorsement), and Saudi Arabia's continued involvement via various routes of sponsorship hang over the tournament.

Once it gets going, the sport of football is invariably good, and the Club World Cup, as an overall idea – that of club teams from different continents getting a rare chance to test themselves against each other – is a good one.

But this inevitable popularity and success of any form of competitive football is the reason these negative elements are attracted to the sport in the first place, as they look to use it for their own ends. And why it often works as such a tool.

The use of the United States as a host country, where there are fewer regulations on ticket reselling, and the state-ownership of clubs and sponsorship of tournaments is criticised, but the football carries on and is enjoyed. It's a difficult sport to boycott, which is why it is a prime target for entities with ulterior motives and why the idea of sportswashing exists in it.

The fact that the Qatari-owned Paris Saint-Germain are starting to gain plaudits and admirers due to their recent success has also shown as much.

Big games will also attract

ticket buyers even at high prices. Again, this is one of the reasons Fifa is currently favouring the United States as a host country despite its public transport limitations in many cities and more serious immigration and visa issues.

The semi-finals at the much-maligned Meadowlands stadium in New Jersey, which will also host the World Cup final next year, drew attendances of 70,556 for Fluminense versus Chelsea and 77,542 for Real Madrid against Paris Saint-Germain.

The dynamic pricing in play saw ticket prices fluctuate ahead of these games, and meant people in the same area of the stadium would have paid prices varying by as much as hundreds of dollars.

This tournament has shown that dynamic pricing leads to ticket price drops as well as increases, but it doesn't seem right that the prices differ so much from one seat to the next in the same area for what should be a communal event.

Fifa is bouncing back and forth between the unfettered capitalism of the United States and the sovereign wealth of oppressive states. Even the 2022 Club World Cup, hosted in Morocco, was heavily sponsored by Saudi Arabia, and the last of the then-yearly Club World Cup tournaments to be held outside of the Middle East was 2016 in Japan, nine editions ago.

While this kind of world club tournament has an appeal which will likely increase as the years go by, and this one has been more successful as a footballing spectacle than many predicted, the underlying, or rather overlying, obvious issues cannot be forgotten.

Performances and stories such as Joao Pedro's, and the link he provided between Fluminense and Chelsea, plus the performances in the stands of the fans from around the world, show the attraction to and benefits of such a diverse celebration of a truly global game. But like much of the rest of football, it is not immune to being exploited by outside influences, and these should not be ignored just because the football was inevitably good.

TOUR DE FRANCE

POGACAR RECLAIMS THE YELLOW JERSEY AFTER STAGE SEVEN WIN

by Our Sports Desk

TADEJ POGACAR (pictured) outsprinted rival Jonas Vingegaard yesterday to win stage seven of the Tour de France in Mur-de-Bretagne and reclaim the yellow jersey from Mathieu van der Poel.

Pogacar opened up his sprint 200 metres from the line with Vingegaard the only man from a select group able to follow his wheel, while 22-year-old Scot Oscar Onley beat Felix Gall into third place on the day.

It was here that Van der Poel beat Pogacar to take an emotional first career Tour stage win and with it the yellow jersey four years ago, honouring his late grandfather Raymond Poulidor, and with Van der Poel holding just a one-second advantage over Pogacar there was potential for a thrilling rematch.

But as they hit the 15 per cent gradients at the start of this two-kilometre climb for the second time, Van der Poel – paying the price of Thursday's breakaway effort – quickly lost the wheels as he gave up one minute and 20 seconds, dropping to fifth overall as he turns his attentions elsewhere.

Remco Evenepoel had been in the front group and led both Pogacar and Vingegaard under the flamme rouge, but he fell back to sixth at the line, allowing Pogacar to open up a 54-second lead over the Belgian at the top of the general classification. Vingegaard sits fourth, one minute 17 seconds back.

Pogacar celebrated a 101st



professional win but was understandably concerned about team-mate Joao Almeida, who fell in a late crash that also brought down Thursday's winner Ben Healy and Jack Haig among others.

"I'm super happy with the win today," Pogacar said. "We did it almost perfectly. I understand Joao crashed, I hope he's okay – if he's okay then it's a perfect day and if not then this victory is for him.

"Me and Mathieu both know this finish very well with nice memories. I guess we both wanted to win on this iconic climb but maybe he left too

much on the road yesterday so we couldn't have this rematch, but for me the day went as planned so it's amazing."

Geraint Thomas, the oldest man in the field riding his final Tour at 39, had been part of a five-man breakaway to try their luck on the 197km stage from Saint-Malo, but they were never given more than around 90 seconds as the main contenders eyed the potential to gain time on the steep finale.

The peloton again set a ferocious pace, with Pogacar's average speed 47.5kmh over rolling roads in northern France.

It proved too much for Van der

Poel, who can reflect on a first week that has brought a stage win and four days in yellow, before switching his attention to the fight for the green jersey.

"I was quite sure I would lose the jersey today so I tried to enjoy it as much as possible and I did," he said. "To come back to Mur-de-Bretagne was quite special wearing the yellow jersey after four years, I'm happy."

As he did on stage four into Rouen the young Onley, riding only his second Tour, hung with the main protagonists to the line and moved up to seventh in the general classification, two minutes 49 seconds back.

MEN'S TENNIS

Alcaraz stays on course for Wimbledon hat-trick

CARLOS ALCARAZ (top) overcame Taylor Fritz in four sets yesterday to reach another Wimbledon final and move a step closer to a third consecutive title.

The two-time defending champion ousted American fifth seed Fritz 6-4 5-7 6-3 7-6 (6) in two hours and 49 minutes on another sweltering day on Centre Court.

He will fancy his chances of completing a "three-peat" as well, having won all five of the grand slam finals he has contested.

The 22-year-old is now on a 24-match winning streak, and also took his scarily impressive career record on grass to 35 wins from 38 matches.

Unlike during the earlier rounds, Alcaraz came flying out of the blocks with a break in the first game.

He raced through the first set as if had somewhere else to be, dropping just four points on serve – and none behind his first serve – in just 35 minutes.

An hour and a quarter

had passed – as well as two interruptions for spectators struggling in the heat – before Fritz got so much as a look at a break point.

But at 6-5 Alcaraz had one of his occasional lapses in concentration, a double fault handing Fritz three set points, and one long forehand later the match was level.

After a lengthy change-over Alcaraz got back to business, drawing Fritz into the net before lobbing him for an early break.

This time he dropped just one point on serve all set and broke Fritz again to edge back ahead with exactly two hours on the clock.

The fourth went with serve – including a four-ace game from Fritz – and rumbled into a tie-break.

A sizzling Fritz backhand winner helped him bring up two set points, but Alcaraz nerveless saw both off and then converted his first match point to roar into a sixth grand slam final.



MEN'S FOOTBALL

Palace demoted from Europa League over ownership rules



GUTTED: Crystal Palace fans watch the action during a Premier League match at Selhurst Park, London

by Our Sports Desk

CRYSTAL PALACE have been forced to drop down to the Conference League after falling foul of Uefa's rules on multiclub ownership, it was announced yesterday.

Palace qualified for the Europa League thanks to their FA Cup final victory over Manchester City in May, but under Article Five of Uefa's club competition regulations, clubs wishing to be eligible for qualification in 2025-26 had to be able to demonstrate as of March 1 that no individual or legal entity had control or influence over more than one club in the same competition.

Uefa's Club Financial Control Body (CFCB) determined that US businessman John Textor's

interest in both Palace and Lyon meant only one of the clubs could enter the Europa League, with Lyon's higher league position edging out Palace.

Palace will drop into the Conference League, with Nottingham Forest expected to replace them in the Europa League, though this was not immediately confirmed by Uefa.

Uefa said the decision could be appealed against at the Court of Arbitration for Sport (CAS).

Uefa had to postpone a decision in the case pending the outcome of an appeal by Lyon against a decision by French football's financial regulator to relegate them to the second division.

Lyon had reached a settlement with Uefa agreeing to be excluded from European

competition if that relegation was upheld on appeal, but on Wednesday the club learned they had overturned the original decision and held on to their top-flight spot. At that point, Palace's prospects of playing in the Europa League appeared to recede considerably.

Textor, who has agreed to sell his shareholding in Palace to New York Jets owner Woody Johnson, told talkSPORT earlier this week he was "worried" this situation might arise from the moment Palace won the FA Cup.

Palace have been approached for comment.



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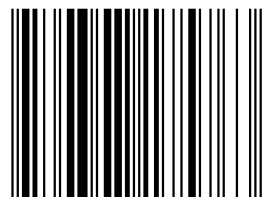
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