



for Peace and Socialism

Morning Star

£1.30 Tuesday June 6 2023

Proudly owned by our readers | Incorporating the Daily Worker | Est 1930 | morningstaronline.co.uk

CAMPAIGNERS HIT OUT AFTER MORE BARGES UNVEILED

by Ceren Sagir

Sunak accused of distraction tactics over migration failings

RISHI SUNAK'S announcement of two further barges to house around 1,000 asylum-seekers off Britain's coast is to distract from the urgent need to process claims fairly and quickly, campaigners warned yesterday.

The Prime Minister said that the number of people making the dangerous journey across the Channel was down by around a fifth since last year, playing down suggestions that it was a result of poor weather conditions rather than policy decisions.

In a speech in Dover, Kent, Mr Sunak defended measures to house asylum-seekers on barges – with the first one set to be moored in Portland, Dorset, within a fortnight, and the announcement of two more to house another 1,000 people.

He declined to say where the two new barges would be moored, although there has been widespread speculation one could be based on Merseyside.

The PM said that the returns deal with Albania had led to 1,800 people being sent back and was having a deterrent effect.

He also claimed the government is “on track” to clear the backlog for initial asylum decisions by the end of the year.

A total of 172,758 people were waiting for an initial decision on asylum applications at the end of March, up 57 per cent from a year earlier and the highest figure since comparable records began in 2010, according to Home Office figures.

Amnesty International UK chief executive Sacha Deshmukh called for the plan to use accommodation barges to be scrapped.

He said: “Like the use of former military barracks and reported plans to use decommissioned cruise ships, corralling large numbers of people onto giant barges is a terrible idea and should be abandoned.”

“Confining people who’ve

escaped terror, torture and other cruelty in locations which will inevitably lead to their social isolation is immoral and potentially unlawful.

“Like the deeply cruel Rwanda scheme, the giant barges project is being used to distract from the urgent need to fairly and efficiently decide people’s asylum claims, something this government is still failing to do.”

British Red Cross executive director Christina Marriott said the government’s focus should be on tackling asylum claims as people are “living in limbo,” sometimes for years, unable to work and separated from families.

She said: “People fleeing war and persecution should be able to access the system whenever they need it, regardless of how they arrived in the UK.”

Ms Marriott called for more accessible safe routes for people to reach Britain. The Refugee Council said that Mr Sunak’s claim yesterday that the asylum system is “overwhelmed by people from safe countries” is “simply untrue.”

It tweeted: “We are raising this repeated misinformation with the Home Office and writing to broadcasters.”

Turn to p3
Star comment: P8



STOP THE BOATS



Confining people who’ve escaped terror, torture and other cruelty in locations which will inevitably lead to their social isolation is immoral and potentially unlawful

Amnesty International



■ POLITICS

Britain's aid policy is failing the poorest countries, claims damning report from ICAI

by Berny Torre

BRITAIN is failing to ensure its support for trade in developing countries benefits the poor, a damning report from the aid watchdog has found.

The Independent Commission for Aid Impact (ICAI) review said Britain's aid for trade risks "focusing too narrowly short-term UK interests."

Britain has shifted its focus in Africa towards larger economies such as Ghana, Kenya, Nigeria and South Africa, where its potential trading opportunities are stronger at the expense of poorer countries, it found.

Commissioner Sir Hugh Bayley, who led the review, said: "Trade is a powerful driver of economic growth, but growth doesn't automatically help poor people."

"There are winners and losers, so aid for trade needs to focus relentlessly on ensuring that small businesses, small-holder farmers and employees reap some of the value of greater international trade."

Giving Britain's aid for trade an overall amber-red score, he added: "We saw UK aid helping poor countries to argue their case at the World Trade Organisation."

"The UK wants everyone to buy into a rules-based international system, so it is important we keep helping poor countries to engage with it even when

our aid budget is tight."

The foreign affairs committee has previously claimed China's Belt and Road Initiative may encourage countries to join its "efforts to undermine certain aspects of the rules-based international system."

The ICAI report also said Britain's reputation suffered when its aid commitments were "substantially reduced" mid-year in Kenya and Ethiopia, leading to "implementing partners to cancel some programmes and make staff redundant."

Among the five recommendations it made was that the government should develop and publish detailed guidelines for aid programmes "to ensure that the pursuit of secondary benefits to the UK does not detract from its primary poverty-reduction objective."

A spokesman for Global Justice Now said Britain's trade rules "have fostered a deeply neocolonial, extractive economy which is fuelling runaway inequality and climate change."

He added: "This damning report from ICAI highlights what many of us have warned about for some time – the UK's aid programme is increasingly focused on what's good for global big business with, at best, only a passing concern for what it means for those the aid is meant to help."

"Frankly, the poorest people would be better off without this sort of aid."

Liz McKean, Director of Campaigns, Policy and Programmes at War on Want said: "The UK government's 'aid for trade' policy proves that poverty is political. It benefits the UK's own economic interests, while cutting aid for the poorest. It is unprincipled, failing – and masks what is really going on."

"Trade deals are part of the global economic system – a system rigged to boost corporate profits and benefit the richest countries. The UK and other rich Global North countries have extracted \$152 trillion from the Global South since 1960, through unjust trade, tax and financial mechanisms – an amount far outstripping aid budgets."

"Although the ICAI is right to recommend UK aid must be focused on eradicating poverty, not fostering UK trade benefits – the Global South needs justice not charity. The UK and Global North countries must cancel crippling levels of Global South debt, overhaul tax rules to ensure corporations pay their fair share of tax – and pay reparations for centuries of plunder and exploitation."

An FCDO spokesperson said: "We welcome the report's publication and will publish a full response in due course. HMG is committed to reducing poverty through its Aid for Trade programmes and will take on board the ICAI report and its recommendations"

bernytorre@peoples-press.com

MEMORIAL: Artist Honor Titus photographs Delisser Bernard, in a clip featured in a BBC programme Windrush: Portraits Of A Generation, which follows 10 artists, from Britain and abroad, as they create portraits of those who arrived to Britain from the Caribbean more than 70 years ago. The 75-minute programme marks the 75th anniversary of the arrival of the HMT Empire Windrush to a dock in England and is being released on National Windrush Day this month.
Picture: Press Association

■ EMERGENCY SERVICES

Firefighters step up bid to prevent closures and cuts

by Berny Torre

FIREFIGHTERS in Scotland are stepping up their campaign to fight fire service cuts amid plans to close 10 stations despite major fires at Cannich and Edinburgh.

The devastating wildfire which broke out in the village near Inverness was one of the largest the country has ever seen and took four days before finally being brought under control last Wednesday. Firefighter Barry Martin, 38, died following the blaze at

Edinburgh's Jenners department store in January.

Fire Brigades Union (FBU) Scottish Secretary John McKenzie said: "Recent events at Jenners in Edinburgh and Cannich in the Highlands show the dangers our members face. The Scottish Fire and Rescue Service (SFRS) is heading for a real crisis if the Scottish government continues to underfund this essential public service."

The FBU is now urging its members and communities to lobby the government to end the underfunding of Scotland's Fire and Rescue Service.

It follows an announcement that fire engines at 10 stations across Scotland will be withdrawn on a "temporary basis" in an effort to tackle a budget crisis in the SFRS.

Mr McKenzie called their withdrawal "the latest in a long line of cuts that are undermining our members' ability to respond to incidents in the communities we serve."

A flat cash settlement means the SFRS has been forced to make £36 million of cuts over the next four years, said the FBU.

bernytorre@peoples-press.com

■ TRANSPORT

Glasgow airport staff balloted on strike

WORKERS at Glasgow airport are to be balloted on strike action in a row over pay, union officials announced yesterday.

Employees of OCS Group UK Limited will be asked about striking during the busy summer period, Unite revealed.

About 70 Unite members previously rejected an offer that would have taken their basic pay to £10.90 per hour. Unite said that the ballot

action was taken after OCS refused to offer its workforce an improved pay offer.

OCS staff assist airline passengers with mobility problems, helping with wheelchairs and ambulant vehicles at airports.

General secretary Sharon Graham said: "Unite's members provide specialist services which are absolutely vital if some passengers are to pass through the airport safely. We cannot accept con-

tinued poverty pay and our members are rightly angry. Unite will always stand up for our members fighting for better pay, terms and conditions."

The ballot opens on June 6 and closes a fortnight later on June 20.

If successful, Unite's OCS members will strike in early July as the airport enters its busiest time of the year.

OCS Group UK Limited has been contacted for comment.

Scottish
★ Morning Star

Women Readers & Supporters Group

Women's Human Rights in Palestine

Thursday June 8 2023, 7pm-8.15pm

The third in our series of Morning Star Women's events looks at the struggles of women in Palestine. A free event - women only.

Speakers: Manal Shqair is a Palestinian feminist and women's human rights defender.

Denise Christie is a feminist and trade unionist.

Chaired by Susan Galloway.

Online: <https://mstar.link/PalestineRights>



■ SCOTLAND

Primary care now at 'breaking point,' fears Scottish Labour

PRIMARY care in Scotland is at "breaking point" due to rising demand and SNP cuts, Scottish Labour warned yesterday after figures showed that the number of GP appointments were falling.

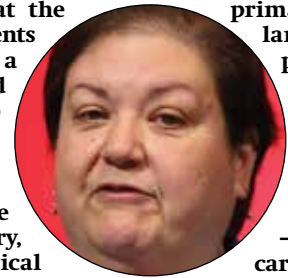
Official data this week has shown that the number of patients registered with a GP in Scotland has risen to 5.930 million – about 1,697 per GP in Scotland.

But for the month of January, just 2.4m physical GP appointments took place – roughly 300,000 short of pre-pandemic numbers.

Last week, British Medical Association Scottish GP committee chairman Dr Andrew Buist warned that one in 10 practices in Scotland have

formally closed their lists to new patients, describing the situation as "simply unsustainable."

Scottish Labour health spokeswoman Jackie Baillie (pictured) said: "The facts are clear for all to see – primary care in Scotland is at breaking point."



"Scotland's GPs are facing a perfect storm of increased demand and reduced funding – with primary care taking on more and more responsibilities due to the wider NHS crisis."

"[Health Secretary] Michael Matheson must recognise the scale of the crisis facing primary care in Scotland and act to bolster GPs across Scotland."

■ SCOTLAND

Tories 'cost Scots £1,500 per year'

by Our News Desk

THE Tory government's economic mismanagement has left people in Scotland more than £1,500 a year worse off, a new analysis by Labour has revealed.

Shadow business secretary Jonathan Reynolds is expected to unveil the party's new analysis today ahead of a visit to Rutherglen with Scottish Labour leader Anas Sarwar.

The party's analysis of official figures from the earliest data available in 1998 found that Scotland's gross domestic product (GDP) increased by just 12.7 per cent between 2010-22 – when the Conservatives came to power in Westminster.

This compares with a rise of 19.6 per cent between 1988 and 2010. Labour said that had the Scottish economy grown at the same rate under the Tories, its GDP would have been between £200 million and £8.5 billion bigger – equal to £1,633 more per capita.

In a speech today, Mr Reynolds is expected to

say that Labour would make Britain the fastest growing economy in the G7 and work with Scottish businesses to "unlock opportunity".

He will also promise that the party will "always respect and value the unique position of Scottish firms while pooling our resources and talent as a United Kingdom to bring prosperity to communities across nations and regions."

Mr Reynolds is expected to say: "I believe Labour's plans represent the kind of change, hope and optimism that I know has been hard to come by in recent years."

"We will only achieve the kind of change and progress we all want to see by working in partnership with each other."

"Business and worker, Westminster and Holyrood, public and private. No one has a monopoly on great ideas and ambition for Scotland."

news@peoples-press.com



■ SCOTLAND

COUNCIL SLAMMED FOR 'SCANDAL' OF FIRE AND REHIRE

UP FOR FIGHT: Union vows to protect nursery workers

by Our News Desk

A SCOTTISH council's plans to fire hundreds of nursery workers and rehire them on cheaper wages are an "outright scandal," a union slammed yesterday as it ballots members on strike action.

Unison said that North Lanarkshire Council's plans to lay off early years practitioners and then reappoint them on lower pay will affect about 375 full-time workers and see some salaries cut by up to £6,500.

Earlier this year, 91 per cent of the Unison members said they were willing to walk out over the issue.

The union is now balloting members on whether to take strike action and has vowed to fight the council's proposals "every step of the way."

Unison North Lanarkshire branch secretary Marie Quigley said: "Strike action is always

the last resort, but early years practitioners have made it very clear that they will do what it takes to have these plans scrapped.

"Demands on early years practitioners are increasing because they're seeing more children with increased educational needs, as a result of being unable to socialise during the pandemic."

"At a time when it's harder than ever to make ends meet, these mostly women workers are being asked to do the same work for considerably less."

"The council needs to put an immediate end to these plans and start prioritising children and the workforce our young people rely upon."

Regional organiser Audrey Malloy said that the council was jeopardising children's entire education, warning that the attainment gap will grow and children and their families will suffer.

She said: "Our early years practitioners don't want to be on a picket line, they want to be in nurseries working with children, but the council is leaving them very little choice."

"The whole community has been rallying in support of the workforce, it's high time the council realised their value too."

Unison Scottish secretary Tracey Dalling said: "To fire and rehire workers is not only an outright scandal, it's completely against both Labour and Scottish government policy."

"Councils across Scotland are feeling the funding squeeze but slashing workers' pay and putting the future of young people at risk is not the way forward."

The council said that the claim is "entirely inaccurate" to refer to the plan as a fire-and-rehire scheme and that it was "irresponsible" of Unison to frame it that way.

news@peoples-press.com

■ FRONT PAGE

Anger as PM unveils plan for 2 new barges

FROM PAGE ONE

"The asylum debate is complex and ministers have a duty to be accurate in their comments, whatever their view."

The Home Office estimates that the cost of detaining and deporting those arriving in small boats could hit £6 billion in two years, according to the BBC, which spoke to a senior government source.

Ministers have so far not revealed any costs linked to the plans, which come under the Illegal Migration Bill.

London Mayor Sadiq Khan called on government yesterday to urgently rethink the "cruel and unworkable" Bill, writing to Home Secretary Suella Braverman to warn that tens of thousands of people will be left stranded in the capital without any support or work.

The Labour mayor said that the Bill also risks incentivising and emboldening traffickers as their vulnerable victims will no longer be able secure protection and support to safely rebuild their lives.

He said: "We have a responsibility to help those fleeing oppression and violence, and the government should be urgently rethinking its plans as we work to build a better London for everyone."

cerensagir@peoples-press.com



APPEAL: Unite called on the London mayor to intervene on the side of workers
Pic: Jordan Pettitt/PA Wire/PA Images

■ LONDON

Khan urged to back homeless charity workers

by Berny Torre

MAYOR OF LONDON Sadiq Khan has been urged to support striking workers who help the city's homeless.

St Mungo's staff held a demonstration outside City Hall yesterday as their month-long strike entered its second week.

The workers and Unite union have now called on the mayor to intervene in the ongoing pay dispute.

Unite says that the value of their pay has plummeted by 25 per cent over the last decade while managers' pay has soared by 350 per cent.

General secretary Sharon Graham said: "Unite members at St Mungo's are on the front line fighting for the homeless.

"But the mayor's generous funding for rough sleeping services is not being fairly shared with the very workers who deliver these crucial services for the city.

"Low pay means St Mungo's workers are at risk of losing their own homes. Imagine that! A homeless charity confronting its own workers with ending up on the street themselves.

"So today we are calling on Sadiq Khan to intervene and call St Mungo's management to account and demand they

be paid a decent wage."

St Mungo's workers are to mount picket lines outside its head office in Tower Hill in London and in Brighton, Bristol and Oxford from May 30 until June 26.

The union said that the industrial action was over the charity's "pitiful" pay offer of 2.25 per cent made in April.

It added the imposition of "poverty wages" had left "many" of its workers in fear of being unable to pay their rents and mortgages, with front-line workers taking home less than £20,000 a year after taxes and deductions.

City Hall this year gave an extra £2 million in grants to the charity whose annual audits revealed a cash balance of some £22m in the past two years, said Unite.

St Mungo's chief executive Emma Haddad said: "Our latest offer, combined with the annual pay rise proposed by the National Joint Council, would have meant a pay rise of at least 10 per cent for those colleagues on the lowest salaries. This is what Unite has been asking for but voted against it.

"We believe our new offer was fair and appropriate. My door remains open to Unite, every day during the strike."

The Mayor's Office has been contacted for comment.
bernytorre@peoples-press.com

■ NURSING

'TORIES PLAYING A DANGEROUS GAME WITH NHS PLAN'

SHORTAGES: RCN warns of a 'catalogue of issues' facing workforce plan

by Ceren Sagir
Social affairs reporter

THE government is "playing a dangerous game" with the delay to the long-awaited NHS workforce plan, a nursing union warned yesterday as staffing numbers are plummeting and waiting lists soaring.

In England, the NHS workforce plan is supposed to address the chronic staff shortages and show a path towards fixing the crisis in the health service.

It was expected to include forecasts for the number of doctors, nurses and other professionals needed to maintain the workforce over the next five to 15 years.

But the Royal College of Nursing (RCN) has warned of a "catalogue of issues."

Its review of official data shows that health targets continue to be missed and patients failed.

In acute settings in England, more than 1.5 million more people waited longer than four hours in A&E in 2022 compared to 2011, the union said.

And the NHS elective care

waiting list has grown by 169 per cent in the same period.

In 2011, an average of 2.53 million patients were on waiting lists compared to 6.79 million last year. The data also shows waiting lists were continually growing even before the Covid-19 pandemic, according to the RCN.

At the same time, nursing vacancy rates since 2017 have remained stubbornly high.

The RCN said that according to the latest data, there are more than 40,000 nurse vacancies in the NHS in England.

RCN general secretary Pat Cullen said: "The crisis in the nursing workforce is leaving patient care at risk and the immense pressure could risk the collapse of health and care services. Ministers are playing a dangerous game by delaying the long-awaited NHS workforce plan – we simply

cannot wait any longer."

Ms Cullen said that the workforce plan "won't be the end of the story," adding: "Our assessment confirms the fact we need investment right across health and care services – without that patients will continue to lose out.

"Some of the most vulnerable are stuck in hospital, partly because of underinvestment in social care and more than a decade of declining community nursing numbers. The knock-on effect in hospitals is disturbing, with four-hour-plus waiting times increasing 16-fold between 2011 and 2022.

"This catalogue of issues must be addressed urgently, or many people will continue to go without the care they need. "No more delays, the government needs to deliver."

cerensagir@peoples-press.com

★ **ADVERTISE HERE**
☎ (020) 4541-5320
💻 ads@peoples-press.com

■ NORTH NORFOLK

Serco staff accept pay rise, ending dispute

SERCO workers in North Norfolk and Breckland have accepted a double-digit pay rise, putting an end to the threat of more refuse strikes, their union said yesterday.

Refuse, street cleansing, grounds maintenance and cleansing workers approved the two-year deal that includes a 20 per cent rise for the lowest-paid staff.

And HGV drivers have won a new basic rate of £14.31 an hour from April 2023, rising from £10.56 in March 2022.

In March, workers walked out for a week after no agreement was made.

They were due to strike again in April but called off action after receiving an improved offer and 55 per cent of Unison members voted in favour.

Unison Eastern regional organiser Cameron Matthews said: "Serco has spent the last few years raking in millions of profits while subjecting Norfolk workers to real-terms pay cuts and rock-bottom wages.

"But refuse, street cleansing, grounds maintenance and cleansing workers in North Norfolk and Breckland have stuck together to win a massive pay rise.

"These vital workers still deserve more – that's why the vote to accept was so close – but they've won a huge victory by joining together in Unison."



OLDER & WISER: Koko the chimpanzee celebrated reaching the milestone age of 50 at Whipsnade Zoo, Dunstable. The conservation zoo's oldest mammal marked her incredible half-century on Sunday June 4, while tucking into a smorgasbord of her favourite foods – including gem lettuces and cherry tomatoes – before playing in the spring sunshine with younger chimps Phil, Grant and Elvis
Pic: Will Amlot/Whipsnade Zoo/PA

SYBIL WHITE
6 June 1908 - 19 October 1995
West Middx CP
Director: London Co-op. Society 1960 -1975
Sec. to Harry Pollitt
Remembered with love and pride on her birthday and every day.
Jen and Phil

GMB CONFERENCE 2023

CYCLE OF TRUST: GMB national president Barbara Plant speaking at a GMB congress fringe meeting yesterday



WOMEN

Deeds not words needed to end sexual harassment

EMPLOYERS and unions must focus on “deeds not words” when fighting endemic sexual harassment in workplaces, GMB national president Barbara Plant said yesterday.

She told delegates at a GMB congress fringe meeting that having better policies is “never enough – they have to be enacted to build up a cycle of trust” with survivors.

The general union overhauled its own procedures following a damning independent investigation in 2020 which found it was “institutionally sexist” and suffered from “deep-rooted misogyny.”

Speaking in Brighton, Ms Plant said: “Having a policy is never enough – there has to be deeds as well as words.

“We then build up a cycle of trust.

“The reason women don’t come forward is because they don’t think they’ll be believed, they’re not treated with empathy.”

The ex-teaching assistant stressed that the union movement should “live up to our values of equality, inclusivity and solidarity every day, but we live in a patriarchal society and therefore we are part of that wider culture.”

PRIVATISATION

Social care should be in public hands

by Matt Trinder
Industrial reporter
in Brighton

BRITAIN’S largely privatised social care system should be recognised as a “national asset because our loved ones are not profit margins,” general union GMB demanded yesterday.

Delegates at the union’s annual congress in Brighton enthusiastically endorsed calls for Tory ministers to follow the examples of Scotland and Wales and kick start moves to bring the austerity-crippled sector into a national care service.

The move, accompanied by a £15-an-hour minimum wage, would help to end the “national scandal of care workers struggling on poverty wages as the worst operators look to squeeze every last penny into shareholder hands and tax havens,” central executive council member Amanda Burley said.

The essential sector’s workforce should also be included in statutory protections against physical assaults on emergency workers as “attacks and abuse, both physical and verbal, are just accepted as part of the job,” her Midlands colleague Tracey Ashton said.

London delegate Mary Goodson said: “Our care workers are not valued and recognised for the invaluable, vital role they perform.

“Years of underfunding and the results of recruitment and retention crisis have led to already difficult work

becoming harder.”

She warned of 165,000 vacancies nationwide but hailed GMB’s commitment to “fighting and making things better.”

Fellow member Michelle Hunt said that the issue is one “we all need to care about, because one day, every single one of us will need social care in one way or another.”

The Yorkshire delegate slammed “truly shocking” Thatcher-era reforms which forced care providers to compete with each other, saying it had helped to create a situation where “amazing key workers are being pushed to breaking point.”

Liz Martin from the union’s Scotland branch argued that the system is “beyond crisis and already broken” but warned the workforce is “not going back in the box” after the horrors of the Covid-19 pandemic.

To rapturous applause in the Brighton Centre, she said: “We’ll fight for £15 an hour, we’ll fight for better terms and conditions, we’ll fight to be valued, we’ll fight for respect and we’ll fight for a better social care system.”

And referring to care workers taking better-paid jobs at US-owned online retail giant Amazon, despite allegations of dangerous working conditions, Welsh delegate Yvonne Healy said: “If our members would prefer to work for Amazon, where employees leave in ambulances, there is something really wrong with our country.”

matttrinder@peoples-press.com

GMB CONGRESS

‘Free childcare is the right thing to do’

by Matt Trinder
Industrial reporter
in Brighton

CHILDCARE that is fully funded and free for the parents of all children from the age of one is the “right thing to do for families, the economy and the prosperity of our nation,” GMB union members said yesterday.

Delegates gathered in Brighton for the general union’s 2023 congress overwhelmingly backed a motion which demanded

“free quality childcare for all parents to ensure work is affordable.”

Moving the proposition, member Luke Simcock said that the move would also be a “step towards the meritocracy that unions were created to fight for.”

He warned that record-high childcare costs in Britain – thought to be among the highest in the world – “take up a substantial part of monthly income which affects working families, but it’s not just a matter of economics.

“Access to quality child-

care is essential for the early development and education of children. Studies show that children who [get it] are more likely to succeed in school and have better long-term outcomes in life.”

Tory ministers must create a “fully funded, free, quality childcare system for all children from the age of one to ensure no family is left behind,” Mr Simcock said. “This is matter of fairness – don’t all children deserve a level playing field?”

“Some may argue that the cost of free childcare is too high, but in truth, the

benefits of this policy far outweigh the costs.”

London delegate Christine Huston criticised government plans to offer all children under five 30 hours of free childcare a week from September 2025 as a reform which “looks good for the media and pushes up demand but not supply.”

Unions and campaigners have repeatedly warned that the austerity-hit sector is struggling to recruit enough workers to meet current demand, let alone a significant expansion.

matttrinder@peoples-press.com

UNITED FOR NATURE: Members of campaign groups Zero Hour, Friends of the Earth and UK Youth For Nature ahead of handing in campaign group Zero Hour’s ‘United For Nature’ petition to 10 Downing Street, London, on World Environment Day, calling on the government to help reverse nature loss by 2030

Pic: Doug Peters/PA Wire



in brief

Turkish battalion arrives in Kosovo

KOSOVO: The Turkish commando battalion requested by Nato has arrived in Kosovo to assist in quelling recent violent unrest in the Balkan country.

The Turkish Defence Ministry shared a video on Sunday showing troops wearing the insignia of the Nato-led KFOR peacekeeping force departing Turkey and arriving in Kosovo.

Palestinian toddler shot by troops dies

PALESTINE: A Palestinian toddler who was shot by Israeli troops last week in the occupied West Bank died of his wounds, hospital officials said yesterday.

Mohammed al-Tamimi was shot in the head last Thursday near his village of Nebi Saleh while riding in a car with his father. He was airlifted to Israel's Sheba Hospital, which announced the two-year-old boy's death.

The Israeli military said soldiers opened fire after gunmen in the area shot at a Jewish settlement.

Iran reopens Saudi missions after rift

IRAN: Iran's foreign ministry announced it would reopen its diplomatic missions in Saudi Arabia this week, restoring diplomatic ties after a seven-year rift.

The foreign ministry's spokesman, Nasser Kanaani said that the Iranian embassy in Riyadh, its consulate general in Jeddah, and office of the permanent representative to the Organisation of Islamic Co-operation would officially reopen on Tuesday and Wednesday.

EU-Poland row

POLAND: The EU stepped up its rule-of-law fight with member state Poland yesterday when the bloc's highest court confirmed that Warsaw had refused to comply with EU rules on judicial independence for which it has already lost over half a billion euros in fines. The European Court of Justice ruled yesterday that Poland's 2019 justice reform infringed EU law after the European Commission claimed that the Polish Supreme Court lacked the necessary independence and impartiality.

WEST AFRICA

Violence in Burkina Faso displaces over two million people

by Roger McKenzie

VIOLENCE linked to al-Qaida and Isis has made Burkina Faso a country with one of the world's fastest-growing populations of internally displaced people, according to government data released on Sunday. The new figures show more than two million people have been internally displaced in the west African nation, a rise of 2,000 per cent since 2019.

The dire humanitarian crisis, affecting mainly women and children, comes as conflict has pushed people from their homes into congested urban areas or makeshift camps.

Aid groups and the government are scrambling to respond amid a lack of funds and growing needs. One in four people requires aid, and tens of thousands are facing catastrophic levels of hunger.

Yet not even half of the \$800 million (£650m) humanitarian response budget requested last year by aid groups was

funded, according to the United Nations.

Alexandra Lamarche, a senior fellow at advocacy group Refugees International, said: "A lot of people might die, and they're dying because they weren't able to access food and health services, because they weren't properly protected, and the humanitarian assistance and the government response wasn't sufficient."

The country was the victim of two military coups last year.

The latest military regime, led by Captain Ibrahim Traore, which seized power last September, vowed to stem the insecurity, but jihadist attacks have continued to take place.

The government retains control of less than 50 per cent of the country, largely in rural areas, according to conflict analysts.

"The situation is very difficult ... People don't have food, children don't have school," said Bibata Sangli, who left the eastern town of Pama in January 2022 just before it came under siege.

She still has family there who are unable to leave, Ms Sangli said.

While the humanitarian situation deteriorates, so has the ability of aid groups to operate.

Since the military takeovers of Burkina Faso's government began in January 2022, incidents against aid organisations perpetrated by the security forces increased from one in 2021 to 11 last year, according to aid groups.

After jihadists attacked his village in eastern Burkina Faso in April, killing people and stealing cattle, a father of five, who did not want to be identified, fled to the region's main town of Fada N'Gourma.

But now his family does not have food or access to health-care and the assistance supplied by humanitarian groups is not enough, he said.

"Since we've been displaced, our situation keeps getting worse," the 46-year-old man said. "I miss my home."

rogermckenzie@peoples-press.com

RELATIONS

Saudis risk angering US after welcoming Maduro on visit

by Roger McKenzie

SAUDI ARABIA has welcomed Venezuelan President Nicolas Maduro on an official visit, reaching out to yet another foe of the United States as the oil-rich kingdom engages in a flurry of diplomacy.

Mr Maduro arrived late Sunday in the Red Sea city of Jeddah, where he was greeted by Saudi officials, according to the Saudi Press Agency.

Later this week the Saudis are hosting an international conference on combating extremism in the capital, Riyadh, which will be co-chaired by US Secretary of State Antony Blinken.

Saudi Arabia has been a close US ally for decades, but relations have been strained in recent years. Over the last few months, the kingdom has restored relations with Iran's theocracy and Syria's

President Bashar al-Assad.

Last month, the Saudis welcomed Ukraine's President Volodymyr Zelensky, a close Western ally, to an Arab League summit. But days later, they hosted a senior Russian official who is under Western sanctions.

The Saudis say they are pursuing their own national interests in a world increasingly defined by great power competition.

Experts say the diplomatic surge is aimed at shoring up regional stability and improving the kingdom's image as it seeks international investment

ment for massive development projects.

President Maduro was re-elected in 2018 but the US and its allies backed a self-appointed interim government in a move that has fizzled out over the past two years, although Washington has imposed severe sanctions on Venezuela.

However last week Brazilian President Luiz Inacio "Lula" da Silva announced that he supported the admission of Venezuela to the BRICS, an international co-operation forum that includes the world's largest emerging economies: Brazil, Russia, India, China and South Africa.

BRICS is proposing to set up an alternative international reserve currency to rival the US dollar.

The move also has the potential to make it harder for the US to impose unilateral sanctions on countries such as Venezuela.

rogermckenzie@peoples-press.com

NEW FRIENDS: President Maduro



VICTORIOUS: Delfina Gomez, Mexico state candidate for Morena, celebrates her electoral win during local state elections in Toluca

Pic: Associated Press



Pic: Associated Press

■ MEXICO

VICTORY FOR AMLO AS MORENA SECURES TOLUCA

ELECTIONS: New era for country's most populous state which has been ruled by PRI for 71 years

by Roger McKenzie

MEXICO'S most populous state turned its back on decades of single-party rule, deciding to move forward with President Andres Manuel Lopez Obrador's ruling Morena party over the long-dominant Institutional Revolutionary Party (PRI).

Results from electoral authorities on Sunday night indicated a victory for Delfina Gomez in the State of Mexico that was confirmed a short time later by Alejandra del Moral's concession speech.

The result was a new low for the PRI, which governed Mexico uninterrupted for 71 years until losing power in 2000 and had ruled the State

of Mexico for even longer until its loss Sunday.

A representative sampling of voting stations just hours after polls closed indicated Ms Gomez was likely to win between 52.1 per cent and 54.2 per cent of the ballots, compared with 43 per cent to 45.2 per cent for Ms del Moral, according to the National Electoral Institute.

"There is going to be a different governance," Ms Gomez said late on Sunday night before cheering supporters in the state capital of Toluca.

The state's first female governor elect stressed her commitment to the mothers of missing people and victims of femicide, and called for the public to denounce corruption.

However, the PRI-led coalition appears to have held onto the governorship in the sparsely populated northern border state of Coahuila.

At the time of writing, with most votes counted, the PRI coalition candidate Manolo Jimenez led by a massive 35 points over the Morena challenger.

But losing the State of Mexico was a heavy blow to the political fortunes of the PRI.

The contest was closely watched, too, because of its potential implications for next year's presidential elections.

Even without having selected its nominee yet, Morena is considered the frontrunner in that national election, more so now with control of the State of Mexico.

The State of Mexico hugs Mexico City on three sides, encompassing urban sprawl and rural ranches, as well as stunning inequality, violence and corruption.

For decades it has been the heart of the PRI.

The loss of the State of Mexico is a stunning reversal for a party that ruled Mexico uninterrupted for seven decades even though turnout was only about half of eligible voters in the State of Mexico. Adair Ortiz Herrera, an information systems student from Coyotepec, a rural area in the northern part of the state, said before the results were announced Sunday that he was sure "a new direction" was coming.

rogermckenzie@peoples-press.com

■ AFGHANISTAN

77 girls poisoned in school attacks

by Roger McKenzie

NEARLY 80 girls were poisoned and hospitalised in two separate attacks at their primary schools in northern Afghanistan, a local education official said on Sunday.

It is thought to be the first time this kind of assault has happened since the Taliban swept to power in August 2021 and began its crackdown on the rights and freedoms of Afghan women and girls.

Girls are banned from education beyond sixth grade, including university, and women are barred from most jobs and public spaces.

The education official said the person who orchestrated the poisoning had a personal grudge but did not elaborate.

There is no indication as to the motives behind the attacks which took place in Sar-e-Pul province over Saturday and Sunday or whether they were carried out by the same people.

Mohammad Rahmani, who heads the provincial education department, said nearly 80 female students were poisoned in Sangcharak district.

He said that 60 students were poisoned in Naswan-e-Kabod Aab School and 17 others were poisoned in Naswan-e-Faizabad School. "Both primary schools are near to each other and were targeted one after the other," he told the Associated Press. "We shifted the students to hospital and now they are all fine."

The department's investigation is ongoing and initial inquiries show that someone with a grudge paid a third party to carry out the attacks, Mr Rahmani said.

He gave no information on how the girls were poisoned or the nature of their injuries.

Mr Rahmani did not give the ages of the girls but said they were in grades 1 to 6.

Neighbouring Iran has been rocked by a wave of poisonings, mostly in girls' schools, dating back to last November.

Thousands of students said they had been sickened by noxious fumes in the incidents.

As with the attacks in Afghanistan, there has been no progress in identifying who might be responsible for the incidents in Iran.

rogermckenzie@peoples-press.com

■ UKRAINE-RUSSIA WAR

Belgium probes arms use

BELGIUM is investigating whether weapons it sent to help Ukraine defend its territory were used in fighting just over the border.

This follows a news report over the weekend by the Washington Post that equipment produced by a Belgian company turned up around Russia's Belgorod region.

Belgian Prime Minister Alexander De Croo told Belgian broadcaster VRT: "Defence and information services have started a probe to be absolutely sure what happened there."

The Washington Post report said arms from some Nato member countries, including the United States, Poland, Czechia and Belgium, had appeared in Belgorod, which

borders Ukraine.

The Post's report cast doubt on whether Ukraine had proper controls in place.

Mr De Croo said that European Union nations supplied Ukraine with weapons on the condition the arms were used only within the invaded country to defend its territory.

"The rule is very strict," the prime minister said, since Russia would likely see the use of the weapons outside Ukraine as Western provocation.

While there could be "leakage of our weapons to other conflicts," Mr De Croo said if there was any truth that arms destined to defend Ukraine were used in fighting in Russia, "we would take that extremely seriously."

■ SYRIA

US landmine kills three kids

AT LEAST three children have been killed and two others injured when a landmine planted by United States occupation forces exploded in Syria's energy-rich northeastern province of Hasakah yesterday.

News agency Sana, reported that children had been searching for scrap metal in an area close to a military facility housing US forces, when the landmine exploded on the outskirts of Qas-

rok village, located in the al-Malikiyah district of the province.

Local reports said two children were immediately killed while another died later in hospital. Two other children are reported to be in critical condition.

Although teams operate throughout the region to try to remove the danger there are still thousands of shells dropped by US occupation forces littering the northern territories of Syria.

★ Star comment

A smoke and mirrors government tries to obscure the real issues

AS THE government proceeds with its “cruel and unworkable” immigration measures, asylum-seekers are housed on barges and the cost of small boat deportations looks likely to hit £6 billion in just two years, Britain’s actual economy is in tatters.

Like some apocalyptic dystopian novel, our society is pulling itself apart, with in-work poverty spiralling, while the government benches and the right-wing media scream at us about immigrants and the undeserving poor, throwing in some occasional footage of Russians and Ukrainians killing each other in order to invoke a misplaced patriotism.

This barrage of anti-worker rhetoric reached fever pitch a couple of weeks ago with the mainstream newspaper headline “Millions paid benefits without ever having to find a job.”

The article bemoaned the increase since Covid in those claiming benefits due to physical or mental health conditions which prevent them from seeking work.

Not because of a concern with the huge increase in physical and mental health conditions following the government’s mishandling of the pandemic but because they consider it a drain on the economy.

This nasty line of thinking, that those who are too sick or disabled to work are a “burden” on society, is exactly what was behind the increased assaults on disabled people several years ago.

The article goes on to complain about an increase in the number of migrants coming to Britain, presumably in the hope that they will get a kicking too.

The same paper followed up last week with a handy tool to calculate “how much of your salary bankrolls the welfare state” – a move compared by several online to Nazi propaganda such as the Hier Tragst Du Mit (you share the burden) poster, promoting euthanasia rather than solidarity with disabled workers.



Of course, this kind of language – from government and the mainstream media – is back for a reason. As the economy plummets and the cost-of-living crisis rages out of control, the vast majority of working people will be getting significantly poorer in real terms, and in ways they will notice.

In this situation, there are only two alternatives: extend the full resources of the state and the media to turn worker against worker, to demonise disabled workers and immigrant workers and paint them as somehow different from other workers, or to risk the anger of a united working class being directed at the real causes of their decreasing standard of living.

So, what is happening in the real economy, away from the puppet-theatre of immigrant workers and disabled workers trying to steal your wages?

The cost-of-living crisis has bitten deep, with food inflation running at over 19 per cent in March and seven in 10 children in poverty now living in households with parents in work.

A primary cause of this crisis is greed, or excess profits. Recent economic instability and price fluctuations have presented an ideal opportunity for speculation and accumulation by big business.

Just like the spivs in WWII, multinational corporations and taking advantage of war and climate chaos to rapidly increase profits, raising prices while holding down wages.

At the same time, the fact our economy is so prone to this kind of manipulation is because of deep structural weaknesses in aggregate supply.

Privatisation and lack of investment have led to weak productivity growth, and the unbalanced nature of our economy, with the massive decline in manufacturing and an excessive reliance on financial services, has left us unable to tackle rising inflation without a radical rethink.

We need an alternative economic strategy. The national care service and investment in the NHS called for GMB and RCN this week are a key part of this.

Public services, and benefits, are a way of investing in our society and our economy. But we also need a coherent industrial strategy. As Community AGS Alasdair McDiarmid says, the government should be “creating the conditions for massive investment in the industries of the future.”

And we urgently need price controls and increased wages. This is the only way out of the current crisis.

Voices of Scotland



The SNP’s national care bill is really an attack on

THE Scottish government is legislating for a scheme that will fundamentally undermine the idea of direct public delivery of services.

That it is calling it a “national care service” should fool no-one. That it is undermining fundamental NHS principles in doing so should worry everyone.

It’s often assumed that the plans embodied in the National Care Service (Scotland) Bill concern only residential care, or perhaps care in the community. Not so.

The scope and ambition of the legislation is huge, as Kevin Stewart the then-minister for in charge, was fond of saying: “The national care service as proposed in the Bill will bring together social work, social care and community health.”

The proposed NCS will take responsibilities and functions from the NHS, giving them to new quangoes called care boards.

The care boards won’t deliver services themselves, but instead contract and procure services from public, private and third-sector providers.

In doing so they can exclude health boards from even bidding for contracts to deliver services which are currently

NHS responsibilities.

Section 41 of the Bill deals with procurement. Care boards, remember, will have no delivery capacity of their own, and will be contracting for and procuring all of the services they are responsible for.

This is a key part of the Bill,

and it specifies that boards can – not must but can – reserve contracts for what are called “qualifying organisations.”

The definition of “qualifying organisation” includes bodies with a variety of structures and ownership types which can be broadly described as being “not for profit.”

The Scottish government however has made very clear that it will not consider either health boards or local councils as “qualifying organisations.”

The scope of services that the NHS can be excluded from even trying to provide is enormous. An earlier clause in the Bill (section 28) gives ministers sweeping powers to transfer functions out of the NHS and into the NCS. Section 41, though, provides a guide to areas that will be in scope.

Services are listed not by name but by Common Procurement Vocabulary (CPV) codes. CPV codes are part of a European-wide scheme which is aimed to make markets in public services work more smoothly.

Once functions go from being publicly delivered public services to commodities in a marketplace, there then becomes a need for them to be rigidly defined for parcelling into contracts.

So instead of obviously stat-

ing that supply services of nursing can be taken out of the NHS personnel – that might scare the parliamentary horses – the Bill instead uses the much less obvious designation 79624000-4. Similar with supply of medical personnel 79625000-1 and much else besides. In fact the Bill includes “a code in the range beginning with 85000000-9 and ending with 85323000-9.”

That is a list that starts with “Health and social work services” ends with “Community health services” and takes in just about every medical function you can think of in between.

The NCS Bill, if passed, will institute a new service based on contracting and procurement. This aim of the SNP/Green government is that this will spend around a third of the budget currently going to councils, and a smaller but significant chunk of the budget currently going to the NHS.

This is a massive expansion of markets in public service provision. Community health won’t something that the NHS does – it’s something that the NHS needs to beat competition to be allowed to do, with an official view that having a “mixed economy” of providers will improve things.

For the NHS staff concerned



That the Bill attacks our NHS is merely the latest of many good reasons to call for its withdrawal



are service the NHS

Be under no illusions – the Scottish government’s new care Bill is a nothing more than a glorified contracting and procurement scheme, writes **STEPHEN LOW**

this will mean insecurity forever. This structure is based on the idea that there are no in-house services. The care boards will deliver services via time limited contracts. Tupe will hang over everyone forever.

More insidious it marks a step back to a purchaser-provider split in health services abolished in Scotland a quarter century ago.

The Thatcher and Major governments’ principle innovation in the NHS was that the way to run the NHS efficiently was to make a separation between the bodies that commission the services and those that deliver the services.

Abolishing that was one of

the first things that was done under devolution – in fact the first steps were taken by Donald Dewar before the Scottish Parliament was set up.

Yet it is the very foundation of what we are being asked to accept as a national care service – and if that is deemed the best way to run all of community health. Why should it stop there and not involve other areas?

Having delayed a vote on the Bill three times even elements within the Scottish government are aware this Bill is a shambles on stilts.

That the Bill attacks our NHS is merely the latest of many good reasons to call for its withdrawal.



TSSA moving forward in 2023

ANDY BAIN reports on the 126th TSSA conference that took place from June 3-5 in Cork

THE TSSA has been in the fore in hybrid conferences and the voting by the 55 delegates present and six online worked very smoothly.

TSSA’s 126th annual conference in Cork took place in the wake of two abandoned mergers, both described as “uncomfortable for TSSA” by the current interim general secretary Peter Pendle.

Guest speaker Liam Berney of the Irish Congress of Trade Unions spoke of the change in public mood in Ireland due to the experience of the pandemic and profit frenzy that followed.

People saw that an interventionist state and good public services, as opposed to the free market, were needed and the trade unions are popular again, especially among the young and women.

Conference agreed to call for the extension of free period products already available in Scotland and to employers of TSSA members nationally. This was moved and seconded by two men.

First-time delegate Mark Harris moved that while we recognise the Labour Party as a voice for the working class in Parliament, support from them is not unconditional.

The ignored instruction of the 2021 conference “to commence a consultation exercise with members on our association’s future relationship with the Labour Party” was agreed, against the EC.

Melissa Heywood, the next

TSSA president from July 2023, said this would mean not being able to attend the Labour Party conference nor take part in policy forums, but the delegates agreed with the consultation exercise.

In what is usually the main conference debate, transport policy, several important areas were covered.

TSSA prides itself in its efforts to improve rail safety and so the recent horrific rail accident in Greece, causing 57 deaths, was covered in some detail.

The Greek railways were privatised five years ago and are now run on the cheap by an Italian operator. In most parts there is no signalling system and the trade unions there have warned many times of the disaster to come.

Needless to say the British mainstream media does not mention the private profit direct contribution to these foreseeable deaths.

Echoing what is proposed here, many rail strikes in Greece have been declared illegal. Solidarity greetings were sent.

In 2019 transport was the biggest single emitter of carbon, so public transport and climate change measures were key demands. As from May 2023 larger lorries will be allowed on the roads and this was condemned.

Much criticism was made

of Tory policies and the final demand was to “work towards an early reintegration of Britain’s railways under public ownership and control.”

Steve Coe, ex-AGS and now delegate from the north-east, in the Future of Rail Industry motion won policy to “work with other rail unions, the TUC and rail users’ groups to campaign for a positive future Britain’s railways.”

This theme was carried on into the open debate on the Strategic Plan – Initial Direction of Travel.

Pendle said that when he started with TSSA he was surprised to find there was no current strategic plan, that nobody had a real answer to why the proposed mergers with the US-based International Brotherhood of Boilermakers and then the GMB and that nobody supported these mergers.

This would not include the four senior staff who have either been dismissed or suspended.

Earlier in 2023 the previous general secretary, Manuel Cortes, was suspended then dismissed for gross misconduct following the Baroness Kennedy KC investigation.

Kennedy reported on this to conference, then the appeals of Cortes and Luke Chester were heard and voted on.

Kennedy addressed the conference via phone. Early on in

the inquiry she had asked staff if they were confident in TSSA having fair complaint processes but most said no and were scared, so the investigation was done in confidence.

This produced much credible and circumstantial evidence of harassment and wider poor governance and evidence that staff were treated disrespectfully.

Recommendations included that the four senior managers in the inner leadership should not remain in the TSSA.

Cortes did not challenge the claims against his behaviour and focused only on what he claimed was an unfair process for his dismissal.

Interim president Marius Alexandrou replied, summarising some of the examples of harassment and bad management practices during Cortes’s period as general secretary.

Cortes was asked to provide evidence but did not. Some employers of TSSA members even threatened to stop recognition unless they acted quickly and the union lost members, citing the Kennedy report.

He was dismissed for serious examples of gross misconduct and bringing the TSSA into disrepute and a fair process had been used. The appeal by Cortes was lost overwhelmingly (90 per cent).

The Meloni government is a regime of private corporations that is normalising fascism

MAURIZIO COPPOLA

from the Italian leftist party Potere al Popolo talks to Muhammed Shabeer about the policies of the far-right government in Italy and the campaigns by the Italian working class to resist the anti-worker policies of the ruling coalition

CAN you tell us about Potere al Popolo's campaign to ensure a minimum wage of €10 per hour in Italy. What has been the government's response to instituting a minimum wage in the country?

Italy is one of a few countries in the European Union without a legal minimum wage; 21 out of 27 EU countries have instituted minimum wages.

In Italy, minimum wages are only determined in collective labour agreements, but these salaries are often very low – around €4-6 per hour.

In addition, Italy is the only country in the continent where since 1990, real wages are not growing – they even diminished by 3 per cent in the last 30 years. Thus, one out of 10 people in Italy are working poor, among the youth, this number increases to one out of six.

Already a year ago, Potere al Popolo started a political campaign seeking the introduction of a legal minimum wage. At the end of May, together with the alliance Unione Popolare, we submitted a legislative proposal to institute a minimum wage of at least €10 per hour, which will also be automatically inflation-linked.

On June 2, all over Italy, we will start collecting signatures. It is a way to respond to a concrete need of the people whose working and living conditions

are under severe attack today, and at the same time, organise them at the workplaces, in the neighbourhoods, and in local committees.

Despite the urgency of the demand, the government of Giorgia Meloni continues to say there is no need to regulate wages.

Her opposition to a legal minimum wage is in continuity with the neoliberal politics of her predecessor and former European Central Bank chief Mario Draghi.

Today, the government prefers intervening with some one-time cuts in the labour tax wedge which temporarily brings some crumbs in the wallet of the workers, rather than introducing a systematic redistribution of the produced wealth.

This confirms that the Giorgia Meloni government is a regime of private corporations and not of the working class.

What has been the impact of the recent floods in the Emilia Romagna region? How effective is the government's attempt to provide relief to the flood-affected people?

What we are facing in the Emilia Romagna region today is not simply a natural catastrophe. It is the result of years and years of cementification of the country, misguided urban development, lack of maintenance



FESTIVITIES:
The Tricolor Arrows of the Italian Air Force flies over Rome to start the celebrations for the 77th Republic Day on June 2

of the hydrogeological basin of the territory, and the dismantling of public civil protection.

In Italy, the artificial covering of the soil has risen to 7.13 per cent of the whole territory, the EU average is 4.2 per cent. Every second, Italy loses two metres square through cementification, that is 19 hectares per day.

As the ecological association Legambiente highlights, 16 per cent of the Italian territory – where around 7.5 million people live – is at high hydrogeological risk.

Earthquakes, wildfires, floods – Italy was never ready to respond in a proper way and with a long-term perspective to any of these catastrophes.

That's why we are not talking about natural disasters but about the failure of all the governments over the previous decades – centre-left, centre-right, and ultra-right-led governments.

Giorgia Meloni has now promised an emergency finan-

“

Earthquakes, wildfires, floods – Italy was never ready to respond in a proper way to any of these catastrophes

cial intervention of €2 billion, which she presented as “the highest emergency intervention in the history of Italy.”

But, of course, the problems are deeper: how much money will be invested in the long term to strengthen the maintenance of the whole territory and the public institutions working on that aspect (civil, forest, hydrogeological protection, etc) and how will the government get this money?

Will it implement laws to protect the territory, for example, a radical stop to cementification? It is highly improbable that such steps will be taken.

How do you evaluate the policies of the current government in Italy, especially towards the working class? On the 78th anniversary of the liberation of Italy from fascism, how do you view the fact that right-wing forces are still in mainstream Italian politics?

The first eight months of the ultra-right government in Italy were characterised by at least four important aspects. First, the dismantling of social assistance payments for poor people that permitted around one million people to step out of absolute poverty in the last four years.

Ironically, Giorgia Meloni used Workers' Day on May 1 to present the reform which increases the obstacles to accessing public help for the working poor.

Second, the government has been accelerating attacks against migrants and refugees. Of course, the anti-migrant discourses and policies didn't start with Giorgia Meloni, but we are witnessing an incredible acceleration on a number of different levels.

The ultra-right government is limiting, once again, access to political and humanitarian asylum for those coming from countries such as Syria, Afghanistan and Iran.



government's support for the war efforts in Ukraine? In what ways does the government collaborate in the escalation of the war and what has been the reaction from the Italian working class?

Since the beginning of the war, Italy supported the militarisation of the conflict led by the US and Nato (sending weapons and logistical support to Nato bases in Italy), the political and economic marginalisation through sanctions, and the cultural demonisation through Russophobia (exclusion of Russian participants from cultural events, for example). These measures were initiated by Mario Draghi and continued by Giorgia Meloni.

CLAMPDOWNS: Italy PM Giorgia Meloni, of the far-right Brothers of Italy party

But the anti-migrant policies are also recognisable in the ultra-right family policies: facing falling birth rates and an extremely ageing society, the government proposed introducing tax exemptions for families with more than one child.

But the migrant population is mostly excluded from this measure, as migrants often earn too little to pay taxes and thus profit from tax exemption.

Third, there is also an acceleration in criminalising social and political activism. In the aftermath of protest actions by Ultima Generazione – an ecologist movement composed of young people colouring walls of institutional buildings, museums, etc, in order to alert the population that we are headed to human extinction – the government presented a law that increases the punishment for activism to a €60,000 fine and the possibility of six years in prison.

Of course, the aim of defining these activists as “terrorists” is not simply to punish the ecologist movement, but also and above all to scare off all sorts of social and political dissent.

Fourth, the treatment of memory and history has changed radically with the ultra-right government. Representatives of the Italian government are specifically working to erase anti-fascism from Italian history.

Whether it be the significance of April 25 (the liberation day of Italy from Nazi-fascism thanks to the resistance led by partisans), the massacres of fascism, or the nature of the Italian constitution, there is a conscious attempt to obscure the anti-fascist character of Italy's past.

This has two objectives: first, it's a way to shift public attention away from the incapacity of the government to respond to the real needs of the working class; second, it's a way to normalise authoritarianism and fascism in Italy again.

During the past few years, different surveys and polls have confirmed that a majority of Italians are against sending weapons to Ukraine and against war.

But, unfortunately, this social majority does not lead to a political majority; on the contrary, today, the entire Italian political-institutional spectrum supports the government's position (with some exceptions in the government's coalition parties Lega and Forza Italia).

In addition, 15 months of one-sided reporting on the war has led to a change in public opinion: more and more people think that the only way to end the war is the military defeat of Russia.

The Italian government is contributing to the escalation of the war by preventing any peace negotiation efforts. In mid-May for example, when Ukrainian President Zelensky was touring Europe, he first stopped in Italy where he met Pope Francis who insisted on peace negotiations, and Giorgia Meloni who assured him additional military support.

Why didn't she back the peace efforts of the Pope? Because economic and political interests linked to the military-industrial complex and post-war reconstruction of Ukraine still dominate her positions, and not the people's need for peace.

But there is also another side of Italy: On February 24 2023, the Genoa dock workers organised a major demonstration against militarism at the port.

The Italian peace movement seems to be reviving and is bringing thousands of people to the streets. It is our task now to join these forces in order to build political power and challenge not only the government's support to the ongoing war in Ukraine but also the entire ultra-right regime of Giorgia Meloni.

Mexico and solidarity journalism

DAVID RABY reports on the difficulties in raising international awareness of Mexico's transformation

IN HIS remarkable daily press conferences (mananeras) Mexican President Andres Manuel Lopez Obrador (Amló) has repeatedly insisted that the press cannot be truly objective or neutral, and that “independent” journalism is a myth, a cover for hidden bias.

So when on May 17 I had the great good fortune to be allowed to attend one of these events for the Morning Star, I thought carefully about how to describe my work.

I decided the best term to use is solidarity journalism. What we and other progressive media do is to report and comment, with accuracy and balance as far as possible, but with a clear commitment of solidarity with social movements and progressive governments.

Reflecting my own observations and those of many Mexicans, I asked the president whether Mexican embassies around the world (including that in London) could not do more to publicise the positive transformation taking place in his country.

They are, in general, efficient in their diplomatic work and in services for Mexican citizens, but say very little about the profound process of change in their country.

In response Amló recognised that embassies could do more in this respect, and explained that if they don't, it's because many career diplomats are right-wing.

This is still the case because the government respects their labour rights so long as they don't actively betray the cause.

He declared that the actual



CHANGING TIMES: A woman casts her ballot in the Mexico State vote at the weekend; (below, left) Amló poses with Jeremy Corbyn; and (below, right) David Raby

ambassadors (including Josefa Gonzalez Blanco in London) who are political appointees are in his opinion more reliable.

Many Mexicans don't agree and are not satisfied, to judge by the hundreds of favourable comments and retweets my question received in the next few hours and days.

Amló is masterful at handling such questions tactfully, implicitly recognising the criticism while avoiding confrontation (in this case with his own diplomatic service) for the time being.

He may well consider this a matter to be dealt with at a later date, possibly by the next president. His willingness to

engage in extensive discussion on such issues shows his commitment to dialogue and support for progressive media, and the importance of promoting international awareness of this.

An interview I had a few days earlier on the satirical TV programme El Chamuco (The Devil) pointed in a similar direction, with the hosts welcoming use of the term “solidarity” which had gone out of fashion.

They agreed that international awareness of Mexico's transformation is far from adequate, and praised the work done by the Morning Star and a few other progressive media outlets.

They also showed great interest in the critical economic, social and political situation in Britain, and were delighted to hear of protests against the monarchy.

Current events underline Amló's continued success despite tenacious right-wing hostility, and hence the importance of solidarity.

Last Sunday there are crucial elections of governors and local authorities in two states, the State of Mexico (Edomex, which surrounds the capital and has 17 million population, the largest in the country) and Coahuila (a northern border area).

Both had long been opposition controlled, and with the win of Amló's Morena party, the 4T transformation has taken another great step forward.

International coverage of the election campaigns confirms the importance of solidarity journalism.

A few days ago (May 31, “How a Mexican state siphoned off millions”) the Guardian car-



ried a surprisingly accurate report on massive corruption under the existing PRI regime in Edomex, but only after publishing a dreadful piece the previous week (May 23, “A megaproject of death”) on Amló's Tren Maya railway project, full of distortions and falsehoods.

The message of this liberal Establishment organ is clear: we recognise the corruption of the old regime in Mexico and what remains of it, but don't expect much progress under Amló.

In Britain we have one great advantage with regard to Mexico: the friendship and commitment of Jeremy Corbyn and his Mexican partner Laura Alvarez with Amló.

But the need for regular and detailed solidarity journalism could not be greater, as we aim to provide with our new Mexico Solidarity Forum and with the support of the US-based Mexico Solidarity Project.

■ David Raby is a retired academic, writer and journalist in solidarity with progressive movements and governments in Latin America. He can be reached at rabylda@riseup.net and on Twitter @DLRaby.



What has been the popular opinion about the Italian

■ This article is republished from Peoplesdispatch.org.

WEATHER OUTLOOK



TODAY

Cloud slowly burning back to the east, but some places remaining rather grey and chilly throughout. Best of the sun again in the west, where it will feel warm.

NEXT FEW DAYS

Staying largely settled with sunniest skies in the west. Feeling very warm in the sun, but chilly along eastern coasts. Perhaps a few showers in the south-west on Friday.

CONTACT US

GENERAL ENQUIRIES

The Morning Star,
Ruskin House,
23 Coombe Road,
London CR0 1BD
enquiries@peoples-press.com
(020) 8510-0815
(Mon-Fri 10am-5pm)

ADVERTISING

Moshfiqur Noor
ads@peoples-press.com

CIRCULATION

Bernadette Keaveney
circulation@peoples-press.com
(020) 4541-5320

CAMPAIGNS

Calvin Tucker
campaigns@peoples-press.com

Tell us what you'd like to see
more of in your paper! Email
editorial@peoples-press.com

Fighting Fund with Keith Stoddart

24
days left

YOU'VE RAISED: **£4,142** WE NEED: **£13,858**



WE'VE received 39 contributions totalling £397, bringing June's total to £4,142.

Sometimes when writing the column I must be a detective, especially if contributors, like us, bank with the Co-op as they don't tell us who transferred the money – there is only a code.

However, having received: "Thanks to the government stopping proper deals with

railway unions I cannot go to Sheffield tomorrow. So, this £25 represents my return rail fare plus a fiver that I would have handed over at the AGM." An online participant sent in £10, as did Northants Communist Party.

Thanks to all who moved us forward, with contributions from Derbyshire, Southampton, South Yorkshire, Berkshire, London, Hook and Glasgow the

locations that I'm aware of.

Today marks the 79th anniversary of the opening of the long-awaited second front with the invasion of Normandy.

Until then physical opposition to fascism had been left to the Soviets and brave partisans across occupied Europe.

Unlike the Nazi-supporting Daily Mail, our forerunner, the Daily Worker, offered a plat-

form for those opposing fascism before and during the war and continues to do so today.

On Sunday, your paper was available as it had been for the previous 18 weeks at a counter-protest against today's fascists outside a hotel in Erskine housing those fleeing oppression. That we can be there is thanks to the Fund hitting its target, please continue to do so.

Give by BACS...

Sort code 08-90-33, account 50505115,
name PPPS Ltd - FIGHTING FUND

online...

morningstaronline.co.uk/
page/support-us

by phone...

(020) 8510 0815
(Mon-Fri 9am-4pm)

...or by post

Cheques to PPF, 23 Coombe
Road, London CR0 1BD

DAILY SUDOKU

(hard)

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

Solution tomorrow...



Yesterday's sudoku

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

TV preview

with Ann Douglas



Pic: BBC/BBC Cymru Wales/Paul Hawkins/ITV Cymru Wales

HORRIFIC CRIMES: The real-life former detective Paul Bethell recounts the harrowing details of the investigation into the murders of three women in 1973 that served as the basis for drama *Steeltown Murders*

Documentary tells the story of how a killer was found years after his crimes

STEELTOWN MURDERS: Hunting a Serial Killer (9pm BBC1) is a companion documentary to the drama of the same name.

It tells the inside story of the police investigation into the 1973 murders of three teenage girls near the steel town of Port Talbot. With revealing interviews from detectives at the heart of the reinvestigation and emotional first-time interviews from friends and family of the girls, the programme reveals how, after nearly 30 years, Wales's first serial killer was finally unmasked.

Across the road you can tune in to **Forensics: The Real CSI** (9pm BBC2). This chilling episode discusses a case of a 12-year-old girl who told West Midlands Police that she had

been groomed online and raped several times.

The suspect is arrested soon after but there's limited physical evidence so officers have to pull out all the stops with the use of digital forensics.

For something much lighter, **Butterflies: A Very British Obsession** (3.30pm BBC2) captures the beauty of butterflies close up, and revealing how they inspire the images of street artist Nick Walker and the performances of burlesque dancer Vicky Butterfly. The programme also raises the question of whether a passion for these elegant insects could help people preserve much-loved landscapes.

Jane McDonald **The British Soap Awards 2023** (8pm ITV1) from the Lowry Theatre in Salford.

Coronation Street, Doctors, EastEnders, Emmerdale and Hollyoaks duke it out for the best trophies.

Biographical drama **Pawn Sacrifice** (11.15pm BBC2) stars Tobey Maguire and Liev Schreiber.

At the height of the cold war, chess prodigy Bobby Fischer becomes an unlikely hero, but his mental health suffers under the pressure of success. His paranoia reaches a peak at the 1972 World Chess Championship, where he faces Soviet grandmaster Boris Spassky in a match seen as a battle between the two world powers.

Olga Koch: OK Computer (6.30pm BBC Radio 4) explores the technological world through the eyes of one comedian and computer scientist.

QUIZMASTER

with William Sitwell

TODAY'S QUESTIONS

1. What is the name of the body of water that separates East Lothian from Fife?
2. Which of the Greek gods was said to cause the earth to tremble?
3. True or false: kiwis (the birds) are active at night.

STRONG & SWIFT: The Danube in Budapest
Pic: *Visions of Domino/CC*



YESTERDAY'S ANSWERS

1. Buda is on the right bank, and Pest on the left, of which river? **The Danube**

2. What is the name of the woman in Sheridan's play *The Rivals* who makes

mistakes in her speech? **Mrs Malaprop (hence the word malapropism)**

3. Is the triangle on the flag of Cuba red, white or blue? **Red**

PREVIEW

Queen Camille

LIAM MALONEY and ALICE MASTERSON welcome the release of the suppressed 1987 Prince album *Camille*, a radical subversion of gender stereotypes

POP has long been a rich space for subverting gendered stereotypes and Prince consistently challenged the rigidity of binary gender roles. At once hyper-masculine and delicately feminine, he cuts a distinctive and enigmatic figure within queer pop history.

Now, a cancelled 1987 album that explores all these elements is finally about to see the light of day on Jack White's *Third Man Records*.

By 1986 Prince was already cemented as a potent force in popular music. After the success of the *Purple Rain* movie 18 months earlier and a slew of successful mould-breaking singles, Prince returned to the recording studio with his sound engineer Susan Rogers to embark on a new project.

It revolved around one core concept that Prince wanted to explore: his voice.

Through processing his vocals in the studio, Prince and Rogers were able to increase the pitch of his voice so it no longer sounded what we might call "male". This more "feminine" or "female" voice was christened *Camille* by Prince and became the centre of his new project.

There is also evidence to suggest that aspects of *Camille* were inspired by Herculine Adelaide Barbin, a 19th-century French intersex person who identified as female.

Rogers was instrumental in bringing *Camille* to life.



She has described *Camille* as a figure "who might have been male, might have been female, it wasn't really clear – might have been kind of ghostly, might have been kind of humanoid."

A study from the *Journal of Voice* illustrates that voices that are manipulated in this way are perceived as "non-male." In essence, this research shows that altering the voice can have an impact on how we perceive someone's gender, and the processing of Prince/*Camille*'s voice is done to a degree that defies the gender binary.

If, as originally intended, we didn't know that this album was produced by Prince, we might have a very different perspective on the singer. *Camille* might have been perceived as female, or possibly as queer or trans – at least in terms of her voice.

Yet, her voice and delivery aren't our only clues to her identity. It can also be found in what she says.

If *I Was Your Girlfriend* is one of the songs which sur-

vived and made it on to *Sign 'O' The Times*, and in some early releases is even credited to *Camille*. The song is perhaps where the combination of lyrics and artificial vocal manipulation are most striking. Opening with six bars of falsetto sighs and screams, the song introduces us to a more vulnerable *Camille*. This vulnerability soon gives way to something more urgent.

The meaning of "girlfriend" is as ambiguous as we have come to expect from Prince. The opening verses describe our narrator and the addressee doing arguably platonic activities, like choosing outfits and swapping stories about those who have wronged them. It is not long, however, until *Camille* sings of the sexual gratification that might result from such closeness and promises of long baths and kisses "down there, where it counts" soon follow.

Camille makes reference early on to having been the former "man" of the person she sings to and suggestions of children occur in the spoken section. Yet her pleas to girlfriend status make up the majority of the song. All elements are sung in *Camille*'s distinctive timbre. Jumping between male and female signifiers throughout, *Camille* could be said to occupy an ambiguous space here, leaving us little in the way of explanation.

The track might be presenting *Camille* as a transgender persona.

On the track's original B-side,



Pic: jimieye/CC

Prince's first visit to Ireland in May 2007

Shockadelica, we find *Camille* in a less melancholic mood. Prince sings about *Camille*, but in her voice. Is Prince talking about this mysterious, bewitching woman, or is *Camille* singing in the third person, as befits a diva?

Either way, *Shockadelica* is an unapologetic celebration of *Camille* and her allure: "She must be a witch, she got your mind, body, and soul hitched!" Where *If I Was Your Girlfriend* challenged gendered stereotypes through its emotional openness, *Shockadelica* is a paean to female sexuality. This is a woman who is fully aware of her appeal and in total control of it, rendering her admirer completely helpless.

By November 1986, the whole album (also called *Camille*) was finalised and a few vinyl demos were pressed in preparation for release the following year. Controversially, Prince decided to attribute the whole album to *Camille* rather than himself, and his name would not appear on the packaging. But, for reasons that are not known, the release was can-

celled. *Camille* lived on for a short time beyond the cancelled release, with three tracks repurposed for the legendary *Sign 'O' The Times*, specifically *If I Was Your Girlfriend*, *Housequake*, and *Strange Relationship*.

After this, *Camille* was never heard from again.

The story of *Camille* fits into the wider narrative and rediscovery of the hidden histories of queer and trans people, mapping the blank spaces where they were erased from history. When shared, these histories can empower marginalised groups within broader society. Imagine the potential impact had *Camille* been released and received as a queer persona in 1987. After all, Prince was a mainstream megastar, selling millions upon millions of records throughout the 1980s.

The history of androgyny and genderplay in pop is a rich one, but *Camille* embodies an ambiguity, playfulness, and queerness to bear in a way that few artists ever explore.

That androgyny and otherness is, to us, where her real power and contribution comes from.

Several highly acclaimed recent television series' have also focused on queer history at a time contemporaneous with *Camille*'s original planned release date. Russell T Davies' mini-drama *It's A Sin* focused on the lives of young queer Brits during the Aids epidemic that decimated the community.

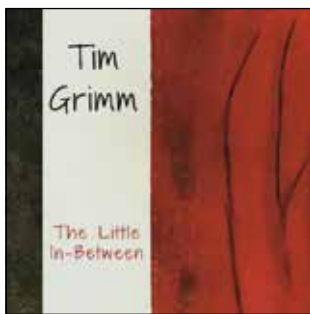
Camille's long absence leaves us only able to speculate on the impact she might have had. What would a *Camille* tour have looked like?

Among today's so-called "culture wars", the denigration of the trans community, and the recent rise in homophobic and queerphobic hate, a celebration of the diversity of gender performances is surely as welcome as ever.

■ Liam Maloney is programme leader for music & sound recording, University of York; Alice Masterson is visiting music lecturer, University of York. This is an abridged version of an article first published in *The Conversation*.

ALBUM REVIEWS WITH KEVIN BRYAN

Tim Grimm
The Little In-Between
(Cavalier Recordings)
★★★★☆



THIS singer, actor, artist and all round Renaissance man has a rare facility for weaving memorable musical narratives which inveigle their way into your subconscious and stubbornly refuse to let go.

The Little In-Between is Tim's latest addition to the impressive body of work which he first began to assemble 25 years or so ago, although his theatrical exploits did take precedence over his music-making activities for quite some time in the 1990s.

It's a classic collection in the storytelling balladry tradition famously popularised by the

likes of John Prine and Bob Dylan, and the poet laureate of a rapidly vanishing rural America has chosen to focus inwards on this occasion.

The finished product is arguably his most reflective and emotionally charged offering to date, with *New Boots* and *Twenty Years of Shadows* capturing Grimm at his wistful best.

Blood, Sweat & Tears
Live & Improvised
(Floating World)
★★★★☆



THE contents of this live two-CD set were recorded at four different North American shows over five nights in the summer of 1975.

Blood, Sweat & Tears had been one of the driving forces behind the burgeoning jazz-rock movement during their early years with Al Kooper at the helm, but the influence of jazz was tending to dominate their live performances by the time that these shows were captured for posterity.

Recently returned Canadian vocalist David Clayton-Thomas was in typically

unsubtle form as the then incarnation of the band plundered their illustrious back catalogue to deliver their fairly loose treatments of old favourites such as *And When I Die* and *Spinning Wheel*, with guitarists George Wadenius, Steve Kahn and Mike Stern joining their ranks at different venues on different nights.

Bruce Cockburn
O Sun O Moon
(True North Records)
★★★★☆



A GREAT deal of water has flowed beneath the proverbial bridge since Bruce Cockburn made his first major impact on the music fraternity with *Wondering Where The Lions Are*.

This intricately crafted ditty soared into the higher reaches of the US singles charts in June 1980, and although it didn't herald a lengthy run of commercial success for the 13-time Juno Award-winner and Canadian Music Hall of fame inductee, he still remains one of the most thoughtful and socially aware singer-songwriters you

could wish to hear more than four decades later.

The stunning poetic imagery which has always been such a feature of Cockburn's best work informs many of the finest moments here, with *On A Roll*, *King of the Bolero* and *When The Spirit Walks in the Room* emerging as the cream of this particular crop.

Legal Notes
weekly tribunal report

Fantastical outcome

Boydell v NZP Ltd

In *Boydell v NZP Ltd and anor*, the Court of Appeal held that the restrictive covenant that the company wanted to enforce would have such a “fantastical” outcome that it could not have been within the contemplation of the parties when they agreed to it.

Basic facts

NZP Pharma Ltd, which specialises in developing and producing bile acid derivatives for sale to pharmaceutical companies, occupies a niche area of the pharmaceutical industry. Dr Boydell had worked as head of commercial, speciality products for the company since early 2021 but handed in his notice in October 2022 in order to join another company as their head of “bile acid business.” His employment ended on January 25 2023.

However, on January 24, NZP issued a claim for an interim injunction enforcing various restrictive covenants. One of these was a non-competition clause contained in a variation of Dr Boydell’s contract, which ran for one year from the termination of his employment and prevented him from competing with the company’s “business activity” or any of its group companies. Dr Boydell argued that the clause had been drafted too widely.

High Court decision

The High Court judge granted an injunction but only after severing some words from the clause, which involved removing references to “affiliates” and “group companies” along with some references to activities relating to the supply chain.

The company appealed, as did Dr Boydell, who argued that the clause was still too wide.

Court of Appeal decision

The Court of Appeal observed that, as originally drafted, the non-compete clause was extremely wide as it sought to prevent Dr Boydell from being involved in any activity for the benefit of any third party that carried out any business activity that would compete with NZP or any other company in the group.

It also noted that although NZP was a highly specialised business, other companies in the group were less specialised. Some of them, for instance, produced general pharmaceutical products such as nasal sprays. As currently drafted, the court was concerned that the clause would prevent Dr Boydell from working for any company (such as Boots and Superdrug) which sold pharmaceutical products, including nasal sprays, for 12 months.

At the time of signing the variation which introduced the covenants into Dr Boydell’s contract, the court took the view that had the parties been asked by a hypothetical officious bystander whether he would be able to go to work for Boots or Superdrug after leaving NZP, they would have said: “of course he would.” It was such an “extravagant,” “fantastical,” “unlikely or improbable” outcome that it must have been entirely outside the contemplation of the parties.

Given that the statutory test for granting an injunction is whether it is “just and convenient,” the Court of Appeal held that the non-compete clause went far beyond what was reasonably necessary to protect the company’s legitimate interests. As such, the High Court judge was entitled at the interim injunction stage to sever the words that he had from the clause and grant an injunction on a more limited basis, not least because the words that he had deleted were peripheral to the main thrust of the clause.

It also dismissed Dr Boydell’s argument that the clause, as redrafted, was still too wide, holding that where a company was involved in a variety of business activities, it might be difficult to justify a covenant against competition such as this one. However, that argument did not hold water in these circumstances because of the highly specialised nature of NZP’s business and that Dr Boydell was a very senior employee.



HEATING UP: It’s time politicians and business scaled up the ambition at Cop28

■ **GREEN NEW DEAL**

Invest in workers’ skills to tackle climate change

CEREN SAGIR’S article about the business priorities for participants at Cop28 to start in Dubai at the end of November (M Star May 30) is a stark message for trade unionists across the world.

Do they really think that it will be business as usual at +1.5°C of global heating?

The principle of ensuring the wellbeing of future generations is now built into the policy and legal framework of many countries, including Wales. We know that the climate crisis is the elephant in the room at any migration policy decision and should be used to inform all

financial investment discussion. But those same business employers seem not to grasp that we need a vast army of skilled workers in every sector if we are to be able to combat climate change and bring down our overproduction of carbon.

Where are the plans to increase accessible upskilling programmes for the current workforce? And we don’t just mean those in construction. Food production needs to change radically so we no longer contaminate and damage soils – a priority for union members in the fast-food industries. Water has to be conserved

at every level. Transport needs a complete zero-carbon overhaul. But where are the skilled trainers?

Where are the courses that working people can attend near to where they live? Who has the job of revisiting green careers advice and making sure there are levels of entry that everyone can understand?

A Green New Deal approach to industrial relations is essential and needed – now.

This is the most pressing health and safety project we have ever had to address and we have to deal with it together, across unions – starting with

the education unions. In the north-west we are forming a climate justice coalition to form the basis of urgent campaigns to get these same business leaders to invest in their workforce. Local training and education are the key. And adult education budgets have to change now. Train the trainers. Scale up the ambition. Cop28 needs to invest in green skills as essential shared assets

LYDIA MERYLL
UCU North West

JASON HUNTER
Unison NW
JOHN FOX
BEAWU

■ **INDEPENDENCE**

Scottish nation should be free to decide its own sovereign fate

THE last thing Scotland needs is Labour’s former luminaries to dictate what it thinks Scotland needs.

Scotland is a recognised nation in its own historical sovereign right, supposedly in partnership in the UK.

So, how can Gordon Brown, Anas Sarwar, Andy Burnham et al claim to adhere to democracy yet deny Scots their right to precisely that by refusing a plebiscite for

Scots to determine their future governance?

Scots remember the lies that Better Together spouted in 2014. We won’t be fooled again.

If there is a democratic road to socialism then is surely isn’t through Westminster. Perhaps Scotland in the EU can better help bring it about.

The UK Union is a dead union limping.

JIM TAYLOR
The Murrays Brae
Edinburgh

■ **PPPS AGM**

Proud to read Morning Star

THANKS for a great 77th PPPS AGM in London on Thursday evening – and to the wonderful Morning Star team for their dedication over the past year – I’m proud to be a reader.

PPS: any chance of reproducing your brilliant front “Spot the difference” AGM cover in the paper? Says it all ...

RICHARD CLARKE
London N7

■ **US MEDDLING**

US president Peltier?

THE US continues to recognise the great pretender Juan Guaido as the president of Venezuela, despite all evidence to the contrary.

Perhaps Caracas should reciprocate and recognise the imprisoned American Indian activist and political prisoner Leonard Peltier as the rightful US president in return?

PHIL BRAND
London SW17



The 1000th footballer to represent England

ASIF BURHAN interviews Neil Webb, who talks about earning his first international cap in 1987, his career, and his desire to continue working

WITH England trailing to West Germany in September 1987, a 24-year-old midfielder from Nottingham Forest was brought on with 25 minutes remaining of the match in Dusseldorf to replace Glenn Hoddle. Neil Webb would go on to win six major medals for club and country but in that moment he created his own moment of football history as he became the 1,000th player to represent the England senior men's team.

After the match, Webb, who played for the final 25 minutes, could not understand why he had been called into the post-match press conference of a match England lost 3-1. It was then it was revealed to him that, 115 years after the first England international caps, he was the 1,000th. "I went home that weekend and got the shirt and my cap framed because I thought that's a milestone!"

Now after being displayed in Webb's hallway for over three decades, a recent house move has prompted him to put the number 14 red England away shirt (pictured) up for sale through specialist sports auctioneers, Graham Budd. The lot, ending tomorrow, has a high estimate of between £10-15,000 but Webb's decision is borne more out of curiosity than necessity. "It's not that I've got to sell it. I thought someone might be interested in having that as a piece of memorabilia. I've got three sons so I will split it three ways. If not, I'll quite happily have it back."

That summer, Hoddle, a fixture in the England squad since his debut in 1979, had moved abroad to play for AS Monaco. By the time of the European Championships the following year, Webb had displaced Hoddle in the England team, starting alongside national team captain Bryan Robson, a move which perplexed many fans of the mercurial Hoddle.

Yet in a team also playing with two wingers in Chris Waddle and John Barnes, Webb believes manager Bobby Robson preferred his greater athleticism. "I think initially he thought that with me and Bryan, we could both get up and down the park, score a lot of goals and defend. We were both similar in that way whereas Glenn was more



creative. I admire Glenn, I played against him when I was 15 and in the Reading Reserves and he was playing for Tottenham Hotspur Reserves. We got beat 9-0 and I looked at this lad and thought 'crikey, he's got some ability!'"

Now playing together regularly for England as they qualified for the 1990 World Cup, the new Manchester United manager Alex Ferguson sought to replicate the partnership of Robson and Webb in his underachieving side. With Nottingham Forest manager Brian Clough unwilling to sell, a protracted transfer deal was eventually settled by a tribunal who decided on a fee of £1.5 million for Webb.

His impact was immediate as he scored with a sumptuous chest trap and volley at the Stretford End of Old Trafford on the opening day of the season during a 4-1 win over the reigning league champions Arsenal. Yet just a month later, while playing for England in a World Cup qualifier against Sweden in Stockholm, Webb's career was stalled when he snapped his Achilles tendon. In the same match, captain Terry Butcher infamously played on with a cut head, finishing the game covered in blood.

Webb recalls the scene on the flight home. "We both sat on the plane at the front. It was just a case of 'this hurts'

because they didn't operate in Sweden, I had to fly back the next day and go back to Manchester and have the operation."

Although Webb returned to play for Manchester United before the end of that season, he believes that he was never the same player again. "I think that injury changed the way I played. If they had a holding midfielder role in my day, that would have been me after my Achilles injury because I stopped going from box to box. I started being a more creative player in getting the ball off the back four and hopefully creating for the forwards."

Webb illustrated that ability perfectly in the FA Cup Final that season. After Manchester United's game with Crystal Palace went to a replay, in a tight, physical rematch, Webb made a decisive contribution clipping an inch-perfect pass over the opposition defence for full back Lee Martin to score the only goal of the game to secure the first trophy for the club during the reign of Ferguson, the catalyst for an unprecedented period of dominance.

"All I saw was one of our shirts running into the box and I pinged a ball over to him. I've always said to Lee, as a joke, if I'd have known it was him, I wouldn't have done it as he's never scored a goal before

final game but remembers that "it was a great atmosphere. I got on for the last 11 minutes in the third place play-off against Italy and I hit the post. Overall, it was a great experience, just a long one."

Ironically, when Gascoigne was forced to miss the following European Championship in 1992, Webb was surprisingly recalled to start the final group stage match against Sweden in the same Rasunda Stadium in which he had suffered his career-defining injury. Webb initiated the move from which England took the lead but their ultimate defeat was the last occasion in which he played for this country having represented them in three major tournaments, one more than Gascoigne.

As well as his World Cup bronze medal, Webb won the FA Cup, two League Cups, the European Cup Winner's Cup and European Super Cup between 1988 and 1992. Of those, he has previously auctioned off all of them except his 1990 FA Cup winner's medal. "That meant something to me, more than the rest of them. The European Cup Winner's Cup final medal, I didn't actually play, I got dropped from the game which I was obviously upset with. The League Cup winner's medals I've sold with Graham Budd as well."

Since retiring, Webb took his coaching badges but found that management was not the path he wanted to follow. "I did the old preliminary badge back in the day, which I didn't enjoy whatsoever. The coaching badges in my day were all stop, start, stand still. I just didn't enjoy doing the coaching courses. I took the Weymouth manager's job for about four months and I hated it. I was living in Reading and driving to Weymouth three times a week. In the end I thought this was not worth it. I had to join the real world and get a proper job."

Webb has held various jobs, famously working as a postman at the start of the century and also holding positions at Reading FC, working at a transport company and now an electrical firm. While many of his peers have made lucrative careers in the media, Webb bears no resentment and now approaching his 60th birthday is proud to say he is still working.

in brief

Glentoran to face Derry this evening

WOMEN'S FOOTBALL: Irish Women's Premiership table-toppers Glentoran, unbeaten in seven games and with a defence that has only conceded three goals, two of those in their 2-2 draw with second-placed Cliftonville last week, are nailed-on for all three points when they visit bottom club Derry this evening.

Derry are without a point, let alone a win, this season and have only scored five goals, conceding 41, in their first seven games.

Middlesex look for win as T20 resumes

MEN'S CRICKET: The Twenty20 Blast resumes today with Middlesex, the only team without a win, taking on Hampshire at Radlett while Essex host Sussex in Chelmsford.

Table-toppers in the South Group Somerset, the only team with a 100 per cent record, are not in action. In the Northern Group bottom club Leicestershire meet Yorkshire and Durham play Northampton with league leaders Worcestershire also due to play until tomorrow.

UAE take on Windies in second leg today

MEN'S CRICKET: United Arab Emirates face the West Indies in Sharjah today for the second leg of their three match one-day series.

The West Indies won the first match by seven wickets after bowling out their hosts for 202 and then reaching their target in the 36th over thanks largely to Brandon King's run-a-ball 112.

West Indies are currently rated the world's 7th best Twenty20 team with the UAE back in 16th.

Miami Heat inflict Denver home loss

MEN'S BASKETBALL: Miami Heat came from behind to squeeze past the Denver Nuggets 111-108 to inflict Denver's first home loss since March and level the best of seven NBA finals at 1-1.

Gabe Vincent top-scored with 23 for Miami while Bam Adebayo and Jimmy Butler weighed in with 21 each. Nikola Jokic netted 41 points for the Nuggets. The third match tips off in Florida on Thursday morning.



FRENCH OPEN

HEWETT PREPARES HIS BID FOR FOURTH TITLE

Wheelchair tennis star adapting to his new status as the man to beat

by Our Sports Desk

ALFIE HEWETT (pictured) is enjoying being the man to beat in wheelchair tennis as he prepares to bid for a fourth French Open title.

The retirement at the beginning of the year of Hewett's big rival Shingo Kunieda after one of the great tennis careers left the Norfolk player as world number one.

Hewett first won the French Open as a teenager and has been used to being the relative new kid on the block but now he finds a host of younger players challenging him.

Top of that pile is Kunieda's Japanese compatriot, 17-year-old Tokito Oda, who was beaten by Hewett in the Australian Open final in January.

Hewett told the PA news agency: "It is strange. I'm 25 so I don't see myself as being the experienced one when you have the likes of Gordy [doubles partner Gordon Reid] and some of the others who are five to 10 years older than me.

"But I guess this is my eighth year on tour so I do have experience. I've been fortunate enough to play in some big moments and I thought the Australian Open final demonstrated that, managing the



occasion probably in a better way than Tokito did, but he's such an unbelievable talent.

"To be playing at his level at [his age], it's just ridiculous – it just shows the talent and the potential that he has. And he's bringing a new style to the sport as well. Other players are having to learn, having to get better.

"I see a lot of myself in him

in terms of his attitude and his fearlessness. It's great to have someone fresh on the scene. I'm sure he's going to be winning a lot in the future but I'll try and stop him.

"That's a big reason why my level this year has been so high because he beat me in the Masters last year and I didn't like it. I went home and I trained hard and I worked hard and it's

made my game a lot better."

Hewett's Australian Open triumph was part of a 16-match winning singles run between January and March that brought his four successive titles.

"I didn't expect it," he said. "It's just a sign of good work behind the scenes. It was new territory for me really. I struggled towards the end of it.

"It makes me appreciate the

likes of Novak [Djokovic] and [Daniil] Medvedev when they go on ridiculous runs of not losing for however many matches and back-to-back events – it's not easy to do.

"You feel the pressure that people are expecting you to win. The level I was playing at in Australia and Rotterdam was probably the best I've ever played but then I went to the States and it dropped, and I was like, 'Hang on a minute, I'm not used to this, why's my level not where it was.'

"But that's just normal, you go through these periods. I enjoyed it while it lasted. I got beaten in the end but it hasn't dampened my spirit with where I'm at. To win eight titles out of 11 is not bad."

Since the end of that run, Hewett has led Great Britain to the World Team Cup title before a narrow loss to Spain's Martin De la Puente, another younger player, in the semi-finals of the Barcelona Open.

In Paris, he will be favourite to add to the singles titles he won in 2017, 2020 and 2021, while he and Reid will bid for a 17th grand slam doubles title.

After that, Hewett's focus will turn to Wimbledon, where he made his first singles final last year only to lose a dramatic encounter to Kunieda.

WOMEN'S HEALTH

Miley hoping to put end to menstruation euphemisms

THREE-TIME Olympian Hannah Miley wants to banish dangerous euphemisms for periods that could leave young athletes feeling "dirty" or ashamed.

A study by a period and pregnancy tracker app and the International Women's Health Coalition uncovered over 5,000 alternative terms for the monthly cycle across 10 different languages – yet conversations around the topic still remain taboo.

Miley finds when those rare discussions do happen, they are filled with unhelpful metaphors that recall adverts featuring blue liquid poured on pads and overjoyed women wearing all-white outfits.

"It all comes back to that simple word of just saying 'period'," said the swimmer, who competed at Beijing 2008, London 2012 and Rio 2016.

"A lot of people struggle to say it. It's 'shark week', 'leak week' so many different words. The fact that we couldn't even say 'period products', it was hygiene, sanitary products – that in and of itself creates that invisible barrier of being able to talk about it."

Miley is adamant that menstrual health education and support needs to change and hopes more information and research will inspire tailored training and open dialogue beyond elite level.

MEN'S FOOTBALL

Postecoglou agrees to leave Celtic for Spurs

by Our Sports Desk

CELTIC boss Ange Postecoglou (pictured) appears to be moving towards a swift resolution of his future amid reports he has verbally agreed to become Tottenham's new manager.

Postecoglou admitted on Saturday that his ability to enjoy Celtic's treble success would soon be disrupted by some decision-making and that seems to have happened even quicker than he anticipated.

The 57-year-old dodged questions on his future before and after Saturday's Scottish Cup final win over Inverness having emerged as the overwhelming frontrunner to take over at Spurs.

Neither club are commenting publicly but reports claim Postecoglou told Celtic prin-

cipal shareholder Dermot Desmond on Saturday night that he intended to leave for London and he is now said to be closing in on signing a two-year Spurs deal with the option to extend.

When repeatedly pressed on his future after Celtic's 3-1 Hampden win over Inverness on Saturday, the Greek-born Australian said: "I anticipate enjoying this moment for the next 24-48 hours, as long as I can, before someone drags me away and takes my attention away from enjoying something that's been hard-earned.

"The reality is, there's probably players in that dressing room who won't be here next year. That's the nature of football.

"But I want them to enjoy



it, I am going to enjoy it, and that's all I am going to focus on until someone grabs me by the collar and tells me that I have to answer certain questions."

The former Australia head coach has won five domestic trophies out of a possible six

after arriving from Yokohama F Marinos in Japan and was linked with numerous Premier League clubs throughout this season.

Postecoglou became a hero with the Celtic support, not just for resuming their success after a barren season, but also for implementing an attacking style of play and his connection with the fans.

But he looks set to swap Glasgow for another rebuild job as Spurs finally look to appoint a permanent successor to Antonio Conte, who departed on March 26.

Postecoglou is due to go on a family holiday today and a deal could be finalised quickly.

Former Hoops manager Brendan Rodgers has emerged as an unlikely favourite to suc-

ceed Postecoglou, four years after leaving the club mid-season to take over at Leicester.

Assistant manager John Kennedy is also high up the list but reports claim Postecoglou hopes to take the former Celtic defender to Tottenham.



Published by Peoples Press Printing Society Ltd (12750R), Ruskin House, 23 Coombe Road, Croydon, London CR0 1BD. Telephone: (020) 8510-0815. Email: enquiries@peoples-press.com. Printed by trade union labour at Reach.

TODAY'S TIPS

Farrington's Doubles
A DEFINITE GETAWAY
Southwell 3.45 (nap)
TOMMYDAN
Southwell 5.20

Houseman's Choice
CAVERN CLUB
Leicester 4.35 (nap)

Compulsive gambling can harm your health and relationships, and leave you in serious debt. For advice on gambling from the NHS, visit: www.bit.ly/NHSGambling

MSTAR 2023-06-06 TUE 1.3
9 770307 175428 23