

'THEY KNEW IF I WAS ON THE BALLOT I WOULD HAVE WALKED IT'

JAMIE DRISCOLL talks to BEN CHACKO about Labour's factional farrago

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COULD GALA BE IN LINE FOR BAN?

LABOUR MP RAISES THE ALARM OVER DRACONIAN NEW ANTI-PROTEST LAWS



by Berny Torre

ANTI-PROTEST laws are threatening the future of the Durham Miners' Gala, Labour MP Ian Lavery has warned, as Europe's biggest annual commemoration of workers' struggles got ready to welcome up to 200,000 visitors this weekend.

The former Labour chairman said the 137th gala, celebrating the labour movement "takes place in the midst of a battle against a wave of draconian legislation."

Writing in today's Morning Star, he argues it "is no exaggeration to ask how much longer the Gala itself... will be permitted under this new legislation which seeks to purge any dissident voices."

National Union of Mineworkers (NUM) general secretary Chris

Kitchen warned it "would be catastrophic" if future galas were prevented by new measures under the Public Order Act.

Parliament passed secondary legislation last month that empowered police to stop protests they believe "may" cause "more than minor" disruption.

Home Secretary Suella Braverman said "mayhem" was being caused on the streets and the Met Police bragged about using the powers to clear Just Stop Oil street protests within minutes.

The government is now trying to push through further legislation that would allow police to be able to preemptively shut down a protest even where disruption has not been caused.

Mr Lavery said: "While I look forward to a more relaxing weekend of meeting and catching up with friends new and old, this year's gala takes place in the

midst of a battle against a wave of draconian legislation that seeks to impose restrictions on our fundamental rights to protest, boycott, collectively bargain, and vote in free elections.

"It is no exaggeration to ask how much longer the gala itself, with its long history of political agitation often at odds with powerful economic and political interest in this country, will be permitted under this new legislation which seeks to purge any dissident voices willing to stand up for ordinary people."

Mr Kitchen told the Star: "You can quite easily see how they would be able to use that law if the powers that be decided to. I'm erring on the side of common sense and decency that they wouldn't."

Asked if doing so would risk a repeat of the Orgreave scandal, he said: "It would be catastrophic."

Thousands of striking miners and police officers clashed in one of the most violent incidents in British industrial history at Orgreave coking plant near Rotherham in June 1984.

He added: "If policing has moved on... it makes you wonder then why the need for the law."

"I can't see Just Stop Oil getting as many numbers on a picket line, why do they need this law? There doesn't seem to be a legitimate peacekeeping rationale for it, it's more authoritarianism to stifle any opposition."

PCS general secretary Mark Serwotka said: "We at PCS wholeheartedly deplore this government's cynical efforts to strip away workers' rights and to shackle the democratic right to protest. It is an outrage that we in the UK are set to have worse workers' rights than any EU member."

A spokesman for Just Stop Oil told the Star: "They know that when we come together in resistance, on the streets, or on picket lines, we are so much more powerful than them."

"It is time to be brave and step into resistance, in whatever way we can, regardless of their threats."

National Police Chiefs' Council Lead for Public Order and Public Safety, Chief Constable Ben-Julian Harrington, said: "Each event or protest will be assessed on its particular circumstances, but policing decision-making must be consistent, fair, proportionate, and ultimately accountable to the law."

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Star comment: p16

► Tory clampdown should concern us all: Ian Lavery, page 14

► DMA general secretary Alan Mardghum on the festivities, page 13

■ CONSTRUCTION

Tragic anniversary sparks action call

by Benny Torre

DEATHS in construction are still regarded as an occupational hazard, Unite said as a bereaved family criticised a delayed probe into how a crane collapse killed an elderly woman at her home.

Today marks the three-year anniversary since June Harvey, 85, was found dead after a 65ft crane crashed down in Bow, east London.

Ms Harvey's niece, Jacqueline Atkinson, 66, and her son Sam Atkinson, 31, said they felt "let down" by the "lack of answers" from the Health and Safety Executive (HSE) investigation into her death.

"The wait for the conclusion to the investigation has been agonising," Mr Atkinson told the BBC.

Unite national officer Jerry Swain told the Morning Star: "There is a fundamental prob-

lem with investigations following serious construction accidents, they invariably take far too long. Justice delayed is similar to justice denied.

"If this was any other sector, there would be a huge outcry that three years after this terrible tragedy we still do not know what happened, let alone a prosecution of anyone responsible.

"Deaths in construction must stop being regarded as an occupational hazard."

HSE inspector Gordon Nixon said: "This has been a challenging and thorough investigation while good progress has been made, inquiries are ongoing."

The Met Police said the investigation was ongoing and it had nothing more to add.

HSE figures this week revealed annual construction worker deaths rose sharply to 45 in the last financial year.

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■ HUMAN RIGHTS

PA calls for activists' release

A PALESTINE prisoners' movement has called for the release of activists arrested for protesting against Israeli weapons factories in Britain.

Six activists from Palestine Action (PA) are currently detained and over 100 more are facing custodial sentences for disrupting the manufacturing of the weapons.

Elbit Systems supplies 85 per cent of Israel's military drone

fleet and land-based equipment – which have been recently used in the brutal attacks in Jenin and Gaza.

In a statement, the Palestinian Prisoners' Movement said: "We condemn the British authorities' arrest of members of the PA movement and call on all international legal and human rights organisations to take ... official and popular action to pressure the British

government to immediately release the remaining activists ... "The statement also called for authorities to "bring an end to the British complicity with the Zionist apartheid regime."

PA has called for a day of action on Saturday July 22 to support prisoners in Britain, as well as some 5,000 Palestinian political prisoners jailed, and to the campaign to shut down Elbit operations in Britain.

■ SCOTLAND

Labour decries first 100 days of Yousaf as FM as 'disastrous'

by Matt Kerr
Scotland reporter

HUMZA YOUSAF'S first 100 days as First Minister have been branded "disastrous" by opposition politicians.

The SNP leader's eventful tenure has seen controversial flagship policies such as the Deposit Return Scheme shelved in a battle with the Westminster government; his national care service policy being delayed in the face of concerted opposition from unions and councils; and uncertainty over strategy to achieve his party's core aim of independence.

And he has seen his party mired in questions around its finances.

The ongoing Police Scotland inquiry has resulted in the arrests of both the former party chief executive Peter Murrell, and his predecessor and political mentor, Nicola Sturgeon, both released without charge.

Despite these challenges however, long-serving SNP minister Shona Robison has hailed the record of the man who appointed her deputy first minister.

She said: "The first 100 days of Humza Yousaf's new administration have seen rapid delivery in areas that matter to people in Scotland.

"Against the backdrop of the damage done by Brexit and cuts from Westminster, the Scottish government is delivering meaningful support to those most hard-pressed, and investing in our public services.

"The record also shows this to be an open and inclusive government, with a willingness to listen to reasonable concerns and change course where necessary.

"With a lot more to do, we are determined to continue earning people's trust."

Ms Robison's opposite number, Labour's Dame Jackie Baillie, was less impressed.

She commented: "Humza Yousaf's time as first minister started with a police raid on his party's headquarters and somehow went downhill from there.

"He was a failed transport minister, a failed justice secretary, and the worst health secretary since devolution – and he's not doing any better as first minister.

"The last 100 days has been disastrous for the SNP but even more so for Scotland, which is stuck with an NHS in chaos and the worst cost-of-living crisis in decades. Humza Yousaf's only solution to Scotland's problems is independence, and he can't even get his position straight on that."

Labour MSP Mercedes Villalba added: "For all his talk during the leadership election of socialism and activism, the self-styled 'First Activist' has done little to translate these words into action in his first 100 days."

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Going to the Durham Miners' Gala?

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KENT: Vehicles queue for ferries at the Port of Dover where passengers are facing up to a two-hour wait for checks by French border officials due to a high volume of tourist traffic beginning the summer getaway early and heavy freight traffic

■ ENVIRONMENT

Just Stop Oil continue march action as temperatures soar



KEEPING UP THE PRESSURE: A Just Stop Oil activists throws confetti on the court at Wimbledon earlier this week as part of the group's campaign to raise awareness of the looming climate crisis

CLIMATE activists continued their slow-march action in central London yesterday to highlight global temperatures reaching a new record average this week.

On Monday, the world's average temperature reached a record breaking 17° Celsius only to be broken the next day at 17.2°.

About 26 Just Stop Oil

supporters in three groups marched in Vauxhall and Pimlico yesterday as part of the group's daily action to demand the government ends all new licences for oil, gas and coal projects in Britain.

Protester Jane Touil, from Rochdale and who is visually impaired, said: "Licensing new oil and gas is a crime

against humanity. I cannot stand by and do nothing, knowing that millions are going to die.

"We have the solutions and if we implement them quickly, climate breakdown will not be so severe.

"If we carry on this path, human civilisation will collapse within my lifetime and billions will die."

■ TRANSPORT

HS2 'FLOUNDERING' AS COSTS RISE AND DELAYS CONTINUE

by Berny Torre

THE government does not know what it is trying to achieve with the "floundering" multibillion-pound HS2 railway project after more than eight years of planning and spiralling costs, MPs found in a damning report yesterday.

The public accounts committee (PAC) urged the Department for Transport (DfT) to "finally establish" its expectations for Euston after the central London station's upgrading costs ballooned to £4.8 billion from an initial budget of £2.6bn.

This prompted works there to be paused for two years in March, with Euston now not expected to run HS2 trains until 2041 – 15 years later than scheduled.

Describing the initial budget set in April 2020 having been "wildly unrealistic" for what the DfT wanted to deliver, PAC said: "Despite spending over

eight years on planning and designing the HS2 Euston station, the department still does not know what it is trying to achieve with the station."

Previous updates to Parliament on cost pressures at Euston did not disclose that construction costs could be significantly higher than expected, the committee added as it called for greater transparency in its six-monthly progress reports to MPs.

The project involves integrating HS2 services with the existing mainline railway and London Underground.

The original £55.7bn for the whole project set in 2015 soared to up to £61bn in 2019, excluding the eastern leg of Phase 2b from the West Midlands to the East Midlands.

HS2 Ltd – the government-owned company responsible for building the high-speed railway – first proposed an 11-platform design for Euston in 2015, to be built in two phases. The

DfT instructed the company to change to a 10-platform, single-stage design following recommendations from the Oakervee review in 2020.

Committee chair Dame Meg Hillier said: "The HS2 Euston project is floundering. This is a multibillion-pound scheme – which has already caused major disruption to the local community – put on pause.

"The pause, ostensibly to save money, is not cost free. Mothballing and possible compensation for businesses which have lost work will all need to be added to the HS2 tally. The government must now be clear what it is trying to achieve with this new station, and how it will benefit the public."

The DfT said it remained "committed to delivering HS2 from Euston to Manchester in the most cost-effective way for taxpayers" and will respond to the PAC's recommendations in due course.

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■ LABOUR PARTY

Starmer backs Khan's policy on Ulez

SIR KEIR STARMER has backed London Mayor Sadiq Khan's plans to expand the Ulez charge on the most polluting vehicles across the capital.

The Labour leader said yesterday that Mr Khan "has no choice" as he was legally bound to improve London's air quality.

Addressing a listener question on LBC, Sir Keir, a former

director of public prosecutions, said: "I accept that the mayor has no choice but to go ahead because of the legal obligation on him.

"I've looked at it myself, looked at the legal provision.

"I think it is difficult to say you could simply ignore the legal requirement to do something about this, so the mayor

in fairness is between a rock and a hard place on this."

Mr Khan announced his intention to extend the Ultra Low Emission Zone (Ulez) to all of London's boroughs in November. This would see drivers in outer London pay a £12.50 daily fee from August 29 if their vehicles do not meet the required emissions standards.

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General Secretary: Mick Lynch President: Alex Gordon

SCHOOL'S OUT: NEU members on the picket line in Durham yesterday



■ EDUCATION

TEACHERS IN ENGLAND STRIKE OVER F-GRADE PAY

POSSIBLE DEAL: NEU chiefs urge government to heed advice of independent pay review body

by Peter Lazenby
Northern reporter

TEACHERS took to school picket lines and staged rallies across England in a third day of strike action yesterday – including in Durham, ahead of the Miners' Gala today.

National Education Union (NEU) joint general secretaries Kevin Courtney and Mary Boustead (pictured) attended the Durham teachers' rally and demanded that the government publish the recommendations of the independent School Teachers' Review Body (STRB) on what pay increase they should receive.

They warned that the government faces "an unprecedented show of determination and unity across the profession" if it continues to refuse to negotiate a settlement.

Teachers are walking out in a long-running dispute over pay, having rejected the government's offer of a £1,000 one-off payment for the current school year (2022-23) and an average 4.5 per cent rise for staff next year.



They want a pay increase equal to inflation, funded by the government and not taken from struggling school budgets.

The joint general secretaries said in a statement: "We believe that the STRB has recommended a 6.5 per cent across-the-board pay rise – if properly funded, implementing such a rise could bring this dis-

pute to a close.

"However, with no word from the government about the reopening of negotiations and with rumours that the government is intending not to implement the STRB report, the NEU continues with our rebalot of members for industrial action in September."

"We will not be alone," they

said, as NEU members rebalot for more strike action. "Education unions ASCL, NAHT, NASUWT are also balloting members for strike action.

"It is an indication of the desperation and anger felt by all who teach in our schools and colleges towards a government who cares little for children and young people's education and those who teach them."

The Department for Education (DfE) said the action would cause disruption to pupils and parents and result in the cancellation of children's end-of-term events.

A department spokesman insisted a "fair and reasonable" pay offer had been made to the unions.

On pay, the spokesman said: "As part of the normal process, the independent School Teachers' Review Body has submitted its recommendations to government on teacher pay for 2023-24.

"We will be considering the recommendations and will publish our response in the usual way."

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■ SCOTLAND

'Horror' at mooted huge cuts to early years learning

by Matt Kerr
Scotland editor

TRADE unionists have been left "horrified" at proposals to cut costs in North Lanarkshire early years education.

North Lanarkshire Trades Union Council (NLTUC) has warned of "terrible repercussions for years to come" as North Lanarkshire Council (NLC) seeks to remove 400 senior posts in early years services as a "budget-balancing" measure.

The NLTUC expressed sympathy on the scale of SNP-Green Scottish government cuts to councils, but called on MSPs, MPs, and councillors to act against proposals it branded "heinous."

"Between birth and five years old, infants go through many significant stages of development which have numerous repercussions for the rest of their life ... failure to support infants during this stage will leave them at an incredible disadvantage," it said.

"Because of the lockdown, many children are developmentally impacted, which if not supported by experienced staff will

see this become a wider social and personal problem.

"Our Grade Nine staff are experienced individuals who are not only passionate about their work, but deeply passionate about the impact their work has on so many young people and will have on our community for years to come.

"If NLC refuse to work with the Grade Nine staff affected by this short-minded decision, they risk dooming a generation of infants.

"We must defend those who can help give our children the best start in life.

"NLTUC will do everything in our power to help the workers affected, and we call on others to come to their aid."

A council spokesperson said redeployment, voluntary severance and enhanced early retirement were available to affected staff.

"These changes align the staffing structure with the previously agreed model and were decided as part of the council's budget-setting process for 2023-24 in which a budget gap of £28.3million had to be addressed," they said.

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■ BY-ELECTION

Candidates challenged to 'take a worker's wage'

CANDIDATES in the potential Rutherglen and Hamilton West by-election have been challenged to take a "workers' wage."

A six-week recall ballot began in the constituency on June 20 after sitting SNP MP Margaret Ferrier received a 30-day parliamentary suspension following her conviction for serious breaches of Covid-19 regulations.

Prospective SSP candidate Bill Bonnar has challenged both Labour and SNP hopefuls to commit to an average workers' wage, rather than the £86,584 MP's salary.

Mr Bonnar said: "More than half of local authority workers are on less than £25,000 a year. "We have Civil Service work-

ers forced to live on the in-work benefits which they themselves administer.

"We have hospital staff resorting to use of foodbanks, and retail workers who often can't afford the food they sell.

"And yet we have a political class totally remote from the conditions of working-class families.

"We expect nothing better from the Tories.

"My challenge to the Labour and SNP candidates is quite simple: will you also publicly promise to live on a Scottish worker's wage, rather than nearly £90,000 a year, plus generous expenses?"

Scottish Labour and SNP were contacted for comment.



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■ SCHOOLS

Tory failure on asbestos 'is a deadly inheritance'

by Ceren Sagir
Social affairs reporter

THE failure to remove asbestos from school buildings across Britain is a deadly legacy on staff and pupils, teaching unions warned yesterday on Action Mesothelioma Day.

More than 80 per cent of schools in England have the potentially cancer-causing material present, according to latest figures by the Department for Education (DfE).

Research by the Joint Unions Asbestos Committee found that 1,000 school staff in Britain have already died from mesothelioma between 1980-2017.

And up to 9,000 former pupils may also have died from mesothelioma during the same period.

Teachers' union NASUWT has called on politicians to adopt recommendations by the work and pensions select committee, including for the introduction of a 40-year deadline for the removal of asbestos from non-domestic buildings.

Under current government plans to build just 50 new schools a year, it would take over 350 years to completely eradicate asbestos from all schools in England, the union said.

Figures from the National Audit Office (NAO) show that the DfE spent on average just £2.3 billion a year on building and refurbishing schools, compared to £7.5bn in 2009-10

before the Tories came into power.

NASUWT general secretary Dr Patrick Roach said: "Asbestos is one of the great workplace tragedies of modern times and it is a national disgrace that the UK has one of the highest mesothelioma mortality rates in the world.

"The risks are now well known, yet as last week's NAO report shows, there is a lack of urgency from the DfE to address the problem.

"This is needlessly and avoidably passing on a potentially deadly legacy to the staff and children working and learning in our schools today."

The union is working with committee chairman Sir Stephen Timms to raise demands in Parliament.

The Association of School and College Leaders (ASCL) general secretary Geoff Barton said that the only way to fully eliminate the risk of asbestos on staff and pupil health is to remove it completely.

He said: "ASCL and other organisations have repeatedly urged the government to fund and implement a programme of phased removal.

"The government has shown no inclination to do this, nor address the huge backlog of repairs needed across the school estate.

"This is further evidence of the government's failure to prioritise education and the wellbeing of pupils, leaders and staff."

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■ SCOTLAND

Junior docs suspend strike after new SNP pay offer

JUNIOR doctors' reps have suspended their upcoming strike actions, which were due to start next week, after a new pay offer from the Scottish government.

BMA Scotland said the new offer amounts to a 12.4 per cent pay increase this year, an improvement on the 14 per cent over two years previously proposed by ministers.

A three-day walkout due to start on July 12 has been averted to allow the union to ballot its members.

Scottish Health Secretary Michael Matheson, who was

in "intense negotiations" with the union to avert the strike, said he hoped the offer "will show junior doctors how much we value them."

BMA Scottish junior doctor committee chair Dr Chris Smith said: "At this stage, our negotiating team feel they have reached the limit of what can be achieved this year and do not think strike action would result in a materially improved offer.

"As a result, we have agreed to suspend next week's strikes and put this offer to our members."

BALANCING ACT: Artist Ken Bambury, from Dundee, creates stone stack sculptures on Bayswell beach in Dunbar, during the European Land Art Festival in East Lothian yesterday. The festival is a week-long event and includes nature artists from all around the world creating sand drawings, wood sculptures and stone stacks using only materials found along the coast



■ WORKERS' RIGHTS

Radiographers set to strike over pay

by Our News Desk

RADIOGRAPHERS are set to strike for 48 hours later this month over pay, their union has said.

The Society of Radiographers (SoR) said its members at 43 NHS trusts voted to walk out between 8am on July 25 and 8am on July 27.

Bank holiday levels of "life-and-limb" emergency cover will be provided for patients while the industrial action takes place, it added.

The announcement comes after union members voted to reject the government's pay offer of 5 per cent plus a non-consolidated lump sum for 2022-23 in an indicative ballot.

Trusts affected include University College London Hospitals, the Royal Marsden, Liverpool University Hospitals, Nottingham University Hospitals and University Hospitals Bristol.

A majority of members were in favour of striking at more than 150 trusts but the required turnout thresh-

old was not reached in many instances.

The union informed affected trusts of the strike by letter on Thursday.

It urged the government to discuss "urgent improvements" to radiographers' pay and conditions to avert the walkout.

Dean Rogers, the union's executive director of industrial strategy and member relations, said: "Voting for strike action is never easy.

"Going out on strike will be even more difficult for our members, who care above all

about the safety and wellbeing of their patients.

"The Society of Radiographers had been seeking meaningful discussions with the government without success since starting its industrial action ballot across England."

The union said radiographers – who carry out scans including X-rays and MRIs as well as radiotherapy for people with cancer – help nine out of 10 NHS patients but "too few" of them are currently being recruited and retained.

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■ HEALTH & SAFETY

Sharp rise in construction deaths since 2022, says executive

THE number of construction workers killed in site accidents rose sharply from 29 to 45 last year, the Health and Safety Executive (HSE) has revealed.

The total was also higher than the five-year average of 37 annual deaths, with construc-

tion making up a third of the 135 workers killed in work-related accidents across all UK industries in the 12 months to March 2023.

It was followed by the combined sector of agriculture, forestry and fishing with 21

deaths and manufacturing with 15 deaths.

The HSE said: "The most common kinds of fatal accidents at work are falls from a height (40), struck by moving object (29) and struck by moving vehicle (20) – all accounting

for around two thirds of fatal injuries to workers in 2022/23."

Official figures for Mesothelioma – the cancer that can be caused by past exposure to asbestos – showed 2,268 people died from the disease in 2021.

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Fraternal greetings to those participating in the Durham Miners' Gala

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Wayne Thomas

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Yorkshire Area
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Chris Kitchen

NUM Yorkshire
Area Chairman
Chris Skidmore

NUM Yorkshire Area
Vice-Chairman
Keith Hartshorne

NEW COLD WAR

China rejects US criticism over anti-drug efforts

by Roger McKenzie

CHINA insisted yesterday that it is up to the United States to “create necessary conditions” for anti-drugs co-operation.

This followed complaints from Washington that Beijing has ignored its calls for a crack-down on precursor chemicals for the highly addictive pain-killer fentanyl.

Foreign Ministry spokesman Wang Wenbin told a daily brief-

ing that the Chinese government takes an “active part in international anti-narcotic co-operation and firmly opposes smears and unilateral sanctions on other countries under the pretext of the fight against drugs.”

He said: “We urge the US to correct wrongdoings with concrete actions and create necessary conditions for the two countries’ anti-narcotic co-operation.”

US diplomats and anti-drug

officials have complained that China has ignored calls for closer co-operation on combating the production and sale of fentanyl precursor chemicals.

Washington and Beijing are at odds on a wide range of issues, from trade to Taiwan and US sanctions against the Chinese defence minister.

China was also deeply angered by a US Justice Department decision late last month to file criminal charges against four Chinese companies and

eight individuals for allegedly trafficking the chemicals used to make fentanyl in the US and Mexico.

The indictments represented the first prosecutions to charge China-based chemical companies and Chinese nationals with illegally selling the chemicals used to make the drug, which has been blamed for a deadly overdose crisis.

The Chinese embassy condemned the charges, accusing the US government of seeking

to blame others for its domestic drug problem.

Beijing has also complained about sanctions levelled against the Ministry of Public Security’s institution of forensic science for its supposed lack of action on combating the production and sale of fentanyl precursor chemicals, and rejected as fiction Washington’s claims that there is a pipeline of such substances from China to Mexico and then into the US.

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 in brief

Zelensky summit invite withdrawn

UKRAINE: Thirty-three Latin American and Caribbean countries have reportedly forced the European Union to cancel Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelensky’s invitation to the EU-Latin America summit due to be held on July 17 and 18 in Brussels.

News website EURACTIV also said that “all elements related to Ukraine’s support” have been deleted from the summit’s draft final declaration prepared by the EU Foreign Policy Service.

Nato to help Ukraine modernise military

NATO: Leaders of the Western military alliance will agree next week to help modernise Ukraine’s armed forces, create a new high-level forum for consultations and reaffirm that Kiev will eventually be granted membership.

But the war-torn country will not begin the accession process anytime soon.

A two-day Nato summit, starting on Tuesday in the Lithuanian capital Vilnius, will also decide on massive increases in military spending.

Over 20 arrested at tax protests

KENYA: More than 20 anti-government protesters were arrested in the capital Nairobi yesterday as many parts of the country also saw opposition-called demonstrations against newly imposed taxes.

Hundreds of protesters turned out in Nairobi and other areas such as the coastal city of Mombasa and the lakeside city of Kisumu, where the opposition enjoys huge support, but they were dispersed by police firing tear gas.

Rallies vent fury at burning of Koran

PAKISTAN: Muslims held a series of rallies yesterday to observe a “day of the sanctity of the Koran” after Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif issued a call for anti-Swedish protests over last week’s burning of the Islamic holy book in Stockholm.

Worshippers gathered outside mosques, calling for diplomatic ties with Sweden to be severed.



‘YOU FAILED’: Amaris Vega

PALESTINE

ISRAELI TROOPS KILL PAIR OF RESISTANCE FIGHTERS

NO SOLUTION: Clash casts doubt on effectiveness of two-day crackdown on armed groups

by Roger McKenzie

ISRAELI occupation forces killed two Palestinian freedom fighters in the West Bank city of Nablus yesterday.

The latest violence came days after Israel concluded a major two-day offensive against Palestinian resistance groups.

The ongoing violence raised questions about the effectiveness of the vicious Israeli attack earlier this week on the Jenin refugee camp, which saw the rare use of air strikes on resistance targets, the deployment of hundreds of troops and severe damage to many roads, homes and businesses.

As a result of the attack, 12 Palestinians and one Israeli soldier were killed.

Israeli domestic security agency Shin Bet said yesterday that the two men were killed in a gun battle with Israeli forces in the heart of Nablus, the West Bank’s commercial capital.

Shin Bet alleged that the pair had been behind a gun attack on a police vehicle this week.

The Palestinian Health Ministry identified the men as Khayri Mohammed Sari Shaheen and Hamza Moayed Mohammed Maqbool.

Two resistance groups, the Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine and the al-Aqsa Martyrs Brigade, claimed the men as members.

Palestinians carried their bodies into the hospital, chanting: “God is great!” as guns were fired into the air.

Israeli Defence Minister Yoav Gallant praised yesterday’s operation, saying: “There will be no loop that isn’t closed and there won’t be a terrorist who doesn’t pay the heaviest price.”

Yesterday’s killings were part of a year-long spiral of violence



that shows no signs of abating, despite the brutal Israeli operation in the Jenin refugee camp this week.

They follow the fatal shooting of Israeli soldier on Thursday by a Hamas fighter near an Israeli settlement in the West Bank.

The raid on the Jenin refugee camp was reminiscent of the second Palestinian uprising, a period of intense violence in the early 2000s that killed thousands of people.

Israel has been staging brutal military raids in the West Bank for the past 16 months.

On Thursday, a group of United Nations experts said the attack on Jenin, home to around 14,000 refugees, might constitute a “war crime.”

Over 150 Palestinians have been killed in the West Bank this year and Palestinian retaliation has claimed at least 27 lives.

Tel Aviv claims that most of the Palestinians killed have

WAR ZONE: Palestinians carry the body of one of the men killed in the Israeli military raid on Nablus yesterday and (below) youths throw stones at Israeli forces in the West Bank city



been militants, but the victims have also included children protesting against the incursions and people not involved in any way.

Israel captured the West

Bank, East Jerusalem and the Gaza Strip in the six-day war of 1967. The Palestinians seek those territories for an independent state.

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UNITED STATES

Racist gun killer waits to hear his sentence

A WHITE Texas gunman who killed 23 people in a racist attack at a Walmart store in 2019 was expected to learn his punishment last night.

In the run-up to the sentencing, relatives of the victims berated Patrick Crusius for days over the shooting that targeted Hispanic shoppers on the US-Mexican border.

Mr Crusius looks set to receive multiple life terms in federal prison for committing one of the deadliest mass shootings in the country’s history.

However, he could still face the death penalty over a separate case in a Texas state court that has yet to go to trial.

The racist gunman pleaded guilty in February to nearly 50 federal hate crime charges after federal prosecutors took the death penalty off the table.

The sentencing was taking place not far from the El Paso Walmart where Mr Crusius opened fire.

The attack came after Mr Crusius ranted online, claiming that there was a “Hispanic invasion of Texas.”

Amaris Vega, whose aunt was among the victims, railed at Mr Crusius’s “pathetic, sorry manifesto” promising to rid Texas of Hispanics.

“But guess what? You didn’t. You failed,” Ms Vega told the killer on Thursday. “We are still here and we are not going anywhere. And for four years you have been stuck in a city full of Hispanics. So let that sink in.”



2023 Durham Miners' Gala

Greetings from the Unite West Midlands Region to all those attending the 2023 Durham Miners' Gala

Annmarie Kilcline
West Midlands
Regional Secretary

twitter.com/UniteWestMids

Asif Mohammed
West Midlands
Regional Chair

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New Organising Conference 8-10 September • Liverpool

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DURHAM MINERS GALA 2023

GREETINGS TO
ALL ATTENDING
FROM THE



The communications union

DAVE WARD
GENERAL SECRETARY

KAREN ROSE
PRESIDENT



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137th Durham Miners' Gala Fraternal Greetings from GMB Southern Region



on behalf of 80,000 members

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Email: info@gmb.org.uk

Tel: 0208 397 8881

Twitter: @GMBSouthernRegion

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DEFENDING A KEY RIGHT: Ben Cohen, co-founder of ice cream brand Ben & Jerry's, and Jodie Evans (right), co-founder of protest group Codepink, burn a replica of the Bill of Rights outside the Justice Department in Washington on Thursday in protest at US government prosecution of Wikileaks founder Julian Assange

GLOBAL ENVIRONMENT

Average world temperature hits another high

EARTH'S average temperature set a new unofficial record high on Thursday, the third such milestone in a week.

The planetary average hit 17.23°C, surpassing the 17.18°C mark set on Tuesday and equalled on Wednesday, according to data from the University of Maine's Climate Reanalyser.

That average includes places that are sweltering in dangerous heat such as Jingxi in China, which recorded 43.3°C.

Even Antarctica was as

much as 4.5°C above normal this week.

The US National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration said that although it could not "validate the methodology or conclusion of the University of Maine analysis, we recognise that we are in a warm period due to climate change."

Nonetheless, the Maine data has been widely regarded as another troubling indication of climate change around the globe. Some climate scientists said this week

that they were not surprised to see the unofficial records.

Robert Watson, a scientist and former chairman of the United Nations Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change, warned that governments and the private sector "are not truly committed to addressing climate change."

Nor are citizens, he said, adding: "They demand cheap energy, cheap food and do not want to pay the true cost of food and energy."

UKRAINE

US to send cluster bombs to Kiev despite risk to civilians

by Roger McKenzie

THE White House has decided to provide cluster munitions to Ukraine and was expected to announce last night that the Pentagon will send thousands of them as part of a new military aid package.

The new package to aid Ukraine in the war against Russia is said to be worth up to \$800 million (£625m).

The decision flies in the face of widespread concern that the bombs cause numerous civilian casualties. The Pentagon says it will provide munitions that have a reduced "dud rate," meaning fewer unexploded rounds that can result in unintended civilian deaths.

US officials, speaking on condition of anonymity, said

the weapons will come from Pentagon stocks and will also include Bradley and Stryker armoured vehicles and an array of ammunition, such as rounds for howitzers and the High Mobility Artillery Rocket System, known as HIMARS.

Long sought by Ukraine, cluster bombs are weapons that open in the air, releasing submunitions, or "bomblets," that disperse over a large area and are intended to destroy multiple targets at once.

Ukrainian officials have asked for the weapons to aid their much-hyped counteroffensive against Russian forces.

US officials accuse Moscow's troops of using cluster munitions on the battlefield and in populated civilian areas.

Asked how the cluster munitions, if approved, would help

Ukraine, US Brigadier General Pat Ryder said that they can be loaded with charges able to penetrate armour and fragments, meaning that they can hit multiple personnel – "a capability that would be useful in any type of offensive operations."

Proponents of a ban on cluster bombs point out that they kill indiscriminately and endanger civilians long after being fired.

A convention banning the use of cluster bombs has been joined by more than 120 countries, which have agreed not to use, produce, transfer or stockpile the weapons and to clear them after use.

The United States, Russia and Ukraine are among the countries that have not signed the convention.

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BRAZIL

Deforestation down by a third in Amazon since Lula took office

by Roger McKenzie

AFTER four years of increasing destruction in Brazil's Amazon region, deforestation has declined by 33.6 per cent in the six months since President Luiz Inacio "Lula" da Silva took power, according to government satellite data.

From January to June, the rainforest had alerts for possible deforestation covering 1,023 square miles, down from around 2,500 square miles during the same period last year under former president Jair Bolsonaro.

This year's data, released on Thursday, includes a 41 per cent plunge in alerts for June, which marks the start of the dry season when deforestation tends to jump.

Environment Ministry executive secretary Joao Paulo Capobianco said: "The effort of reversing the curve of growth has been reached. That is a fact: we reversed the curve; deforestation isn't increasing."

Mr Capobianco noted that the full-year results will depend on a few challenging months ahead. But, the data is an encouraging sign for Lula, whose electoral campaign last year included pledges to rein in illegal logging and undo the environmental devastation seen while Mr Bolsonaro held office.

The far-right politician weakened environmental authorities while his insistence on development of the Amazon region resonated with land grabbers and farmers who had long felt maligned by environmental laws.

Under his administration, Amazon deforestation surged to a 15-year high.

Jair Schmitt, head of envi-



MAKING A DIFFERENCE: President Luiz Inacio 'Lula' da Silva

ronmental protection at Ibama, Brazil's federal environmental agency, said: "Bottom line, we are prioritising environmental law enforcement."

However, the continued shortage of personnel means that the task hasn't been easy, he said. Many Ibama agents retired and were not replaced during Mr Bolsonaro's time in power, reflecting his effort to reduce the strength of environmental authorities.

Lula has committed to restoring the workforce, but the 700 Ibama enforcement agents remains the lowest number in 24 years.

The federal environmental agency has strengthened remote surveillance, where deforestation is detected through satellite imagery, according to Mr Schmitt.

Ibama agents have also seized thousands of illegally raised cattle within embargoed areas. Such action is effective because it inflicts immediate punishment, whereas fines are rarely paid in Brazil due to a slow appeals process, Mr Schmitt said.

According to Ibama head Rodrigo Agostinho, the value of fines imposed in the first half of the year jumped by 167 per cent from the 2019-22 average and the agency embargoed 2,086 areas – an 111 per cent increase.

The Amazon rainforest covers an area twice the size of India and holds tremendous stores of carbon, so it serves as a crucial buffer against climate change. Two-thirds of it is located in Brazil.

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Gawain Little, General Secretary, GFTU (chair)

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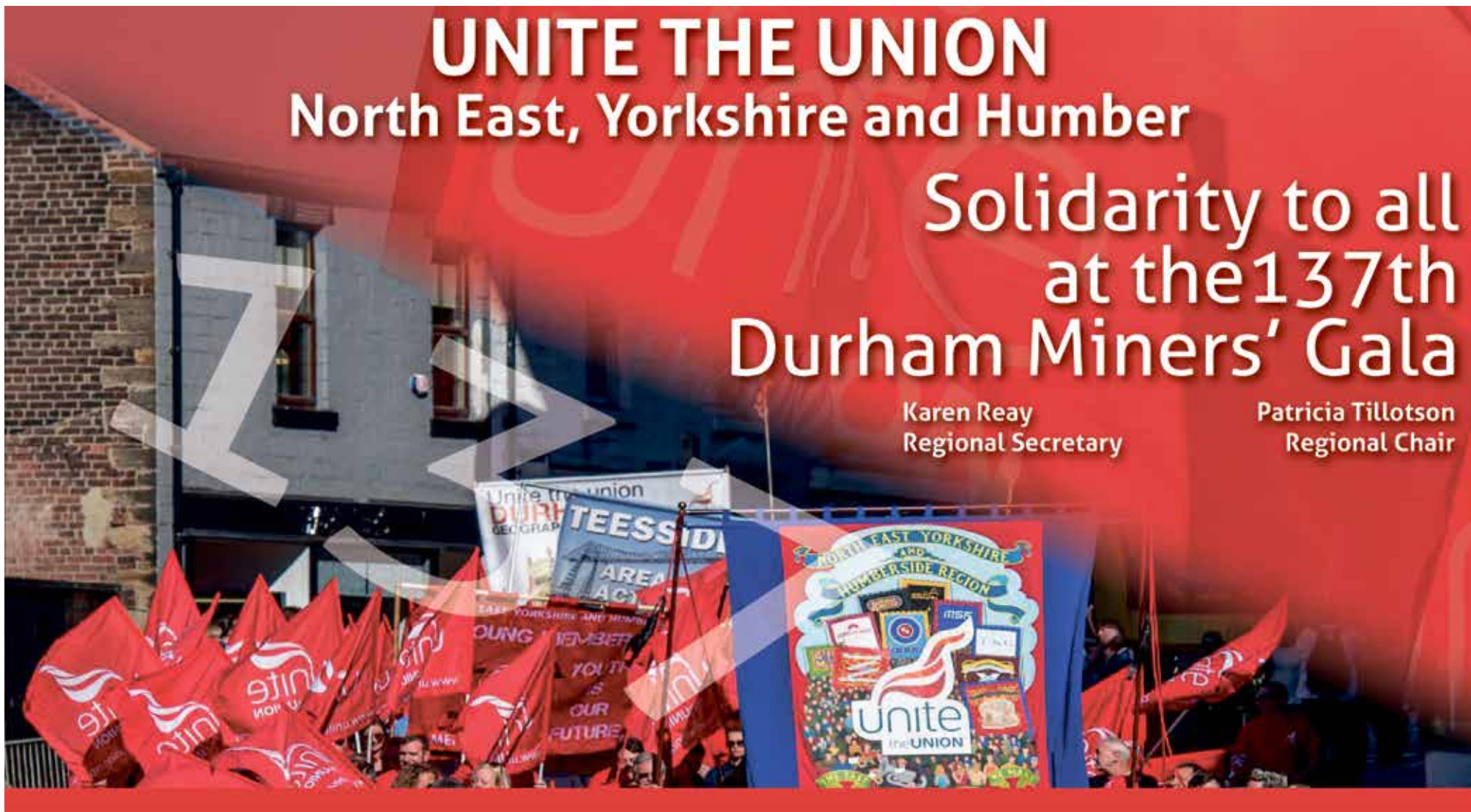


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Durham Miners' Gala 2023

'Recharging the batteries for the fight that will continue'

Matt Trinder talks to Durham Miners' Association general secretary

ALAN MARDGHUM about the 2023 Durham Miners' Gala, taking place this weekend

"I CAN'T understand why anyone wouldn't be in a union, but I was brought up in a culture of trade unionism. Kids today are not. You've got zero-hour contracts, you've got workplaces that are not the same as they used to be in the pits or the shipyards, where industrial communities used to socialise together.

"We need to get back to the grassroots and explain why we're stronger together. If you're not in a union, join a union – rise up!"

Rise up is a very appropriate theme for this weekend's Durham Miners' Gala, which barring world wars and pandemics, has hit the streets of the city in England's north-east every 12 months for more than 150 years.

2023's meet-up comes as the biggest strike wave to sweep the country since the 1980s shows no signs of abating. Teachers, lecturers, doctors, train drivers and guards, refuse collectors, even British Museum staff – they're all warning they can't take much more Tory austerity.

What better time to roll out the gala, described by its host the Durham Miners' Association (DMA) as a "unique and inspiring spectacle of the world's greatest celebration of community, international solidarity and working-class culture."

DMA general secretary Alan Mardghum is busy getting ready to welcome an expected 200,000 people, but he generously finds time to speak to the Morning Star.

He stresses that this year's event is all about "showing solidarity with all workers in struggle and on strike.

"Workers who are fighting against poverty wages, continuing attacks on living standards, rising energy prices and everything else. It's dedicated to workers throughout the country and the world."

Indeed, the international element is very important to the ex-miner. He tells me the gala has enjoyed visitors from as far afield as California, Australia and Chile in recent years. "It's great to see that internationalism, friendship and camaraderie.



RISING UP: Bands and banners parade through the city during the Durham Miners' Gala, 2019, and (below) DMA leader Alan Mardghum



"Instructing frontbenchers not to stand on picket lines – if that's not the job of Labour leaders and MPs, I don't know what is

"And, perhaps most importantly, showing common purpose. Working people coming together and saying, 'this is our day, you're not gonna wreck us.' It's about community and social justice."

Key workers from across public services were invited to address the crowds at 2022's event, the first in three years due to Covid-19 disruption.

Bakers' Union leader Sarah Woolley, PCS president Fran Heathcote and Labour's Coventry South MP Zarah Sultana are the pick of the leftwingers scheduled to appear this time.

Having a slate of socialist speakers, which was not the norm prior to the 1980s, is "something we try to keep hold of," Mardghum says.

"I've been actively involved since 1977. I went a couple of times as a kid, I just jumped on the train with some mates, but you don't take it as seriously when you're 13, 14.

"It's changed massively over time. When I first starting going, there were big crowds, but in the '90s it started to wane and we

were in danger of losing it.

"Due to the efforts of people like [former DMA head] Davy Hopper and [ex-president] Davy Guy who put the feelers out to find philanthropists, it's now back to its former glory – it's massive.

"It's a marvellous sight, and it's not just miners' banners now, you see the full array of unions present."

He describes today's gala as still "vitaly important" to the modern labour movement as it is a "rallying call for people. It's about recharging the batteries for the fight that will continue.

"There's nothing else like it – we've got other marches and rallies, like Tolpuddle and With Banners Held High in Wakefield, but the gala is at the top of that. It's vitaly important that support for it continues."

This year's meet-up – the 137th since 1871 – will be the first ever to offer British Sign Language interpretation for the keynote speeches.

Mardghum warns that "trying to cover everything is very difficult, but we're trying to make it more inclusive. As

trade unionists and socialists, we're doing what we can – it's all about inclusivity, brotherhood, sisterhood."

He soon turns his attention to the "negative attitude" of Sir Keir Starmer's increasingly right-wing Labour Party, which, with its left-wing purges and aversion to strikes, is anything but inclusive.

"Instructing frontbenchers not to stand on picket lines – if that's not the job of Labour leaders and MPs, I don't know what is," he warns.

"They're forgetting who they represent. The leadership is trying to get into office but they're offering no difference from the Tories in lots of ways – it's absolutely horrendous.

"Then we've got the debacle of them expelling people from the party or withdrawing the whip from people like Jeremy Corbyn on the grounds that he's anti-semitic. Anyone who knows Corbyn knows that he hasn't got a discriminatory bone in his body.

"[Film director] Ken Loach, who's done more than most to battle injustice throughout his life via film, to say he's anti-semitic, that's absolutely appalling. It's poisonous, it's toxic and it doesn't bode well for the future."

But away from the bad news, the general secretary stresses the massive successes over the past year, with bumper pay rises won by various unions across many industries.

"The labour movement needs to be better at promoting ourselves, not just personalities," he argues.

"That's part of the theme of the gala this year – rise up. If you're not in a union, join a union. We're stronger together than individually.

"We need to get back to the grassroots and explain why we're stronger together. Labour are not helping that cause at all which is an absolute shame as our forefathers gave birth to the party.

"We've gotta do it on our own. The bosses aren't gonna look after us. That's why they've got their employer organisations and the Tory Party in their pocket – they know they're stronger together and that's what we need."

Durham Miners' Gala 2023

Tory clampdown on freedom to protest should concern us all



Draconian new anti-working-class laws mean events like the gala need to be vigorously defended, writes **IAN LAVERY MP**

MAY I begin by saying I am thrilled to once again be at the Durham Miners' Gala, a highlight of the year that only keeps going from strength to strength.

Over the years the gala has taken on a powerful role in bringing together our movement to celebrate its proud working-class industrial heritage, reaffirm our spirit of solidarity and camaraderie, and to inspire the next generation to carry on the good fight.

Watching and absorbing the rituals and traditions of the brass bands, lodge banners, and political speeches

serve to remind us that we belong to a movement bigger than ourselves, that we are the torch-bearers of a history of working-class solidarity and resistance in this country and internationally that goes back centuries, in which I am proud to play my part.

While I look forward to a more relaxing weekend of meeting and catching up with friends new and old, this year's gala takes place in the midst of a battle against a wave of draconian legislation that seeks to impose restrictions on our fundamental rights to protest, boycott, collectively bargain and vote in free elections.

The root of this is the Conservative government's com-

plete lack of ideas and solutions to the multitude of problems facing the country. The fact is that the country is broken. It is literally on its knees.

Wages have shrunk, public services have crumbled, hospital waiting times are through the roof and the buses and trains don't show up on time – if they indeed show up at all as private greed has smashed our transport system, with record profit siphoned off to countries overseas.

Despite this, the ideological debates within the Conservative Party remain firmly rooted in the 1980s.

Millions of people across the country voted for the Conservatives in 2019 hoping they would stick to their promise of harnessing the power of the state to defend their economic interests against the malign effects of globalisation and an economic orthodoxy that has decimated their industry and communities.

Instead they were offered reheated Thatcherism with more than a hint of right-wing Farageism, and a government more interested in protecting the interests of the ultra-rich few rather than the many.

Alarming, it appears that the vast majority of politicians in Westminster underestimate the challenges facing our country ahead in the 21st century.

A rapidly ageing population, complete lack of industrial strategy, high energy prices and a chronic housing crisis are all issues that do not receive anything like the attention and

urgency they deserve.

To divert our attention from their inability to find solutions to our political problems, the Tory Party keeps the culture wars raging, spending more and more time debating the minutiae of controversial issues the vast majority of people in the country remain uninterested in.

People want to hear solutions that will really benefit their lives. How will the government get inflation down? How will they repair our NHS and public services? What is their strategy for creating high-quality, secure, local jobs that have disappeared from their communities and been left unreplaced? Or how will pay, which has stagnated for over a decade, keep up with inflation and the rising cost of living?

Instead, the government responds by imposing new oppressive restrictions on trade union activity, curbing the rights of working people to collectively organise against plummeting wages while they stand by and watch shareholders and CEOs get richer and richer.

Or by legislating against the right to peacefully protest against climate change and global warming, the effects of which will devastate working-class communities at home and around the globe – effects that those who are making their fortunes from destroying the environment will remain sheltered from.

It is no exaggeration to ask how much longer the gala itself, with its long history of political agitation often at odds with powerful economic and political interest in this country, will be permitted under this new legislation which seeks to purge any dissident voices willing to stand up for ordinary people.

Would the speeches at the racecourse, delivered in the past by names such as Keir Hardie, Clement Attlee, Aneurin Bevan, Ellen Wilkinson, Harold Wilson, Barbara Cas-

Pic: Andy Dowson



LONG TRADITION: Secretary of state for employment Barbara Castle cocks an ear to a voice in the crowd below as, with prime minister Harold Wilson, she watches the Durham Miners' Gala, 1968



It is no exaggeration to ask how much longer the gala itself will be permitted under this new legislation

tle, Tony Benn and Dennis Skinner among many others, be acceptable under today's severe anti-protest and anti-trade union laws? We are only left to wonder and perhaps in the near future find out.

There is only so much more that ordinary people, working hard to put food on the table and keep a roof over their families' heads, can take.

People are crying out for an alternative government that is brave enough to firmly commit to protecting their civil rights and liberties fundamental to our democracy, and who are willing to stand up for their economic interest rather than protecting a system that only serves to make the rich richer and exacerbate our growing equality gap with disastrous social and political consequences.

I would also like to once

Durham Miners' Gala 2023



again place on record my unwavering support for the trade union movement who have been a beacon of hope over the past year, leading the fight on behalf of ordinary people who face a government ideologically hostile to workers' rights and a commitment to keep wages down and working-class people in their place.

I have been on countless picket lines up and down the country speaking to workers passionate about their industry and concerned not only about being able to make ends meet themselves, but about the future of our public services that are being torn apart all together.

The battle will rage on so long as we have a Ukip-lite government in charge, but the movement can count on my unwavering support, as well as

the support of millions of workers around the country, for as long as it necessary.

At this moment in time you would be forgiven for thinking the outlook was bleak for our movement and the country's fortunes more generally. But the fight goes on.

Use this weekend to soak up the atmosphere. Revel in the solidarity that still runs deep through our community and let it be an example of just how powerful we can be when we stand together as one.

Remind yourself of the battles we have both won and lost over the years and how far we have come since the first gala over 150 years ago. And most importantly, remember to enjoy yourself.

■ Ian Lavery is Labour MP for Wansbeck.

JUNE 18 1984 was a day different to any other during the 1984/85 miners' strike. Miners weren't stopped and turned around by the police at roadblocks as had been happening throughout the strike. Instead, they were literally ushered into the fields surrounding the Orgreave coking plant by the police.

What was also different about that day was the vast numbers of police there with 13 different police forces from all over Britain present. All were assembled and briefed to attack, and all done in a time without mobile phones and electronic communication.

Significantly it was also a day different in terms of the extent of police brutality and violence unleashed on those present by well-armed and pseudo paramilitary-trained police units.

Police violence against miners, women against pit closures and supporters sadly became a frequent occurrence in our mining communities and throughout Britain.

Those that were at Orgreave that day say if you'd said you weren't terrified, you were lying.

Last month marked the 39th anniversary of that day at Orgreave, and as we approach the 40th anniversary it is important that every one of us collectively needs to make next year the loudest possible demand for some kind of Orgreave inquiry.

We don't need an inquiry just to set the record straight. It is essential to ensure that the repeated Tory and media lies and false narrative that the miners were the violent ones is shattered once and for all.

Besides that, we also need to examine what happened at Orgreave to provide a better understanding of the political policing of today and why government after government seeks to increase police powers to advance their political agendas.

How can it be right that 95 miners faced trumped-up charges of riot and unlawful assembly based on fabricated police evidence, and stood trial for 48 days before being acquitted as the prosecution threw the towel in?

How can it be right that no-one was held accountable for that? We heard plenty about the arrests and how those facing trial should face the full weight of the law – including receiving life sentences.

Tory ministers at that time like Leon Brittan and Nigel Lawson used every mainstream media opportunity to demand this. Despite their interference, the prosecution had no option but to offer no evidence, given the evidence they had produced was so unreliable and, in some cases, clearly falsified.

The lack of accountability over the state-ordered policing benefits those in govern-

Orgreave: the blueprint for policing dissent

The Tories' attempt to broaden police powers in dealing with protest adds urgency to the call for an enquiry into events at Orgreave, writes **CHRIS PEACE**

Pic: Brian Clarke



ment and the police who were involved 39 years ago, and those who are involved in suppressing dissent now.

The volume and speed of recent anti-protest and anti-trade union legislation is the legacy of Orgreave and the miners' strike and it explains the blatant impunity this Tory government wallows in.

It is quite clear that this Tory government views striking workers and environmental activists in exactly the same way as the Tory government of 40 years ago viewed the striking miners.

We should, however, always remember that the truth will always be revealed. This happened with Hillsborough, with Shrewsbury and, last week, we had a step forward for all campaigning and involved in the SpyCops Inquiry.

The Interim Report of the Undercover Policing Inquiry, delivered by one of the most conservative judges in the country, John Mitting, has shone a light on the vile and shameful Metropolitan Police's Special Demonstration Squad.

We send our solidarity to all sisters and brothers who have never given up their fight for justice.

There is plenty of evidence in the public domain to confirm what we have always known, that the policing of the miners' strike was controlled by the government.

However, since our campaign started, the government and security services must have ensured that crucial papers are embargoed well into the future.

Our campaign has been

informed that some papers of the Association of Chief Police Officers, those responsible for writing and then deploying the tactics in the secret "Manual" which came to light during the 1985 Orgreave trial, are embargoed until 2066.

We have also recently discovered that papers regarding some of those miners arrested at Orgreave from the director of public prosecutions are embargoed until 2071.

Today at Durham we remember and celebrate our comradeship and collective unity.

We look forward to seeing our supporters, old and new, at our stall. Most of all we look forward to marching with our banners held high, with our ears filled with the stirring sounds of the brass bands.

A wonderful day to remember the importance of solidarity and commitment to the class struggle. A day to show our determination and demand for bread and roses, and an Orgreave inquiry too!

■ Chris Peace is an activist from the Orgreave Truth and Justice Campaign and works as a criminal defence solicitor. You can find out more about the campaign at otjc.org.uk.



We send our solidarity to all sisters and brothers who have never given up their fight for justice

★ Star comment

A festival of working-class values not heard in Houses of Parliament

WE CAN be sure that that, at today's Big Meet, thousands will give voice to policies that reflect the settled views of the British people.

The Durham Miners' Gala is a powerful demonstration of the unity, cohesiveness and devotion to community of the Durham coalfield and the communities, forged in labour and working-class culture, of the people who live and work there.

It has also become a national festival that gives voice to working-class values of struggle and solidarity and the place and time when we hear the most trusted and representative leaders of the working class.

The Durham Miners Association set the scene for today with a statement that emphasised that this year's event is dedicated to trade unionists taking industrial action in the fight for wages and the cost-of-living crisis.



Labour Party leader Keir Starmer will not be at the gala for the second year running. Which is a shame because just two days ago he gave the latest of his mission speeches in which he promoted the idea that the education system should put oracy at the centre of the curriculum.

This is a laudable idea. The working class is not short of people with the ability to express themselves fluently, even grammatically, as the speeches today, and the famous audience response, will show. Maybe that is the reason for his no-show.

For the education system to ensure that all our children enter the world of work able to express themselves with precision and clarity is perhaps something some employers might have reason to fear, but the fact is that a modern economy needs two things – first, a highly skilled and continuously trained workforce and, second, capital investment in the most developed plant and machinery.

That it needs continual investment in infrastructure, public utilities, education, sustainable power generation and the health system is a matter of common sense of which the twisted values of conventional capitalist economic theory takes no account.

And therein lies Starmer's problem. Beyond platitudes he has nothing to say to an enlivened and class-conscious working-class audience that has little sympathy for the bipartisan politics which rule in the Westminster Parliament.



The bewildering paradox of our times is that the overwhelming public support for the restoration of public ownership in our basic utilities – mail, rail, water, electricity, gas, buses – finds scant reflection in the policy portfolios of the major political parties.

This is the inevitable consequence of a political strategy grounded in the belief that an aspiring party of government must first seek the approval of the rich and powerful before devising a government programme to put before the voters.

When we consider the lengths to which our ruling class went to destabilise the most recent attempt to present an alternative programme, we can perhaps understand why politicians, who have little stomach for a fight with anyone but working-class voters, fold so comfortably into the ruling-class consensus.

Starmer's modest proposal to improve our diction is to be welcomed but little real progress will be made in our education system until it get the kind of investment which the defence industry enjoys.

But as important, perhaps more so, we need to end a situation where the wealthy can buy a publicly subsidised "private" education that creates a fast and privileged track for their children and perpetuates the kind of class divisions that can only be finally ended when the ownership of the means of production, distribution and exchange are in the hands of the people.

Durham Miners' Gala 2023

LABOUR'S decision to bar North of Tyne Mayor Jamie Driscoll, pictured, from selection for the coming North East mayoralty has provoked uproar.

The local response too has been "overwhelming and really quite humbling," Driscoll tells the Morning Star. Following the ban on his candidacy, "of 22 constituencies in the region, half refused to nominate. Of those that did nominate you had standing orders being suspended, you had walkouts. In one meeting that was held on Zoom you had loads of people show up in Jamie Driscoll masks!"

Support for Driscoll has come from right across the trade union movement, with even leaders of non-affiliated unions such as PCS, UCU and NASUWT, who "rarely dip their toes into internal Labour politics," protesting against the treatment of a respected regional leader.

Unite's Sharon Graham raised it directly with Keir Starmer, Driscoll says, but "he was intransigent."

Though Labour never gave Driscoll a reason for his exclusion, its smear machine briefed that it was connected to sharing a platform with the celebrated film-maker Ken Loach – untruthfully insinuating that Loach's own expulsion was connected to anti-semitism, not something mentioned in his expulsion letter.

The party's casual – if deliberately vague – use of such serious allegations for factional advantage prompted an angry open letter from Jews in the region, who asked Labour to make it clear the attacks on Driscoll were nothing to do with the local Jewish community and warned that "any attempt to smear Mayor Driscoll's integrity by making oblique references to alleged Jewish concerns ... would be inappropriate, potentially libellous and could well have the effect of generating hostility against Jewish people or organisations."

Driscoll is sure the conversation with Loach at Newcastle Live, in which they discussed his string of films set in the north-east (this year's *The Old Oak*, *Sorry We Missed You* and *I, Daniel Blake*) was just an excuse, and can point to a long history of attempts to obstruct his work by the party, including denial of access to the party membership lists normally accessible by councillors and mayors dating back to 2020.

He's far from the only one. Greater Manchester Mayor Andy Burnham "has had to publicly say, 'stop briefing against me.' It's an open secret in the Westminster bubble that Keir Starmer is threatened by him."

But in parliamentary deselections – Jeremy Corbyn being the main exception – sitting MPs have been allowed to stand. You'd think that as a sitting



MAN OF THE PEOPLE: Jamie Driscoll joins a UCU picket (in blue top)

metro mayor in the area his inclusion in a long list would have been automatic.

"They took me out of the long-list stage because they knew if I was on the ballot I would have walked it."

Will it affect Labour's chances of reclaiming the "red wall" in a region where it suffered heavy losses in 2019, generally associated with its call for a second EU referendum when the area was strongly Leave-supporting? "Absolutely. People voted Leave not because they were interested in the intricacies of how decisions were made in the European Commission. It's because they felt people a long way away weren't listening."

"And now the Labour Party does this, and people say, they're not listening. People chat to me on the metro, they say 'I'm not going to vote Labour.'"



It's an open secret in the Westminster bubble that Keir Starmer is threatened by Andy Burnham

Because Driscoll is an extremely popular figure. Winning elections, he says, is down to economic competence, but not in the sense the term is usually used.

"For most people, it means do the buses turn up on time, can you get an appointment with the GP, are my kids going to be able to afford a house. Competence is not just about the stock market."

In Driscoll's case he is "10 years ahead of my job creation target ... we've increased training places from 22,000 to 33,000 for the same budget. When does a branch of government ever get a 50 per cent increase in value for money?"

"We did it by working directly with local providers and cutting out the big outsourcing companies and consultants, and by making it applicable to people, so people can get training that works around part-time jobs, around caring responsibilities."

"People know that and see this centralised clique in Labour HQ making these decisions, and that's why you've had this outpouring of support for me."

The training and progress on employability is one of Driscoll's proudest achievements as mayor.

"Fifty-seven per cent of those who've done the courses are women, 45 per cent non-white, 21 per cent in these courses and qualifications self-identify as disabled or neurodiverse, so we are genuinely making progress on equalities."

It was he who led negotiations on forming the new, enlarged North East mayoralty, negotiating "Britain's best-funded devolution deal" that will bring in billions to "fix our transport

system" – a big motivation was the inability to devolve transport while a metro system spanning the Tyne fell under multiple authorities.

Poor transport links affect the economy of the whole region, making it hard for people to get jobs.

"Creating good, well-paid jobs is the basis of the labour movement – right back to the Seven Men of Jarrow and the Tolpuddle Martyrs. So having created thousands of jobs is delivery."

For the first time ever, unemployment in the north-east is below the national average.

"It also makes central government happy because the Treasury gets more tax receipts – and I'm happy with that, it's win-win."

"But when I back that with a good work pledge that brings trade unions into it – you can reasonably say that is a socialist plan."

Though the Tories cut funding for Union Learn projects, the TUC gets £130,000 from the North of Tyne combined authority to fund a network of trade union reps who go into workplaces and talk to low-paid workers, showing them opportunities to develop more skills with employers giving them time to learn because their staff become more productive.

One of these achievements seem to matter to the Labour leadership, which worries

Driscoll. "Look at everyone who's been going out on strike over the past year – bus drivers, teachers, nurses – they're going to expect the Labour Party to fix these problems when it comes in, but

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'Most people don't trust the Westminster clique'

The Labour Party shot itself in the foot after barring **JAMIE DRISCOLL** from the upcoming North East mayoralty, but that won't stop him fighting on behalf of the disadvantaged, he tells Morning Star editor Ben Chacko

we're seeing a party that's running back on any commitments it has made to change anything."

What motivates the constant backtracking, the abandonment of radical policies and the purges of socialist candidates like himself?

"You have those who believe you can only win an election through focus groups, and there's an element of 'don't mention Corbyn'... there was a character assassination on Jeremy, of course [the Corbyn leadership] made mistakes on comms and politically, everyone does, but the policies were very popular, they didn't need ditching.

"Then there's the viciousness that comes with some of the people at the centre of this – the simple faction-fighting, people who enjoy expelling people for liking a tweet.

"But the most worrying reason I think is the genuine influence of big money on the party at the moment. So you get American healthcare companies donating money. And shortly afterwards you get Wes Streeting saying, we will fund the private sector to do the NHS work.

"And that makes no economic sense, because the shortage is of skilled people – if you're paying surgeons to do operations in private hospitals, they're going to do less work in the NHS.

"Most recently, there's a tweet from Keir and the front bench saying 'great spending time with Google.' And a couple of

days later, we've changed our mind on the 10 per cent tax on Big Tech, we're going to let them off that £3 billion. It doesn't take a genius to spot a pattern of behaviour."

Can anything be done about it? Driscoll is clear that something must.

"You've probably seen that recent poll that found only 6 per cent of people think our politics works. People don't trust Westminster or Westminster politicians, there is a strong drive for regional representation and I think that will be the basis of a fightback.

"People might have different views about nationalisation or common ownership of utilities... but nobody likes this wilfully underhand McCarthyism."

But however wide the outrage, Starmer has so far simply sat it out, confident that Labour's lack of internal democracy means members, mayors and affiliated unions can protest all they like – they have no mechanism to stop him.

The North of Tyne Mayor is clear that "a cost has to be imposed on this kind of behaviour."

How? Could Ken Livingstone's example point the way? Cheated of the Labour selection for the newly established London mayoralty in a shameful fix by Tony Blair, he stood as an independent, relying on his personal standing in the capital to romp to victory absorbing most of the

Labour vote. He was later welcomed back to the party after a change of leader.

Driscoll might be unusually well placed to pull off a similar coup. His popularity in the north-east extends well beyond the Labour Party itself; independent councillors in Newcastle put a motion to the council asking Starmer to reverse the ban on him standing.

Even Tories have said on regional TV that Labour has shot itself in the foot. Couple that with natural resentment of locals' choice being blocked by orders from a London-based clique, and Driscoll would appear to have a fighting chance even if Labour continues to block his candidacy.

Understandably he declines to bite when this prospect is dangled before him. But when speaking of the potential of the new, enlarged authority – which will encompass all Northumberland, Co Durham and the Tyne and Wear conurbations – and how public control can start to integrate heavy and light rail, buses and so on to double use of public transport, he sounds like a man with a plan for another term and certainly not like someone who will accept his region's ambitions being shut down from Westminster.

Keir Starmer might be advised to watch out – the north-east may not prove the pushover he expects.

Pic: Karl Weiss



FLAGS OUT: A view from the upper floor of Marx House of workers assembling on May Day

Rebuilding labour movement education at the Marx Memorial Library

MEIRIAN JUMP explains how the MML is developing its proud history of trade union education for activists to build their knowledge of struggle and class analysis

TRADE union militancy is in the ascendancy, with many young members engaged in industrial action for the first time.

How can labour movement educators harness this opportunity? What does non-sectarian political education look like today, and how can we deliver? How can an understanding of sex and race discrimination enrich a class analysis?

These were some of the questions posed at the Marx Memorial Library's conference on the future of trade union education earlier this year.

Thirteen national trade unions and trade union confederations attended the event at London's Marx House, with socialist education at the top of the agenda.

With over 200,000 set to celebrate the 137th Durham Miners' Gala this weekend, these subjects – on class mobilisation through education – resonate today.

The Marx Memorial Library has a proud history of political education. Founded 90 years ago as a workers' school, working-class education has always been a central objective. Indeed, the 1940s saw study circles on combatting fascism spring up across the country under the auspices of the MML.

Our archive of correspondence courses and syllabuses on the nature of imperialism and the wage system are testament to this work.

It continues today. 2023 sees the completion of our Unite History Project with the sixth and final volume set to go to print in the autumn.

We are currently planning a rerun of our successful RMT young members course piloted in summer 2022 and a new British labour history course focusing on labour, race and empire.

But this is just the beginning. Our conference demonstrated a hunger for a co-ordinated approach to socialist education across our movement.

What was proposed at this meeting was radical; to create a network of educators sharing information and pooling resources.

Workshops centred on four themes; political economy; labour history; internationalism and trade unions, class and power. All were examined with a race, sex and class analysis.

Practical outcomes included the development of additional course material by the MML – for instance on international labour exploitation – and the promotion of our existing work through networks.

New bite-sized subject guides on MML resources on the history of collective bargaining

and health and safety were discussed as helpful "ways in" for new activists.

The importance of tutor training – particularly on labour history – was also flagged. A flexible approach, with resources which could be adapted and repurposed, was also discussed.

This is the start of a conversation. With plenty of work to be done, we anticipate running a follow-up event early in 2024.

MML now boasts eight national trade union affiliates, all of which have been in dispute in the recent period. There is enormous potential for meaningful joint work.

One participant at the conference eloquently explained that without a sound understanding of the history of our movement's struggle – its ebbs and flows – and a robust class analysis new activists are more likely to fall away, become disillusioned. Our history makes us resilient. It gives us confidence and the resolve to fight again.

On our 90th year, we know our library founded by and for the working class is crammed full of material with the power to do just that.

■ Meirian Jump is director of Marx Memorial Library & Workers' School, Clerkenwell, London (www.marx-memorial-library.org.uk).

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UNION POWER: Steelworkers march down Whitehall in London to protest outside the Houses of Parliament, June 28 2023

OUR trade union movement faces very real challenges over the coming months and years.

We are experiencing a cost-of-living crisis not of our making. As inflation goes through the roof, profits are sky-high and the only thing not rising is our members' wages.

Many of us work in, and all of us use, public services which have been systematically underfunded and fragmented, many subject to privatisation.

And Britain's manufacturing industry, the heart of our productive economy, has been decimated.

These phenomena run deep in our economic and political system. They are the result of almost five decades of neoliberal reform which has led to a massive transfer of wealth from the working class to the super-rich.

But the past year has shown that, as a movement, we are no longer willing to sit back and take this.

The working class is back – or more correctly, it never went away – the current strike wave has mobilised huge numbers, many of them new to industrial action.

It comes off the back of a hugely traumatic pandemic in which key workers were publicly saluted for the work they do – then told they don't deserve pay rises by a Tory government.

And let us not forget those key workers who received no public recognition at all, in food production, supermarkets and elsewhere.

Directing anger into a strategy for change

GAWAIN LITTLE highlights the General Federation of Trade Unions' new education programme – to help forge the unity and strength we need to force a change of direction for Britain

This wave of action comes off the back of big political upheavals as well. Brexit was one. The Jeremy Corbyn surge another.

The lesson we learn is that people want change – but

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The current strike wave has mobilised huge numbers, many of them new to industrial action

anger at the existing state of things isn't enough.

Unless we in the trade union movement can express that anger and turn it into a genuine strategy for change, we will stay trapped in a downward spiral on pay and services. We will be poorer tomorrow than today.

And of course, there is no need for this to be the case. The cost-of-living crisis stands side by side with what the Sunday Times Rich List calls a “golden era for the super-rich.” We are poorer because they are richer.

Of course, there is another option – an alternative economic policy based on rebuilding Britain's manufacturing base, investing civil and public services and the reintroduction of sectoral collective bargaining as the basis for determining wages, terms and conditions.

The current wave of inflation can be brought to heel by bringing in price controls

to curb profiteering and real wage increases to ensure that the pay of the vast majority does not fall in real terms.

But winning such policies means establishing a broad, united front to secure a change of course. And to do that, we need to strengthen our movement and build its unity.

Today, as hundreds of thousands of trade unionists gather in Durham for the largest gathering of working people in Britain, we launch the General Federation of Trade Unions' new education programme, run by the GFTU Educational Trust.

When the GFTU was first founded in 1899, our founding mission was built around three pillars – education, solidarity and unity in action.

It is these values which inspire our new education programme, which we hope will make a significant contribution to forging the unity and strength we need to force a change of direction for Britain.

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Unless our experience of struggle is combined with opportunities to discuss, to build leadership – renewal will be unsuccessful

Trade union education is a vital component of the renewal which is needed across our movement. Experience has taught us that workplace organising and political campaigning, though essential to bring change, are not enough.

Unless our experience of struggle is combined with opportunities to reflect, to discuss, to build leadership at every level of the trade union movement, renewal will be unsuccessful.

We cannot afford for that to be the case. We have a duty to win change for working people and to continue educating, motivating and growing stronger.

■ Gawain Little is general secretary of the General Federation of Trade Unions. You can apply for GFTU Educational Trust courses at gftuet.org.uk/education. To donate to support the GFTU education programme, visit gftuet.org.uk/support-us/donate.

Cuba's not a terrorist state — so why is it still on the US's list?

Roger McKenzie talks to Cuban ambassador **BARBARA MONTALVO ALVAREZ** about the ongoing harm caused by the country's inclusion on the notorious list

CUBA demands its removal from the United States created State Sponsors of Terrorism List (SSOT), the Caribbean island's ambassador to Britain said in an exclusive interview for the Morning Star.

Her Excellency Barbara Montalvo Alvarez says: "Who is the US to create this list? Who gave them the mandate? We don't recognise the US has any moral authority to create such a list and US presidents know full well that Cuba has no links with terrorism."

The list, first published in 1979, designated Syria, Iraq, South Yemen and Libya as state sponsors of terrorism. Cuba was added to the list three years later in 1982 under the Ronald Reagan presidency.

Why? Because it dared to support revolutionary struggles against colonialism in Latin America and Africa, including against the South African apartheid regime.

One of the reasons given for adding Cuba to the list was down to the island's support of the Revolutionary Armed Forces of Colombia (Farc).

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Every year the general assembly of the UN votes overwhelmingly in favour of a motion demanding an end to the economic blockade, the US refuses to listen

But, as Alvarez says: "President Joe Biden revoked the listing of Farc as a terrorist organisation back in 2021."

Cuba has also been hosting and facilitating talks in Havana to bring an end to the long-running conflict in Colombia which, just this week, led to commitments by Farc that may pave the way to a lasting peace.

Cuba now sits on the list alongside Iran, North Korea and Syria, which restricts foreign aid, prohibition of defence sales, banning goods that could be used for civilian or military purposes as well as other financial constraints.

Alvarez says: "This is clearly a politically motivated action by the US and increases the damage that has already been caused by the illegal blockade of Cuba."

The US has imposed an embargo on the sovereign Caribbean nation since the late 1950s, which bans the flow of all goods to Cuba including oil and much-needed medical supplies.

The Cuban government, backed by United Nations research, has estimated the total cost to the island's economy over the six decades to be well in excess of the equivalent of £100 billion.

Even though every year the general assembly of the UN votes overwhelmingly in favour of a motion demanding an end to the economic blockade, the US refuses to listen.

The inclusion of Cuba on the SSOT list adds to the massive

challenges already faced by the Cuban people.

Then president Barack Obama took steps to remove Cuba from the SSOT list in 2015 and eased many of the restrictions around trade and tourism.

"The Obama administration signed 32 different agreements with Cuba," Alvarez tells me. But 10 days before the end of the administration of Donald Trump he reimposed "243 sanctions against Cuba, all of which are still valid under Biden," she says.

Alvarez adds: "It's a political aberration for Cuba to be on this list and many organisations, such as the Community of Latin American and Caribbean States, the European Union and many organisations within the US are calling for Cuba to be removed from the list."

"So why hasn't President Joe Biden removed Cuba from the list?"

Biden was vice-president when the Obama administration eased relations with Cuba.

But, she tells me: "Biden has simply maintained Trump's policies on Cuba. Cuba seems to be more about the domestic agenda of the US rather than an issue of foreign policy."

"We have a bizarre situation where someone with the power to allow for what most countries in the world want — an improved relationship with Cuba — refuses to do so."

The ambassador says: "It causes severe damage to Cuba to be on this list. The moment



SPEAKING OUT: (Above) Roger McKenzie talks to Cuban ambassador Barbara Montalvo Alvarez; (below) people shelter from the heat in Havana, Cuba

we were placed on the list, 45 international banks immediately terminated relations with Cuba.

"This goes way beyond designating an adversary. It jeopardises our economic and commercial life and, of course, affects every individual. It is economic warfare against Cuba."

Alvarez adds that "even religious groups who want to give aid to our country are prevented from doing so because we are on the SSOT list. It worsens the impact of the blockade on supplies needed for our health and education system and the tourism industry, which is one of Cuba's main currency earners."

The ambassador says that if more people in the US and across the world knew what was happening they would be outraged.

"People need to learn more about what's happening to Cuba. We believe this would create more solidarity with the Cuban people. We ask people to read and learn for themselves about

what is happening. They don't just need to take our word for it."

Alvarez was reminded about Comandante Fidel Castro imploring people not just to listen to what he and other leaders said but to go out and learn for themselves.

She says that people will see that, "rather than deserving to be treated like a terrorist country, it is Cuba that has been the victim of terrorism."

As Castro once said: "I don't think it is so difficult to solve the problems between Cuba and the United States; it all depends on whether there is a dialogue, a discussion."

The US president has the choice of dialogue and discussion rather than hostility by removing Cuba from the SSOT list.

"The list is drawn up by the US secretary of state. It does not require approval from the US Congress to remove Cuba from the list, it just needs President Biden to pick up a pen and remove Cuba from the list."

But in March of this year Secretary of State Antony Blinken told the powerful House of Rep-

resentatives foreign affairs committee that the administration had no plans to remove Cuba from the SSOT list.

Alvarez says: "We believe that the more US opinion is informed about what is happening the more likely it is to be against the policy."

Biden could easily resolve the matter with the stroke of his pen but, as with any other matters of politics, people in power rarely just do the right thing.

It requires the power of the people to force a change in policy. We need to support the great work of the Cuba Solidarity Campaign in Britain and the international movement that aims to mobilise the power of the people against the brutal and illegal blockade against Cuba as well as their inclusion on the SSOT list.

If you are in a union get them to raise their voices in Britain and through their international organisations and political contacts.

Invite speakers to meetings to hear about the impact of the brutal and illegal US policies towards Cuba.

Much is rightly said about the inspirational resilience of the Cuban people. We must match that resolve by doing all that we can to change US policy towards Cuba.

Cuba has only advocated having a good relationship with the US but this can never happen at the point of a gun or as a result of an illegal blockade.

Cuba has as much right to sovereignty as Ukraine or any other country. But, as Castro said: "Our position is that we do not accept conditions of any kind which may affect the independence and sovereignty of our country, just with the view to solve economic problems existing between the United States and Cuba."



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Cuba has as much right to sovereignty as Ukraine or any other country

Notes from a Free Walker

In love with 'sheep walks'

DAVE BANGS pays tribute to the joys of the South Downs

OWE it all to my mum – my thing about the South Downs “sheep walks.”

When we were kids in the early 1960s on family outings, trudging up the flinty Downland paths past ever-expanding cornfields, she'd go into a riff about the old Downs she'd known as a girl in the 1920s and '30s.

“It was so different then, dear. So lovely. We'd walk for miles and never get tired, because the 'sheep walk' turf was grazed all short and tight like a lawn – soft and springy underfoot.

“We met no fences or hedges. It was open and free. There was the smell of thyme or gorse on the breeze, and always there was the music of skylarks high above.”

As a teenager I'd walk and walk to try to find places that matched her and Grandad's memories. I found them, but they were few and rare survivors. Wolstonbury and Fulking Down stayed intact like that for a while. Often the places I found were in dire peril.

My bro and I found our first adder and early purple orchids amongst the gorse on Mount Zion. Even then the bulldozer was pushing back the bushes and anthills on the edge of that place. Next spring the home of that adder and those orchids was a ploughed field.

This is a story that many of you of my vintage can tell, about your favourite meadows, woods, pastures and streams in that dreadful decade of the triumph of “factory farming.” Stories of loss and mourning.

Later, in the mid-1990s, the prospect of a Blairite Labour government came into view, albeit stripped of socialism.

Michael Meacher, the shadow environment minister, was better than most of them. There



GREEN AND PLEASANT: Members of the public taking a stroll in the South Downs in Sussex and (below) Dave Bangs poses with a neolithic hand axe found on his local Downs

was talk about a new national park of the South Downs.

A group of us Labour members engineered a private meeting with him down here in Brighton. I thought this was my big chance – and I went for it.

I painted Michael a harsh picture. The South Downs was like a loved one in an intensive care unit, I said – unrecognisably injured under bandages and tubes.

We are frightened they'll turn off the life support. Yet we know that she's still there, though broken. She CAN be brought back to her full self.

I said that the National Park project was the “patient's” last great hope. Most of the soft, rolling, flower-dappled down pastures were gone, and the national park was the only mechanism that could restore

that lost delight. I could see my fellow party members sweating with unease at my frankness.

Meacher cut through all this: “Yes, don't worry, I already understand what you're saying and I completely agree. A national park of the Downs has to be of a new type, dedicated to restoring the landscape, not like other national parks where the heathery moors or mountain fells are still intact.” We breathed a collective sigh of relief.

He was as good as his word, and in his speech to party conference announcing two new national parks (the other was the New Forest) he exactly repeated the idea of a national park dedicated to a project of landscape restoration.

After the passing of an enabling Act and two long public inquiries it finally came into existence in 2011.

Yet Meacher, I am sure, would not be happy if he saw how the South Downs National Park project has panned out. (He died in 2015, but not before he'd made it clear that he supported Jeremy Corbyn's bid for party leadership, and confessed that he regarded his own vote for the Iraq war in 2003 as “the worst political mistake I've made in my lifetime.”)

The National Park Authority has never made the restoration of the old landscape of Down pasture (or “chalk grassland,”

as us botanists call it) its backbone project.

Its new project for massive tree-planting in the park gets far more publicity than its work to salvage and restore the extraordinarily biodiverse fragments of chalk grassland that survive.

The park's unelected governing body is a lot more interested in cosying up to private landowners and agribusiness farmers than it is in challenging them, and driving forward an alternative vision for restoring our lost “landscape of freedom.”

We can't blame it just on the park authority. Hobbled by lack of statutory powers, major enabling funding or – above all – political will, the national park's workers and activists have to be content with meagre piecemeal gains.

On my block of Downland north-west of Brighton, just 18 square miles, the once-unitary mantle of down pasture (aka chalk grassland) is now reduced to some 60 scattered fragments, nearly all on slopes too steep to be ploughed.

Indeed, I propose a new law to add to Boyle's law and Newton's laws of motion. I call it “Bangs' law,” and it states that “on open Downland in the management of private farmers and landowners no species-rich chalk grassland will survive on land which is on more than 20 degrees of slope” (beyond which farm vehicles would tumble down).

Indeed, it is even worse than

that, for some very steep chalk grassland slopes were destroyed by crop spraying aircraft back in the 1960s to '80s.

This May half-term we took two of the youngest grandkids up onto gorgeous flowery Newtimber Hill's down pastures. They ran about and learned to stalk the butterflies of many colours and work out what they were. They loved it ... peering at small coppers, dingy skippers, common blues, burnet companions and Lincoln green forester moths.

They learnt to avoid treading on the fragrant and spotted orchids, and got to watch foraging swallows, chirruping house martins, and yellowhammers, and listen for the lark's sky music.

As we drove them home we asked them what they had enjoyed the most ... the flow-

ers? ... the butterflies? Both of them said it was the jelly babies I'd doled out a few minutes before.

My old mum would have had a good laugh at that.

■ *Dave Bangs is an eco-socialist who migrated to King's Cross, then back to Brighton 26 years later. He has trespassed all his life. His first direct action was aged 11 when he nicked some bags of sugar and put them in the tank of a bulldozer on some precious Downland being built on. He's won some battles against council housing “stock transfer” (privatisation) and the privatisation of council Downland. He's lost loads more.*

■ *Notes from a Free Walker is a new monthly column, to appear on the second weekend of the month. Keep an eye out for the next one on August 12.*





PIONEERS: Matchwomen participating in a strike against Bryant & May, London 1888

IT'S 135 years since a group of close female friends walked out of the match factory where they worked, and into history.

To the middle classes, the Bryant & May matchwomen were a "rough set of girls," completely beyond the pale: "East-enders," which was bad; working women which was worse; and largely Irish, which was simply unforgivable!

They should have been grateful for their jobs: for earning a pittance while their bosses lived in palatial country estates; for wages pushed down ever lower as the firm's share price soared; for jaws rotted by deadly white phosphorus. They were an inferior "race" according to the Victorian narrative: part of the dangerous, subhuman "underclass."

But the Great and Good could reassure themselves on one point – the matchwomen were too uneducated and ignorant to be a political threat. The mob might rise up now and again, in a swell of inchoate animal rage (and should be put down with extreme force when it did so: "bullets against brickbats" were entirely justified), but this was not class-conscious, intelligent rebellion.

In 1888, the matchwomen set fire to that lazy thinking, and warmed their hands on the flames.

Walking out in protest against management bullying and deadly working conditions, they quickly elected representatives to put their terms to man-

agement – terms which looked beyond their immediate needs, and included a demand for the right to form a union.

This was radical – workers like them were not, in general, wanted by the established labour movement, especially not if female.

Henry Broadhurst, the parliamentary secretary of the TUC, had stated that women should be "in their proper sphere, at home," and that it was the job of his Congress to ensure they were driven from the workplace and returned there.

It seems astonishing that the women were well aware of this, yet carried on regardless, with all the odds against them – but we have to understand two things about them: that they were prepared to fail, even if they all lost their jobs, for the principles at stake; and that they were not as unresourced as they appeared.

They had something vital which both their bosses and middle-class socialists overlooked – each other.

The matchwomen had always understood the power of the collective, and had strong codes of loyalty. They might have occasional fights but always defended each other against outsiders, to the amazement of their so-called "betters" – they "lend their clothes and boots... they will give their last crust to one of their number out of work," noted surprised middle-class commentators.

Of course they did: solidarity

was a matter of principle, but also life or death, to the industrial working class.

They knew they could only withstand the crushing weight of relentless poverty by shouldering it together; and not just physically – though they would share food, money and clothing – but emotionally too.

The poor saw their friends and family driven mad by the endless grind, and sometimes to suicide. They knew they had to support each other, with love and friendship, and find fun wherever they could, to make their lives tolerable.

This was not just pragmatism, but political understanding too.

When I began researching them years ago, I was told the matchwomen couldn't possibly have political understanding.

I found this implausible, even before I traced their relatives, and so it proved: Anglo-Irish Victorian "slum children" were reared on "tales of Erin's wrongs" going back centuries.

Mary Driscoll, one of the matchwomen whose families I traced for my book *Striking a Light*, carried likenesses of Robert Emmett as well as the 1916 Rebels from rented room to rented room throughout her life.

The matchwomen fought back culturally, too – singing "Bold Robert Emmett," as well as learning the words to the popular music hall songs of the day, and forming gin committees to organise big nights out. They were known as excel-

Fierce and formidable: the matchwomen live on

Ahead of the annual Matchwomen's Festival next weekend, **LOUISE RAW** celebrates the striking women of the Bryant & May factory – who, against all odds, fought for their rights and won

lent dancers, and I found an account of them "dancing a breakdown" on the "crystal stage" outside the Eagle pub.

It took me years to discover the dance in question, and I think, from its name and description, it might well have been another example of the working classes thumbing their noses at poverty – in this case, the despair of overcrowded living conditions.

In the "cellar flap breakdown," the dancer's feet remain fixed to the spot while the arms and torso "gyrate madly."

The women also paid into "feather clubs" to buy and share communal hats and their trimmings – not being able to afford their own didn't mean they weren't going to dress to the nines on rare nights out. This was partly a fierce class pride – look down on us if you dare, we look FABULOUS!

Descendants told me that the matchwomen were often real community leaders too, the queens of their streets, and virtual one-woman welfare states.

They would help you in childbirth, lay out your dead, tell you which shop keepers would give you "tick" (credit), and which butcher would give you bones at the end of the day to make your family a nourishing broth.

Mary Driscoll later became



LIVELY: Festival-goers enjoy the day at Matchfest in Bow, east London, in 2018

a small shopkeeper (a leap in status that would have taken a lot of work to accomplish) and also rented out the back shop to anyone who wanted private meeting space.

However, according to family lore, she turned down one hire, because she thought the man was an "arsehole" – Oswald Mosley, when he was first trying to get a foothold in the East End.

Another matchwoman, Martha Robertson, loved, supported and fed children and grandchildren on little more than fresh air, and when older and frail physically, still enjoyed the pub, and told her grandson Ted Lewis that if a fight started "just prop me up in the corner if it kicks off, Ted – I'll take 'em on with my stick."

Taking on one of the country's most powerful firms, winning the first major victory of the industrial working class, forming the largest union of women and girls in the country at the time, and inspiring so many others, including the dock strikers of 1889, was just another beautiful feather in their hats.

It is typical of our "great individuals" school of British history that it for so long credited middle-class journalist Annie Besant

with leading the strike, when my research found a vast amount of proof that she did no such thing – the phrase "bullets against brickbats" quoted earlier comes from her urging governments to shoot down rioters.

In 2016, Jeremy Corbyn kindly acknowledged my work and the matchwomen as the mothers of the modern labour movement, and

party.

I am particularly delighted therefore to welcome him and his wife Laura Alvarez as key speakers at this year's festival as well as multiaward-winning writer, hilarious speaker and socialist AL Kennedy.

We will also speak with Sistah Space (the domestic violence support charity whose founder suffered racist questioning at Buckingham Palace last year); the women of Orgreave Justice, Sukhdev Reel, mother of Ricky who died in still unexplained circumstances 25 years ago; and Julia Caro, mother of Chris Nota who died after being failed by local authority services.

We have music, too, from two hugely talented and original singer-songwriters and musicians, Maddy Carty and Emma Gee Flowers.

This year we have worked to keep ticket prices down – they're actually slightly LOWER than last year as we are more than aware how hard things are out there – and are offering £5 solidarity tickets for trade unionists with ongoing strike action.

Please join us! We are a small, independent, and feminist, socialist and anti-fascist festival dependent on donations, we have no set funding.

■ The Matchwomen's Festival 2023 takes place on Saturday July 15 from 2pm to 10pm, at Bow Arts Trust, 183 Bow Road, London E3 2SJ.

■ Tickets via Eventbrite bit.ly/Matchfest23.

Pic: Wellcome Collection



SPARK: Bryant & May 'Pearl' safety matches, London, England, 1890-1

COMPETITION

Win a night at the workers' stately home



WORTLEY HALL

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

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

So how do you win our fabulous prize? Just answer the following question: **What is this year's Gala dedicated to?**

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

The competition closes on Monday July 17 and the winner will be announced on Friday July 21.

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

ABOUT WORTLEY HALL



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

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

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

The bar and restaurant offer a spacious and relaxing atmos-

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

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

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

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

TERMS & CONDITIONS

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

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

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

adults to one night B&B at Wortley Hall dispatched to them. The voucher expires on March 31 2024. **5.** The winner's name and county may be disclosed to anyone who writes within one month after the published closing date, stating the date of publication and enclosing a stamped

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

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

Morning Star teams up with Manifesto Press

BERNADETTE KEAVENEY
 on an exciting new partnership

RECENTLY, the Morning Star's online shop and stalls have lacked any new books that would be of interest to our readers.

It is therefore with real pleasure that we can announce today that books published by Manifesto Press will be available to our readers via our online shop and where we can at conferences and events.

It's over a decade since Manifesto Books was launched, with the aims to publish working-class history, socialist theory and the politics of class struggle and working-class political power and, during this time, over 40 books have been published.

Manifesto Press is now constituted as a co-operative registered in the same way as the People's Press Printing Society which makes it even more appealing for our two businesses to be working together on promoting the publications.

The logistics have been relatively simple to set up as both Manifesto Press and the Morning Star use Solu4ions fulfilment. Solu4ions has been running the Morning Star online shop for several years, allowing us to concentrate on our core business of publishing the Morning Star.



Two books that we hope will fly off the Morning Star online shop's shelves are Phil Katz's new biography of revolutionary pioneer Tom Mann and Nigel Flanagan's *Our Trade Unions: What Comes Next After the Summer of 2022*.

And if, like me, you are eagerly awaiting the release of the *London Recruits* film, you can get up with some background reading with these two books: *London Recruits* (an Educational Resource) and *How To Master Secret Work*.

Radical inspiration comes from learning about solidarity, bravery and internationalism and these books will give you all of this. Importantly for the Morning Star we will take a percentage of all sales made from Manifesto Press books. So another great way for you to support the paper.

Now that we have tempted you to revisit the Morning Star shop, don't forget to look at the other merchandise items, mugs, caps, hats, badges, flasks and travel mugs. Check back regularly as we will be updating with new items shortly.

■ Bernadette Keaveney is Morning Star circulation manager. Visit the Morning Star shop at shop.morningstaronline.co.uk.

A red and white Italian favourite

THANKS to the lively appearance of its red and white leaves, which make it so popular in mixed salads sold in supermarkets and restaurants, radicchio has gone from being an allotment oddity to a familiar vegetable.

Although shops sometimes label it as a lettuce, it's actually part of the chicory family, coming into its prime during the colder months.

Its colour, crunch, and a flavour that combines sweet and bitter, make it a welcome change in the winter both cooked and raw.

One of the most widely available types for sowing in June and July is *Rossa di Treviso*, mainly because it stands up to the cold particularly well, often still being harvestable well after Christmas. But there are plenty of other red chicories in the seed catalogues if you're feeling adventurous.

If you have the facilities to begin radicchio under cover, preferably sown in modules, there's no doubt you'll be starting with an advantage.

If it's sown in the soil in the conventional way – in rows, or broadcast – slugs are likely to take an interest in the seedlings. Germination may also be erratic outdoors if the weather's very hot.

I tend to plant them out at a generous spacing, around a foot (30cm) apart each way, because they do need air movement around them to prevent rotting.



MAT COWARD on how to grow a colourful, crunchy radicchio crop

Radicchio requires a decent soil, one that has plenty of organic matter in it. Because they're making most of their growth through the driest months, they'll struggle in ground that was thin and dry to start with. Alternatively, try them in pots using a good quality potting compost.

They continue to need regular watering during dry weather in both summer and autumn.

Once the "hearts" have formed, meaning the plants

become ball-shaped and rather firm, it's safest to pick the chicories as soon as possible.

Foliage soon starts rotting on hearted radicchio, and within weeks the whole thing will be slimy and unusable. Don't immediately abandon a plant with slimy outer leaves, though: peel them away and you should find sound foliage beneath, unless you've left it in the ground too long.

If you're only ever going to want a few leaves at a time, you can choose a non-hearting or

loose-leaf variety of chicory. Or you can delay a hearting variety from reaching that stage by treating it as a cut-and-come-again crop, periodically cutting the leaves down to a stump without pulling the plant up, and letting it produce more.

Sometimes a radicchio that doesn't heart before winter will survive right through to the start of spring.

Warnings about slugs and rot may make radicchio sound like a difficult vegetable to grow, but really it's not: very few creatures seem to eat it once it's past the seedling stage, and it isn't particularly prone to disease.

The northern Italians are the experts when it comes to using radicchio, and it's definitely worth having a wander around the internet for a few of their recipes.

TV Weekend Preview



Sunday
Exploring India's Treasures with Bettany Hughes, 8pm Channel 4
 Classical historian Bettany Hughes takes in this first episode of a rapid tour of the vast subcontinent.

The Taj Mahal, Ganges river and Janiwas Palace all feature, alongside a look at the holy city of Varanasi. An enthusiastic host, she usefully includes chat with local experts as she explores the spiritual and historic aspects of the various sites.

Film

Saturday
Mission Impossible: Fallout, 9pm Channel 4

Motorbike chases, high-wire stunts and a particularly OTT plotline made this sixth in the franchise a memorable one.

Personal Shopper, 11.10pm Great!
 Kirsten Stewart shoulders a ponderous piece on grief and alienation.

Sunday
The Hitman's Bodyguard, 9pm Film4

Ryan Reynolds's usual comedy action shtick, with Samuel Jackson and Selma Hayek.

A Quiet Place Part II, 9pm Channel 4
 Emily Blunt and family escape from blind aliens with super-sensitive hearing.

The Second Best Exotic Marigold Hotel, 6pm Channel

All-star comedy about British pensioners retiring to India.

Rain Man 10pm BBC1
 Dustin Hoffman and Tom Cruise play an autistic savant and his exploitative sibling in this Oscar winner, which has had complex impacts on popular perception.

Drama

Sunday
A Midsummer Night's Dream from Shakespeare's Globe, 8pm BBC4

Emma Rice's bold and raucous take on the Bard's classic.

A Spy Among Friends 9pm ITV
 Period spy drama on Kim Philby. Entertaining despite the Western lens.

with Ann Douglas

Documentary

Sunday
A Year on Planet Earth, 8pm ITV
 Stephen Fry fronts this seasonal take on winter wildlife in the northern reaches.

Britain's Ancient Capital: Secrets of Orkney, 10.45pm BBC4

A topical subject for wandering around and learning about, given recent musings about the island's Norwegian inclinations.

Sport

All weekend Wimbledon, 11am-9pm across BBC1 and BBC2
 Running throughout the day and indeed throughout the next week.

What to miss

Saturday: Sophie: The King's Secret Weapon? 9.15pm Channel 5
 Sadly this isn't about the death ray Chuck's got secreted in his volcano lair. No, instead it's an entire hour dedicated to his sister-in-law. The usual hagiographic tosh spiralling ever further outwards because every other royal has been fully saturated on screen.

Yesterday's sudoku

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

THEATRE/MUSIC REVIEW | UNTITLED F*CK M*SS S**GON PLAY

★★★★☆ | ROYAL EXCHANGE MANCHESTER

PAUL FOLEY urges you not to miss an interrogation of Asian stereotypes whose anger is laced with humour

AS Manchester's biennial International Arts Festival gets into full swing there are a multitude of wonderful, outrageous, unfathomable and quite frankly downright absurd events across the city.

If there is only one thing you can attend, then head to the Royal Exchange where you will be served up a delicious new play from Kimber Lee. Her *Untitled F*ck M*ss S**gon Play* won the inaugural Bruntwood International Prize in 2019. Now having its world premiere, it shouldn't be missed.

It's a wonderful, funny, thoughtful and very angry play.

The Narrator, a marvellously deadpan Rochelle Rose, takes us on a journey from 1905 to 2023 through the depiction of Asian



STEREOTYPICAL ASIAN HELL: Mei Mac as Kim

women in Hollywood film and TV. Starting with *Madame Butterfly*, by way of *South Pacific* and *Miss Saigon*, the Narrator guides Kim and Clarke through their Asian adventures.

Guess what, whether it's Japan, Polynesia or Vietnam, it amounts to a plucky Asian village, with plucky Asian peasants and a plucky, pretty girl. A beefy US soldier, sailor, airman arrives, rapes the young woman (tastefully of course) then abandons her. Four years later he returns with an appropriate Western wife, steals the child and leaves an appropriate knife, gun, rope, poison in order that the young woman can do the decent thing.

Each vignette is hilariously played out with Kim, the young

girl, a fabulous mix of shy naivete and pent-up rage from Mei Mac, and Clarke (Tom Weston-Jones) oozing testosterone as they go through their allotted roles. By the time we reach the late 1970s and *Miss Saigon*, Kim is becoming apoplectic at the number of rapes and tasteful deaths she must encounter. By 2023 her rage boils over and she explodes at those around her, desperate to find an escape from this stereotypical Asian hell.

And therein lies Lee's point. Western appropriation of a whole continent's culture is reduced to a generic small peasant village where its women are gagging to be freed by Western men and values.

When the laughing stops, Lee's excellent play hits you

between the eyes. What is the legacy of this discrimination? Are we complicit in perpetuating the stereotypes? Should the likes of *Miss Saigon* still be performed? What about Puccini's *Madame Butterfly*? As Kim finally declares this is the "end of the f***ing play" Lee leaves the audience to decide the answer to those questions.

Long after the tears of laughter dry, the underlying horror within this play will stay with you for a long time.

Go see this important play but if you can't get to Manchester, the play transfers to the Young Vic on September 18.

Runs until July 22 2023; royalexchange.co.uk; then Young Vic Sep 18 - Nov 4; youngvic.org

OPINION

DANIEL PAUL TAYLOR and MATT ALFORD are sceptical of Jonathan Pie's aspiration to tell the truth behind the news

STRUGGLING actor Tom Walker found overnight success when he posted his first video as the fictional TV reporter Jonathan Pie in 2015.

The Pie format is simple and devastatingly effective. After whittling off mainstream talking points, the visibly exasperated Pie then launches an off-air aside, which gives a reasonable counter-argument that much of the public is thinking but no-one is saying.

The conceit tapped into a feeling that news coverage is not only out of step with public opinion but also disingenuous, as not even the reporters believe it.

Though this is all often entertaining, there's a risk in seeing Pie's seemingly spontaneous outrage as somehow above the fray or channelling truth. It isn't.

Let's take two key issues: cancel culture, and Ukraine.

Pie genuinely seems to confuse the goals of the Labour left with that of Twitter trolls. When Rebecca Long Bailey was kicked out of Labour's shadow cabinet in June 2020, Pie scoffed: "The left-wing contingent are up in arms."

Long Bailey had ostensibly been sacked for tweeting an article which alleged links between the US and Israeli police.

"You did this," Pie chides, as if the Corbynite wing of the Labour Party was primarily motivated by identity politics.

"You created this society of a tiny but very vocal minority of perma-offended woke tw*ts with an extraordinary amount of power."

Other high-profile dismissals include Jamie Driscoll, who has recently been blocked simply for talking to the film director Ken Loach. It's not that everyone is being destroyed for dodgy tweets. It is that the Labour left is being systematically eliminated.

On foreign policy, Pie also crumbles.

Just after the 2022 Russian invasion of Ukraine, in a video made especially for the *New York Times*, Pie rightly explained that "stronger sanctions against Putin are in danger of hurting us more than it does him," before adding, "This was Putin's plan all along. For 20 years he's been

slowly neutralising us as a threat by using our own greed against us," referring to Russian oligarchs who have bought up chunks of London.

Well, okay, but that is an odd way to frame it.

By painting Putin as an implacable "enemy" and "mass-murdering tyrant" about whom we do nothing, Pie fed the narrative of a "gutless" West. A year on from his diatribe and with a Western-funded war in full flow, Pie would be hard pressed to make the same case. The overriding problem is not "doing business" with Putin, it's that the West has forced trade to cease. Meanwhile, we've stoked the war, entirely unmentioned by Pie - including in his live gig we saw at Shindig festival.

Jonathan Pie had a short stint with RT, the Russian state-controlled international news television network funded by the Russian government, until, in 2016, he realised the Russia connection might harm what he called "Pie brand." His current podcast series is out with the BBC and, as he's been filtered through the mainstream machine he sounds increasingly like the commentators he once seemed to satirise.

Daniel Paul Taylor runs the YouTube channel *Complaints on a Plate*. Matt Alford is a writer and comedian who co-produced the documentary *Theaters of War* (2022)



Pic: Spammer Films/Public Domain

THEATRE REVIEW | BENEATHA'S PLACE

★★★★★ | YOUNG VIC

SIMON PARSONS recommends an riveting production that lays bare the politics of cultural heritage

INSPIRED by Lorraine Hansberry's acclaimed *A Raisin in the Sun*, Kwame Kwei-Armah's play has updated the eponymous character's narrative and brought it slap bang into a world where current issues of cultural heritage regularly generate controversial headlines.

Picking up the story again in 1959 at Chicago University, we see a politicised Beneatha who has made her choice to marry her Nigerian boyfriend, Joseph Asagai, and return to his homeland on the eve of independence where his political standing makes him a key figure.

Caught between the different colonial, US interventionist and local factions, Asagai's struggle for full Nigerian independence is doomed with the discovery of oil in the Niger delta.

His fate and political impotence are the tragic lessons Beneatha carries into the second act where as the present Dean of the Social Sciences at Lagos University, she is battling for the future of her renowned approach to ethnic studies.

Returning to her short-lived Lagos home, part mausoleum/part museum of 1950s racial memorabilia, she skilfully manoeuvres her academic colleagues into revealing their innate racial prejudices during a discussion on whether critical whiteness studies should supersede African-American studies.

Cherrelle Skeete is outstanding as Beneatha, visibly transforming from a mischievous young wife who mocks the absurdly comic patronising of the white missionaries and former owners of their new home, who faces the stark realities of her new role through the trans-



Pic: Johan Persson

Zackary Momoh and Cherrelle Skeete in Beneatha's Place

formative radicalism of the late 1960s, to the politically astute, aged academic who fulfills a promise to her late husband.

The supporting cast include a dignified and impassioned performance from Zackary Momoh as both her husband and then trusted associate, and sharp satirical roles from, amongst others, Sebastian Armesto, first as the Machiavellian CIA representative and later as the articulate Professor Bond who contends that black history should be taught from a white perspective for the sake and education of its largely white audience.

Kwei-Armah's writing and direction are excellent, dealing with the complex issues of cultural heritage and cultural appropriation with humour, pathos, strong characterisation and stimulating dialogue.

This riveting production, dynamically and entertainingly revitalises both the political and personal arguments around Orwell's maxim: those who control the present, control the past and those who control the past control the future.

Runs until 5th August, box office: 020 7922 2922, youngvic.org

B C B NEWS

JONATHAN PIE
Chief Political Correspondent

FEATURE: THE MINING ART GALLERY, BISHOP AUKLAND

WE were both raised in mining communities - Robert in Ferryhill and Gillian three miles away in Spennymoor - at a time when South West Durham was the epicentre of activity in the Great Northern Coalfield. It was difficult not to be in awe of the majesty of the headgear, the timely reminder of the buzzers and the camaraderie of the colliers returning from shift. This was not simply an occupation - it was a whole way of life. It enveloped us.

It was a chance meeting between ourselves in 1996 that began our own personal journey along the pit road, culminating in the Gemini Collection. A journey to our ultimate goal: a gallery in which to display our burgeoning collection of mining art.

Mining artist Tom McGuinness lived in our adopted home town of Bishop Auckland. Individually, we had been collecting his art for some time - work which we both admired for its sensitive and emotive impact.

We agreed that his significant body of work should be documented. What we initially imagined would be a catalogue was to emerge as Tom's biography. After discussion with Elizabeth Conran, then Curator of the Bowes Museum, the book was to be launched there in conjunction with a major retrospective of Tom's work.

When our initial publisher, Durham County Books, was unable to find the funding, we took a leap into the unknown in deciding to publish and distribute the book ourselves. In so doing we created our own publishing company, Gemini Productions.

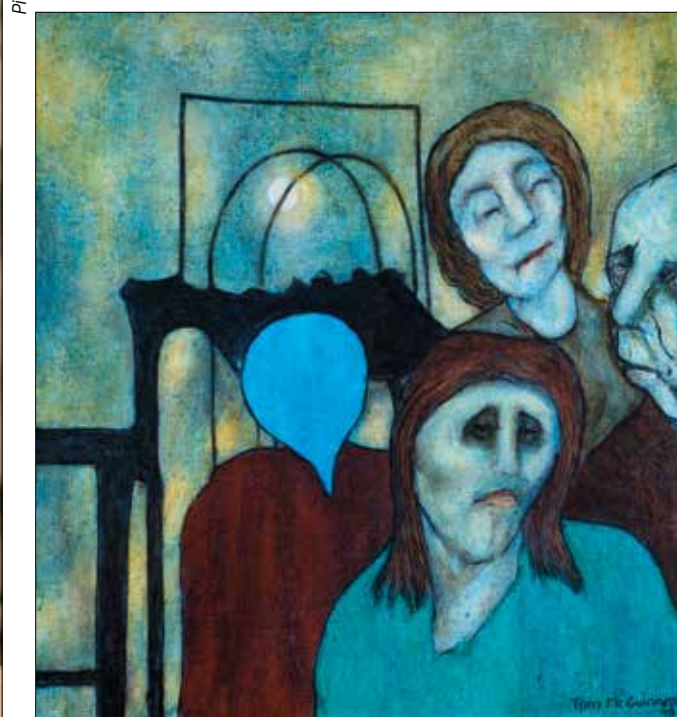
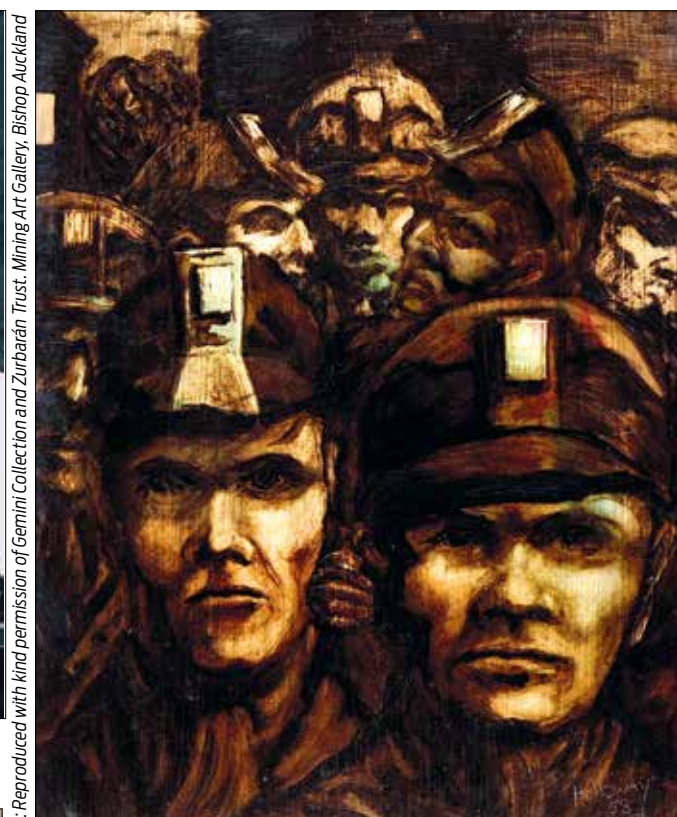
The Bowes exhibition was a huge success at that time and the book sold out in just a few months. It was immediately obvious that there was a huge, largely uncatered, interest in not only the art of Tom McGuinness but in the whole phenomenon of mining art - experiential art of the working man.

It also dispelled the myth that art appreciation was a concept to which the working man could not respond. Something of huge importance had struck a chord with the folk of the North East, and the art world.

During our research into the work of Tom McGuinness many



Above: Alistair Brookes, Bronze Miner, 1990's; **Above R:** Ted Holloway, Miners' Heads No 2, 1958, shoe polish. **Below:** Robert Olley, Off the Way, 2000; **Right:** Tom McGuinness, Women Waiting at the Pithead, 1998



Pics: Reproduced with kind permission of Gemini Collection and Zurbarán Trust. Mining Art Gallery, Bishop Auckland

The art of the miners

ROBERT MCMANNERS and **GILLIAN WALES** tell the story of creating the first dedicated Mining Art Museum in Britain

doors were opened to us. We knew of Norman Cornish and the Spennymoor Settlement and had read about the Ashington Group, but suddenly a plethora of new names was introduced to us. Our research eventually uncovered over seventy coalfield artists, many from the Great Northern Coalfield, about whom little was known or had been written. Mining art was a genre in danger of disappearing from living memory. It had not been collected systematically.

We determined that this was an aspect of heritage that was crying out to be researched and recorded.

We set ourselves that task. For the next five years our research took us to many parts of the country meeting artists, curators, historians and collectors. It revealed that this was not just a North Eastern phenomenon, and experiential mining art could be found in all coalfields. Palpably, there was a universal need for the miner to tell his story, unlike the other heavy industries spawned by the Industrial Revolution where there is very little experiential art to be found, despite those industries being visually more appealing than the dark arcane world of the coalmine.

And who better to tell the story of the unseen subterranean world of the coalmine than the miner himself? In 2002 we published our book Shafts of Light: Mining Art in the Great Northern Coalfield and launched it to coincide with a major exhibition in Bishop Auckland Town Hall. Forty four of the seventy artists featured in the book attended and signed our personal copies. Today only a handful of those artists remain. Virtually the whole genre of art and its mining artists had been consigned to history. We had not initially intended to amass a collection of mining

art but, when appropriate work became available, we took the opportunity of buying it using the profits from our books. As generous donations from enthusiastic artists and their families began to augment our Gemini Collection, it became imperative that this unique collection be seen. A permanent home was necessary. In 2011, philanthropist Jonathan Ruffer bought the entire Auckland Castle estate. Subsequently The Auckland Project, (TAP), was set up in 2012 with an ambitious and radical vision, to transform the 900-year-old Bishop's Palace from a little-known private dwelling into a vibrant attraction which would be the catalyst for the economic and social regeneration of Bishop Auckland, to be achieved by

focusing on the art, culture and heritage of the area. In September 2015 Old Bank Chambers in the heart of Bishop Auckland's Market Place came up for sale. Standing adjacent to the Town Hall, this building was perfect for our needs. TAP acquired it and suggested using the building as a Mining Art Gallery in which to display our Gemini Collection as a permanent legacy of our mining heritage. The stars were now aligned and the search was over. We gifted our Gemini Collection of 424 works, in partnership, to create the first dedicated and accredited Mining Art Gallery in the United Kingdom. The Gallery opened on 21st October 2017. **Info:** aucklandproject.org

“ Mining art was a genre in danger of disappearing from living memory. It had not been collected systematically

WEATHER OUTLOOK



TODAY
 Another warm day, but with rain turning to thunderstorms across many areas for a time, especially in north and east during the afternoon. Windy in the north-west.

NEXT FEW DAYS
 Fresher and rather less settled tomorrow and into next week, with a risk of heavy showers and perhaps the odd rumble of thunder.

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

Fighting Fund with Keith Stoddart

23 days left

YOU'VE RAISED: **£4,642** WE NEED: **£13,358**



JULY'S Fighting Fund appeal now stands at £4,707, thanks to 19 supporters sending £285 to move us forward.

Clickity-click, £66 arrived from Oxfordshire, £50 came from Berkshire and a couple quid was from Burnley.

At last Sunday's Bevan Day festival in Tredegar, 150 complimentary copies of the Morning Star were distributed by local

comrades and their supporters. It was a job well done and obviously appreciated, as £25 has arrived courtesy of contributions from folk happy at receiving the papers. Keep up the good work, you folk in Wales.

From Birmingham and four other places came gifts of £5, three of which were accompanied by good wishes and one

by words of praise for being "a voice for the voiceless. Keep talking." That's the plan. However, we can only do so as long as folk like all of you support the Fund.

The mail has arrived, but I can't say yet what's in it. I'll have an update for you on Monday.

Fraternal and sororal greetings to all in Durham this

morning attending the Miners' Gala, which has become a kind of Glastonbury for politicians.

In addition to a complimentary copy for those attending, our paper has a stall at the field, so pop along and say hello. If you like what you've read, leave a couple of quid for the Fund and if, like me you missed out on Durham, the carnival moves to Tolpudde next week.

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Commie Chef archives

Spaghetti with lentil and tomato sauce

I USED to make this regularly for my children about four decades ago. It's cheap and cheerful and they loved it. Forty years of neoliberal pain later, it's still cheap and capable of

restoring cheerfulness. Serving spaghetti with tomato sauce is, to say the least, pretty standard, but adding the lentils adds protein and makes the dish more filling.

Ingredients

- large onion, chopped
- 2 cloves garlic, or more to taste, crushed or grated
- Medium carrot, scrubbed and diced
- 110g/4 oz green or brown lentils

- ½ standard can of tomatoes
- tbsp tomato puree
- level tsp paprika
- 2 tbsps vegetable oil
- salt and freshly ground black pepper
- 225g/8 oz spaghetti

What to do

Fry the onion on a medium light in the oil in a heavy-bottomed saucepan until it softens and begins to look a little transparent. Try not to let it brown. Add the garlic and fry for another minute, then add the carrot, tomatoes, tomato puree, paprika and lentils.

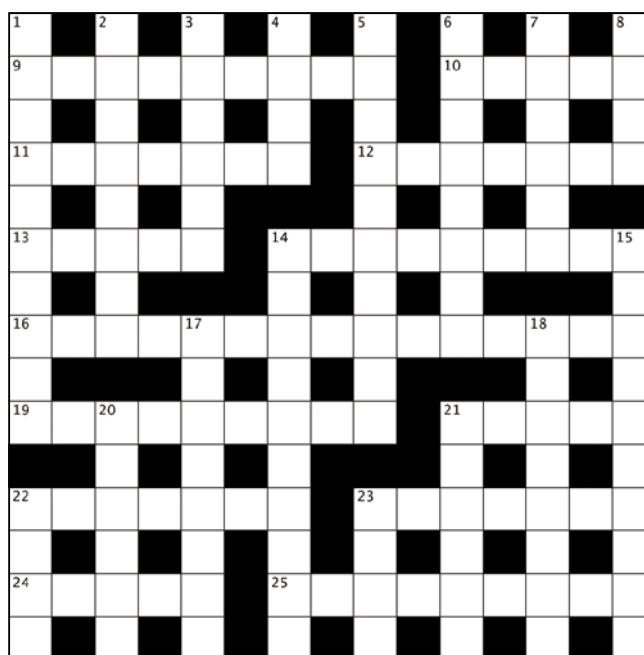
Cover with half a pint/250 ml of water and bring to the boil.

Reduce to a simmer and cook for about 20 minutes. While it's simmering, cook the spaghetti according to the instructions on the packet. Season the sauce.

You can either serve the spaghetti and sauce separately and allow people to help themselves or stir the pasta into the sauce, which is what I like to do. Either way, buon appetito!



CROSSWORD 1,500 set by Alamet



ACROSS

9. Native bear I go in to nobble (9)
10. Heather country but not in the morning (5)
11. Normally, when beer is interrupted by game (2,1,4)
12. Don't start: get away with items of clothing (7)
13. To include club amend order (5)
14. Perhaps life embraces current consciousness (9)
16. Band sang with cellist improvising - something funny going on here? (9,6)
19. Decorate a river in the country (9)
21. Wee small cat (5)
22. Two ways to follow slithering viper's taster (7)
23. Now sell bananas that are distended (7)
24. Relative neutral that is going to church (5)
25. 24 bode ill for following the rules (9)

DOWN

1. Began a meal, cooked and convenient (10)
2. Restored a man's oil painting (4,4)
3. Ukulele begins and ends in brand-new piece of music (6)
4. Starts to make inroads, removing encrusted dirt (4)
5. Automated cinema 23 down rebuilt (10)
6. Man in red taken in by 10, changing sides of instrument (8)
7. The game's up with something charged to follower (6)
8. Ruins bar (4)
14. A download's wrong for timber (10)
15. Fair, yet passed (4-6)
17. Bad deal, ride went off track (8)
18. Country that beat Germany accepts welcome (8)
20. Shaded class, they say (6)
21. Dull detective sees chances rise (6)
22. School put around new water feature (4)
23. Cast off novel by duke (4)

Solution on Monday...

QUIZMASTER with William Sitwell

TODAY'S QUESTIONS

- 1 True or false: the coot is found in the wild in both Britain and Australia.
- 2 Marguerite St Just is the wife of the title character in which famous play?
- 3 Which part of salsify is

eaten as a vegetable?



YESTERDAY'S ANSWERS

1. In the London Borough of Southwark, there is a large mural of which species of butterfly? **The Camberwell beauty, which takes its name from a town in the borough**
2. Leon Gautier (pictured),

who has just died aged 100, was France's last participant in which notable second world war event? **D-Day, in June 1944**
 3 In the men's competition of which sport is the Davis Cup a feature? **Tennis**

DAILY SUDOKU (challenging)

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

Solution on Monday...

■ ECONOMICS

Britain, awash with wealth, is still a 'third-world' country

SADLY and disgustingly, more and more people are now being forced to live in this, one of the wealthiest "third-world" nations on the planet.

Third world? People are now unable to feed their children adequately, unable to pay mortgages or inflated rents, unable to access quality healthcare when they need it, and low-paid working people will soon be unable to enjoy the basic human right to strike.

This all sounds like a third-world scenario to me. One of the wealthiest? Certainly. Our country is awash with wealth, sadly the vast majority of it in the wrong pockets. Wealth obtained on the backs of the workers who created it.

Wealth gained by blatant malpractice – tax avoidance, corrupt practices, cronyism, non-dom status and anything else they can get away with.

Similarly inherited wealth, accrued by centuries of oppression of the workers.

A change of government would be refreshing, however, a move from far right to left of centre will not be the solution to our deep-seated problems.

What is needed is a total restructuring of our society based on the redistribution of wealth.

We must strive to redress the huge injustices (both Tory and historical) which have broken our country.

To make it official, we could appoint a "levelling down" secretary.

Just a thought, but a happy one!

No doubt the rich will threaten to leave these shores with what remains of their wealth.

Well, I am reliably informed that Rwanda is really very nice!

CHRIS OLSEN

Whitley Bay

■ MINERS' STRIKE

Editorial absent of key facts about Orgreave

MANY involved in supporting the striking miners back in 1984-85 will tell that it was not the police thugs at Orgreave who broke the strike, but the divided Labour movement (including the then Communist Party), which had no few elements that failed to support the miners' struggle and, indeed, were hostile to it; and the failure of the movement to build a sufficient level of public support.

The recent editorial, Lessons from the Battle of Orgreave can inform today's class struggle (M Star June 17), fails to make this clear and is rather ambiguous, confusing and incomplete.

Is the Morning Star suggesting that the miners should have gone "tooled-up"? Is this the lesson now being given to "every young trade unionist"?

Back in 1937, when working people were facing the advance of reaction, fascism, and the danger of war, Communist Party leader Harry Pollitt warned: "It is a terrible reflection that never has the British labour movement been so unready as now to face this challenge."

This was true again in 1984, when much of the trade union movement had already surrendered to Thatcherism, and is even more so now.



TURNING POINT: Striking miners are chased by police during the Battle of Orgreave, June 18 1984

The lessons for today's youth should be to continue the struggle to defend and extend their existing rights, and to work for unity in the movement while at the same time building a substantial and organised political base

of people who accept the need for the socialist development of our society and economic system.

It's all very well for some to declare: "A popular uprising is rapidly becoming the only option left open to defend

people's democratic freedoms" (M Star, June 19). I would say to them what was said to the impetuously aggressive in my school days: "You and whose army?"

BRYN ROWLANDS
Malmesbury, Wilts.

■ ASSANGE

Extradition would be illegal

UNDER article 4 of the US/ British extradition treaty 2003, a person cannot be extradited for political activities, so this would make any potential depor-

tation of Julian Assange null and void and completely illegal under both US and British law.

PHIL BRAND

London SW17



HAVE YOUR SAY
Write (up to 300 words) to...

letters@peoples-press.com
23 Coombe Rd, London CR0 1BD

★ Readers & Supporters

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COLCHESTER – The Colchester Morning Star Readers and Supporters Group meets every 3rd Tuesday of the month.

CHELTENHAM – Email Simon Meddick at cheltmorningstar@gmail.com. Meets 4th Monday every month.

CROYDON – We meet regularly at Ruskin House, 23 Coombe Road, Croydon CR0 1BD. For details e-mail croydonmornings-tarrsg@gmail.com.

CYMRU/WALES – New Welsh group established. Contact David at davidedwin.nicholson@gmail.com.

DORSET – New group. Contact Ruth Pitman at dorsetrsg@gmail.com.

DUMFRIES – Email Stuart Hyslop at stuart.hyslop1@hotmail.co.uk.

DUNDEE – Email dylanmarshall1000@gmail.com.

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GOVAN & SW – Email David Ferguson at david-ferguson23@hotmail.com.

SCOTTISH LABOUR PARTY – Email Vince Mills at vpmills@outlook.com.

LONDON – Call Paul Clyndes on 07969 321-657 or email paul@redstar.me.uk.

MANCHESTER – Requiring new members for relaunch, email Evan Pritchard at evanpritchard.ep@gmail.com.

MARKET HARBOROUGH – New group formed, email Peter at peterwhalen13@gmail.com.

MERSEYSIDE – Meets regularly. Email Helen at merseycpnews@gmail.com.

MILTON KEYNES – Meets regularly. Email Jimmy McIntyre at macintyrejimmy@gmail.com.

NORFOLK AND SUFFOLK – Contact Sean Meleady on smelea@hotmail.co.uk or call 0775 814 5671.

NORTH-EAST ENGLAND – Email Ron Brown, Geoffrey Ferris or Jenny at ronnie49@live.co.uk.

OXFORDSHIRE – New group formed, email Chesterton at oxonrsg@gmail.com.

SHROPSHIRE – Regular paper sales & monthly socials: Call Phil on 07816 641-884 or email shropshiremorning-star@gmail.com.

SOUTHAMPTON – Regular group: Contact Glynn Tudor, Glynt1951@gmail.com to get involved.

SOUTH YORKSHIRE – Email Carrie Hedderwick at hedderwickc@gmail.com.

SUNDERLAND – Email Alec McFadden at alec.stuc@gmail.com or call 07831 627531

SWINDON – Email Pete Webb at jackobadenski@yahoo.com.

WATFORD – Call Phil Brown on (01923) 239-512 or email leveller@myphone.coop.

WEST DUNBARTONSHIRE – Email George Kirkpatrick at george.kirkpatrick@hotmail.com.

WEST YORKSHIRE – Email westyorkmorningstar@gmail.com.

SIMON RENTON explores the Star archives

80 YEARS AGO TODAY...



Worker renews calls for a second front in Europe

THE Daily Worker's editorial on Thursday July 8 1943 called for the opening of a second front. This was needed both to lighten the load born by the Red Army but also to shorten the war, and would be to the advantage not only of the Soviet Union but also of Britain and the US.

However, the Worker also reported the suppression of a French newspaper published in London for "stirring up discord," by which was meant support for de Gaulle and the clearing out of the Vichy-supporting officials from liberated French territory.

THE SECOND FRONT IN 1943

"These are the days when all Britain must stand taut and eager, ready to spring to the attack. The enemy has struck again, this time without the confidence of 1941 and 1942 but with a desperation and fury that betokens serious menace. The offensive which Churchill foretold and for which Stalin prepared has begun. One of the greatest battles of the war is at present raging on a sector of the Eastern front, 250 miles south-west of Moscow, the capital of the Soviet Union and centre of its communications.

"This is happening on the Eastern front, the Red Army front, our front as well. War is indivisible. The warriors who in these days

have destroyed over 1,000 German tanks are defending London and Washington as well as Moscow. How well this is understood by the peoples of all democratic lands! They have learned the lesson through years of anguish and suffering. But understanding is not enough. In days of battle, action must not lag behind understanding, it must spring forth simultaneously and lead to great achievements.

"Today Britain is lagging, the deed is not equal to the word. No greater tragedy could overtake the British people than for the great needs of the hour to be drowned in a torrent of fair words and noble principles. What Russia needs and what Britain and America also need

is allied soldiers fighting at this very moment on the soil of Europe in sufficient numbers to draw off decisive Nazi forces from the Eastern front."

You can read editions of the **Daily Worker** (1930-45) and **Morning Star** (2000-today), online at mstar.link/DWMSarchive
Ten days' access costs just **£5.99** and a year is **£84**

unite
the UNION
South West

Solidarity & Greetings to all at Durham Miners' Gala 2023

Steve Preddy
Unite South West Regional Secretary

Stéf Kasprowski
Unite South West Regional Chair

UniteSW
 @UniteSW
 @UniteSW

SOLIDARITY

to all those attending the Durham Miners' Gala from the General Federation of Trade Unions

TRADE UNION EDUCATION FOR THE WHOLE MOVEMENT

- ✔ Bitesize Online Sessions
- ✔ Train the Trainer
- ✔ A Better Future - GFTU Summer School
- ✔ Young Members' Development Weekend
- ✔ Trade Union Leadership Innovation Programme
- ✔ Digital Organising & Engagement
- ✔ Industrial Action
- ✔ Understanding Political Economy
- ✔ Tackling Sexual Harassment
- ✔ Roots of Racism
- ✔ Bigger Picture Online Seminars
- ✔ Working Class History
- ✔ Lessons in Organising
- ✔ Shop Stewards Stage 1 & 2

GFTU **Visit:** gftuet.org.uk/education

Communist Party of Britain

Executive Committee

Greetings to all workers and families at the great Durham Miners Gala today!

Are all political parties the same?

	TORY GOVERNMENT	STARMER'S LABOUR	BRITAIN'S COMMUNISTS
Trade union fightback	X	X	✔
Wealth Tax	X	X	✔
Public ownership	X	X	✔
Price controls	X	X	✔
Repeal anti-union laws	X	X	✔
No NATO wars	X	X	✔
Socialism	X	X	✔

Join the Communist Party for working class and people's power!

Robert Griffiths General Secretary
 Ruth Styles Chair
 Andy Bain Industrial organiser

membership@communistparty.org.uk
facebook.com/CPBritain 020 8686 1659
 Ruskin House, 23 Coombe Rd, Croydon CR0 1BD

UNITE EAST MIDLANDS

Sending solidarity greetings to all attending the 137th Durham Miners' Gala

REGIONAL SECRETARY
Paresh Patel

REGIONAL CHAIR
Sam Chapman

The Red List

Month July 8-15

▶ SATURDAY 8

Can Doughnut Economics Future-Proof Southampton?
10am at Friends Meeting House, 1A Ordnance Road, Southampton
A participative workshop introducing doughnut economics, helping us think about how Southampton can thrive within planetary boundaries. Find out more and register at eventbrite.co.uk/e/652669370657. Organised by Socan (Southampton Climate Action Network).

Bristol Pride parade
10.45am (gather from 10am) from Castle Park (bandstand end), Bristol
Demonstrate how diverse and proud Bristol is by celebrating our community and showing that hatred and prejudice have no place here. Find out more at bristolpride.co.uk/parade.

Winning Big: Acorn Armley strategy day
11am at Armley Liberal Club, Armley Lodge Road, Leeds
Help plan a campaign to take over derelict land in Armley and turn it into a community space. All welcome.

Stop Demolishing the Aylesbury! Refurbishment Not Demolition!
11am from Elephant & Castle leisure centre, Newington Butts, London SE1
March to the Aylesbury estate (outside Thurlow Lodge) to protest at its disastrous "regeneration" by Southwark council. Part of a nationwide day of action for an end to the destruction of council housing.

Labour CND conference 2023: Wages Not Weapons
11am online
A day of online campaigning, with sessions on the increasing costs of militarisation and on trade unions and workers' security. Register at eventbrite.co.uk/e/662750613927.

Cuba: Facing the Challenges With Determination
11.15am at the Golden Cross pub, 8 Hay Lane, Coventry
A talk by Morning Star international editor Roger McKenzie, organised by Coventry and Warwickshire Cuba Solidarity Campaign. For details, email pk52@outlook.com.

Stop the War Coalition day of action
■ Bath: 11.30am-12.30pm outside Bath Abbey
■ Bristol: 1-3pm on Cascade Steps
■ Colchester: 11am-1pm outside the Town Hall in High Street
■ Canterbury: 12-2pm in High Street
■ Colchester: 11am-1pm outside the Town Hall in High Street
■ Dorchester, Dorset: 11am at the Town Pump
■ Durham: 11am-4pm at the

Racecourse Ground (as part of Durham Miners' Gala)
■ Exeter: 12pm in Bedford Square
■ Falmouth: 11.45am in Market Street
■ Glasgow: 1.30pm-2.30pm in front of Marks and Spencer in Argyle Street
■ Liverpool: 11am outside Primark, 48-56 Church Street
■ London E8: 11am-12.30pm in Narrow Way, Hackney
■ London E11: 2.30-4.30pm outside Church Lane exit from Leytonstone Tube station
■ London N10: 12pm outside former Barclays Bank, 223 Muswell Hill Broadway
■ London NW5: 12pm outside Co-Op, 250-254 Kentish Town Road
■ London SE8: 3-4.30pm in Deptford Market, near Douglas Way
■ London W5: 12-1.30pm near Lloyds Bank in Ealing Broadway
■ Newport, Isle of Wight: 12pm in St Thomas Square
■ Preston: 2-4pm in Flag Market
■ Rochdale: 12-1pm opposite B&M in Yorkshire Street
■ Sheffield: 1pm in front of the Town Hall
■ Southampton: 12pm at the Bargate
Stop the War activists spread the word about the need for immediate peace talks between Russia and Ukraine, an end to Nato expansion and welfare not warfare. For more events, check stopwar.org.uk/ events.

Save Our Homes, Green Space and Community Centre From Being Blown Up
12pm on the green space between 151 and 171 Wyndford Road, Glasgow
A community event with free pizza and cake, face painting, egg and spoon race, drawing competition and prizes, plus solidarity speeches from 2pm. All welcome. Organised by Wyndford Residents Union and Housing Rebellion.

London Trans+ Pride 2023
1pm from Trafalgar Square, London WC2
A day of trans, intersex, non-binary and GNC joy, rage and liberation as we march once more in defiance of the attacks on our community and our lives.

The Crisis in our School System
8pm (buffet from 7.30pm) at St John's Church Hall, High Road, London E11
The Vi Gostling Memorial Lecture is delivered by National Education Union joint general secretary Kevin Courtney, who will discuss the multiple crises in our school system,

the stress on pupils and the teacher retention crisis. Entry free but donations welcome. Organised by the News From Nowhere Club.

8th-10th: The Freedom Flotilla visits Cardiff
Various times and locations across the city
A range of events to mark the Freedom Flotilla Coalition's boat arriving in Cardiff as part of a tour of European ports to raise awareness of Israel's occupation and blockade of the Gaza Strip. Find out more at facebook.com/events/735081381953485.

Warde and an immersive soundscape by composer Thomas Baynes, commemorating and celebrating the contributions of the Windrush generation in Basingstoke.

Until July 31: Sankara x Guevara art exhibition
Online all the time
A variety of immersive, digital, and AI art exploring the shared political values of Latin American revolutionary Che Guevara and his African counterpart Thomas Sankara, who was president of Burkina Faso from 1983 to 1987. Find out more and view the exhibition at pastfutures.co.uk.

Until September 2: Windrush: A Voyage through the Generations
Every day at Clapham Library, Mary Seacole Centre, 91 Clapham High Street, London SW4
A new photography exhibition by Jim Grover exploring how the generations which followed the Windrush arrivals are living their lives in Britain today. For exact opening times and other information, go to mstar.link/44m2jJC.

Until September 5: Journeys to Hope
Any time at Autograph, Rivington Place, London EC2
An outdoor display of pictures from the TopFoto archives, punctuated with the profound words of Professor Stuart Hall, showing the journey of those who arrived in Britain on the Empire Windrush in 1948.

Until September 10: Over A Barrel: Windrush Children, Tragedy and Triumph
10am to 6pm Thursdays to Saturdays, 12pm to 5pm on Sundays, at Black Cultural Archives, 1 Windrush Square, London SW2
An interactive exhibition exploring the incredible journeys of children who travelled from the Caribbean to Britain during the Windrush era. Entry £5, concessions £3. Find out more at mstar.link/3pkDNTE.

Until November 30: Windrush: It Runs Through Us
10am-3pm every week from Tuesday to Saturday at Mansfield Museum, Leeming Street, Mansfield
An exhibition on what Windrush was, why it happened and how migration has shaped Britain.

Until January 7: Northern Ireland: Living with the Troubles
10am to 6pm at the Imperial War Museum, Lambeth Road, London, SE1
An exhibition allowing visitors to further their understanding of the Troubles through the multiple perspectives of individuals affected by the conflict.

Virtual art exhibition: Roots, Culture, Identity 2023
Online all the time
A Windrush-themed art exhibition which also marks the 30th anniversary of the murder of Stephen Lawrence. Artists featured include Antonietta Torsiello, Frederico Ramos, Jay Percy, Marci-Yah, Oisín ("Oshii") Davis-Lyons, Rhian Wellington, Shaneen Phipps, Shiquerra Clark, Yeside Linney and Zita Holbourne. Go to mstar.link/447mRhO.

▶ SUNDAY 9
Norwich summer social with Just Stop Oil
12pm in Waterloo Park, Angel Road, Norwich
A chance to spend a few hours dis-

cussing all things Just Stop Oil, such as building civil resistance in the local community, with like-minded people. Register at eventbrite.co.uk/e/665269277317.

Sing for the NHS
1pm on the Cascade Steps, Bristol
Join the Protect Our NHS choir to celebrate 75 years of the health service and show opposition to its underfunding, dismantling and privatisation.

▶ MONDAY 10
Save Dudley Libraries lobby
5.15pm at the Council House, Priory Road, Dudley
Protest at council plans to slash library funding by 30 per cent by 2025.

10th-13th: Theatre show: Blood, Gold and Oil
8.30pm on Monday and Wednesday, 7pm on Tuesday and Thursday in Studio 3, Riverside Studios, 101 Queen Caroline Street, London W6
Produced for the 20th anniversary of the invasion of Iraq, Jan Woolf's play examines the flawed brilliance and complex legacy of TE Lawrence, aka Lawrence of Arabia. For tickets, priced £10, concessions £6.50, go to mstar.link/43az5oJ.

10th-19th: The Freedom Flotilla visits Bristol
Various times and locations across the city
A range of events to mark the Freedom Flotilla Coalition's boat arriving in Bristol as part of a tour of European ports to raise awareness of Israel's occupation and blockade of the Gaza Strip. Find out more at mstar.link/44dDclo.

▶ TUESDAY 11
The World At War: A Trade Union Issue
12pm in Gresham Suite, The Old Ship Hotel, 32-38 Kings Road, Brighton
A Stop the War Coalition event on the fringe of the Unite conference, with speakers including Stop the War vice-president Andrew Murray, Italian trade unionist Valentina Orazzini and someone from Unite.

Book event: Family Abolition – Capitalism and the Communitising of Care
6pm online
ME O'Brien is joined by Lara Sheehi and Jules Gleeson for a panel discussion of her book, which uncovers the history of struggles to create radical alternatives to the private family. Register for a Zoom link at eventbrite.co.uk/e/637996102517. Organised by Historical Materialism.

Inside the White Rose: An Anti-Vaxx, Covid Conspiracy Theory Ecosystem
7.30pm at Davy's Wine Vaults, 116 Greenwich High Road, London SE10
Good Thinking Society project director Michael Marshall reports on how group such as the White Rose used the Covid crisis to radicalise vaccine-hesitant people into a dangerous ecosystem of misinformation and extremism. Find out more at facebook.com/

events/271496015548390. Hosted by Greenwich Skeptics in the Pub.

▶ WEDNESDAY 12

Solidarity With the People of Sudan! End the Proxy War!
6.30pm online
Speakers include progressive Sudanese activist Amira Osman, progressive Sudanese activist, Rashid Elsheikh of the Sudanese Communist Party, Workers' Party of Belgium MEP Marc Botenga, Jeremy Corbyn. Register at eventbrite.co.uk/e/663032517107. Organised by Liberation in partnership with the Stop the War Coalition and the Morning Star.

Is Climate Activism Working?
7.30pm in Queen Elizabeth Hall, Southbank Centre, Belvedere Road, London SE1
Ben Okri, Phoebe Plummer and Dr Rupert Read debate the future direction of climate activism and discuss which protest tactics can actually make a difference. For details and tickets, priced £15 to £25, go to mstar.link/43fjxLV.

▶ THURSDAY 13

Book event: Depravity's Rainbow – A Dark History of Space Travel
6.30pm at the Wiener Holocaust Library, 29 Russell Square, London WC1
Lewis Bush discusses his study of the origins of rocketry and space exploration under the Nazis and how many of its developers went onto work for organisations such as Nasa. Register at eventbrite.co.uk/e/629889425227.

▶ FRIDAY 14

Trans Pride Brighton: 10th Anniversary Fundraising Gala
6.45pm at the Dome, Church Street, Brighton
A night of trans pride and trans joy with performances by Jordan Gray, Grove, Bethany Black, Adia H Dee and Alexa Vox, plus guest compères Dr Cheddar Gorgeous and Dakota Schiffer. For tickets, priced £27, concessions £17, go to mstar.link/3NIRNyb.

14th-16th: Tolpuddle Martyrs' Festival
From 12pm on Friday and all day on Saturday and Sunday in Tolpuddle, Dorset
A family-friendly labour movement festival with discussions, music, food stalls and campaign groups, trade union activities, radical films, comedy and more. Find out more at tolpuddlemartyrs.org.uk/festival.

▶ SATURDAY 15

Trans Pride protest march
11am in Jubilee Square, Brighton
There will be speeches before the march leaves at 12pm for Brunswick Square, where there will be music, stalls and food. Find out more at facebook.com/events/6252234181508887.

Glasgow's Pride March
11am in Glasgow Green, Glasgow
Help turn the city centre into a sea of rainbow flags as we continue to fight for equality. This year's theme is Women of the LGBTQ+ Community and Movement. Groups, floats, etc, should register at mardigla.org.

Meet Greater Manchester Stop the War at MIFFF'd
2pm at the Peer Hat, Faraday Street, Manchester
Speak to anti-war activists at Manchester International Fringe Festival to hear the case against arming Ukraine and fanning the flames of war when the NHS is on its knees through lack of funding.



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solidarity
to those
attending this
year's Durham
Miners' Gala



**Communist
Party of
Britain**

Northern District

Extends comradely greetings to
everyone at the 2023

DURHAM GALA AND BIG MEETING
Build a United Front against the ruling
class assault!



ORGREAVE

TRUTH AND JUSTICE CAMPAIGN

Greetings and Solidarity to all at the
Durham Miners' Gala 2023

Justice for the Miners

Visit our stall in the DMA Marquee -
Looking forward to seeing you

OTJC.ORG.UK

NASUWT
The Teachers' Union

Solidarity to all at the
137th Durham Miners' Gala

Dr Patrick Roach
General Secretary

Rosemary Carabine
National President

Regional Centre:

NASUWT
Witney Way
Baldon Colliery
Tyne & Wear
NE35 9PE

Tel: 0191 519 5300

NORTHEASTNASUWT NASUWTNORTHEAST NORTHEASTNASUWT

For more information, please contact the Regional Centre or alternatively visit our website at:

www.nasuw.org.uk

**UNITE London & Eastern
Region**

Greetings and Solidarity to
all involved in one of the
greatest celebrations of our
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Durham Miners' Gala 2023



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Racing Guide

with Farrington

■ SANDOWN, HAYDOCK, BEVERLEY

'Bridestones is sure to go far in the Distaff stakes at 3.00'

ECLIPSE day at Sandown Park is always a great occasion so it is a huge shame that only four runners will go to post in the Group One feature as the St James's Palace and Irish 2,000 Guineas hero Paddington locks horns with the Coronation heroine Emily Upjohn.

I fancy that the three-year-old Irish raider will relish this step up to a mile-and-a-quarter, and conversely the filly won't have any issues coming back down to 10 furlongs after showing a blinding turn of foot at Epsom.

However, **DUBAI HONOUR** looks exceptional value at a double figure price being rated a pound

behind the three-year-old, but without the room to improve that his classic winning rival does.

A battle-hardened global player, the selection wouldn't want this to turn into a sprint up the final climb, but hopefully that will be negated by the fourth member of this party, West Wind Blows, making this a fair test from the front.

There are several juicy looking handicaps on the card and the one that interests me most of all is the challenge over a mile at 2.25. This 15-runner event could see the layers pricing it up at 6/1 the field at the very least, but at around 16/1 I have a strong preference for **BALTIMORE BOY**.

The Ian Williams-trained charge blew out completely in the Spring Mile at Doncaster first time out, where he was fully eased from over two furlongs out on that very deep ground.

But he bounced back with a staying on fourth at Ascot and was then a never nearer eighth of 12 over the course and distance last time out, when the quick ground may not have been to his taste.

On this much better surface, with a stronger pace guaranteed and with his rating down to 88, the four-year-old looks solid each-way material at a double-figure price.

As far as the rest of the card is concerned, **BRIDESTONES (nap)** looks sure to go close in the Distaff stakes at 3.00 after she was badly hampered in the Sandringham Stakes at Royal Ascot.

In fact, the Gosden trained filly did well to finish as close as just under 10 lengths off the

winner, coming home 12th of the 29 runners that afternoon.

Based on her Fred Darling run, the daughter of Teofilo is way better than that defeat at the Berkshire track and she gets the nod over both Breege and Stenton Glider.

Lord Protector looks sure to be a popular selection in the 10-furlong handicap at 4.15, following his win over the course and distance a year ago off a 2lbs lower mark.

He could be the main danger to top weight **AIKHAL (nb)**, who simply doesn't stay one-and-a-half miles well behind in the Duke of Edinburgh Stakes at the Royal meeting, will relish a fast-run mile-and-a-quarter on such a stiff track, and a rating of 102 looks well within his capabilities if Saffie Osborne can settle the four-year-old through the first quarter-mile.

The Group Two Lancashire Oaks is the feature event at Haydock Park (2.40) and I certainly think that Time Lock is better than her run suggests in the Sir Lester Piggott Stakes here last time out, when she was hardly suited by the moderate pace.

However, this is a much better contest with greater strength in depth and I think that **POPTRONIC** is the each-way call against the favourite Mimiky. Karl Burke's charge finished ahead of Time Lock in that aforementioned event, despite running very freely and not suited by the pace.

This set-up will surely suit her better, and if Sam James can get her to settle, then the daughter of Nathaniel will be

RAPID: Gavi Di Gavi ridden by Georgia King (left) passes Roman Dynasty ridden by Becky Smith at Sandown Park yesterday



firing home inside the last quarter-of-a-mile.

The Old Newton Cup (3.15) is the big betting race on the card at the Merseyside track and you can be sure that several of these handicappers will have been laid out for this valuable prize.

Gaassee didn't get competitive in the Copper Horse Handicap at Royal Ascot, but probably didn't stay and this drop in trip is perfect for him off a 2lbs lower mark.

Maksud had a horrible passage in the Duke of Edinburgh after being a wholesale gamble the night before and is probably

worth another chance, while Toshizu could also find a bit of improvement upped to a mile-and-a-half for the first time.

But my each-way call simply has to be the bottom weight **HOWTH**. He has been crying out for a step up in trip being an eye catcher at both Chelmsford last November and over the same course and distance just under a month ago.

The key to his chance is an end-to-end gallop, so that he settles before hopefully coming home strongly.

Elsewhere today, with rain expected at the back end of

the Haydock Park card, old boy **SAFE VOYAGE** could well be the springer in the market for the seven furlong handicap at 4.25, while **RIVERUSK** should outrun his price in the finale at 5.00.

At Beverley, have a second look at **MIDNIGHT FLAME** in the handicap sprint at 3.25, while I have a strong fancy for **STRANGERONTHESHORE** in the extended mile event at 4.02.

Unlucky not to win at Doncaster last time out, there is enough pace to pull the mare into the race late on and make a play up the final climb.

WEEKEND TIPS

Farrington's Doubles

Saturday

BRIDESTONES

Sandown 3.00 (nap)

AIKHAL

Sandown 4.15

Sunday

TOIMY SON

Chelmsford 3.20 (nap)

MAC AILEY

Ayr 3.40

Houseman's Choice

Saturday

PADDINGTON

Sandown 3.40

Sunday

POTAPOVA

Chelmsford 3.55

■ WOMEN'S TENNIS

Boulter backed to give Rybakina a hard time

by Jerome Pugmire

ANNE KEOTHAVONG has backed Katie Boulter (left) to give "vulnerable" defending champion Elena Rybakina a run for her money today at Wimbledon.

The British number one is through to the third round for the second year in a row and has been rewarded with a plum tie against the third seed.

Rybakina has built impressively on her first grand slam title, reaching the final of the Australian Open and winning

the big events in Indian Wells and Rome, but she came into the event undercooked after illness and has looked shaky at times in her opening two matches.

Keothavong, the captain of Britain's Billie Jean King Cup team, said of Boulter, who won her first WTA Tour event in Nottingham last month: "She's been playing some fantastic tennis."

"It's not just this tournament but over the last few weeks. It's taken time for all of that to come together. And the big-

gest thing is she's been able to remain fit and healthy for a long period of time, which for Katie has always been a challenge.

"It doesn't get any easier again but Rybakina hasn't really come into this year's champs playing lots of tennis. I think this is a good time for Katie to play against her, or for anyone really to play against her, she has looked vulnerable at times.

"And, if you were to be in Rybakina's shoes, you're up against a British number one

who is popular, who the British public are now familiar with, who will have the majority of that crowd supporting her, which is a situation I don't think Rybakina has found herself in really anywhere around the world too often.

"Katie, she's a big-match player, she will absolutely love it. It won't be a daunting experience for her, which I think is a big thing. It's not the first time for her going out on Centre Court. Having had that previous experience, that will help carry her."





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Solidarity and best wishes to the
Durham Miners Gala



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For more information

www.friendsofdurhamminersgala.org/join_us



Durham Miners' Gala RISE UP!

The 2023 Durham Miners' Gala is dedicated to workers taking industrial action.

The Durham Miners Association (DMA) is also calling on all workers not yet in a union to rise up and join the struggle for a fairer and more equal society.

The platform speakers at the 137th Gala – on Saturday 8 July – have all been working to support striking workers and communities organising in response to economic challenges.

The platform speakers will be:

Paul Nowak, General Secretary, TUC
Zarah Sultana MP

Fran Heathcote, President, PCS

Sarah Woolley, General Secretary, BFAWU

Sara Bryson, Tyne & Wear Citizens Assembly

Alan Mardghum, General Secretary, DMA

Chaired by **Stephen Guy**, Chair, DMA

The speeches on the racecourse will get underway at 1pm.
At 8.30am banner groups and bands gather in Durham City Centre Market Place.

in brief

Lions second place behind Belle Vue

SPEEDWAY: Leicester Lions leap-frogged Wolverhampton into second place in the Premiership, seven points behind Belle Vue but with four games in hand, after they stuffed bottom of the table Peterborough 57-33 and Wolves lost in the last heat, 47-43 to Ipswich on Thursday night. Elsewhere in the Premiership Jack Holder scored 12 points and Kyle Howarth bagged 11+1 as Sheffield romped to a 57-33 win at King's Lynn.

Cliftonville prepare for Cork City clash

WOMEN'S FOOTBALL: Cliftonville warmed up for Sunday's cross-border clash with Cork City in the last four of the inaugural All-Island Cup by thrashing Linfield 6-1 to seal their place in the Women's Premiership League Cup final. They will take on Sion Swifts, who edged out Crusaders 1-0 in their semi, for the trophy on July 23. Tomorrow's other All-Island Cup semi final pits Galway United against Wexford Youths.

England face Spain in U21s final tonight

MEN'S FOOTBALL: England face Spain in the European Under-21s final in Georgia this evening. England haven't conceded a goal in the tournament yet, and saw off Israel 3-0 to reach the final whilst the Spanish came from a goal down to sweep aside Ukraine 5-1 in their semi final. Spain are five-time winners of the cup but have never beaten England in a competitive Under-21 match. England have won the trophy twice before.

Ireland up against hosts South Africa

MEN'S RUGBY UNION: Ireland are up against hosts South Africa in Cape Town on Sunday afternoon for the first semi final of the Under-20s World Cup before defending champions, and top seeds, France take on England. None of the teams left in the competition have lost a game but England have drawn twice. Earlier on Sunday Wales will meet Georgia in the fifth place semi final.

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Climate protesters should be cheered and not jeered

JAMES NALTON discusses how the narrative surrounding Just Stop Oil has become increasingly negative, from the media to the general public

“I WANT a safe future, not just for my grandchildren but for all children around the world and the generations to come,” said Deborah Wilde, 68, a retired teacher from London.

The Wimbledon crowd booed her.

“I don't want my grandchildren, nieces and nephews to suffer,” said William John Ward, 66, a retired civil engineer from Epsom.

“Right now, millions of people are being forced outside of the conditions necessary to support human life.”

The Wimbledon crowd booed him.

This isn't the exact order in which these things happened, and the crowd didn't boo these sentiments directly, but this is effectively what they were doing when booing Just Stop Oil protests which made the sports headlines again this week.

Maybe it was more pantomime than genuine hostility, but a good cause is still being jeered rather than cheered, for some reason.

This further back page coverage came after protesters inflicted some mild inconvenience on spectators of the Wimbledon Championships at the All England Lawn Tennis & Croquet Club in London.

The response to the protesters is increasingly negative, not just from the expected quarters of the Establishment, but from elsewhere too, even in standard, straight reporting.

There's also an idea that these protests aren't working because rather than anger being aimed at the government, and increased support for the aims of Just Stop Oil, there is just annoyance with the protesters who are seen as a nuisance, spoiling the enjoyment of a sporting event.

But away from the headlines made by Just Stop Oil, there doesn't seem much public concern for this cause anyway.

In some reports, the Wimbledon protests were derided as underwhelming, with the impact on the day's play being less than in previous incidents in other sports.

Even though one of the messages to the protesters was that there might be more sympathy for their cause if they toned things down a bit and minimised disruption, when they did that this week (intention-

COURAGEOUS ACTIVIST: England's Jonny Bairstow removes a Just Stop Oil protester from the pitch at Lord's



ally or otherwise), they were still criticised.

Just Stop Oil is a non-violent civil resistance group demanding the British government stop licensing all new oil, gas and coal projects. This is how it describes itself on its website, and this is for all intents and purposes what it is.

No-one was harmed by the actions of protesters at Wimbledon, and previous interruptions at the second Ashes test match at Lords, the World Snooker Championships, football and other sporting events have been non-violent and peaceful.

But they have been somewhat disruptive. Which is the point.

When there are calls for peaceful, non-disruptive protests, this usually translates more truthfully as: “We want protests we can just ignore, thanks.”

Other forms of protest don't seem to be working very well. Governments around the world occasionally mention climate change but rarely do anything

about it, because one of the biggest obstacles to halting climate change is capitalism itself and the governments who execute its worst whims and maintain its status.

“I'm just an ordinary grandmother in resistance to this government's policy of serving us new oil and gas licences,” added Wilde.

“In normal circumstances, this sort of disruption would be entirely unacceptable, but these aren't normal circumstances.”

Asking protesters to be quieter, cause less disruption, and generally stay out of people's way is like asking teachers to strike during the summer holidays (which one Tory MP actually suggested last week).

The whole point of protest is that people notice and the issues are raised and placed in the public eye.

Home Secretary Suella Braverman condemned the Wimbledon protests, which is as good an indicator as any that the protesters are championing a good cause and should be supported.

Braverman, like many commentators, tries to twist the narrative around to the idea that Just Stop Oil protesters are only ruining the day for the paying public, but if anything, spectators are getting more value for money.

Most punters will remember the day they saw Jonny Bairstow ungainly carry a protester all the way to the boundary rope or the time a session of snooker was iconically interrupted by a cloud of orange smoke.

The incident at the snooker seemed especially jarring for fans of the sport. The near-continuous, almost comforting shot of the 12 by 6 table on TV, and the close-quarters action in the Crucible Theatre made the protest seem big and distressing, especially when one protester stood on the table.

In Elton John's autobiography, he commented that even during wild parties he would implore guests to not spoil the baize of his snooker table,

or words to that effect. The snooker table is sacrosanct.

From the hallowed baize to the immaculately prepared lawns of Wimbledon and Lords, Just Stop Oil is using England's green and pleasant lands to make a point in an attempt to ensure they remain green and pleasant for everyone. Not just for elite private members' clubs.

“If we continue down our current path it will destroy families and communities,” says Just Stop Oil.

“We will face the starvation and the slaughter of billions of the poor – and the utter betrayal of our children and their future.”

“Climate collapse will mean the end of workers' rights, women's rights, all human rights. It is already the greatest injustice visited on the global South in human history.”

What would the Wimbledon crowd's reaction to this be? Maybe Just Stop Oil protesters should be cheered and not booed.




clydebanktuc.org

Solidarity to all marchers in Durham from Red Clydeside.

Newcastle Upon Tyne TUC

sends solidarity greetings to all participants in the 2023 DURHAM MINERS GALA




Communist Party of Britain
Swindon & District

Fight to save our NHS
"The NHS will last as long as there are folk left to fight for it"
(Aneurin Bevan)

The Irish Communist Party sends **Solidarity greetings to the Durham Miners' Gala**

And our demands most moderate are we only want the earth

James Connolly

"Man is a result of both his inherited instincts and his education. Among the miners, their common occupation and every-day contact with one another create a feeling of solidarity"


Peter Kropotkin speaking at the Durham Miners' Gala in 1882.

Solidarity Forever

Greetings to the BIG MEETING from **Nick Matthews and Susan Moron Garcia**

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Renard determined to lead France to first major trophy

by Jerome Pugmire

WENDIE RENARD (pictured) grew up in a place so remote that locals nicknamed it “The End of the World.”

By the end of the Women’s World Cup, the France captain hopes she’ll be raising aloft the major international trophy that has eluded the women’s national team.

The imposing central defender’s journey starts with a 10,540-mile trek to Australia, where France opens its campaign in Sydney on July 23 against Jamaica.

France’s men have won two World Cups and two European Championships – and reached three other major finals – but Les Bleues are underachievers. The women’s team lost its only World Cup semi-final 12 years ago to the United States.

“We have a lot of quality, but our honours list is blank,” Renard told the Associated Press in an interview at the team’s Clairefontaine training camp outside Paris. “There’s a long, long way to go. But the tougher

it is, the better it is at the end.”

Despite boasting a team packed with players from ultra-successful French club side Lyon – the starting lineup for France’s opener at the 2019 World Cup had seven Lyon players – France has also only reached one European Championship semi-final, losing last year to Germany.

“Quite a lot of us have experience at the highest level and we need to use it,” Renard said. “The hardest thing is saying, ‘I should have done this, I have should have done that.’ By then it’s already too late.”

The tournament, co-hosted by New Zealand, kicks off on July 20, which is also when Renard turns 33.

She has played 144 internationals and scored 34 goals for France. With Lyon, Renard has won a record 16 league titles and a record eight Champions League trophies.

She’s long been considered one of the best players in women’s football, yet there’s a giant gap in Renard’s international resume.

Renard has a chance to put

that right, which back in February didn’t look like being the case.

Renard said she wouldn’t play at the World Cup after saying she no longer felt able to play for France. That decision came after years of tensions between then-coach Corinne Diacre and senior players, including Renard.

Striker Marie-Antoinette Katoto and forward Kadidiatou Diani also put their international careers on hold until significant changes were made.

Two weeks later Diacre was fired and Herve Renard was hired. He won the African Cup of Nations as coach of Zambia and Ivory Coast, and guided Saudi Arabia to an upset win over Argentina at the men’s World Cup last year.

He immediately eased tensions.

Renard overturned her decision and 33-year-old midfielder Amandine Henry – who had not played for France for three years under Diacre – was recalled.

“He has an open-mindedness and he doesn’t judge you.

There’s a level of trust. He says things up front, which is very important. It’s honest and to your face,” Renard said about her new coach.

“He said from the first day that his door is always open, that he wants our feedback: what we thought about the training session, if there’s anything we could have done more of. He says that we have a project in common.”

Renard, therefore, is among the designated leaders that other players can always approach. The others are striker Eugenie Le Sommer, Henry, Diani and midfielder Grace Geyoro.

When she put her international career on hold, Renard mentioned the need to protect her mental health, which is a priority subject under the new regime.

“The coach spoke about it with us. You have to help each teammate, you can’t leave anyone on the side,” Renard said.

“If she’s coming into the dressing room in the morning, I know if she’s feeling well or not, if anything’s weighing on her mind.”

Renard hopes a strong World Cup performance will boost the women’s league back home. Interest waned after France hosted the 2019 edition.

“There was great exposure, there was a huge media impact. But we didn’t manage to surf that wave and we stagnated, or even regressed, whereas other nations made the most of it and structured their leagues,” she said. “We hope we can get the momentum back, all that we lost.”

She points out how the women’s game in England is reaping the results of a continual investment. In May, a record crowd of 77,390 watched Chelsea beat Manchester United 1-0 in the Women’s FA Cup final at Wembley.

“They created a momentum there in a progressive way, with decisions that were already taken years ago. For the league, for TV rights, lots of things were done,” Renard said.

“When we see how full the stadiums are at Wembley, we say to ourselves ‘Why not us?’ Because when our games are on TV, we generally have good ratings, but when it’s [at the

stadium] we need to attract more people.”

Renard has played her entire club career in France, yet has been brushing up on her English for the World Cup.

“I’m shy and I’ve never dared speak it in front of the cameras. I’m good in front of my teacher, but she often tells me off and says to me, ‘You’re ready, you can speak English,’” Renard explained. “I feel like I don’t have enough command yet to express myself properly. But if the opportunity comes I’ll make the effort.”

Effort is something Renard learned early, growing up in Le Precheur (The Preacher) on the northern coast of Martinique, some 5,000 miles from France.

Le Precheur was so far away from anywhere else in Martinique that it became known as The End of the World.

It’s where she honed her skills for hours every day as a young girl; beginning a journey that took her to France as a determined teenager.

It could well culminate with a victory lap in Sydney on August 20.



WOMEN'S CRICKET

ENGLAND WILL ATTEMPT TO EXTEND ASHES FIGHT

Sciver-Brunt says squad expect to face fired-up Australia at Lord's today

by Our Sports Desk

NAT SCIVER-BRUNT (pictured) says England are expecting to face a fired-up Australia when they attempt to stay in the hunt for the Ashes at Lord's on Saturday.

Heather Knight's side trail 6-2 in the multiformat series but have been lifted by clinching Wednesday's second T20 match at The Oval by three runs.

Although England remain in must-win territory if they are to have any hope of claiming the Ashes for the first time since 2014, Sciver-Brunt insists they are convinced they are on the right path.

"It makes the game more simple – there's no choice, you just have to go for it. We're trying to focus on ourselves," the all-rounder said.

"Both teams would say they haven't played their best so there should be some tuned-in performances from both sides.

"But we know that Australia will definitely come back hard at us and hopefully we can combat that.

"The win on Wednesday helps with the belief in our group. If anything it will spur us on to keep playing in the way we have been playing. It validates that a bit.

"We've believed in ourselves quite a lot more than we have in the past over the last nine to 12 months but not quite got the results, so we're really happy to have got over the line."

A crowd of around 20,000 is



expected at Lord's for the last of the three T20 matches before the Ashes concludes with a trio of one-day internationals, each of which has sold out.

It comes after 20,328 gathered at The Oval to see England claw their way back into contention. The last time the series was played on these shores in 2019 it produced a total combined attendance of 30,000.

"The crowds have been really special and show where we are at the minute, but also what happens when you market it as well as you can," Sciver-Brunt said.

"You've got two top teams going head to head and it's the Ashes and this proves it is as popular as we think it is.

"Playing in front of that many people and riding that energy you get from the crowd

is something really, really special. Hopefully it will be replicated at Lord's."

Sciver-Brunt has confirmed that she will be able to bowl after completing two overs at The Oval in her first spell since suffering from knee inflammation during the Test between the rivals.

"I'm feeling good. My knee's recovered pretty well from the

injection after the Test match so I'm really happy with how it's going," she said.

"I've played pretty much my whole career as an all-rounder and I thrive off being able to contribute to everything in the game.

"I felt like I was letting people down when I couldn't do that and I'm in a good place for it now."

MEN'S CYCLING

Philipsen claims third stage win in Bordeaux

JASPER PHILIPSEN denied Mark Cavendish a record-breaking Tour de France victory yesterday as the Belgian won stage seven on the line in Bordeaux.

Philipsen made it three wins from three sprint stages in a row in this Tour as he came around Cavendish in the final few metres, leaving the Manxman to curse as he rolled in second, still tied with Eddy Merckx on 34 career Tour wins.

The 38-year-old had come from well down in the pack to power his way down the right hand side and up to the front of the race, but Philipsen got onto his wheel and powered by, with Biniam Girmay in third.

The sprint finish to the 170km stage from Mont-de-Marsan meant no major changes at the top of the general classification, in which Jonas Vingegaard leads from Tadej Pogacar.

But all eyes had been on the sprinters, with Cavendish hoping to make more Tour history 16 years to the day since he made his debut in the race in London in 2007.

The Astana-Qazaqstan rider was several places down in the pack as they negotiated a tight and twisty approach to the long finishing straight but moved up well and looked to have the speed he needed as he found a path down the right hand side to reach the front, only to see Philipsen come past at the last.

Philipsen said: "I think we can't be proud enough on our team achievement. Without them it would never be possible to get the third stage win already. I'm just really proud of them and how we worked together, how we found each other in the final.

"If you told me [three stage wins] one week ago I'd think you were crazy. So far it's a dream Tour for us and hopefully we can add another one."

WOMEN'S FOOTBALL

PFA chief hails value of collective bargaining agreements

by Our Sports Desk

FOOTBALLERS' union boss Maheta Molango has highlighted the value of collective bargaining agreements in women's sport, in a week featuring a World Cup bonus dispute between the England squad and the FA.

The PA news agency understands the Lionesses have been left disappointed by the fact the FA will not follow the lead of the Australian and American federations – where CBAs are in place – in paying bonuses on top of prize money being

paid to players direct by tournament organiser Fifa.

Players are also understood to be frustrated over a lack of clarity over what their cut from any commercial deals done by the FA linked to the Lionesses will be, as well as the restrictions around their personal sponsorships.

Professional Footballers' Association chief executive Maheta Molango, speaking at an event to mark the Professional Players Federation's Female Athlete Week this week, said: "We are seeing now, with many countries who are going to the World Cup, players being

prepared to stand their ground when they don't think they are being listened to.

"Issues like this really highlight for players the value of the kind of collective bargaining agreements that countries like the USA have in place in their sports, which strong player unions and associations are crucial to achieving."

The FA has been approached for comment.

Discrimination in cricket was highlighted in a damning independent report published last week, which said sexism and misogyny towards women in the sport was "routine."

Crucially, it called for average pay to be equalised in the domestic game by 2029 and by 2030 at international level.

Rob Lynch, chief executive of the Professional Cricketers' Association, said at the same PPF event: "While we must have that collaborative relationship [with the England and Wales Cricket Board], by virtue of the fact that they are the governing body and we represent the players, we are going to have issues and will need to have robust conversations.

"For the PCA, the collective voice is so key. When we have

an issue, we need to go back to the players, explain it to them and ask them to stay tight.

"Fundamentally, keeping our players closely aligned on key topics allows us to represent their interests in the strongest way."

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