



INSIDE YOUR WORKERS' MEMORIAL DAY SPECIAL EDITION:

MARY BOUSTED: Forget bankers and billionaires – it's staff that'll save us

CLAUDIA WEBBE MP: Covid-19 is highlighting extreme racial and class inequalities

PLUS reports on workers braving the coronavirus front line in Britain and abroad



for Peace and Socialism

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NEVER FORGET WORKERS WHO FOUGHT FOR US

Annual memorial pays tribute to those who have died in crisis and demands urgent protection for staff still working to keep us alive

by **Bethany Rielly**

WE WILL forever be in debt to the key workers who lost their lives during the pandemic, trade unionists have declared ahead of today's one-minute silence to honour them.

People across Britain will pay tribute at 11am today to NHS staff, bus drivers, shopkeepers, prison guards, posties and other key workers who've died while saving lives and keeping the country running.

Tributes from local NHS trusts and loved ones yesterday marked the deaths of 92 people working for the health service since March 25, though it's likely that the true figure is higher, with Nursing Notes claiming that at least 124 healthcare workers have died from the virus.

TUC general secretary Frances O'Grady said: "We will be forever in debt to the workers who have died

during this pandemic, whether they be nurses, doctors, care staff or other essential workers.

"They have lost their lives looking after our loved ones and keeping our country running."

As unions paid tribute, they also highlighted the failures that many believe have contributed to key workers' deaths.

Ms O'Grady described the lack of personal protective equipment (PPE) for front-line workers as a "grotesque failure" by ministers.

"We remember those who have died and recommit to fight for the living," she continued. "Every worker should be safe at work: during this pandemic, and always."

The minute's silence follows a campaign led by Unison, the Royal College of Nursing (RCN) and the Royal College of Midwives.

The tribute coincides with International Workers' Memorial Day, which

takes place around the world each year on April 28, remembering all those who have lost their lives at work or from work-related diseases.

Unison said that this year the day holds a "special significance" as thousands sacrifice their health and lives around the world on the front lines of the crisis.

"Thousands of key staff are on the front line while the rest of us are in lockdown," Unison general secretary Dave Prentis said. "That's why we've issued this call for the whole country to take part and remember the sacrifices they've made."

RCN general secretary Donna Kinair insisted: "This must not be the last time that sacrifice is recognised."

"The country and its leaders owes a tremendous debt to these key workers and the many more who are on shift again today."

Yesterday two more NHS staff were reported to have died from the

virus. One of them was Jenny Esson, a 45-year-old NHS worker at a mental-health trust in Cambridgeshire, who died in hospital on April 17.

"If Jenny saw something she felt was wrong, she wouldn't just moan about it," a family member said in a statement. "She hated social injustice and stigmatising of any kind. She was my hero, my soulmate, my everything."

NHS admin worker Laura Tanner, a mother-of-two from Basildon in Essex, was 51 when she died from Covid-19 on April 1. She had worked for the NHS for more than 10 years. Her husband Kevin Tanner described her as "friendly to everyone."

He said: "I'm having stories coming through where she would just randomly meet people at the bus stop, friends that she'd made, just got talking to people. They've laid flowers on the doorstep."

"It's just heartbreaking. She really was loved."

Scotland's First Minister Nicola Sturgeon confirmed the Scottish government will join in the minute's silence. She said that "our obligation to keep care and health workers safe" was government's "most vital" duty.

The number of key workers who have died from the virus is not yet known, but the Office for National Statistics announced last week that it is working on this.

Earlier this month Mayor Sadiq Khan confirmed that 21 London transport workers had died.

RMT general secretary Mick Cash said: "In recent days there has been a disturbing stream of Tory backbenchers and grandees talking up an easing of lockdown measures."

"To be clear: we will advise our members in the transport sector against co-operating with any unsafe easing of lockdown measures."

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■ ECONOMY – COVID-19

McCluskey calls for 'coherent' recovery plan

UNITE leader Len McCluskey called yesterday for "a coherent blueprint" for economic recovery to be drawn up for when the coronavirus crisis ends.

He was speaking following a warning from the Royal Society for the Encouragement of Arts, Manufactures & Commerce that a third of jobs could be threatened after the pandemic.

Its analysis revealed that areas with a high proportion of jobs in hospitality, retail and tourism are most affected.

Mr McCluskey said: "We fought for the job-retention scheme to be implemented

and for it to be extended to June in order to stave off mass unemployment.

"And we've been clear with employers that they must stand behind their workers while the state is standing behind them.

"But the threat of a deep and lasting recession is still very much active. The government will have to remain open to the probability that many parts of the economy will depend on taxpayer support for some time to come."

He said that unions should be involved in devising any blueprint for economic recovery.

■ LOCKDOWN

TUC: safety of workers must be top priority

A STRATEGY to keep workers safe from Covid-19 before the lockdown is eased should be at the top of the Prime Minister's in-tray now he has returned to work, Frances O'Grady said yesterday.

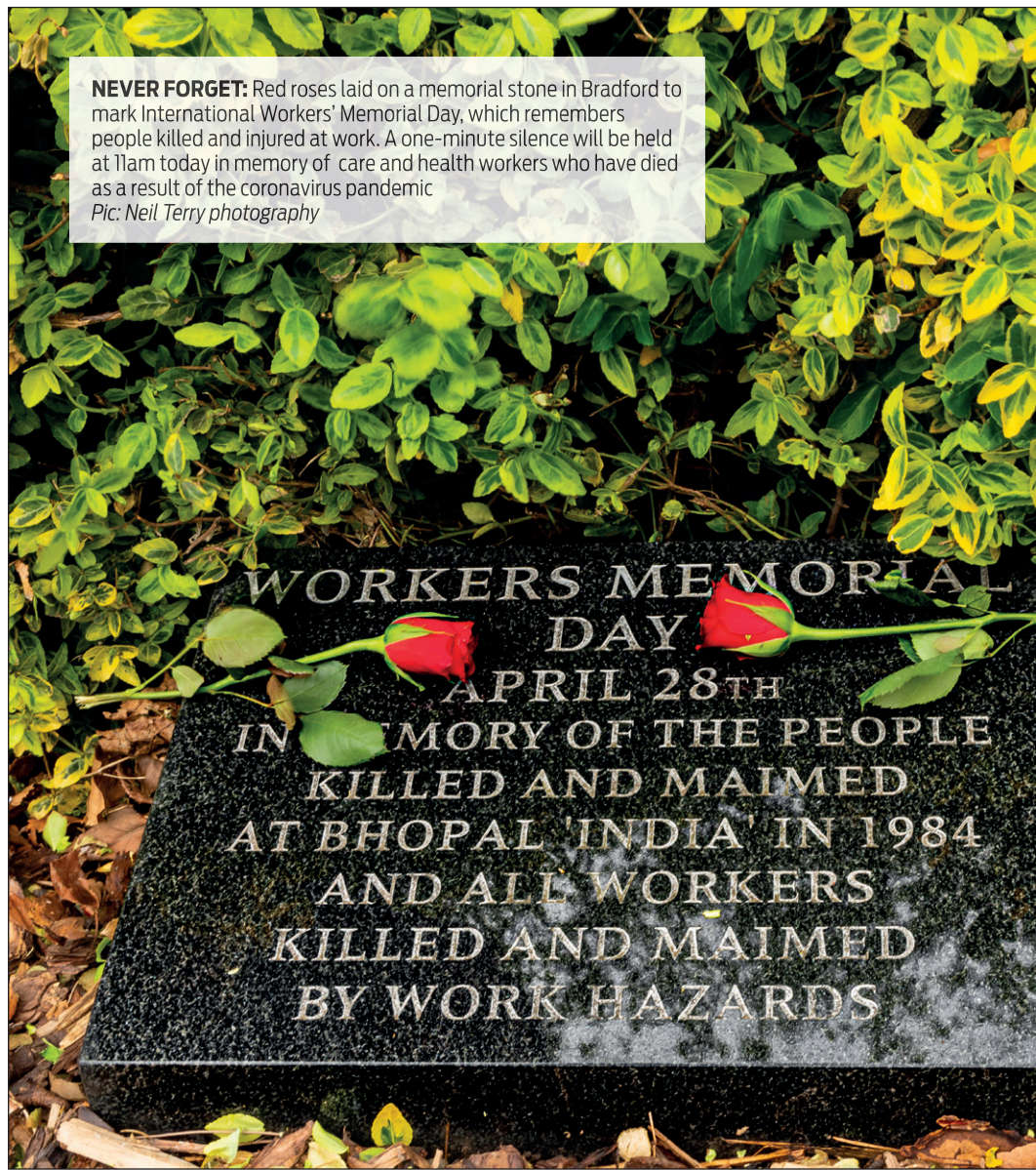
Workers' shifts should be staggered and social-distancing rules should continue after restrictions are lifted, the TUC general secretary insisted.

In a report published yesterday, the TUC calls for mandatory risk assessments to be carried out before employees return to work, to be signed off by unions or health & safety inspectors.

A TUC poll revealed that 40 per cent of workers are concerned about returning to work because of the virus; more than a third are worried about exposing household members to greater risk.

Ms O'Grady told BBC Radio 4's Today programme: "Everyone wants people to get back to work safely so we can get the economy back on its feet.

"But workers have to know and be confident that their health and safety is being put first. Otherwise we are going to see the virus spread again and be back to square one."



NEVER FORGET: Red roses laid on a memorial stone in Bradford to mark International Workers' Memorial Day, which remembers people killed and injured at work. A one-minute silence will be held at 11am today in memory of care and health workers who have died as a result of the coronavirus pandemic
Pic: Neil Terry photography

■ FRONT PAGE

NEVER FORGET WORKERS WHO FOUGHT FOR US

FROM PAGE ONE: "To be clear: we will advise our members in the transport sector against co-operating with any unsafe easing of lockdown measures."

The rising death toll of key workers comes amid outrage that key workers are still not being supplied with adequate protective wear.

Yesterday research by the Royal College of Physicians showed that doctors are still finding it harder generally to access any sort of PPE, despite ministers' pledges to solve the problem.

The Department of Health & Social Care has insisted that it is working "night and day" to provide health and social-care staff with PPE, claiming it has delivered over a billion items since the outbreak began.

Labour leader Keir Starmer said that no worker should be risking their lives because they don't have the right PPE.

"We can't go out and clap on a Thursday and pretend that when this is over we can wretch return to business as usual," he



said in a video message to mark International Workers' Memorial Day.

"Many of those on the front line have been undervalued and underpaid for far, far too long, and we owe them and the whole country a vision of a better future when we come through this pandemic – as we will."

Trade union councils in Wales called yesterday for a 10 per cent

pay rise for all NHS, front-line and care workers.

President of Cardiff Trades Union Council Katrine Williams said it was vital that workers being hailed as heroes should receive a pay rise as a "step towards returning their pay to 2010 levels, plus hazard pay for working in dangerous conditions."

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WORKERS' RIGHTS

Childminders feel 'unsupported' as they work for free

by Bethany Rielly

CHILDMINDERS have been left feeling "entirely unsupported" and "underappreciated," with one in four receiving reduced rates or nothing at all to care for key workers' children.

Childcare providers have been "financially crushed" during the coronavirus crisis, childcare platform Yoopies warned yesterday after publishing a shocking report into the problems faced by those in the profession.

Researchers surveyed 425 childcare providers including Ofsted-registered childminders, nannies (Ofsted and non-Ofsted registered) and self-employed babysitters.

They found that 25 per cent of childminders who are still able to work are doing so for a reduced salary or have offered their services for free, while more than two thirds of families have refused to pay a retention fee to support their childminder while they can't work.

Despite assurances that childminders can apply for the government's self-employment income-retention scheme, the report found that 57 per cent are not eligible for this support.

"I feel scared, I'm putting my family at risk every day to help NHS staff save lives," one childminder, who is not eligible for the grant, said.

"If I don't work for key workers' children, I would have no money, as I only started childminding in August last year. As my husband is still working, we can't claim universal credit."

Other childminders said that the lack of support showed that the profession was still viewed as "bottom of the pile."

"I feel very undervalued," one worker said. "We welcome families into our home, putting our own families at risk with no protection or acknowledgement, even though we go through the same grading and inspections as schools and nurseries."

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COVID-19

VIRUS RESPONSE BLASTED BY EX-SCIENCE CHIEF

'HEADLESS CHICKENS': Former adviser slams government inaction

by Lamiat Sabin
Parliamentary reporter

A FORMER chief scientific adviser condemned the government yesterday for "running around like a bunch of headless chickens" in their attempts to deal with the coronavirus pandemic.

Professor Sir David King, who served under Tony Blair and Gordon Brown, said that from the outset Prime Minister Boris Johnson had lost a lot of time, despite receiving plenty of detail from China about Covid-19, in preparing a taskforce.

Such a body should have helped oversee the domestic manufacture of protective wear and ventilators that have been in short supply, as well as developing tests and extending testing capability, he said.

His criticism came as Mr Johnson returned to work after convalescing from the coronavirus for three weeks.

The PM told the media that he acknowledged frustrations – mainly from his own backbenchers – over the continuing lockdown imposed on March 23, but he insisted that he would not risk a second peak in the virus by relaxing restrictions too quickly.

He compared the disease to a mugger, saying: "This is the moment when we have begun, together, to wrestle it to the floor."

Mr Johnson indicated that gradually lifting restrictions would depend on meeting five tests: "Deaths falling, NHS protected, rate of infection down, really sorting out the challenges of testing and PPE [personal protective equipment]."

Labour's shadow work & pensions secretary Jonathan Ashworth has said that mass testing and contact-tracing of Covid-19 is "nowhere near on track."

The government estimated that 100,000 tests per day may be needed before the lockdown is lifted, according to scien-

tific adviser Prof Peter Horby, who said tracking and tracing future coronavirus patients would be a "real logistical challenge." The 100,000 figure is also Health Secretary Matt Hancock's daily testing target by the end of the month.

British Medical Association chairman Dr Chaand Nagpaul said NHS staff need greater access to tests after slots offered online to key workers ran out within hours for the third day in a row on Sunday.

"There is no point putting forward a proposal unless it's matched with adequate capacity," he said.

More than 10 million essential workers and their households are now eligible for Covid-19 tests at home or in drive-through centres. The Department of Health & Social Care said that patients and health and social-care workers had been prioritised for tests from the beginning of the testing regime and would continue to be.

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ECONOMY

Small businesses to get new loans

SMALL businesses will be eligible for new fully government-backed "micro" loans worth up to £50,000, it was announced yesterday.

Chancellor Rishi Sunak made the statement in the Commons and MPs asked questions via videolink, as the new "virtual" Parliament adhered to social-distancing rules.

He said firms struggling during the coronavirus pandemic can receive "bounce

back" loans worth up to 25 per cent of turnover. The government will pay interest for the first year, he said.

Business owners can apply from next Monday with a "quick standard form" to get the cash 24 hours after approval, and there will be no forward-looking eligibility test, Mr Sunak said.

The £50,000 cap balances the risk to taxpayers with the need to support businesses that "need it most," he added.

Anneliese Dodds, in her first Commons speech as shadow chancellor, said that it was unsettling that figures suggested that "business confidence has taken a stronger hit in the UK than across the eurozone."

She added that the government "needs to be open about blocks" it has hit in tackling the spread of the virus and "how it will remove them" to get lockdown restrictions eventually lifted.

JUSTICE FOR PALESTINE

HSBC slammed for blocking payments to aid group

by Bethany Rielly

CAMPAIGNERS have demanded HSBC reverse its decision to stop processing standing orders to Palestinian aid group Interpal.

A report by Middle East Eye revealed yesterday that the bank will stop payments to Interpal – one of Britain's largest groups delivering aid to Palestinians in the West Bank, Gaza and in refugee camps in Lebanon and Jordan – from May 17.

HSBC, one of the biggest banks in the world, did not give any specific reason for the decision.

Interpal told the Morning Star that the move will have a big impact on its aid work.

"This step will, unfortunately, divert essential time and resources away from our focus on aid work to Palestinians in urgent need amidst a

global pandemic, the month of Ramadan and an existing healthcare crisis in the region," a spokesperson from the charity said.

The move follows a relentless campaign against Interpal by Israeli lobby groups that have sought to disrupt its ability to raise funds and strip it of its charitable status.

One group, UK Lawyers for Israel (UKLFI), has accused the charity of being a "terror" organisation with links to Hamas, which Interpal strongly denies.

Such accusations are based on the US Treasury's designation of Interpal as a terrorist organisation in 2003. However, three investigations by the Charity Commission prompted by UKLFI have exonerated the group each time.

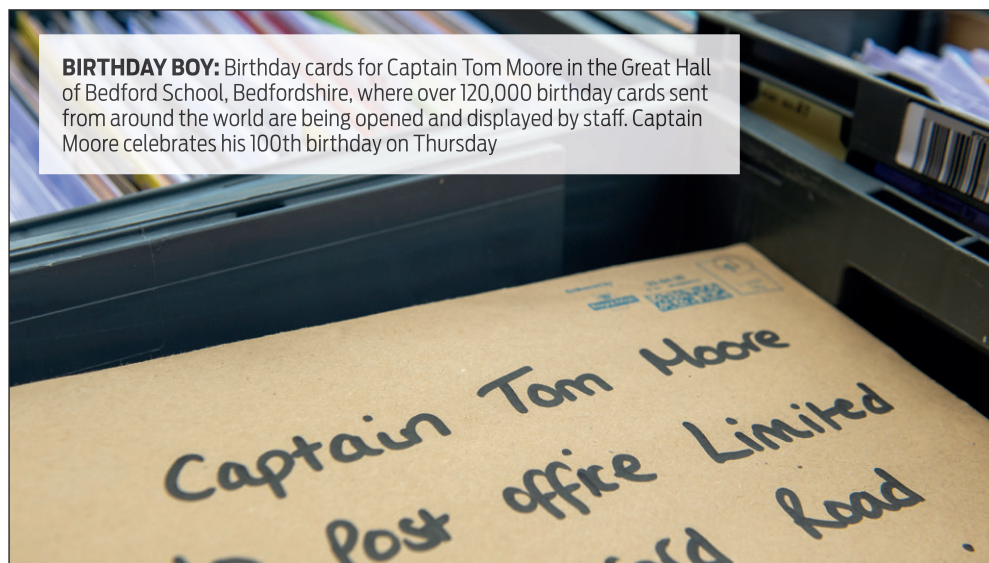
Palestine Solidarity Campaign (PSC) director Ben Jamal told the Morning Star: "Interpal has been the target, as have

many solidarity groups, of illegitimate smears and attacks by pro-Israel groups in the UK.

"What's more, this decision during Ramadan – when Interpal would be looking to process a larger volume of donations which are desperately needed to support its humanitarian work in Palestine – is particularly grotesque.

"HSBC must act immediately to reverse this decision."

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BIRTHDAY BOY: Birthday cards for Captain Tom Moore in the Great Hall of Bedford School, Bedfordshire, where over 120,000 birthday cards sent from around the world are being opened and displayed by staff. Captain Moore celebrates his 100th birthday on Thursday



In this **COVID-19 crisis** and at all times RMT's priorities for our members are :

- Health
- Safety
- Livelihoods

On **Workers' Memorial Day** those priorities remain the same.



www.rmt.org.uk

General Secretary: Mick Cash

President: Michelle Rodgers



WE REMEMBER ALL WORKERS WHO HAVE DIED FROM EXPOSURE TO COVID-19 WHILST DOING THEIR JOBS

Workers need adequate PPE, not empty words and spin.

#IWMD20

#NeverForgotten

MATT WRACK
General Secretary

IAN MURRAY
President

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INTERNATIONAL WORKERS' MEMORIAL DAY

REMEMBER THE DEAD, FIGHT FOR THE LIVING



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PROTECT US: Firefighters work during the pandemic, when they have taken on a slew of extra responsibilities to keep the public safe

Pic: Neil Terry Photography

■ FBU

BOSSSES 'SNEAKING THROUGH' BRUTAL FIRE SERVICE CUTS

'HYPOCRISY': Union slams cost consultation for key front-line services

by Peter Lazenby

FIRE & rescue service bosses were accused yesterday of trying to "sneak through brutal cuts under the cover of the coronavirus crisis."

The Fire Brigades Union (FBU) said that employers and politicians are rushing through cuts that will reduce firefighter and appliance numbers and create a "major threat to public safety."

A consultation on sweeping fire & rescue cuts is being launched by employers in the middle of the pandemic crisis, the union said.

Firefighters have taken on sweeping new duties during the coronavirus pandemic.

These include moving dead bodies, driving ambulances, and producing protective wear

at the request of the government and the National Fire Chiefs' Council.

Despite this, cuts are being cynically forced through, the FBU said. The union cited East Sussex's Conservative-controlled fire authority, which is launching a public consultation on more cuts based on a plan drawn up before the coronavirus outbreak. The proposals include major cuts to the number of fire engines, staffing levels, and night-time fire cover.

The FBU says 10 fire engines in the county, at Battle, Bexhill, Crowborough, Lewes, Newhaven, Rye, Uckfield, Seaford, Heathfield and Wadhurst stations will be axed, and dedicated crews for high-

reaching aerial fire appliances will be reduced, along with other staff.

East Sussex firefighter and FBU brigade chairman Simon Herbert said: "Firefighters are out on the front line helping our communities through this crisis while still responding to fires and other emergencies.

"Meanwhile our fire authority has thanked us by beginning the process of decimating our emergency-response capabilities and ability to save lives – all from the safety of their living rooms.

"These proposals are dangerous and will seriously damage the availability of fire crews throughout East Sussex."

FBU general secretary Matt Wrack said: "The Prime Minister and other government ministers are asking people to clap for front-line workers on a Thursday while their policies continue gutting front-line services. It's shameless hypocrisy.

"While firefighters are taking on sweeping new areas of work to keep their communities safe, they have been completely betrayed by fire chiefs and politicians.

"This could be the first of many attempts to sneak through cuts to services while the public focuses on the pandemic.

"If politicians think they are going to make public services pay for this crisis, then they are sadly mistaken."

East Sussex Fire & Rescue Service had not responded to requests for comment at the time of going to press.

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“ If politicians think they are going to make public services pay for this crisis, then they are sadly mistaken

FBU general secretary Matt Wrack (left)



■ SCOTLAND

SNP's former deputy says party may need replacing

by Niall Christie
Scotland editor

THE SNP's former deputy leader Jim Sillars (pictured) said yesterday that the party is so "rotten" that it may have to be replaced by a new independence party.

Writing in the forthcoming issue of the Scottish Left Review, the ex-MP said he believed a "complete clear-out of the highest levels of the party" was needed before it was fit to lead again.

Mr Sillars, who served under former leader Alex Salmond during the 1990s, warned that revelations in the recently acquitted politician's new book could cause a "volcanic eruption" within the SNP.

It is expected the book will outline evidence of an alleged conspiracy

against the former first minister.

Mr Sillars said: "The criminal trial of Alex Salmond may be over but the trial of the SNP both at party and parliamentary level is yet to begin.

"The cult of personality, the obsessive desire of leaders for complete control of the membership and parliamentarians, the growth of a clique of acolytes, one-person rule – there has been a rot growing at the

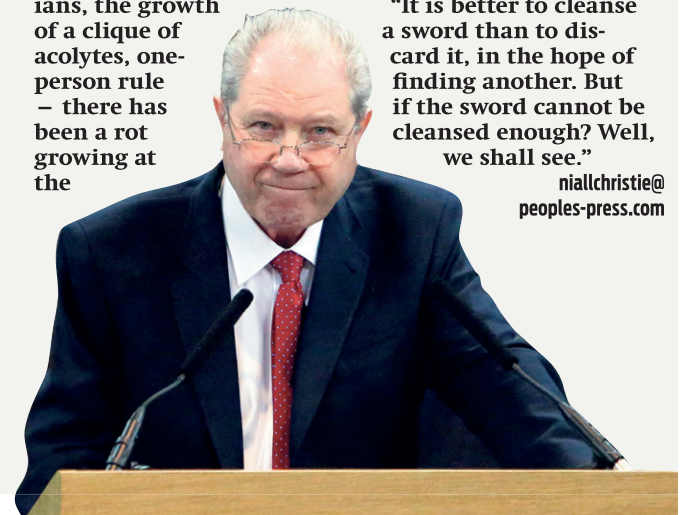
heart of this organisation for years."

Mr Sillars raised the question of whether the 86-year-old party should be replaced altogether.

He said: "As the rot is uncovered, the temptation – already being thought of by some – will be to set up something new, untainted, in its place.

"It is better to cleanse a sword than to discard it, in the hope of finding another. But if the sword cannot be cleansed enough? Well, we shall see."

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■ WESTMINSTER

Labour MP broke rules taking pay for events

FORMER Labour MP Stephen Pound breached Parliamentary rules by accepting cash for holding events at Westminster, an investigation found yesterday.

Parliamentary commissioner for standards Kathryn Stone found that Mr Pound had received between £10,000 and £14,000 for hosting events on Parliament's grounds between 2012 and 2019.

The events were tours, talks, skills training and seminars. Private events on the estate are not permitted. Mr Pound, who stood down from the Commons in December, did not profit, donating all the money, after tax, to charities.

Ms Stone had forwarded the matter to the Commons committee on standards. The committee said that it accepted that, while the breaches took place on a number of occasions, his actions "did not amount to a deliberate and wilful breach of the rules" as Mr Pound was unaware that he was contravening rules.



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GMB

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Commemorates Workers' Memorial Day 2020

**Remember the dead, fight for the
living.**

**To remember those key-workers
who died or who were made
unwell by their work.**

Regional Secretary

Paul McCarthy

Regional President

Dougie Henry

■ CORONAVIRUS

Care operator still waiting for test kits despite C-19 deaths

DIRE SHORTAGES: GMB says staff in Vida Healthcare homes, where two patients have died, also lack PPE amid 10-day delivery delay

by Peter Lazenby
Northern reporter

DESPITE two of its residents dying with coronavirus, a care-home operator has been waiting 10 days for testing kits to arrive, its healthcare director said yesterday.

Vida Healthcare provides specialist support for up to 194 residents living with dementia in its two care homes in Harrogate, North Yorkshire.

Director Bernadette Mossman said that kits promised by Public Health England to test residents showing symptoms never arrived. She said that one employee had to travel 50 miles to Manchester to get tested on Sunday.

"The biggest issue has been

delivery of home testing kits to the home. We have had a delay with that and that's been unfortunate," Ms Mossman said.

"For people living with dementia, self-isolation can be a struggle, because if they can't retain that information, it can be very difficult."

Dr Mike Gent, deputy director of health protection at Public Health England (Yorkshire & Humber), said that the government has committed to testing all care-home residents and staff showing symptoms.

General union GMB in Yorkshire said that care homes were suffering shortages of both protective wear and testing kits.

Regional officer Rachel Dix told the Morning Star: "We have had lots of discussion about PPE [personal protective equipment] but testing is absolutely vital."

"The testing kit would not be such an issue if staff had appropriate PPE and could also

afford to stay at home if they have the virus.

"We constantly have members in a dilemma, because if they have to self-isolate, they have to survive on statutory sick pay, which is less than £96 a week.

"What we are hearing is that PPE is getting through – but not to staff on the front line.

"We have had reports of care-home managers locking the equipment in their cars and offices and staff having to make a case for why they need it.

"One thing that is really annoying me is that the focus is on PPE – but nobody is talking about the fantastic people risking their lives, mainly on the minimum wage. It is criminal.

"Hopefully home care-workers will come out of all this into a better situation."

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■ HUMAN RIGHTS

Saudis slammed for 'empty words' over death sentence

by Niall Christie

BRITISH human-rights organisations have raised serious concerns that the Saudi legal system could continue to seek death sentences against children, despite new laws being announced yesterday.

An unofficial version of a royal decree by Saudi Arabia's Human Rights Commission has announced that children are no longer eligible for the death penalty in the kingdom.

The full text of the document has not been published, but the commission says that anyone convicted of crimes that took

place while they were under the age of 18 will face up to 10 years in juvenile detention.

However, initial legal analysis of a version posted online suggests that there are significant loopholes that will enable prosecutors to sentence children to death. The European Saudi Organisation for Human Rights (ESOHR) said that little has changed legally.

And rights group Reprieve said that if the Saudis are serious about reform, death sentences for those at risk of execution should be commuted.

Reprieve director Maya Foa said: "These will be nothing more than empty words as long

as child defendants remain on death row."

Four of those who still face execution have exhausted all legal remedies and are at imminent risk of execution.

Of the rest, one's death sentence is subject to appeal, and eight are currently on trial.

All were charged with terrorism offences after attending pro-democracy demonstrations, which would remain death-eligible, irrespective of the age of the defendant.

The commission has not said whether the new decree will be applied retroactively.

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HOT AIR:
Saudi Crown Prince Mohammed bin Salman

■ COVID-19

Film artists provide free services for bereaved

BEREAVED families are being offered a free video memorial service because lockdown rules are preventing people from attending funerals.

Film-makers and other professionals have come together to develop a Video for Distant Memorials service staffed by volunteers who will make free video memorials for anyone who has lost a loved one, whether or not the death is due to coronavirus.

Manchester-based founder Sarah Hodgetts said: "Not being able to gather to celebrate a loved one's life is heartbreaking.

"We are editing together photos, videos, and memories so families and friends can share and remember their loved one together."

"This is not an easy task, but the creative community has really shown what it's all about – they are completely committed to making sure that people's stories are not lost," Ms Hodgetts said.

BLUE-SKY THINKING: A community is hoping to create a nature reserve through a buyout of Langholm Moor (pictured) in Dumfries and Galloway in Scotland.

The Langholm Initiative is in advanced discussions with Buccleuch Estates over plans to purchase about 10,500 acres, with nine residential properties, in Dumfries and Galloway.

It hopes to create a Tarras Valley Nature Reserve, which would help with community regeneration, wildlife conservation and improving the environment, as well as developing outdoor tourism.

The Langholm Initiative's project leader Kevin Cumming said: "This is one of the most important and forward-thinking community plans in the UK.

"We are in a climate emergency and the decisions we make now will have a massive impact on future generations."

He said that the group raised £8,000 in just eight days through a crowdfunding, with donations coming from all over the world.

"It's rare that we as individuals have the opportunity to make a difference on this scale and we are hopeful that people will support us," he said.



Midlothian Trades Union Council

International Workers' Memorial Day



This day in 2020 we pay special respect and gratitude to all N.H.S. staff, care workers and all those in essential services for their unselfish contribution to the health of us all. We hope this might remind those in power that protective equipment is essential for those in the front line.

Mourn the dead. Fight for those fighting for us all.

Communist Party of Britain



Scottish Committee

Mourn the dead, fight for the living.

Part of that fight must be a day of reckoning for this government's criminal neglect of its people over coronavirus.



WORKERS' MEMORIAL DAY NEWCASTLE UPON TYNE TUC says 'Never again!'

Honour the key workers who have perished with COVID-19 by fighting for a society which puts people's lives before big business profits

REMEMBER THE DEAD, FIGHT FOR THE LIVING

Usdaw applauds all key essential workers for their work and sacrifice to keep the nation safe, healthy and fed. They all deserve our utmost respect and gratitude.

To join or find out more
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fallen comrades and
committing to organise
in their memory

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Stop the pandemic in the workplace.

Karen Reay
Regional Secretary

Dick Banks
Regional Chair



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INTERNATIONAL WORKERS MEMORIAL DAY



Remembering all those who've
been killed by Covid-19 and
other hazards at work

General Secretary Manuel Cortes www.tssa.org.uk @TSSAunion



*The Communication Workers
Union remembers the dead
and fights for the living*



WORKERS MEMORIAL DAY

TUESDAY APRIL 28TH 2020

#IWMD20

DAVE WARD
GENERAL SECRETARY

KAREN ROSE
PRESIDENT

 @DaveWardGS  The Communications Union  @@CWUNews #TheCWU CWU.ORG

■ MIDDLE EAST

Israel launches air strike on Damascus

ISRAELI war planes launched air strikes against Syria yesterday killing three people and injuring four, including a child, according to the Sana News Agency.

The missiles struck civilian areas in the Damascus countryside. Earlier Syrian air-defence systems repelled air strikes on the capital, destroying most of the missiles. Those that reached their targets caused limited material damage, a military spokesman said.

The Israeli jets launched their assault in the early hours, flying across southern Lebanon, Syrian armed forces said.

Israel does not usually confirm air strikes but has consistently targeted Syria, where it insists it will not allow Iran, which has provided troops to support President Bashar al-Assad's fight against jihadists, to gain a foothold.

Last year Tel Aviv took the unusual step of admitting it had carried out hundreds of missile attacks against Syria. Belligerent Israeli premier Benjamin Netanyahu insisted the country would defend itself "by any means necessary," a stance backed by Washington

INDIA: Health workers attend to a colleague who fainted due to exhaustion and long working hours at a Covid-19 testing centre in New Delhi, India, yesterday. Many health workers allege having to work extra hours, often without sufficient facilities provided for their protection and wellbeing. India, which has a population of 1.3 billion, has less than one medical doctor and three nurses per thousand people, the minimum recommended by the World Health Organisation



■ UKRAINE

ARMY TRIES TO 'ERASE VILLAGE FROM THE EARTH'

ATTACK: Armed forces 'cold-bloodedly' bombard town with grenades, artillery and missiles

by Steve Sweeney

UKRAINIAN forces have been accused of trying to "erase the village of Zaitsevo from the Earth" after it was bombarded over the weekend in breach of an official ceasefire.

Head of the Zaitsevo administration Irina Dikun posted footage of the shelling online, accusing the Ukrainian Armed Forces (UAF) of "cold-bloodedly" trying to destroy the village, north of the city of Gorlovka, in Ukraine's eastern Donetsk region.

The bombardment started in the early hours of Saturday, she said, with Ukrainian army soldiers opening fire in an unprovoked attack.

In one of the videos a resident of Zaitsevo was heard describing the action, reporting that civilian homes were being hit throughout the assault.

Howitzer shells, bullets and missiles rained down on

the village, he said, with just 30-second intervals between the shooting.

"It's almost an hour they have been hammering non-stop on us, whereas from our side none fired, even with a slingshot. I didn't even hear a little pistol fart somewhere," he said.

"They strike only with big weapons. The smallest among them is automatic grenade launchers, that's all.

"Oh, and here's the machine gun that started to work, and that's probably in our direction..." he added as the sound of heavy artillery could be heard.

The village is on the front line of the Donbass conflict, sitting in between Ukrainian forces and the separatist Donetsk People's Republic (DPR), which declared independence in 2014 alongside the Luhansk People's Republic and the Republic of Crimea (the last being established as a federal subject of Russia follow-

ing military annexation and a referendum).

The conflict erupted after the 2013-2014 Euromaidan coup, when a movement backed by the EU and the US ousted President Viktor Yanukovich, who had rejected an EU trade deal.

Zaitsevo has come under repeated attack by Ukrainian forces despite a ceasefire, which came into effect in

December 2016.

Ms Dikun claims that UAF shelling has intensified since the agreement, which aimed to bring about a political solution to the Donbass conflict.

In October she reported that the ceasefire agreement had not reached Zaitsevo, with Ukrainian bombing occurring every night, targeting homes and infrastructure.

"They are destroying us, street by street, in the town. They take one street and destroy it house by house. Then they turn to another street," she said.

Mayor of Gorlovka Ivan Prikhodko confirmed that at least one house was razed to the ground during the weekend assault.

Earlier this month he accused Ukraine of waging a genocidal war, in "acts committed with intent to destroy, in whole or in part, a national, ethnic, racial or religious group."

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■ PALESTINE

Singer releases solidarity song

by Our Foreign Desk

AWARD-WINNING Palestinian singer Nai Barghouti has released a song in solidarity with those around the world fighting oppression and the global Covid-19 pandemic.

The song, Think of Others, is based on a poem of the same name by Mahmoud Darwish, dubbed Palestine's "national poet." It features recordings of his voice with the accompanying video showing images of communities fighting poverty, military occupation and violence.

Ms Barghouti said this was her inspiration when composing the music to Mr Darwish's poem. "I was indeed thinking of so many others. Of Palestinians under a 13-year lockdown in Gaza or in crowded refugee camps. Of communities fighting repression, poverty, racism and structural oppression. Of courageous medics and humanitarian workers worldwide resisting the pandemic."

The video, comprising single smartphone camera shots, features striking images includ-

ing those of children in Yemen, Kashmir and Pakistan; a family in a Brazilian favela facing armed officers; a devastated Iraqi father holding his child; a hopeful scene from Wuhan; Palestinian refugees in Gaza, Syria and Lebanon; a healthcare worker in Italy; and a parking lot used for the homeless in Las Vegas, among others.

"When humanity as a whole is facing this unique threat, I feel it is our moral duty to lift up the voices of particularly those who must cling on to hope for a more just and peaceful future while relentlessly resisting systems of injustice. This video is my attempt to fulfil this duty," Ms Barghouti said.

Palestine has 492 recorded cases of coronavirus and two deaths. But there are fears that the disease could spread across the region due to poor sanitation, cramped conditions and a blockade imposed by Israeli occupying forces leading to a lack of medical resources.

<https://www.facebook.com/naibarghouti/videos/639568633286603/?v=639568633286603>
intrnational@peoples-press.com

Unite London Mech

Unite London Mechanical Construction Branch
We salute the memory of victims of work-related injury and disease.



Our goal must be a trade union safety representative in every workplace

Frank Bagnall President
Dorothy Kilsby Secretary

Unite Bristol Retired Members SW/1001899

On Workers' Memorial Day when we remember workers who have died or been injured at work, it's fitting that this year we pay tribute to all the essential workers who are putting their lives at risk from the Covid-19 virus to keep the rest of us safe. In Solidarity.



Hastings & District Trades Council

REMEMBERS

On Workers' Memorial Day we pay tribute to all workers who have been killed or injured in the workplace, or are suffering from work related disease.



This year our thoughts are with those affected by the Covid-19 pandemic. We salute the essential workers keeping us safe. "Remember the Dead and Fight Like Hell for the Living".

Join a Union.

Unite South West 007 Gloucester Area Branch

Sends solidarity to all workers on International Workers' Memorial Day.



Chris Firth Secretary
Neil Armitage Chair

Unite NE/GEO/1 Sheffield East

We remember all the workers who have passed and especially those in the present crisis. Our thoughts are with their families and loved ones and we will not forget them.



Reading Trades Union Council

COMMEMORATES International Workers Memorial Day today and May Day on May 1.

We commemorate workers whose lives have been lost at work, with particular focus this year on public service workers who have fallen as a result of contracting COVID-19 in the workplace.



The proximity of IWMD to the anniversary of the International Brigade causes us to remember those workers who fell fighting fascism.

We also celebrate International Workers Day, and send greetings of solidarity to workers everywhere on May 1st.

Visit the RTUC on Facebook for details of our commemoration.

Unite North West



Remember the dead –
fight for the living

Ritchie James
Regional secretary

Ian Bruce
Regional chair

Unite Irish Region

Remembering
the fallen on
International
Workers'
Memorial Day



Fighting for a better future

Jackie Pollock Regional secretary
Jeffrey Robinson Regional chair

■ BRAZIL

TURMOIL AS BOLSONARO FACES LEGAL CHALLENGE

by Steve Sweeney

A POLITICAL crisis is unfolding in Brazil, with far-right President Jair Bolsonaro facing potential impeachment charges after a complaint raised against him by former justice minister Sergio Moro.

The former ally of Mr Bolsonaro resigned sensationally on Friday after the president fired federal police chief Mauricio Vaelixo without giving a reason. He was replaced by the boss of the Brazilian Intelligence Agency, Alexandre Ramagem.

Brazil's Attorney General Augusto Aras has paved the way for charges to be brought against Mr Bolsonaro, requesting the Supreme Federal Court open investigations into allegations of political interference.

Analysts suggest that Mr Bolsonaro could face impeachment, while his administration is in turmoil over his leadership during the Covid-19 pandemic.

Earlier this month he sacked



health minister Luiz Henrique Mandetta, the pair clashing over the measures needed to tackle the spread of the coronavirus. Mr Mandetta had insisted the need to maintain social distancing, which Mr Bolsonaro has dismissed.

Formerly Mr Moro was the judge behind the widely condemned jailing of Brazil's popular former president Luiz Inacio "Lula" da Silva, who was leading in the polls ahead of the 2018 presidential election.

His subsequent banning

from standing paved the way for Mr Bolsonaro's victory, and the far-right leader rewarded Mr Moro by appointing him justice minister.

But last year investigative news website the Intercept published stunning revelations in a series of WhatsApp messages, suggesting a conspiracy between Mr Moro and prosecutors to ensure that Lula ended up behind bars.

Mr Moro remained a close confidant of Mr Bolsonaro, but his resignation last Friday indi-

cates serious cracks in Brazil's ruling elite. He said the sacking of Mr Valeixo was "a signal that the president wanted me out."

The former minister has now emerged as a serious rival to Mr Bolsonaro, with Free Journalists spokesman Bouaventura de Sousa claiming that the US is now backing Mr Moro for the 2022 election.

The Portuguese academic said that Mr Moro has paved the way for his candidacy by "destroying the Brazilian economy, destroying the left" and creating the conditions for Mr Bolsonaro, whom he described as a "transitional politician" to be discarded.

Brazil remains the worst-hit country in the region, with nearly 63,000 confirmed cases of Covid-19 and more than 4,200 deaths.

But health officials warn that the true figure may be much higher, citing a lack of early testing, as hospitals struggle to cope and bodies are buried in mass graves.

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■ AFGHANISTAN

Washington muses spook withdrawal

by Our Foreign Desk

WASHINGTON is considering the withdrawal of hundreds of CIA operatives from Afghanistan, while a new UN report reveals that 500 civilians, almost a third of them children, were killed in the first three months of the year.

The UN Assistance Mission in Afghanistan (Unama) said the figures included 152 dead children and 60 women.

Most of the casualties took place last month, according to the report, despite the signing of a peace agreement between the United States and the Taliban.

Unawa claimed that anti-government forces were responsible for 55 per cent of the killings during that period. But the Afghan government dismissed the claims, insisting that international troops caused more child casualties than the Taliban or Isis.

"To safeguard the lives of countless civilians in Afghanistan and to give the nation hope of a better future, it is

imperative that violence is stopped with the establishment of a ceasefire and for peace negotiations to commence," Unawa chief Deborah Lyons said.

But the Taliban has rejected calls for a ceasefire during the holy month of Ramadan.

The jihadists have accused President Ashraf Ghani's government of failing to abide by the peace process, in particular the release of 5,000 Taliban prisoners.

Now Washington is considering pulling some 200 CIA operatives from Afghanistan in a bid to salvage the fragile agreement.

The US spooks have been conducting a clandestine war, arming and training proxy forces including the Khost Protection Force (KPF), a 6,500-strong unit of elite Afghan soldiers that has a strong presence in Taliban strongholds such as Ghazni, Paktia and Khost.

But that decision is reported to be under review, with the option of limiting CIA operatives to the US embassy in Kabul under consideration.

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■ ARGENTINA

Mass letter to say 'thank you' to Cuban doctors

ARGENTINA urged its citizens to sign a proclamation welcoming Cuban doctors to the country and demanding an end to the crippling US blockade as medics arrived from the socialist island yesterday.

Signatories including the president of the Grandmothers of Plaza Mayo – a group that campaigns to find children stolen and illegally adopted under the country's military dictatorship – Estela de Carlotto (pictured) and actors Cecilia Roth and Cristina Banega welcomed 200 Cuban health professionals to Argentina as part of efforts to tackle the global Covid-19 pandemic.

The statement insisted that Covid-19 requires "unity and solidarity between peoples and nations," with health a

"universal human right.

"Today, it is about preserving the lives of millions of people, without exceptions, and this is what is most important. The virus kills without respecting borders or ideologies," it said.

Argentina has nearly 4,000 confirmed cases of coronavirus and 192 recorded deaths as of yesterday.

"We will need more medical and nursing personnel, and for this we cannot rule out the need to resort to international co-operation," the signatories said.

It called on Argentinians to reject "the US campaign against Cuban medical collaboration in the world which today is part of the aggressiveness and intensification of the blockade against that brother country."



LEBANON: An anti-government protester scuffles with Lebanese army soldiers in the town of Zouk Mosbeh, north of Beirut, Lebanon, yesterday. Scattered anti-government protests broke out in several parts of Lebanon yesterday amid a crash in the local currency and a surge in food prices, leading to road closures that prevented medical teams from setting out from Beirut to conduct coronavirus tests across the country

Pic: Vladimir Platonow/ABr/CC



ESSENTIAL: A shopworker serves customers from behind a protective screen

Shopworkers are on the front line in this pandemic – they deserve our respect

Retail staff have a crucial role in our communities, says Usdaw leader **PADDY LILLIS** as the movement marks International Workers' Memorial Day

FOR International Workers' Memorial Day this year, Usdaw is highlighting the risks many front-line workers are taking to help keep the rest of us safe and healthy.

Healthcare workers in particular are risking their lives doing their job to take care of the sick.

Many others, like Usdaw members in supermarkets and delivering the food supply chain, are providing essential services and deserve our thanks for everything they are doing.

We urge the public to observe a one-minute silence at 11am today to remember those workers we've lost to Covid-19.

More people are killed at work than in wars. They died because their safety just wasn't a priority. So today we "remember the dead and fight for the living" by highlighting our all-year-round campaigning for better health and safety at work.

Shopworkers and their colleagues in the retail food supply chain are on the front line of feeding the country during the current crisis.

They are providing an essential service in very difficult circumstances, working long hours in busy stores, facing abuse from customers and of

course they are concerned they may contract Covid-19.

This year we should take time to recognise the heroic efforts they are making in very difficult circumstances, alongside many other front-line workers.

A one-minute silence at 11am for those we've lost is a fitting tribute.

Udaw continues to work with employers to improve health and safety for staff, particularly those dealing directly with the public.

We also call on customers to stay calm, respect shopworkers and practise the necessary hygiene measures to help limit the spread of the virus.

We were shocked that a survey of our members found that violence, threats and abuse have doubled during this national emergency.

At a time when we should all be working together to get through this crisis, it is a national disgrace that people working to keep food on the shelves for their local communities are being abused and assaulted.

Urgent action is required. Our message is clear – abuse is not part of the job.

Life on the front line of retail is normally pretty tough for many shopworkers and has

become much worse during the coronavirus emergency.

The safety of our members is absolutely paramount, but they tell us that some of the shopping public are resisting social distancing measures in stores and can become abusive when asked to queue and maintain a two-metre gap.

Our message to the public is there is no excuse for abusing shopworkers, please treat our

members with the respect they deserve.

So there needs to be action to help protect staff. We want the government to legislate for stiffer penalties for those who assault workers – a simple stand-alone offence that is widely recognised and understood by the public, police, Crown Prosecution Service, the judiciary and, most importantly, criminals.

Retail staff have a crucial role in our communities and that role must be valued and respected – they deserve the protection of the law.

Shops are the cornerstone of our communities, but they can only operate with staff, who clearly do not have the option to work from home.

We continue to work with retailers to improve health and safety for staff. We also call on customers to stay calm and respect shopworkers.

Strong unions are the best protection for workers. Workplaces that have strong union representation typically have much lower fatality, injury and ill-health rates than those that do not.

Research in this country and abroad has shown repeatedly that unions make a difference.

■ Paddy Lillis is general secretary of shopworkers' union Usdaw.

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Our message to the public is there is no excuse for abusing shopworkers

APRIL 28 is a big day in the trade-union calendar. International Workers' Memorial Day is when workers around the world unite to remember those killed at, or by, work and to organise in their memory.

Under normal circumstances I would perhaps be reflecting about many of the global incidents that you have read about in the pages of the Morning Star over the past year – of bad employers, dangerous working practices and persecuted trade unionists.

But while we do continue to reflect on those cases, these are far from normal circumstances.

They are extraordinary. And that is why this year's theme for IWMD is "Stop the Pandemic at Work."

The call to "remember the dead and fight for the living" has never been so urgent and so poignant. And rarely has the trade-union movement felt more conscious of global unity on a single issue.

There is no doubt that NHS workers are central to tackling the pandemic. That is why, rightly, they have been hailed at every turn by government, commentators and the general public.

Indeed, BBC1 has recently built an entire Thursday night schedule around the weekly clap for the NHS.

But many NHS workers have lost their lives to the virus, and this is certainly not something to be applauded.

It has been a savage blow to their families, and deeply alarming and upsetting for their colleagues. We will remember

those workers during the minute's silence at 11am today.

We will also remember the care workers who have died, the transport workers, the prison workers and police.

Tragically, some education staff have also lost their lives, and we will take this opportunity to remember them and send thoughts to their loved ones.

Our objective throughout this crisis is to fight tooth and nail to ensure the health and safety of our members and children they educate.

The Covid-19 pandemic has focused attention on the links between occupational health and safety and wider public health like never before.

It has also demonstrated that not only is the health and safety of NHS and care staff vital to fighting the pandemic, so too is the health and safety of key workers in other sectors, including, of course, education.

As entire nations experience this unprecedented shutdown, unions are playing a crucial role in ensuring all workers are protected.

It is workers who will get us through this coronavirus crisis, not bankers or billionaires.

Since March 23, schools have been open to the children of key workers as well as the most vulnerable pupils.

In many cases it has been possible to deliver schooling in circumstances where social distancing is maintained, and we commend staff, parents and pupils for endeavouring to make this work.

But the fact is that we are some way off having a sufficiently safe working environment in schools.

and are therefore more likely to be forced to work in unsafe conditions.

The heightened suffering of African, Asian and minority ethnic communities is, tragically, a global trend.

In the United States, almost one-third of infections nationwide have affected African-Americans, according to data from the Centres for Disease Control.

Likewise, nearly one-third of those who have died across the country are African-American, roughly double the proportion of the US population.

On International Workers'

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It is vital that we use this moment to push for a permanent extension of migrant rights

THE Covid-19 crisis is, of course, unprecedented. Yet it is also shining a brutal light on existing racial and class inequalities, which have deepened after half a century of brutal, unrestrained neoliberal policies.

As a black woman representing the exceptionally diverse constituency of Leicester East, it has been extremely concerning to see the disproportionate impact of the coronavirus upon African, Asian and minority ethnic communities.

Analysis from the Intensive Care National Audit and Research Centre found that, of over 4,000 critically ill coronavirus patients, 34 per cent were from BAME backgrounds – over double what would be expected based on population demographics.

These figures reflect the severe racial disparities in our economy. The Resolution Foundation think tank estimate that Black, Indian, Pakistani and Bangladeshi employees experience an annual pay penalty of £3.2 billion.

This means that African, Asian and minority ethnic communities are more likely to fall through the cracks in the government's financial support

It is workers who will get us through this coronavirus crisis, not bankers or billionaires

Normal public events won't be possible for Workers' Memorial Day this year, but marking the day has never been more important, says joint NEU leader **MARY BOUSTED**

Regrettably, unnamed sources within government have spent recent weeks briefing out highly speculative rumours about possible dates for reopening schools to all pupils.

They wish to use schools as a symbol of recovery, a good headline to lift the nation, but it comes with no clear plan to protect staff, children, young people or their families.

We all want to see the reopening of schools, but the National Education Union's position is clear. Schools can only reopen when scientific advice says it is safe and after systematic testing and contact tracing is up and running.

We have written to the Prime Minister asking for assurances about how the government will mitigate risks to staff health.

You can help reinforce this position by joining the 200,000

people who have already signed our petition: mstar.link/NEU-Petition.

Personal protective equipment (PPE) is not yet available to all educators who need it, particularly in certain special school settings – we have been pressing the government and will continue to do so.

Normal public events won't be possible for International Workers' Memorial Day 2020, but marking the day has never been more important. For our part, the NEU has a social-media campaign in which everyone can participate.

We are joining forces with the Hazards campaign, and there are some fantastic resources on its website (www.hazard-scampaign.org.uk), including posters that you can print off to display in a window at home.

Take a look at our website

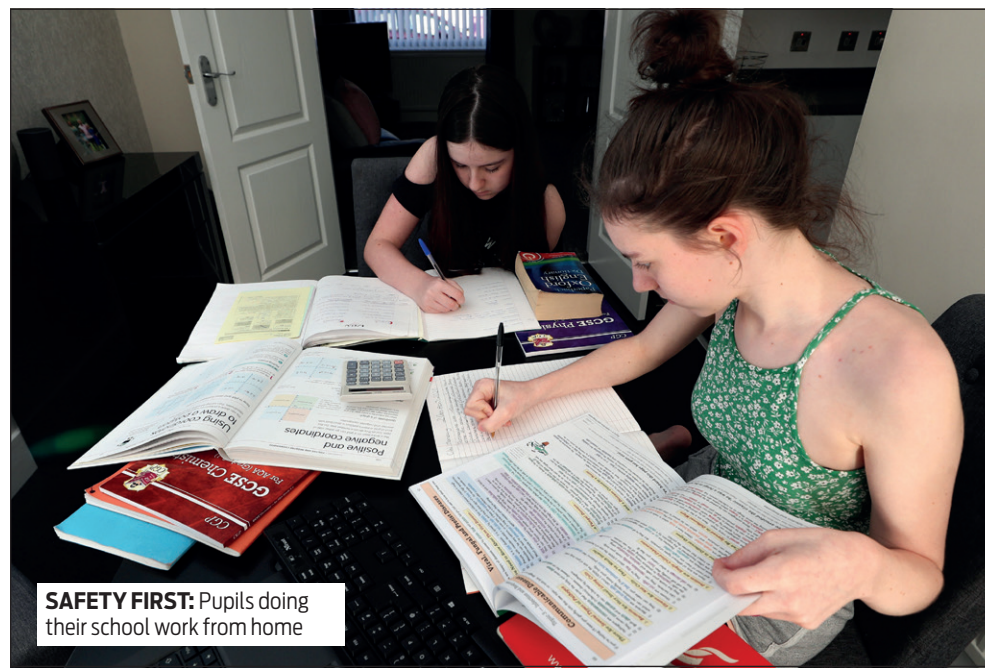
for ideas. Join us in lighting a candle tonight. Take a photo of your candle and, with a caption about who you're remembering, post it on social media using the hashtag #IWMD20.

There are many heroes on the front line, but we are so proud that NEU members across Britain are playing such an important role in the fight against coronavirus.

In continuing to care for vulnerable children and those of key workers, it is teachers, heads and school staff who are helping to keep the country going at this difficult time.

Together let's ensure we make our voices heard and that we come out of this crisis even stronger.

■ *Mary Bousted is joint general secretary of the National Education Union.*



Coronavirus is highlighting extreme racial and class inequalities

Memorial Day, when I join the minute's silence for all workers and trade unionists who have lost their lives, I will be especially thinking of all the NHS professionals, carers and staff who have tragically died on the front lines of the coronavirus crisis.

NHS staff are at considerable risk, in large part due to the lack of staff testing and shortages of personal protective equipment.

In a study of 106 healthcare workers who have tragically died from the virus, the Health Service Journal found that BAME individuals accounted for 95 per cent of medical staff deaths despite making up 44 per cent of the NHS medical workforce.

The same HSJ study found that 66 per cent of NHS workers who have died were not born in the UK.

Our health service simply would not function without the sacrifices of people from across the world.

As anti-racists, it is vital that we use this moment to push for a permanent extension of migrant rights.

That means an end to the hostile environment, shutting detention centres and granting indefinite leave to remain to all NHS workers and their families.

Many have tried to dismiss the imbalance in deaths as being explained by cultural differences.

Yet as socialists, we know that racism and discrimination are deeply ingrained in the social, political and economic structures of our global economic system.

The scourge of institutional racism results in unequal access to quality education, healthy food, liveable wages and affordable housing – which are the foundations of health and wellbeing.

This is the context in which the coronavirus crisis is operat-

The uneven deaths reflect a global economic system which has been built upon racialised extraction and subordination, writes

CLAUDIA WEBBE MP

ing. The uneven deaths reflect a global economic system which has been built upon racialised extraction and subordination.

Existing racial and class inequalities, coupled with inadequate government support, mean that migrants and African, Asian and minority ethnic communities are at greater risk during this crisis.

I welcome that, after pressure from Labour MPs, the government has launched an investigation into the disproportionate impact of coronavirus on BAME communities.

Yet the Conservatives are responsible for deepening the racial and class inequalities that exist in our society.

Last year a special rappor-

teur for the UN's human rights council reported on the state of discrimination in Britain.

Its findings were "analogously grim," as it reported that "austerity measures in the United Kingdom are reinforcing racial subordination."

According to the findings of the most recent Race Disparity Audit, black and Asian children are twice as likely to be in persistent poverty and live in substandard accommodation as white British children.

The Runnymede Trust also found that the poorest black and Asian households have lost out the most under austerity, to the tune of £8,400 to £11,700 per year.

This might seem like small change to our government of the super-rich, but it is the world of difference for poorer families.

As well as being a day of remembrance, Workers' Memorial Day is also a celebration of everything that the Labour

and trade union movement has fought for and won.

From fairer pay, the eight-hour day to weekends, everything that makes the lives of workers tolerable has been won by generations of struggle.

I will be reflecting on how much of these achievements have been cut away during the failed neoliberal project of the last half century.

It is hard not to wonder how many of the workers that have died due to exposure from the coronavirus could have been saved if recent governments had focused on building up protections for workers rather than transferring the wealth they create to the super-rich.

After this crisis, we can no longer live in a society defined by extreme racial and class inequality. It is up to all of us to fight for that better world.

■ *Claudia Webbe is Labour MP for Leicester East.*

While healthcare staff are applauded as heroes, criminal failings are leaving them to die

Across the NHS and the heavily privatised social care system, key workers now face a hand-to-mouth existence on PPE, writes **JACQUI BERRY**

C OVID-19 has exposed what socialists and trade unionists have long understood – it is working-class people who are indispensable to society.

Workers who are now applauded as essential heroes were just a few short months ago dismissed, demeaned and demonised by the Tory government.

The starvation diet imposed on the NHS left the system woefully under-resourced.

Over 100 healthcare workers have already paid with their lives.

Criminal failings in personal protective equipment supplies have forced healthcare workers into making impossible choices – risk their own lives or refuse to work without PPE and risk the lives of others.

Some have refused. Many more have attempted to find

solutions, reusing single-use only items and repurposing bin liners, rain coats and swimming goggles.

Some employers have threatened disciplinary action against workers who refuse to put their lives on the line.

Others have attempted to scare workers into silence as well as submission, forbidding staff from raising concerns publicly.

Appearing on the Marr Show on Sunday, Dominic Raab continued the government's steadfast refusal to accept any responsibility for the catastrophic shortfall in PPE, blaming an "international shortage."

While he is right to highlight the inadequacies of the global free market in facilitating a co-ordinated response to the pandemic, Raab offers no solutions beyond unconvincing claims that PPE is in the pipeline.

Across the NHS and the heavily privatised social care

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The failure to plan is not the failure of the Tory government alone. It is endemic within the capitalist system

system, key workers now face a hand-to-mouth existence on PPE, not knowing what, if any, life-saving equipment will be available from one shift to the next.

Thousands of competing care providers have joined the scramble for gloves, gowns, masks and eye protection. The result? Death, on an untold scale.

The failure to plan is not the failure of the Tory government alone. It is endemic within the capitalist system.

The production and distribution of PPE on a global scale is driven not by human need, but by the relentless drive by manufacturers for profit.

The Tory government has not intervened to requisition private firms and force the production of PPE, because it would create a conflict with big business.

However, it would be a far more effective way to deliver a

regular, reliable stream of high-quality products which could prevent thousands of deaths.

There can be no confidence in any government that is prepared to sacrifice the lives of working people in order to protect the interests of big business.

Thousands of workers are dying alone. Sometimes gasping for breath, sometimes with a nurse wrapped in plastic to hold their hand.

Year after year, on Workers' Memorial Day, trade unionists sombrely repeat the old adage, "Remember the dead, fight for the living."

Our movement cannot wait for the pandemic to pass before we do. Socialist solutions to the coronavirus-induced capitalist chaos are urgently needed. We have a world to win!

■ Jacqui Berry is an ICU nurse and Unison NEC member. She writes this column in a personal capacity.

SHORT SUPPLY: Paramedics and staff at the Royal Liverpool University Hospital wearing various items of PPE



T OGETHER with other campaign groups and trades unions, the Coronavirus Fightback campaign has tried to keep up the pressure on the government to take action to meet people's needs – not the demands of billionaire big business and bankers who care only for their wealth and power.

Now is not the time to back off. The government has been reluctantly pushed every step of the way by the people – and it still of course routinely misses its targets in terms of testing and PPE, with the resulting sickness and deaths.

We need to keep pushing. Today is International Workers' Memorial Day when we remember all workers who have died at work. Yet, despite all the evidence, arguments and demands, workers in warehouses, shops, construction sites, transport and many other areas are still forced to go to work in jobs that no-one could see as "essential" – no-one, that is, except their bosses who believe it is essential that they go on making profit from it.

Now the business world and their most slavish Tory supporters in Parliament are trying to reassert themselves,

lift the restrictions on them as employers and get the money rolling in for them – again.

They are dressing this up as freeing people from social isolation – and people who should know better like Labour's knight of the realm, Sir Keir Starmer, are adding fuel to this in a bid for popularity.

Of course we are all fed up with "stay at home" social isolation, and the finger-wagging and heavy-handed policing of it – particularly against people with often cramped conditions at home, with very little or no outside space.

This needs to be dealt with as a very real problem. But the answer is not to "get the economy going again" – that is, to herd the workforce back into dangerous workplaces to allow their bosses to start trousering the profits again.

There are five tests that the government has had forced on it which need to be met.

How much more clear do they have to be? But we will repeat them for those who pretend not to know.

Before any restrictions are lifted:

■ The NHS must be in a position to cope with the numbers currently ill



BUSINESS FIRST: Health Secretary Matt Hancock

■ There must be a clear and sustained fall in the death rate

■ The infection rate must be under control, falling and manageable by the NHS

■ The current supply of test kits and PPE must be meeting current demand, and allowing the development of a stock to meet projected future demand

■ Any adjustments to the social isolation and economic shut-down must not risk a further spike in sickness and death.

The only way to get to that final position is through social

isolation, widespread testing of the whole population, contact tracing of those infected, quarantine of those contacts and the development of a vaccine.

The government has not only failed to achieve these five tests, the raw fact is that it has no intention of applying them.

It fails to attempt to eradicate the virus and simply repeats that its ambition is to "slow down the spread of the disease."

This is a continuation of the policy it says it has abandoned

– "herd immunity" – but with the herd taking a slower pace than the gallop the Tories had originally planned for us, with between 250,000 and 500,000 projected deaths.

The architects of this, Dominic Cummings and his patron Boris Johnson, were persuaded this would not be good for the popularity of the government and they retreated – marking the first real success of the people in forcing the government away from its deadly policies.

But the idea remains. With-

out testing, contact tracing and quarantine having been put in place, there will inevitably be renewed infection.

And that is what tells us that the policy of herd immunity is still in place – at a slower pace perhaps, with a less dramatic level of death at any one time – and maybe something that the public could be persuaded to think of as the "new normal."

We must not be bullied or conned by big business and their supporters in any and all parliamentary parties into allowing them to fire up their operations again before it is safe.

The TUC and trades unions – the organisations best situated to represent and speak for Britain's workers – should play a central role in any such discussions at government level, and no decisions about changes in that direction should be taken without their agreement.

Even though we'd all love life to get back to normal as soon as possible, people's lives must come before the normal grind of the capitalist profit machine.

■ Jay Veyess is part of the Coronavirus Fightback Facebook campaign (www.facebook.com/coronavirusfacebook).



Never has Workers' Memorial Day carried such great significance

GMB will fight until every worker feels safe and protected at work, says **HELEN O'CONNOR**

WORKERS' MEMORIAL DAY is held around the world to remember workers who have been disabled, injured and killed while at work.

Never has the day carried greater significance than in 2020 as key workers are on the front line keeping the whole of society going while a coronavirus pandemic is raging.

This Tory government's clear failure to plan and prepare for this pandemic is causing

key workers to become unwell, and the death toll is rising.

Failure at all levels in the NHS and in care homes alongside continuing denials of the seriousness of this crisis have led to a toxic situation where there is now a lack of testing, personal protective equipment and risk assessments being carried out.

A crisis within a crisis has been created as each day more and more workers in our NHS and care homes are lost to us forever.

Day in and day out, worried NHS and care workers are going into work in a state of fear and anxiety as they find that PPE is either not there or running low. Managers are using a range of methods to bully them into unsafe practices and silence their voices.

Today we will be pro-

magnitude we are experiencing now, never occur again.

We must be clear what this means in practice – it means driving the market ideology out from our public services, it means an end to privatisation and bringing outsourced contacts back in-house.

It also means making sure the key workers who have proved that it is they and not the billionaires who protect us and hold society together are recognised and rewarded for what they are doing for all of us.

Key workers must now receive the proper pay and terms and conditions that they need and deserve and that have been withheld from them for so long.

On Workers' Memorial Day let's honour the dead and wholeheartedly commit ourselves to fight like hell for the living.

■ Helen O'Connor is GMB Southern Region organiser.

Workers must not be pushed back to work before it is safe to do so

People's lives and wellbeing should come before the capitalist profit machine, says **JAY VEYESS**



testing outside Queen Elizabeth Hospital to support a GMB union member who is facing the sack because he insisted on proper PPE.

The job of a trade union is to secure workers' rights to a safe environment. We can never accept any situation where hospital workers are disciplined for asserting their right to be safe.

GMB union is so concerned about gaping holes in health and safety practices up and down the country during this pandemic that we have launched the Get Me PPE campaign. We will fight until every worker feels safe and protected at work.

Exposing all of the wrongdoing is not enough – we must hold the government to account and we must make sure that failures in leadership, of the

“

A crisis within a crisis has been created as each day more and more workers in our NHS and care homes are lost to us forever

★ Star comment

After the pandemic, health and safety can no longer be dirty words

“REMEMBER the dead, fight like hell for the living.” The solemn pledge made each Workers’ Memorial Day by trade unionists is especially poignant amid a global pandemic.

Workers are dying. Workers on the front lines of the National Health Service, in our care homes, staffing our shops or keeping public transport running, delivering goods and post or looking after the children of other key workers in our schools.

Workers have been exposed to catching the Covid-19 virus because non-essential workplaces have not all been closed. And workers whose work is essential have been put in harm’s way because managers have not adapted workplaces properly to adhere to social distancing guidelines. On a still greater scale, workers’ lives have been risked – and lost – because they have not been provided with proper personal protective equipment (PPE), even when their jobs involve treating infected people in our hospitals.

TUC leader Frances O’Grady is right to describe this failure as “grotesque” and right to lay it at the door of ministers. The government ignored warnings from the World Health Organisation and from China, where the coronavirus first struck, and failed to use precious weeks to prepare. It was late in establishing a lockdown and then failed to take appropriate measures to address continuing problems such as overcrowding on public transport.

It has repeatedly sought to blame the public and even health workers for the lethal consequences of its own decisions. Before coronavirus, the government had years in which it recognised and even tested scenarios for dealing with a global pandemic.



Some claim authorities were unprepared because they had game-played outbreaks of influenza, which does not spread in the same way as coronavirus.

Yet ministers did not bother to act on the central findings of the 2016 pandemic drill – that the NHS would be rapidly overwhelmed and that stocks of PPE would be rapidly exhausted. Had they done so, fewer workers would have died this year.

No wonder journalist John Pilger has called for then health secretary Jeremy Hunt, who also presided over a 40 per cent reduction in PPE stocks, to be prosecuted for criminal negligence.

Such demands are not mere point-scoring but would help end a culture of impunity for the elite that allows them to play fast and loose with our safety.

Backed up by a corporate media whose devotion to private profit easily eclipses its concern for human life, successive governments have been able to turn a basic and vital demand – that people are not put at unnecessary risk while doing their jobs – into a joke, “health and safety gone mad.”

In 2012 David Cameron complained that health and safety legislation was “an albatross around the neck of British businesses” and vowed to “kill off the health and safety culture for good.”

Two years later he was being lauded for his “bonfire of the building regulations,” a phrase that sticks in the throat following the Grenfell Tower disaster – though as the Fire Brigades Union has meticulously documented, decades of deregulation by both Tory and Labour governments set the scene for that tragedy. Like Grenfell, the failure to supply workers with essential PPE was preventable, and must not be depoliticised.

When we observe a minute’s silence today for the workers who have perished as a result, we should commit in their memory to ensure people are not forced to risk their lives to do their jobs in future. That entails sweeping changes in the world of work, to redress the balance of power between the worker and the boss.

It requires Britain’s repressive trade union legislation to be overturned, to ensure trade unions have access to workplaces and the ability to negotiate appropriate working conditions for each sector through collective bargaining.

Ministers are not going to offer us such reforms. Only huge industrial and political pressure from our movement will carry them forward.

WITH the coronavirus pandemic dominating our lives, health

and safety is paramount and nowhere more so than at work.

But all is not well in Britain’s workplaces. Even before the current danger, classic occupational diseases caused by chemicals and dust were being complemented by the maladies of the 21st-century workplace – heart disease, suicide and work-related depression and despair.

This is neither speculation nor scaremongering. Asbestos deaths are at an all-time high, silicosis ruins or ends thousands of lives each year and occupational asthma afflicts unchecked new generations of wheezy workers.

At the same time work-related stress, anxiety and depression are at a record high.

This old and new health-robbing double dose is no accident. British workers are vulnerable by design, increasingly overloaded and underprotected at work.

The lines between work and home life have blurred too, as technology gives employers a wireless route directly into our homes, day and night.

Shift work, which is linked to cancer, heart disease, diabetes and all-round poorer health, is now the “daily” routine for many.

The result is that British working hours are among the highest in Europe. Burnout is now a World Health Organisation (WHO) recognised and classified “occupational phenomenon.”

We are a generation of working wounded, frequently too poor or too worried to go sick.

And yet, at a time when Britain has a record numbers of workers and workplaces to police, the Health and Safety Executive, Britain’s safety regulator, is running on empty, barely visible at work and increasingly absent from the courts.

In a report due out next week, the authors, Andrew Moretta and David Whyte, show that an erosion of employment rights combined with a retreat from official oversight of workplace health and safety conditions, have left British workers vulnerable to abuse at work and lacking both support and an effective safety net.

Britain’s place in the global economy is now a place where safety outcomes can be determined in the boardrooms of multinational companies or fashioned to suit global trade lobby groups.

Consider this. Companies and their uber-rich owners frequently have more economic power than the majority of countries where they do business.

The online retailer Amazon is worth more than the GDP of 90 per cent of the world’s nations.

The personal wealth of Amazon CEO Jeff Bezos would put him at number 65 in the list

You can’t have a first economy if you choose to play by third-rate

Britain’s failure to ratify international workplace standards reflects a government approach that among us to die making a living, argues RORY C

of richest countries if he was a nation and not the world’s richest shopkeeper.

It is a system that elevates money over morality. The World Trade Organisation (WTO) does not have protection of workers’ rights, welfare or the environment as part of its core operational priorities.

In fact, the WTO has been used to challenge protective legislation as a barrier to free trade.

There is, however, a well-established global body capable of checking labour rights and safety abuses, and which is cited in international trade negotiations.

The International Labour Organisation (ILO), a UN agency, celebrated its centenary in 2019.

Britain was a driving force in the creation of the ILO but now lags behind most developed and many developing nations in the number of ILO standards ratified.

The absentees from the list of British ratifications are not irrelevant instruments, includ-

ing many known by heart by international trade union reps because they are cited so frequently, including Conventions 162 (asbestos), 139 (occupational cancer), 170 (chemicals) and 174 (major industrial accidents).

The need for global baseline safety standards has never been more acute.

Cost-cutting decisions made in the London boardroom of BP were major contributory factors in the deaths of 15 contract workers in the Texas City refinery fire in 2005 and 11 in the 2011 Deepwater Horizon oil rig tragedy in the Gulf of Mexico.

When Britain fails to ratify ILO safety conventions, it sends a signal worldwide that safety beyond its immediate doorstep doesn’t matter, even though British coffers and the country’s most prestigious companies benefit hugely from income earned in other nations and produced by the labour of their nationals.

If Britain thinks these ILO safety instruments are not worth ratifying, why should a

developing nation step up? Eschewing globally accepted controls sends that clear and clearly dangerous message.

It is perhaps significant that unions and safety advocates are finding creative ways to ensure decent and safe standards are observed internationally.

The ILO model is embraced in Global Framework Agreements struck between multinational companies and global unions.

The agreement signed in 2017 between the British-based global online fashion retailer Asos and the global union federation IndustriALL, for example, requires both sides “to collaborate to ensure the application of International Labour Organisation standards” throughout the Asos supply chain.

It makes explicit reference to several ILO health and safety conventions and recommendations.

If Britain wants to emulate the economic success of countries like Sweden, Norway, Finland, Germany and the



t-class se rules safety requires some O'NEIL

Netherlands it would do well to note the observation in this publication that these countries are far more enthusiastic ratifiers of ILO safety conventions.

You can't have a first-class economy if you choose to play by third-rate rules.

But we shouldn't have to argue a business case. We shouldn't have to put a case against a system where the law allows workers to be used, abused then thrown away.

We must and can reject completely a British government approach that, by design, requires some among us to die making a living.

Rory O'Neill is editor of Hazards Magazine and occupational health and workplace safety adviser, International Trade Union Confederation.

■ This is an edited version of Rory's preface. The full version and details of the forthcoming report *International Health and Safety Standards after Brexit* are available from the Institute of Employment Rights at www.ier.org.uk.



Voices of Scotland

Spend money on the NHS, not nukes

IN COMMON with other campaigning organisations, Scottish CND has had to curtail its activities as a result of the Covid-19 crisis. However, through the use of social media we have been able to put out a number of important messages.

We have also been able to keep up to date with important developments in relation to the struggle to rid our country and our world of the scourge of nuclear weapons.

One of these developments has been the ratification by Namibia on March 20 of the Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons.

Namibia is the 36th country to ratify the treaty, and it is a highly significant move because the country is rich in uranium, an element used within nuclear warheads.

It is really encouraging that the south African country has now signed this treaty, which prohibits involvement in the production, development and testing of nuclear weapons.

Unfortunately, the British government refuses to give consideration to co-operating with the treaty, so the struggle to change its position must continue.

Scottish CND was also delighted to see a remarkable letter published by the Bertrand Russell Peace Foundation on April 1.

In a letter signed by three senior naval commanders, huge questions were raised about the cost and the usefulness of maintaining Britain's nuclear weapons.

This letter highlights the fact that Trident missiles have been detargeted since 1994 and have been stood at several days' notice to fire since 1998. It goes on to highlight the colossal cost of £2 billion a year to maintain Britain's Trident nuclear weapons system.

It makes a compelling case for getting rid of a nuclear arsenal that costs a fortune to maintain, and Scottish CND will ensure its content receives maximum publicity.

Prior to the Covid-19 crisis, Scottish CND was undertaking a lot of public work with our People Not Trident campaign.

This focused on highlighting the vast sums currently spent on nuclear weapons that could be better spent in areas such as health and education. Reaction has been overwhelmingly positive, and we expect support to grow when public work can resume after the lockdown.

To supplement our work on the economics of nuclear weapons, Scottish CND is also part of the Don't Bank on the Bomb Scotland network.

This network focuses on the assistance that banks and

Covid-19 highlights how spending on nuclear weapons is a massive waste of public cash, says **ARTHUR WEST**



other financial institutions give to the production and development of nuclear weapons.

It is deeply depressing that the Royal Bank of Scotland provided £2.5bn to 15 of the world's top 20 nuclear weapons producers between 2014 and 2017.

The Don't Bank on the Bomb network has gained widespread support in the wider Scottish peace movement, and work will continue to press the Royal Bank of Scotland and other financial institutions to reconsider their nuclear-weapons investments.

Despite the hard work of Scottish CND, the struggle against the menace of nuclear weapons remains very much an uphill struggle.

Prior to the lockdown, the Trump administration seemed intent on a massive increase in spending on nuclear weapons. Scottish CND received information that if Donald Trump is re-elected he would propose in 2021 to give the Pentagon nearly \$30bn to modernise nuclear-weapons delivery systems.

His 2021 budget proposals also include an allocation of almost \$20bn for the purpose of modernising the US nuclear-weapons stockpile.

The recent revelations by Pentagon officials that Britain has agreed that the proposed new generation of nuclear warheads to replace the Trident system will be based on US technology is also bad news.

This disclosure was made before an official government announcement and angered many MPs and experts.

It also underlines the govern-

ment's reliance on the US for a central plank of its defence strategy.

Meanwhile, back in Scotland, it has been revealed that the Ministry of Defence has plans to increase discharges of radio-

active waste into the Firth of Clyde by up to 50 times.

The liquid waste comes from the reactors that drive the submarines at the Faslane base and from the processing of Trident nuclear warheads.

It is proposed that this waste will be discharged from Faslane into the Gareloch nearby via a proposed new pipeline.

This proposed pipeline is a clear illustration of the threat to the environment and community safety that is posed by having nuclear weapons based at Faslane.

In the light of so many negative developments, it is imperative that Scottish CND and the wider peace movement continue to use a diverse range of tactics and activities such as letter-writing, non-violent direct action, demonstrations, leafletting and petitioning to make the case against nuclear weapons.

I personally find it helpful to remember the words of William J Perry, the United States secretary of defence from 1994-7, when our task feels overwhelming, as it can at times.

In his 2015 book, Perry made a remarkable statement about the danger of nuclear weapons when he said: "Facing the danger from nuclear weapons is daunting, but we must recognise the threat and devote ourselves to diminishing it."

"To be sure, as long as nuclear weapons are deployed by nations as a part of their war plans, we can never be sure that they will not be used in a regional war or by a terror group.

He continues: "Even a single detonation would entail casualties a hundred times greater than those suffered on 9/11."

These words of Perry's underline the urgent need to rid our country and the world of the scourge of nuclear weapons.

Hopefully, in the light of the Covid-19 crisis, people will start to agree with CND that we should scrap Trident and spend the money on precious national assets such as the NHS.

■ Arthur West is a Scottish CND executive member and joint convener of the Scottish CND Trade Union Network.



Scottish CND received information that if Donald Trump is re-elected he would propose in 2021 to give the Pentagon nearly \$30bn to modernise nuclear-weapons delivery systems



WEATHER OUTLOOK



TODAY

Chilly and cloudy with spells of rain, heavy at times, across Wales and southern and central England. Rain then perhaps into southern parts of northern England later. Brighter elsewhere.

NEXT FEW DAYS

Rather unsettled and often cloudy with showers or longer spells of rain. Temperatures remaining slightly cooler than average.

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with Keith Stoddart
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2 days left

YOU'VE RAISED:
£16,278

WE NEED:
£1,722



A COUPLE of days until the end of April's fund and with less than a couple of grand needed to hit target it's doable if folk get contributions in soonest.

Yesterday's £502 means our running total is £16,278, thanks to BACS transfers. It's a system you've taken to with gusto, with a couple of dozen contributions arriving.

The only problem I have

is that it offers little interaction with yourselves, it's only a name and an amount, with no location given or room for a message. So, if using this method, drop the Fund an email with anything you want me to say or an anniversary to be marked.

I recognise some names and can say with some authority that £10 has arrived from New-

castle CPB. I also know a pony [£25] from a comrade in Fort William is helping us gallop towards target and I hope that more will arrive as we enter the final furlong(s). There's a couple of debit card contributions too, including £25 from London.

For most of us, the current crisis has curtailed both our political and cultural activities which, in unintended consequences,

have been helpful for the Fund. A comrade in Sheffield – neither travelling nor socialising – sends £100 in monies saved.

I think we're all finding that it's getting to the difficult bit, with the novelty of being at home all the time wearing off. However, we need to grin and bear it for the foreseeable future. It's necessary to stay home, but still support the Fund.

Give by BACS...

Sort code 08-90-33, account 50505115, name PPF

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DAILY SUDOKU

(as easy as pie)

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Solution tomorrow...



Yesterday's sudoku

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

TV & radio preview

with Neil Jenkin



PPE: Dr Michael Mosley wealds a gas mask

Michael Mosley muses over modern medicine's many miracles and marvels

A LOOK at some great art without all those people in the way? Yes please. For tonight's **Museums in Quarantine** (7.30pm BBC4), Simon Schama takes us on a virtual tour of the Young Rembrandt exhibition at the Ashmolean Museum, Oxford. I hope Schama doesn't get in the way.

More telly: **Pain, Pus and Poison: the Search for Modern Medicines** (8pm BBC4), Michael Mosley explores early attempts to tackle infection; **The Vietnam War** (8.40pm PBS America), Ken Burns and Lynn Novick's epic documentary: Nixon, promising peace, wins the presidency; **Expedition Volcano** (9pm BBC4), a team of geologists head for one of the most active volcanoes on the planet; **Paul Hollywood Eats Japan** (9pm Channel 4): I'd settle for a kebab, myself.

Films: **The Ladykillers** (12.50pm Film4), the Ealing one with Alec Guinness and that; **Notorious** (7pm Talking Pictures), highly rated 1946 Hitchcock thriller with Cary Grant and Ingrid Bergman; **Breaker Morant** (2.50am Sony Movies Classic), 1980 Australian drama about a trio court-martialled for war crimes during the second Boer war.

Radio: **The Life Scientific** (9am Radio 4), Jim Al Khalili quizzes physicist Brian Greene: is the universe really made of string? **Art of Now: Raw Meat** (11.30am Radio 4), Susan Bright talks to artists who use animal parts as their raw material. Yech! **Composer of the Week: Handel** (noon Radio 3); **Viral Exposure** (1.45pm Radio 4), how sanctions, protests and a flirt

with war shaped Tehran's response to the coronavirus; **Costing the Earth** (3.30pm Radio 4), can Britain achieve the goal of net zero carbon emissions by 2050? **Great Lives** (4.30pm Radio 4), Maya Angelou; **Radio 3 in Concert** (7.30pm), singer-songwriter Lianne La Havas with the BBC Symphony Orchestra; **Jamaica: a Brother's Story** (8pm Radio 4), Steve Walker investigates the death of his brother after his return to the Caribbean; **Inside Health: the Virus** (9pm Radio 4); **The Essay: Music of the Spheres** (10.45pm Radio 3), Dr Stuart Clark argues that the concept of harmony, still so prevalent in art, continues to underpin science as well; **Bhangra and Beyond: the History of Asian Music in Britain** (3.30am BBC6 Music).

QUIZMASTER

with William Sitwell

TODAY'S QUESTIONS

- Which country in Africa was the largest from 1956 until 2011?
- Is a famous British war film called the Wooden Shoe, the Wooden Horse or the Wooden Boat?
- What type of musical instrument is an oud?



Pic: Retroplum/Wikimedia Commons

YESTERDAY'S ANSWERS

- Which predecimal coin was worth a 20th of a pound? **The shilling**
- In architecture, what is coping? **The covering of a wall**

- True or false: greengages are always green. **False - they can also be yellow**

**Communist Party
of Britain**
North London Branch



Remember the dead and fight
for the living — UNIONISE!
From North London CPB

Bristol Trades Council

International Workers' Memorial Day

On International Workers' Memorial Day Bristol Trades Union Council demand the Government ensures the immediate provision of full and adequate PPE for all NHS, Social Care and Key Workers.

Remember the Dead and fight for the Living
Simon Crew, President | Andy Robertson, Secretary



TUC North West

On International Workers'
Memorial Day, we
remember those who have
died and ensure they are
never forgotten.

This year more than ever, we
know the value of our health
and safety reps and safe
workplaces

**Communist
Party of
Britain**



South West England & Cornwall
District Committee

On Workers' Memorial Day
we say:

People before Profit! Safety
First! Remember the dead,
fight for the living!

www.southwestcommunists.org.uk
Facebook: South West Communists.

Liz Payne, Chair Ken Keable, Secretary

tssa Anglia
South Branch

Anglia South General sends greetings
to all trade unionists on Workers'
Memorial Day. Better health & safety
for all.

SOUTHAMPTON

AGAINST AUSTERITY

PEOPLE'S
ASSEMBLY

REMEMBER THE DEAD,
FIGHT FOR THE LIVING.
PPE FOR ALL KEY WORKERS.

**Pellacraft offers solidarity on
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**Communist Party
of Britain**
Oxfordshire & Berkshire



Workers' Memorial Day

Protect public service workers' lives!
REMEMBER THE DEAD, FIGHT FOR
THE LIVING

oxford@communist-party.org.uk

**The Communist Party of
Ireland** sends greetings
of solidarity to workers
risking their lives in the present
crisis. Our demands are for Health
and Safety at work every day.

**Belfast Shorts and NI
T&E Branch**

Solidarity Greetings
to all Workers



**Support our
care workers
to stop the
spread.**

Protect health Protect employment
Protect pay Protect our families

www.unisonnw.org/covid19.petition

**Care workers
FOR CHANGE**

CARE WORKERS vs COVID-19
Support us to stop the spread

UNISON
North West

UNISON North West sends greetings to all
trade unionists on Workers Memorial Day 2020




Bolton Branch

Sends fraternal greetings
on International Workers'
Memorial Day.

Thank you to all the staff
who volunteered to keep
schools open allowing key
workers to work during the
lockdown.


Remember the dead,
work for the living.



International Workers' Memorial Day
Tuesday April 28th

One minute's silence at 11am for all key workers lost to COVID 19

- Mourn the dead! Fight for the living!
- Proper access to PPE and testing for all workers!
- No one should go to work to die!




JOIN THE COMMEMORATION AT <https://www.facebook.com/TRUSTsafetyteam/>

INDIAN WORKERS' ASSOCIATION (GB) LEICESTER

We pay our respects to those who paid the ultimate price at work. In their memory we continue to fight for the living.

We salute the frontline workers during Covid-19 crisis who are risking their lives for us to survive.



DYAL BAGRI National President
MOHINDER SINGH FARMA Leicester President

INTERNATIONAL WORKERS' MEMORIAL DAY 28 APRIL

REMEMBER THE DEAD FIGHT FOR THE LIVING



Protect all workers from Covid19

Message from DAST and TRUST



International Workers' Memorial Day is more important than ever this year.

The health and safety of workers' is rightfully top of the agenda. On this day workers' organisations the world over remember those that have lost their lives and actively campaign to make the world of work the safe place that everyone deserves.


Follow our posts & campaign messages on facebook and twitter from 28th April to 1st May

Facebook Pages: International Workers' Memorial Day 2020
DAST — East Midlands Wide Asbestos Support

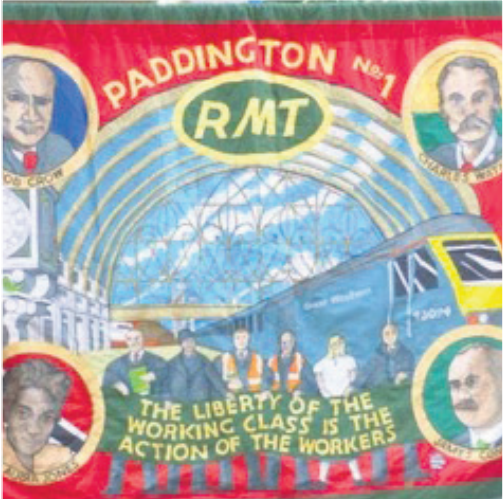
Twitter: @TRUSTsafetyteam
@DAST24

Unite London and Eastern Region

THIS YEAR MORE THAN EVER, WE REMEMBER THE DEAD, BUT FIGHT LIKE HELL FOR THE LIVING

RMT Paddington No.1 Branch



Remembers those who have lost their lives at work — Demand PPE for front-line workers!

Remember the dead. Fight like hell for the living.



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ARTS AHEAD

LYNNE WALSH looks forward to some innovative performances online, from a beautifully bonkers live music stream to new plays on your phone

SINGING with Nightingales is an initiative from folk singer and conservationist Sam Lee, who'll be livestreaming the audio of a nightingale singing, coupled with guest artists, in improvised "duets" from their own homes. Performances run from April 29 to May 9.

At the risk of coming across as an ageing hippy, it sounds transcendental – darkness falls, the bird warbles away and a musician sings and plays along. Light the chiminea in the garden and pour me some mead...

If the concept sounds familiar it's because it's based on the evening in May 1924 when cellist Beatrice Harrison played Delius's Cello Concerto in her Surrey garden – and a nightingale answered.

The resulting BBC broadcast grabbed the public's attention and lovers of today's Springwatch programmes owe a huge debt to Harrison and her feathered friend.

It'll be streamed on thenestcollective.co.uk/includes/singing-with-nightingales, and you can also enjoy the recorded event which kicked off Lee's project, celebrating 50 years of Earth Day at youtube.com/user/thenestcollective

Other folk events to have migrated from pubs and clubs include the hugely popular TwickFolk, currently running Sunday evening "singarounds" with some exquisite and quirky material, from traditional to Americana and beyond.

Usually based in Twicken-



ON AT A PHONE NEAR YOU: Julie Hesmondhalgh Pic: Harry Pott

ham's Cabbage Patch pub, the collective have attracted top-notch performers over the past 40 years. Locked out of the pub due to the virus, you can catch them on the Facebook group TwickFolk Friends.

There's plenty there to keep you happy every day, though the Sunday night 8pm live vibe is huge fun. You'll have to provide your own beer, naturally. Other folk fora include englishfolkexpo.com/lockdown-live, folking.com and folkandhoney.co.uk

The extraordinarily talented Paines Plough theatre company was formed in 1974 and their combination of innovation and sheer determination is spawning new projects. Come to Where I Am is the fruition of 30 newly commissioned plays, from writers all over Britain, about the places they call home.

Technology and talent are really working together on this one, with Paines Plough's

"caller service" delivering the new work via a phone app, allowing audiences to enjoy the dulcet tones of actors including David Bradley and Julie Hesmondhalgh on their mobiles. Details on the company's website: painesplough.com/play/come-where-i-am

Those sorry to miss Mike Bartlett's Albion, especially as its run at the Almeida Theatre in London earned a four-star review in the Morning Star, will be pleased to know it'll be on at the end of this month on BBC Four, as part of its Culture in Quarantine series.

Exploring politics and patriotism via the conceit of a dysfunctional family gathered in an English country garden, it has nostalgia, grief, loss and real plans lovingly planted into soil by the cast during the performance. It will also be available on iPlayer.

LYNNE WALSH

THEATRE ONLINE | CRONGTON KNIGHTS

★★★★☆ | PILOT THEATRE YORK

Knights in shining harmony

SIMON PARSONS recommends a tuneful beatbox musical on the reality of young inner-city lives

WITH the support of three regional theatres, Pilot has produced this dynamic beatbox musical, adapted from Alex Wheatle's award-winning novel for young adults. Premiered at Coventry's Belgrade Theatre, it's now available online.

Squarely aimed at a young audience, it follows the exploits of the self-styled The Magnificent Six, a group of disparate school friends, as they venture outside their home territory in an attempt to regain a phone and stop the potential revenge porn targeted at one of their posse.

Adventure quickly turns to misadventure as they stray into other gang territories and find themselves in a world of machismo violence, sexual predators and xenophobic gang culture.

It's a story rife with inner-city deprivation and, on a split-level graffitied set, the multicultural group try to come to terms with missing parents, debt collectors, hidden guns, stolen bikes and riots. Their only certainty is each other.

Initially, the teenagers' lives seem dominated by the usual manner of branded merchandise, boy and girl friends, latest phones and relationship issues with their parents. But their coming-of-age escapade delves



ANIMATED: Crongton Knights

Pic: Robert Day

far deeper into the psychological and social pressures that shape their lives.

Esther Richardson and Corey Campbell direct the animated cast, who maintain a fast and furious tempo throughout, with stylish choreographed sequences to highlight moments of tension. Conrad Murray's music and lyrics shift seamlessly between amusing beatbox numbers about cooking up a feast to the more plaintive harmonies of songs such as How Can I Find My Way Back Home?

Olisa Odele gives a strong performance as the sensitive, overweight McKay, who loves his food and holds the group

together, while Aimee Powell as the queen of the gang adds passion to the mix and soulful vocals to the wide-ranging numbers.

After last year's surprise smash hit at the Edinburgh Festival, a beatbox version of Frankenstein by BAC Beatbox Academy, there's obviously a demand for such high-energy theatre and Pilot's production will appeal to this audience and hopefully create new young converts to the theatre with this accessible and socially relevant musical.

■ Online until May 9, pilot-theatre.com/webcast

ALBUM REVIEWS | IAN SINCLAIR

SAVAK
A Rotting Teeth in the Horse's Mouth
 (Ernest Jenning Record Co.)
 ★★★★★

THE FOURTH album by SAVAK – the band named after the CIA-backed Iranian secret police during the Shah's rule – is an energising hit of politically charged punk rock.

A supergroup of sorts, its members all come from other US indie bands – drummer Matt Schulz is from Holy Fuck and co-frontmen Michael Jaworski and Sohrab Habibion from The Cops and the Obits, respectively.

Their main target is the current fascistic occupant of the White House and the gruesome polity he has spawned.

But amid all the controlled



anger – check out the fast-paced anti-war Bayonet and the shouty Mutual – there's also a welcome interest in melody. The ringing vocals on Exposure sound a lot like Michael Stipe, while the pop-oriented Aujourd'hui could easily be an out-take from The Decemberists' brilliant The King Is Dead record.

The spirit of Husker Du and the Dead Kennedys lives on.

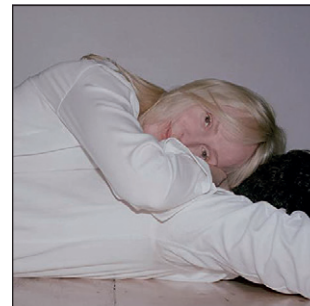
Laura Marling
Song For Our Daughter
 (Chrysalis/Partisan)
 ★★★★★

RELEASED early to "entertain, and at its best, provide some sense of union" during this dark time, Laura Marling's seventh solo album is a song cycle of advice to an imaginary daughter.

In particular, Marling says, the record is concerned with "what it is to be a woman in this society."

As with much of her previous work, the beguiling folk-rock songs invite the listener to live inside them, with many memorable melodies and images conjured up.

On Held Down, she remembers how her legs



were wrapped around a lover, while on the strings-assisted title track she worries about "all of the bullshit" her daughter will encounter.

Arguably the most talented singer-songwriter working in Britain today, the set's confident and mature artistry is up there with her 2013 career high Once I Was An Eagle.

Marker Starling
High January
 (Tin Angel Records)
 ★★★★★

"MUSIC is a form of expression/It's how I express myself/ If it comes from the heart you can never go wrong," are the memorable first words on High January, the latest album from Canadian singer-songwriter Chris A Cummings.

Working under the moniker Marker Starling, Cummings has created a wonderfully light set of romantic and melancholic tunes.

That it was produced by Sean O'Hagan of the High Llamas and Stereolab fame gives an indication of what to expect. I also hear echoes of Sufjan Stevens in the hushed



vocals on Move It On, and the humour of Jens Lekman in much of the vocal delivery.

The band's backings of Cummings's whimsical thoughts create a warm '70s soft-rock ambience, with the poppy Waiting For Grace a real highlight.

This gentle and seemingly effortless indie guitar music is the perfect summer soundtrack.

■ MARXISM

‘Leadership may be drifting from core’

DOUG NICHOLLS writes eloquently about the shallow and reactionary redivision of those who sell their labour power into culturally determined classes and of course he is right when he distinguishes between workers and owners of the means of production.

However this is an economic definition which has always invited refinement.

Politically, those who share in the profits of corporate capitalism at high managerial level are honorary members of the exploiting class and will behave as such.

Then there are middle strata with all their petite bourgeois wavering when it comes to loyalty and affiliation to progressive and revolutionary movements.

We also, in the 21st century, have to contend with a reduced workforce at the point of production and a very low level of labour organisation especially among the young and those precariously employed.

Marxist-Leninists have to recognise that the leadership of key struggles against capitalism in Britain may be shifting away from the proletarian core.

This is not true globally, but our communist cadres do insist on quoting Lenin regarding the focus of struggle in one’s own country.

Just a thought!
DR PAULA JAMES
Chelwood Gate, West Sussex

HAVE YOUR SAY

Write (up to 300 words) to
letters@peoples-press.com or
52 Beachy Rd, London E3 2NS



■ THEORY

‘Whole system’ approach needed

THE recent Marxist Q&A Just how does Facebook really make its profit? (M Star 20 April) was clear and topical.

In particular its emphasis on a “whole-system” understanding of the generation of surplus value and realisation of profit in a variety of different contexts clarified the way capitalist production operates.

Could that inclusive approach to the analysis of exploitation be extended further?

Because apart from all the various sites where surplus value and profits relating to particular products are generated (by cleaners, accountants, sales people, teachers etc) there is also a vast amount of unpaid emotional and practical labour

going on in domestic contexts, mostly done by women.

The exploitation and oppression in these contexts can be every bit as thorough as that which occurs in paid work, and just as essential to the ultimate generation of private profits.

Perhaps the concept of exploitation in Marxist analysis could be restored to its normal fuller meaning to include other sites where value is generated and appropriated unjustly?

Might that help counter the impression of focusing too much on male manual workers, and open the way to developing a more balanced “road to socialism” which included tackling exploitation in personal and familial relationships?
The only shortcoming in the

article was towards the end when it was suggested that Karl Marx might have considered that social media, like religion, merely provided some comfort to its users.

Marx’s views were in fact much more nuanced and dialectical than that, and accurately expressed the double-sided nature of all cultural activities such as using the media, as well as spiritual and religious activity. Using social media can be functional to capitalism, but it can also enhance a politically progressive sense of connection and solidarity between isolated and demoralised individuals, as we are witnessing in the current coronavirus crisis.

MIKE QUILLE

Newcastle

■ AVANTI FRONT PAGE

Euston RMT members are angry at Star story that did not represent our views

AS THE largest union on Euston Station we were disappointed and angry that the Morning Star chose to run a story relating to coronavirus in our workplace (Avanti train staff left fearing for their lives, M Star April 24) without coming to RMT for comment.

The story was both inaccurate and sensationalist and was in no way a genuine representation of the majority staff view at Euston.

We are working in difficult times and the last thing that we need is divisive and opportunistic stories in a newspaper

that RMT is proud to support.

We expect in future that we will be contacted by the Star on any similar issues at Euston Station rather than relying on inaccurate and damaging information that does not represent the views of the trade union majority among the workforce.

To the family, close friends and colleagues it was a distressful and incorrect portrayal of trade union organisation of our workplace at Euston.

KATHY MAZUR
RMT Euston 1
branch secretary

■ TRANSPORT – UNITE

Glad to see Woolwich ferry still in good use

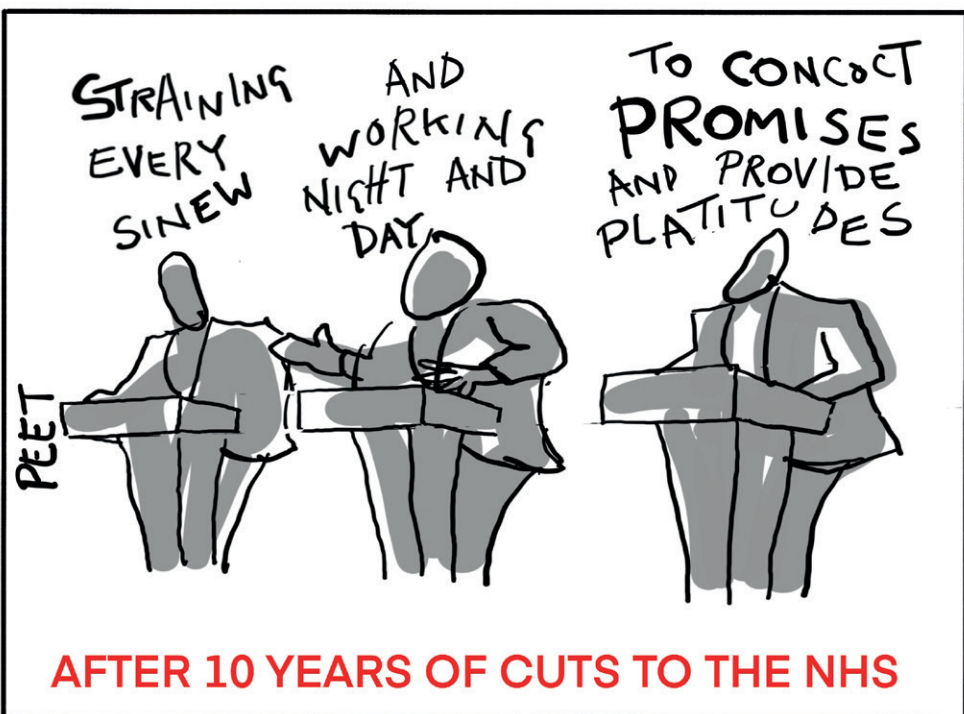
MY FATHER was born in Woolwich in the mid-twenties and from his grandparents’ house in St Mary’s Street he and his brothers could clearly see the Woolwich ferry.

As children they often travelled to the other side and back for fun, which naturally would not have happened if there was a charge.

If he were alive now he would be overjoyed – because not only is the free ferry still in existence, but also all staff are to be kept on at full pay.

Well done Unite and good luck to everyone who keeps this fabulous service going!

ROBERT BOSTON
Kingshill, Kent



■ IMPERIALISM

Scotland’s brutal role in empire

I HAD real excitement when Maggie Chetty declared that empire was now “a corpse.” Perhaps I was guilty of undue notions of Scottish “national exceptionalism.”

This is exciting news indeed! Apparently I can now attribute all the evils of capitalism to the single mother in Birmingham while nestling in the bosom of millionaire backers of the pro-big business SNP.

Not just that, but I can vicariously attribute to current struggling masses in England the vast enthusiastic legacy that Scots played in subduing natives across the world to “their betters.”

One only has to consider the place names in the former colonies of the British empire to see the indelible mark that

Scots played in its creation.

Australia alone has Stirling, Perth, Ayr, Ben Lomond and St Kilda.

The efficiency (aka brutality) of Scots was so pronounced in India that colloquially many called it the “Scottish empire.”

And as a Hebridean Gael I will not negate my forebears who had been brutalised by landowners in the Highland clearances.

Yet a significant number went into the employ of the British military and then visited upon the inhabitants conquered by our British imperialism a brutality that is still not acknowledged by most Brits, especially so among nationalist-minded Scots today.
To which I give nationalist

Scots the challenge: to ask aboriginal Tasmanians about their experiences of Scottish-enforced empire?

But they wouldn’t be able to. The reason is that we Scots wiped them all out in genocide.

Imperialism today is no “corpse.” It is alive and well in Scotland and England. Scots played an enthusiastic part in making many corpses across the globe.

And our wagon is still hitched to the war machines of the US, Nato and the EU.

But class politics cuts across all of that, and unites us in the class struggle against exploiters – so Ms Chetty should be encouraged to bring her passionate fight to the SNP.

CAILEAN MACAULAY
Glasgow G12



ON THIS DAY: THE first FA Cup final to be held at the newly built Wembley Stadium, in 1923, is often referred to as the “white horse final” because mounted police,

including one on a light-coloured horse, had to be deployed to clear crowds from the pitch to allow the match to take place. Vast crowds, estimated to

be up to 300,000, surged into a stadium with an official capacity of 125,000. Bolton beat West Ham 2-0.

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■ MEN'S FOOTBALL

Serie A allowed to train in May

by Our Sports Desk

NEARLY two months after the last game was played, Italy's top division finally has a target date to resume practice.

Prime Minister Giuseppe Conte announced on Sunday night that professional sports teams can resume training on May 18, while individual sports can resume practice on May 4.

The move means that Serie A could resume playing games in June – albeit without any fans in the stadiums.

Conte said that starting today, Sports Minister Vincenzo Spadafora “will work intensely with ... the soccer system, the professional sports in general, to find a road map that we have already partly defined in terms of the resumption of individual training on May 4 and teams on May 18.”

He added: “Then we'll evaluate if the conditions will allow the leagues that were suspended to be completed.”

Serie A has been suspended since March 9, when the government ordered a nationwide lockdown due to the coronavirus emergency.

Italy was the first Western nation to be hit hard by the outbreak and its official total of 26,600 fatalities lags behind only the United States in the global death toll.

“Being a big soccer fan, like so many Italians, at the start it seemed strange to me that the season could be interrupted and suspended,” Conte said. “But obviously we found ourselves involved in this health, social and economic emergency. And I think everyone, even the most ardent fans, understood that there wasn't any alternative.”



TRAINER: Rebecca Menzies

■ RACING

Menzies: Rainbow Applause's winnings to be given to NHS

TRAINER Rebecca Menzies is hoping one-eyed filly Rainbow Applause can pick up some prize money for NHS charities when the Flat season eventually gets under way.

The County Durham-based handler ran a competition on social media earlier this month to name a two-year-old daughter of Camacho out of Dubai Sea, drawing more than 1,000 entries.

The filly was named Rainbow Applause, with any prize-money she earns and any profits made by her owners, the Rainbow Applause

NHS Charity Racing Club, to be donated to charities directly associated with the NHS.

Menzies said: “The NHS are doing an amazing job in the current circumstances and if we can give club members a bit of fun while raising money for a fantastic cause, that would be brilliant.”

“Rainbow Applause was born with one eye but it hasn't stopped her at all – she's been cantering away since November and is a great mover with real character.”

■ MEN'S FOOTBALL

Spain's health minsiter: No games before the summer

by Our Sports Desk

SPAIN'S health minister said on Sunday night that the country should not expect to see professional football restart before the summer.

Spain has been without football since March 12, two days before the nation went into a strict lockdown under a state of emergency to battle the savage coronavirus outbreak that has claimed more than 22,000 lives there.

“It would be reckless for me to say now that professional football will be back before the summer,” Salvador Illa said. “We will continue to monitor the evolution [of the virus] and the guidelines we will present will indicate how different activities can return to a new normalcy.”

The Spanish league had already said that play would not resume before late May. Madrid's mayor had said that he does not expect football before the end of the summer.

The government's health officials, led by Illa, have the final say to authorise the return of sporting activities that would bring together groups of people



and present a collective contagion risk.

Illa also appeared to dampen expectations that football players would be tested for the virus, as the Spanish league wants to happen on a daily basis once training resumes.

“There is a ministerial order in effect for all different

groups, including professional football,” Illa said. “The tests must be put at the disposition of regional authorities, no matter what type of test they are. And it will be for [the regional health authorities] to decide. We must have a common strategy. All of us must pull in the same direction.”

There is no timetable for when practice would restart.

Some players had also criticised the league's plan for testing because tests are scarce among the general public in Spain and not recommended by authorities for people who do not show symptoms of the Covid-19 virus.



FORMULA ONE

F1 EYES AUSTRIAN RETURN IN JULY

French GP cancelled but chiefs hope season can consist of 15-18 races

by Our Sports Desk

FORMULA ONE is planning to start its 2020 season on July 5 in Austria after the French Grand Prix became the 10th race this year to be postponed or cancelled because of the coronavirus pandemic.

The decision to cancel the race at Circuit Paul Ricard in Le Castellet on June 28 seemed increasingly unavoidable after French President Emmanuel Macron placed a ban on mass gatherings in the country until at least mid-July.

But F1 chief Chase Carey is optimistic of beginning the campaign a week later at Austria's Red Bull Ring and holding between 15 and 18 races before the curtain-closer in Abu Dhabi in December.

Carey, though, does anticipate the first few races to be held behind closed doors, with the British Grand Prix telling its fans yesterday morning that its event on July 19 will be held without spectators.

Carey said: "Although this morning it was announced that the French Grand Prix, due to take place in late June, will not be going ahead, we are now

increasingly confident with the progress of our plans to begin our season this summer.

"We're targeting a start to racing in Europe through July, August and beginning of September, with the first race taking place in Austria on July 3-5 weekend.

"September, October and November would see us race in Eurasia, Asia and the Americas, finishing the season in the Gulf in December with Bahrain, before the traditional finale in Abu Dhabi, having completed between 15-18 races.

"We will publish our finalised calendar as soon as we possibly can. All of our plans are obviously subject to change as we still have many issues to address and all of us are subject to the unknowns of the virus.

"We expect the early races to be without fans but hope fans will be part of our events as we move further into the schedule.

"We still have to work out many issues like the procedures for the teams and our other partners to enter and operate in each country.

"The health and safety of all involved will continue to be priority one, and we will only go forward if we are confident



we have reliable procedures to address both risks and possible issues."

French Grand Prix managing director Eric Boullier said his focus is on next year's race.

He said: "Given the evolution of the situation linked to the spread of the Covid-19 virus, the French Grand Prix takes note of the decisions announced by the French state making it impossible to maintain our event.

"The eyes of the GIP Grand Prix de France - Le Castellet are already turning towards the summer of 2021 in order to offer our spectators an even more unprecedented event at the heart of the region Sud."

For the moment, the British Grand Prix will go ahead but Silverstone's owners said that a

race "under normal conditions is just not going to be possible" in announcing a decision to keep supporters away from the event.

Silverstone managing director Stuart Pringle said in a letter: "I am extremely disappointed to tell you that we are unable to stage this year's British Grand Prix in front of the fans at Silverstone.

"We have left this difficult decision for as long as possible, but it is abundantly clear given the current conditions in the country and the government requirements in place now and for the foreseeable future, that a grand prix under normal conditions is just not going to be possible.

"Our obligations to protect the health and safety of everyone involved in preparing

and delivering the event, our volunteer marshals and race makers, and of course, you, the amazing fans, means that this is the best, safest and only decision we could make.

"We have consistently said that should we find ourselves in this position we will support Formula One as they seek to find alternative ways to enable F1 racing to take place this year.

"Following this weekend's news from the Department for Digital, Culture, Media & Sport we are now working with them on the viability of an event behind closed doors."

To date three grands prix have been cancelled: Australian, Monaco, French; and seven postponed: Bahrain, Vietnam, Chinese, Dutch, Spanish, Azerbaijan, Canadian.

CORONAVIRUS

Fifa happy to allow an extra two substitutions

TEAMS will be able to make up to five substitutions under a new proposal from Fifa to help cope with the return to action amid the coronavirus pandemic, the world governing body has stated.

The substitutions will be allowed at a maximum of three slots plus



the half-time interval to avoid unnecessary stoppages. They are being proposed in recognition of the long lay-off players have had due to competitions being suspended, and the

anticipated high volume of matches when and if matches resume.

The proposal is subject to the approval of the game's law-making body the International Football Association Board; it is then at the discretion of individual competitions such as the Premier League or the Bundesliga whether or not to implement it.

"When competitions resume, such competitions are likely to face a congested match calendar with a higher-than-normal frequency of matches played in consecutive weeks," a Fifa spokesperson said.

"In light of this, and in light of the unique challenge faced globally in delivering competitions according to the originally foreseen calendar, Fifa proposes that a larger number of substitutions be temporarily allowed, at the discretion of the relevant competition organiser."

MEN'S FOOTBALL

Wallace: We can't return with out of contract players

by Our Sports Desk

PLAYERS will refuse to risk their careers if the season goes beyond June 30, Stevenage chairman Phil Wallace insists.

The English Football League (EFL) has been postponed since March 14 because of the coronavirus pandemic, with no date set for a return.

The race to finish the season is complicated by the fact that more than 1,000 players are expected to be out of contract by the end of June.

In anticipation of that, Colchester have already decided not to re-sign their out-of-contract players, with chairman Robbie Cowling accepting that it will make his side "less capable" when the season resumes.

For their part, Stevenage are bottom of League Two and have



just two contracted players for next season - and Wallace questioned how the EFL can finish the campaign if players will not play.

He said: "All you can do is have an aim. We'd love to finish the season if we are able to in a safe manner. How we are going to do that is beyond me, given

the time frame with players out of contract.

"On July 1, Stevenage have two contracted players. What is supposed to happen then?"

"You have some people say: 'Surely they will play in July?' - No they won't. Why would they risk their careers if they are not on contract?"

"If someone else is paying for it, they can extend them for as long as they want - I'm not paying for it.

"I will make the commercial decisions in the best interest of our football club's commercial survival.

"It's probably the best part of £250,000 you're talking about [to pay players for an extra two months]. You know how long I can feed doctors and nurses and the old people in my community with that?"

The EFL and the Professional Footballers' Association have made a recommendation for players in Leagues One and Two to agree a wage deferral of up to 25 per cent for April as they try to ease the financial burden on clubs.

Some have also questioned how clubs would fund themselves if there are no gate receipts dur-

ing any return, but Wallace is not concerned with finances yet.

He said: "It's just money. I'm not being flippant. It's money and solvable. If you start giving coronavirus to someone and exposing players to it, that's irresponsible.

"We keep talking about games behind closed doors. But if social distancing is in place and it's unsafe to put people in a stadium, how is it safe to put people on grass and have a contact sport?"

HAVE YOUR SAY

Write (up to 300 words) to letters@peoples-press.com or 52 Beachy Rd, London E3 2NS

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