

for Peace and Socialism

Morning Star

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IDF ATTACKS AL-AQSA AS PALESTINE CEASEFIRE BEGINS

London and the world march in solidarity

by Bethany Rielly

CAMPAIGNERS have vowed to continue fighting for freedom, justice and equality for Palestinians with large crowds set to protest this weekend regardless of the latest ceasefire.

Organisers are expecting at least 150,000 people to join a mass rally in London today to demand an end to Israel's brutal occupation and siege of the Gaza strip.

It comes a day after Hamas and Israel agreed to a ceasefire in the early hours of Friday morning, bringing an end to 11 days of deadly bombing that has killed at least 232 Palestinians, including 65 children.

Despite the ceasefire, campaigners stressed yesterday that sustained pressure was needed to end Israel's system of apartheid and ethnic cleansing.

In a statement, protest co-organiser Palestine Solidarity Campaign said: "Despite the ceasefire, Palestinians in Gaza still face a 15-year long siege that entraps them and violates all of their human rights."

While Palestinians in the West Bank and East Jerusalem face a brutal occupation, those in Israel are subjected to over 65 discriminatory laws and Palestinians in

exile are denied the right to return home, PSC said.

"Israel's system of apartheid and ethnic cleansing cannot continue," the statement said. "We can't stop just because Israel has temporarily stopped bombing Gaza."

"We must campaign and protest until the Palestinian people enjoy what is their birth right; freedom, justice and equality in their historic homeland."

Saturday's demonstration will see protesters gather at Embankment at 1pm before marching to Hyde Park.

Organisers added that attacks by Israeli forces on Palestinian worshippers in Jerusalem's al-Aqsa mosque on Friday, just 12 hours after the ceasefire, also showcased why further demonstrations were needed.

Friends of al-Aqsa chairman Ismail Patel said: "Despite the Israeli decision to stop bombing Gaza we have to continue with the protests as Israel continues with its occupation of Palestine."

"The attack by Israeli forces on worshippers in Aqsa Mosque hours after the ceasefire shows the need to continue with our efforts."

Shadow foreign secretary Lisa Nandy said the latest violence, which saw large areas of Gaza reduced to rubble as well as the

deaths of 12 Israelis by Hamas rockets, must mark a turning point.

"There is no military solution to this conflict," she said. "We must establish a meaningful peace process that ensures a sovereign Palestinian state alongside a safe, secure Israel becomes an achievable prospect."

Other politicians also welcomed the ceasefire but said more action was needed to achieve justice for Palestinians.

Labour MP Zarah Sultana said on social media that "true peace flows from justice" which includes "an end to illegal settlements, the occupation of Palestinian lands and the siege on Gaza."

Global actions of solidarity with the Palestinian people have seen mass rallies in over 80 towns and cities across Britain last weekend.

Activists occupying the roof of an Israeli arms factory in Leicester maintained their action for a third day yesterday, shutting down weapons production.

Members of Palestine Action argue that drone parts manufactured at the UAV Tactical System's factory are used by the Israeli military in its bombing of Gaza.

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▶ Star comment: p10



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PALESTINE: Palestine supporters in Bradford in West Yorkshire staged a fundraising effort to help the people of Gaza yesterday. They made food and set up a stall to sell meals following Friday prayers at the city's Doha mosque. One visitor to the stall said: 'While our government is supplying Israel with weapons, this is what real people are doing for the people of Gaza'
Pic: Neil Terry Photography

■ TSSA Balfour Beatty bosses deny pay rise

THE work on improving Britain's railways is to be delayed because a corporate contractor has refused to give workers a pay rise.

Balfour Beatty is involved in publicly funded contracts to improve Britain's rail network.

Members of the Transport Salaried Staffs Association (TSSA) have voted overwhelmingly for strike action because

the company has refused a pay rise for 2020. The union said that the company has handed out nearly £2 million in bonuses to senior managers and made profits of almost £50m.

TSSA general secretary Manuel Cortes said: "Our brilliant members have shown huge commitment and sacrifice during this past year and have made their voices heard

over their shoddy treatment by Balfour Beatty."

He said the union would be happy to negotiate through the arbitration and conciliation service ACAS.

"If this doesn't happen, strike action next month will be a certainty. It's that simple."

The workers voted by more than 90 per cent in favour of strike action.

■ GIG ECONOMY

UBER LAUNCHES ACTION TO SQUASH WORKERS' RIGHTS

MANOEUVRE: Cab company looking to undermine Supreme Court ruling

by Ceren Sagir

UBER is launching a fresh High Court action in a bid to undermine the Supreme Court's previous ruling on workers' rights and to weaken transport regulations, drivers claimed yesterday.

The ride-hailing firm is seeking declaratory relief from the court to confirm that its business model is compliant with Transport for London (TfL) regulations.

In February, the Supreme Court ruled against Uber to confirm that its drivers are workers and are entitled to statutory protection under employment law.

The Supreme Court also raised fresh questions on Uber's business model and whether it was compliant with transport regulation.

TfL, which has the duty of regulating the company, published Uber's application for relief on Thursday under the Private Hire Vehicles (London) Act.

The App Drivers & Couriers Union (ADCU) warned that if Uber is successful, the implications would be "catastrophic" on workers and the broader public interest.

The union said that Uber would also likely escape VAT liability which it estimated

currently to be £2.5 billion outstanding.

The ADCU also criticised TfL for failing to raise concerns about the risk of unrestrained driver exploitation that is likely of Uber's application is successful.

"The ADCU is shocked to learn of TfL's tacit support for Uber in making the application with the regulator even suggesting cosmetic changes to the text of the relief sought," the union said in a statement.

ADCU president Yaseen Aslam and general secretary James Farrar said: "This is a brazen attempt by Uber to undermine our Supreme Court victory and weaken Transport for London's powers to protect workers from terrible exploitation."

"TfL and the mayor's decision to go along with this legal caper

amounts to a terrible betrayal of 100,000 Londoners working as licensed drivers under brutal working conditions.

"Instead of showing political leadership and standing up for precarious workers, the mayor is sweeping us and the problem under the carpet."

An Uber spokesperson said: "Earlier this year we made changes to our business to ensure all UK drivers are guaranteed at least the national living wage, holiday pay and a pension plan."

"We are committed to these worker changes and this legal procedure is seeking to clarify a different and narrow point of law."

TfL was also approached for comment.

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■ RMT

Private train firms raked in £88m during pandemic

by Peter Lazenby

PROFITEERING private rail operators grabbed an extra £88 million from taxpayers to run services during the first six months of the pandemic, rail union RMT said yesterday.

Half of the cash will be transferred out of Britain because the government has handed operating contracts to overseas operators, including state-owned rail operators in other countries which will use the cash to fund their own networks.

RMT warned that private

train operating companies will enjoy guaranteed profits from taxpayers under the government's revised rail operating system – so-called "Great British Railways."

At the same time rail staff face pay cuts and job losses.

RMT said that the extra cash was given to operators in "management fees" through the government's Emergency Measures Agreements (EMAs), which paid them to run trains after passenger numbers plummeted during periods of lockdown.

The union warned that the flow of public money out of the industry and into overseas coffers

was "the shape of things to come."

RMT general secretary Mick Lynch said: "For all the showbiz fanfare around Great British Railways, the truth is that behind all the government's greasepaint and jazz hands it's still private companies looting profits from our railways with the only difference being that now they don't have to take any risks for their reward."

"Not only do we once again see pandemic profiteering, but we are also faced with the bitter irony that the great British taxpayer is in fact helping to send money abroad to fund great overseas railways."

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Scottish Morning Star Campaign Committee

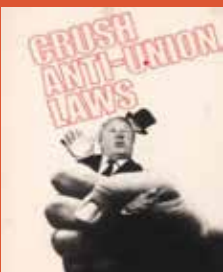
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50th Anniversary

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Chair: KATE RAMSDEN



7pm, TUESDAY JUNE 16

Join Zoom Meeting: mstar.link/OCOCTU

UNITE

Thurrock council workers score pay victory

REFUSE workers in Thurrock have stopped a pay cut in its tracks with a six-week strike win.

Thurrock Council wanted to reduce 90 workers' pay with a new contract that meant axing wages by between £1,200 and £3,800 a year.

The workers, responsible for recycling in the district, are members of the Unite union.

They have suspended

their action after the council backed down and dumped the pay cuts.

Unite regional officer Michelle Cook said: "This deal is a victory for the workers, who stood firm for six weeks in a strike to defend their pay."

"The workers and the residents of Thurrock will be pleased that the council have amended their plans, and services can get back to normal."

"These essential workers, who were applauded for their work through the pandemic, now deserve to be applauded for the solidarity and determination they showed. When workers organise, workers win."

General secretary candidate Steve Turner said: "It's well-organised, determined and confident workers taking action that wins."

PEACE & JUSTICE PROJECT

Corbyn seeks to build solidarity with refugees

by Our Foreign Desk

JEREMY CORBYN will host a refugee-led event today that seeks to build solidarity across borders and fight increasing hostility towards displaced people.

Organised by the Peace and Justice Project, a global initiative founded by the former Labour leader, the event will hear from people trapped for years in refugee camps in countries including Palestine, Somalia and West Papua.

The online conference will also address Britain's "hostile environment" policies and government plans to overhaul the asylum system that would see refugees penalised for entering the country via an "illegal" route.

It will also touch on the criminalisation of rescue workers in Italy and the worsening experiences of people trapped for years and even generations in refugee camps.

Ahead of the event, Mr Corbyn warned that refugees and migrants have been scapegoated, while poverty and inequality have soared.



"Instead of allowing the few to divide us, we need to build solidarity across borders and across communities to stand up for dignity, human rights and big changes to systems that hurt us all," he said. "Refugees are not passive victims, but people whose ideas and experiences should shape a more just and decent world."

Ways activists in Britain can demonstrate practical solidarity will be discussed, as well as the causes and consequences of refugee crises.

The event is being backed by the International Transport Workers' Federation (ITF), the global union for transport

workers, which supports seafarers such as those aboard the *Iuventa 10*, who have been arrested for rescuing refugees in the Mediterranean.

Assistant general secretary Rob Johnston, who will be addressing today's event, said: "Transport workers globally are often on the coalface of the refugee crisis and the hostile environment towards migrants, whether it's responding to distress calls at sea, enforcing abusive migration policies or delivering urgent aid for those in need. We see the crisis on a daily basis."

"With the devastation that the Covid-19 pandemic is having, particularly in the global south, as well as conflicts that are forcing tens of thousands to flee for their lives, the Peace and Justice Project's fightback on refugee and migrant rights could not be more timely."

There are 80 million people around the world who have been forced to flee their homes, equal to about 1 per cent of the human population.

The online event begins at 3pm and can be joined here: mstar.link/3ytDq8i.

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TRANSPORT SCOTLAND

RMT demands action to end ScotRail equality row

by Niall Christie
Scotland editor

THE RMT called on the Scottish government yesterday to end its silence on a long-running dispute with ScotRail ahead of another weekend of strikes.

Rail union leaders have said Transport Scotland must intervene to bring an end to the argument over equality and pay justice for conductors and ticket examiners.

Union members have walked out on successive Sundays in a fight over the issue of enhanced payments for rest-day working.

Ahead of further action on Sunday, general secretary Mick Lynch said: "It is a kick in the

teeth for these workers that Transport Scotland continues to wage war on essential workers who have worked tirelessly throughout the Covid-19 pandemic to keep Scotland's rail services running.

"The company needs to focus on resolving this dispute instead of putting its energies into organising managers to scab with only cursory training, putting public safety at risk."

A Transport Scotland spokeswoman told the Star that the efforts of rail workers were "fully appreciated" and negotiations were between the union and operator – but there was "quite simply no additional funding available" and any increase would need to be

funded through "efficiencies." The calls came as the RMT also announced that ScotRail train care workers are to strike on Monday over the promotion of a manager said to have been found guilty of breaching dignity and respect policies.

The RMT union said the member of staff had been promoted two weeks after being removed from his original post due to an incident in which he had been the subject of a collective grievance by 16 workers.

A number of workers are said to be incensed, but ScotRail said there had been no dispute following the investigation and it deemed the strike ballot "inappropriate."

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BACK IN BUSINESS: Dancers from the Sophie Adams Ballet Company after performing in Southwark Cathedral in London yesterday. Candle-lit ballet performances are scheduled for May 20 and 27, and are accompanied by a string quartet

BASHIR INTERVIEW

BBC reforms under consideration

THE government will consider whether reforms of BBC governance are required following a report which found the broadcaster covered up the "deceitful behaviour" of a journalist, ministers have said.

Lord Dyson's report on the 1995 Panorama Diana interview investigated the BBC's handling of journalist Martin Bashir's interview with the Princess of Wales.

It suggested that the corporation went against its supposed values and principles to protect its reputation.

Culture Secretary Oliver Dowden said: "Lord Dyson's report reveals damning failings at the heart of the BBC."

"We will now reflect on Lord Dyson's thorough report and consider whether further governance reforms at the BBC are needed in the mid-

term charter review."

The royal charter forms the constitutional basis for the BBC and sets out its mission and public purpose, as well as its governance and regulatory arrangements.

The current charter ends in December 2027. Its mid-term review, due in 2022, will focus on governance and regulatory arrangements but not the broadcaster's mission or funding.



unemployment FIGHT BACK

'UNEMPLOYMENT FIGHTBACK! —A FAST AND FURIOUS WEBINAR'
29 MAY 2021 1100-1230
www.comunistparty.org.uk

Keynote speakers include Bill Greenshields and Molly Brown (CP in discussion), Mark Porter (Rolls Royce Unite at Barnoldswick), Steve Turner (AGS Unite), Rohan Kon (Sheffield Needs a Pay Rise), Laura Smith (ex-Labour MP and No Turning Back campaign), Johnny Hunter (YCL), Helen O'Connor (NHS activist), Sabby Dhalu (SUTR), Rickard Juan Escrich Communist Party of Spain (on a bill to protect gig employees), Jackie Simpkins (War on Want) and Mick Lynch (newly elected general secretary of RMT)

Register here: https://communistparty-org-uk.zoom.us/webinar/register/WN_mbstgFNN5jm8pM3oVAR_tQ

'Unemployment Fightback - Organising Meeting' June 5, 2021 11:00 AM - 1:00 PM
This organising meeting has been arranged to complement the above meeting. You are urged to register for both and to invite active trade unionists.
Register here: https://communistparty-org-uk.zoom.us/meeting/register/tjMvdemrzz4jE9Zn8yY91R899epaMojJm_n_p

  
@CPBritain

Usdaw calls on the international community to act to stop the appalling escalation of violence and address the underlying causes. An immediate and permanent ceasefire is needed to stop the loss of more Palestinian and Israeli lives.

Israel must halt the military action against Palestinians, the evictions of Palestinian families from their homes in Sheikh Jarrah and the illegal occupation of Palestinian land. The rockets launched from Gaza aimed at Israel must also be immediately halted.

We need to see genuine efforts towards a comprehensive, just and lasting peace based on a two-state solution.

For further information or to join Usdaw visit: www.usdaw.org.uk or call: 0800 030 80 30

Paddy Lillis, General Secretary • Jane Jones, President
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■ SCOTLAND

HIDING COVID CARE HOME DEATH DATA WAS UNLAWFUL

‘SHAMEFUL’: Call for inquiry after ruling on Scottish government agency

by Niall Christie
Scotland editor

A SCOTTISH government agency was condemned yesterday for unlawfully keeping the extent of Covid-19 care-home deaths a secret.

The National Records of Scotland (NRS) was found to have breached freedom of information (FoI) legislation by refusing to release the number of confirmed and suspected coronavirus-related deaths in each of Scotland's care homes.

After a probe carried out as part of a joint project by the Scotsman, the Herald, DC Thomson and STV, the Scottish Information Commissioner ruled that NRS had used arguments that were “speculative in nature” to block the release of statistics.

The commissioner said the agency's efforts to stop the publication of care home death numbers had involved time-wasting shuffling between care-sector bodies, and the commissioner's office ruled that the NRS had failed to comply with FoI legislation.

NRS has now said it will make the data

available in line with FoI legislation, with the probe finding a number of arguments to refuse requests had been flawed and speculative.

The commissioner's office also rejected the argument that the data would be “too complex and would fail to tell the full story of the deaths.”

Scottish Labour leader Anas Sarwar described the cover-up

as utterly shameful. He said: “This is another devastating blow for the care home residents and families who have been denied justice.

“Those responsible must be held accountable and lessons must be learned. We need a Scottish public inquiry without delay.”

Further increases in coronavirus cases in parts of Scotland saw tighter restrictions due to be lifted continue in some parts of the country yesterday.

First Minister Nicola Sturgeon confirmed that Glasgow will remain in level three of Scotland's coronavirus restrictions for a further week before review but Moray, which was the first local authority area to be held back, will now move down to level two.

Public health experts have warned an outbreak in East Renfrewshire, which has seen case numbers overtake Glasgow, may need tougher measures to help get the surge in cases under control quicker despite being “painful” for the community.

Professor Devi Sridhar of the University of Edinburgh said that while it is a tough trade-off, bringing in restrictions sooner rather than later could mean they do not have to drag on into the summer.

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This is another devastating blow for the care home residents and families who have been denied justice

Anas Sarwar



SCOTS COMMUNITIES: Programme co-ordinator Sonia Napolitano with What if...?/Scotland, an exhibition which was designed to be staged in Venice as part of the 17th International Architecture Exhibition La Biennale di Venezia, but will now open at V&A Dundee today and run until Sunday November 21.

The exhibition is centred around Scots' wishes for how they want their neighbourhoods to look in the future. Ideas from people in Edinburgh, Paisley, Annan, Elgin and Lerwick include more green spaces, a new bridge, arts facilities, accessible design for wheelchair users and regenerating old industrial sites.

■ HOUSING

SNP mulls extending eviction ban for vulnerable tenants

A BAN on tenant evictions is being considered to be expanded across Scotland, the new Cabinet Secretary for Covid Recovery has said.

John Swinney told MSPs on Thursday evening that further protections for those renting accommodation are under consideration following the end of an outright ban on evictions.

He was responding to an urgent question in Holyrood, after Green MSP Ariane Burgess had told the chamber that “evicting vulnerable people who have been unable to work or earn during the pandemic is deeply unfair.

“As a minimum, we need to keep the eviction ban in place for as long as restrictions remain,” she said.

Glasgow Labour MSP Paul Sweeney reiterated the financial challenges facing tenants, reminding the government that it has a legal responsibility to prevent homelessness.

With all measures expected to end in September, Mr Swinney told MSPs that it would be “an area that we continue to keep under close consideration as we look at our continued navigation out of, and recovery from, Covid-19.”

■ LA RETRAITE SCHOOL

Cleaners win union recognition battle

by Our News Desk

CLEANERS at La Retraite Roman Catholic Girls' School in south London were celebrating yesterday after they won their battle for trade union recognition.

The outsourced cleaners, the majority of whom are Latin American migrants, went on strike for several days in March in a dispute over what they described as wage theft, trade union victimisation and inadequate health and safety procedures including a lack of full sick pay.

The strike saw the cleaners win a 24 per cent pay rise, parity in sick pay with in-house

staff, improved health and safety procedures and the majority recovery of their stolen wages.

But La Retraite's contractor Ecocleen continued to refuse to voluntarily recognise United Voices of the World (UVW) as their union, activists said.

The organising of the cleaners saw them emerge victorious after the Central Arbitration Committee (CAC), the statutory body responsible for oversight of collective bargain-

ing, ruled that over half of the workers were in the union and therefore Ecocleen must recognise UVW.

Magaly Quesada, one of the strike leaders, said:

“Recognition was the one thing that we were missing after our victory in March, and I'm delighted that we've now won that too!

“We deserve to be able to negotiate with our employer, we do the work, so it should never be the case that we have no say over our pay or working conditions.

“So I feel incredibly safe and secure knowing that our union is recognised and I want to give a big thanks to my colleagues who have fought long and hard for this.”

UVW organiser Petros Elia said: “This victory is a real testament to the tenacity of our members.

“After their stunning victory in March they kept on organising and pushing for trade union recognition.

“It wasn't an easy fight, but they were determined that their voice be heard and that they be able to sit across the table from their employer and be able to negotiate as equals.”

news@peoples-press.com



Communist Party of Britain



BRITAIN'S COMMUNISTS SEND GREETINGS TO ALL MARCHING THIS WEEKEND IN SOLIDARITY WITH THE PALESTINIAN PEOPLE.

- Stop the killing – start the talking
 - End the Israeli occupation and ethnic cleansing
- For an independent and sovereign Palestine within pre-1967 borders

Step up the Boycott, Divestment and Sanctions campaign to force Israel to respect and implement UN resolutions and international humanitarian law.

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Communist Party of Britain



ONLINE SOLIDARITY MEETING FOR PALESTINE MONDAY MAY 24, 7PM

'For an independent state within the recognised borders as they stood on June 4 1967!'

The British government must impose sanctions on Israel until UN resolutions are fulfilled.

SPEAKERS:

AQEL TAQAS | International Secretary, Palestinian People's Party
OFER CASSIF MK | Communist Party Israel Member of HADASH, Israeli Knesset

Register: cpb.tiny.us/ma8s37cy

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MARX MEMORIAL LIBRARY



Marking the 150th anniversary of the Paris Commune

Thursday May 27th 2021 at 7pm



A few days before the anniversary of 'Bloody Week', the Marx Memorial Library presents 'Marking the 150th anniversary of the Paris Commune' a panel lecture with Dr Guillaume Roubaud-Quashie, editor of *Cause Commune* and member of the executive of the French Communist Party, Dr Jonathan White, author of *Making Our Own History*, and Professor Mary Davis, labour historian.

Contributions from the panel will include analysis of the Commune's significance for the development of the working-class movement both in France and internationally, an examination of Marx's Civil War in France and its theoretical contribution to our understanding of state power, and a look at the role of women Communards and their importance for subsequent generations of socialists.

Register at mstar.link/150PC

Support the MML as a member or donor: marx-memorial-library.org.uk/support

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It is with sadness we announce the recent passing of our comrade and founding member of Construction Safety Campaign

IAN McDESON (Mac)

Former Camden UCATT branch secretary, Camden DLO convenor, Builders Charter, joint sites committee, London Hazards Centre activist, supporter of the Morning Star, radical folk music enthusiast.

The funeral is to take place on Friday May 28 at 4pm, Golders Green Crematorium, NW11 7NL

His family wish for remembrance donations, payable to Marie Curie Hospice Hampstead, 11 Lyndhurst Gardens, London NW3 5NS

CONSTRUCTION SAFETY CAMPAIGN



TOUCH AND GO: The RNLI launches at Trearddur Bay, Wales, in heavy weather on Thursday night to successfully save a surfer who had got into difficulty. One volunteer said it was “possibly the most touch and go shout I have been on,” with crews facing heavy swells and having “only one chance” to get to the woman before she was too close to the headland. The RNLI reminded the public that stormy seas are always unpredictable, with further rain and wind likely over the weekend.

▶ Star weather: p20

■ SCOTLAND

SNP's education secretary urged to work with unions

by Niall Christie
Scotland editor

SCOTLAND'S new Education Secretary must work to address the serious issues facing the sector, opposition parties and trade unions said yesterday.

Labour has written to Shirley-Anne Somerville, who was promoted this week, urging her to move quickly to ensure recovery for young people across the country.

Education spokesman Michael Marra warned that Ms Somerville must engage with teachers and unions to prevent a “summer of discontent in education.”

In a letter, Mr Marra welcomed the MSP to her new role before calling on the government to publish the Scottish Qualifications Authority's appeals process, implement a resit guarantee and to ensure that a no-detriment policy for accessing further or higher education be put in place.

He said: “I am calling on the minister to listen to teachers, education experts, unions and Labour, and take the vital

action needed now to solve another exams fiasco in our education system.

“Our young people need hope after this dreadful year. The minister must deal with the damage and distress that has already been caused by this government.

“She must also start to rebuild opportunity for young Scots' futures.”

The Educational Institute of Scotland (EIS) welcomed Ms Somerville to the post, thanking Mr Swinney for his engagement in his role.

The union said that workers' contracts must be a priority for the cabinet.

General secretary Larry Flanagan said: “The first issue the Cabinet Secretary will need to address is an end to the scandal of temporary contracts throughout the education system.

“If we are to have an education-led recovery, we need more teachers on permanent contracts to cut class sizes, provide more support to pupils with additional support needs and address the impact of poverty on children's learning.”

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■ STUC

‘Holyrood must secure rights of LGBT+ workers’

THE Scottish government must ensure that LGBT+ rights are not forgotten or pushed back again, trade unionists have demanded.

Ahead of its 10th annual conference this weekend, the STUC's LGBT+ workers' group said that Scotland's most diverse parliament must champion issues affecting LGBT+ workers.

The committee says that dithering and delay has helped create a toxic environment that has “pushed trans rights back further in Scotland.”

This year's chair, Willie Docherty, said that there could be no caveats in the

laws banning so-called conversion therapy that would allow perpetrators to slip through the net.

The move has been backed by STUC general secretary Roz Foyer, who said that trade unions have a proud history of championing equality.

She said: “The STUC supports the committee's drive for [reform to] the Gender Recognition Act and a real end to conversion therapy.

“We have a collective responsibility to stand with all our LGBT+ comrades, to protect and advance their rights in Scotland and around the world.”

FAR-RIGHT EXTREMISM: A CAMBRIDGE maths graduate with an “extreme right-wing mindset” was jailed for two years yesterday for possessing a bomb-making manual.

Police found a copy of the Anarchist Cookbook when they searched the home of Oliver Bel, 24, in late 2019.

He was found guilty last month of collecting informa-

tion likely to be useful to a terrorist.

Analysis of his mobile phone revealed a Facebook post in July 2019 about wanting to “go on a spree,” as well as racist comments against Jewish and black people.

During sentencing, judge Alan Conrad QC told Bel that his pronouncements “were abhorrent to all right-thinking people.”

■ NHS

LEGAL CHALLENGE OVER GP SURGERIES SELL-OFF

HANDS OFF: Campaigners tackle decision to let scandal-hit US firm take over eight practices

by Peter Lazenby

THE plan to hand medical practices with hundreds of thousands of patients to a scandal-ridden US health privateer is to be challenged in court.

North Central London Clinical Commissioning Group (CCG), a government body that awards contracts for NHS provision, is handing eight GP practices with 375,000 patients to US health insurance firm Centene.

The company and its web of subsidiaries have a track record of falsely claiming taxpayers' income and of failing to provide adequate health services to patients in the United States.

Patients, doctors and NHS campaign groups have united to mount the legal challenge.

Led by Keep Our NHS Public (KONP) and 999 Call for the NHS, the campaigners want a

“

I am so afraid that our NHS is being dismantled bit by bit, with the private sector playing a bigger and bigger part

Islington councillor
Anjna Khurana

judicial review of the decision, alleging that the CCG “was not sufficiently diligent in its investigation into the potential impact, and failed to engage patients and the public in the decision.”

They also say “there are particular concerns about what may happen to patients' personal medical data.”

Anjna Khurana, a patient at Hanley Primary Care Centre in Islington and a local councillor representing Tollington, said: “I am so afraid that our NHS is being dismantled bit by bit, with the private sector playing a bigger and bigger part.

“I need to trust my doctor: how can I do that if they work for a company like Centene, a company that has a record of fraud in the US?”

KONP member and GP Louise Irvine said: “North Central London CCG's decision to allow the changes took place well

away from the glare of public scrutiny.

“The NHS constitution demands transparency, and people rightly expect accountability in NHS decision-making, especially about such important matters as who runs our GP practices.”

The action is supported by Baroness Joan Bakewell. She said: “I recently spoke in the House of Lords about the iniquity of allowing a profit-making American company to buy surgeries that serve the NHS.

“I feel strongly that the NHS should remain our own, and I believe many of the public would agree with me if they were fully aware of what is involved.

“So I believe the government has a strong case to answer.”

■ The campaigners are crowd-funding for the legal costs and donations can be made at: mstar.link/3bJG7ji

in brief

Catalan president set on referendum

SPAIN: Newly elected Catalan President Pere Aragonés says he will keep pressing Madrid to allow an independence referendum.

Elections were held in February but disagreements between separatist parties delayed formation of a government until now.

Catalonia held an illegal referendum in 2017, but opponents of secession boycotted it and Spanish police attacked voters and arrested local leaders, many of whom received long jail sentences.

US 'no longer wants to buy Greenland'

ARCTIC: US Secretary of State Antony Blinken has confirmed that Washington no longer wants to buy Greenland.

Then president Donald Trump's proposal was mocked in Greenland and in Denmark, which rules the island, prompting him to cancel a state visit to the latter.

Mr Blinken was speaking at a summit about Arctic security. Russia and the US accuse each other of stepping up military activity in the area.

Argentina enters Covid lockdown

ARGENTINA: A national lockdown will begin today as Covid-19 cases soar.

President Alberto Fernandez said: "We are living the worst moment since the pandemic began. We are seeing the highest numbers of cases and deaths."

Argentina has so far registered 3.4 million confirmed coronavirus infections and more than 72,000 deaths.

China keeps mutual sanctions on EU

TRADE: China said yesterday it will not lift sanctions on members of the EU Parliament to unlock a blocked trade deal.

The EU froze the trade deal on Thursday, demanding sanctions on MEPs be lifted. But Beijing pointed out that its sanctions were themselves a response to EU sanctions on its own officials, applied over alleged human rights abuses in Xinjiang, which China denies.

ELETRORAS

Brazil's left slams Bill to sell public energy company

by Our Foreign Desk

BRAZIL'S left has condemned Jair Bolsonaro's government for rushing a Bill through parliament to privatise the state electricity company Eletrobras.

The lower house passed the legislation on Thursday morning but it must go to the Senate before becoming law. The Communist Party of Brazil (PCdoB) said it could challenge the way that the Bill was fast-tracked through parliament in the courts.

The party's national president Luciana Santos, who is also deputy governor of Pernambuco state, said President Bolsonaro was selling off "a strategic asset, a patrimony of the Brazilian people."

Delivering it to private interests would make "energy costs more expensive for ordinary people, hand over the management of our rivers and change the priority of this service, which should always be the social interest," she charged.

The Socialist Party's Alessandro Molon asked: "Is it reasonable to sell the sixth most lucrative company in Brazil, decisive for energy sovereignty? Is it reasonable to vote on an important matter like this in 23 hours?"

On Wednesday night former president Luiz Inacio Lula da Silva said that the decision undermined Brazil's energy security and accused Mr Bolsonaro of planning to sell the company "for the price of a banana."

It was "just another crime against the Brazilian people and the future of our country," he said.

Lula will stand against Mr Bolsonaro for the presidency next year as the Workers Party candidate and is expected to be backed across the left.

His convictions on trumped-up corruption charges, which have now been annulled, prevented him from running against the far-right leader in 2018, though polls indicated that he would have won.

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OVERJOYED: A Sea-Eye volunteer as the NGO's ship reached Pozzallo, Italy
Pic: Guillaume Duez

CIVIL FLEET

400 refugees on dry land despite EU states' efforts

EUROPE'S commitment to human rights was called into question again today as an NGO ship was finally allowed to disembark 400 rescued refugees yesterday after it was forced to take a two-day detour.

The Sea-Eye 4 rescue ship saved the lives of over 400 people in just 48 hours in the central Mediterranean last weekend, without any help from the Libyan, Maltese or Italian authorities.

On Tuesday Leoluca Orlando, the mayor of the Italian city of Palermo, announced on social media that the ship could disembark the rescued in his city after Malta refused to do so.

The next day, as the ship drew nearer to Palermo, the Italian authorities broke their silence and assigned the Sea-Eye 4 a port in Pozzallo, another two days' journey from their position.

Following the disembarkation today, Sea-Eye chairman Gorden Isler said: "The last seven days of our rescue mission have once more very clearly demonstrated the failure of the EU states.

"People regularly drown as they flee and thousands are forcibly returned to the civil war hell of Libya. No-one in the governments of Europe seem to even think about respecting human rights any more."

UNITED STATES

Justice Dept steps up row over chaos in Alabama jails

THE US Justice Department has decried "failed negotiations" with the state of Alabama over rampant prison violence it says violates the constitution.

In an update to a lawsuit launched last December, the department says that Alabama will not voluntarily bring its prisons into compliance and that federal intervention is needed.

The case accuses Alabama of violating the constitutional rights of prisoners, including the ban on cruel and unusual punishment, by failing to prevent excessive levels of prisoner-on-prisoner violence and sexual abuse and failing to protect prisoners from the use of excessive force by security staff.

The homicide rate in Alabama's jails is seven times the national average, it says, with at least 16 prisoners killed in the 2020 fiscal year.

Officials also accuse Alabama of reporting deaths inaccurately. In one cited example, an inmate at Kilby Correctional Facility died in 2017 from multiple stab wounds to his head, abdomen, back and arm, but the state recorded his death as natural.



EXTREMISM

Belgian troops hunt for far-right soldier who stole gun stash

by Our Foreign Desk

HUNDREDS of Belgian special agents have been deployed to comb the countryside for a far-right soldier on the run who is considered armed and dangerous.

Helicopters are scanning the Hoge Kempen national park; roads through it have been closed and residents told to stay indoors.

Jurgen Conings was a Belgian army marksman for over three decades before being disciplined in recent months for issuing threats and making racist remarks on Facebook. He fought in the US-led invasion of Afghanistan.

Belgian Prime Minister Alexander De Croo is facing criticism over how Mr Conings was



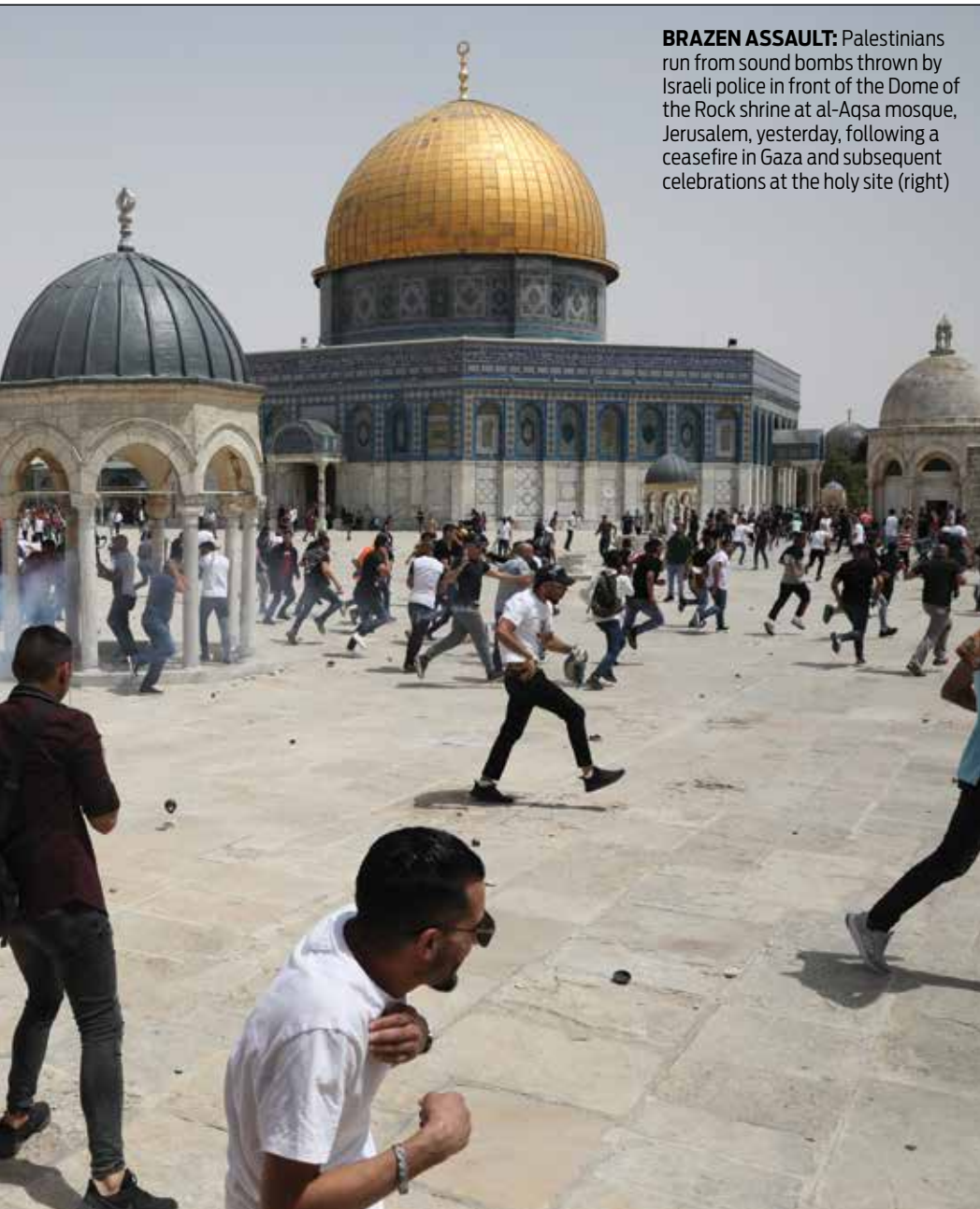
'ARMED & DANGEROUS': Soldiers search for Jurgen Conings (right)



has Van Ranst's address?"

He then went on the run after taking four rocket launchers, a sub-machine gun, a pistol and a bulletproof vest from his barracks. The rocket launchers have been found in an abandoned car. He left one note saying he plans to kill himself rather than live in a world run by "politicians and virologists,"

able to get his hands on heavy weaponry after he was identified as a risk, identified as an anti-vaccination agitator, who threatened Belgian virologist Marc Van Ranst, even apparently staking out his house, he was merely confined to a desk job after tweeting "Who



BRAZEN ASSAULT: Palestinians run from sound bombs thrown by Israeli police in front of the Dome of the Rock shrine at al-Aqsa mosque, Jerusalem, yesterday, following a ceasefire in Gaza and subsequent celebrations at the holy site (right)



■ EAST JERUSALEM

AL-AQSA ATTACKED BY POLICE HOURS AFTER CEASEFIRE

INCENDIARY: Israeli cops storm mosque compound despite Gaza deal

by Our Foreign Desk

ISRAELI police attacked worshippers at the al-Aqsa mosque yesterday just hours after a ceasefire with Hamas took effect.

Officers fired tear gas, stun grenades and rubber bullets into crowds who had gathered for Friday prayers.

Tens of thousands had gathered at the East Jerusalem mosque, Islam's third-holiest site, to celebrate the ceasefire, which came into effect at 2am yesterday.

Israeli police spokesman Micky Rosenfeld said that police had come under attack by stone-throwing Palestinians and had responded.

The attack was incendiary given that previous police assaults on worshippers at the mosque, together with Israel's attempt to evict residents of East Jerusalem's Sheikh Jarrah neighbourhood from their homes to make way for Jewish settlers, had prompted the 11-day conflict, in which Israel pounded Gaza with hundreds of air raids and artillery

bombardments, while Gaza's ruling Hamas launched thousands of rockets into Israel.

At least 232 Palestinians were killed, including 65 children. Twelve Israelis were killed, including two children.

Israeli newspaper Ha'aretz journalist Amira Hass noted that multiple whole Palestinian families were wiped out in Israeli air raids, indicating a deliberate policy, while medics and journalists were also targeted.

But celebrations took place across Gaza, the West Bank and East Jerusalem yesterday following news of the ceasefire.

In Gaza crowds waved Palestinian and Hamas flags, distributed sweets and set off fireworks.

The militant group hailed the ceasefire, brokered by Egypt, as a victory despite the far higher Palestinian death toll, because Israel had not proved able to stop the rocket fire.

US President Joe Biden, whose administration blocked four UN security council resolutions calling for a ceasefire over the last 11 days, described the

ceasefire as "a genuine opportunity to make progress."

But in Israel Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu was attacked from the right. Gideon Sa'ar of Likud breakaway party New Hope said the ceasefire was embarrassing, while Itamar Ben Gvir of the far-right Jewish Power called it "a grave surrender."

The conflict spread within Israel for the first time in two decades, with ethnic violence erupting in several cities and a Palestinian general strike uniting Palestinians inside Israel, in Gaza and across the West Bank.

The Communist Party-led Hadash coalition said it had met Israeli trade union federation Histadrut to press it to defend workers threatened with the sack for taking part.

Norwegian Refugee Council secretary-general Jan Egeland welcomed the ceasefire, but said people should not mistake "calm for normality."

"There is no normality to speak of for the two million Gazans under siege, nor for those living in the West Bank under Israeli occupation."

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■ NATO

Turkish aggression in Macron's sights

by Our Foreign Desk

FRENCH President Emmanuel Macron took aim at Turkey yesterday, saying Nato needed to enforce "cohesion" at its summit next month.

Mr Macron said the US-led military bloc would not function if countries focused on "national interests that are contradictory to the security of other allies, as has been the case in recent years in Syria, the eastern Mediterranean, Libya and the Caucasus."

He did not name Turkey, a Nato member – but its invasion of northern Syria to crush Kurdish forces took place despite their fighting alongside the US against Isis in the area; it has engaged in tense naval standoffs with fellow Nato member Greece in the Mediterranean; and it intervened heavily in the Libyan war, deploying jihadist fighters from Syria to assist the UN-recognised

government against a military revolt backed by France.

Mr Macron added that "interoperability of armaments" was absolutely critical, a criticism of Turkey's purchase of Russian missile-defence systems.

Turkish President Recep Tayyip Erdogan and Mr Macron command Nato's second and third-largest militaries respectively.

The French leader spoke out as Nato military drills in eastern Europe provoked a Russian and Serbian response.

Russian and Serbian troops began joint exercises in Serbia as Defender Europe 2021, a massive US-led operation involving 28,000 troops conducting manoeuvres in eastern Europe, carried out drills in every one of Serbia's Balkan neighbours, surrounding the country.

Serbian Interior Minister Aleksandar Vulin said Russia was a "great security partner," citing the Nato exercises as a threat to their independence.

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and another saying he was going to join "the resistance."

Army sources described their colleague as "an extreme right-wing weapons nut who does not shy away from violence" and "an anti-vaxer who hates Van Ranst," according to Het Laatste Nieuws.

Links between the German military and the far right are also under the spotlight as the trial of army officer "Franco A" got under way on Thursday in Frankfurt.

The officer had assumed a false identity as a Syrian refugee, succeeding in registering as one while continuing to report for duty as a soldier. A large cache of weapons was found at a friend's house and Nazi memorabilia was discovered displayed in the common room of his barracks.

Prosecutors say he planned to stage terrorist atrocities and provoke a backlash against immigrants. He claims he was attempting to expose weaknesses in the immigration system and the weapons were to defend his family in an "emergency." The case has alarmed Germans following a string of exposés indicating far-right activity within the military.

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■ PALESTINE

'Deal doesn't solve the core issue – occupation'

PALESTINIAN Foreign Minister Riyad al-Maliki has warned that the ceasefire struck between Israel and Hamas does not address the core issue that started the violence.

Mr Maliki pointed to the desecration of the al-Aqsa mosque by Israeli soldiers, whose repeated attacks on worshippers there – repeated yesterday – prompted this month's

outbreak of hostilities. He also pointed to the ongoing ethnic cleansing in East Jerusalem and settlement expansion in the occupied West Bank.

The war had "refocused attention again on the issue of Palestine," he said. "We see today that the issue of Palestine, the issue of Jerusalem and the occupation ... is the most important issue for all

Muslims and Arabs across the world.

"We want to see the Palestinian people free and also living in their own independent Palestinian state with East Jerusalem as its capital."

Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu has vowed that a Palestinian state will never be established while he remains in power.

★ Star comment

Exist, resist, return: we are seeing a new phase of Palestinian resistance

EXIST, resist, return. It is instructive that a ceasefire – after 11 days of air strikes on the people of Gaza – is agreed only after the Palestinian people displayed their formidable solidarity.

This ranged from resistant people amid the desolated infrastructure of Gaza to include the embattled villagers and town-dwellers of the occupied territories and insurgent Palestinians who live and work in Israel.

Of course, what the so-called international community designate as “Israel” is a confection of many parts – the original territory granted by the UN resolution which gave conditional sovereignty to the new Israeli state in 1948 (rapidly followed by the violent eviction of hundreds of thousands of Palestinians from their homes within that territory), plus extensive territories which it has subsequently annexed by military force and settled with incomers.

The Palestinian people have demonstrated their courage and resilience in fulfilling the first condition of their strategy for struggle.

They exist. Under diverse conditions; under occupation, in exile, under bombardment and within the apartheid state itself.

The renewed unity of this beleaguered people is an inspiration to the millions who stand in solidarity and a source of anxiety to their oppressors and to the imperial powers whose sponsorship of this settler state is the precondition for its continued existence beyond its permitted territory.

The conflict is not reducible to a stand-off between the massed firepower of the most heavily armed nuclear state in the region and the back-yard rocketry of Hamas and Islamic Jihad.

The resistance now encompasses the entire Palestinian people and, with this week’s widely observed general strike, has punctured the Israeli assumption that the conflict can be indefinitely externalised and that the Israeli economy lies outside the conflict zone.

The Israeli economy is, of course, highly dependent on US subsidy and exports but production – especially construction and agriculture – depends for the accumulation of capital on a constant supply of Palestinian labour.

The international boycott, disinvestment and sanctions campaign, modelled on the original BDS strategy which weakened the South African apartheid state, is playing an increasing role in solidarity with Palestinian resistance.

In our country, the narrative framework in which the struggle for Palestinian statehood is discussed is transformed.

The Israeli propaganda machine has suffered a strategic defeat that has long been in the making but the new element, perhaps temporary, is that in the so-called mainstream media the Palestinian case is being heard, sometimes even directly, from authoritative Palestinian voices.



Thursday’s Channel Four interview with Husam Zomlot, the Palestinian ambassador to London, centred on an disingenuous bid to focus the discussion on whether he supported “what Hamas has been doing in Gaza.”

But in skilfully turning the issue to his demand for a “clear commitment from the UK to fix the mess created here,” Zomlot put Britain – as the original colonial power in Palestine and the present-day sponsor of the Israeli state – in the frame.

But the killer line was his reminder that “the absolute minimum Palestine will accept” is a two-state solution.

This was coupled with a demand that Britain cease resisting a role for the International Criminal Court.

It is revealing that Palestine has accepted ICC jurisdiction. Israel, backed by Britain and the US, refuses.

They exist. They resist. They will return.

The decisive factor in achieving this ceasefire is the depth and extent of Palestinian resistance and the worldwide solidarity which it inspired which compelled, after many delays and diversions, the US president to order Israel to stop.

There is a long way to go before a comprehensive peace agreement will permit the Palestinian people to repossess their stolen homes and lands.

Today’s demonstration is a sign that millions of people in Britain stand with them, for peace with justice.

The general strike: a severe blow to Israel’s status quo

BETHANY RIELLY reports on the the general strike that significantly disrupted the Israeli economy and exposed its dependence on Palestinian labour

ON Tuesday, hundreds of thousands of Palestinians across their historic homeland took part in the largest collective action the region has seen in decades.

Workers across Gaza, the West Bank, East Jerusalem, Israel and even refugee camps in Lebanon and Jordan withheld their labour in a show of unity and defiance against Israel’s long-held policy of fragmenting the Palestinian people.

Commercial centres across the West Bank were deserted, shops in the ancient markets of Jerusalem’s Old City tightly shuttered to protest at violence against Palestinians, the bombing of Gaza and looming evictions of families in East Jerusalem.

Observed widely, the general strike brought significant disruption to several Israeli sectors exposing the country’s dependence on its occupied population.

While strikes are a common tool of resistance for Palestinians, many shared the feeling that Tuesday’s action was something different.

“It is kind of unprecedented in our history that it should be so widespread,” Akram Salhab, a Palestinian activist in East Jerusalem, told me last week. “We are really seeing the new generation rising up and taking its future into its own hands.”

Since the Nakba when more than 700,000 Palestinians were forcibly displaced from their homeland in 1948, as the state of Israel was created, they have been separated both geographically and by their differing experiences of Israeli colonialism.

Over the decades Israel has tried to isolate Palestinians into different and dispersed societies – Gaza, the West Bank, within Israel, East Jerusalem and refugees outside of historic Palestine – to sever their sense of shared identity and resistance.

“Refugee camps from town, West Bank from Gaza and outside from inside – all these divisions are designed to fragment us,” Salhab explains.

But the activist believes the events over the last week demonstrate that these efforts have



UNITED THEY SHALL NOT BE DEFEATED: (Above) Palestinian demonstration during a general strike in the West Bank city of Ramallah on Tuesday and (top right) most shops closed in the West Bank city of Nablus last Tuesday

failed, with some referring to the collective action as the “unity intifada,” or uprising.

“The main measure of our strength is whether we can unite as a people and we have,” he says.

“The fact that we are all able



That the strike was led by the people, and not the Palestinian leadership, has also given many a renewed sense of hope

to be in this moment 73 years after the Nakba and we have on our hands what looks like a mass popular uprising across all of historic Palestine and the camps and diaspora is already an incredible achievement.”

Originally called by the Arab Follow Up committee – the Palestinian leadership in Israel – the general strike was picked up and spread across historic Palestine by youth and grassroots groups.

That the strike was led by the people, and not the Palestinian leadership, has also given many a renewed sense of hope.

“The young generation is here, it is out on the street, it is determined, it is sick and tired of the old generation and the political leadership that has stagnated and they want to move on with the struggle for liberation,” Fairouz Sharqawi, the director of Grassroots Al-Quds, an organisation that works to combat attempts by the Israeli occupation to fragment Palestinian communities in Jerusalem, tells me.

“This time it was really led by the people – that is what is so amazing about it.” Sharqawi believes that Israel

had been counting on the young generation becoming less politically aware and dropping the struggle for liberation. But recent days have shown this is far from the reality on the ground, with the Palestinian youth leading protests in East Jerusalem and across the country.

“I think the young generation is showing us all that they are more committed than other parts of our people,” she says.

The uprising erupted after multiple pressures on the Palestinian people finally came to a head. Recent weeks have seen Israeli forces attempt to restrict Palestinian freedoms during Ramadan, attacks on worshippers at al-Aqsa mosque and the attempted evictions of families from East Jerusalem. In Gaza, 11 days of brutal bombardment by Israeli forces has killed 232 Palestinians, including 65 children.

The new wave of resistance was kindled in Jerusalem before spreading to towns and cities within Israel.

The participation of Palestinian citizens of Israel, who make up 20 per cent of the population in the Jewish state, in the gen-



eral strike is particularly viewed as a testimony of the enduring unity of the Palestinian people.

This is because Palestinians living within the Jewish state, unaffected by some of the worst aspects of Israel's brutal occupation, are often accused of dismissing the national issue.

Amir Toumi of the Haifa Youth Movement, one of the strike organisers, tells me that Palestinian citizens of Israel experience an identity crisis.

"We are born in our homeland in Palestine but in a state that doesn't accept us because it is a Jewish state and we are not Jewish," he says. "We are born into this state where we don't know what we are."

"People in general were disconnected because everyone thinks about their welfare, they don't want to get into politics. They think our lives are much better than other Palestinians, why would we really get involved?"

But Toumi stresses that the events of the last weeks have shown that this attitude is changing.

"Now more than ever we see Palestinians who have never expressed political opinions before really joining the effort because now they see that the whole system of Israeli discrimination is against us as Palestinians even if we are citizens," he explains.

The mobilisation of Palestinian citizens of Israel has also been forced by settler violence against their communities. Lynch mobs, incited by Israel's far-right parties, have attacked Palestinians in recent days, aided by the Israeli police (<https://www.aljazeera.com/news/2021/5/16/palestinian-protests-in-israel-...>).

As a result, they widely respected the general strike, hitting Israeli sectors that have a high proportion of Arab workers including construction, transport, sanitation and catering.

Building sites, which are totally reliant on Palestinian labour from both sides of the Green Line, fell silent on Tuesday. Only 110 out of the 65,000 Palestinian construction workers from the West Bank went to work in Israel, paralysing sites and causing estimated losses of

£30,000, according to the Israeli Building Association, which admitted: "We cannot build without them." 10 per cent of all bus drivers in Israel did not show up to work, resulting in the cancellation of around 300 journeys while some 5,000 cleaning staff also walked out.

Israeli media reported that a number of McDonald's chains were forced to close, while delivery services reliant on Palestinian workers ceased operations for the day.

Those striking turned out onto the streets in droves. For Toumi, who has always strived to unite Palestinians in Israel with the wider struggle, the last week has brought him hope. "People I never thought I would see in the street are bringing their kids to the protests, they are raising their own flags in their neighbourhoods. It's extraordinary."

Awad Abdel Fattah of the One Democratic State Campaign and former general secretary of the Palestinian National Democratic Assembly (NDA) tells me that the strike surprised the Israeli government.

"People within the Green Line have been locked out as if they have forgotten their identity and their belongings with the Palestinian people so now they

are surprising everybody by saying we are still united," he says.

"Now they are acting again as one people."

But the action has not come without consequences. Many Palestinians were issued with illegal dismissal notices, while protesters have faced a brutal crackdown across the country.

In the week up until May 19, 26 Palestinians were killed by Israeli soldiers in the West Bank including a child, while 675 have been injured according to the Palestinian Centre for Human Rights. In Israel, more than 900 Palestinians have been arrested, including journalists. Israeli police have not arrested a single Israeli over the violence, despite armed settler gangs targeting Palestinian communities.

Fattah says this is being done to repress the intifada and prevent it from spreading, but stresses that attempts to quell the uprising will not succeed.

For many Palestinians the awakening of their shared sense of unity is too strong to simply go away.

On Tuesday, protesters in the West Bank's northern cities of Tulkarm and Taybeh could see Palestinians striking in unison in villages on the other side of the apartheid wall. "I feel proud," Abdel-Karim Dalbah, a journalist and activist from Tulkarm, tells me as he recalls the moment villages on the Israeli and West Bank side united in protest.

The sense of shared unity was also keenly felt in Jerusalem, Sharqawi says. "Though there are still physical barriers between Jerusalem and the West Bank, I think that collective action helped us see these physical barriers disappear and people feel connected again."

While there is a prevailing sense of hope, activists I spoke to also have mixed feelings. "What happened in Gaza and now what [is] happening in the West Bank, in East Jerusalem I am heartbroken but also proud and feel that something will happen," Dalbah tells me. "We are united all around the world. I think we will continue the uprising."

As Fayrouz says: "We are one colonised people with one struggle for liberation and freedom."

We will never stop our protests until Palestine is free

A temporary ceasefire does not change the brutal reality of the military occupation and the daily injustices inflicted on the Palestinian people, writes **BEN JAMAL** of the Palestine Solidarity Campaign

SOME 150,000 people took to the streets of London last week in protest against Israel's brutal bombardment of the Gaza Strip, its ethnic cleansing of Palestinians in Jerusalem from their ancestral homes and its violent, repressive treatment of Palestinians inside Israel exercising their right to protest.

Yesterday a ceasefire deal between Israel and Hamas came into effect and many think this will be the end of it, calling on all parties to now restore "calm."

And while there is no doubt that life for the Jewish-Israeli population will indeed go back to normal, with the beaches and clubs of Tel Aviv heaving, calm is not a concept Palestinians get to enjoy along with them.

The political leaders who have been calling for the violence in Gaza to end are the same ones who block any UN security council resolutions to hold Israel accountable for its long and growing list of war crimes.

They are also the same nations that sell Israel the arms it has been using to bombard the young population trapped in the open-air prison that is the Gaza Strip.

And these are the very same leaders who will now brush the Palestinians' plight under the table, and have us believe that we can avert our gaze because the bombing has ended.

But we are not marching because of the bombs. We are marching because today, after the bombs stopped dropping, Palestinians still wake up living under a system of injustice that even Israel's biggest human rights organisation B'Tselem and separately Human Rights Watch in a 212-page report define as meeting the definition of apartheid.

A temporary ceasefire does not change the reality on the ground for Palestinians.

It does not bring back the 232 Palestinians who were killed by Israel in its most recent assault on the Gaza Strip.

It does not bring back the 65 of those who were young children with their whole lives ahead of them, nor does it heal the wounds of the 1,900 Palestinians who were injured by Israel's weapons, many of which are manufactured in Britain.

It does not heal the collective trauma, nor does it rebuild the thousands of homes that have been destroyed.

It does not restore the livelihoods lost, the beloved bookshops and cafes that will never open their doors again.

It does not lessen Israel's inhumane siege on Gaza that entraps its population, denies them the right to live free lives, to move and build and develop.

A temporary ceasefire does not remove the constant threat of forced displacement faced by Palestinians living in Sheikh Jarrar and many other neighbourhoods, whose family homes are still in danger of being taken away from them at any moment.

A temporary ceasefire does

not change the brutal military occupation that is enforced on Palestinians in the West Bank and East Jerusalem by soldiers who deny them their freedom of movement, access to their own lands, demolish their homes and take their children into military custody.

A temporary ceasefire does not remove the barrage of laws that Palestinian citizens of Israel are faced with, that privilege the rights of Jewish citizens above theirs, rendering them second-class citizens in their own homes and subjecting them to violent attacks which they are unprotected from.

And finally, a temporary ceasefire does not grant the Palestinians who were forcibly ethnically cleansed from their homes in 1948, nor their descendants, including all of my extended family, their right – as enshrined in international law – to return home.

So for all of these reasons we will march again in our hundreds of thousands today. But the protest and the campaigning do not end there.

Israel's system of apartheid can only be sustained with the complicit support of our government, our political leaders, our public bodies and our companies and corporations, including those manufacturing weapons in towns across Britain.

The thousands who have joined the protests in the past few weeks now need to join our ongoing campaigns.

Our message today to the people of Palestine and to all complicity bodies in Britain must be loud and clear.

We will never stop our protests, we will never stop our lobbying, we will never stop our boycotts, until the Palestinian people enjoy what is their inalienable right; freedom, justice and equality in their historic homeland.

■ Ben Jamal is director of Palestine Solidarity Campaign (www.palestinecampaign.org).

“ Israel's biggest human rights organisation B'Tselem and separately Human Rights Watch in a 212-page report define [Israel's system of injustice] as meeting the definition of apartheid

“ Only 110 out of the 65,000 Palestinian construction workers from the West Bank went to work in Israel

Taking the fight to the heart of the Israeli war machine

Earlier this week Palestine Action campaigners brought an Israeli-owned arms factory's production to a halt by climbing onto the roof in a continuing protest against the killings in Gaza. **PETER LAZENBY** reports

“I WAS terrified,” said Ethan, one of four young Palestine Action activists who climbed a ladder onto the roof of an Israeli-owned arms factory in Leicester in the early hours of Wednesday this week, bringing production in the factory to a standstill.

“But we did it. And with support and solidarity we can keep doing this.”

The four activists were still on the factory roof yesterday, having suffered cold and driving rain, but determined to remain until police remove and arrest them, which they know is inevitable.

Before climbing to the roof they had prepared themselves for an uncomfortable stay, taking a tent, warm clothes, food and water to sustain themselves.

Palestine Action is new among the groups campaigning against Israel's colonisation of Palestine and its development of an apartheid state.

It was launched in July last year by two Palestine activists, Richard Barnard and Huda Ammori, who wanted to intensify campaigns for Palestine and Palestinian rights with direct action, including taking the fight to the heart of the Israeli war machine – the

manufacturers who supply the falsely named Israeli Defence Force with weapons.

The activists do so by occupying and blockading the factories manufacturing weapons for Israel, halting production.

They started late last year with Elbit, which has five factories in Britain, manufacturing drones for the Israeli military.

Since then the five factories have repeatedly been shut down by rooftop occupations.

For every action there is a reaction, and since Palestine Action began successfully halting production, albeit temporarily, at Elbit factories in Britain, Barnard and Ammori have been targeted by police.

Barnard said: “We have had our houses raided and our passports confiscated – illegally.”

“They were given back to us by the courts. The police didn't even bother to attend. That was on February 3.”

The two are also awaiting trial on charges relating to an occupation at an Elbit factory in Staffordshire.

Elbit is so far Palestine Action's main target, with a stated aim of driving the company out of Britain.

Elbit has 10 sites in Britain, five of them manufacturing drones and components used

in Israel's systematic subjugation of the Palestinian people.

The drones can drop canisters of tear gas to break up rallies and marches and were used in the last week against protesters taking part in a general strike in Palestine in protest at Israel's murderous attacks on the people of Gaza. Drones pinpoint targets for Israeli jets and tanks.

Elbit's five weapons factories are in Leicester, Oldham in Greater Manchester, Shenstone and Tamworth in Staffordshire, and in East Kent. It also has five non-manufacturing sites.

Two are headquarters offices in Bristol and London. The other three are at Royal Air Force bases: RAF Cranwell in Lincolnshire, RAF Valley in Anglesey in north Wales and RAF Barkston Heath in the East Midlands.

The RAF allows Elbit to use the three bases for testing the drones before they are sent to Israel – another example of the British government's complicity in Israel's repression of the people of Palestine.

Ammori said: “The RAF sites are where Elbit trials the technology, along with other arms companies.”

Palestine Action has targeted all five factories for occupations and blockades, successfully and

repeatedly halting production, though temporarily.

Ammori said: “We have shut the Shepstone factory four times in the last four months, the one in Tamworth twice, and Oldham three times.”

She estimates that each day of lost production at an Elbit factory costs the company £50-80,000 in lost profits.

Another of Palestine Action's aims is to alert communities around the Elbit factories to their role in supplying the Israeli war machine.

Last night a rally took place outside the Leicester factory. Attendance was expected to exceed the 100 who went to the factory gates when the occupation began on Wednesday.

Recent blockades of the Oldham factory have also involved local residents alongside Palestine Action activists.

Members of the Oldham Peace and Justice Campaign group joined the latest blockade there, bringing more people into the struggle. Blockades of the Oldham factory are now planned weekly.

“We encourage people to join us in direct action against Elbit and show solidarity,” said Ammori. “The people of Gaza need action, not words.”

Ethan, on the roof of the Leicester factory, said on Thursday: “We could see a few at the gates on Wednesday. Later on there were about 100. And they stayed late, maybe until midnight.”

Ammori said that as well as producing drones for surveillance, and “bombing” protesters with tear gas canisters, the Elbit factory at Shenstone in Staffordshire produces components which play a more deadly part in the Israeli military's operations.

“The engines that are made



in Shenstone also fit drones made in Israel that can fire missiles,” she said.

“By direct action we can directly stop these weapons which are used to kill people in Gaza,” said Ammori.

“That's why the actions are so important. The longer we stay there the longer we disrupt the kill chain.”

The appalling situation in Palestine last week meant that the Leicester rooftop occupation attracted international attention, with coverage on broadcast networks in India, Russia, on the BBC, and with a visit scheduled by the Arabic TV network Al Jazeera.

In the longer term, Palestine Action wants to see Elbit forced out of Britain, whether by the government caving in to growing public pressure, which is unlikely, particularly under the present government, or by making the factories uneconomic through enforced closures, which is also a formidable challenge.

But there's also an immediate and rewarding effect of the occupations, and one which kicked in within hours of news of the Leicester occupation being broadcast. It emerged on Palestine Action's online site.

“We have had hundreds of comments,” said Ammori, “and a lot of them were from Gaza, from Palestine. We got an amazing response from people in Pal-

estine. They are warmed by this.”

Some unions are committed to the struggle to help Palestine, and the Leicester occupation brought an example.

On Wednesday police called for fire service support at the factory. When crews arrived they were asked to help remove the occupiers. The firefighters refused and drove off.

The Fire Brigades Union (FBU) has a longstanding commitment of support for the people of Palestine, and reiterated it in a national statement on Wednesday following the firefighters' refusal to help remove the protesters.



“

The longer we stay there the longer we disrupt the kill chain

“

We got an amazing response from people in Palestine. They are warmed by this



INTERNATIONALISM: Protesters from Palestine Action on the roof of the Elbit factory in Leicester

“The firefighters were brilliant. It was true solidarity, like the Italian dockworkers,” said Ammori, referring to the refusal of Italian dockers this week to load ships with weapons destined for Israel.

In the 10 months since it was launched, Palestine Action has grown. Direct action groups have sprung up London, Norwich, the Midlands, Leicester, Cambridge, York and Glasgow.

There’s no formal structure, Ammori said, “We would encourage people to see what we are about and if they are interested in taking direct action then take action. If people want to form a group they can contact us at info@palestineaction.org.”

Back on the roof of the Elbit factory in Leicester, “terrified” Ethan was preparing for another night in the tent with his three friends, well aware that police could arrive at any time to remove and arrest them, particularly late at night and in the early hours when even the hardest supporters at the factory gates would have gone home.

Ethan says overcoming his initial fear was a big step in an act of direct action.

“It’s important to say we were all scared,” he said. “To be honest I didn’t believe I could do it, especially with the current ‘down’ on rights to protest.

“But that’s changed. We have shut Elbit down. We are

not going away. And after Elbit we will be moving on to other things and playing our part.”

For the immediate future he asked for the support which has grown outside the factory gates to continue once the four are arrested.

“Please keep supporting us when we get arrested,” he said. “We definitely will be arrested. We knew that when we were getting into this.

“And take direct action. The numbers are on our side. I think public opinion has shifted dramatically. The London protest was the biggest since 2009. If we can convert that into direct action...”

“People can do whatever they are comfortable with. Take the next step. You will amaze yourself at what you can do.

“By taking action we are taking responsibility for the UK’s involvement in Israel’s colonial project.”

He appealed for people to head for the factory gates in support whenever and wherever an Elbit occupation takes place, including Leicester.

Legal action by Elbit has hit Palestine Action’s ability to raise funds. Their appeals for financial support have been removed from fundraising sites such as Paypal, GoFundMe and Facebook.

Palestine Action has set up its own fundraising platform at palestineaction.org/donate.

We need unity to resist the scourge of unemployment

BILL GREENSHIELDS previews two forthcoming events to help organise and build strength as job ‘losses’ mount amid the Covid crisis

FACING the threat to millions as furlough is ended, we hear about “job loss” every day, as workers – as a result of factors beyond their control – are thrown out of work, deprived of income and thrown into individual and collective community desperation and deprivation.

“Job loss” is a weasel term. We might as well refer to wilful murder as “life loss.”

It’s a term which avoids responsibility or guilt for the crime and presents disaster as an unfortunate but largely normal aspect of life.

House keys and phones are lost. Jobs are not “lost” – they are destroyed by the crises of the economic system, by the policies and actions of those that own and control that economy, imposed by their tame politicians.

Right now, as furlough ends, we are facing the destruction of further millions of jobs as a result of the virus crisis – or, more accurately, by the government’s handling of it.

Some would say “mishandling” – but that’s another misnomer.

The Tories have not mishandled the crisis as far as they are concerned. They’ve protected and increased the wealth and power of the corporate monopolies, maintained the banking and finance industry and strengthened the repressive forces of the state – while wages decline, workers face daily greater insecurity, small businesses and self-employed go to the wall.

Not a bad outcome for a government 100 per cent committed to state-backed monopoly capitalism.

They intend to emerge with a sufficiently large unemployed “reserve army of workers” that they can use to drive wages of the employed even further down, reduce rights and working conditions and undermine union organisation.

In its most blatant form, we recognise it as “fire and rehire.” But every day there is the spoken and implied threat – particularly in non-union workplaces – that if you don’t want the job on the boss’s terms, there are plenty in the “reserve army” who will take it.

That’s the value of unemployment to capitalism –



whether it be the 2.6 million unemployed predicted by the Office for Budget Responsibility or the four million anticipated by many – they will be used by the rich and powerful to drive down wages, after more than a decade without a rise, and a 1 per cent real-terms cut over the last year, and so increase profits and personal wealth.

Unemployment is an attack on both those out of work and those with jobs. We need to fight it together. We need to be loud and clear that the virus crisis did not create the inequalities and injustices, structural racism and sexism, exploitation and oppression, poverty and powerlessness that are endemic to capitalism.

But Covid has exposed and massively intensified all these. This is as true of unemployment as any other aspect of the capitalist system of corruption and crisis.

In the 16 months of the pandemic, one million jobs have been scrapped in Britain; but we need to remind ourselves that prior to Covid, even before the end of the effects of the 2008-9 crisis, a new crisis was building out of the destructive cycles of capitalism.

All the indications were of a developing “downturn” and recession – from 2018 to 2020 Britain had already “lost” 436,000 jobs.

Hardest hit then, now, through capitalist history and future, are young workers, women workers, disabled and black and minority ethnic workers.

Capitalism loves division and super-exploitation – the low-paid have been the most serious victims of unemployment.

All this is darkened further by the looming shadow of hidden unemployment among Britain’s six million “economically inactive,” the enforced underemployment of four million gig-economy “precarious” workers and the million workers on zero-hours contracts – and millions more who want full-time jobs but are forced by universal credit to accept low-paid part-time work – many as “agency” staff and bogus “self-employment” – or face sanctions.

These exploitative work practices are now common in every type of occupation: whether delivering food on your bike, or babies in the labour ward, whether handing out burgers or legal advice, whether building roads or educational achievement.

As Marx put it: “The bourgeoisie has stripped of its halo every occupation hitherto honoured and looked up to with reverent awe. It has converted the physician, the lawyer, the priest, the poet, the man of science, into its paid wage labourers.”

And all wage labourers are facing similar threats of job insecurity, job “loss,” underemployment and unemployment.

The Communist Party is organising two inspirational and practical analytical and organisational online events.

On Saturday May 29 from 11am the Unemployment Fightback “fast and furious” webinar, chaired by the CPB’s Moz Greenshields, brings together 12 leaders from a broad spectrum of the working-class movement.

We have trade-union gen-

eral secretaries and workplace stewards, gig-economy workers and “new union” organisers of super-exploited workers, leaders of young workers in struggle and online campaigners, People’s Assembly, NHS and public-service leaders, community activists and political No Turning Back campaigners, and international trade union and political organisers.

Then just a week later, on June 5, we will reconvene with the Unemployment Fightback organising conference, chaired by Carolyn Jones of the Institute of Employment Rights, with short introductions to eight workshop groups on different organising areas and methods: building workplace organisation and strength, organising in the gig-economy, organising online with StrikeMap, community organising with trades councils, people’s assemblies and local government, developing a union organising culture and IWGB “new union” organising.

We’ve had to fight unemployment from the beginning of capitalism and will have to for as long as it exists.

The demand for the right to work runs throughout our history in individual workplaces, across regions of Britain, in whole industries – and with great monumental periods of struggle from the 19th century, on to the National Unemployed Workers Movement of the 1920s and ‘30s, to the post-WWII period and the early ‘80s People’s March for Jobs and with the establishment of the Unemployed Workers’ Centres.

Now we must be prepared and determined to carry this history forward in the face of a challenge that will be in all the history books.

What future will we workers in Britain make in coming out of the virus crisis? Will it be “back to normal ... periodic crisis-driven unemployment with all the consequent cuts to wages and conditions?”

Or will it be a “new normal” where the needs of the people, not the greed of the rich and powerful, are the nation’s priorities and the right to work is at the centre of our movement?

■ Register for the webinar at mstar.link/UnemploymentWebinar. Register for the organising conference at mstar.link/UnemploymentConference.

Scottish independence and the British trade union movement

THE re-elected Scottish National Party government, with Green Party support, has won a clear mandate for a second independence referendum.

The Scottish Trades Union Congress has passed a motion stating that “the Scottish Parliament should have the power to hold a referendum on Scotland’s future and should not require UK government consent.”

This democratic right to a second referendum must be unequivocally supported by every socialist and trade union leadership throughout Britain and Ireland.

The class collaborationism that defined the approach of the Labour Party and many trade union leaderships in the 2014 independence referendum must be confronted and rejected, as must the self-fulfilling prophecy that working-class division is an inevitable outcome of support for Scottish self-determination.

It was class anger not narrow nationalism that drove strong support for independence in working-class heartlands like Glasgow, the West of Scotland and Dundee in the first referendum – it was also a desire for democratic accountability, political control and hope that independence might prove a credible route to a more fair and equal society.

It was also an expression of workers’ contempt for the

JOHN McINALLY argues the British trade union movement can maintain unity by adopting an independent class position and fully supporting the democratic right of Scottish workers to pursue national self-determination

Westminster political consensus exemplified in the “Better Together” campaign, an alliance of Tory, Labour and Liberal parties, that offered nothing but the status quo of cuts, privatisation and austerity.

The Blairite Labour Party abandoned British workers, but they were also repeatedly failed by the Trades Union Congress (TUC) and right-wing union

leaders who refused to organise a generalised co-ordinated fightback against relentless neo-liberal assault on their terms and conditions: betrayal of the 2010-11 public-sector pensions dispute emboldened David Cameron’s coalition government to implement austerity in its most brutal form.

Many Scottish workers were suspicious of the SNP but their support for independence exposed Peter Mandelson’s hubristic delusion they had “nowhere to go.”

Scottish workers’ support for self-determination was, and remains, the result of a fundamental crisis of working-class leadership and political representation.

Led by irreconcilable “family, flags and forces” British nationalists Labour is incapable of playing any constructive or even independent role in the independence debate and will echo, with some cosmetic presentational “differences,” the Tories’ uncompromising pro-unionist position, further alienating the radical youth and Scottish workers, including many of their own current party members.

Trade unions can meet the challenges, dangers and opportunities presented by

the independence debate but this will require a clear class analysis, not in abstract terms, but in the context of the living struggle now unfolding. That means the adoption of an independent class position with principled support for the democratic right of workers to pursue national self-determination while campaigning as never before to protect and advance the interests of workers throughout the islands and uncompromisingly advocating a socialist alternative to the chaos and instability of capitalism.

Lessons from the independence referendum 2014

Woefully unprepared for the first referendum the British trade union movement avoided division by good luck rather than judgement. But the stakes now are immeasurably higher and UK-wide unions and the TUC must now begin a debate and learn from mistaken approaches in the first referendum.

The following examples give a picture of how some union leaderships approached the 2014 referendum: imposition of a recommendation to vote No

to independence with no consultation with either members or activists; a recommendation to vote No decided by a UK-wide union conference; membership consultation, but only after a leadership imposed a No recommendation and, a “neutral” stance, recommending neither Yes nor No.

In Unison, the UK’s largest public-sector union, the leadership attempted to impose a No recommendation but were faced down by Scottish activists who warned them of the inadvisability of such a move.

Two unions, the rail workers and prison officers, held Scottish conferences that, significantly, resulted in Yes to independence votes.

The imposition of vote No to independence recommendations by leadership fiat or by so-called “democratic” UK-wide votes – in reality an effective veto on workers’ right to national self-determination – are “strategies” that can only lead to division and even splits.

A foreshadow of such potential division occurred when the STUC, in touch with the mood of Scottish workers, refused to back the Better Together campaign.

The imposition of pro-unionist recommendations to

members led to not insignificant membership loss in some unions, a self-inflicted wound exploited by the SNP as over 11,000 workers joined their trade union wing.

It is true that “a Scottish worker has more in common with a worker in Birmingham than a Scottish millionaire” but substituting a slogan for an analysis and a sermon for a strategy does little to illuminate the class basis of the struggle taking place and which underpins support for independence among significant layers of Scottish workers.

There is no demand from Scottish workers or activists for a split in the UK-wide trade union movement because they understand that no contradiction exists between pursuing their democratic right to self-determination while maintaining the wider unity of the British trade union movement.

National self-determination: a democratic strategy for the trade unions

The strategy adopted by Civil Service union PCS offers some clue to how democratic debate and a campaigning strategy can be developed across the movement.

The union prioritised and enabled the widest possible



It was class anger not narrow nationalism that drove strong support for independence in working-class heartlands



Ken Livingstone

former mayor of London

Time for a border poll in Ireland

LAST week saw the outcome of the inquests into the deaths of the victims of the Ballymurphy massacre.

The coroner found that all 10 of those shot dead between August 9 and 11 1971 – in the days following the introduction of internment without trial – were “entirely innocent of any wrongdoing.”

For 50 years the families knew the truth, but for half a century that truth was hidden from the British public.

Internment and the use of military force against civilian populations was part of a long litany of failed British policies in Ireland.

Perhaps the greatest policy failure of all, however, was not 50 but 100 years ago. This year marks the centenary of the partition of Ireland, but there is

The people of Ireland have the right to shape their own future, as agreed in the Good Friday Agreement, writes **KEN LIVINGSTONE**

little sense of jubilation. Earlier this year, polling conducted for the BBC found that even within Northern Ireland only 40 per cent considered it a cause for celebration.

On both sides of the border, most people now believe that Ireland will be united at some point in the next 25 years.

Westminster politicians saw partition as a way to “get Ireland done.” By dividing Ireland it was hoped that the divisive “Irish question” could be removed from British politics.

The fruits were bitter. Fifty years of discrimination under what amounted to a one-party

unionist regime were followed by three decades of conflict, in which more than 3,500 people were killed.

The sectarian nature of the state that was built from partition is still visible at the so-called “peace lines” in Belfast and other towns and cities that were recently the site of fresh disturbances.

But 23 years ago, in 1998, the Good Friday Agreement began to lay the ground on which peace could be built. Central to that agreement was the right, guaranteed to all the people of Northern Ireland, to identify as Irish or British or both and to

pursue through peaceful and democratic means their future aspirations for the island.

It placed on the British secretary of state a responsibility to organise a referendum should it appear likely to lead to constitutional change – and across Ireland today, that conversation is growing louder.

The part it played in bringing about the Good Friday Agreement is arguably the most important achievement of the last period when Labour was in power.

Alongside others from right across the labour movement, I am proud of the part I played

in insisting – even in the most dark and difficult days – that dialogue and negotiation offered the only path to peace.

With a Tory government content to wallow in its own apparent ignorance, the labour movement in this country, along with civil society and the Irish community, has an enormous part to play in supporting the kind of dialogue that is every bit as necessary today.

Raising the level of understanding about Ireland in Britain can help to ensure that the failures of the past are learnt from and not repeated and put pressure on the government to

do the right thing and live up to its commitments.

It is time to make good on the promises made in 1998. A whole generation born after the Good Friday Agreement are now adults, while there are people in their 40s today who were not yet old enough to vote when it was signed.

The people of Ireland have the right to shape their own future. It is surely time for a border poll.

■ You can follow Ken at www.twitter.com/Ken4London and www.facebook.com/KenLivingstoneOfficial.



debate through consultation with Scottish members and activists, including the circulation of information from both camps, policy forums, branch debates and a Scottish conference.

Membership surveys of the union's 30,000 Scottish members showed their main concerns were job security and pensions with their main priority the provision of good public services.

Delegates attending the Scottish conference in February 2014 voted on three options:

The union would provide information on both campaigns so members could decide which to support and PCS would continue to campaign on industrial issues with the Scottish

government, as well as with the Westminster government, and would continue to press its demands on PCS's alternative to austerity, cuts and privatisation with both the Yes and No campaigns;

Support Yes, and Support No. Branch votes, reflecting their membership, voted for Option 1 – 18,025, 2 – 5,775 and 3 – 0.

This sharp picture of a mixed consciousness within a key sector of Scottish workers showed a wariness about both Yes and No campaigns, although the total lack of support for the No campaign strongly echoed members' revulsion toward Better Together.

The conference overwhelmingly endorsed the union leadership's approach that PCS should not be a mere observer in the campaign but active participants with an independent

LOUD AND CLEAR: Protesters during a Scottish independence rally in George Square, Glasgow on May 1 2021



Socialists and trade unionists have nothing to fear from demands for Scottish self-determination

class position, promoting and defending the interests of its members and the working class, campaigning for an end to austerity, cuts and privatisation, and for tax justice, repeal of the anti-trade union laws, equality and civil liberties, and an extension of public ownership of the utilities.

This strategy, including full support for the right of workers to national self-determination, was endorsed by the union's UK-wide annual conference.

The Tories and the reactionary British establishment will attempt to defeat the independence campaign through the tried and tested methods of liberal democracy – a biased press and media, "Project Fear" propaganda and so on.

But such methods are becoming increasingly unreliable, which is why the Tories are

reaching for stronger repressive legislation and strategies, including the Policing Bill and voter suppression.

Trade unionists need no reminding that the UK has the most repressive anti-union laws in the Western world and should be deeply concerned by calls from influential representatives of the ruling class for a "Catalonian solution", ie, open state repression, to defeat independence.

It must not be underestimated how important it is for the Tories to assemble another Better Together-style formation and exploit the authority of the trade union movement as part of a pro-unionist front, but such an alliance can only divide and disorientate workers in all nations and must be rejected by all trade unions and the TUC.

Many Scots now regard Tory Britain as demonstrating characteristics of a failed state in irreversible decline – Brexit, rising British/English nationalism, racism and the disastrous response to the Covid-19 pandemic in which the ruling kleptocracy put their own enrichment over people's lives.

Scottish workers' support for independence is more likely based on "anything is better than this" than "Saor Alba."

The past period is no reliable guide to the qualitatively different one we have now entered, which is one of unparalleled instability in which multiple crises will provoke rapid shifts

in consciousness with the established order questioned as never before.

Workers' support for independence is not an embrace of reactionary nationalism but a demand for democracy and, in however an undeveloped or even distorted form, for socialism itself.

Socialists and trade unionists have nothing to fear from demands for Scottish self-determination but each union must develop strategies for the widest consultation and participation among Scottish members while asserting, through patient explanation and debate to members in England, Wales and Ireland why the right to national self-determination, a basic democratic demand, must be fully supported.

Trade union unity can be maintained and even strengthened but only by adopting an independent class position that stands separate and distinct from both reactionary British nationalism and pro-capitalist Scottish nationalism and which builds the strongest possible campaigns to leverage maximum concessions from the Westminster and Scottish governments.

Nothing will unite our class across the islands like a co-ordinated fightback, and that must be the movement's top priority.

■ JOHN McINALLY is the former PCS union vice-president, he oversaw the union's strategy in the 2014 Scottish independence referendum. Follow John McInally on Twitter @JohnMcInally13.

TV Weekend preview

with Neil Jenkin

POLITICAL STATEMENT: Boom Bang a Bang singer Lulu clutches her trophy after coming joint first in 1969



Saturday Eurovision Song Contest, 8pm BBC1

A GLIMPSE into the abyss that is foreign telly, the contest has been with us for 65 years.

Most depressing for me is the almost universal decision to sing in English. And they've banned Belarus's

entry for being "political." Wasn't Boom Bang a Bang political? Ding a Dong? What about Waterloo? Definitely political. Bah. Hypocrites the lot of them. Nul points.

More to my liking is tonight's **Father Ted** (0.15am More4) episode in which Ted and Dougal enter the Eurosong contest.

Film

Saturday

Harry & Tonto, 9.55pm Talking Pictures

When his apartment building is torn down, a retired lifelong New Yorker (Art Carney) and his cat go on a cross-country odyssey. Carney picked up the Oscar for best actor for his performance in Paul Mazursky's 1974 comedy drama.

The Lobster, 1.20am Film4

In Yorgos Lanthimos's 2015 dystopian black comedy, newly single David (Colin Farrell) is sent to The Hotel to find a romantic partner. He has 45 days in which to form a relationship with someone with whom he shares a defining characteristic; if he doesn't, he'll be transformed into a lobster. Fair enough.

Sunday

Vendetta For The Saint,

3.15pm Talking Pictures

Feature-length 1969 edit from the TV series. A holidaying Roger Moore's raised eyebrow gets caught up with the mafia in Palermo and Naples.

Drama

Sunday

The Pursuit of Love, 9pm BBC1

Final episode of this adaptation of Nancy Mitford's novel set among the Bright Young Things of the interwar years. Emily Beecham, Lily James and Andrew Scott star. What's with the anachronistic soundtrack, though? Did someone just get drunk and ramble round Spotify for days? How very now.

Fargo, 10pm Channel 4

The critics seem to have turned against this spin-off from the Coen brothers' black-comedy crime film, but to this viewer this fourth series, set amid the warring gangs of Kansas City in

1950, retains the elements that made its predecessors watchable: savour murderous Nurse Mayflower (Jessie Buckley)'s Minnesotan accent.

Documentary

Saturday

Arena: African Apocalypse, 9.30pm BBC2

Poet and activist Femi Nylander travels to Niger to discover the modern-day impact of French army atrocities that took place in 1899.

Sunday

Dark Matter: A History of the Afrofuture, 9pm BBC4

An exploration of how black artists have used the sci-fi genre to examine black history and conjure up new alternative futures.

Sport

Saturday & Sunday

Giro d'Italia, 2pm, S4C

Stages 14 and 15, a couple of lumpy rides as the tour heads into its final week. Highlights later in English on Quest (7pm).

Saturday

Scottish Cup Final, 1pm BBC1 Scotland

St Johnstone v Hibernian, or Perth v Leith for clueless Sassenachs like me. Sadly, a Covid surge in Glasgow means Hampden Park will be empty of fans. Kick-off is at 2pm.

Yesterday's sudoku

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

LITERATURE | SHAKESPEARE AND THE LOST PLAYS

BY DAVID MCINNIS | CAMBRIDGE UNIVERSITY PRESS, £29.99

Research into the lost plays of the Shakespearean period provides new insights into the Bard and his work, says GORDON PARSONS

DESPITE extensive research, relatively little is known about Shakespeare and his work and, consequently, popular scholarship tends to focus on the language and dramaturgy of the Bard's extant plays.

Fortunately, compared with his contemporaries, many

of his plays have survived through fellow actors posthumously collecting 36 of them in the famous First Folio.

Theatre historian David McInnis recognises that rather than being an isolated artist foreseeing his world reputation, this busy working drama-

tist, feeding the insatiable daily theatre appetite of Elizabethan and early Jacobean audiences, must essentially have responded to the currents of popularity and fashion, as important in the 16th and 17th centuries as they are today.



A specialist in tracing lost plays of the period, McInnis records that as many as 744 are identifiably lost, with hundreds more completely untraceable. This is not owing to their lack of quality but the scarcity of surviving texts and performance records.

McInnis's literary archaeology sets out to "better understand Shakespeare's plays by restoring them to their most immediate and pressing context: the lost drama of the day" and in this quest, he draws on that vagary of human perception Rubin's Vase.

The outline contours of the ambiguous, two-dimensional image mark out identical faces and the eye necessarily sees either the "figure" of the vase or the "ground" of the faces but never both.

Presenting Shakespeare's plays as the "figure," McInnis employs forensically examined evidential fragments establishing the nature and dating of lost plays from the repertoires of the Lord Chamberlain's Men – Shakespeare's company – and their main rival, the Admiral's Men, as the "ground."

SHAKESPEARE'S STAGES: A panorama of London by Claes Van Visscher in 1616 shows two theatres – The Bear Garden and The Globe – in the foreground



Naturally the individual play, the figure, is more dominant given the semi-invisible lost plays but McInnis demonstrates that Hamlet might originally have been written more as a play "participating in a Danish matrix," of "a decade or more of representations of Denmark on London stages," than as today's dramatic study of the tragic hero's psychological turmoil.

Awareness of the commercial influences on Shakespeare leads to questioning modern views of his career path as a progression from early histories, through middle comedy, to later tragedy and a final "reconciliation" period.

These plays, often seen as a professional journey from youthful energy to aged maturity, were more likely to have reflected the changing theatrical temper of the times.

McInnis also examines the likely influences on the choice and nature of the plays of the four different theatre spaces Shakespeare's company moved to during his career.

Although clearly designed for the academic library, Shakespeare and the Lost Plays is a fascinating work of literary detection. It humanises a remarkable playwright, one among many working in the emerging and competitive theatrical marketplace of his day.

CAMPBELL PRICE is one of the great communicators on all things ancient Egypt – check out his excellent YouTube seminar on the subject and you'll see why – and his interest in that ancient world was first piqued at a very young age at the Kelvingrove Museum in his native Glasgow.

"The perfume of antiquity" which pervaded the Egyptian objects on display drew him in: "I've been hooked ever since," he says. He's Curator of Egypt and Sudan at the Manchester Museum, which houses one of Britain's largest Egyptology collections, and he has just published a new book Mummies of Egypt, which investigates the colonial acquisition of Egyptian antiquities and the ways in which they have been interpreted in the Western world.

Despite an outstanding academic track record, he admits to taking a "somewhat childish" sense of excitement forward into a career in Egyptology. "Egyptian colleagues tend to develop an interest slightly later in life and have a somewhat more mature attitude to the subject compared to many non-Egyptian Egyptologists," he says.

"Any student, of any subject, bases at least part of their interpretation on their own upbringing; it isn't a failing to admit that. Some colleagues could learn from that, I think.

"Egyptology encompasses a vast range of different specialisms and, in seeking to understand a different culture, it is a valuable addition to the humanities, not least because there is such a vast amount of heritage in Egypt itself."

In a recent blog post, Campbell insisted that while Egyptologists should be in the business of trying to understand the ancient Egyptians and share their findings and interpretations, they ought also to be honest and open about their own preconceptions.

"Egyptology exists under the shadow of – and to an extent perpetuates – the foundational opinions of white, upper and middle-class European men," he explains.

"They have shaped the discipline, such as it is, and it is a lot of work to critique and unthink

OPINION

Artful exclusion

TONY CONWAY and GRAHAM LEE take issue with the marginalisation of local talent in the programme for Coventry City of Culture

JUNE 5 marks the launch of Coventry's year as City of Culture. It actually started on May 17 but the organisers kept it low-key to avoid any large gatherings – imagine a cultural event that works best without any observers!

City of Culture is an honour bestowed by Whitehall every few years on a city that it believes would be particularly deserving of some Londoners showing it what "proper" culture is.

Previous recipients include Derry-Londonderry – as the private company that ran the festival rebranded it – Liverpool and Hull.

Looking at some of the big names in the programme, you could easily get the impression that the idea is that those city folks are coming up from Euston to let us know how culture works: the Turner Prize will be at the Herbert Art Gallery and the Booker Prize "virtually announced" from Coventry, whatever that means.

And Terry Hall, formerly of the Specials, will return to the city to curate a three-day music event.

One local visual artist told me that the whole programme felt more "host town, not ghost town."

Local performers were marginalised and prime locations used to showcase imported works, with no thought as to whether Coventry-based talent could be highlighted.

Pictures are already being shared across social media of some of the impressive murals that have been installed by artists from Bristol and London.

Do the street artists of Coventry not have any thought-provoking expressions of life in their home city to share with the world? Couldn't Coventry City of Culture celebrate the culture of the city of Coventry?

High up on the programme is a theatre adaptation of Silas Marner by Coventry-based George Eliot, involving local performers but there are



plenty more grassroots, local work happening, down the programme – the website warns that these have not been produced by the official company but are "taking place during our year."

And even more will be happening that hasn't come to the notice of the official committee. Coventry Association of International Friendship (CAIF) will celebrate the links made between women of the city and of Stalingrad in 1944 and will organise a Coventry-Dresden festival of the arts too.

The City of Culture will excite many, but it is a missed opportunity. One issue of grave concern is the lack of trade

union involvement.

Coventry has a proud trade union and tenants' association history which has won big pay rises for workers and last year there were a large number of Black Lives Matter demonstrations. Protest is part of the city's culture.

Many community groups such as CAIF, the Lord Mayor Peace Committee, Coventry Against Racism and Love Music Hate Racism have attempted to liaise with the culture team but given the nature of these bodies have not been consulted on the programme.

We should welcome the events planned during Refugee Week which involve the

A LOT TO LIVE UP TO: Coventry City of Culture
Pic: coventry2021.co.uk

Coventry Asylum and Refugee Action Group. But most people ask what will the legacy be. Will local people gain long-term employment? Will there be any apprenticeships? What will links will be made with the local schools?

It remains to be seen whether this is a year-long jamboree that packs up at the end of its tenure and moves on – Medway, Southampton, Bradford and even, improbably, the county of Lancashire all have their websites ready for their 2025 bids – or whether there will be a lasting, transformative cultural legacy for Coventry. And whether it's a legacy the people of Coventry want, or the one a central committee in the capital think that they should have.

The local Communist Party branch wants to inject class politics into the events, organise busking in the city and ask people what they think the City of Culture means to them.

Coventry-based readers of the Morning Star can contact us at coventry@communistparty.org.uk if they have any views and wish to join us in really celebrating Coventry's culture.

“Egyptology exists under the shadow of – and to an extent perpetuates – the foundational opinions of white, upper and middle-class European men

INTERVIEW

Open to radical interpretation

DR CAMPBELL PRICE talks to Cliff Cocker about moving the study of ancient Egypt on from elitist preconceptions



Pics (except where bylined separately): Julia Thorne/Manchester Museum



many of the assumptions that underlie even the most well regarded university teaching of Egyptology today."

For most, ancient Egypt is simply reimagined in the image of the beholder and the dominant narrative is "a sort of proto-British empire, with hierarchies and terminology used to describe ancient-life worlds mapped onto those the 'founding fathers' understood."

Thus "viceroys" and even "durbars" [the courts of Indian rulers] are described as taking place in the second millen-

nium BC and, he says, it is interesting that when Egypt was ruled by the Greeks and Romans "that sort of multiculturalism is difficult for the imperial British mentality to process."

Ancient Egypt, as the blurb for his new book explains, is popularly synonymous with gold, sex, art and death. But Price questions to what extent these concepts are representative of ancient concerns or realities and how modern interpreters may shape the ancient past to fit a narrative attractive to themselves and their audiences.

Unlike ancient Greece and Rome, there are few contemporary commentaries about political and social events from ancient Egypt but there are some written accounts which have incidental details about social conditions, including the first recorded strike in human history.

For Price, how the ancient audience interacted with what are today museum pieces is a source of fascination. The statues often have hieroglyphic texts on them telling how they



ought to be "used" – an example is one asking passers-by to leave offerings and even clean the monument – and he has translated some of them for a book slated for publication next year.

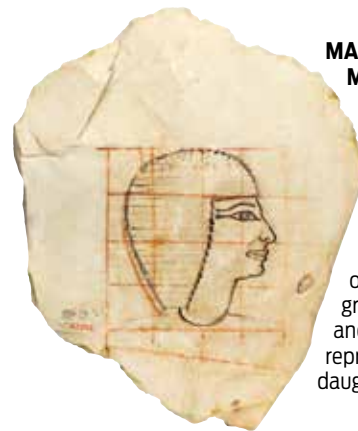
The elite vs non-elite in Egyptian archaeology, a focus of his new book, is an age-old issue. "Elite contexts tend to be richer and yield more written – therefore more "historical" – evidence and to have more display-worthy objects," he says.

"Non-elite contexts – modest burials and mud-brick houses – simply don't survive the deprivations of time nearly as well as those built of stone,

designed for maximum display, for the gods, for eternity. Thus, museums don't show anything like a cross-section of society but rather focus on rich dead people.

"But does this mean that the non-elite – by far the majority of the population would seem to have been working on the land – were aesthetically deprived or is this an argument for silence? I attempt to address the question of audience in my next book on elite sculpture which – surprise, surprise – seems to have been intended for a restricted, elite audience."

He is clear that we don't need more royal tombs, we need "closed contexts" – an undisturbed settlement or ritual



MARVELS FROM THE MANCHESTER MUSEUM:

(Left to right from top) Basalt stela, inscribed in hieroglyphs and demotic script, Ptolemaic period, 305-30 BC; wooden toy horse set on four wheels, Roman period, 30 BC-150 AD; green glass bracelet, Roman period; Gilded cartonnage mummy mask, Ptolemaic period; Openwork wooden carving, probably from a coffin or funerary bier of Isis, Roman period; Ostrakon, an artist's gridded sketch of Senenmut, found in his tomb and a block statue of the frequent representation of Senenmut holding Hatshepsut's daughter Neferure, both c1479-1458 BCE

deposit – which might furnish more direct insight into how objects were at least originally associated, if not actually used, and provide insights into social practice.

A problem for Price is that museums don't transmit facts, they create them and "all museum visions are skewed in some sense. The surviving evidence is biased towards the rich dead and curators can only try to order the material they have at their disposal to give a narrative meaningful to a modern museum audience."

One such narrative is that of Hatshepsut and Senenmut. In response to the inevitable question about what ancient Egyptian site he would visit if he could travel back in time, he picks out Deir el-Bahri, a complex of mortuary temples and tombs opposite Luxor on the west bank of the Nile.

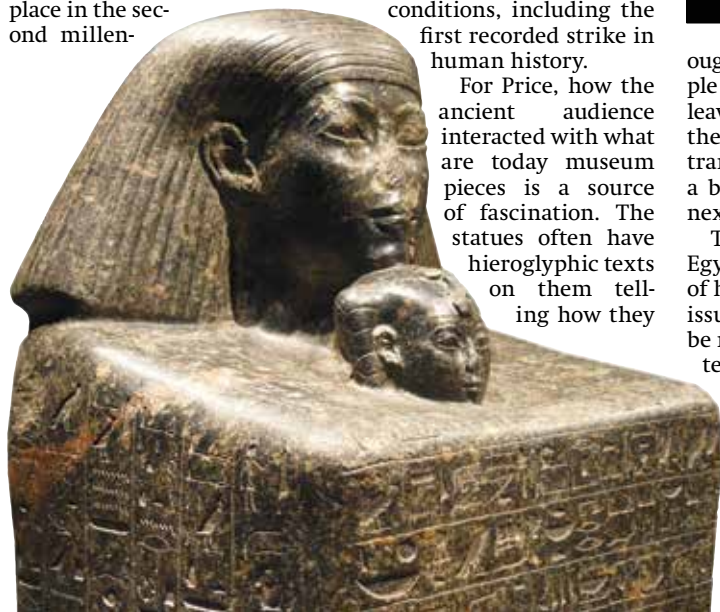
It's the site of an impressive temple of Hatshepsut,

Egypt's most successful female Pharaoh from c1479 to 1458 BC, "proving that women could rule a powerful ancient polity," Price says.

"Senenmut, her chief official, was something like an ancient Egyptian Michelangelo. He was an innovator, a designer and, intriguingly, apparently unmarried – leading to suggestions of a royal romance.

"He left behind lots of monuments, largely as a result of the queen's favour, so there's a lot of evidence to base speculations on – a historian's dream!"

■ *Golden Mummies of Egypt: Interpreting Identities From the Graeco-Roman Period*, price £25, is available at the Manchester Museum online shop: manchestermuseumshop.co.uk/books-and-prints/golden-mummies-of-egypt



Pic: Richard Morte/Creative Commons

Pic: TheMet/Public domain

■ ELECTIONS

East Oxford turned Green at the thought of Akehurst

LIKE your correspondent Pauline Fraser (M Star, May 18), I think it's important to share some of the good news from the May 6 elections with your readers.

Here in Oxford on May 6 we had elections for Oxford City Council.

In the ethnically diverse St Mary's ward in east Oxford there is usually a close contest between the Labour and Green candidates.

In the last contest in 2018 the two parties took almost 90 per cent of the votes and the Greens' majority was just 157.

So, I'm sure readers will be as pleased as I was to see that this year when Labour put forward leading national executive committee rightwinger Luke Akehurst – director

of We Believe in Israel and someone who describes himself on its website as a lifelong committed zionist – things were very different.

The Greens romped home, with Mr Akehurst beaten by over 400 votes.

GEOFFREY FERRES
Oxford



LANGUISHING: Abdullah al-Howaiti (above) was just 14 years old when he was arrested in 2017 – the same year Crown Prince Mohammed bin Salman (right) came to power



■ HUMAN RIGHTS ABUSES

Another child faces death at the hands of Saudi authorities

ABDULLAH AL HOWAITI was 14 years old when he was arrested in Saudi Arabia.

He was held incommunicado for four months – his family had no idea where he was, or if he was even alive.

He's been locked up ever since his arrest in 2017. His mother has only seen him once since his arrest.

And now he faces the threat of being executed at any moment. Abdullah has an alibi – he was at the sea-front playing football with his friends at the time of

the alleged "crime," a high-stakes jewellery robbery and murder.

The DNA evidence used to charge Abdullah is inconsistent.

Abdullah's alibi is backed by his friends, family and CCTV footage. But Abdullah was tortured until he "confessed" to crimes he could not have committed.

His brother was also tortured – and held incommunicado too, without access to a lawyer or their family. Abdullah shouldn't be fac-

ing execution. He was a child at the time of the alleged crime and his alibi should be enough to save his life.

Abdullah was 14 years old when this story began – by law, he was a child.

He shouldn't have been arrested, or tortured, or held incommunicado or sentenced to death for a crime he couldn't have committed.

Please speak up for him now. Visit the Reprive website for further details.
B McKENNA
Dumbarton

■ PALESTINE
We must continue to support Gaza against the Israeli state aggression

SUPPORTING Israeli apartheid in 2021 is as morally indefensible as supporting South African apartheid in 1991 – the onslaught on Gaza must be met with firm opposition and mass protest by the left and progressive movements.

We must do all we can to support the embattled people of Palestine, and one practical way of doing that will be by attending today's rally called by PSC and STWC which starts at 1pm and sets off from Victoria.

Plenty of Jews support the Palestinian cause and there needs to be a full understanding that Judaism is not automatically synonymous with zionism.

Those who have engaged in anti-semitic abuse of Jewish individuals have nothing to do with the Palestine issue, in fact they undermine it and actually play into the hands of those who do support the slaughter of the innocents in Gaza.

Let us take to the streets and show our solidarity with the Palestinian peoples – we are many.

PHIL BRAND
London SW17

The Red List

May 22-29

▶ SATURDAY 22

One Year On: George Floyd Memorial Protest

11am US embassy, Nine Elms, SW11
A socially distanced memorial event to mark one year since the police murder of George Floyd, with speakers including MP Bell Ribeiro-Addy and Stand Up to Racism's Nadia Sayed.

Why Politics Matter with Unite the Union

10am-2pm online
Unite West Midlands Politics hosts a free Zoom event on Why Politics Matter to workers. If you're interested, apply here: <http://mstar.link/whypolitics>

Voices of Refugees

3pm online
Supported by the International Transport Workers Federation, this event will bring together displaced people from different backgrounds across the world to explain their struggles as well as their hopes for the future. Hosted by the Peace and Justice Project. Register here: <http://mstar.link/voicesofrefugees>

▶ SUNDAY 23

Palestine Matters: How can educators respond?

5pm online
A discussion hosted by NEU Left about how educators can stand in solidarity with Palestine on the streets and in our schools. Register in advance here: <https://bit.ly/33N13A>

Remembering the Nakba Day

4pm online
A discussion with ex-Knesset member Haneen Zoabi – who made history in 2009 when she became the first Arab woman to be elected to Israel's parliament – and Rachel Beitarie of Zochrat.org, hosted by the West Midlands Palestine Solidarity Campaign. For further information: <http://mstar.link/rememberingnakba>

▶ MONDAY 24

School of Humanities New Writing Festival: Black Writers and the Black Archive

6pm online
Join writer, researcher and organiser Lola Olufemi, academic Eddie Bruce-Jones and writer, archivist and poet Jesse Bernard for this free online event considering the relationships between black writers and black archives. Find full details and book here: <https://bit.ly/3o7ANEA>

North West Culture and Creative unions meeting

12pm online
TUC North West are inviting union members working in the cultural and creative industries to join a free Zoom call to present your experiences during Covid-19 to a special guest panel, including shadow minister for culture and sport Alison McGovern MP. Register here: <http://mstar.link/NWTUC>

Saturday 22

March for Palestine
1pm Victoria Embankment, London
Protest against Israel's relentless attacks on Palestinians. Organised by PSC, CND, Stop the War and Friends of Al-Aqsa.

▶ TUESDAY 25

Book event: Bob Dylan in London, with Jackie Lees and KG Miles

7pm online
Five Leaves Bookshop presents Jackie Lees – only the second woman to write about Bob Dylan – and KG Miles in conversation with Michael Eaton, talking about their new book, Bob Dylan in London, which is about exactly what it says on the cover. This event is a day after Dylan's 80th birthday. Register here: <http://mstar.link/bobdylan>

▶ WEDNESDAY 26

Mental Health Matters - Forgotten Key Workers

4.30pm online
The next in a series of online Mental Health Matters meetings. In this episode the role of forgotten key workers throughout the Covid-19 pandemic is explored. Register here: <http://mstar.link/mentalhealth>
Organised by the TUC North West.

Book event: Not Quite Right for Us: Celebrating flipped eye and Speaking Volumes

7pm online
Housmans presents a joint event with flipped eye and Speaking Volumes to celebrate the publication of Not Quite Right for Us, an anthology featuring 40 international voices talking about outsider-ness. Also part of flipped eyes' 20th anniversary celebrations and Speaking Volumes's 10th anniversary this year. For further info and tickets: <http://mstar.link/notquiteright>

▶ THURSDAY 27

Book event: Paint Your Town Red – Matthew Brown and Rhian E. Jones in conversation with Grace Blakeley

7pm online
Housmans Bookshop hosts a discussion with Matthew Brown and Rhian E. Jones on their book Paint

Your Town Red: How Preston Took Back Control and Your Town Can Too, the story of how one city in the north of England decided to level up without waiting for Whitehall. Organised by Housmans. For more info and to book: <http://mstar.link/preston>

Book event: Diversity in Children's Literature 3: Alex Wheatle and AM Dassu

7pm online
Alex Wheatle and A. M. Dassu join Deirdre O'Byrne to read from and talk about their books and the issues they address, and about cultural diversity in children's books in general. Organised by Five Leaves Bookshop. This event will have BSL interpretation provided but – please note – you will not be able to see the BSL interpretation during the talk if you're using an iPad. For more info and to book: <http://mstar.link/preston>

One year from George Floyd's murder: We need action now!

6pm online
The BLM Movement has exposed that racism is at the heart of British society just as much as the US. A panel of young speakers will discuss what we can do in the here and now in the battle to end discrimination. Organised by Stand Up to Racism. For further information and Zoom details: <http://mstar.link/georgefloyd>

Lies, Damned Lies & Corruption: Why we urgently need to free the press, and how we're going to do it

7pm online
Extinction Rebellion UK hosts this panel discussion of what a "free

press" really means, and how we're going to make change, with The Canary co-founder Kerry-Anne Mendoza; activist and founder of United for Black Lives Marvina Newton, and Media Reform Coalition chair and Goldsmiths University Professor Natalie Fenton. Check here for further details: <http://mstar.link/damnedlies>

▶ SATURDAY 29

Writers of the Left in an Age of Extremes

6.30pm online
Launch meeting for the Socialist History Society's latest Occasional Publication. The joint authors of the publication will discuss why the writers who are featured still matter. David Morgan will speak about Edgell Rickword and Greta Sykes will speak about Anna Seghers and Carlo Levi. All welcome, free to attend, register here: <http://mstar.link/ageofextremes>



■ CHILE

Left advance puts capitalism on the run

THE election results on Sunday in Chile were probably a death blow to neoliberalism here.

The right wing will not be able to prevent a progressive constitution being written unless they can bribe a significant number of delegates.

Many municipalities elected left-wing mayors and many councillors for the first time.

Readers of the Star should know that communist mayor Iraci Hassler elected in Santiago is not the equivalent of Sadiq Khan.

She is mayor of the central municipality with a popula-

tion of about 400,000. The total population of the city is over six million.

Another municipality was won by a young woman communist, and several other big ones by members of the left-wing Broad Front.

All of them were helped by the impressive record of Daniel Jadue in the municipality of Recoleta: providing cheap medicines, opticians, a bookshop and quality municipal housing for low rents, a first for Chile.

DANIEL MORGAN
Araucania, Chile

■ REFERENDUM

Is Scotland result really a vote for separation?

THE much-trumpeted supermajority for Scottish separatists never materialised when the SNP and the Alba Party faced the voters. Alex Salmond's Alba efforts hardly registered: at under 2 per cent of the vote it had no candidates elected. Nor could the SNP itself claim success, falling one short of a majority.

But with a popular vote that showed a majority favouring parties that supported unity (albeit slim, separatists on 49 per cent of the constituency vote and the list vote split 50/50), the UK government will be even more determined to resist calls to rerun the 2014 referendum.

Reinforcing rejection of such a rerun are priorities such as sorting the Covid-19 pandemic and dealing with Scotland's multiple problems such as its acute drug crisis, failing education system and massive spending cuts in the cities.

A crisis looms in energy too, with North Sea oil and gas run down and discouraged. The administration has imposed a moratorium on nuclear, while promoting uncertain energy sources like tidal power, and windfarms are much promoted.

The constant threat of break-up is now starting to be recog-



IDENTITY: Indyref 2020 rally, hosted by the National newspaper, in George Square in Glasgow, in November 2019

nised across Britain as a destabilising factor. Proposals to peg a Scottish currency to the pound would have undermined the British economy. It doesn't help when former prime ministers like Gordon Brown start meddling with appeasement notions like federalism and "more powers for the Scottish

Parliament" which only encourage the drive to break up.

Meanwhile, the real break-up is within the separatist camp with spiteful diatribes flying between the more orthodox SNP and the defeated Alba Party. The separatist Wings over Scotland is retiring from the struggle in

exasperation and giving up hope of a second referendum.

Many workers in Scotland rejected this camp and made up their own minds to vote tactically to keep separatists out, more or less using political parties as tools.

WILL PODMORE
London E12



SHINING EXAMPLE: Communist Recoleta mayor Daniel Jadue has presided over the creation of 'people's pharmacies'
Pic: Mrecoleta/CC

■ ENVIRONMENT

Tories need to be ousted for our planet's sake

WELSH and Scottish farmers have a point in the economies of scale possible for Australian farmers with flocks and herds of thousands of animals compared to those possible on small family farms.

But they have a huge natural advantage which our government resolutely ignores: distance.

If Australian lamb and beef were to carry the full environmental cost, not only local farmers but the world would be better off. Transport by sea already put a billion tons of greenhouse gases a year into the atmosphere between 2007 and 2012, according to the International Maritime Organisation. That's on

top of gases that make it a major source of air pollution affecting people along shipping routes.

Our Tory government seems to think any price is worth it to scramble a post Brexit trade deal together. Those extra greenhouse gases are tipping us ever closer to climate chaos, with floods, droughts, fires and typhoons.

People in poor low-lying countries will be hit hardest. But our PM and friends will be sitting pretty in their latest "second" home half way up some mountain. We need to get the Tories out while there is still some climate normality left to save.

PAT SANCHEZ
Littleborough



WEATHER OUTLOOK



TODAY

Rather cloudy at first but brightening up from the west with scattered showers from late morning. Windy in the far east at first, but less windy, and warmer, than yesterday.

NEXT FEW DAYS

Mostly dry start tomorrow, with spell of locally heavy rain spreading eastwards later. Rain for parts of Scotland Monday, sunshine and heavy showers elsewhere. Sunny spells, isolated showers, on Tuesday.

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Fighting Fund with Keith Stoddart

9 days left



YOU'VE RAISED: £9,543 **WE NEED: £8,457**

THE mail coach has arrived, and when added to our electronic contributions it came to £1,750 on the day.

Thanks go to folk in Edinburgh and Merseyside for £10s, Kent for £15, Sheffield for £100 and a returned 501 Club cheque from York came in the hope that "the mop-top muppet is soon drowned in the effluent of his own making." Perhaps, but

as Frosty said yesterday there's a shortage of the stuff.

A couple of £5s came with fine words. "Thank you for supporting women's rights by consistently reporting on events and stories which other papers don't," said one. And the other said: "I really am fed up with the lies in the media and from this government. I want to hear the arguments against this

government and arguments for a socialist way of governance." It's what the Morning Star always aims to do.

Cheques without messages (three £10s, £15 from Newport CPB, £25, £30, and £200) are gratefully acknowledged.

Now, a tale of two meetings. The misnamed Progressive Britain Labour group was launched via Zoom with 56 folk tuning

in to hear Sir Keir. Followed by Mr Mandelson it dropped to 28, and by the time David Milliband spoke it was a mere 23. £290 was raised. In contrast the meeting of RSGs of Bath, Bristol, Cheltenham, Gloucester and Stroud was attended by 60 who remained throughout and raised £300!

We're getting there: stay tuned for more on Monday.

Give by BACS...

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

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morningstaronline.co.uk/page/support-us

by phone...

9am - 4pm,
0778 0220 391

...or by post

Cheques to PPF, 52 Beachy Rd, Bow, London E3 2NS

Commie Chef

Beetroot butter

THIS is good served over hot steamed new potatoes, rice or pasta, and/or with an egg dish.

It's been around a long time, so long that it was popular in

ancient Egypt, though this was probably for the leaves, which are indeed delicious.

It's also long been used medicinally, though with what success I'm not sure.

Ingredients

- 1 lb./450g beetroot
- 1 oz/30g butter
- tbsp lemon juice
- tbsp chopped mixed fresh

- herbs (parsley, marjoram, oregano etc)
- salt and freshly ground black pepper

What to do

Preheat the oven to 200°C/400°F#6.

Bake the beetroots in their skin for 45 minutes or until tender.

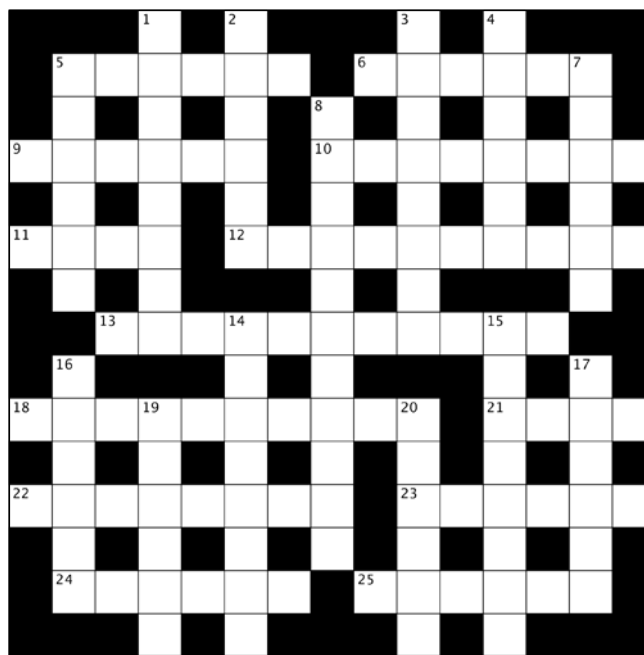
Peel them when they are just cool enough to handle, chop into large dice.

Melt the butter and stir in the chopped herbs and lemon juice, mixing vigorously.

Season to taste and serve hot, though if there's any left over it's fine served cold as part of a salad, too.



CROSSWORD 1,393 set by Alamet



ACROSS

5. Force traitors to accept individual for free (6)
6. Funny peculiar cojones - leave name out of it (6)
9. Friend of heartless duck? (6)
10. Choose current film for glass half-full type (8)
- 11, 21. Archdeacon gets motorists to hold accountant against vessel (4,4)
12. Conform at a missile explosion (10)
13. Again letting in to study dynasty including one non-drinker (11)
18. Extremely reliable way of finding sex? (10)
21. see 11
22. Figure of speech is neat but unknown to fool (8)
23. Moving towards the centre of popular part of town (6)
24. Detectives earlier managed to be rotten (6)
25. Keep after live act (6)

DOWN

1. Support at meeting to make valid earlier (8)
2. Before mistake amateur is up mountains (6)
3. Derision shown by prisoner satisfied to set up exercise (8)
4. Official in favour of graduate trainee (6)
5. Overabundance of space for 8 of flour (6)
7. Not all malingerers at Zurich are phoney (6)
8. Notice stunt executed by voter (11)
14. Unaware first botched raid is carried out on time (8)
15. Ties, for example, part of bottle on river (8)
16. Former partner replaces middle of stage, needing muscle (6)
17. Reluctant Irish giving support to Bible (6)
19. Nudge - activity during sleep in Germany (6)
20. Direct on-line nonsense (6)

Solution on Monday...

QUIZMASTER with William Sitwell

TODAY'S QUESTIONS

1. Denver is its largest city and capital. What is the name of this US state?
2. A family of which normally domesticated animals were found recently in an old bird's nest in Buckinghamshire?
3. Was Apollo 11's command module called Endeavour, Columbia or Kitty Hawk?



YESTERDAY'S ANSWERS

1. To which group of elements do gold, silver and platinum belong? **The noble metals, which are most resistant to chemical attack**
2. Merlot is a variety of which fruit? **Grape (a wine grape - pictured)**
3. Cubital refers to which part of the body? **The forearm**

DAILY SUDOKU (fiendish)

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

Solution on Monday...



Racing Guide

with Farrington

■ HAYDOCK, YORK AND LINGFIELD

Four meetings share centre stage this weekend

A GLUT of seriously competitive handicaps alongside group events this weekend across four attractive meetings. Traditionally, the Silver Bowl Handicap, restricted to three-year-olds, at Haydock (3.00), attracts a big field, but this year there are only 10 set to line up and the Andrew Balding filly **Nebulosa** looks a cracking bet.

I know that her trainer feels she is capable of making her mark outside of handicap class and with the soft ground most definitely in her favour here she looks sure to go well off a relatively light-weight of 8-12 which equated to a handicap mark of just 86. There is plenty more to come from this daughter of Archipenko following her last-gasp win over seven furlongs at Goodwood and the extra yardage here is certainly in her favour.

Of her rivals, Heights of Abraham impressed on his sole start this year and a 6lbs penalty certainly isn't prohibitive, while Wobwob won in silky smooth fashion at York and there is no reason why he shouldn't be as effective over this extra 220 yards.

The Temple Stakes at 4.10 normally throws up a contender for the King's Stand Stakes at Royal Ascot, but this year's renewal looks somewhat short on quality.

What we do know is that the ultra speedy Chester winner Jabbarockie will take them along at a rate of knots, but

the question is can he hold on inside the distance? I fancy that he could set the race up for **Keep Busy** who has a fair record when fresh and will revel in the testing conditions. Anything around the 4/1 mark would make the selection well worth an investment in this Group Two sprint.

The three-year-olds go to post for their Commonwealth Cup trial, the Sandy Lane Stakes at 3.35 where the unbeaten all-weather specialist Dragon Symbol is likely to start favourite in what looks a hugely open renewal.

Method's second to Winter Power in the Cornwallis Stakes has been well and truly cemented already this season and Martyn Meade's runner has reportedly been flying at home.

This step back up to six furlongs is what he has been crying out for and I think he is one of the stronger wagers I will be having today.

As far as the four handicaps on the card are concerned the only bet I shall be having in this sector will be on **Speedo Boy** (each way) in the two miler due off at 2.25.

The Ian Williams-trained charge is very talented over hurdles and on the flat, and ran a race full of promise when finishing fourth of 13 in the Chester Cup consolation earlier in the month.

Any further easing in the ground certainly won't prove a problem and he may get the better of the Roger Varian-trained Postileo.

At Newmarket the going will also be on the soft side with more heavy showers forecast. **Apparate** is a horse I have been waiting to reappear and the Varian charge makes his five-year-old debut off a mark of 95 at 2.35.

Very lightly raced for a horse of his age (this will be the 10th run of his career) the son of Dubawi has endured several niggly problems during his career to date, but has been pleasing in his home work of late and may be able to give the weight away to Newmarket raider Law of One.

Later on, I am pretty sweet on the chance of **Lunar Jet** in the mile-and-a-quarter handicap at 4.50.

The course and distance winner showed his turn was just around the corner at Chester last time out and is taken to step up here at the main

expense of the well handicapped Man of the Night.

Goodwood's Listed Festival Stakes at 2.10 has a small but select field and although Stormy Antarctic comes here in good form, this extended trip may just prove a shade too far for him if they go a decent clip.

The nod goes to **Majestic Dawn** who remains open to significant improvement on only his 12th career start.

He may well have been somewhat flattered by his success in the Cambridgeshire last year due to an advantageous draw, but if he can dictate here I suspect he will be able to take this rise in class in his stride.

Talbot could be the answer to the three-year-old handicap at 2.50 for Brian Meehan, while **Miss Mulligan** looks a solid wager to see off Beauty Stone in the fillies' handicap at 4.00.

Repatee could run a big race following a wind operation in the York 2.05, but he may just have to give best to the consistent Escobar in the seven furlong handicap.

A mark of 107 hardly gives him any leeway, but the make-up of this race is perfect for him.

Later on at the Knavesmire, **Live Your Dream** should run well under top-weight at 3.15, while **Count D'orsay** has stable mate Copper Knight to worry about in the sprint handicap at 3.50.

The selection probably ran too free behind his next-door neighbour nine days ago and if held onto for a bit longer, he should step up significantly here.

Finally have a second look at **Nicks Not Wonder** in the mile-and-a-half handicap at Lingfield Park at 5.55.

The selection simply didn't act on the Fibresand last time out, but on his breeding he should have no problem with the slow turf on his grass debut. Later on the card at the Surrey track, **Zumaaty** may well defy top-weight in the extended seven furlong handicap at 8.25.

The extended mile at Wolverhampton may well have been a shade too far for him last time out and this drop in trip looks sure to suit him.



WEEKEND TIPS

Farrington's Doubles

Saturday

METHOD

Haydock 3:35 (nap)

LIVE YOUR DREAM

York 3:15

Sunday

BARDEN BELLA

Fakenham 3:05 (nap)

STORM CATCHER

Nottingham 2:20

Houseman's Choice

Saturday

LIBERTY BEACH

Haydock 4:10

Sunday

MUSTARRID

Nottingham 3:30

HAVE YOUR SAY

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

Layth's take

with Layth Yousif

Champions League spot is the biggest prize left on the table this weekend

AS THE Premier League season creaks to a finish this weekend after a long and tortuous year, the race for Europe is the only thing left to fight for.

With Manchester City deservedly crowned weeks ago, and the three relegation places decided with Sheffield United, West Brom and Fulham all dropping down to the second tier, the fourth Champions League spot and three remaining places are the only issues unresolved.

While Liverpool and Leicester may share the same number of points (66), the Reds have a goal advantage of plus four. Jurgen Klopp's side crucial 3-0 victory over Burnley at Turf Moor this week gave them the edge over the Foxes. With Leicester to face fast-imploding Tottenham on Sunday, anything could happen. Liverpool for their part host Crystal Palace, in a final send-off for the gentleman that is Palace manager Roy Hodgson.

Football has rightly paid tribute to the man who has spent nearly 50 years in the professional game. My small contribution would be recalling the aftermath of a post-match presser at Palace a while back. A father and son waited patiently on the steps outside the media centre at Selhurst Park, holding an Inter Milan shirt. Media duties completed, Mr Hodgson proceeded to make his way out of the area, noted the pair, immediately switching to Italian, speaking kindly to the dad and lad before signing the shirt. It made their day.

It was a simple act of kindness, testament to a good man.

Time to congratulate Ruben Dias. Members of the Football Writers' Association correctly voted the Man City defender their footballer of the year. On a small personal note, Dias becomes the fourth successive winning FOTW I have voted for, a nice record. I wonder who will shine next season?

Did you watch the FA Cup final last Saturday? Wonderful, wasn't it? Or perhaps I should clarify: it was wonderful to anyone who wasn't a Chelsea fan. Apart from the fact that in a tournament that is nearly 150 years old, a brand new name was added to the list of winners, there were so many delightful and poignant sub-plots. Fifth time lucky for Leicester.

Youri Tielemans's winner was surely one of the best goals in cup-final history, certainly as good as Santi Cazorla's outstanding effort for Arsenal in their 3-2 victory over Hull City in 2014, and Steven Gerrard's last-gasp long-range effort for Liverpool against West Ham in 2006 in Cardiff.

As a neutral, you couldn't help but praise VAR – for once – after ruling out what appeared to be a late equaliser. The decision followed former Foxes player – oh, the irony – Ben Chilwell's ping-pong effort in the box, which came off veteran defender Wes Morgan.

For Leicester fans to see Chilwell run off in joy in the belief that he had scored against his former club was one thing: to see him kiss and

pat the badge was another. So, understandably, there was deep joy and no little schadenfreude from Foxes fans when the goal was chalked off.

It also meant that Morgan could breathe a sigh of relief. And so it came to pass that the only captain in Leicester's history to have lifted the Premier League title also did the same for the FA Cup. The man the chairman called this week their greatest ever player raised the venerated silverware aloft alongside pal Kasper Schmeichel, whose outstanding saves from Chilwell and Mason Mount had also contributed to the heartwarming victory.

And then there was Brendan Rodgers, firmly cementing his reputation with English silverware after a trophy-laden spell in Scotland with Celtic.

I must admit I was dubious about him for a long time, having watched the infamous 2012 "Being Liverpool" documentary, when Rodgers was in charge at the Merseyside giants, not least when he came across as a football David Brent with the "three names in the envelope" stunt, which left Gerrard and Jamie Carragher, among others, none too impressed.

It was a scene that stayed with me, clouding my opinion of him. But having seen him close up in various post-match pressers at the King Power and the Emirates over the last couple of years, he has changed my view. Calm, composed, articulate and empathetic, he is very much a progressive manager and an intelligent thinker.



How heartwarming was it to see him hug Foxes chairman Aiyawatt Srivaddhanaprabha, and how poignant too, after the tragic death of his predecessor, his father Vichai. It also showed the bond an owner can achieve with a club, its players and fans – if they only take the time to understand the club – and if they actually care.

Vichai and Aiyawatt had – and have – Leicester in their hearts, and the outpouring of love and affection was a joy to watch, even for a neutral. Certain Premier League owners take note.

For Arsenal supporters, we have the Kroenke Out dem-

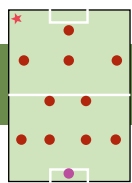
onstration at 2pm on Sunday ahead of the Brighton game. It's vitally important to keep the pressure on the club's absentee owners as loyal supporters congregate outside the stadium to exercise their democratic right to demonstrate peacefully. If only Gooners had their own equivalent of Aiyawatt instead of the Kroenkes.

I'll be there of course. In fact I'll be there from 11am, by the arches on Hornsey Road, flogging the new issue of the Gooner Fanzine. Our team and yours truly have been busy burning the midnight oil putting together the finishing touches on our biggest

and brightest issue yet in our 34-year history.

Needless to say, the front cover simply says: Kroenke Out, imposed on a brilliant image of demonstrators outside the Emirates by Islington artist Ruth Beck. If you're planning to go to the demo, why not buy a copy and wave the front cover to let the world know how you feel.

For Arsenal supporters, it's the only thing left to fight for this season. That is, if you discount an improbable tilt at the European Conference and leapfrogging bitter rivals Spurs in the process – which simply won't happen. ...Or will it?



The left wing

with James Nalton

Football's tackling racism and fascism at grassroots level



AS A global game representing diverse communities and groups of people all around the world, and one which is, in the main, supported by and played by working-class people from those communities, football is in a position of influence when it comes to tackling racism and fascism in sport and society.

On top of that, the groups of people who support these teams – in their hundreds or thousands or millions, at club or international level – mean these organisations naturally have a community base to work with.

Despite their huge influence, there is relatively little action taken by the biggest organisations, with governing bodies often turning a blind eye to incidents of racism or fascism, issuing meaningless meagre fines, and doing little at the grassroots level where real change can happen.

This is where those at the top could learn from clubs operating at a lower level who, across the globe, are involving everyone in their clubs to the point where many are actually run by the communities in which they reside.

“A non-league club's deep links within their own community is a unique opportunity to shape and mould the club and drive change,” says Michael Meadows, a director at COLFC in the Community, the community arm of Northern Premier League side City of Liverpool FC.

“At COLFC we realise that in order to truly represent the city of Liverpool, we must immerse ourselves in the attitudes and values of the community in which we exist.

“Just like the city, we have a diverse and vibrant membership and fan base, and if we weren't to protect their values and act to uphold and protect them, we wouldn't be representing either in an honest way.”

On the back of the European Super League saga, which involved another club in the city, Liverpool FC, there have been numerous discussions about supporter involvement at clubs and how such fan integration would be structured and actioned.

Clubs already truly embedded in their communities to the point where they take their direction from these groups of people would rarely, and probably never, encounter the problems with poor decision-making that many top-flight clubs have experienced in recent years.

This supporter influence can be extended from the

avoidance of misguided decisions to positive change, grassroots education, and community integration, which would naturally discourage ideas that lead to racism and fascism.

When not combined with such community work, the top-down anti-racism campaigns of football governing bodies are ineffective, and in the worst cases can lead to a push-back against these initiatives.

One example is the Black Lives Matter (BLM) movement's brief incorporation into top-level football.

At this level, games continued during the pandemic, and the taking of the knee prior to kick-off began as support of BLM; but the clear messages behind that movement didn't remain front and centre for long.

Starting as a gesture that, for once, actually meant something and had a grassroots political movement behind it, it was soon replaced and diluted.

Broadcasters received complaints and soon reverted to one of their numerous safe slogans. Commentators now sound like they're reading from a script as they explain this pre-match ritual.

“Token gestures, petty fines and other farcical attempts by the FA, Premier League and Uefa, to name but a few, are absolutely pathetic,” says Joe Chlebig of 0161 Community, which

works closely with communities in Manchester and National League side Curzon Ashton FC.

“There's not a plan with anything – and they're all surface and token acts that do nothing to actually deal with racism on a base level.

“What is needed is more education at a grassroots level which needs to work across multiple platforms and agencies.”

Grassroots movements are better positioned to explain these initiatives and engage with people on the ground, bringing diverse communities together.

This could temper the emergence of the far-right groups that still exist in football, and ultimately kick them out altogether; but such groups have been emboldened in recent years by the words and actions of high-profile right-wing politicians in power in the UK and around the world.

As a result, the far-right have made their presence known more openly at games, and for clubs that are open to all, they can be difficult to remove.

This is something COLFC had to deal with in 2019 when far-right groups such as the Football Lads Alliance and the Democratic Football Lads Alliance tried to work their way into the club.

COLFC were able to ban these groups and do so efficiently thanks to the struc-

ture in place at the club and the political guidance and expertise that exists within it as a result of community representation.

“The club's founding values, to establish democratic ownership, equality and diversity are only possible if we were to reject any suggestion of a position of political neutrality,” Meadows says. “We cannot coexist alongside anyone who wishes to exclude valued members of our diverse community based on religion, ethnicity, homophobia, sectarian politics or bigoted views.”

As a COLFC statement said at the time: “By necessity, our inclusion cannot be extended to, and abused by, those who would seek to exclude.”

Just as Curzon Ashton work closely with 0161 Community, Northern League club Durham City AFC have a similar relationship with the County Durham Anti-Racist Coalition (CDARC) and have encouraged clubs across the country to establish links with such organisations.

“It fits perfectly,” said Durham City chair Gary Hutchinson. “We want to be a club with the right approach, the right ethics – a club where people feel safe and welcome, whatever their background or circumstances.”

Tim Dredge, welfare officer at Durham City and a member of CDARC,

acknowledged that plenty more needs to be done in the sport.

“There is still much work to do to combat racism, but we are very heartened by football's stance and by the fact that a local club at the heart of our county want to tackle it front and centre and promote the right messages,” he said.

“CDARC would encourage other grassroots football clubs to link with local anti-racist groups in their area and adopt Durham City's approach.

“It can only help spread the message of football as a force for good.”

Non-league clubs are naturally more connected to their local area, but there's no reason clubs in the top divisions can't follow their example and adopt similar grassroots initiatives that go beyond slogans and PR.

Many of the world's biggest clubs are built on a local identity that was then adopted by fans around the world, so in many ways have a bigger grassroots base to work with.

They would then be in a better position to pressure governing bodies to turn their words into actions and grow positive movements from the ground up, using sport to connect with the communities in which these clubs reside, and with others to where their influence has spread.



ATHLETICS

IOC: WE WILL NOT CANCEL 2021 GAMES

Olympics will go ahead despite Japan's state of emergency

by Our Sports Desk

The Olympic Games will proceed even if Tokyo remains in a state of emergency, according to a senior member of the International Olympic Committee (IOC).

The Japanese capital is one of nine prefectures in Japan which is in a state of emergency due to the coronavirus pandemic until May 31 at the earliest.

However, the chair of the IOC's co-ordination commission, John Coates, is confident that even if those measures have not been lifted by the time the Games are due to open on July 23, it will not affect the event being staged.

"We've successfully seen five sports hold their test events during the state of emergency," he said at a Tokyo 2020 briefing yesterday.

"All of the plans that we have in place to protect the safety and security of athletes and the people of Japan are based around the worst possible circumstances, so the answer [to whether a Games could take place during a state of emergency] is absolutely yes.

"The advice we have got from the World Health Organisation and all of the scientific advice is that all the measures we have outlined in the playbook, all those measures are satisfactory to ensure a safe and secure Games in terms of health, and that's whether there is a state of emergency or not."

Coates was asked about a series of negative opinion polls among Japanese residents, many of whom are still calling for the Games to be cancelled amid the global health crisis.

"There may well be a correlation between some of these percentages and the low percentages so far of people in Japan who have been vaccinated," the Australian said.

"I'm expecting that as the number of vaccinations increase that there will be better polls and public opinion will improve, but if it doesn't we just have to make sure that we get on with our job and our job is make sure these Games are safe for all participants and all of the people of Japan."

The final co-ordination commission ended yesterday, and Coates said: "After nearly eight years [of planning] the



finish line is within touching distance.

"This is testament to the work of the Tokyo 2020 organisers and the incredible support of the Japanese government."

The government has called on Games organisers to further reduce the number of overseas visitors to Japan, insisting that only those essential to the oper-

ation of the event come into the country.

Overseas spectators have already been barred, and a decision on how many – if any – Japanese fans can attend will be taken next month.

The IOC is confident that over 80 per cent of residents at the Olympic Village will have been vaccinated by the

time they arrive in Japan, but Coates insisted the plans for daily testing of athletes would remain in place regardless of the vaccination programme.

Athletes and other participants must all abide by the "playbooks" which govern almost every aspect of their lives while in Tokyo for the Games.

MEN'S RUGBY LEAGUE

Rainbow Laces games moved forward to June

by Our Sports Desk

CLUBS will join forces in round nine of the Super League to show their support for Stonewall's Rainbow Laces campaign.

The campaign usually takes place in December, but Super League is keen to demonstrate its commitment during the season and will provide rainbow laces for players to wear in matches over the weekend of June 10-12.

In addition, LED perimeter boards at stadiums will highlight the campaign and supportive messaging will feature on Super League social-media channels.

Super League says the move is an important part of the game's Tackle It campaign, which aims to drive out discrimination based on sexuality and gender identity.

Super League executive



chairman Ken Davy said: "Matters of inclusivity and diversity are important not only in sport but also the wider communities in which our clubs exist, so it is great to see clubs, players, match officials and fans coming together in support of this campaign."

Stonewall director of pro-

grammes Liz Ward said: "It's great that Super League is committed to supporting its lesbian, gay, bi and trans players all year round, and we will keep working with them to help make sport everyone's game."

Meanwhile, the Combined Nations All Stars will show their

support for former Hull KR and St Helens prop Mose Masoe in his battle against a life-changing spinal injury by wearing a specially designed shirt for their game against England at Warrington on June 25.

The Oxen jersey design, inspired by Mose's career and character, will include a subtle nod to all the clubs that he represented in his career as well as a unique shoulder and sleeve design that replicates his own tattoos.

Organisers say £10 from each jersey sale will go to the Mose Masoe Foundation, the charity set up in the light of Mose's injury to provide support for his family but with the long-term goal of supporting other rugby-league players who suffer spinal injuries.

All Stars coach Tim Sheens said: "One of the first things we agreed as a management team was that we'd want to do some-

thing to support Mose.

"He's a great example of what we want the team to represent – overseas players who have given so much to the competition over here and who are coming together for a unique rugby league experience."

Masoe said: "I am so grateful for this amazing gesture from Tim Sheens and the Combined Nations All Stars.

"I've had wonderful support from the rugby-league family, and the overseas players in the Super League are like another family."

SPORT ON TV

Saturday

■ **CRICKET:** County Championship, Surrey v Middlesex – Sky Sports Cricket 10.55am.

■ **CYCLING:** Giro d'Italia – Eurosport 110.25am, S4C 2pm.

■ **FOOTBALL:** Championship play-offs, Brentford v Bournemouth – Sky Sports Football 12pm, Sky Sports Main Event 12.10pm, Swansea v Barnsley – Sky Sports Football, Sky Sports Main Event 5.15pm; League One play-offs, Sunderland v Lincoln – Sky Sports Football, Sky Sports Main Event 2.45pm; Scottish Cup final, St Johnstone v Hibs – Premier Sports 11.30pm; Bundesliga, Werder Bremen v Gladbach – BT Sport/ESPN 2.15pm; LaLiga, Real Madrid v Villarreal – Premier Sports 15pm; Serie A, Sampdoria v Parma – Premier Sports 17.45pm; FA Trophy, Hereford v AFC Hornchurch – BT Sport 1 3.45pm; LaLiga, Valladolid v Atletico Madrid – Premier Sports 2.5pm.

■ **HORSE RACING:** Haydock Park – ITV 4.15pm.

■ **MOTOR SPORT:** Monaco GP, practice 3 – Sky Sports Main Event, Sky Sports F1 10.45am, Monaco GP, qualifying – Sky Sports Main Event, Sky Sports F1 1pm; World Rally Championship, World Rally Championship in Portugal – BT Sport 17pm

■ **RUGBY LEAGUE:** Super League, Catalans Dragons v St Helens – Sky Sports Arena 4.55pm.

■ **RUGBY UNION:** Heineken Champions Cup, La Rochelle v Toulouse – BT Sport 2 4pm, Channel 4 4.15pm; Rainbow Cup, Sharks v Stormers – Premier Sports 2 11.55am, Lions v Bulls – Premier Sports 2 2.25pm.

Sunday

■ **CRICKET:** County Championship, Surrey v Middlesex – Sky Sports Cricket 10.55am, Sky Sports Main Event 11am.

■ **CYCLING:** Giro d'Italia – Eurosport 112.15pm; Tour of Murcia – Eurosport 14.15pm.

■ **FOOTBALL:** Premier League, Arsenal v Brighton – Sky Sports Arena 4pm, Aston Villa v Chelsea – Sky Sports Action 4pm, Fulham v Newcastle – Sky Sports Mix 4pm, Leeds v West Brom – BT Sport 2 4pm, Leicester v Tottenham – Sky Sports Football, 4pm – Liverpool v Crystal Palace – Sky Sports Main Event 4pm, Man City v Everton – Sky Sports Premier League 4pm, Sheff Utd v Burnley – BT Sport 3 4pm, West Ham v Southampton – Sky One 4pm, Wolves v Man Utd – BT Sport 1 4pm; League Two play-offs, Morecambe v Tranmere – Sky Sports Football 12pm, Forest Green v Newport – Sky Sports Football 6pm, Sky Sports Main Event 7pm; National League, Sutton v Hartlepool – BT Sport 1 12.15pm; Ligue 1, Angers v Lille – BT Sport 1 7.45pm, Brest v Paris St Germain – BT Sport 2 8pm; Eredivisie, Feyenoord v Utrecht – Premier Sports 1 11.10am; Serie A, Atalanta v Milan – Premier Sports 17.40pm.

■ **GOLF:** PGA Championship – Sky Sports Golf 1pm, Sky Sports Main Event 9pm.

■ **MOTOR CYCLING:** World Superbikes, Ciudad del Motor de Aragon superpole race and race two – Eurosport 2 9.30am.

■ **MOTOR SPORT:** Monaco GP, race – Sky Sports Main Event, Sky Sports F1 1.55pm; World Rally Championship, World Rally Championship in Portugal – BT Sport 1 8.30am & 12pm.

■ **RUGBY LEAGUE:** Super League, Leeds v Hull FC – Sky Sports Arena 7.30pm.

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