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Tuesday March 27 2018

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JEWISH SOCIALISTS UNITE BEHIND CORBYN

JEWISH
B.O.D. DEPUTIES
DOES
NOT
SPEAK
FOR
ME!

by Lamiat Sabin
Parliamentary Reporter

JEWISH socialists condemned two large “unrepresentative” Jewish organisations yesterday for their “flimsy accusations” of anti-semitism against Jeremy Corbyn.

They came to the defence of the Labour leader following revelations that he questioned why a council was painting over a mural by street artist Mear One six years ago. Mear One said it depicted members of the global banking elite Rothschild and Warburg.

An open letter from the Board of Deputies of British Jews and the Jewish

Leadership Council – which protested in Parliament Square yesterday evening – said they hold Mr Corbyn personally responsible for anti-semitic comments made online and in Labour meetings.

Jewish supporters of Mr Corbyn held a counter-rally to take place at the same time, with the Jewish Socialists’ Group (JSG) pointing out that board president Jonathan Arkush was one of the first to congratulate Donald Trump on his election as US President on behalf of the board.

Mr Arkush also gives “unqualified support” to Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu, who “enjoys good relations with the very far-right political forces in Hungary, Poland and the Czech Republic,” the group added in a statement.

JSG spokesman David Rosenberg said: “Any act of anti-semitism from whichever quarter angers me, but I am equally outraged by those who cynically play games with accusations of anti-semitism for party political or any other purposes.

“The Tory Party is desperate. It is on course to do very badly in the local elections and that will speed up the likelihood of a general election.

“But they have friends they can rely on, like Jonathan Arkush.”

He slammed the Tories for having the most appalling record in relation to migrants and asylum-seekers, and for having members that “hob-nob with fascists and Holocaust deniers in the ‘Traditional Britain Group’.”

“Corbyn has enemies on the right of the Labour Party who will latch on to this cynical ploy with glee,” Mr Rosenberg added.

“We should be clear that any single Labour MP who will help the BoD and the JLC with this are acting in the interests of the Tory Party and against the interest of Labour and its 600,000 members.”

The Jewish Voice for Labour group said that it was “appalled” by the actions and statements of the Board and JLC.

“They do not represent us or the great majority of Jews in the party who share Jeremy Corbyn’s vision for social justice and fairness,” it added.

The group Jewish Voice UK tweeted that the media will “smear to the extreme” any Labour leader opposed to right-wing and neoliberal agendas.

It added that the number of insults group members receive from non-Jewish Tory supporters that “talk down to Jews” for backing Labour “shows how toxic this debate is.”

The board and JLC wrote in their open letter: “Again and again, Jeremy Corbyn has sided with anti-semites rather than Jews.

“At best, this derives from the far left’s obsessive hatred of zionism, zionists and Israel.

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■ TRANSPORT

Northern Rail strike as guard dispute enters second year

NORTHERN Rail staff went on strike over the axing of guards on trains yesterday while union leaders urged employers to engage in meaningful discussions.

Members of the Rail, Maritime and Transport union at Arriva Rail North (Northern) walked out for 24 hours, bringing operations to a halt across northern England.

The dispute, which is now entering its second year, is related to the role of the safety-critical guard on services.

Picket lines were mounted outside railway stations, with little sign of any breakthrough in the disputes, now affecting five train operators.

Workers are concerned that Northern Rail, a German-owned franchise, intends to run approximately half a million trains a year without a safety-critical guard on board.

RMT general secretary Mick Cash paid tribute to the "determination and professionalism" of RMT members in the "battle to put public safety before private profit."

Northern Rail has also been condemned widely by Labour MPs, including shadow minister for disabled people Marsha de Cordova, who praised the RMT's fight for "passenger accessibility, security and safety."

Mr Cash urged the franchise to "get out of the bunker" and begin negotiations with the RMT.

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■ LABOUR

CONSULTATION KICKS OFF OVER UNION REAFFILIATION

DEBATE: RMT members to discuss the merits of resuming its link to Corbyn-led Labour Party

by Marcus Barnett
Industrial Reporter

RMT activists have urged fellow members to stand "shoulder to shoulder with Corbyn" in a Labour reaffiliation debate.

Meeting in London on Sunday, RMT members belonging to the transport union's Campaign for Labour Affiliation put their case forward.

Following a correspondence between the leadership of Labour and the RMT, the union has begun a consultation process from within the union, with the national executive urging a robust and comradely debate on the pros and cons of affiliation to the party.

It is expected to be one of the largest and most serious political discussions ever internally conducted within the union.

The 100-year link between the RMT and Labour was severed in 2004 when the union rejected an ultimatum from New Labour to restrict local branches in Scotland from supporting the Scottish Socialist Party against Blairite candidates.

Since then the union has supported various political projects such as the Trade Union and Socialist Coalition (Tusc) but has continued sup-

porting individual Labour MPs.

However, RMT members noted the dramatic changes that have occurred under Jeremy Corbyn's leadership of the Labour Party and have warmly welcomed the political direction of the new leadership.

Jeff Slee, a former national executive committee member, said that Mr Corbyn's election had "transformed Labour from a party run by a Blairite clique into an arena for struggle."

"Hundreds of thousands of new members have joined or rejoined since 2015 to fight

for socialist policies.

"RMT's rightful place is shoulder to shoulder with those in the Labour Party fighting for the interests of our class. It is time for RMT to affiliate to Labour."

Echoing Mr Slee's sentiment was former RMT president Alex Gordon, who has called on his fellow union members to "block the Blairites" and strengthen the leadership of Mr Corbyn, who is an RMT member.

"RMT's fight for safe, accessible public transport with guards on passenger trains and for the renovation

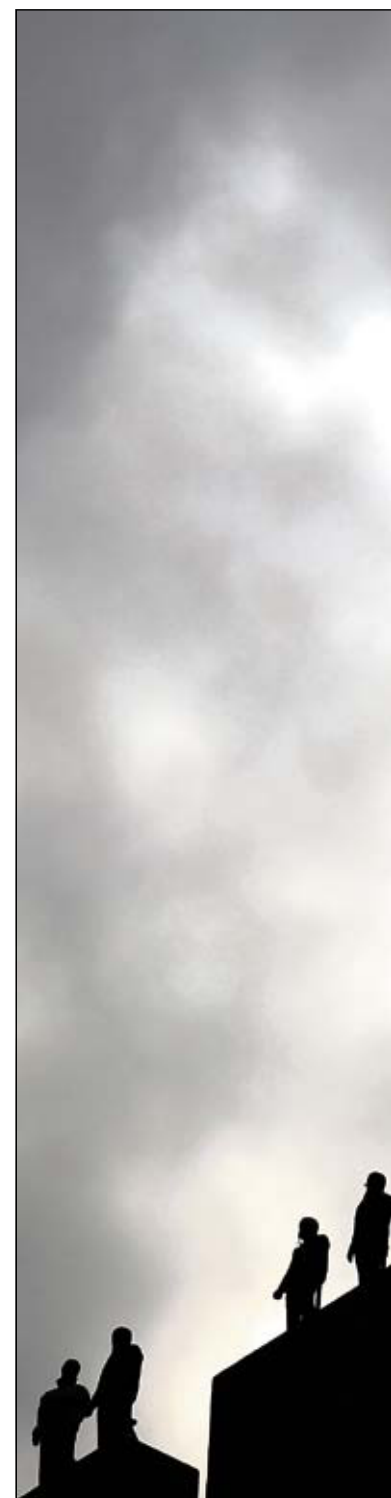
of British railways will only be won by backing Jeremy Corbyn and [deputy leader] John McDonnell."

"That means the RMT affiliating to the Labour Party."

Should reaffiliation take place, it is expected that the political influence of the union would increase, with a strong likelihood of the union being handed a seat on Labour's influential national executive committee.

A special general meeting will be held no later than June 1 following the consultation.

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■ FRONT PAGE

JSG RALLIES BEHIND CORBYN

FROM P1: "At worst, it suggests a conspiratorial worldview in which mainstream Jewish communities are believed to be a hostile entity, a class enemy."

Mr Corbyn, in response, has written a letter to the board and the JLC stating that he is "sincerely sorry" for the pain caused by "pockets" of anti-semitism within Labour that he labelled "the socialism of fools."

He also repeated his offer for an urgent meeting with the board as soon as possible.

A spokesperson for Mr Corbyn said last week that his Facebook comment from 2012 was responding to concerns over the "removal of public art on grounds of freedom of speech" but that, on later inspection of the mural, that it was "right that it was removed."

■ INDUSTRY

Labour announces tech and creative diversity charters

by Marcus Barnett

LABOUR will today set out a "diversity charter challenge" to improve the representation of women and minorities across the economy.

In moves announced by shadow business, energy and industrial strategy secretary Rebecca Long-Bailey, the party will address the woeful lack of representation in core sectors of British industry.

Under the proposals, every major sector will be forced to develop and implement a diversity charter that deals with ethnicity, sexuality, class background and disability.

It will also be ground-break-

ing in establishing work charters in the tech sector and the growing creative industries.

New figures reveal that only 5 per cent of leading positions in the technology industry are held by women or ethnic minorities.

Labour intend to apply political pressure for these burgeoning industries to positively improve representation.

The party will also appoint "diversity champions" to ensure the implementation of this policy – the first to be announced being comedian and actor Sir Lenny Henry.

Ms Long-Bailey said: "We must not only push for greater diversity at the very top, but at every level of a

business, ensuring that all workers are able to succeed.

"Labour will create a high-skilled, high-wage, high-productivity economy – and our diversity charters will ensure that 'good jobs' are accessible to the many, not just to a privileged few."

Shadow minister for industrial strategy Chi Onwurah added that "diversity is not an optional add-on, it is an economic imperative – and Labour's strategy has been written with this in mind."

"It's no surprise that this government is failing on productivity and growth when key industries are failing to utilise the talents of the whole population."

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THE EU AND BREXIT — WHICH WAY FORWARD FOR THE LABOUR MOVEMENT?

guest speakers

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ALEX GORDON
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Croeso i bawb — everyone welcome!



PROJECT 84: A new sculpture was unveiled yesterday on top of London Television Centre to raise awareness of male suicide. Artists Mark Jenkins and Sandra Fernandez created 84 figures to represent the number of men who take their own lives each week in Britain.

FRANCHISE FAIL

RMT demands public ownership after bailout bill

by Marcus Barnett

RAIL union RMT demanded the renationalisation of Britain's railways today, after it emerged that rail franchises are hemorrhaging hundreds of millions of pounds at the taxpayer's expense.

Details of the budget revealed that the anticipated taxpayer support of private rail companies, the vast majority of which are overseas owned, falls just short of a staggering £250 million.

The RMT suspect that the figure does not include the cost of the struggling East Coast Main Line, which the union labelled a "salvage operation," and believe that further questions must be answered about other tanking franchises.

It follows revelations that £22 million of taxpayer's money was given to Govia Thameslink to underwrite alleged losses

incurred due to the ongoing guards dispute.

The RMT said that this displays Transport Secretary Chris Grayling's lack of real interest in resolving the dispute, accusing the Tories of "privatising profit and nationalising the risk."

RMT general secretary Mick Cash said "there appear to be no depths to which the private rail franchising racket can sink that would force the government to pull the plug," and claimed that it is no surprise that over 70 per cent of the public now support the RMT's demand to renationalise the railways.

Accusing the DfT of not "coming clean" about other failing franchises, Mr Cash condemned the government for hiding the gravity of the scandal and keeping the public in the dark - emphasising that "the only solution to this financial racketeering on Britain's railways is public ownership."

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ARMS TRADE

Thousands back campaign to end Saudi weapons sale

by Ceren Sagir

TENS of thousands of supporters have backed one of Save The Children's biggest ever campaigns, urging an end to British arms deals with the Saudi government.

Public figures such as actor Joely Richardson and TV presenter Natasha Kaplinsky, both ambassadors for the charity, have signed a petition for an immediate suspension of arms sales to Saudi Arabia and to ensure humanitarian access to children in Yemen.

The petition, marking the third anniversary of the escalation of the Yemen conflict, has

more than 60,000 signatures and will be delivered to the Foreign Office.

Ms Richardson implored Foreign Secretary Boris Johnson to "save the children of Yemen."

She said: "We shouldn't be selling arms towards anyone that would bomb children and civilians."

"The point is that it's year three of a war and that there are 17 million people who are being starved, experiencing famine, cholera, and air strikes."

"It's a terrible situation, but I'm here specifically to save the children. Children shouldn't be victims of war."

Save The Children's Jack Madden said it is one of the

largest campaign petitions the charity has ever had. "It's because people feel so strongly about what the government are doing and feel strongly about what's happening to children in Yemen," he said.

Mr Madden said more needs to be done to make sure that humanitarian and commercial goods are let into the country and that people who have committed violations against children are held to account in Yemen.

"The Foreign Secretary can suspend weapon sales to Saudi Arabia to help stop fuelling the conflict and to make sure that we maintain funding and access for aid into the country in order to help rebuild chil-

dren's lives in Yemen," he said.

Campaign Against Arms Trade (CAAT's) Andrew Smith said: "Yemen has endured three years of destruction, but the arms sales haven't stopped."

Mr Smith said that as the war enters its fourth year, the humanitarian crisis is only getting worse.

"Theresa May and her colleagues must end their shameful complicity in the destruction."

"If the government wants to do the right thing for the people of Yemen, then it must stop arming and supporting the brutal Saudi regime," he said.

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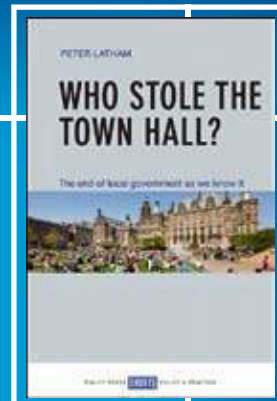


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■ LONDON

Primary sees off academy threat

by Marcus Barnett

PARENTS and teachers are rejoicing after governors of a London school decided yesterday not to turn it into an academy.

After a seven-month campaign involving strikes by local teachers, the governing body of Keir Hardie primary school, Newham, has decided not to academise the school.

The school had been scheduled to join the Agate Momentum Trust on January 1, but action by the National Education Union (NEU) and parental opposition successfully delayed the decision.

NEU representative Bethan Phillips said the community and the staff feel “relieved” and “confident” that concerns about academisation were taken seriously by the governors.

Parent-teacher association committee member Lisa Palmer, whose petition to resist the business takeover of the school gained 564 signatures, said that she was “very happy” with the decision.

“It is great that the governors finally heard the collective voices of parents, teachers, staff and the community of Keir Hardie,” she said.

“We all want the best for our children and look forward to building a stronger and better future together.”

The dispute is being hailed as a huge victory in the defence of a comprehensive, progressive education – and a massive leap forward for trade unionism in east London.

During the strikes at Keir Hardie, previously non-union support staff and supply teachers joined the NEU alongside their full-time colleagues out of outrage at the potential marketisation of the school.

Since the beginning of the dispute, union membership at the school has tripled.

This victory comes after news that the academisation of Brampton Primary School will also be halted after 13 days of strike action and community outrage over the plans led to a successful High Court injunction last week.

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SOUTH YORKSHIRE: Campaigners celebrated the anniversary of the founding of South Yorkshire's renowned Freedom Riders against cuts to free travel for elderly and disabled people in Sheffield yesterday.

In March 2014, South Yorkshire Passenger Transport Authority abolished free rail travel for pensioners and disabled people to cut costs.

Barnsley Retirees Action Group

responded by establishing South Yorkshire Freedom Riders, gathering weekly at Barnsley railway station, boarding a train to Sheffield and refusing to pay.

There were confrontations with police, who unsuccessfully blockaded the station to stop the protesters from boarding.

The transport authority finally conceded free rail transport for disabled

people but not for pensioners – and the campaign continued.

Two pensioners were manhandled and arrested at a Sheffield station rally after a “free” journey from Barnsley.

Freedom Riders organiser George Arthur, one of the pensioners arrested and discharged, vowed that the campaign would continue as the transport authority had ample funds to subsidise free rail travel for pensioners.

■ SAFETY AT WORK

FIRMS' 'CORROSIVE CULTURE' SILENCING SEX PESTS' VICTIMS

EHRC: Law should place onus on employers to prevent harassment

by Ceren Sagir

VICTIMS of sexual harassment at work need better protection because their voices have been silenced by “corrosive cultures,” the Equality & Human Rights Commission (EHRC) said yesterday.

The commission's report calls on the government to introduce legislation stopping employers from ignoring complaints to protect their reputation.

It said it had found “truly shocking” examples of sexual harassment, including a 17-year-old who locked herself in a toilet after men “joked” about rape, and a woman who revealed she had lost her job and her health.

The commission said firms should not use non-disclosure agreements to sweep sexual har-

assment under the carpet and there should be a new legal duty on employers to prevent harassment and protect victims.

EHRC chief executive Rebecca Hilsenrath said there was a lack of “consistent and effective action” being taken by employers, with people's careers and mental and physical health being damaged as a result.

“Corrosive cultures have silenced individuals and sexual harassment has been normalised,” she said. “We underestimate the extent and we are complacent as to impact.”

She said urgent action was needed for change. “It cannot be right that millions of people go to work fearing what might have happened by the time they come home.”

TUC general secretary Frances O'Grady said the report echoed the union body's own research, which found more than half of women had expe-

rienced sexual harassment at work, though only one in five had reported it.

“The impact of sexual harassment can be devastating and long-lasting,” she said.

“Employers and government must take the practical steps set out by both the EHRC and the TUC to stamp out sexual harassment.”

“The EHRC also highlight the role union reps have in supporting workers. If you have experienced sexual harassment, join a union today.”

The Fawcett Society's Sam Smethers said that no woman should face “humiliation, intimidation or harassment” at work.

“Sadly, it's becoming increasingly clear not only that it's an all-too-common experience, but that far too many employers are turning a blind eye or even silencing victims of harassment,” she said.

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■ INEQUALITY

Gender pay gap exposed at yet another 'top' paper

by Ceren Sagir

WOMEN at the Financial Times earn nearly a fifth less than men, according to new figures.

The newspaper, which employs 1,400 staff in Britain, published figures yesterday showing a median pay gap of almost 20 per cent between male and female employees.

The FT also reported that two thirds of its highest paid staff were men and the median gender pay gap for bonuses stood at nearly 30 per cent.

The findings are worse than predicted and worse than most other media groups, with the gender gap for FT's editorial staff widening over the past six years.

National Union of Journalists reps at FT have launched their own pay survey in response and asked for urgent meetings with senior managers to discuss the data.

The reps aim to push for specific moves to close the pay gap and to address potential problems with equal pay.

In a statement, the newspaper, owned by the Japanese Nikkei Inc, said the primary reason given for the gender pay gap was because the FT has "fewer women than men at senior levels."

FT head John Ridding said:

"On equal pay, we've done a thorough review and we are assured that employees are paid equally for the same or equivalent work. We would take any claim to the contrary seriously."

The median pay gap at the Guardian is 12 per cent, over 9 per cent at the BBC, 18 per cent at ITN. Channel 4 has the highest median pay gap at over 24 per cent.

The findings come as Equality & Human Rights Commission (EHRC) warned yesterday that it will take enforcement action against companies who do not publish their gender pay gap.

Companies with 250 or more employees are required to submit their pay gap figures to the government's equalities office by April 4.

For public-sector employers the deadline is March 30.

Employers who ignore the instruction could face unlimited fines decided by the courts.

Figures published so far by 3,745 firms show more than 77 per cent have a median gender pay gap in favour of men.

Only 14 per cent of these firms show a pay gap in favour of women and just 8 per cent have none.

EHRC chief executive Rebecca Hilsenrath warned: "The clock is ticking."

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■ HEALTH

Rise in adults juggling jobs, money – and cancer

LEADING cancer charity Macmillan has noted a "significant rise" in working-aged adults diagnosed with the disease.

Macmillan Cancer Support said between 2010 and 2015 there was a 10 per cent rise in the number of people aged 16 to 65 living with cancer.

Working-aged people now make up more than a third of people living with a cancer diagnosis.

Spokeswoman Liz Egan said the "significant rise" means more people than ever are facing "the gruelling task of juggling" their cancer, jobs and finances.

"Staying in work is important to the majority of people as it helps to retain a sense of normality that is essential to their emotional and physical wellbeing," she said.

Many sufferers are unaware that their employer has a legal obligation to make reasonable adjustments for them.

The charity has called on employers to do more to help workers who have been diagnosed.

Ms Egan said: "Employers cannot face this challenge alone, and the government must include the needs of people with cancer in their policies on health and work."

■ SKINT NHS

At risk but denied test

LIFE-SAVING cancer tests are being denied to thousands of at-risk patients, a charity warned yesterday.

Four in five English hospitals are not testing bowel cancer patients for a genetic condition called Lynch syndrome, which significantly increases a person's risk of the disease.

Bowel Cancer UK found that 83 per cent of hospital trusts are not following official guidelines to test all bowel cancer patients at the time of their diagnosis for Lynch syndrome. Nine in 10 trusts cited financial reasons as the main barrier.

The inherited condition with no symptoms means that children of those with it have a 50 per cent chance of developing it.

Testing to identify the condition costs £200.



Cartoon: Mike Bryson

■ COOKING THE BOOKS

Rumbled: DWP's iffy figures on universal credit job bonus

Lamiat Sabin
Parliamentary Reporter

MPS accused the government yesterday of misrepresenting Institute of Fiscal Studies (IFS) research to dress up the numbers of those who would be in work under universal credit.

The Department for Work and Pensions (DWP) had said it was "determined" that 260,000 more people would be employed as its flagship benefit reform scheme is rolled out across the country.

But the employment impact of the controversial universal credit scheme remains highly uncertain and difficult to quantify, according to the think tank IFS.

Work & pensions select committee chairman Labour MP Frank Field wrote to Employment Minister Alok Sharma to ask how the DWP



'WORRYING:' Frank Field

came to its figure of more than a quarter of a million people.

The estimates stood at 150,000 more people employed due to "increased financial incentives to work," 50,000 more due to "increased conditionality," and 60,000 due to "simplification of the benefit system."

The DWP claimed that its figures were "reviewed" by the IFS.

But the IFS said that "at no stage" did it review the DWP's estimates that attributed 50,000 and 60,000 of the overall 250,000 forecast.

It added: "The employment impact of UC is highly uncertain. The move to UC involves a number of changes for which it is hard to find comparable precedents ..."

Mr Field said yesterday that the lack of evidence for the universal credit scheme was worrying and insulting.

"The ongoing lack of evidence to back up the much-vaunted employment impact of universal credit was already extremely disappointing," he said.

"This clumsy and ill-judged attempt to piggyback on one of the most trusted authorities on public policy and finance would be farcical if it was not so deeply worrying."

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■ BAD BOSSES

Non-payment condemned employee to Smash diet

A PREGNANT woman had nothing to eat but Smash for weeks after she was sacked without being paid owed wages, an MP claimed yesterday.

At the Commons' work & pensions questions, Labour's Helen Goodman asked what the government is going to do about bad employers in her Bishop Auckland constituency.

She cited one that "sacked a lot of young people without paying the wages they were owed," leaving a pregnant woman eating nothing but instant mash for three weeks.

Work & Pensions Secretary Esther McVey said the government "will not stand by any bad employer" and urged Ms Goodman to provide more details.

YEMEN

Houthi missile kills one in Riyadh

by Our Foreign Desk

SAUDI ARABIA reported one death from missiles fired across the border by Yemen's Houthi movement on the third anniversary of the Gulf kingdom's war against its southern neighbour.

Two others were wounded by fragments from the missile, among several shot down over Riyadh by air defence systems.

The victims were reportedly Egyptian nationals. Reports identified the type of missile fired as a Burkan, which arms experts say shares characteristics of the Iranian-built Qiam ballistic missiles.

Saudi Arabia claims the Houthi rebellion that overthrew Yemen's president Abed Rabbo Mansour Hadi, who its brutal war aims to restore, was sponsored by Iran and that Iran is supplying the movement with weaponry.

Its claim was backed yesterday by Britain-based

investigative organisation Conflict Armament Research (CAR), which receives funding from Germany, the EU and the United Arab Emirates, saying that roadside bombs used in Yemen against invading Saudi forces bore similarities to those used by Hezbollah in Lebanon and "insurgents" in Iraq and Bahrain, which it said suggested an Iranian "influence" in their manufacture.

The insurgents referred to were not named. A pro-democracy uprising in Bahrain was crushed by the Saudi military in 2011.

CAR regional operations head Tim Michetti said the report made Iran's "plausible deniability" over links to the Houthis "not very plausible."

The death in Riyadh was the first in the Saudi capital as a result of the war, in which Saudi forces armed and equipped by the US and Britain have killed thousands of civilians in raids on hospitals and schools.

international@peoples-press.com



SPAIN

Protests erupt as Puigdemont awaits German decision

by Our Foreign Desk

PROTESTERS have clashed with riot police in Barcelona and other Catalan towns following the detention of the region's former president Carles Puigdemont in Germany on Sunday.

A German court was set to rule yesterday on whether the separatist politician would remain in custody while other courts decide whether he should be extradited to Spain, where he is charged with rebellion and misuse of public funds for organising a unilateral referendum on Catalan independence, regarded as illegal by Madrid, last October.

The Catalan parliament's subsequent declaration of independence received no international recognition and provoked a heavy-handed takeover of the regional government by Spanish authorities.

Mr Puigdemont was being held in a prison in Neumuenster after his arrest on Sunday when he entered Germany on his way back from a trip to Finland to Belgium, where he has been holed up since he fled Spain in October.

EU rules state that member states must honour arrest warrants issued by other members – but they retain the right not to extradite people if the crimes they are accused of are not crimes in the state that detained them.

German courts will consider whether the Spanish crime of rebellion is equivalent to the German offence of high treason in order to determine whether it constitutes grounds for extradition.

German Left party MP Andrej Hunko said the arrest was a "disgrace."

Tens of thousands rallied in Mr Puigdemont's defence in

Barcelona on Sunday night, marching on the Spanish government's representative's office and clashing with police.

The anti-separatist Citizens Party leader Ines Arrimadas blamed the independence movement for the clashes, saying that they were evidence of a "society broken in two."

But the Catalan parliament's speaker Roger Torrent – the highest-ranking elected official in the region, as the assembly has been unable to elect a president in Mr Puigdemont's absence – called for a "democratic front" of political parties, trade unions and other organisations to challenge Madrid's "thirst for revenge."

international@peoples-press.com



ALL OUT: Catalan Mossos d'Esquadra regional police officers clash with pro-independence supporters trying to reach the Spanish government office in Barcelona



RUSSIA

Deadly shopping centre blaze kills at least 64

THE deadly blaze in the Siberian city of Kemerovo killed 64 people, authorities reported yesterday.

Sunday's fire at the Winter Cherry shopping arcade burned through the night and firefighters confirmed the final death toll after combing the building's four storeys.

Witnesses said fire alarms did not go off and staff were "nowhere to be seen" as the conflagration blazed in the city of half a million, an important industrial centre 1,900 miles east of Moscow.

Ten people are in hospital. Health Minister Veronika Skvortsova said the patient in the gravest condition was an 11-year-old boy who jumped out of a fourth-floor window to escape the flames. His parents and younger brother were dead, she added.

An investigative committee has detained four people for questioning and launched a probe into possible negligence and violations of fire safety rules, although they were not ready to state the cause of the fire yesterday.



■ UNITED STATES

FACEBOOK 'HARVESTING ANDROID USERS' DATA'

INVESTIGATION: Social media site now questioned over revelations it collected phone numbers

by Our Foreign Desk

FACEBOOK faced new questions yesterday about collecting phone numbers and text messages from Android devices.

The revelations are embarrassing following the US-based internet giant's apologies in US and British newspapers for exposing users' data to Cambridge Analytica, a consultancy firm which worked with the Donald Trump campaign in the US and the Leave campaign in Britain's 2016 referendum on EU membership.

The website Ars Technica

reports that Android users who checked data gathered by Facebook on them found that it had years of contact names, numbers, call lengths and text recipients.

Facebook said on Sunday that the information is uploaded to secure servers and comes only from Android users who opt to allow it. A spokeswoman said the data is not sold or shared with users' friends or outside apps.

The company also said it does not collect the content of text messages or calls.

Messages were left on Sunday seeking comment about security from Google officials,

who make the Android operating system.

Reports of the data collection came as Facebook CEO Mark Zuckerberg took out ads in multiple US and British Sunday newspapers to apologise for the Cambridge Analytica scandal.

The ads say the social media platform doesn't deserve to hold personal information if it can't protect it.

According to the ads, a quiz app built by a Cambridge University researcher leaked Facebook data of millions of people four years ago.

Cambridge Analytica got the data from a researcher who

paid 270,000 Facebook users to complete a psychological profile quiz in 2014. But the quiz gathered information on their friends as well, bringing the total number of people affected to about 50 million.

The Trump campaign paid the firm \$6 million (£4.2m) during the 2016 election but has since distanced itself from the company.

Vote Leave is accused of channelling money through another campaign to a firm linked to Cambridge Analytica in a potential breach of electoral law.

international@peoples-press.com

■ UKRAINE

Officials accused of selling off blood

UKRAINE'S communists accused Kiev of loosening restrictions on exporting its citizens' blood yesterday, saying the "bloodsucker oligarchs" who have run the country since the 2014 Maidan coup were treating Ukrainians as "raw biological materials for the West."

Ukrainian law states that components and preparations made from donated blood can only be sold outside the country if there are enough available reserves to meet internal needs, but the Communist Party of Ukraine said the Health Ministry – run by acting minister Ulana Suprun, a US-born and educated health entrepreneur, since 2016 – had assured the authorities there was "plenty" of blood in the country.

The Ukrainian government report on exporting blood says doing so will "expand the export potential of Ukraine and contribute to an increase in the production of medicines."

"The impoverished population will go to donate blood for little money, which somewhere on the border with the EU will turn into big money," the Communist Party predicted.

Ukraine agreed to standardise its regulations on the quality and safety of donor blood with those of the EU in 2014's association agreement.

■ UNITED STATES

UAE adviser 'paid to push anti-Qatar laws through'

by Our Foreign Desk

A TOP adviser to the United Arab Emirates (UAE) supplied millions of dollars to a Donald Trump fundraiser in order to push anti-Qatar legislation through the US Congress, a new investigation has revealed.

Elliott Broidy received \$2.5 million (£1.75m) from UAE adviser George Nader, now a witness to a probe into foreign meddling in US politics, shortly before sponsoring a conference on Qatar's ties to Islamist extremism and distributing just under \$600,000 to senior Republicans in Congress and on party committees.

During the conference Californian congressman Ed Royce said he was introducing legislation that would brand Qatar a terrorist-supporting state and apply sanctions. The Bill is currently awaiting review by the House financial services committee.



IN HOT WATER: George Nader is said to have wired \$2.5 million to Donald Trump's fundraiser

Mr Royce had received \$5,400 in campaign gifts, the maximum allowed by law, from Mr Broidy.

The despotic Gulf country is a long-term ally of Washington and home to the largest US air base in the Middle East at al-Udeid, but tensions with fellow US ally Saudi Arabia resulted in a blockade by its neighbours last year, with the UAE in the Saudi camp.

Saudi Arabia backs extreme

Salafist terror organisations in the Middle East such as the Syrian rebel groups Jaysh al-Islam and Ahrar al-Sham, while Qatar is reportedly linked to the Muslim Brotherhood and Palestine's Hamas movement.

Mr Broidy and Mr Royce both maintain that they have long been outspoken critics of Qatar and deny that money from the UAE or its advisers has played any part in their activity.

international@peoples-press.com

■ UNITED STATES

Republican sparks anger over gun control

US GUN violence victims hit back yesterday after a senior Republican said the million who marched at the weekend for gun control were "looking to someone else to solve their problem."

"They took action to ask someone to pass a law," he said on TV channel CNN's State of the Union programme.

"They didn't take action to say: 'How do I, as an individ-

ual, deal with this problem?'

"How about kids, instead of looking to someone else to solve their problem, do something about maybe taking CPR classes or trying to deal with situations [so] when there is a violent shooter you can actually respond to that," he asked.

The former Pennsylvania senator, who has twice sought the Republican nomination for

the presidency, drew immediate condemnation for his comments.

"For anyone to suggest that the solution to gun violence is for kids to learn CPR is outrageous and indicative of the NRA's desire to do or say anything except strengthen America's weak gun laws," said Erica Lafferty, whose mother was killed in a 2012 shooting at Sandy Hook primary school.

★ Star comment

The left must unite against smears aimed at undermining Labour

THE self-proclaimed “leaders of British Jewry” attempting to disinter bogus accusations that Labour leader Jeremy Corbyn is somehow soft on anti-semitism do nothing but expose how threadbare is their pretension to speak for British Jews.

Their preposterous posturing is a cynical ploy aimed at undermining Labour’s performance at forthcoming local elections.

On its own, it is unlikely to do this. The Daily Mail’s 12 pages of smears accusing Corbyn, John McDonnell and Diane Abbott of sympathising with terrorists on election day last year backfired, increasing support for Labour.

Similarly, a public weary of the same baseless allegations being thrown repeatedly at the party leader’s head will see through the open letter published by the Board of Deputies of British Jews and the Jewish Leadership Council (JLC).

Unlike Corbyn, neither body can claim any consistent opposition to racial prejudice.

As Jewish Voice for Labour points out, “there is massively more anti-semitism on the right of politics than on the left.”

But the Board of Deputies and the Jewish Leadership Council (JLC) were indifferent to the racist Tory campaign against Sadiq Khan when he ran for mayor of London, just as they are silent now on the Conservative Party pamphlet in Havering, also directed at Mr Khan, which Labour MP David Lammy describes as “one long dog whistle about race.”



Nor did they rush to the defence of Ed Miliband, whose father was a Jewish refugee from nazism, when the Mail proclaimed Miliband Senior had “hated Britain” and launched a nod-nod, wink-wink tirade implying that the family were un-British and unpatriotic because of their background.

Their own letter reveals their real gripe, as their references to the “far left’s obsessive hatred of zionism, zionists and Israel” and to “Jews” as a group supposedly having expressed collective fears over what “such politics” – Corbyn’s – would mean for their “wellbeing” indicate.

As an anti-imperialist, Corbyn as prime minister might object to long-standing features of British foreign policy – such as playing second fiddle to the warmongers in Washington, slavishly sucking up to the head-chopping despots of Saudi Arabia and, yes, collaborating with Israel’s illegal colonisation of Palestinian land.

That the Board of Deputies and the JLC are more concerned about a loss of political support for the Israeli government than they are about racism is demonstrated by board president Jonathan Arkush’s rush to congratulate Donald Trump on his election to the White House – despite the US president’s associations with a US “alt right” steeped in anti-semitism.



That they will not be satisfied by anything less than Corbyn abandoning solidarity with Palestine and vetoing criticism of Israel is shown by the contempt they openly display for the Shami Chakrabarti investigation into anti-semitism within Labour, which highlighted genuine examples of anti-semitism in the party – which are completely unacceptable – while stating, correctly, that Labour is not a haven for anti-semites and nor are anti-semitic views typical, prevalent or tolerated within it.

Feeble as the latest smear on Corbyn is, its danger lies in its propensity to kick off another round of backstabbing by Labour MPs who remain hostile to the party’s leftward shift.

Ian Austin’s immediate call for Corbyn to apologise, and demands by some in the PLP that the Labour leader “explain himself” before them, are evidence that this constituency is as shameless as ever.

Austin was not always so keen on apologies – when Corbyn apologised in Parliament for the party’s role in starting the Iraq war in 2003, the Dudley North MP had to be shushed by Speaker John Bercow for shouting “sit down and shut up” and “you’re a disgrace” while his leader was talking.

That nasty little incident tells us everything we need to know about the politics of Corbyn’s accusers. The left must show unity in the face of these attacks, and make it clear that MPs who connive at slandering him will be held to account by our movement.

Precarious work and contemporary capitala



by Jonathan White

SCARCELY a week goes by at the moment without some press story about precarious work in Britain, and it’s undeniable that something profound has happened to Britain’s labour market.

The full employment boasted by Tories is in truth closer to full under-employment – a swelling in the ranks of part-time workers.

Self-employment, real and bogus has expanded massively. But what exactly is going on? And how should the labour movement respond?

For some writers today, we are living in a new world of work characterised by technologically dominated platform working in a gig economy.

Work has become precarious, mobile, flexible, empty of meaning and probably just best endured in return for a basic income.

This idea has been expressed in its most sophisticated form by Guy Standing who has argued that neoliberalism and post-Fordism are bringing with them the breakdown of old certainties about work and the emergence of a new class, a precariat.

The precariat is composed of

migrant workers, downwardly mobile middle-class professionals and the “left behind” chronically under-employed in deindustrialised communities.

It stands in opposition to the “salaried” – those sections of the working population who have held on to secure work and it is qualitatively different from the old proletariat who consisted “mostly of workers in long-term, stable, fixed-hour jobs with established routes of advancement, subject to unionisation and collective agreements, with job titles their fathers and mothers would have understood, facing local employers whose names and features they were familiar with.”

Now, there are serious weaknesses with this analysis. First, it’s ahistorical.

Working-class history is littered with precarious workers, many of them turning up in the annals of the trade union movement as leading sections of the old proletariat that’s supposed to have been overthrown.

Second, it’s questionable how useful the concept of the precariat is for explaining

what’s happening to the working class of the global south, whose ranks are being swelled by the movement of multinational capital.

These people look more like the proletarians of 19th-century Europe than components of a new class.

Finally, it’s politically dubious. The concept of a precariat establishes a cleavage between the interests of different sections of the working class and, in Standing’s formulation at least, struggle is directed toward the achievement of a basic income that leaves existing property structures fundamentally unchallenged.

Whatever it is, Standing’s vision is not one of a united working-class engaged in self-emancipation.

However, we shouldn’t chuck out the idea of precariousness. It has currency because it describes something real that is happening to working people, and if the hot takes emanating from Britain’s intelligentsia aren’t adequate, then we need better concepts for understanding what’s going on.

In a new essay for Trade Union Futures, I look at how an engagement with Marx’s ideas can shed a different light on

this issue and give some pointers to the trade union movement in how to respond.

Here’s the argument in brief. In capitalist societies, Marx argued, businesses accumulate capital from the exploitation of working people: their ability to persuade and coerce people to contribute more work than they are paid for in wages.

Because profits depend ultimately on this exploitation, capitalist firms constantly try to work out how to extract more labour from workers: cutting wages, intensifying work, introducing new ways of working and bringing in new technologies.

As capital accumulates, capitalist businesses draw ever more people into industrial work and away from work on the land or small property owning.

At the same time, the capitalist businesses are constantly changing the technologies they use and the skills they need and seeking to replace expensive workers with cheaper ones, often women, children or migrants.

Finally, the anarchic competition between capitalist firms leads to many businesses being driven to the wall or swallowed up.

alism



In these ways, Marx argued, capitalism created its own surplus population, what he called an “industrial reserve army.” Ever-growing numbers of workers are drawn into industrial production, others are cast out to join the ranks of the unemployed or under-employed.

From this perspective, capitalism has always had a precariat. It's partly the industrial reserve army of labour. But partly, precariousness is just a condition of life for the wider working class.

In the advanced capitalist West during the post-second world war period, the so-called “Golden Age of capitalism,” it's arguable that these forces at the heart of capitalism were relatively muted.

But this was a brief period in the history of capitalism and it only really meant something in the advanced capitalist states.

With the neoliberal turn, we've seen the forces creating precarious work unleashed once more. Now they run riot across the globe, fuelled by the development of financialised multinational corporations.

Today, monopolistic multinationals are decisive players in the global economy and the majority are now owned solely or predominantly by invest-

ment banks, investment funds or private equity.

Why does this matter? It matters because these financial businesses look for steady flows of high dividend payments and they turn over their portfolios rapidly in search of the best returns.

In the 1950s, the average shareholding was six years in duration. Now it's six months. This changes the way that big businesses behave, gearing them to the creation of profit at any cost.

CEOs of multinationals strive to keep the dividends flowing by growing fast through aggressive mergers and acquisitions, by share buybacks that artificially boost share prices and by tax avoidance.

Most importantly for this essay, multinationals also try to drive down the cost of labour and this explains why they strive to create cheaper “flexible” workforces that can be hired or fired at will and to offshore work to the new working class in the global south.

These same companies have used their dominance of the state to beat down labour market regulations across the globe.

Collective bargaining and employment law frameworks have come under sustained attack not just in Britain but

in the US, the EU, the former socialist countries of eastern Europe and across the global south. Multinational companies insist on flexible labour laws and the dismantling of collective bargaining arrangements as the price of investment.

Finally, the state employment sectors that were built up over the course of the 20th century have come under sustained attack from multinationals and their finance capital backers.

With marketisation and privatisation of public services have come the mantras of the New Public Management and the conscious attempt to fragment jobs and create flexible, precarious workers within the public sector.

What's to be done? In the longer essay, I look at the state of the British economy, its working class and its unions in a bit more detail. But a few things can be suggested here.

First, there are no magic bullets for unions. For all the boosterism surrounding “new small unions,” their actual record in organising and bargaining for precarious workers is certainly no better than that of big general unions like Unite or the GMB.

Equally, there are problems with the way the TUC-affiliated unions operate if entire workforces of precariously employed retail workers, for example, are fenced off by unions with no intention of organising them.

The weak bargaining power of unions in the global south can be ameliorated to some degree by supply chain organising, but this is long-term and patient work with few quick wins.

The bigger problem is that financialised multinationals controlled by remote shareholders have few incentives to engage in collective bargaining.

This is what makes the issue of politics and ownership so vital. Unions interested in building workers' power must recognise the limits of their “economic” role and ensure they also mobilise around alternative economic and political strategies that aim to tackle the financialised ownership patterns of multinational capital.

At the same time, however, the ability of left political parties to gain and hold power will depend in part on the levels of active support they can mobilise from the masses of people organised in unions.

Unions have no choice but to put major resources into confronting the reality of precarious work and organising around whatever can be won in the workplace.

Otherwise they will simply wither. But if they can make themselves relevant to precariously employed workers in the modern proletariat through flexible organising and combining different strategies and tactics, and encompass this within active support for radical action to change the financialised ownership basis of contemporary capitalist businesses, then they can start to build genuine power in the workplace.

■ To read the full article visit the Trade Union Futures website (tradeunionfutures.wordpress.com).



Anti-semitism is to be deplored – but the political context of the latest smears against Corbyn reveal malicious intent

THE Jewish Socialists' Group expresses its serious concern at the rise of anti-semitism, especially under extreme right-wing governments in central eastern Europe, in the US under Donald Trump's presidency and here in Britain under Theresa May's premiership.

The recent extensive survey by the highly respected Jewish Policy Research confirmed that the main repository of anti-semitic views in Britain is among supporters of the Conservative Party and Ukip.

This political context, alongside declining support for the Tories, reveals the malicious intent behind the latest flimsy accusations of anti-semitism against Jeremy Corbyn and the Labour Party.

These accusations have come from the unrepresentative Board of Deputies and the unelected, self-proclaimed “Jewish Leadership Council” – two bodies dominated by supporters of the Tory Party.

Between now and the local elections the Tories would love to divert the electorate on to accusations of anti-semitism against the Labour Party rather than have us discussing austerity, cuts to local authority budgets, the health service, and social care.

Many Jews within and beyond the Labour Party are suffering from these policies along with the rest of the population, and oppose them vehemently.

Board of Deputies president Jonathan Arkush was one of the first to congratulate Trump on his election as president of the

The Morning Star prints here a public statement by the **JEWISH SOCIALIST GROUP** about claims of anti-semitism within the Labour Party

United States on behalf of the board.

This action was harshly criticised by many Jews he claims that the board represents. He also gives unqualified support to Israel's pro-settler Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu, who enjoys good relations with the very far-right political forces in Hungary, Poland and the Czech Republic who are fanning bigotry against minorities, including Jews.

Until very recently the Jewish Leadership Council was chaired by Sir Mick Davies, who was appointed Tory Party treasurer in February 2016 and is now the chief executive of the Conservative Party.

The Jewish Socialists' Group includes many members of the Labour Party, and we know many Jews who have joined or rejoined the Labour Party, enthused by the progressive leadership of Corbyn.

Labour is the party that brought in anti-discrimination legislation at a time when many

Tory members were open supporters of and investors in apartheid South Africa.

The Tories are the party that have dished out the harshest treatment to migrants and refugees, especially when Theresa May was home secretary.

Shamefully, they are still refusing to accede to the proposal of Labour peer Lord Dubs, who came to Britain as a Jewish refugee on the Kindertransport, to take in a small but significant number of unaccompanied child refugees from Syria.

We have worked alongside Corbyn in campaigns against all forms of racism and bigotry, including anti-semitism, for many years, and we have faith that a Labour government led by Corbyn and Labour-led councils across the country, will be best placed to implement serious measures against all forms of racism, discrimination and bigotry.

■ For more information about the Jewish Socialist Group visit www.jewishsocialist.org.uk.

Voices of Scotland

with Charlie McDonald and Val Jennings

Workers need an effective voice through their union

ON March 5 West Dunbartonshire Council's SNP-led administration presented their 2018-19 budget to the residents of West Dunbartonshire.

The subsequent press release by the council led on investment on planned road upgrades and protecting social care services. This will be welcomed by many.

But the report failed to mention the proposal to cut 16 important services to achieve savings of more than £1 million – cuts which will affect thousands of residents in West Dunbartonshire, lead to numerous job losses and which will have a detrimental impact on the communities that rely heavily on the current level of service provision.

Services which will be affected include a significant reduction in the maintenance of parks, cemeteries and other common spaces, the removal of funding for voluntary organisations and strategic partners and the reduction of paid trade union conveners.

The council's administration has claimed that these cuts were chosen using feedback from the residents of West Dunbartonshire and council staff through an online consultation process.

In response, the Joint Trade Unions is now challenging on three fronts: first, the integrity and validity of the online survey on which these service cuts are based due to its limited scope and accessibility; second, the need for savings to be made within the budget at all; and third, the attack on the democracy of trade unions by reducing workplace representatives. This is despite the recent joint statement issued by the First Minister and the STUC which said that "workers need an effective voice through the union."

The Joint Trade Unions believes that the administration has completely abdicated its responsibilities as elected representatives by using an online survey to identify and justify the cuts.

We believe the operational decisions, especially where they affect public services, should only be made after careful analysis of the likely impact and effect on communities.

We believe that asking resi-

VAL JENNINGS and **CHARLIE McDONALD** write on the injustice of West Dunbartonshire council's slashing of trade union facility time



VOICES HEARD: Unite members during a walk out at the Faslane nuclear base in 2014 on the Clyde, Scotland over a dispute between the union and contractors Babcock

dents to make decisions on service provision without providing all the known facts and likely impact could be considered reckless and irresponsible.

In addition, much has been made of the "fact" that 76 per cent of residents voted for the cuts. This is very misleading.

In reality, out of a population of 89,590 in West Dunbartonshire, only 2,700 returned a survey. That equates to 3 per cent of the residents in West Dunbartonshire.

In addition, the council claims that a comprehensive staff survey returned a 67 per cent vote in favour of the cuts. Again a sense of perspective is required to put this into context.

Out of approximately 5,000 council employees, only 385 completed the survey, which is 6 per cent of staff.

In conclusion, we believe

that the survey, and the online process, is fundamentally flawed.

The survey was not widely publicised and not available to all residents and staff, the choices were limited and misleading, and the outcomes were manipulated and weighted in favour of the preferred cuts.

The Joint Trade Unions believes that the outcomes of the survey are not a true representation of the opinions of the council's workforce or its residents.

Although the SNP administration has stated that the decision to cut services was vital to keep the council's finances in order, the Joint Trade Unions strongly disagrees that there is a need to cut services at all as a cost-saving exercise.

The council's base income from government is approxi-

mately £214m per annum. Therefore a saving of £1m represents less than 1 per cent of its budget.

According to the council's annual accounts for the year ending March 31 2017, the authority has a target prudential reserve level for the general fund of £4.1m and at March 31 2017 the reserve exceeded this level by £959,000 bringing a total reserve in the general fund of £5m.

This excess funding above the prudential reserve level could have been used to fill the projected funding gap.

The Joint Trade Unions is also concerned that, once again, cuts to services will only affect lower-paid, front-line workers, when the council at the moment employs 108 employees earning over £50,000 per annum, at a cost of £6,500,000 and the five highest

earning employees earn over £515,766 between them.

It also has concerns that the council paid out £3.6m in "exit packages" between 2015 and 2017 to mostly senior employees (annual accounts, March 2017).

Despite reassurances that the council was right behind trade unions in West Dunbartonshire, and that the SNP is nationally advertising its support of the Fair Work Convention and workers' rights to trade union advice and representation, the Joint Trade Unions was dismayed to learn that the budget called for a reduction in paid representatives at a time when their services are needed most.

We believe that the budget implications, in the name of austerity, are a direct attack on the workforce and on the trade union movement.

The decision to reduce this vital service is not the result of a meaningful and legitimate public survey, but derived from a management recommendation designed to weaken the resistance to future service cuts.

In spite of First Minister Nicola Sturgeon's support for the trade union movement, and the SNP's historic opposition to interference in trade union representation, the SNP-led West Dunbartonshire Council has decided to significantly reduce trade union representation for its employees at a time of uncertainty and change.

We urge the elected members of the council to reconsider the reduction of this vital service.

■ Charlie McDonald is Unite convener for West Dunbartonshire and Val Jennings is Unison convener for West Dunbartonshire.



Chris Searle

...on jazz



AS ONE: Mark Sanders (left), Jon Edwards (centre), and John Butcher (right)

Pic: Dawid Laskowski

An ethos of sheer equality, a tribute to the freest music

Last Dream of the Morning

John Butcher, Jon Edwards
and Mark Sanders

Relative Records RPR 1056

THE free drummer Mark Sanders (born in Beckenham in 1960) is the last musician to see himself as a leader. He will however, call himself the “instigator” of certain recorded sessions, but an ethos of sheer equality defines them.

No single soundmaker takes precedence or adopts a commandist role – all compadres inspire, move and steer each other as the essence of the music, with Sanders’ percussive artistry listening, provoking and responding to every note and change of sound of his bandmates, saying almost telepathically to each other, as

Sanders puts it, “What sound will we create to put it right?”

Sanders’s first boyhood vision of his drums was watching his dad play the bongos, and dancing in the aisles of the penny seats of the London Palladium to Brian Bennet’s drums when, as a six-year-old, his mum took him to see the Shadows.

At 15 he saved up and bought a drum kit and as a teenager, he moved into a flat with his mum’s friend’s boyfriend, who happened to be the future jazz bass virtuoso Paul Rogers.

He played left-field rock in his late teens but was beguiled when he watched avant-garde pianist Cecil Taylor one night on the television.

When he was 22, he met met an inspirational teacher and trumpeter, Brian Tuneson, at Brixton College, who took him towards freer forms of music while he listened carefully and joyously to the great

bop and post-bop drummers Kenny Clarke, Elvin Jones and Tony Williams, and later to more avant-gardists like the Sheffield drums genius Tony Oxley.

Sanders has drummed on scores of albums, but one of his prime “instigations” is *Lost Dreams of the Morning*, recorded in November 2016 at The Fish Factory studio in Willesden, north London.

Swimming in sound alongside him are the Brighton-born (in 1954) saxophonist John Butcher and the monster-bassist from Hounslow, John Edwards. Although they are all old confreres, this is the first album they have made together, and it is a rare musical achievement.

Sanders’s clicking drums and Edwards’s pulsating strings begin the first track *Lucid*, under the freezing notes of Butcher’s horn, blowing through the sonic snow.

It is an astonishing sonic sound, as if the human sources of the music were born together: Edwards, Sanders, Butcher – heartbeat, bloodstream, nerves and breath, the same organism, one nucleus.

As Butcher’s slap-tongue conclusion moves into the final notes of a deceptively effortless collective whimper, the brilliance of the work of recording engineer Benedict Lamdin makes the threesome a quartet.

The second track *Syphon* begins in virtual quietude with Edwards almost noiseless plucking and Sanders eerily draws a bow across his cymbals.

Butcher’s agile soprano preludes Edwards’s uncanny bow-work as the hornman’s notes sounds like frightened birdsong.

The longest track, nearly 18 minutes, is *Sand Dance*, where Butcher’s tenor saxo-

phone arrives almost momentarily before the trio reverts to their very own mollifying oneness, with Sanders seeming, sometimes almost inaudibly to strike a multitude of surfaces, every one as a grain of resonating sand as Edwards’s plucked strings crack, groan, speak, gambol and rejoice as if the whole of life were in them. Butcher’s final timbral cavort is where the dance of breath finds its unique pitch.

Signal is the briefest track, with Sanders’s multilayered drumming and Edwards’s leaping bass song creating the ambiance for what sounds like Butcher’s cry of water birds at night.

Its four minutes pass in a superbly evocative instant, as the trio moves into their album finale, *Gridlocks*, which integrated into its musical freedom, discipline and beauty, is a lucid exposition of how the concept

of musical chiefs and leaders becomes an irrelevance to this trio, so much are they as one with a sonic unity, a metaphor for a different kind of society expressed with so much clarity in the realms of free jazz.

Again, these three musicians and their artistry make you consider how close music is to quasi-soundlessness, so quietly do they play and how volume gradually ebbs away to uncover the very heart of sounds: a contradiction perhaps, but one that is achieved in many treasured moments of this album.

Last Dream of the Morning is more evidence of the British contribution to the true heights of free music – and if no-one has to lead, someone or other has to “instigate.”

So thanks to Mark Sanders for doing that and enabling the sheer sound artistry and beauty that ensues all through this recording.

WEATHER OUTLOOK



TODAY

Rain and breezy conditions will spread eastwards across all parts overnight, with some hill snow in Scotland. The rain will ease and turn showery in many western parts by morning.

NEXT FEW DAYS

Turning colder and increasingly unsettled. Showers and longer spells of rain will bring a risk of snow across northern hills and also across more southern parts at times. Often windy.

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Fighting Fund

YOU'VE RAISED: £14,432 **WE NEED: £3,568**



THE pressure's on, comrades, but you all sure know how to ease our financial worries as we get closer to our deadline day.

A very impressive £1,122 arrived here yesterday from some very generous fundgivers.

In no particular order, we would like to thank the comrades in the William Paul Society at a Burns night supper held in January. Better late than

never, comrades!

Thank you also to those of you who donated a £50 and a score in memory of Ted Poole, who remains much missed. As does Bill Whittaker, as the £100 donation proves. Many thanks.

The Recurrers bring in £68 – well done, you lot – while team Standing Orders raise £442, good work all round.

A dear comrade in Basildon

has been unwell this week so hasn't been able to buy any hard copies of the paper and so donates a tenner to make up for lost revenue. Thank you very much! All of us here wish you a speedy recovery.

An reader from Kent donates a generous £50 in spite of Ivan's friendly face being replaced by her Maj. We're sorry about that, comrade. Obviously if we had

our way, there wouldn't be a single monarch on any of the notes. One day, comrade, one day.

We also say thanks to our good ol' Bramton reader for the £4 and a tenner from the comrade who has fought long and hard against the cutbacks.

And with more of your help, we shall also keep fighting the cutbacks for as long as we can.

Give by post...

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phone...

From 10am-5pm on
(020) 8510-0815

and online

morningstaronline.co.uk/
pages/support-us

DAILY SUDOKU

(middling)

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

Solution tomorrow...



Yesterday's sudoku

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

TV preview

with Ann Douglas



Engineer's dream of reconstruction rises from the ashes of shattered Gaza

QUIZMASTER

with William Sitwell

Pic: Flopsy Designs/Creative Commons



YESTERDAY'S ANSWERS

1. Chiliad (pronounced "kiliad") is a rare term referring to how many objects? **A thousand**
2. Which river forms most of the boundary between Carmarthenshire and Ceredigion?

The Teifi (pictured at Cardigan)

3. In both the 2014 and 2018 Winter Olympics, Lizzy Yarnold was the only Briton to win what? **A gold medal**

TODAY'S QUESTIONS

1. What sort of mammals are uakaris?
2. True or false: the two largest islands in the Mediterranean both belong to the same country.
3. A rafter is a group of which domesticated birds?

I DOUBT there's a single Star reader who isn't familiar with the plight of the inhabitants of the Gaza Strip: 1.8 million Palestinians, the vast majority refugees, trapped in 140 square miles of territory cut off by the besieging forces of Israel.

After three major assaults in the last eight years, resulting in the deaths of thousands of Palestinians and the destruction of or damage to thousands of homes, Gaza is a basket case. Unemployment runs at more than 40 per cent, it's hard to hook up to clean water and electricity, and reconstruction has been almost non-existent due to the lack of basic construction supplies.

The UN has described the situation as "a constant humanitarian emergency."

Despite such challenges,

young Gazan engineer Majd Mashhrawi has developed a way of making bricks that she hopes could make Gaza less dependent on outside help.

She uses rubble and ash to create a cheap, light brick that can be made locally.

Today's **World Hacks: The Bricks Helping To Rebuild Gaza** (1.30pm World Service) visits the factory to learn more about how this award-winning new brick – "green cake" – could make a difference.

A new three-part drama series starts tonight (9pm BBC1), written by Danny Brocklehurst, whose distinguished CV includes Clocking Off, Shameless, Sorted and The Driver.

Paula Malcomson and Christopher Eccleston top the bill as Greg and Marie, a couple mar-

ried for 19 years when Marie walks out.

The first episode of **Come Home** (9pm BBC1), told from Greg's perspective, follows him and the kids as they struggle to comprehend their mother's actions.

While football fans with deep pockets and high dishes can coo and chirrup over the step-overs, rabonas and Cruyff turns from the likes of Spain, Argentina, Germany and Brazil, us terrestrials must endure **Hungary v Scotland** (6.30pm BBC1 Scotland, kick-off 7pm) or **England v Italy** (7.30pm ITV, kick-off 8pm). Perhaps, with these lighter evenings, it's time to creosote the fence.

Brilliant repeat department: Ken Burns's documentary series **Jazz** (10.15 PBS America) – Louis Armstrong, Duke Ellington et al.



■ MUSIC REVIEW

Precious pearls in a rock oyster

The Pearl Harts
Sebright Arms, London

★★★★☆

DEEP in the bowels of a basement bar in London's Bethnal Green the sound reverberates, shaking the building to its foundations.

It emanates from The Pearl Harts, two women playing their first-ever sell-out show promoting debut album *Glitter and Spit*.

Sara Leigh Shaw pounds the drums like there's no tomorrow, while giving it her all on guitar and vocals is Kirsty Lowrey. This blistering duo take the audience on a rapid ride through rock, metal, blues and more.

Opening with *Go Hard* and its refrain of "I wanna make you shiver, I wanna make you shake," the music takes the guitar riffs of Black Sabbath, adds that deep drum beat and combines them with vocals reminiscent of Joan Jett.

It's a strong start which builds through the next number *The Rush* which channels Led Zeppelin and it's followed by *Lara*, a shoutalong paean to a friend who doesn't care what anybody thinks about her.

As the set progresses, the riffs build while the drums

shift to a more melodic and almost disco dance-driven edge.

Midway through they take it down for what Lowrey calls the band's love ballad. With two backing singers, the harmonies recall the melodic musings of Warpaint but the calm doesn't remain for long.

The guitar takes over for *Hit the Bottle*, bringing the band back to Runaways-type hard-rock riffs that continue through to a confetti-filled finale. After just 11 songs, they're gone.

Overall, there are shades of great bands like Sabbath, Joan Jett, Courtney Love and Hole by way of Warpaint and a bit of The Cramps running through what they do.

In places, there's even Blondie-like funky disco beats and other hidden gems.

Like a rock oyster, The Pearl Harts are hard, dirty, throbbing and cool, so get ready to prise open that shell for a glittering reward.

They have potential, the question is whether they'll live up to the promise. It's still early days but this duo are definitely one to keep an eye – and especially ear – out for.

On tour with Louise Distras until April 28, details: thepearlharts.com

MIK SABIERS

■ THEATRE REVIEW

A tsunami of historical proportions

The Great Wave is an acute reflection of the fraught relations between Japan and North Korea, says **SIMON PARSONS**

The Great Wave
National Theatre, London

★★★★☆

IN 1987, when a North Korean terrorist was captured after blowing up a South Korean airliner, the first real evidence came to light that numerous Japanese had been abducted by the North Koreans in order to train their agents to pass for Japanese.

Those abductions over a 10-year period, shrouded in mutual recriminations and denials from both governments, are the focus of Francis Turnly's play. Its title harks back to Hokusai's famous print and this fast-evolving thriller explores another tsunami in the two countries' enduring animosity.

Indhu Rubasingham's production, with what appear to be non-complex characters and the clean, uncluttered lines of Tom Piper's set – a typical Japanese room – initially misleads as to the human and political complexity of the tragedy that still dominates many Japanese concerns about their neighbour.

But Kirsty Rider (pictured), as the 17-year-old abductee Hanako, gradually grows into a performance of real depth and sensitivity as she evolves from typical teenager to prisoner and then from teacher to North Korean wife and mother. Behind the mask of total compliance, she hides her real iden-



Pic: Mark Douet

tity from an ever-vigilant state and the sacrifice she is called on to make at the end sees her a lifetime away from the school-girl at the start.

Her long-suffering, stoical mother and fiery academic sister (Rosalind Chao and Kae Alexander), reveal the anguish the family members go through as they put their lives on hold searching for the missing girl and then campaigning for her return.

As the years pass and the family's struggle becomes a national campaign, initially ignored and refuted by the Japanese government, so the play becomes a political exploration of the two countries' troubled relationship without ever sacrificing the human drama at the heart of the story.

Just as the characters are transformed, so too is the rotat-

ing angular set, with layers of projections creating multiple worlds that confound those first impressions of reality depicted onstage.

Such complexity, at a time when political machinations and accusations are so prevalent internationally, makes this absorbing production as topical as it is moving.

Runs until April 14, box office: nationaltheatre.org.uk

ALBUM ROUND-UP

Montero
Performer
(Chapter Music)

★★★★☆

AKIN to taking a long soak in a warm bath, the new record from Australian musician and visual artist Ben Montero – check out the album cover – is a real treat.

Co-produced by Jay Watson from Oz psychedelic rock bands Tame Impala and Pond, Performer expertly transports the listener back to the classic, slightly stoned soft rock of the 1970s.

Strong opener *Montero's Airlines* sets the scene with its luxurious Wings-like sound and matching Paul McCartney-style vocals.

Single *Vibrations* continues to mine The Beatles oeuvre,



while the stoned *Tokin' The Night Away* should have been on the *Dazed and Confused* soundtrack.

Elsewhere, Montero sings sagely: "Don't let those lessons go to waste/Because life is a running race."

The '70s pop vibe is so strong I started to expect Mr Blue Sky to be the next song.

A lush, sonically coherent set.

Ezra Furman
Transangelic Exodus
(Bella Union)

★★★★☆

AN ELECTRO-POP step change from the bubble-gum rock'n'roll of his last two records, US singer-songwriter Ezra Furman's stunning *Transangelic Exodus* is a sorta-concept album about falling for an angel and escaping on a paranoid road trip.

Accordingly, the gender fluid Furman recently proclaimed his love for Bruce Springsteen, despite saying he wished the Boss was more "sick" and "queer."

The astonishing *Suck The Blood From My Wound*, an explosive and cinematic story song about springing someone from hospital and going



off grid, is a twisted *Born to Run* for freaks.

Rock music hasn't sounded this urgent since *The Hold Steady* at their mid-2000s peak.

Sometimes challenging, Furman's talent is undeniable. Check out the closing track about the narrator losing his "innocence to a boy named Vincent." A contender for album of the year.

The Hanging Stars
Songs For Somewhere Else
(Crimson Crow)

★★★★☆

LIKE their impressive 2016 debut album, the new record from London-based five-piece The Hanging Stars is another listenable slice of gentle Americana.

With Swede Richard Olsen on songwriting and lead singing duties, the band do late-60s Byrds-like songs – the sweet melancholia of opener *One Sweet Summer's Day* – and channel the cosmic country of Flying Burrito Brothers on *For You My Blue Eyed Son*.

Olsen's Scouse-sounding vocals and the off-kilter madcap instrumentation on *Too Many Wired Hours* brings to mind the The Coral and the



Arctic Monkeys, while *How I Got This Way* rolls gently along like Badly Drawn Boy's early noughties minor anthem *Something To Talk About*.

Songs For Somewhere Else won't rock the musical world, but, with its pleasing pedal-steel guitar, enticing harmonies and impressive melodies, it's a suite that will appeal to anyone with an interest in classic rock.

with Ian Sinclair

■ TRANSPORT

Take back buses from private companies

LABOUR rightly talk about renationalising the railways, but what about buses? Private firms in a monopoly situation can easily exploit their position with regard to fares and the like.

Stagecoach have done so in Grimsby, with my weekly Megarider ticket rising in cost by almost 9 per cent.

Perhaps it is time for remunicipalisation, giving back to local authorities a valued service they can run in the interests of the people.

TIM MICKLEBURGH
Grimsby

■ ITALY

Where have all the left parties gone?

DIDN'T the Italian people once fight to the death against fascism for over 20 years, with the Communist Party leading that fight?

The communists were also a major force in post-war Italian politics, so much so that the CIA interfered in every single Italian election to prevent the party from winning.

The far-right gains in the recent legislative elections again prove what happens when there is no left alternative to the EU.

PHIL BRAND
London SW17

■ LANGUAGE

Stop the export of American-isms

I WAS enjoying reading Comrade Docksey's piece on the town of Salisbury (M Star March 20) until I reached her mention of Ms Mayhem heading to "the Guildhall for a meeting with first responders."

Please can we ensure the term "emergency services" is used in future. We have enough culture and language in our society already which originated across the pond - we have no need for it in our paper.

I am sure I am not the only one to cringe at the term.

DR PETER STORCH
Argyll & Bute



'BUFFOON': Boris Johnson worryingly close to microphones

■ RUSSIA

Boris gaffe reveals forgotten history

SO Tory Foreign Secretary Boris Johnson adds to his reputation as an utter buffoon by insulting the Russian nation and its Soviet veterans by comparing Hitler's Olympics with the World Cup being held in Russia.

Perhaps he should be reminded that in 1936 in the Berlin Olympic Stadium, the England football team were ordered by the British Foreign Office to give the Nazi salute when the German national anthem was played.

Most of the British press never reported this shameful event but the Tory Times and Telegraph did. The Times

remarked "the England team immediately made a good impression by raising their arms in the German salute" and the equally Tory Telegraph reported: "The team that bore the insignia of England on so important an occasion as the one which threatened our football prestige on the continent has done us proud."

Even The Scotsman oozed praise for the Nazi Olympics lauding the match and stadium which "was a picturesque sight with Nazi Swastikas flown from all around the ground."

The England players were quite reluctant to give the

salute but the FA was unanimous in the making the decision for the team to give the fascist salute "in a gesture to ensure the right atmosphere for the match."

Only one newspaper 'had the courage' to condemn this shameful act, and that was The Daily Worker. And while the British ambassador Neville Henderson sat with Joseph Goebbels and Rudolf Hess in Hitler's box watching the football, the Soviet Union boycotted the games. Put that in your champagne cocktail Boris.

RICHARD MAUNDERS
Axminster

■ LABOUR

Focus on clear Corbyn majority

SINCE becoming the leader of the Labour Party, Jeremy Corbyn has succumbed too much to those within his party who will never accept his leadership.

He has overlooked his supporters by appointing his enemies to the frontbench and other positions. He has allowed some of them to worm their way back in, despite their having resigned in an attempt to force him from office.

He has allowed a free vote on Syria, yet no one remembers a free vote on Iraq. He has whipped an abstention on Trident. He has acted against the social and ethnic cleansing of Labour Haringey, but not to secure justice for the 472 teaching assistants in Labour-held Durham. He is supporting the government's indulgence of the ludicrous the-

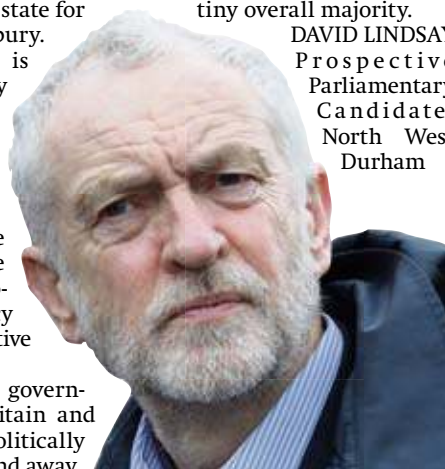
ory of gender self-identification. He is hinting at support for the Customs Union. And has gone too far in accepting Theresa May's and Boris Johnson's totally unproven attempt to blame the Russian state for the attack in Salisbury.

Jeremy Corbyn is the most culturally significant British politician in living memory, the most agenda-setting leader of the opposition ever, and the global leader of the opposition to neoliberal economic policy and to neoconservative foreign policy.

The Corbyn government will lead Britain and the world out of politically chosen austerity, and away

from wars of political choice. But only if it is backed up by enough MPs to cancel out his enemies within his own party, since there is going to be either another hung Parliament or a tiny overall majority.

DAVID LINDSAY
Prospective Parliamentary Candidate, North West Durham



■ IRELAND

Unresolved questions in BBC documentary on the Troubles

I did watch the programme The Funeral Murders as recommended by Amy Smith in the TV and Radio Preview column (M Star March 19).

I did wonder if there would be further revelation or clarity about why, in what was in effect the third act of this dramatic sequence of events, two army corporals in plain clothes ended up driving at high speed in an unmarked vehicle into an IRA funeral procession.

Their attempt to withdraw and escape was blocked off by the frightened and angry crowd and by black taxis.

The corporals were apprehended, disarmed, beaten, and then handed over to the Irish Republican Army who took them away and executed them, believing they were SAS. Everything was filmed by an army helicopter.

Private Eye at the time openly wondered what the two had been up to.

The IRA funeral of Caoimhin Mac Bradaigh (Kevin Brady) was happening just

three days after loyalist gunman Michael Stone had attacked the funeral for three IRA Volunteers who had been shot to death while unarmed by an SAS death squad in Gibraltar. Mac Bradaigh was one of three killed while pursuing Stone away from the funeral.

The documentary noted that the two army corporals were under cover rather than simply plain clothes, wore non-GI long hair, were armed and their unmarked car had armour plating. The opinion of Sinn Féin and IRA people present were that "they were up to no good."

The official story is that they found themselves "by accident" in the middle of an IRA funeral attended by leading republicans such as Martin McGuinness and Gerry Adams, despite a General Order that all security forces were to keep well away from the entire area.

ANDREW NORTHALL
Kettering

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GRAHAM STEVENSON
explores the Star archives

DAILY WORKER

80 YEARS AGO TODAY...

Milkmen secure union victory

"Milkmen Down Bottles" announced the Daily Worker of March 28 1938, as United Dairies Balham depot "struck work" against the suspension of a roundsman, who, the men claim, was fulfilling his job as satisfactorily as anyone else. His quotas for milk, cream and groceries were all up to standard, except for the sale of prunes.

The union - probably the TGWU - said that the men considered it to be the start of further attacks on working conditions. The job of milk roundsman was already arduous, with exceptionally long hours being worked. Roundsmen had to balance their books at the depot as well as collecting weekly payments after delivering. Now groceries were added to existing time schedules and they were expected to introduce these products to customers.

A meeting of roundsmen, some inside staff, and young workers considered negotiating terms for reinstatement. On hearing that no guar-

antees could be given, the men walked out to ensure the involvement of the head office of the company.

Mr Fernando, the union organiser, was called in to negotiate with the United Dairies district manager and the workers decided to return to work on the understanding that no pay would be stopped and no custom lost blamed on the men, allowing the case to go to a conciliation board for decision.

The nation's army of roundsmen had faded to only 40,000 by the early-1970s but, today, there are less than a tenth of even that. Most people now buy their milk from supermarkets, where it is sold under cost as a loss leader.





MEN'S RUGBY UNION

CALLS FOR TACKLE HEIGHT TO CHANGE TO REDUCE CONCUSSIONS

by Our Sports Desk

WORLD Rugby was asked yesterday to consider reducing the legal height for a tackle after a seventh successive season of increased incidents of concussion in the English professional game.

The Professional Rugby Injury Surveillance Project, jointly commissioned by the Rugby Football Union and Premiership Rugby, with the support of the Rugby Players' Association, released the injury data for the 2016-17 season.

The report showed concussion was the most commonly reported match injury for a seventh straight year, contributing 22 per cent to the total.

And it suggested a World Rugby directive – to increase sanctions on tackles and take a zero-tolerance approach to

contact with the head, introduced in January 2017 – made “no difference” to the incidence of all injuries and concussion.

RFU medical services director Dr Simon Kemp said World Rugby was making its own analysis of data to consider a reduction in the legal height of a tackle, which RFU professional rugby director Nigel Melville said has “become a bit of a grey area.”

Kemp said: “We would like World Rugby to give consideration to thinking about reducing the legal height for the tackle. “There’s very little margins for error with the permitted height of the tackle at the line of the shoulders.

“It’s for World Rugby to consider and we know they’re doing that at the moment.”

Melville added: “It’s become a bit of a grey area at times.

“What we’re looking for is

consistency across the refereeing. It’s challenging for World Rugby, with referees coming from different hemispheres, from different competitions and you get a lack of consistency.

“That’s difficult for fans and people watching to know what’s right and what’s wrong.”

The report, in its 14th season and delivered by researchers at the University of Bath, showed concussion cases requiring more than a three-month absence had increased in number.

That was attributed to “a trend to more conservative management of players who have sustained two or more concussions in a 12-month period.”

For the first time, hamstring injuries and concussion appear alongside anterior cruciate ligament knee injuries in the top three match injuries result-

ing in an absence of 84 days or more.

For the 2016-17 Premiership season, there were 3.8 injuries per match [1.9 per team], on average.

Of the 169 concussions reported, 22 players suffered more than one concussion. One player suffered four and one player three.

The average severity of match injuries, measured by the time taken to return to play, for the same campaign was 32 days.

The report showed 47 per cent of all match injuries are associated with the tackle, with an almost equal split between tackler and the ball carrier.

Concussion accounted for 43 per cent of injuries to the tackler and 19 per cent to the ball carrier.

An eight-point Professional Game Action Plan was

announced alongside the publication of the injury project.

As well as addressing the tackle height, the plan vowed to undertake or continue research in player load, training injury risk and the impact of artificial grass pitches.

Three of 12 Premiership teams played their home matches on artificial turf in 2016-17 and the report showed “the incidence and burden [days absence] of match injury on artificial turf was significantly higher than that of natural grass.”

There were 608 and 170 injuries on grass and artificial turf, respectively.

The report also said combining data for the four seasons in which Premiership matches have been played on artificial surfaces “indicates that neither injury incidence or severity differ between surfaces.”

MEN'S CRICKET

CA want answers ‘as a matter of urgency’

CRICKET chief executive James Sutherland flew out to South Africa yesterday as investigations into the ball-tampering scandal continue.

Steve Smith’s future as Australia’s Test captain is in doubt after he admitted the team’s “leadership group” intentionally planned to manipulate the ball during the third Test against the Proteas.

Cameron Bancroft was caught on camera appearing to tamper with the ball and now Sutherland intends to discover exactly what happened “as a matter of urgency.”

Smith has stood down as captain of the Rajasthan Royals so “the team can get ready for the start of the Indian Premier League without the ongoing distractions,” the franchise have announced.

India vice-captain Ajinkya Rahane will replace the 28-year-old as skipper for the new IPL season, which starts next month.

Manoj Badale, the franchise’s co-owner, said: “Rajasthan Royals will do everything possible to protect the values and the integrity of the game.”



TODAY'S TIPS

Farringdon's Doubles

HEPBURN

Hereford 3:45 (nap)

SAM MISSILE

Newcastle 6:10

Houseman's Choice

VOLATILE

Southwell 4:00

FORMULA ONE

Mercedes probing Hamilton's computer glitch

by Our Sports Desk

LEWIS HAMILTON'S Mercedes have launched an investigation into the computer glitch which denied their star driver the perfect start to his defence of the Formula One World Championship.

Hamilton was on course to open his campaign with the maximum quota of points at Melbourne's Albert Park on

Sunday only to see rival Sebastian Vettel snatch victory following a miscalculation by Mercedes.

The mistake afforded Vettel the chance to leapfrog Hamilton during a virtual safety car period at the Australian Grand Prix before he went on to seal an unlikely victory.

The inquest started at Mercedes' Oxfordshire base in Brackley yesterday as the sport's reigning constructors' champi-

ons work to ensure they do not leave Hamilton exposed again.

“It was clearly a problem on our side and we need to analyse that to understand what happened and correct it,” Mercedes boss Toto Wolff said.

“Lewis was in control through the opening stint of the race and then after his pit stop and looked on course for a strong victory.

“It is a tough one to take but there are lots of lessons to be

learned so we can come back stronger next time.”

Hamilton will be kept updated with the investigation after the error handed Vettel an early advantage in this year's championship race.

The Englishman, 33, was magnanimous in defeat and, while he expects to go head to head with Vettel in Bahrain a week on Sunday, he also believes he has the tools to bounce back.

“We have got a great car and

we are still the world champions so with a couple of adjustments I believe we can win the next race,” Hamilton added.

“You never know how the season is going to pan out as you do not get a good understanding until after four races, but Ferrari are quick.

“They are going to be rapid at the next race – they are always good when it comes to hot circuits – so it is not going to be easy and it is going to be close.”



DISMAYED: Joe Root

MEN'S CRICKET

ROOT 'SOUL SEARCHING' FOR ANY POSITIVES AFTER NZ DEFEAT



by Our Sports Desk

JOE ROOT was adamant yesterday that England had proved their mettle even in defeat against New Zealand but they face more "soul-searching" as they try to hit back from 1-0 Down in the second and final Test.

England had a mountain to climb after collapsing to an embarrassing 58 all out at the very start of New Zealand's inaugural day-night Test at Eden Park.

Two days of rain aided their survival cause – but eventually, even after four second-innings half-centuries, they were bowled out for 320 in

the final session to lose for the 10th time in 12 away Tests by an innings and 49 runs.

It was a difficult task for the captain to put much gloss on another hugely disappointing performance but he emphasised that his rallying call was answered.

Root said: "I think one thing about today was that I asked the guys at the start: 'Show everyone how much it means to you to play for England and represent your country.'

"I thought we got that from the guys.

"We were always fighting our way back into the game. But the character the guys showed today, I think, was a step forward – and we simply

need to be better when we get to Christchurch."

There, England may yet be without Ben Stokes, who returned for his first Test in six months, after his enforced Ashes absence, as a specialist batsman only because of his stiff back.

The injury resurfaced while Stokes was making a defiant top-score of 66 and Root warns the all-rounder's participation cannot be taken for granted on Friday.

Root said: "With Ben, it's day-to-day with his back and making sure he's fit to play.

"That assessment will continue throughout this week, leading into the game, and if he's not fit to play he won't play."

Both Stokes and Root followed first-innings ducks – England made five – with 50s at their second attempt.

"In the first innings, we didn't adapt quickly enough to the situation, the conditions," added the Yorkshireman.

"That is very disappointing because we're used to the ball seaming around – used to it swinging – and at no stage did anyone get themselves in and we didn't create any partnerships.

"So it was important we did show character today and very important this week leading into the [second] Test match we do some soul-searching and get things right."

Whether there may be selection changes is a moot point which Root is not yet about to clarify.

"There's a lot of emotion knocking around now and it's still very raw," he said.

"It's very important we have some rational thinking and we sit down and make sure we go into that Test match with the XI we think is going to win the game.

"We're going to have to make sure that, when we get that opportunity, someone stands up – or a couple of guys do – and take it on themselves to put in those match-winning performances, which we do quite frequently in our own conditions."

TONIGHT'S FOOTBALL

Intl Friendlies

Curacao.....	Bolivia, 1am
Japan.....	Ukraine, 1.20pm
Tanzania.....	DR Congo, 2pm
Kenya.....	Central African Republic, 3pm
Armenia.....	Lithuania, 4pm
Georgia.....	Estonia, 4pm
Russia.....	France, 4.50pm
Azerbaijan.....	Macedonia, 5pm
Iran.....	Algeria, 5pm
Kosovo.....	Burkina, 6pm
Switzerland.....	Panama, 6pm
Montenegro.....	Turkey, 6.10pm
Denmark.....	Chile, 7pm
Egypt.....	Greece, 7pm
Hungary.....	Scotland, 7pm
Ivory Coast.....	Moldova, 7pm
Senegal.....	Bosnia & Herzegovina, 7pm
Tunisia.....	Costa Rica, 7pm
Slovenia.....	Belarus, 7.15pm
Luxembourg.....	Austria, 7.30pm
Romania.....	Sweden, 7.30pm
Belgium.....	Saudi Arabia
Germany.....	Brazil
Poland.....	Korea Republic
Colombia.....	Australia, 8pm
England.....	Italy, 8pm
Morocco.....	Uzbekistan, 8pm
Nigeria.....	Serbia, 8pm
Spain.....	Argentina, 8.30pm

Under-21 Intl

Andorra.....	Netherlands, 5pm
Serbia.....	Italy, 5.30pm

Scottish Champ

Inverness CT.....	Dundee United
St Mirren.....	Dumbarton

Scottish League One

Albion Rovers.....	Arbroath
Raith Rovers.....	East Fife

Scottish League Two

Berwick Rangers.....	Elgin City
Cowdenbeath.....	Clyde
Stirling Albion.....	Edinburgh City

All kickoffs 7.45pm unless noted

SPORT ON TV

■ BASKETBALL: NBA, Miami Heat v Cleveland Cavaliers – BT Sport 2 1am (Wed).

■ FOOTBALL: European Under-21 Championship qualifier, England v Ukraine – BT Sport 1.5.45pm; Friendly, Hungary v Scotland – BBC One Scotland 6.55pm, England v Italy – ITV 7.30pm, Germany v Brazil – BT Sport 2 7.30pm, Spain v Argentina – Sky Sports Main Event 8.25pm.

■ TENNIS: ATP Tour, Miami Open – Sky Sports Main Event 4pm and 2am (Wed); WTA Tour, Miami Open – BT Sport 1 12.30am (Wed).

WOMEN'S RUGBY SEVENS

Brown to captain Team England in Australia

by Our Sports Desk

OLYMPIAN Abbie Brown will captain Team England's rugby sevens side at the Commonwealth Games next month after they named their squad to compete in Australia.

Brown, who helped Great Britain reach the semi-finals at Rio 2016, will lead the squad of 12 players and one travelling reserve for the Gold Coast as the women's competition makes its Commonwealth Games debut.

Emily Scarratt, who played

in the 2017 Rugby World Cup final, has been named as vice-captain, with fellow Olympians Heather Fisher, Claire Allan, Natasha Hunt, Emily Scott and Amy Wilson Hardy also named in the squad. Holly Aitchison has been ruled out with a knee injury, though.

Fellow World Cup finalists Lydia Thompson, Alex Matthews and Megan Jones are included alongside Deborah Fleming and Jess Breach, who impressed with nine tries in her Sydney Sevens debut earlier this year, with Vicky Fleetwood named as travelling reserve.

England are in Pool B and will face Australia, Fiji and Wales and head coach James Bailey is in optimistic mood heading into the competition.

He said: "We are really looking forward to competing at the Commonwealth Games in April. As a new squad, the players and management have worked tremendously hard to bring this squad together and also transition the experienced 15s players back to sevens within a short time frame.

"We have really benefited and developed a lot from com-

peting on the World Series and at numerous invitational tournaments, against some of the best teams in the world, in order to be ready for this tournament.

"We have a lot of incredibly

talented, world-class players in this side who are willing to work exceptionally hard for each other – and it's that level of dedication and commitment that we're hoping will bring success at the Games."



IN CHARGE: Abbie Brown

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