

**NEWS IN BRIEF 3**

October 5th – 12th 2024

**CNN**

The 2024 Nobel Prize in physics has been awarded to John Hopfield and Geoffrey Hinton for their fundamental discoveries in machine learning, which paved the way for how artificial intelligence is used today. Hopfield, a professor at Princeton University and Hinton, a computer scientist at the University of Toronto, were praised for laying the foundations for the machine learning that powers many of today's AI-based products and applications. Hinton, however, has also expressed fears about AI's future development, cutting ties with his former employer Google in order to speak more freely on the issue.

**THE ECONOMIST**

America's Department of Justice told a federal judge it might push for Google to be broken up because of antitrust concerns. The DoJ's court filing said that the tech giant's "unlawful conduct persisted for over a decade and involved a number of self-reinforcing tactics". It follows an American judge's ruling in August that the firm's search business was an illegal monopoly.

**EURONEWS**

Tech executive Elon Musk cast the upcoming presidential election in dire terms during a Saturday appearance with Donald Trump, calling the Republican presidential nominee the only candidate "to preserve democracy in America."

The CEO of SpaceX and Tesla who also purchased X, Musk joined Trump in Butler, Pennsylvania, where the former president survived an assassination attempt in July. He warned "this will be the last election" if Trump doesn't win and, clad in a black-on-black cap bearing the "Make America Great Again" slogan of Trump's campaign, appeared to acknowledge the foreboding nature of his remarks.

**BBC NEWS**

Brazil's Supreme Court has said it is lifting a ban on the social media platform X. In his decision, Justice Alexandre de Moraes said that he authorised the "immediate return" of X's activities in the country after it paid hefty fines and blocked accounts accused of spreading misinformation. The site has paid fines totalling 28 million reais (\$5.1m; £3.8m) and agreed to appoint a local representative, as required by Brazilian law. Moraes had blocked access to the platform, owned by Elon Musk, after it had refused to ban several profiles deemed by the government to be spreading misinformation about the 2022 Brazilian Presidential election.

**ABC NEWS**

Misinformation complicates Hurricane Helene recovery efforts. Former President Trump has for several days now spread lies and spouted conspiracy theories about the federal government's response to Hurricane Helene, claiming that the relief funds had been used to help migrants instead of those affected by the hurricane, causing confusion.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=eErfT3ikStE>

**BBC NEWS**

Russia's intelligence agency has been on a mission to generate "mayhem on British and European streets", the head of MI5 has said, as he warned the UK faces "the most complex and interconnected" threat it has ever seen.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ne8fG2vqSeg>



## The green deindustrialisation of Britain, *Spiked!* October 6th 2024

At midnight on Monday, Britain's last remaining coal-fired power station turned off its turbines. The closure of the Ratcliffe-on-Soar plant in Nottinghamshire brings to an end Britain's 142-year reliance on the black stuff for generating electricity. The end of coal is being celebrated by the political class as a sign of Britain's 'leadership' on the climate. Apparently, this is a mark of our 'progress' towards a greener, cleaner future. Indeed, politicians were so eager to shut Ratcliffe down that the deadline for its closure was actually brought forward by a year by Boris Johnson's Conservative government, ahead of the 2021 COP26 climate talks in Glasgow.

What is now painfully obvious is that 'leading the world' in decarbonisation also means leading the world in deindustrialisation. Britain's last coal power plant is merely one casualty among many of the drive to cut CO2 emissions. In fact, on the very same day that Ratcliffe closed, the steelworks at Port Talbot in Wales decommissioned its last coal-powered blast furnace as part of a transition to a less carbon-intensive manufacturing process, costing 2,800 jobs. A few weeks earlier, it was announced that Grangemouth, Scotland's only oil refinery, will close, potentially as early as next year – a decision accelerated by the looming ban on sales of petrol and diesel cars.

These three closures alone have staggering implications for Britain's economy and self-sufficiency. Coal may only have represented a tiny proportion of our energy mix before its elimination this week. But Ratcliffe was still essential to keeping the lights on during the past two winters amid the global energy crisis. Coal remains by far the cheapest source of electricity (even if it is made artificially more expensive in Britain thanks to heavy carbon taxes), and its price is far less volatile on the global market than oil and gas. Eradicating coal has come at an enormous cost. Thanks to the move away from reliable and cheap fossil fuels to unreliable and expensive renewable energy, the UK currently has the highest industrial electricity prices in the world.

The downsizing at Port Talbot is also directly connected to the green agenda. Its blast furnaces are set to be converted to electric-arc furnaces. These eco-friendly furnaces can make recycled steel, but they cannot make 'virgin' or 'primary' steel – a material essential to carmaking, the defence industry and other manufacturing sectors. When British Steel closes its last two blast furnaces in Scunthorpe, as has already been planned, the UK will become the only country in the G20 that cannot produce virgin steel. Meanwhile, the Grangemouth oil refinery is currently responsible for producing 80 percent of Scotland's fuel – and generating a whopping four per cent of the nation's entire economic output. Instead of producing home-grown fuel, it will be converted into an import terminal to supply Scotland with petrol and diesel from abroad. [...]

The tragedy is that the nation that birthed the Industrial Revolution has become a leader in green reaction. Britain was the first country in the world to build a coal-fired power station – the Holborn Viaduct in London began operations in 1882. Abraham Darby pioneered the use of coking coal for steelmaking, while Henry Bessemer invented the 'basic oxygen process', the basis for modern blast furnaces. These inventions kickstarted a process that would transform humankind, giving rise to the most rapid advance in living standards the world has ever seen, and creating our modern age of prosperity.

Yet today, the Industrial Revolution and the fuels that powered it are looked on by the political class with fear and loathing. Britain's industrial prowess helped 'derange the natural order', said Boris Johnson at COP26. Ludicrously, the new foreign secretary, David Lammy, considers the continued use of fossil fuels to be a more 'pervasive' and 'fundamental' threat than terrorism. This is why our politicians take a perverse pride in the UK becoming the first nation to set legally binding climate targets, to pledge Net Zero carbon emissions and to abandon the use of coal. It's why the loss of vital strategic industries and assets is greeted with a mere shrug. The green deindustrialisation of the UK shows how environmentalism has turned normal politics on its head. It invites us to view prosperity as wicked and penury as progress. The British people will pay a heavy price for the green designs of their leaders.

*Spiked!* is a British right-wing libertarian Internet magazine.

**a plant** = a factory    **to bring to an end** = to end    **re'liance** [aɪ] = dependence    **to be 'eager** [i:] **to do sth** = to be avid, enthusiastic to do sth    **'merely** = only, simply    **'steelworks** [i:] : une aciérie  
**looming** = impending, imminent    **'staggering** /'stæɡərɪŋ/ : pour un nombre ou un prix, faramineux, sinon, sidérant    **'self-su'fficiency** /sə'fɪʃənsi/= autonomy, independence    **'downsizing** [aɪ] : les licenciements  
**'whopping** = enormous    **'output** /'ɔ:ptʊt/ = production    **to pio'neer** [i:] = to innovate  
**to 'kickstart** [ɪ] = to be a catalyst    **'loathing** /'ləʊðɪŋ/ = hatred, disgust  
**legally bɪndɪŋ** [aɪ] = made compulsory by contract    **to pledge** = to promise    **'shrug** [ʌ] : un haussement d'épaules    **'wicked** [ɪ] = evil