

Russian communists call for victory!

by our Eastern European
Affairs correspondent

Fierce fighting continues on all fronts in Ukraine as the Russians beat back waves of Ukrainian attacks in the south and the Donbas. The Ukrainians launched further pin-prick drone attacks on Moscow that have no military value but have only served to provoke the Russians into further strategic bombing of the Ukrainian capital. And the Russian naval blockade tightens as their missiles pound Ukraine's Black Sea ports to cut off all Ukrainian sea-borne exports, including the grain so crucial to the Western market.

The blockade was first imposed at the start of the Russian intervention to save the Donbas in February 2022. It had a crippling effect on Ukrainian grain exports and sent global food prices soaring. The grain deal brokered by the UN and Turkey was meant to help cover the grain needs of the Global South and exempt some Russian agricultural products from the imperialist sanctions re-

gime – but the imperialists never kept their promises.

Russia will return to the grain deal when the West actually fulfils all the deal's obligations towards Russia. And Russia is working to meet the needs of the countries most in need of food. Reliable options for the supply of Russian grain, including on a free-of-charge basis, are being worked out in talks with Turkey and the countries of the Global South.

Meanwhile Yuri Afonin, the deputy leader of the Communist Party of the Russian Federation (CPRF), mocked Ukrainian talk about “liberating” Crimea. Taking part in a discussion on Russia One TV, the Russian communist said the Zelensky regime had said Crimea would be taken in their “spring offensive”. But “spring is long over, summer has passed the middle. It seems that as everyone has already forgotten past promises new ones can be made... however, it will not be possible to deceive the people forever and drive them to the slaughterhouse, sooner or later this vile regime will

be swept away”.

At the same time Russia must build up its armed forces. This must continue even after the Ukrainians are beaten, he said, because “we have entered into an irreconcilable battle with the collective West, and this struggle will not be easy”.

Afonin called for the restoration of Russian naval power. At the moment the Russian fleet is inferior to the Soviet Navy of 1990 in terms of the number of large combat surface ships seven times, in terms of the number of submarines six times. But he pointed out that since 2000 Russian oligarchs have spent twice as much money on building their yachts as the state has spent on building ships for the navy: \$18 billion for yachts versus \$8 billion for ships. Of course, this should not be the case, the state needs completely different priorities: revenues from Russian mineral resources should not go to the over-consumption of a handful of rich people.

“Today, a considerable part of humanity is looking at Russia with hope,” he said. “More and more coun-

tries of the world perceive Russia as the vanguard of the anti-colonial struggle. It is no coincidence that the Russian flag appears on the streets of the rebellious capital of Niger – for Africa it is the same symbol of struggle as the Soviet flag once was. After the destruction of the USSR, the West began again to impose a neo-colonial model on Africa, and the disastrous consequences of this model for Africans are expressed in numbers: if in the 1980s the gap between the average per capita GDP in Africa and in the countries of the ‘golden billion’ was eight times, now it is almost 14 times!

“For more than 10 years, the number of hungry people has been on the rise in Africa. Now 22.5 per cent

of the population of this continent is systematically malnourished – this is more than 300 million people! And this is by no means a consequence of our special military operation and problems with the export of Ukrainian grain, as they invent in the West.

“African hunger and poverty are the fruits of the neo-colonial model of relations. Russia challenged Western colonialism, and hundreds of millions of people sympathise with our struggle – they believe that our victory will make the world more just. And in order to fulfil this great mission, we must build up our military potential, rebuild our economy and strengthen the morale of our people!”

FUND

Last week's post was delayed so we only received £850 for the fighting fund thanks to a veteran supporter in Essex who gave us £30 and another from Southall who sent in £180 as well as the regular bankers' orders that underwrite so much of our fund-raising work.

This means that the July fighting closed nearly a grand down, with just £2,590 at the end of the day.

The fund needs £3,500 per month to guarantee the survival of the New Worker. Let's see if we can do it in August. The August appeal starts now!

All donations, big or small, help keep our presses rolling. Please send your donation to: New Worker Fund, PO Box 73, London SW11 2PQ. Cheques and postal orders should be made payable to the 'New Worker'.

To save a stamp you can also use your credit or debit card to send contributions here:

<http://newworker.org/ncpcentral/fightingfund.html>

INSIDE

BLINKEN SNUBBED ..P7

TONY BENNETT .. P11

AFRICAN FOOD CRISIS
.. P12



• A break from the fighting

THE NEW WORKER

Weekly paper of the New Communist Party

A new wind of change in Africa

The army have taken over in Niger, a land-locked, poverty-stricken part of what was once “French West Africa” that gained formal independence from its colonial masters in 1960. But the French maintained a hold over their former territory using pliant civilian and military leaders to maintain their grip on the country’s gold and uranium exports, which largely went to France. Or did do until the army led by General Abdourahmane Tchiani kicked out the old gang last week.

In the capital, Niamey, people took to the streets in support of the new leadership and to call for the closure of the French air base and withdrawal of all French troops from the country. Many were carrying Russian flags during the protests calling on people to block Niamey airport, where the French are based, until all French military personnel leave the country.

General Tchiani has suspended the export of uranium and gold to France whilst warning against foreign meddling and military intervention against the coup. He called on “...the people of Niger as a whole and their unity to defeat all those who want to inflict unspeakable suffering on our hard-working populations and destabilise our country”. But the intervention has already begun as the imperialists on both sides of the Atlantic work to restore the old regime politicians that long did their bidding in Niger.

French President Emmanuel Macron condemned the revolt as “completely illegitimate and profoundly dangerous for the Nigeriens, Niger and the whole region”. And in Washington Joe Biden called for the release of deposed president Muhammed Bazoum and the restoration of what he called “democracy” in the country. “I call for President Bazoum and his family to be immediately released, and for the preservation of Niger’s hard-earned democracy,” Biden said.

“In this critical moment, the United States stands with the people of Niger to honour our decades-long partnership rooted in shared democratic values and support for civilian-led governance. The Nigerien people have the right to choose their leaders. They have expressed their will through free and fair elections – and that must be respected” Biden said.

The pro-Western Economic Community of West Africa, known as Ecowas and led by Nigeria, is already threatening military intervention as a “last resort” should the coup leaders fail to back down. But few, if any, will want to send in their troops without substantial Western backing.

Although the stage is set for an imperialist-inspired civil war, the days when the imperialists and their hirelings simply could do what they liked in Africa are long gone.

The future of Niger is not the plaything of Western politicians and big energy and mining corporations that have mercilessly looted and plundered the country for over 100 years. Biden and Macron don’t speak for the Nigeriens whose voice was stifled by the bogus values of imperialism and the sham ‘democracy’ of the West. Their voice is in the barracks and on the streets of Niger who want the French out and genuine independence and the right to choose their own way of life without imperialist interference.

General Tchiani and his National Council for the Safeguard of the Homeland may or may not succeed. But that can only be the choice of the people of Niger.

The Korean War: no end of a lesson

The USA will continue to suffer if it fails to learn lessons from the Korean War.

The 27th July marked the 70th anniversary of the signing of the Korean Armistice Agreement. Prior to this commemorative day, a US nuclear ballistic missile submarine visited Busan, South Korea, the first visit by a US submarine since 1981. Some US congressmen have openly claimed that this move is not only a warning to north Korea but also a deterrent against China.

It appears that the USA has not seriously reflected on the lessons learned here, but instead seems to be repeating the mistakes made back then. As a result, at the occasion of the 70th anniversary of the Korean War armistice, it is of significant practical importance and utmost urgency to look again the lessons brought about by that war.

The Korean War is one of the most profound regional conflicts following the Second World War and it is regarded as the “biggest defeat in the history of the US Army”. Ironically, however, this “biggest defeat” that was called a “nightmare” has become a “forgotten war” within the USA, deliberately overlooked by Washington. This negligence and forgetfulness may leave the American people without the consciousness of drawing lessons from the past when facing new crises, making them susceptible to repeating past mistakes.

Yet, what is even more serious, worse and dangerous, is that some American political elites have drawn completely wrong lessons from the Korean War, using them to misguide the USA’s foreign policy today, leading the country to proactively incite and provoke crises, and even wars.

On 26th July the US magazine *Foreign Affairs* published an article written

by Mike Gallagher, Chairman of the ‘House Select Committee on the Strategic Competition Between the United States and the Chinese Communist Party’, titled *Why America Forgets – and China Remembers – the Korean War*. This Washington politician, known for his consistently anti-China stance, summarised three ‘lessons’ that the Korean War taught the Americans.

The first lesson is that: “Washington must not neglect deterrence and readiness,” and should always be prepared to fight and enhance military capabilities. He specifically mentioned that: “The US has failed to make sufficient military investments” in Taiwan.

The second lesson is that: “Politics and combat are deeply intertwined.”

The third lesson is that: “Once fighting has broken out, excessive self-restraint can invite further aggression.”

These three ‘lessons’ are all targeted at China, specifically referring to the Taiwan question. His arrogance and madness are comparable to that of Douglas MacArthur.

We can see that when most Americans lack knowledge and discernment about the Korean War 70 years ago and today’s Taiwan question, they can easily be led astray by a few loud and radical voices, resulting in a ‘herd effect’ in US diplomacy.

The USA is a superpower, so the mistakes it makes often result in strong spill-over effects that not only harm itself but also burden the region and even the entire world.

The USA can and should learn valuable lessons from the Korean War.

The first is to respect the legitimate security concerns of regional major powers. The second is to restrain the impulse and ambition to interfere in the affairs of other countries. Lastly, the USA should never underestimate China’s determi-

nation and ability to defend its homeland. Disregarding these three lessons happens to be the prominent characteristics of current US hegemonism.

The Korean War inflicted a painful price on the USA, but if the USA fails to learn from it, it will make even greater mistakes in the future.

Before China decided to resist the US aggression and aid North Korea during the Korean War, it had repeatedly sent stern warnings that if US forces crossed the 38th parallel China would not sit idle. The USA did not take it seriously, however, thinking that China was only making empty threats and would not take action. As a result, they were caught off-guard when they encountered the Chinese People’s Volunteers Army on the battlefield.

Today, a similar major mis-judgment towards China is occurring in Washington. The biggest difference between now and the Korean War era is that China’s strength has greatly increased. The consequences of infringing upon China’s security interests and national sovereignty will undoubtedly be much more severe.

Back then, when General MacArthur threatened to bring the war to the Chinese mainland, then chair of the Joint Chiefs of Staff Omar Bradley said that a wider conflict would embroil the USA “in the wrong war, at the wrong place, at the wrong time, and with the wrong enemy”.

The irony of history is that 70 years after the Korean War armistice, the USA once again finds itself in a position dangerously close to committing such a terrible mistake. It must be clear however, that if there is another strategic misjudgment this time, the price it will pay will surely be much higher than 70 years ago.

Global Times

Workers' Notes

Green Oil?

by New Worker correspondent

Monday's declaration by Prime Minister Rishi Sunak to grant 100 new North Sea oil and gas licences received a predictably mixed reception. This he said was "entirely consistent with net-zero commitments". This was a general commitment and to the industry and did not signal approval of any particular developments such as the Rosebank field west of Shetland. He added that Britain would always need oil and gas for about a quarter of its energy needs.

To sweeten what some saw as a bitter pill, at the same time he announced support for two more carbon capture and storage (CCS) projects, in Aberdeenshire and the Humber.

The announcements were attacked by both Ox-fam's climate change policy advisor and Friends of the Earth's head of policy, Mike Childs, said the Government needed to "focus on energy efficiency and the UK's vast home-grown renewable resources, rather than championing more costly and dirty fossil fuels", adding: "Even if it ever worked, which is unlikely in the near term, CCS won't capture all the climate pollution caused by burning fossil fuels or address the significant emissions that are created when gas and oil is extracted."

The response from opposition parties was somewhat mixed. For the SNP it was left to Westminster leader Stephen Flynn to welcome the carbon capture project, and he condemned the delay and the failure of earlier bids. Despite the SNP saying in March 2022 that it wanted to see the end of the industry, he did not actually condemn the likelihood of new fields being opened-up. After all, they

do not want to be blamed for losing jobs. First Minister Yousaf took a slightly harsher line, saying that the decision showed the UK "is not serious about tackling climate change". But that was all he had to say, and no other SNP figures piled in to demand an end of the industry.

Labour's climate and net-zero spokesman Ed Miliband merely pointed out that: "Rishi Sunak's weak and confused policy will not take a penny off bills – as his own party chair has admitted – will do nothing for our energy security, and drive a coach and horses through our climate commitments, while continuing to leave us at the mercy of fossil fuel dictators like Putin." But he took care not to directly denounce opening-up new oil fields.

Unite the union welcomed the news that more oil and gas would be produced off Britain's coast without actually saying so. General Secretary Sharon Graham said: "In the lead up to the general election, we're going to see a lot of 'jumping on the bandwagon' promises. The devil will be in the detail. We need to see long-term plans and well-paid roles with proper terms and conditions." She added that: "We won't tolerate the devastation of whole communities, with 'leap of faith' promises from Westminster all over again and we will not let workers in oil and gas become the miners of tomorrow."

It does of course have many workers in the oil and gas industry and many more in related engineering industries.

Earlier in the month another energy union, Prospect, welcomed another Government measure to save the planet, also expressing scepticism about their ability or willingness to implement their declared policy. On this occasion Prospect cheered on the launch of Great Britain Nuclear, in particular its support for small modular reactor (SMR) technology, but it deplored the lack of mention larger-scale nuclear power stations except Hinkley C and Sizewell C.

Senior Deputy General Secretary Sue Fern said:

"The launch of Great British Nuclear is an important milestone in the government's ambition to deliver the next generation of nuclear power and get us to net zero," warning that: "The window for creating and protecting the skills we need for new nuclear is closing. If we miss this opportunity, then our commitment to net zero will be hot air."

For many people, going green often means the proverbial green glow of the nuclear power plant.

Rubbish strikes

by New Worker correspondent

Across England three groups of refuse disposal and redistribution workers are involved in industrial action.

In Coventry, a long-running dispute has resumed. On Monday Unite condemned the city's Labour council for threatening refuse workers with significant cuts to their terms and conditions and of refusing to negotiate in any meaningful way resulting in talks collapsing.

The battle involves over 40 HGV refuse lorry drivers who voted for strike action when the council planned to end industry standard 'task and finish' provisions. Coincidentally, these attacks came when sister union GMB was fighting equal pay claims.

Early last year Coventry's HGV refuse lorry drivers were on strike for six months in pursuit of a pay claim. Rather than settle the dispute the council spent £9.4 million trying to break the strike by hiring scab labour at much higher rates than the workers were claiming.

Sharon Graham said: "Coventry council's race to the bottom agenda for its workers has been laid bare. The Council agenda is not about genuine equality, it is instead about equalising the misery. This kind of levelling down and anti-worker behaviour is completely unacceptable, especially for a so-called Labour council.

Unless the council climbs down from these atrocious plans, strike action is inevitable."

The union's national lead officer for council workers, Onay Kasab, said: "Unite went into talks today with an open mind and was prepared to negotiate. It [the council] is clearly intent on disregarding Labour principles and forcing wages and T&Cs downwards for both the refuse workers and its other staff. Negotiations have collapsed and Unite will be announcing strike action in due course."

Further north in Selby, in North Yorkshire, outsourced workers employed by waste company Urbaser are on some of the lowest rates in the country for these jobs. Here bin loaders and grounds workers are paid only £10.64 per hour and refuse lorry drivers, with an HGV license, are on a mere £12.51 per hour. The present offer is in fact a real-terms pay cut. The planned action sees an increase in strike action from one to four days a week on those days this month and next when general non-recyclable waste is collected.

Regional officer Richard Bedford said: "Urbaser's attempts to undermine the strike and the collective bargaining process will not work and are just exacerbating the dispute. The increased disruption to bin collections is entirely the fault of Urbaser and North Yorkshire council, which needs to pressure the firm into putting forward an acceptable offer."

In an attempt split the workforce Urbaser has implemented the rejected pay deal for those workers not taking industrial action and is holding one-to-one meetings with strikers rather than honouring the agreed collective bargaining process.

Another refuse workers dispute involving an outsourcer is taking place in South Gloucestershire, where contractor Suez is stonewalling by refusing talks despite workers starting action in June. The 150 Suez workers are now taking all-out strike action every day until 3rd September. Once again agency workers were brought in in an attempt to defeat the

striking workers.

The South Gloucestershire bin loaders earn £11.53 per hour, to contribute to Suez's UK profits of £80.8 million in 2021.

From 10th August Suez will not be able to continue using the agency staff it brought in to undermine the strike due to a High Court ruling that cancelled recent legislation allowing employers to use agencies to cover workers taking industrial action.

Regional official Ken Fish added: "Unite has left Suez without shadow of a doubt that from 10 August the company is barred from using agency staff during the strike and it must abide by the letter of the law. The only way to resolve this dispute is to put forward a deal our members can accept."

More action over pay

by New Worker correspondent

A serious warning has been delivered to the effect that Britain could run short of tea, after 88 per cent of GMB's 150 members at Tetley's plant belonging to Tata Consumer Products Limited in Teesside rejected a pay offer from the company. They are balloting for industrial action.

The largely female workforce has suffered years of real-terms pay cuts. GMB Regional Organiser, Laura Maughan, said: "Tetley workers have faced years of real terms pay cuts.

"Now, during a cost-of-living crisis, they have overwhelmingly refused to take another." She added that her members "are struggling to support their families, unable to escape from domestic abuse in some cases and are having to resort to food banks.

"Their quality of life has been eroded over time, and it's in Tata's power to change this for the workers, their families and for the future of decent paid jobs in Teesside."

continued on page 4...

...continued from page 3

Another beverage which could be in short supply is Irn-Bru. Nine days of strike action, three per month, will take place between next week and early October at AG Barr's plant and distribution centre in Cumbernauld. A ban on overtime will be in place over the same period.

This action was backed by 83 per cent of trucker and shunter drivers. This action takes place despite talks conducted by Advisory, Conciliation and Arbitration Service (ACAS). Barr has refused to increase its five per cent pay offer for this year, which is in effect 2023, which is of course a real-terms pay cut at a time when inflation is still over 10 per cent.

Barr recently announced a £43.5 million profit on a revenue of £317.8 million, which was up 18.2 on the previous year.

Unite industrial officer Andy Brown said: "Despite our best efforts to resolve this dispute through negotiation, AG Barr has not moved beyond five per cent. The only way it seems they will pay attention is if supplies of its popular products including Irn-Bru start to fizzle out which is exactly what is now on the cards."

Teachers accept Government offer

by New Worker correspondent

July began with teachers going on strike and ended with all four teaching unions in England announcing they were accepting the 6.5 per cent pay rise as recommended to the Government by the School Teachers' Review Body for 2023-4.

Members of the National Education Union (NEU) accepted the below-inflation award. This united the NEU along with the National Association of Schoolmasters & Union Women Teachers (NASUWT), the National Association of Head Teachers (NAHT) and the Association of School and College Lecturers (ASCL), who accepted it earlier last month.

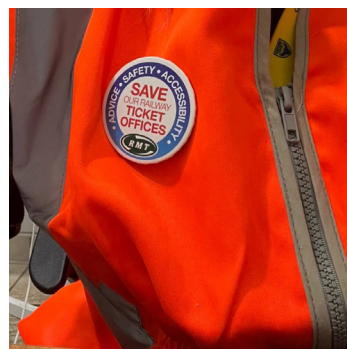
This delighted the Prime Minister, but Mary Bousted, outgoing joint general secretary of the NEU, was more cautious. She noted that although "the deal meant the average teacher's salary would increase by £2,500", it was "not all

that we wanted, and we will continue to campaign for better school funding and for a restoration of teacher pay – but for a one-year pay award, it is a significant achievement".

Unions also claimed the deal was "properly funded" and would not come from existing school budgets.

Paul Whiteman of the NAHT also said the union still had issues over workload and wellbeing, and Patrick Roach of NASUWT said that the deal was not "sufficient redress for the impact of more than a decade of real-terms pay cuts". He warned of action short of strikes in coming months over workload and working hours in coming months.

Elsewhere in the UK, Scottish teaching unions secured a slightly better seven per cent pay rise after taking strike action. In Wales, NEU agreed rises of eight per cent for 2022-3 and five per cent for 2023-4.



In Northern Ireland the political stalemate means there has been no pay deal since 2021. Unions in the six counties are still seeking a rise of six per cent for 2021-22, and to secure a rise of the inflation rate plus two per cent for 2022-23.

On and Off the Rails

by New Worker correspondent

Just as one long-running industrial dispute comes to an end, another continues. This week and next train drivers' union ASLEF is staging an overtime ban as part of their struggle for a decent pay rise at 15 rail companies in England. Many drivers do overtime because train operating companies do not employ enough drivers, so the impact will be severe.

The main services affected are Avanti West Coast, South Western Railway main line, and many other regional services. RMT's own dispute is also rumbling along.

ASLEF General Secretary Mick Whelan stated: "We don't want to take this action, because we don't

want people to be inconvenienced, but the train companies, and the government which stands behind them, have forced us into this place because they refuse to sit down and talk to us and have not made a fair and sensible pay offer to train drivers who have not had one for four years – since 2019 – while prices have soared in that time by more than 12 per cent."

He went on to point out that the offer of a four per cent increase was unacceptable, particularly as it came with the demand that drivers give up hard-won terms and conditions.

A new front on the railways has opened up with the planned closure of 1,000 ticket offices with the loss of 2,000 jobs. This battle has scored a modest success with the short, official 'consultation' period being extended until 1st September. This came after sustained pressure from rail unions, various passenger user groups and disability activists. Last Saturday saw 20,000 staff walk out as part of the campaign.

The campaign is showing signs of success, apart from the extended consultation period, as LNER amongst others has instructed staff to stop wearing "save our ticket offices" badges on pain of disciplinary action.

Despite the length of the various rail disputes the shareholders in the privatised railway companies are not suffering.

RMT has discovered that rail companies are indemnified against any losses to the tune of a billion pounds. As a result, there is no financial incentive for the rail operators to settle their disputes.

RMT notes that the claimed savings in closing ticket offices is about £89 million, less than a tenth of the £billion spent prolonging the present pay disputes.

General Secretary Mike Lynch warned of the wider implications of the case, saying: "Not only are ticket office closures being used as a fig leaf for the wholesale de-staffing of stations but this is the thin end of wedge for getting rid of staff across the railway network – something our union will oppose vigorously."

**20 years ago
this week
in the New Worker**

**New Worker
25th July 2003**

SADDAM HUSSEIN'S sons Oday and Qusay died in a hail of gunfire and rockets on Tuesday at the end of a six-hour battle with American troops in the northern Iraqi city of Mosul. His 14-year-old grandson Mustafa is also believed to have been killed when the Americans stormed a villa in Mosul following a tip-off from an Arab traitor.

Some 200 US Troops surrounded the villa after they claimed an offer to

surrender had been ignored.

They met with fierce resistance which was only quelled when the building was pounded by anti-tank missiles and helicopter gunships. Another Iraqi defender was killed and four Americans were wounded in the fighting for the house that was owned by a cousin of the ousted leader. The informer is expected to collect an American bounty of \$30 million for fingering two of the top men on the occupation force's hit-list.

Imperialist hopes that the news of the deaths would dampen the spirit of the resistance were soon dashed, however.

On the same, day four US troops were killed in resistance attacks, three near Mosul itself and one in an ambush north of the capital, Baghdad. According to the Pentagon, 234 US soldiers and 44 British have died in the war so far; 96 Americans since the war officially ended on 1st May. Well over

1,000 have been wounded.

This week a Gulf television station broadcast another message from the former Iraqi leader whom many believe is leading the Baathist resistance movement inside the country. In a taped message to a Dubai TV channel and recorded on 20th June, Saddam Hussein said: "The war is not over. The war is not finished. The only correct assessment will be when the enemy officially announces that the war is not finished because the war is not over politically or militarily."

The death of Saddam's sons, who held high office in the former Baathist government, may boost the morale of the occupiers for a day or so but it will hardly dampen the temper of the resistance, which is only partly down from the Saddam Fedayeen Youth Movement and the Baath party. Nor is it likely to affect the morale of Saddam's powerful Takriti family, except to fire them to exact revenge.

USA: Teamsters claim victory

by Mark Gruenberg

The Teamsters claimed a big win on 25th July when, within hours of bargaining restarting for the first time in three weeks, UPS (United Parcel Service) agreed to a five-year tentative contract with the union.

The pact gives workers substantial raises, eliminates many part-time jobs by raising the positions, and the workers in them, to full-time, and effectively kills the hated two-tier wage system at the nation's largest package delivery company, which employs 340,000 Teamsters. "We've changed the game," union President Sean O'Brien exulted.

Had bosses not settled, they would have forced the workers to strike and cost their own company hundreds of millions of dollars a day. Had the union been forced to walk, it would have been the largest private-sector strike against a single company in U.S. history.

The current contract expires at midnight on 31st July. Before the 25th July session, UPS honchos had walked out of bargaining at 4:15 am on 5th July after presenting what O'Brien called "an insulting" wage offer.

"Rank-and-file UPS Teamsters sacrificed everything to get this country through a pandemic and enabled UPS to reap record-setting profits," O'Brien declared.

"The union went into this fight committed to winning for our members. We demanded the best contract in the history of UPS, and we got it. UPS has put \$30 billion in new money on the table as a direct result of these negotiations. It will go into the pockets of our members, full-time and part-time.

"We've changed the game, battling it out day and night to make sure our members won an agreement that pays strong wages, rewards their labour, and doesn't require a single concession. This contract

sets a new standard in the labour movement and raises the bar for all workers."

O'Brien previously said the Teamsters would also promote the new UPS pact, assuming it's ratified in the one-Teamster-one-vote election from 3–22 August, as a reason Amazon warehouse workers and truckers should organise with the union, too.

In apparently winning, O'Brien and his running mate, Secretary-Treasurer Fred Zuckerman, kept the key campaign promise that carried their reform slate to victory in the 2020 one-Teamster-one-vote presidential race: UPS workers, who had their last contract imposed by then-President Jim Hoffa, would get a new and generous pact.

The union's large bargaining committee, which included rank-and-file reps from the 176 Teamster local branches with UPS members, unanimously endorsed the tentative agreement. Rank-and-file analysis and discussion of it will precede the balloting.

The union credited strong solidarity and strike preparation, plus increased militancy from rank-and-file members, as factors prompting the firm's honchos to yield.

"Our hard work has paid off from those members and leaders negotiating for more at the table to my sisters and brothers building a credible strike threat around the country," negotiating committee member Bran-

dy Harris of Local 174 in Seattle, a part-timer, told the union.

"Our union was organised and we were relentless. We've hit every goal that UPS Teamster members wanted and asked for."

New York City Comptroller Brad Lander added another factor: Wall Street. A Teamster-published analysis shows institutional investment firms, such as JPMorgan Chase and Black Rock, own 72 per cent of UPS stock, and Lander told Reuters they didn't want a forced strike.

"The vast, vast, vast majority of shareholders are eager to see a strike averted," he said. Lander is the official investment adviser for city workers' retirement systems, which hold \$191.1 million in UPS stock.

UPS, he said, should "put a good deal on the table addressing the issue the Teamsters have made quite clear is the remaining sticking point". That, says O'Brien, is what UPS did the morning of 25th July. The issue was pay for all Teamsters members and promotions for thousands of part-timers – who are half of UPS workers – to full-time slots.

"UPS came dangerously close to putting itself on strike, but we kept firm on our demands. In my more than 40 years in Louisville representing members at Worldport – the largest UPS hub in the country – I have never seen a national contract that levels the

playing field for workers so dramatically," Zuckerman added. Not only are there substantial raises, but "a full range of new protections for them on the job".

One protection, previously announced: Air conditioning in all new UPS vehicles starting 1st January, gradually replacing each car and truck in the fleet. All current vehicles get two fans and air vents in their cargo compartments. Other contract details include:

- Raises of \$2.75 more per hour in 2023, and \$7.50 more per hour over the five years. The average top rate for full-time drivers will top out at an average of \$49 hourly, up seven dollars.
- Current part-timers get an immediate hike from \$16.20 hourly to \$21, plus longevity increases of \$1.50 per hour. New part-timers will start at the \$21 rate, followed by a two-dollar hike and "market rate adjustments".
- So-called 22.4 drivers, all part-timers, would be immediately reclassified as full-time package car drivers, ending the two-tier wage system that saw them start at much lower rates. Their years as part-timers will be included in seniority rankings.
- "No more forced overtime on Teamster drivers' days off. Drivers would keep one of two work-week schedules and could not be forced

into overtime on scheduled off days.

- UPS Teamster part-timers will have priority to perform all seasonal support work using their own vehicles with a locked-in eight-hour guarantee. For the first time, seasonal work will be contained to five weeks only from November–December.
- 7,500 new full-time Teamster jobs and company commitment to fill 22,500 open positions, many of them to be taken by current part-timers.

Joe Henry, a veteran of the last long strike UPS forced on the Teamsters, in 1997, said this settlement builds on the gains made then. Intervening pacts, negotiated by then-Teamsters President Jim Hoffa, did not. And this time, he noted, there was Wall Street pressure to settle, too. In 1997, investors owned 37 per cent of UPS. Now they own double that.

"We were able to build upon what was done that year" in planning, organising, mobilising, and laying out goals, Henry said. "This contract will determine, in a positive way, the trend in the future." Congratulations poured in from other unions and pro-worker politicians.

"This contract creates new jobs, secures essential protections, & raises wages for ALL workers, including part-time," the AFL-CIO tweeted. "@Teamsters secured this TA through relentless organizing and a credible strike threat that woke @UPS UP! When we fight together, we make history together!"

"This is an incredible victory in the fight for working people across our country," tweeted Representative Rashida Tlaib (Democrat-Michigan). "There's power in solidarity. At a time of massive income and wealth inequality, solidarity is key in taking on corporate greed and delivering for the working class."

And the California Labor Federation kept its tweet short and sweet: "This is called delivering for your members!"

People's World (USA)



• Members of the Teamsters National Negotiating Committee celebrate their win.

China: fighting for a better life

by Yuan Yuan

The Enbo club, a mixed martial arts (MMA) club, was forced into the spotlight in 2017 when a viral video showed two underage children from the club fighting in an octagon cage. The video sparked heated discussion of whether the club was placing children in commercial fights. But a probe into the club and its founder uncovered a different story.

A story of twists and tears is always a good one for a film – which was premiered in Beijing in June. The film *Never Say Never* grossed over 1 billion yuan (£108 million) within six days of its release. Director Wang Baoqiang worked on the film for six years. The actor-turned-filmmaker also played its protagonist

A way out

The Enbo club was established in Chengdu, Sichuan province, in the early 2000s. It first served as a “home away from home” for rural students attending a sports school in neighbouring Aba Tibetan and Qiang Autonomous Prefecture.

Enbo, the founder, is a retired paramilitary officer skilled in sanda, a Chinese form of freestyle combat. Born in Aba, he lost his father at aged eight and grew up in poverty.

The club, funded entirely by Enbo, provides free meals and accommodation as well as training facilities. Gradually, it became known as a martial arts school for

children from rural areas and began to attract a steady flow of students, especially from underdeveloped areas in Sichuan, including the Aba and Liangshan Yi Autonomous Prefecture.

Students are accepted by the club only on condition they are from low-income rural families, are willing to practice martial arts and have the permission of their parents or guardians.

Eighty per cent of the children had already dropped out of school before joining the club, Enbo revealed to media in 2017. As these students could not be officially registered as residents of Chengdu, they were ineligible to attend public schools there. Consequently, Enbo employed four teachers to teach academic subjects in the students’ spare time, such as on nights and weekends.

Padma Dorje, better known as Banma Duoji, a Tibetan student born in Aba in 1999, joined the club in 2009. Before that, he was in third grade at a local elementary school. His father passed away before he was born and the family had struggled financially ever since. He heard about the Enbo club from his headmaster and decided to go.

Starting from scratch, it took him two years to get ready to represent the club in sanda competitions. In 2015, Enbo introduced MMA (Mixed Martial Arts) to the club’s offerings by hiring MMA coaches.

Banma Duoji switched from sanda to MMA in 2015 and won his first match at a competition run by Henan TV. “I was not sure whether I was



• The cast at the premiere of *Never Say Never* in Beijing in June.

suitable for martial arts when I first joined the club,” he told the Tencent Sport Channel in May 2021. “But when I raised my arms and shouted in happiness after winning the match, I knew immediately that MMA was something I wanted to do for the rest of my life.”

When some of the students started to make a name for themselves in competitions, a five-minute video showing two of them bruised and fighting in an octagon cage went viral online in July 2017. The video sparked harsh accusations from viewers that the club was exploiting children for possible commercial use.

“These kinds of accusations are based on many people’s limited knowledge of MMA,” says Xu, an MMA vlogger. “It was in 2017 when many people in China didn’t have a clear idea of MMA and would equate it to brutal fighting, something illegal; not to mention the fact that the fighters were children.”

The voices were so loud that the police and related departments began to inves-

tigate the club. It was then that Enbo began appearing in the media, telling the stories of the children and the club.

Li Zicongwu, one of the students in the viral video, was 14 at the time. He joined the club in 2014 when he was 11. His mother passed away when he was 10 and his father had left their hometown looking for work. When he heard about the Enbo club Li had already dropped out of school and he and his elder brother made a living by growing potatoes and corn.

“I love martial arts, and it was in my blood,” he told *The Beijing News* in 2017. He immediately went to join the club and found it was his dream environment. He no longer needed to worry about money and could have meat and eggs at every meal. All he needed to do was to practice martial arts.

Speaking of Enbo, Li said: “We all call him dad and he gives us everything. If I hadn’t come here, I might have ended up struggling to make ends meet my whole life.”

The investigation concluded the club

had not done anything illegal. But authorities mandated the children be returned to their home-towns to complete their compulsory education, as the hours of academic study provided by the club were far less than what is legally required for students in grades one through nine.

Dreams coming true

Before the authorities had made their decision, Li called his father in advance to ensure he had his permission to stay at the club, but also prepared for the worst. “No-one wanted to leave,” he said.

Li was lucky as the club established a branch in Aba’s local sports school, allowing students from Aba, such as Li, to continue their training. But more than 10 of the club’s students made tearful goodbyes.

“Even if I had been forced to leave, I knew I would come back. I was pretty sure MMA was the only thing that I wanted to do. Nothing could stop me from

chasing my dream – to be a UFC fighter.”

Based in Las Vegas, the UFC, or Ultimate Fighting Championship, is the world’s leading MMA promoter. Li’s dream seemed to grow a little closer when Su Mudaerji, a senior fighter from the Enbo club, made his debut at the UFC in November 2018 at 22.

It is on Su that the character Su Mu in the film *Never Say Never* is based. Born in 1996, he used to herd cattle in his home-town in Aba before joining the club in 2010.

“MMA changed my fate,” Su told media after joining the UFC. “It took me out of the mountains and made me see a bigger world. Now I have even created my own brand. I might have been satisfied by winning one UFC match before. Now I would say ‘why not champion?’”

Now, three fighters from the Enbo club have joined the UFC. Even some of the students that returned to their home-towns also made names for themselves at competitions. Jishi Agyal from Liangshan joined the local middle school’s boxing team. From 2019–2022 he won three gold medals at the Sichuan Youth Boxing Competition and ranked as a first-grade athlete at the national level.

Now, the club is regarded as the cradle of MMA fighters. Enbo attended the film release in Chengdu. “We might get confused and make mistakes in our life,” he said. “But after we set our life goal, we will spare no efforts in fighting against all difficulties. This is the spirit of MMA.”

Beijing Review

Why is Blinken snubbed?

During his latest Asia-Pacific trip, US foreign minister, Secretary of State Antony Blinken, tried to persuade New Zealand to join the AUKUS (Australia-UK-USA) military alliance. The response he got was clear – it would cost New Zealanders their soul to accept the top US diplomat's advice.

"It's a club we'd have to sell our soul to join," said New Zealand Foreign Minister Nanaia Mahuta.

Mahuta replied to Blinken on Thursday that her country was "not prepared to compromise or change our nuclear-free position" and continued to support a nuclear-free Pacific.

But this was not the only time the top US diplomat got snubbed during his recent tour.

At a joint press conference after meeting with Tongan Prime Minister Hu'akavameiliku Siaosi Sovale-ni last week, Blinken called Beijing's engagement in the re-

gion "problematic behaviour" but was only told that the Pacific island kingdom had "no concerns" about its relationship with China.

The reasons why Washington was given the cold shoulder are obvious. Blinken claimed that "We really understand what is a priority for the people here", but his real priority is nothing but "American First".

What he and those decision-makers back in Washington have proposed for the region are simply not in line with or are even counter-productive to its key interests and urgent needs. That is something the regional countries understand fairly well.

In recent years, the USA has been bent on peddling the so-called "Indo-Pacific strategy" and "great power competition" in an attempt to build an alliance in the Asia-Pacific region against China's rise.

From throwing mud at China's co-operation with local countries to trying to

expand the AUKUS bloc, Blinken's current visit is actually seeking either to sabotage Beijing's image or to force the island nations to take sides.

Nations in the region want peace, stability and development.

The AUKUS pact, which has violated the principles and practices of the Treaty on

the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons and severely undermined the international non-proliferation regime, can only stir up confrontation and fuel an arms race in the area.

That is also why former Australian Prime Minister Paul Keating warned earlier this month against the USA-led NATO's Asia

expansion attempt, saying: "Exporting that malicious poison (NATO) to Asia would be akin to Asia welcoming the plague upon itself."

Despite Washington sparing no efforts in smearing China, countries in the Asia-Pacific region see Beijing as an equal partner and a real friend.

Take Tonga. Over the past years, China has provided around 100 grant-aid projects, big and small, to the Tongan government and Tonga people, which covered agriculture, fishery, education, health, environment protection and climate change.

When Tonga was faced with multiple challenges, including volcanic eruptions, tsunamis, and the COVID-19 pandemic, China rushed to its assistance.

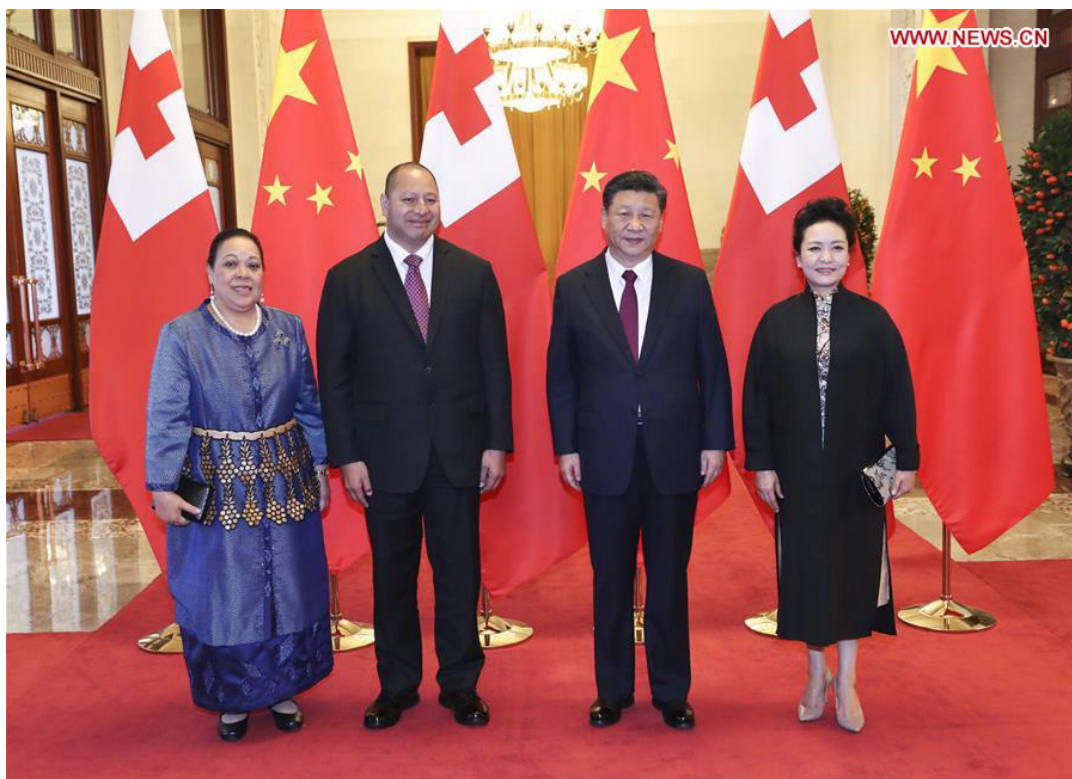
As facts have proven, China's friendship

has always been based on deeds rather than words, Tongan King Tupou VI has said.

As for New Zealand, China is the country's largest trading partner for trade in goods, both in terms of imports and exports.

The relationship with China is incredibly important for New Zealand and both countries now enjoy a very constructive and positive relationship, New Zealand Prime Minister Chris Hipkins said during a visit to China last month, adding that his country hopes to further expand bilateral trade and sees it as a priority to re-establish economic activity with China in the post-pandemic era.

Between confrontation and common development, it's not difficult for Asia-Pacific countries to choose.



• Chinese President Xi Jinping and his wife Peng Liyuan with Tonga's King Tupou VI and his wife Queen Nanasipau'u, in Beijing in 2018



• Tongans welcome Chinese assistance.

Xinhua

LETTERS

Dear Comrades

US imperialism fears and resents the dramatic changes now taking place in the global arena. A new multi-polar world order is forming that will bring to an end to decades of US hegemony with its corrupt and brutal exploitation of weaker nations. It's obedient slavish vassal states and unsavoury puppet regimes may be concerned for their futures. Russia has challenged NATO's eastward expansion. BRICS is expanding rapidly, which will allow former colonial countries and the developing world to pursue unfettered economic development. Significantly the emergence of People's China, under the leadership of the Communist Party of China, with its fast growing economy, powerful military might and outstanding Belt and Road Initiative is playing a major role for change.

China's amazing growth, on a scale unseen since the days of Stalin leadership in the Soviet Union, shows what socialism may achieve. GDP growth in China exceeded \$18 billion last year and is expected to increase by 5.6 per cent during 2023. It may soon overtake the current US level. If, however, service charges, such as lawyers' fees and eye-watering medical costs, are removed then China has the largest level of industrial production and farm output. India's GDP, although at a lower base, will expand by an impressive 8.5 per cent this year.

US imperialism stems from a social system that breeds pessimism, despair and the destruction of human lives and values through wars and exploitation. It's foreign policy aim of international hegemony puts it in a position of confrontation with the Peoples of the world.

The decline of the USA has manifested itself in a number of theatres of go-political conflicts where it attempts to strengthen its control. It has faced a number of setbacks and debacles in Asia, Europe and the Middle East.

Imperialism's Ukraine project was designed to expand NATO up to Russia's southern border, contrary to assurances given in 1990 as the USSR collapsed. This was part of a strategy to weaken and fragment

Russia with the aim of gaining cheap labour and raw materials.

The situation in Ukraine has become a human tragedy and another debacle for US Imperialism and NATO as it loses its proxy war. A bitter civil war that started when the Western powers engineered a coup that ousted the elected president and overthrew his government. Russia has received support and understanding from most of the world as it acted to protect Russian speakers and to oppose the creation of a fascist state in the heart of Europe.

When they carried out their military coup in 2014, to overthrow President Viktor Yanukovich, little did the USA and its allies realise what a disaster it would be for themselves and that 11 rounds of sanctions against Russia would fail completely.

The dysfunctional EU faces deep divisions as it has become forced to depend upon expensive US shale gas. European industry is rapidly becoming uncompetitive and the continent is entering recession. Russia, on the other hand, with a projected GDP increase of 2 per cent, will soon be back to pre-war levels.

As it considers an exit ramp to abandon Ukraine, like Iraq, Afghanistan and many others, the USA can console itself with the thought that its European petty imperialist competitors have been weakened. Those so-called leaders seem not to have realised yet they have been well and truly shafted. Due to the chaos created by their incompetence it would be reasonable to expect the election of new progressive governments – however the beneficiaries are likely to be populist movements such as Alternative for Germany and Marine Le Pen's National Rally. Much of the traditional left appears dead in the water. Socialist parties have become irrelevant as they have adopted social-democratic positions. Once massive and respected communist parties have been destroyed by revisionism to become a spent force from the past with nothing to inspire the masses.

The brilliance of Chinese diplomacy in the Middle East, for some just a land of palm trees, sand and sultans, has produced

a watershed in international politics. Diplomatic relations have been established between Iran and Saudi Arabia. The spin-offs from this development have been immense with diplomatic contacts being re-established throughout the region. The new openness will accelerate infrastructure expansion and sustainable development in a region once condemned to semi-feudal domination with the USA in the background. The desert will surely bloom and social progress related to local cultures will progress. One of the most important matters has been the effect upon the Syrian conflict. President Assad's government has been re-admitted back into the Arab fold. Facing defeat, the USA is now sending its terrorists from Syria into Ukraine to continue the bloodshed there.

It is now 10 years since Chinese President Xi Jinping proposed the Belt and Road Initiative (BRI) to promote regional and international co-operation amongst nations.

BRI has been an outstanding success. Large transport and infrastructure projects now complement a Green Silk Road and a Digital Silk Road. New supply chains have been built offering a greater diversity in logistics. China's direct investment into energy, agriculture and local industries is becoming a corner stone for advancement. Developing countries benefit from exporting farm produce, energy and mineral products and the output of craft industries whilst importing machinery, electronic products and household goods.

All this activity is free from US sanctions, payment restrictions and American licences. Desperate propaganda from imperialist sources claims that the countries are in debt to China, however the opposite effects present themselves as GDP rates soar all along the road.

A number of regional and international trade associations have been established, all free from US domination. BRICS, an acronym for Brazil, Russia, India and South Africa, is set to expand to over 30 countries. Egypt, Argentina, Belarus, Iran, Mexico, Pakistan and Syria are all set to join. The USA

and other western nations are becoming increasingly concerned at the GDP growth rates achieved by these countries relative to their own dismal outlook.

Plans to introduce its own BRICS gold-backed currency are currently being discussed but India has some reservations about China's growing influence. The two great civilizations may have misgivings but the only real threat to India comes from the USA. The latter may attempt to bribe India with the sale of advanced weaponry, offer more favourable trading conditions or promise investments, but if ever India looks like it is repeating the Chinese success the USA would pull the plug.

As demonstrated by the level of support for Russia by most of the world in its proxy war with NATO in Ukraine, it is now the USA and Europe that are in a minority position. These nations grew fat by plundering the rest of the world. They appear to be unable to overcome their colonial mindset of superiority and act as if they still mastered the globe. For a variety of reasons they are all in decline, especially Europe which has been led into a trap by the USA to weaken them further. Faced with a shortage of energy, inflation and recession, their leaders run around like headless chickens whilst Rome burns.

Our epoch is one in which the world is in evolutionary transformation from capitalism to socialism. The defeat of fascism and the collapse of direct colonial rule along with an ever closer affinity between the socialist community and emergent nations is an integral part of this process. Political and social advances are gaining impetus.

There is no room for complacency, however. War hysteria is being whipped up by the USA and its craven allies whilst living standards continue to fall.

The New Communist Party of Britain works to strengthen the understanding and record of working-class internationalism in the British Labour Movement. Such a struggle puts us on the side of Palestine, Syria, Donbas and oppressed people everywhere in their fight for justice and liberty.

John Maryon
Suffolk

Diary

EVERY SATURDAY
Committee to Defend Julian Assange: Protests: 12:00–14:00, HMP Belmarsh, Western Way, London SE28 and 16:00–18:00 at Eros statue, Piccadilly Circus, London SW1.

UNTIL 9 SEPT
John Rylands Library: *Workers' Playtime: culture and community in industrial Lancashire.* Exhibition, 10:00–17:00 Weds-Sat. Free. Deansgate, Manchester.

UNTIL 30 DEC
Working Class Movement Library: That Impudent Little Party: The Independent Labour Party 1893–1975. Exhibition, Wed–Fri afternoons, WCML, 51 Crescent, Salford M5 4WX.

SUN 6 AUG
Campaign for Nuclear Disarmament: Hiroshima Day commemorations. See CND website for many local events including Nagasaki Day on Wed 9 August.

SAT 2 SEPT
Korea Friendship Association: Hybrid meeting. Details TBA.

SUN 3 SEPT
Burston Strike School rally: Church Green, Burston, near Diss, Norfolk.

MON 4 SEPT–FRI 15 SEPT
Campaign for Nuclear Disarmament: Protests at DSEI Arms Fair. London's Royal Docks, London E16.

SAT 9 SEPT
Korea Friendship Association: Online seminar. Details TBA.

SAT 9 SEPT
Wigan Diggers Festival: 11:30–9:30, Open-air free festival, The Wiend,

Wigan WN1.

SUN 10 SEPT–WED 13 SEPT
Trades Union Congress: 115th Congress 2023, ACC Liverpool King's Dock, King's Dock Street, Liverpool, L3 4FP.

TUES 12 SEPT–7 NOV
Marx Memorial Library: Marxist Economics for Beginners. Online course. Book on MML website.

THUR 14 SEPT
Marx Memorial Library: 50 years Since the Fascist Coup in Chile. Panel Discussion 19:00. Hybrid meeting. MML, 37a Clerkenwell Green, London, EC1R 0DU and online.

WED or THUR 13/14 SEPT
Glasgow Against NATO Action Committee: End the Sanctions against Russia! 19:00–21:00, Pearce Institute, Govan Road, Govan Underground, Glasgow.

14 SEPT–14 DEC
Townsend Theatre Productions: *The Ragged-Trousered Philanthropists*. Neil Gore's one person adaptation. Nationwide tour, see TTP website for venues.

SAT 23 SEPT
Campaign for Nuclear Disarmament: Stop US Nukes Coming to Britain. Day of Action. Details TBA.

The editor welcomes letters from our readers. If you have a contribution to make please make sure it reaches us before Wednesday. You can send your letters to: PO Box 73, London SW11 2PQ, or email party@NCP.clara.net

CONTACT US...

Post: NCP, PO Box 73, London SW11 2PQ

Phone: 07497 393 263

New Worker National: www.newworker.org

email: party@ncp.clara.net

London District NCP: <http://londoncommunists.blogspot.com/>

JOIN US!

For peace!

justice!

socialism!

I would like to join the New Communist Party....

I would like more info about the NCP....

Name.....

.....

Address.....

.....

.....

.....

postcode.....

phone.....

Send to NCP, PO Box 73, London SW11 2PQ.



BOOST OUR FUND

Make your commitment to sustaining the New Worker in the struggle for peace and socialism

COMPLETE THE BANKER'S ORDER FORM BELOW:

The Manager.....

.....

bank. Bank's address.....

.....

Please pay to the New Worker account No 50492464, 08-90-34, Co-op Bank plc, 17 High St, Kingston-upon-Thames, KT1 1LP. the sum of £.....

(in words) each month starting on.....

.....

Signature.....

.....

RETURN THIS FORM TO:

NCP Fund, PO Box 73, London SW11 2PQ.

Scottish Political News

by our Scottish political affairs correspondent

It's the "silly season", when parliaments and law courts close. The great and the good depart for their usual watering holes in the sun – or maybe not, given the riots in France and the forest fires sweeping southern Europe – and millions of working people take their traditional summer holidays – possibly for the first time since the end of the COVID-19 crisis.

Coined in the Victorian era, the phrase describes the stories used by the mainstream press to fill the columns of their rags in the silly season. They wouldn't have to look far in Scotland these days.

Sillier and sillier

For starters, climate change campaigners defaced a portrait of King Charles at the Scottish National Portrait Gallery in Edinburgh last week. Two members of 'This is Rigged' paint sprayed the words 'the people are mightier than a lord' over the painting, protected by a glass covering, and then superglued themselves to the floor. This is Rigged later said it would continue "to take action until the Scottish government vocally oppose all new oil and gas licenses and secure a fair and fully funded transition for workers to renewable energy".

First Minister Yousaf Humza has joined in the fun by promoting the nationalists' vision of an independent Scotland, including plans for a new passports (in fact just the usual standard issue burgundy red of the European Union) and new Scottish citizenship laws with a "common travel area" including the UK, the Channel Islands and the Isle of Man, just as at present. He said that Scotland will be part of the EU but not part of Schengen but didn't explain how this would be achieved. All this is, however, a bit academic because a second independence vote is not even on the horizon as far as the major Westminster parties are concerned.

Poor old Yousaf's already got enough on his plate. Tuesday saw the announcement that will add to the SNP's woes as the recall petition to replace

Rutherglen and Hamilton West MP Margaret Ferrier who was suspended for travelling to and from Westminster whilst testing positive for COVID-19 passed the 10 per cent threshold to trigger an awkward by-election for the SNP.

The police investigation of Sturgeon's financial doings proceeds apace. Sir Iain Livingstone, the departing Chief Constable, says that Police Scotland's investigation has expanded beyond the initial enquiries into the missing £660,000 allegations into misuse of funds and potential embezzlement. Opposition politicians are licking their lips at the prospect.

At the same time Humza has come under flak from all sides for using Civil Service staff and time to write (or cut and paste) papers about passports whilst neglecting more pressing problems. Tory Scottish Secretary Alister Jack sent an official letter to Yousaf saying the SNP government was putting its "obsession with independence ahead of pressing priorities in Scotland" – but it is yet unclear if this against Civil Service rules.

Labour's deputy leader Dame (no less) Jackie Baillie said of Yousaf's "summer of independence" that: "It is astonishing that in the midst of a cost-of-living crisis and chaos in our public sector, the out-of-touch First Minister has elected to spend his time gallivanting around Scotland's top tourist spots."

It has to be said that civil servants have not actually done much work. Details about the costs of passports and embassies etc are nowhere to be seen. One does not need to be a very careful textual scholar to notice that the last document is largely a rehash of the 2013 White Paper that was the cornerstone of the Referendum campaign.

Yousaf is also facing a leadership challenge from one Chris Hanlon who, from his power-base as Secretary of the West Fife & Coastal Villages SNP branch, is looking for nominations to stand at the party's annual conference in October. This Yousaf dismissed the as something he is "not bothered about it", which is probably the most sensible thing he has said in months.

Fishing in troubled waters

A spectre is haunting the SNP – Alex Salmond. Although their former

leader remains exiled to the political fringe of the nationalist community, he still makes his mark in the media.

Salmond's Alba Party was launched in early 2021. It flopped in the Holyrood elections that May, winning a mere 1.7 per cent of the regional list vote. Worse were the 2022 local elections when it won 0.07 per cent of the vote when it put up 111 candidates – all of whom lost, including 11 sitting councillors who had defected from the SNP. Critics who said Alba means "All Losers Back Alex" have a point judging by more recent by-elections.

Their only representatives are the two SNP defectors sitting in the hated House of Commons. And in the North Lanarkshire bull-pit dissident SNP councillors recently formed their own party rather than join Alba.

Salmond isn't giving up though. In May, Alba claimed a membership of 7,500 saying this was about 1,000 more than the previous year; more than the combined total of Scottish Tories and Liberals, and about the same as the Greens.

The recent rise in membership, however, does not include any councillors or senior figure in the nationalist camp. Alba's new recruits are almost entirely disgruntled SNP members annoyed at the lack of progress towards independence or disappointed at failing to get on the SNP gravy train.

With his customary good taste, Salmond used the Inverness Cathedral memorial service for the late Winnie Ewing to put

the boot into Nicola Sturgeon. His eulogy to one of the pioneers of the nationalist revival included the telling lines: "Winnie never held office but you don't have to hold high office to achieve something, just as you can hold office and achieve nothing." It is not difficult to work out who in particular the final point refers to.

Salmond was also star turn at the Coronation Day rally in Glasgow, which has helped boost his standing in the eyes of the broader nationalist community. His popularity figures, according Savanta's polling figures, have rocketed from minus 64 to minus 47. In addition, he has a new online TV chat show modestly titled *Scotland Speaks With Alex Salmond*, and even a stage show at this month's Edinburgh Festival Fringe. This will include a chinwag with failed, but almost successful, SNP leadership candidate Kate Forbes.

During her final years in office Alba arguably made life easier for Ms Sturgeon as it removed critical members from the SNP. She said that she would not have any dealings with Salmond unless he apologised to the women who had accused him of harassment. It was of course these allegations and subsequent court case from which Salmond emerged less than smelling of roses that caused the split. Whilst co-leader of the Greens Lorna Slater had a point by alleging that Alba is "a party thrown together by a disgruntled ex-first minister as part of his vendetta against our first minister", there is more to it than that...

FROM THE NEW COMMUNIST PARTY

The Middle "Class" by Neil Harris. £2 plus 50p p&p (New Worker reprint)

The ruling class, fascism and the State by Neil Harris. £2 plus 50p p&p (New Worker reprint)

The poisoned well (an insight into imperialist intelligence work). £2 plus 50p p&p (New Worker reprint).

Communists and the united front by Neil Harris. £2 plus 50p p&p. (New Worker reprint).

New technology and the need for socialism £2 plus 50p p&p.

Communists in Britain today £2 plus 50p p&p (New Worker reprint).

Peoples's China in perspective £2 plus 50p p&p (New Worker reprint).

The case for communism £2 plus 50p p&p.

The basis of scientific socialism, the 1st chapter of Anti Daring by F Engels. £2 plus 50p p&p.

On Stalin £2 plus 50p P&P (New Worker reprint).

Stalin & the BRS £2 plus 50p p&p.

How we got in the State we are by Daphne Liddle. £1 plus 50p p&p (New Worker reprint)

All in the family by Daphne Liddle. £1 plus 50p p&p (New Worker reprint).

Arab nationalism and the communist movement by Andy Brooks. £1 plus 50p p&p (New Worker reprint).

Killing ourselves to live by Daphne Liddle. £1 plus 50p p&p (New Worker reprint).

The first 30 fighting years of the New Communist Party of Britain £2 plus 50p p&p (New Worker reprint)

NCP Lit. PO Box 73, London SW11 2PQ.

(cheques to New Worker)

THE NEW WORKER

Weekly paper of the New Communist Party

SUBSCRIBE NOW!

4 weeks: £6; 3 months: £20; 6 months: £30; annual: £50

Name.....

Address.....

.....

Post code.....

Cheque/P.O.s, made out to New Worker, to: NW Subs, PO Box 73, London SW11 2PQ.

In search of Karl Marx

by Carole Barclay

London comrades went to Trier in July – a small German town in the Moselle valley just a few miles from the border with Luxembourg. Trier was once an imperial capital in Roman times. In the Middle Ages it was the capital of an independent German state ruled by the Archbishop of Trier that only ended during the Napoleonic occupation.

These days visitors roam through the medieval cathedral and the old town, painstakingly restored after Allied bombing during the Second World War, or gaze at spectacular Roman remains such as the monumental Porta Nigra gate and a Roman palace that's now a Protestant church.

For us, however, Trier is first and foremost the home of Karl Marx. He was born here on 5th May 1818. The city, now under Prussian control,

was his home until he moved to continue his studies in Berlin in 1836.

Marx's birthplace is now the Marx House museum. He spent the first 18 months of his life here. But the rent was too much for his father to bear so the family moved to cheaper rooms above a shop near the Porta Nigra that you can spot if you look out for the plaque on the wall.

Karl Marx House was a project of the old German Social Democrats (SPD) in the 1920s. They restored the building as a permanent tribute to the man who, together with Frederick Engels, penned the *Communist Manifesto* and helped launch the First International in 1864. Seized by the Nazis when Hitler came to power in 1933, the house was returned to the SPD in 1947. It is now run by the Friedrich Ebert Foundation, a social-democratic political trust with close ties to the modern SPD. This is clearly reflected in the displays that reflect

modern European social-democratic thinking rather than that of the world communist movement.

Although there are some personal mementos from Marx's life, such as his pocket watch and his favourite armchair, the galleries largely focus on Marx's political career and the working class movements that embraced the banner of scientific socialism during his lifetime and right through to the present.

The SPD was part of the anti-communist West German bourgeois consensus that worked to bring down the old German Democratic Republic in the east. So Marx remains a controversial character in Germany. Neo-Nazis and reactionaries protest at any promotion of Karl Marx. But the city worthies, including the SPD that has a major presence on the Trier council, know the added value of the 'Marx trail' to their burgeoning tourist industry.



• NCP leader Andy Brooks by the statue of Marx.

A giant bronze statue of Karl Marx stands in the heart of town. It was unveiled in 2018 on the 200th anniversary of the great thinker's birth. It was a gift from People's

China created by China's most famous sculptor – Wu Weishan. Some 150,000 Chinese tourists come to Trier to see Marx House every year. They join thousands of

other communists and socialists, like us, following Marx's footsteps in the town of his youth.

For peace on the Korean peninsula

by New Worker correspondent

Korean solidarity campaigners met at the NCP's Party Centre in London last weekend for a hybrid seminar to celebrate the victory of the Korean people over US imperialism and its lackeys in the Korean war, and to discuss the prospects for peace on the Korean peninsula and the way forward for the solidarity campaign in Britain.

NCP leader Andy Brooks, who chaired the Friends of Korea (FoK) event, welcomed everyone to the meeting, at the Sid French library or by video link, to hear key-

note openings from FoK secretary Michael Chant and Dermot Hudson of the Korean Friendship Association (KFA) and an online contribution from Song Gi Kim from the Democratic Korean

embassy in London. This was followed by contributions from everyone in the room and from many of the online participants across the country.

The Korean war ended on 27th July 1953

with an armistice that promised free elections to end the partition of the Korean peninsula. But the Americans never kept their word and the country remains divided between the Democratic People's Republic of Korea (DPRK) in the north and a puppet regime in the south that is propped up by tens of thousands of US troops and an American nuclear armada off the coast.

The USA has done everything possible to maintain its military presence on the Korean peninsula. But the resistance of the DPRK continues, as the Korean people proudly demonstrate their mettle and build their own future.

Victory Day is not simply a celebration for commemorating and looking back to a chapter of resistance in a previous era. The day also serves as a reminder that the US imperialists and their lackeys are stepping up war preparations in the Asia Pacific rim, and that the terrible tragedies visited upon the Korean people during the Korean War must never again be permitted. The significance of that war is taking on new meaning today as the US imperialists beat the drums of war to attempt to justify a nuclear catastrophe that threatens the very survival of the Korean people and the peoples

of the world. But it further serves as a reminder that it is the people who are the makers of history and that they themselves must prevail against war.



• In the Sid French library.

The NCP badge



£4.50 inc P&P from New Worker, PO Box 73, London SW11 2PQ.

The anti-racist legacy of Tony Bennett

by Monica Moorehead

Tony Bennett, who died peacefully at the age of 96 on 21st July, was not only one of the most influential singers of the 20th Century but a conscientious supporter of the Civil Rights Movement of the 1960s. In his 1998 autobiography, *The Good Life*, Bennett spoke on how his friendship with a Black soldier while they served in the army during the Second World War was condemned by racist white officers. Bennett stated that he opposed all wars following this experience. In fact, Bennett refused to sing the national anthem because of its violent lyrics.

Bennett expressed outrage over the racist treatment of great jazz artists such as Nat King Cole, Duke Ellington and Count Basie. Bennett wrote: "Nat and Duke were geniuses, brilliant human beings who gave the world some of the most beautiful music it's ever

heard, and yet they were treated like second-class citizens. The whole situation enraged me."

Having heard about Bennett's public stance against racism, the late, great Harry Belafonte – who also died at age 96 in April – asked Bennett to join other prominent entertainers in the 19-day Selma to Montgomery march in 1965. This historic march eventually led to the signing of the Voting Rights Act that same year.

Bennett did not hesitate to say yes to Belafonte's request. He compared this situation to the one he had when he was a soldier: "When the march started, I had a strange sense of déjà vu. It felt the same way down in Selma: the white state troopers were really hostile, and they were not shy about showing it. There was the threat of violence all along the march route, from Montgomery to Selma, some of which was broadcast on the nightly news and really helped to make the country aware of the ugliness that was still

going on in the South." Along the 54-mile route, Bennett, along with other entertainers such as Belafonte, Sammy Davis Jr and Rita Moreno, would perform for the marchers on a nightly basis.

How ironic it was that following the culmination of the march and rally, Bennett was driven to the Montgomery airport by Viola Liuzzo, a 39-year-old white sup-

porter from Detroit, on 25th March 1965. Liuzzo was fatally shot by the Klu Klux Klan that same night, becoming one of the many martyrs of the movement.

On his experience in the South, Bennett commented in his book, "I'm enormously proud that I was able to take part in such a historic event, but I'm saddened to think that it was ever necessary and that any

person should suffer simply because of the colour of his skin."

Bennett joined the artistic boycott against apartheid South Africa during the 1980s and performed for Nelson Mandela in England following his release from prison.

The widow of Dr Martin Luther King, Coretta Scott King, remarked on Bennett's contributions after be-

stowing the Salute to Greatness award on him in 2002, saying, "Tony is not only one of America's premier performing artists, but he was a deeply committed friend and supporter of my husband and the Civil Rights Movement."

In 2007, Bennett was inducted into the International Civil Rights Walk of Fame, a promenade at the Martin Luther King National Historical Park in Atlanta, which also includes the late actor Sidney Poitier.

Frank Sinatra referred to Tony Bennett as "the best singer in the business". Considering the source, this is certainly high praise. But besides him being a legendary performer, more importantly, Bennett's legacy should be that he was a socially conscious person who strongly spoke out against the injustice suffered by the great Black artists that he worked with and so admired. He wanted an end to racism and war for all humanity. Rest in power, Tony Bennett!

Workers World (USA)



• Harry Belafonte and Tony Bennett at a UNICEF benefit in 2012.

Another Marxist view from India

by Robin MacGregor

Revolutionary Democracy; Volume two, No 1 (New Series), April 2023. £5.00 + £1.00 PP from NCP Lit: PO Box 73, London SW11 2PQ.

The latest issue of the twice-yearly Indian journal *Revolutionary Democracy* has once again arrived on these shores. The usual three-part format of items on contemporary India – articles from across the globe from movements associated with the International Conference of Marxist-Leninist Parties and Organisations (ICM-LPO), which adheres to the Albanian Hoxha tradition), along with hitherto unknown material from the Soviet archives.

In the first category come brief articles on the ill-treatment of a young

Muslim lawyer at the hands of BJP Government, criticisms of the latest Indian national budget and condemnations of two separate military actions against Indian peasants, which in one case included aerial bombardment of villages. A review of a recent book on women collective farmers in the Indian state of Kerala provides an encouraging view that collective farms can help overcome the problems of tiny farms that result from centuries of land fragmentation due to inheritance.

This is followed by a longer piece on the *Political Economy of Freebies*, which deals with the ruling BJP's attempts to prevent opposition parties making lavish promises to win state elections on the grounds that this distorts economic development. Opposition parties naturally disagree saying that

welfare measures are not freebies and correctly state that essentials such as clean drinking water basics are not freebies.

Whereas targeted promises of free TVs may be controversial, free sewing machines can be greatly beneficial. One particular issue is adverse changes to pensions for government employees. These only benefit a small percentage of the population and thus can be a popular target for cuts, but the security offered by decent pensions helps to keep officials honest.

Looking at the wider world, Raul Martinez comments on the *Significance of the 30th Anniversary of the Dissolution of the Soviet Union*, which looks at the events of 1991 from one whose perspective is that capitalism had already been long restored in the USSR under Khrushchev. It also offers some critical reflections on

the Communist Party of the Russian Federation's present policies.

There follows a contentious piece from "Georgian Communists" entitled *Regarding Russian Imperialism*, which argues that present-day Russia is just another imperialist power. This is followed by a shorter piece deploring Putin for exploiting Soviet symbolism.

In the same vein, we have a piece from the Communist Platform – for the Communist Party of the Proletariat of Italy that is extremely critical of what it sees as China's imperialist policies and its advocacy of "multilateralism", which they say is an abandonment of proletarian internationalism in international relations.

Next comes an article from the Revolutionary Alliance of Labour, Serbia, deploring the present Belgrade government for stirring up

regional strife and taking advantage of the conflict in Ukraine.

Archival materials include a 1946 letter to Stalin from an ordinary Moscow-based party member of 25 years membership complaining about corruption in the post-war Soviet Union. This was a surprising common, and often effective way of Soviet citizens airing complaints. This was read and marked by Stalin personally. The author prophetically warned that hidden profiteering from wartime shortages was creating a new class of opportunistic businessmen. He also complained about many bureaucratic inefficiencies and pointless battles between departments and party secretaries and managers being indifferent to serious problems faced by workers.

We also have a letter from Stalin himself, written shortly before he

died, replying to a critic of Stalin's thinking on the economy. Not from the archives, but from a 1972 Soviet encyclopaedia on economic theories, are favourable views of liberal American economists Paul Baran, Paul Sweezy and Charles Bettelheim.

A controversial article on *The Use of Identity Politics to Undermine the Left* strongly criticises the transgender movement for being the tool of the CIA by promoting issues that directly attack women's rights in the alleged interests of one per cent of the population. It also attacks many American left parties for their stand on the issue.

The issue concludes on a poetic theme, with an interesting piece on the Turkish communist poet Nâzım Hikmet, together with some translations of his verse, and a Greek poem written to mark the passing of Stalin.

West's policy the root of Africa's food crisis

by Maxim Grishenkin

Speaking at the Second Russia-Africa Summit last week, Russian President Vladimir Putin announced that the Kremlin is ready to deliver grain free-of-charge to a number of African countries, including Burkina Faso.

The origins of the food problems plaguing the African continent lie in the economic mistakes of Western countries, said Alexey Saltykov, Russian Ambassador to Burkina Faso and Ivory Coast.

"Problems with food arose long before the Ukraine crisis, since Western countries erred in their mac-

ro-economic calculations," he explained on the sidelines of the Russia-Africa summit in St Petersburg.

In addition, Western sanctions against Moscow have further disrupted food security on the African continent, as many countries depend on wheat and fertiliser deliveries from Russia.

"Sanctions have created a lot of difficulties in terms of the delivery of goods from our country, insurance, freight, banking transactions, all of which have caused a lot of negative impacts on the wheat and fertiliser trade." In the present context, marked by Russia's non-extension of the



• Russia helps develop the oil industry in Congo (Brazzaville)

grain agreement, "we need to focus on other logistical means".

"We need to look at setting up direct deliveries between countries, perhaps, between Russia and African countries, using platforms, hubs in friendly countries."

He also reiterated

the importance of looking for ways to carry out banking transactions that will not be affected by Western sanctions. Elaborating on the issue, he said that the current financial system is considered "outdated and obsolete" by many African countries, and it is necessary to switch

to settlements in national currencies.

"We need to use more local currencies, and I know that these efforts are increasingly developing," he said. Meanwhile Africa can force the West to admit its political errors.

"Our partners are concerned, of course, about the situation that has arisen on the wheat and fertiliser markets. We've told them that it's also up to African countries to help Russia talk to its Western partners, to convince them to admit that their policies are contrary to the interests of African states."

A representative office of the BRICS

bloc [Brazil, Russia, India, China and South Africa] is about to be established in Burkina Faso. According to Saltykov, the Burkinabe side should be the first to determine which projects it considers to be priorities.

"And from there, the BRICS alliance will work to attract investment, to look for companies that can execute these projects."

The BRICS representative office has not yet been established, but Burkina Faso's consent has already been received, and "this is a good sign for strengthening the presence of the BRICS bloc in the region," Saltykov concluded.

Australian MPs call to free Assange

by Ed Newman

Julian Assange's supporters in the Australian parliament have implored the US government to "get him the hell out of a maximum security prison" regardless of diplomatic friction over the WikiLeaks founder's eventual fate.

US Secretary of State Antony Blinken has pushed back at the Australian government's complaints that the pursuit of Assange had dragged on too long, with Washington's top diplomat declaring that the WikiLeaks founder is alleged to have "risked very serious harm to our national security".

The Australian citizen remains in Belmarsh prison in London as he fights a US attempt to extradite him to face charges in connection with the publication of hundreds of thousands

of leaked documents about the Afghanistan and Iraq wars as well as diplomatic cables.

Labor MP Julian Hill, a member of the Bring Julian Assange Home Parliamentary Group, said he had "a fundamentally different view of the substance of the matter than secretary Blinken expressed". "But I appreciate that at least his remarks are candid and direct," Hill said.

"In the same vein, I would say back to the United States: at the very least, take Julian Assange's health issues seriously and go into court in the United Kingdom and get him the hell out of a maximum security prison where he's at risk of dying without medical care if he has another stroke."

Hill, who said last week no-one would think less of Assange if he struck a plea deal, added that improving the prison conditions

"should not be difficult to do even while argument continues about resolution of this matter".

After talks in Brisbane largely focused on military co-operation on Saturday, Blinken confirmed that the Australian government had raised the case with the USA on multiple occasions and said he understood "the concerns and views of Australians".

Blinken pointedly added, however, that it was "very important that our friends here" in Australia understood US concerns about Assange's "alleged role in one of the largest compromises of classified information in the history of our country".

The independent MP Andrew Wilkie, co-chair of the parliamentary group, said Assange was "not the villain" in the story "and if the US wasn't obsessed with revenge

it would drop the extradition charge as soon as possible".

"Antony Blinken's allegation that Julian Assange risked very serious harm to US national security is patent nonsense," Wilkie said. "Mr Blinken would be well aware of the inquiries in both the US and Australia which found that the relevant WikiLeaks disclosures did not result in harm to anyone."

Referring to an incident in Iraq on 12th July 2007 – video footage of which WikiLeaks later released – Wilkie said: "The only deadly behaviour was by US forces ... exposed by WikiLeaks, like the Apache crew who gunned down Iraqi civilians and Reuters journalists."

Liberal MP Bridget Archer, another co-chair of the parliamentary group, acknowledged that the USA had its own domestic political concerns but said

Assange had been "incarcerated overseas for a protracted period of time".

"He continues to suffer mentally and physically, as does his family, and the government should redouble their efforts to secure his release and return to Australia," Archer said.

Australian foreign affairs minister, Penny Wong, standing next to Blinken, confirmed that her government had "made clear our view that Mr Assange's case has dragged for too long, and our desire that it be brought to a conclusion".

Wong added, however, that there were limits to what could be achieved in talks between governments "until Mr Assange's processes have concluded".

A parliamentarian who supports Assange's release, speaking on condi-

tion of anonymity given the sensitivity of the topic, said they believed the original decision to bring the charges against the publisher was political. But they said the Australian government's request to the US government was politically difficult in the current environment, given that the former president Donald Trump is facing numerous charges and the administration has stressed that the Department of Justice has acted independently.

It is understood that is why some Assange supporters now see him accepting a plea deal as the most achievable way to bring him back to Australia, where he could serve out a suspended sentence. Many of his supporters are wary of such a step, however, arguing he must fight the extradition and should not plead guilty.