

MILLIONAIRE MALCOLM



**TAX THE RICH
HANDS OFF
THE UNIONS**

US ELECTION

Race, class and the
rise of Trump

ABCC

Union leader on Greens'
big mistake

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EMAIL

solidarity@solidarity.net.au

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SOLIDARITY: WHO ARE WE?

Solidarity is a socialist group with branches across Australia. We are opposed to the madness of capitalism, which is plunging us into global recession and misery at the same time as wrecking the planet's future. We are taking the first steps towards building an organisation that can help lead the fight for an alternative system based on mass democratic planning, in the interests of human need not profit.

As a crucial part of this, we are committed to building social movements and the wider left, through throwing ourselves into struggles for social justice, against racism and to strengthen the confidence of rank and file unionists.

Solidarity is a member of the International Socialist Tendency. Visit our web site at www.solidarity.net.au/about-us for more information on what we stand for.

SOLIDARITY MEETINGS AND BRANCHES

Sydney

Sydney Solidarity meets 6.30pm every Thursday at Brown St Hall, Brown St, Newtown
For more information contact: Erima on 0432 221 516
sydney@solidarity.net.au

Melbourne

Melbourne Solidarity meets fortnightly at 6pm Second Floor Union House, Melbourne Uni
For more information contact: Feiyi on 0416 121 616
melbourne@solidarity.net.au

Perth

For more information contact: Phil on 0423 696 312

Brisbane

For more information contact: Mark on 0439 561 196 or brisbane@solidarity.net.au

Canberra

For more information contact: Geraldine on 0458 039 596 or canberra@solidarity.net.au

Magazine office

Phone 02 9211 2600
Fax 02 9211 6155
solidarity@solidarity.net.au

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Things they say

Unlike France or Britain, we lack a colonial past to complicate the present.

Tony Abbott shows his ignorance of Australian history again, writing in *Quadrant*

Apparently in the eve of an election when there is a few reports about banks, Bill Shorten's up there in his ill-fitting suit, puffing his chest up, and saying we need to thump the table

Scott Morrison gets agitated about the call for a Royal Commission into the banks

You've got to have a lot of renewal in this business—it's a talent business—and you've got to make sure you've got new people coming through Turnbull explaining why he doesn't want Abbott back in his cabinet

Israel is known as start-up nation for good reason

Mike Baird on his visit to Israel

Basically the message is don't do it but if you have please come and speak to the tax office because ... penalties will be reduced significantly. Mr Michael Cranston, deputy tax Commissioner warning the high flying tax avoiders revealed by the Panama Papers data leak

So whether it is Howard as leader of the Liberal Party, Abbott or Turnbull, we've had the same policy on border protection...it was not something invented by Tony Abbott Turnbull explains how he was always committed to keeping out refugees

I'm starting to feel a bit strange about these questions

Iceland's prime minister Sigmundur David Gunnlaugsson when asked about his offshore dealings

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INSIDE THE \$YSTEM

Sydney and Melbourne millionaire magnets

SYDNEY AND Melbourne have become magnets for the world's millionaires. In the "Millionaire Migration" report, published by the Wealth research firm New World Wealth, Sydney was ranked as the world's top millionaire capital after an inflow of about 4000 millionaires in 2015, and Melbourne ranked second with an inflow of 3000 millionaires.

There are now 95,400 millionaires living in Sydney and 66,800 living in Melbourne. In contrast, Paris was at the bottom of the list. Relatively high income tax saw 7000 flee the French capital in 2015. There is now a 45 per cent income tax rate for salaries over \$223,000.

The rich don't face such infringements on their wealth in Australia. Not only does Australia tax the rich lightly, but the Federal government recently announced a "fast track" visa for wealthy immigrants with money to invest. If only our government was as kind to refugees as it is to millionaires.

Aboriginal people starving in Utopia

IN EARLY April Arrernte-Alyawarra Elder and NT person of the year Rosalie Kunoth-Monks put out a call for help from Utopia, with Aboriginal people starving. Utopia is made up of 16 outstations 260 kilometres north of Alice Springs. Rosalie, who lives on one of the outstations with her daughter Ngarla and grandchildren, says that the elderly in particular are not being fed under the dysfunctional aged-care program that exists there.

"Last week after having to call for the meals, one elderly man with end-stage Parkinson's received two small packets of mincemeat and white bread, the elderly women close-by received nothing," said Ngarla Kunoth-Monks.

Rosalie slammed the recent review of the punitive and bi-partisan "Stronger Futures" policy, formerly the NT Intervention. She said, "the recently released Review of Stronger Futures was disappointing. The legislation should have been repealed and on food security there was no mention of freight subsidies for the delivery of food to remote communities which would help make food more affordable."

Hockey makes \$1 million on tax-payer funded house



FORMER LIBERAL Treasurer Joe Hockey sold his tax-payer funded Canberra house for \$1.5 million at auction in April. Located in the up-market suburb of Forrest Lodge, the three bedroom house was originally purchased by Hockey and his wife in 1997 for \$320,000. It was one of four properties in the multi-million dollar portfolio of Hockey and his wife, a former investment banker.

But the Canberra property whose sale brought the pair in excess of \$1 million profit actually had its mortgage at least partly paid by the tax-payer. Hockey claimed a \$273 a night travel entitlement while staying in Canberra for Parliament and other business, even though he was staying in a house owned by himself and his wife. Other Liberal MPs paid Hockey rent to stay there too, including Ross Cameron, Bob Baldwin and Brendan Nelson. While Treasurer, Hockey told struggling first home buyers to "get a good job that pays good money" if they wanted to afford a house.

DHS social media witch-hunt fails

A DEPARTMENT of Human Services witch-hunt against staff who use social media to air criticisms of the government has been exposed in a recent Fair Work Commission unfair dismissal case.

The case details the bizarre lengths the department went to in order to track down a dissenting staff member who was pummeling his employer, Centrelink, online. Centrelink employee Daniel Starr was tracked down after engaging in an argument in an online forum with the official DHS account "Flick@HumanServices". Starr posted with the username "mmdl" in order to criticise official claims about Centrelink waiting times, understaffing and public service cuts.

The Fair Work ruling details how senior DHS bureaucrats Mark Withnell and Melissa Ryan ordered a hunt for the identity of "mmdl". The Fair Work decision said that "this involved a wholesale trawl through all of 'mmdl's' online posts, since it was discovered from those posts that 'mmdl' claimed that he was approximately 39 years old in January 2015, had been employed at Centrelink for 20 years, lived opposite the Telstra exchange in Corrimal, and would be travelling overseas during late May to early June 2015..."

"These claims were matched with the Department's internal data sources, and permitted 'mmdl' to be identified with a high degree of confidence as Mr Starr." Starr was then fired. However, the Fair Work decision went against the DHS and Starr got his job back.

Research and writing by Adam Adelpour

Send suggestions for INSIDE THE SYSTEM to solidarity@solidarity.net.au

Liberia outsources entire education system

THE WEST African nation of Liberia has announced plans to outsource its entire primary school and early childhood education system to private contractors. An \$85 million contract has gone to a company called Bridge International Academies.

The for-profit company formed in 2008 has received backing from the likes of Facebook's Mark Zuckerberg, the World Bank Group's International Finance Corporation and Bill Gates.

Liberia's Minister for Education George Werner says the plan was inspired by the proliferation of Charter Schools in New Orleans in the US following hurricane Katrina.

Werner says, "After Hurricane Katrina devastated the city in 2005, New Orleans' education system lay in tatters. The city government made the bold decision not to rebuild the monopoly of public sector provision."

But Kishore Singh, the UN special rapporteur on the right to education, has lambasted the plan.

"It is ironic that Liberia does not have resources to meet its core obligations to provide a free primary education to every child, but it can find huge sums of money to subcontract a private company to do so on its behalf"

Instead of using trained, experience or qualified teachers, Bridge International Academies will hire unqualified local people for around \$118 per month. They will then be sent into class rooms with tablet computers loaded with lesson scripts the "teacher" robotically reads out to the class.

According to the *Independent* newspaper, the lesson script on the tablet literally directs the teachers' every move and, "instructs the teacher to look up from the e-book every five seconds, to wait eight seconds for children to answer."

EDITORIAL

Time to throw out millionaire Malcolm

THE WHEELS have come off Malcolm Turnbull, as he fumbles, stumbles, and slides in the polls. Newspoll has the Liberals behind Labor at 51-49 for the first time since Turnbull became PM. Turnbull's personal approval rating is in freefall, with just 38 per cent approving of his performance.

New Matilda has counted 17 Turnbull backflips in seven months. As Tony Abbott enjoys popping up to remind us, "the Turnbull government is running on the Abbott government's record".

After toying with plans to increase the GST, Turnbull backed off for fear of public outrage.

His plan for changing the funding deal between the Federal government and the states went nowhere. His announcement of a "once in a generation reform" to give state governments the power to set the level of income tax was dead within days, after state Premiers roundly rejected it.

Turnbull's efforts to clean up the mess left over from Abbott's funding cut to hospitals and schools reassured nobody. He has restored perhaps a third of the money that Abbott cut between now and 2020 from hospitals. But there was nothing at all to compensate for the \$30 billion reduction in schools funding over ten years.

To make matters worse, he floated the idea of the Federal government ending the funding of government schools altogether, and leaving responsibility with the states.

But at the same time he promised the Federal government would still fund private schools—making it clear his priorities lie with the rich and privileged.

With steelmaker Arrium set to go under, threatening 7000 jobs across the country including over 1000 in the South Australian town of Whyalla, Turnbull offered nothing to save the jobs.

The last year has seen a raft of bank scandals, from the Commonwealth Bank losing hundreds of millions of customers' money through botched financial planning, denying life insurance payouts to critically ill claimants, and interest rate rigging by ANZ and Westpac.

But when Labor raised the prospect of a Royal Commission into the banks, Turnbull was having none of it. Treasurer Scott Morrison labelled it a "reckless distraction". Yet several



Above: Turnbull postured by delivering some stern words to the banks, but then ruled out doing anything about it

Coalition backbenchers disagreed, publicly backing the idea.

Budget

Turnbull wants to fight the election on union bashing and "living within our means", and says Labor's plans for modest increases in spending on schools and hospitals just aren't affordable. Last year, the big four banks made a combined profit of a staggering \$30.5 billion, yet Turnbull is talking about cutting corporate taxes.

Treasurer Scott Morrison says the government's focus is still to "get... expenditure under control", meaning more cuts are likely in the budget on 3 May.

Education Minister Simon Birmingham has hinted at increases or changes to student fees.

The Liberals have also flagged lowering the repayment threshold on student debts, so that students start paying them back when they begin earning \$42,000 instead of the current \$54,000. This amounts to increasing tax on relatively low-income earners.

This is a government totally committed to the interests of big business and the rich.

It's now clear that Turnbull can be beaten. But that can't be left to opinion polls and Turnbull's gaffes, or electing a Labor government. There has to be a fight.

Instead of the union leaders going along with the administrator's restructuring proposals at Arrium's steelworks, there could have been a fight

for the jobs and demands on Turnbull to nationalise the company.

The union leaders need to plan an active campaign against the threat of the ABCC. Turnbull has outsmarted The Greens by using the constitution to recall parliament to vote on his anti-union bills. But strikes and protests at the opening of Parliament on 18 April could have made it clear that the ABCC will be fought with industrial action.

When Turnbull unveils his plans in the budget, we need a response like that that met Abbott's first budget in 2014. This means protests and demonstrations against the Liberals' agenda, and demanding they tax the corporations, banks and the millionaires to fund universities, schools and hospitals.

The revelations in the Panama Papers of the scale of the greed and tax avoidance of politicians and the global rich have sent shockwaves around the world (see p9). Demonstrations have brought down Iceland's Prime Minister. Britain's Prime Minister David Cameron is under pressure, as are politicians in Pakistan, Ukraine, Russia and Argentina, as well as the King of Saudi Arabia.

The Panama Papers are just a small glimpse of the hypocrisy, corruption and greed that characterises world capitalism. Malcolm Turnbull is the local representative of that global 1 per cent that imposes austerity to protect the profits and wealth of the super rich. We need to toss Turnbull out and fight the system that he represents.

.....
Last year the big four banks made a combined profit of \$30.5 billion, yet Turnbull is talking about cutting corporate taxes

Unions, the working class and the future of The Greens

By Erima Dall

THE GREENS have hit another fork in the road, and taken the wrong turn. Their decision to prioritise Senate reform, despite the risk of bringing back the anti-union Australian Building and Construction Commission (ABCC) has done serious damage to their credibility with unionists.

This comes on top of Greens leader Richard Di Natale's failure to rule out ever joining a Liberal government, saying he'd "never say never".

The choice between being a party driven by electoralism and "pragmatism", or building a clearly left-wing party, is starker than ever.

Di Natale is moving the party to the right, with a greater willingness to work with the Liberals to get changes through parliament.

The Greens have built their support as a left of Labor alternative, by taking a stand on refugee rights, against the Iraq war, for same-sex marriage, climate action, and funding for education and health.

They win far more voters from Labor than from the Liberals: in elections where the Greens vote has increased significantly (in 2001, 2004 and 2010), between 30 and 40 per cent of their voters had supported Labor the previous election, compared to around 10 per cent who had voted Liberal.

However most Greens members do not see reaching out to unionists and the wider working class as a strategic priority. Despite the decline in Labor's vote, it still has the support of most union activists and the more politicised sections of the working class. Former Greens leader Bob Brown often said that The Greens' aim was not to simply "keep the bastards honest" through deals with the major parties but to "replace the bastards".

But The Greens can only achieve this through winning over the mass working class support base that remains with Labor. Their decision to prioritise Senate reform over union rights will make this much harder.

The party still goes out of its way to present itself as "above politics" and pitch for "blue-green" votes of disgruntled Liberal or Nationals voters.

Founding leader Bob Brown described the Greens as "more Labor than Labor and more Liberal than the Liberals", while current leader Richard Di Natale says he's "not an ideologue" and wants The Greens to



Above: The Greens have won support on the basis of standing as a left alternative to Labor

represent all "progressive mainstream Australian voters".

When Christine Milne took over the leadership from Bob Brown, she appealed to "progressive" business and the rural community as the next constituencies for The Greens.

There has not been a similar emphasis on winning working class votes. Unions are treated as just another interest group, and the party does not accept union affiliations as Labor does.

Class divide

But the working class is a critical base of support in building a mass left-wing party. Class remains the key divide in society. The Panama Papers remind us that class is all too real: there are those in society who can hide their wealth from tax in offshore islands, and there are the rest of us.

The working class is diverse, encompassing women, migrants and LGBTI people, not just the stereotypical male blue-collar labourers.

Workers have a direct material interest in supporting the progressive reforms The Greens stand for, such as closing superannuation tax loopholes for the rich, or adding dental care to Medicare.

And they have the power to fight for them in a way no other social group does. Union power is vital to the strength of any social movement. The nurses' union was at the forefront of defending Medicare from Tony Abbott's co-payment plan. And it was the CFMEU that put the best case to defend the idea of a mining super-profits tax against opposition from the mining companies.

And whilst it is not automatic that

working class people support refugee rights and action on climate change, it is in their interests to do so.

There is a proud tradition in Australia of unions fighting racism, from boycotts on apartheid South Africa, to walking off the job for Land Rights. Unions have played a key role in the Gay Liberation movement, and also in protecting the environment from major developments.

Business

On the other hand, chasing "progressive business" will put pressure on The Greens to water down their policies. Sections of business may support social or environmental reforms such as same-sex marriage, but there is no section of business that supports higher penalty rates, the right to strike or higher corporate tax.

The Greens have built relationships with left-wing unions like the CFMEU construction division who have given substantial donations to The Greens in the past, but are now harshly critical. Other left officials like Peter Simpson from the ETU feel similarly burnt (see opposite page).

Despite this, the ETU in Victoria are continuing to support Adam Bandt in the lower house seat of Melbourne, citing the need for a force in parliament to the left of Labor, who retained many of Howard's anti-union laws.

Many unionists are deeply disillusioned with Labor and looking for alternatives. The Greens' future will be determined by whether they can recognise the importance of unions and the working class, and work to repair the damage that's been done.

The party still presents itself as "above politics" and pitches for "blue-green" votes of disgruntled Liberal or Nationals voters

Left union leader on ABCC: ‘The Greens’ actions are helping the government’



Above: Queensland ETU Secretary Peter Simpson

PETER SIMPSON is the Queensland State Secretary of the Electrical Trades Union (ETU).

His union led campaigns against privatisation against both Anna Bligh’s Queensland Labor government and Campbell Newman’s Liberal National state government. In 2011 he was expelled from the Labor Party when his union began discussing moves to run anti-privatisation candidates against Labor at the state election. He was subsequently re-admitted.

The union’s Victorian branch has made several large donations to The Greens.

He spoke to *Solidarity* about The Greens’ decision to work with the Liberals to pass Senate voting reform, despite the risk this would allow Malcolm Turnbull to go to a double dissolution election and give him more chance of passing the ABCC legislation. Turnbull has now re-called parliament, attempting to blackmail the cross-bench Senators into supporting the Australian Building and Construction Commission (ABCC) bill and the anti-union Registered Organisations bill, or face a double dissolution election where many of them will likely lose their seats.

What has the union’s relationship with The Greens been like in the past?

We’ve had an excellent relationship with The Greens. We’ve backed them financially, we caucused with them and lobbied them on occasions.

Our people have been able to go and talk to their people, especially our Victorian branch, in particular with Adam Bandt who’s been very good, and who we are still working with despite what’s happened.

What do you think about their decision to vote for Senate reform, knowing it makes the chance of the Liberals passing the ABCC and the Registered Organisations bill more likely?

It’s dumb politics and that’s what really gets up my nose.

We weren’t asking them not to do it [vote for Senate reform], that’s their policy and they want that outcome. All we asked them to do was wait, and not just us, the ACTU and everyone else, to put it off until May 12 until they voted on it, to take the [prospect of a] double dissolution out of it. But they went ahead and did it and guess what, we’re heading for a

double dissolution.

Everyone in the union movement who had anything to do with the ABCC told them. We knew what the government was going to do and this was impressed upon The Greens. They were lobbied, they were texted, they were phoned, emailed, written to. They denied it, they said it wouldn’t happen. Well it did happen.

I’ve got a very dim view of the new leadership of The Greens, I think they’ve lurched to the right. I think Di Natale could fit very well into the front bench of the Liberal Party and I’ve got no time for him whatsoever.

Why is the ABCC such a big deal for the union movement?

The ABCC issue’s important to our members.

I was talking to our Victorian branch secretary the other day and there are over 50 clauses that would be automatically knocked out under the code [for building industry enterprise agreements].

So that’s at least 50 conditions and allowances and rights that our members have fought for and won to get in their agreements over the last

100 years that are going to be knocked out by this code. When Labor got back into power last time they said that anything you can negotiate with an employer, we’ve not going to stop you from doing it.

Our guys fight for conditions, fight for wages, fight for rights and the stroke of a pen can undo that.

The Greens are against it, I get that it’s not their policy to see that come in, but by virtue of their actions they are helping the government. That sickens me.

How has this affected your attitude towards The Greens?

I haven’t got a relationship with them now and that’s sad.

I’ve had a relationship with The Greens for many years and I’ve copped criticism from the Labor Party for backing The Greens, on occasions publicly supporting The Greens. But I make no apologies for that because they actually said the right thing and followed it up.

The new leadership and new direction The Greens seem to have taken themselves in, siding with the Tories, it’s going to be a very rocky road I’d suggest from here on, not just with our union but with quite a few.

.....
‘Everyone in the union movement who had anything to do with the ABCC told them’

Safe Schools outrage: Turnbull lets homophobes off the leash

By Amy Thomas

IN MARCH, Tony Abbott proudly proclaimed that it's his agenda that Malcolm Turnbull is taking to the election. But there's at least one exception—when it comes to attacking LGBTI youth, Turnbull has gone further than Abbott dared.

In their last days, the Rudd government provided funding for the Safe Schools program, a student and teacher resource designed to curb homophobic and transphobic bullying in schools.

The actual program was launched by the Abbott government in 2014. In early 2015, the Coalition's arch-conservative right-wing voiced concerns in a party room meeting. According to *The Saturday Paper*, it was both Abbott and then Education Minister Christopher Pyne that stopped attempts to alter or axe the program.

But when Senator George Christensen did the same this February, Turnbull caved immediately, announcing a review. Subsequently, the program, in the words of a boasting Christensen, has been "gutted". It will now be voluntary, not available in primary schools, and require parental consent. Much of the content has been stripped back to the bare bones. And, come 2017, it will no longer receive any funding at all.

In order to preserve his leadership, Turnbull has been prepared to give the homophobic right of the party a massive win.

The Australian Christian Lobby's scare campaign labels Safe Schools "a radical program that encourages kids to explore gender theory and sexual practices".

They were horrified that students might be asked to imagine they were gay or of a different gender in a role play, or that transgender students might use the toilets they want to, or wear the uniform they choose to.

Recalling the old homophobic slur of gay men and gay teachers as sexual predators, Christensen even likened Safe Schools to "paedophile grooming".

Behind it all is simply the assumption that being gay or trans is abnormal, and that anti-homophobic education will encourage people to come out (and that that's a bad thing).

It reflects the right-wing's abiding concern to protect traditional gender roles and the heterosexual nuclear



Above: Proud schools rally at Melbourne Midsumma festival

family from the push for same-sex marriage and transgender rights.

The supposedly radical, "age inappropriate" content of the program includes booklets like *OMG I'm Queer*, now banned from primary schools. It features explanations of the differences between biological sex and gender, and true stories about coming out, being outed by others, dealing with depression, and finding happiness in accepting yourself.

NSW Liberal Premier Mike Baird considers this terrifying, "How on earth can our children be looking at this?" he asked ABC Radio. His support for killing Safe Schools comes after the NSW ban on schools screening *Gayby Baby* last year.

Unsafe schools

Programs like Safe Schools can mean the difference between life and death. School is the most unsafe place to be LGBTI in Australia.

La Trobe University's most recent 2010 *Writing Themselves In Again* report on LGBTI youth found that rates of abuse have been rising since 2000. What's so "troubling", they write, "is the ubiquitousness of the abuse", which creates "an everyday culture of harassment which young people accept as their due", with no "expectation of bystander support or redress".

Sixty-one per cent of young people reported verbal homophobic abuse. Eighteen per cent reported physical abuse. The detail makes for shocking reading. One respondent wrote that he had "fag cut into my back in three places then fuck here with a arrow pointing to arsehole

across my butt", he was "then held and repeatedly abused with sticks".

Eighty per cent of the abuse happened in schools. As well as physical and verbal abuse, there were other, more subtle forms of torture—rumours, social exclusion, cyber-bullying, graffiti.

As Victorian Premier Daniel Andrews rightly pointed out on Q&A, the idea of parental consent for Safe Schools is absurd when 24 per cent of LGBTI young people have suffered abuse in the home.

There's a clear link between abuse, and self-harm and suicide. LGBTI youth are six times more likely to attempt suicide than their heterosexual peers.

Fightback

The Victorian and the ACT Labor governments will keep the program going in its original form, and federal Labor has opposed the attacks.

Adam Bandt, Greens MP for Melbourne, has offered to distribute Rainbow flags for schools. Hundreds have attended snap demonstrations, while a huge number of academics and health professionals have signed statements. The teachers' unions need to support teachers all over Australia to teach the original program. Statements are not enough.

What scares the homophobic underbelly of the Liberals and the Christian right is that accepting LGBTI young people also means challenging the homophobic status quo more widely. It means same-sex marriage and full equality. That's why opposing the attack on Safe Schools is so important.

.....
School is the most unsafe place to be LGBTI in Australia

Panama Papers: capitalism working well for obscenely rich

By John Passant

THE PANAMA papers show us, once again, that capitalism is a system of absolute greed. The 11.5 million leaked documents from Mossack Fonseca expose the workings of the 14,000 rich and powerful clients of the Panama headquartered company and the 220,000 shell companies it has set up for them in tax havens around the globe.

Why tax havens? Not only do these countries have no or low tax rates they also have secrecy provisions which protect the income and assets of wealthy individuals and companies from the prying eyes of state bodies like tax offices and company regulators.

Take Wilson Security here in Australia. It runs the "security" on Australia's asylum seeker and refugee gulags, Manus Island and Nauru. It is owned by Wilson Offshore Group Holdings (BVI) Limited, a British Virgin Islands company set up by Mossack Fonseca to protect the true identity of the owners from any governmental scrutiny.

Thomas Kwok, one of those true owners, is in jail for fraud in Hong Kong. The other, his brother Raymond Kwok, was acquitted of similar charges. They had resigned as the directors of Wilson Offshore Group Holdings (BVI) Limited shortly after the charges were laid. Two companies, Winsome Sky and Harmony Core, replaced them as directors. The Panama Papers show the brothers control those two companies.

Wilson Security would not have won Australian government contracts if it was known that one of the real owners was in jail for fraud.

The ATO is investigating 800 Australian entities named in the leaked documents. The Panama Papers refer for example to Australian banks and BHP Billiton. Banks are involved because you have to get the money out of your jurisdiction and into the tax havens.

Ripples

Iceland's Prime Minister, in the face of big demonstrations, has gone on indefinite leave (resigned) after the Panama Papers revealed his wife held shares through a shell company in the very banks her husband was negotiating a bailout with. UK Prime Minister David Cameron inherited wealth from his Dad whose Panama shell compa-



Above: Thousands take to the streets of London to express their anger at millionaire PM David Cameron's dodgy profiteering

nies made tax free money for 30 years.

Australia's current Prime Minister Malcolm Turnbull, one of Australia's richest men, has hedge fund investments in or through the Cayman Islands.

The point here is not whether they are legal or not or whether investors like Turnbull pay their "correct" amount of tax. It is that they are part of the game the rich and powerful play to increase their individual and corporate wealth. That game is rigged in their favour by governments too afraid to crack down on investments.

Many tax havens today are outposts or former outposts of empire set up to hide the money of British colonialists and capitalists. Some of them, like the British Virgin Islands, the Cayman Islands and Bermuda, are British Overseas Territories, still under some form of British control.

At the centre of these tax havens is the City of London, one of the main financial hubs of British, and indeed, global capitalism. The US has its own equivalent tax havens, in particular Delaware where half of all Wall Street companies are incorporated for the low state taxes and slack company regulation.

So the traditional view of tax havens as sunny places for shady people is actually not correct, unless climate change turns the City of London into a tropical paradise.

The ATO recently released tax data of public and private big business

companies which shows that well over one third pay no income tax and the majority pay a much lower effective tax rate than the statutory rate of 30 per cent.

Big business tax avoidance gives the lie to the Turnbull mantra that we have to live within our means. There would be no budget crisis if we addressed big business tax avoidance.

Using tax havens and shell companies reflects the business view that any profit is 'theirs,' rather than the reality that it arises from the unpaid labour of workers. As Google Chair Eric Schmidt said about his company's tax avoidance activities, funnelling almost \$10 billion into Bermuda to saving \$2 billion in taxes: "The company isn't about to turn down big savings in taxes. It's called capitalism. We are proudly capitalistic. I'm not confused about this."

The problem of tax avoidance is systemic. It requires a systemic solution, a democratic and socialist revolution to put the vast majority in control of the assets of the world and to organise production to satisfy human need, not to make a profit. In the interim we on the left must continue to argue for taxing the rich and to build all the campaigns against the injustices, social and economic, that capitalism creates, including the Turnbull austerity agenda which is about transferring wealth from labour to capital. To tax the rich we must build the fight against austerity.

.....
Big business tax avoidance gives the lie to the Turnbull mantra that we have to live within our means

Public service: we need more industrial action to win

FEDERAL PUBLIC servants staged their first 24-hour strike on 21 March, after nearly two years of insulting non-negotiable pay offers and attempts to strip conditions.

Workers across Medicare, Centrelink, the Tax Office, Bureau of Meteorology and the Bureau of Statistics took part in the action. But its visibility was undermined by the union's decision not to organise any mass meetings or rallies on the day.

The action was scheduled to continue at airports over the following week, with Customs and Border Protection workers targeting the busy Easter period. But the union backed down, suspending action at the request of the Prime Minister after the terrorist attack in Brussels. This was a mistake—and the government has seized on it, heading to Fair Work Australia for an order to stop strike action at the airport as endangering “national security”. However CPSU members in the Department of Agriculture and Water Resources, including in airport quarantine and biosecurity, will strike for 24 hours on Monday 18 April.

Industrial action at airports has been running for ten months, yet the government expects us to believe it has only just discovered it is a national security threat.

Members in agencies covering about 85 per cent of the APS have voted “No” at least once, many have rejected their offer twice and one, the Department of Agriculture, three times. The largest agencies—DHS (Centrelink, Medicare, Child Support), the Tax office and Immigration and Border Protection—are holding out with “No” votes larger than 80 per cent. Even Defence and the Prime Minister's agency voted “No” recently.

Collective action

The fight requires APS-wide campaigning, while facing ballots on agency-specific agreements. Tax workers are gearing up for another vote by petitioning and leafleting outside workplaces.

CSIRO staff, lumbered with Abbott captain's pick Larry Marshall as CEO, face major cuts to staff and programs. Up to 450 are facing redundancy. The CSIRO Staff Association (part of the CPSU) have run a tremendous highly visible campaign with successful national strikes and bans, and recently rallies



Above: CSIRO staff rally in Melbourne as part of the campaign to save jobs

in Hobart and Melbourne. They are planning further rallies for other cities.

However, the most effective way to change government policy is all-out strike action across the public service, with highly visible protests and solidarity from the rest of the union movement and broader community.

The agency-specific campaigns need to be seen as a focus to draw in members across the APS.

Union leaders argue we don't have sufficient resources to organise this. Yet the resources of the union are more and more being channeled into electoral campaigning in marginal Liberal-held seats.

But Labor governments have also attacked APS wages and conditions. Gillard applied a 4 per cent efficiency dividend, causing major staff cuts.

CPSU officials clearly separate industrial from political action, urging members to travel to campaign in marginal seats to defeat the current government.

Far from being a negative at election time, industrial action can translate into political confidence for change. The Victorian election in 2014 was also dominated by industrial struggles like the ambulance workers and firefighters, encouraging the defeat of the Liberals after one term.

Yet CPSU leaders have squandered the willingness of workers to play more of a role by reducing their participation to handing out leaflets or telephoning residents in marginal seats.

Instead the CPSU could be

leading wider industrial action, organised through delegates and workplace meetings, and showing the government our action matters in society because the public sector matters. However, the union is retreating from industrial action as the election approaches.

The issue which unites APS workers remains the need to change government policy on enterprise bargaining. CPSU has shown that a majority of staff, members and non-members support this campaign. However, it is not enough to keep voting “No” in ballots on new agreements; industrial action is required to create a campaign to force the government into actual negotiations for a decent outcome.

It is true most agencies have low union membership. However, instead of building campaigns to recruit new members who will support industrial action, the union has slipped into an electoral campaign as the answer.

The largest agency, DHS, enjoys about 50 per cent membership and could be the spearhead of such action, causing headaches for the election as Centrelink and Medicare slow down.

In Victoria, some delegates are campaigning for APS-wide delegates meetings to discuss and develop action across the service. Such meetings could plan solidarity for the many agency-specific campaigns and unite these struggles where possible in mass actions to challenge the government's agenda. The moves towards APS-wide action need to escalate, not go on hold.

CPSU delegates, Melbourne

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The union is retreating from industrial action as the election approaches

How unions fought back the ABCC last time

By Tom Orsag

MILLIONAIRE MALCOLM wants to fight an election on the issue of “union lawlessness” in construction and to dredge up a Howard-era relic, the Australian Building and Construction Commission (ABCC).

But that government-funded body has only ever set out to criminalise basic union organising on building sites.

It deals only with breaches of industrial laws, not corruption or criminal conduct. Even the head of the Master Builders Association, Wilhelm Hamisch, admitted as much, telling the ABC’s John Faine, “those people who are saying this is about dealing with criminality and corruption are missing the point about the ABCC bills.”

They want to restrict everything from signing members up, the right of entry to sites, safety, to making sure wages and entitlements are paid by employers. It’s that basic.

Construction is a dangerous injury. Cutting corners can cost lives. Weakening the unions erodes safety on building sites. Under the Howard government, the number of deaths in construction almost doubled from 19 in 2004, when the ABCC was set up, to 37 in 2007-8, by the time Howard lost office.

The Liberals have been targeting the building unions since the early 1990s. This is because the Electricians, Plumbers and Construction divisions of the AMWU and CFMEU are among the strongest and most effective unions in the country.

For the building company bosses, strong unions are an impediment to increasing their profits. The Liberal Party is right behind them.

Bosses’ battle

When the Victorian Liberals tried to introduce a state-based version of the ABCC, reporter John Ferguson, in *The Australian*, admitted the aim was to, “police workers on state-run major projects in a bid to drive down costs.”

NSW Premier Nick Greiner first had the idea of setting up a Royal Commission into building unions in 1990. After two years of mud-slinging not one charge was laid. But John Fahy, who followed Greiner as Premier, now had an excuse to form a NSW Building Industry Taskforce to harass building unions.

Greiner went on to become the



Above: The CFMEU on the march

director of one of largest building companies in Australia Valemus (Bilfinger Berger), owners of AbiGroup, Baulderstone and Conneq.

The same template of using a Royal Commission to justify a special body for the industry was used by Tony Abbott, Howard’s Workplace Relations Minister in 2001.

The Liberals funded the \$60 million Cole Royal Commission (2001-2003) which failed to successfully to charge one person, let alone convict anyone. Even *The Australian*, no friend of the unions, called the Commission a “highly political exercise”.

Howard had to wait until 2004 when he finally had the numbers in the Senate to set up the ABCC.

Anti-union gestapo

The ABCC made building workers into second-class citizens. They were obliged to appear before the body and compelled to answer questions. The right to silence was abolished. What went on was secret: you couldn’t tell even workmates or family what the ABCC asked about. Refusing to comply was punishable with six months’ jail.

Over 200 rank and file workers and officials were called up for questioning.

The ABCC legislation was introduced alongside WorkChoices, the focus of the union Your Rights at Work campaign. It was only after Labor’s election in 2007, when Kevin Rudd refused to abolish the ABCC

and dithered in what to do with it, that the campaign against the ABCC really began.

It took two individual unionists who were willing to defy the ABCC, by refusing to answer questions and facing jail time, to trigger significant union action.

The first was Noel Washington, a Victorian branch official, in 2008. A national building workers strike on the day he faced court ensured his charges were dropped.

The Commonwealth Director of Public Prosecutions simply withdrew the charges, refusing to admit why.

At a mass meeting in Melbourne that followed, construction unions called on all workers and union officials to refuse to co-operate with the ABCC, and pledged to defend anyone prepared to take the same stand.

Then in 2009 a rank-and-file South Australian rigger, Ark Tribe, was charged over refusing to attend an ABCC interrogation. Further industrial action by building unions ensured the courts understood that jailing him would mean millions in lost profits, through escalating strike action.

To their eternal shame, Labor never fully abolished the ABCC. They kept it alive until 2012 and then only stripped it of some of its more draconian powers. It was rolled into Fair Work Australia, as a Building Inspectorate.

The lesson from last time is that defiance, backed by mass strike action, can force the government to back off.

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The ABCC made building workers into second-class citizens

CAN THE STATE BE ON OUR SIDE?

Clare Fester looks at the role of the state under capitalism

THE STATE comprises the set of institutions that claim authority over society and its operations, including the courts, the police, the armed forces, the government bureaucracy and parliament.

At first glance the state under capitalism looks neutral. It provides us with Medicare and public education and public transport. Most of us would participate in an election before we went to a demonstration or decided to go on strike.

This is because there is a common sense idea drilled into us that the state is under the control of the democratically elected parliament.

But at the core of the state sit a series of repressive institutions which operate by the use of force.

These parts of the state remain unelected. We don't get to choose the generals who make decisions about wars. We don't elect the judges who make choices about the justice system. We don't have any say over the police commissioners who decide when to break up pickets and protests.

Karl Marx described the state as "nothing but an executive for managing the common affairs of the whole bourgeoisie."

Building on this idea during the revolutionary upsurge in Russia in 1917 Vladimir Lenin wrote his pamphlet *State and Revolution*. There he argued that the state arose out of the particular historical development of class society. The state emerged to deal with the fundamental antagonism between the exploiting class and the exploited class. But it has always been controlled by the class which controls society.

So although it regulates conflicts, between different corporations, between corporations and workers, between different nation states, it exists to defend the capitalist order.

Although the state gives the impression of neutrality, no capitalist state defends all people equally.

Police attack workers and students when they protest and challenge the existing order, but they don't prevent bosses from cutting jobs. The legal system, police, prisons and armies—the repressive core of the state—are all designed to defend the interests of the exploiters. There is no equivalent institution anywhere that has as many



Above: Police are used to break up protests and picket lines that threaten capitalist order

weapons or as much power to detain as the state.

Running the state

Many parties and organisations through history have argued that electing the right people to parliament can change all of this and reform the capitalist state in a democratic way.

Some even think that the existing state can be harnessed as part of the transition to socialism. But we see consistently how impossible this is in practice.

Syriza in Greece is a classic example. Rising to power off the back of mass strikes and protests against austerity, ordinary people held huge hopes in Syriza.

But their decision to work within the state and not to challenge the ruling class' desire to remain in the EU meant they had to find ways to pay off Greece's debt.

The unelected "institutions": the European Union, the International Monetary Fund and European Central Bank quickly forced it into line. This means Syriza is now enforcing exactly the same austerity policies today as the parties that came before them.

Smashing the state

A left government that did try to challenge capitalism would face serious resistance from state institutions, first of all from the managers of the state bureaucracy refusing to carry out government instructions.

It would also face violence, and ultimately an attempt to overthrow it, from the police and armed forces. Famously, this was the fate of Salvador Allende's democratically elected left-wing government in Chile, when

it was overthrown in a military coup in 1973.

This is why socialists argue that we need to overthrow the existing state through a process of revolution.

The old ruling class will fight hard to claw back their authority in a revolutionary situation and they will use all the violence they can muster. If workers can control one workplace or even a whole industry, the ruling class will use the state to wrench that power away.

During the Arab Spring we saw in Egypt how the capitalist state turned the army and security forces against ordinary people. They will turn their guns on us if we step outside the lines. As soon as workers start to challenge the status quo in society the state uses all its repressive instruments to curb their power and maintain control.

To defeat the violence of the old ruling class will require co-ordination through a democratic state run by workers until attempts by the capitalists to regain power are defeated. We call this a workers' state or the "dictatorship of the proletariat."

A workers' state is an entirely different formation to a capitalist one. Instead of the state dominating ordinary workers, it is under the democratic control of the mass of ordinary people.

This formulation was drawn from Marx's experience in the Paris Commune in 1871, where workers developed a new kind of state. People were democratically elected, recallable and paid regular workers' wages. There was no specialised, separate body of unelected armed men. The workers state was simply the mass of workers, armed to defend their own power.

As Friedrich Engels wrote, if socialism triumphs then the workers state will wither away. Once there are no class antagonisms to manage anymore, there will be no need for the state. Lenin wrote in *State and Revolution*:

"Under socialism, all will take part in the work of government in turn and will soon become accustomed to no one governing... Socialism will raise the masses to a new life, will create conditions for the majority of the population that will enable everybody, without exception to perform 'state functions' and this will lead to the complete withering away of the state in general."

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Although it regulates conflicts, the state exists to defend the capitalist order

Nationalise to save steel jobs at Arrium



There should be a fight to demand the government nationalise the company and guarantee the jobs

THE JOBS of 1100 workers at the Whyalla steelworks in South Australia are at risk after their employer, Arrium, went into administration in early April. Altogether 7000 jobs across the country are threatened if the company collapses.

Labor leader Bill Shorten has called on the government to guarantee the use of Australian steel in all government projects, and to put up money to keep the company afloat through co-investment with its owners. This has exposed the Liberals' blind faith in the free market, as they rejected bailing out the company and instead offered just an \$80 million order for a rail line upgrade between Adelaide and Tarcoola. But this won't save the steelworks—according to *The Australian* the company needs between \$100 and \$120 million in additional orders in the next two years to keep it open.

Even under Labor's plan there would undoubtedly be cuts to jobs and pay for workers at Arrium. The company has already sacked 900 staff in South Australia in the last year, and last month asked 400 miners to take a 13 per cent pay cut.

This mirrors the restructuring at BlueScope Steel at Port Kembla. In November, its workers voted to accept 500 job cuts and a three year pay freeze. The company threatened to close the plant unless they agreed.

Such trade-offs do not guarantee jobs. Workers at Holden made concession after concession, agreeing to work half-time during the 2008 economic crisis, then accepting a wage freeze in 2013. But the company still decided to shut up shop.

There is a global glut of cheap steel coming from China. This is threatening steel producers worldwide, with Tata Steel in Britain also facing closure with the loss of 15,000 jobs. But there is no reason to lose a single job or for anyone to take a pay cut. There should be a fight to demand the government nationalise the company and guarantee the jobs.

If workers occupied the steel plant, it could prevent the company moving out valuable equipment and stock. Such a fight for jobs could win support across the country, and put serious pressure on the government to act.

This is a challenge to the logic of free market capitalism, which says that profitability comes before all else. But the thousands of workers' lives that would be destroyed through sackings are more important than the bosses' profits. Unions need to lead a fight to save the jobs—at any cost.

James Supple

Nightly mass meetings in Paris organise resistance to new law

A NEW movement is blooming in France out of the Place de la République square in Paris.

It has been occupied by nightly general assemblies since a demonstration against the Labour-type government's attack on workers' rights last month.

Student activist Gael Braibant said, "Depending on the weather there's usually a few thousand people there every night. We discuss everything—not just the functioning of the occupation but debates about the system, the police and the role of violence. And we elected a committee that plans actions."

In early April more than 100,000 people marched in Paris as part of a day of action called by unions against the proposed Work Law.

That evening up to 2000 people from the occupation marched to link up with refugees and migrants camping out on the streets of Paris.

Cops recently cleared them out of the area under the elevated Metro line at Stalingrad station and put up fences to stop them returning. So occupiers and migrants together went there and took the barriers down.

More than a million people have protested or struck against the Work Law. But there is a question about the movement's leadership. Main student union Unef held talks with Valls. Those unions opposing the Work Law have called a second day

of strikes and protests on 28 April, too slow for many activists.

The occupation represents an alternative vision of the struggle—and its objectives. Gael said, "This absolutely isn't a movement that's against political parties or unions. But it has come about largely outside the existing organisations. Many of the workers here are from sectors with no union organisation.

"One supermarket checkout worker brought people from the occupation to go down to her workplace to convince her colleagues to join a union."

The economist Frederic Lordon, one of the figureheads of the movement, has argued that the only way to win is through a general strike.

Denis Godard, a member of the occupation's action committee, wrote in the New Anti-capitalist Party's newspaper, "The occupations give the movement a direction, a questioning of the whole logic of the system, a possibility of bringing together the different fronts of struggle.

"This cannot last and develop without linking the movement of the squares to the struggle in every workplace, every university and college, every neighbourhood—and by scoring victories starting with the withdrawal of the Work Law."

Dave Sewell
Socialist Worker UK

By Vivan Honan

10,000 in Dili say hands off Timor's Oil

THOUSANDS RALLIED in Timor-Leste in March to demand the establishment of a permanent and fair maritime boundary. Australia's ongoing theft of Timor-Leste's oil and gas exposes Australia as the imperialist bully that it is.

More than 10,000 packed out on the streets outside the Australian Embassy in Dili on 22 and 23 March 2016. Placards read "Down with Australian imperialism", "Stop the theft" and "Median line now". Solidarity protests took place in the Philippines, Indonesia, Malaysia and Australia.

Timor-Leste is demanding that a median boundary in line with international law. This would likely see the lucrative oil and gas fields—that are much closer to Timor-Leste—fall under their jurisdiction.

With the issue of the boundaries still unresolved Timor-Leste Prime Minister Rui Araujo wrote to Malcolm Turnbull earlier this year requesting a new round of talks on the boundary, but Turnbull has refused to discuss the issue. Now, Timor-Leste is taking Australia to conciliation under the UN Convention on the Law of the Sea.

Australia's theft

Just two months before Timor-Leste gained official independence in 2002, Australia withdrew its recognition of dispute settlement procedures under the UN Convention. This means conciliation proceedings will be non-binding.

Since then it has bullied Timor-Leste into signing three agreements that ensure they are cheated out of revenue from gas and oil fields off its coastline.

The most recent treaty in 2006 splits the revenue from the Greater Sunrise fields fifty-fifty between Australia and Timor-Leste. The agreement came at the cost of Timor-Leste having to shelve its claims for permanent boundaries for another 50 years until the agreement expires in 2057. Timor-Leste argues it has lost \$6.6 billion in revenue to Australia since 2002 under these arrangements.

Australia's spy agency went as far as installing bugs into a cabinet room in East Timor during the negotiations, under the guise of an Australian aid project. After a whistle-blower made these revelations, Timor-Leste commenced international proceedings against Australia over the 2006 agreement.

In a brazen attempt to prevent the whistle-blower testifying at the



Above: Timorese protest outside the Australian embassy in Dili

case in The Hague, Attorney-General and Liberal Senator George Brandis instructed ASIO to cancel his passport and raid the Canberra home of the lawyer representing Timor-Leste to seize his files.

Timor-Leste is one of the world's

poorest countries and is heavily dependent on revenue from the oil and gas fields. Almost 50 per cent of the population live below the national poverty line. Australia has used its regional muscle to bully Timor-Leste and steal oil profits. Justice is long overdue.

Timor-Leste argues it has lost \$6.6 billion in revenue to Australia since 2002

Obama brings US business back to Cuba

BARACK OBAMA became the first US President to visit Cuba for 88 years in March. After decades of opposition to US imperialism, the Cuban regime is welcoming back US investment and influence.

Last year the US formally reopened diplomatic relations, and began allowing Cubans in the US to send money to relatives at home, and more travel there by American tourists. While the US trade embargo remains, something that can only be overturned by Congress, Cuba is also opening up to US business. Starwood Hotels announced plans the day before Obama arrived to run three separate local hotels.

Obama brought with him a business delegation that included the CEOs of Marriott Hotels and Airbnb, as well as restaurant, clothing and media companies. Executives from Mastercard and pharmaceutical giant Pfizer have already made separate trips.

Cuba's economy collapsed when support from Russia ended at the close of the Cold War. Before the US began normalising relations,

its economy was struggling, with growth between 1 and 2 per cent a year.

It is now treading the same path as China, reducing state control of its economy and opening up to the free market. But the ruling bureaucracy around Raul Castro is determined to maintain firm political control.

This means embracing policies little different to the standard neo-liberal formula, in chasing foreign investment through cutting corporate tax. A new law passed in 2014 halved tax on investments to 15 per cent. In 2010 the government began efforts to sack half a million workers and force them into the private sector.

Cuba has never been a genuinely socialist country, with an economy under democratic workers' control. It is instead undergoing a transition from state capitalism to an increasingly free market capitalism.

The Cuban regime has withstood efforts at invasion and sabotage from the US for decades. But it is no model for socialism in the 21st century.

Turnbull turns to racism and scapegoating after Brussels bombing

By James Supple

WHEN HE took over as Prime Minister Malcolm Turnbull distanced himself from efforts to encourage Islamophobia, warning, “we must not vilify or blame the entire Muslim community” for terrorism.

But his response to the terror attack in Brussels in March, that left 32 dead, had him sounding just like Tony Abbott. Turnbull tried to scapegoat and spread fear about refugees, blaming “porous borders” that have allowed the movement of refugees into Europe for letting in terrorists. And he didn’t miss the chance to claim that it was “strong border protection” here that was keeping us safe.

Yet of the five bombers, four were born or grew up in Brussels, and the fifth was born in Sweden. Only one of them had posed as a refugee in order to return from Syria.

Turnbull went further, blaming terrorism in Europe on the “failed or neglected integration” of Muslims. This echoed Abbott’s claims that there was a problem with Muslims where some weren’t prepared to, “be on ‘Team Australia’”.

Such comments only further the racist idea that the entire Muslim community is suspect. And they can only increase the discrimination and isolation that Muslims suffer, encouraging more people to turn towards extremism.

It is this, combined with the murderous wars that Australia and the West are waging across the Middle East, that is fuelling terrorism. The number of civilians killed and wounded in Afghanistan was over 11,000 last year, the highest on record 14 years after the war began. In October the US bombed a Médecins sans Frontières hospital, killing 40 people.

Belgium, where the latest attacks took place, has sent troops to the war in Afghanistan, as well as Mali and Libya, and participated in bombing raids in Iraq in 2015.

Brussels, and its suburb of Molenbeek in particular, has been labelled a “jihadi breeding ground” and “Europe’s terrorism capital”. Belgium’s Prime Minister Charles Michel declared last year that the suburb, “was involved in almost every terrorist attack of recent years”. But their efforts to ramp up the police raids and targeting of the Muslim community



Above: Police step up their surveillance and patrols in the wake of the Brussels bombing

will only make the problem worse.

After the terrorist attacks in Paris in November, the government imposed a lockdown on Brussels, after it emerged that several of the suspects were from the area or had been living there. One, Salah Abdelsam, was believed to be in hiding in Molenbeek.

Shops, schools and public transport were all ordered to close for a week. Police carried out at least 20 raids across the city. There were 37 arrests, but police only managed to charge five people with any offence.

Repression

Such heavy handed police tactics only further marginalise Muslim communities and make people more hostile towards the police.

Local resident Farida Aarrass, part of the Parents Campaign against Police Violence, said, “You could hear terrified children shouting and crying. Now everyone here is frightened.

“It’s becoming unbearable. All the parents are worried that their children could be beaten, locked up or taken away as terrorists—which they’re not.”

Nordine Saidi, an activist in the Brussels Panthers campaign group, told Britain’s *Socialist Worker*, “The daily presence of the police is one of the main reasons people feel unsafe.

“They come down in huge numbers, creating a sense of being under siege, circled by an occupying army.

“There have been serious incidents linked to these interventions, often classed as ‘anti-terrorist’.

“People stopped by the police experience ethnic profiling, humiliation and racist language. And if they resist they are charged.”

Unemployment is 40 per cent in Molenbeek for people under 25, and many young people turn to drugs or gangs because of lack of other options.

Increasing the use of police repression will do nothing to address the hopelessness and discrimination they face.

Racism

Muslims have become one of the main targets of racism all across Europe. In Britain teachers and social workers are now obliged by law to spy on students and families to identify signs of extremism.

In March nursery workers suggested referring a 4-year-old to “de-radicalisation” classes after his pronunciation of “cucumber” was mistaken for “cooker bomb”.

In France there have been at least 3200 police raids since the terror attacks last November. Police have burst into mosques, homes and even restaurants, placing between 350 and 400 people under house arrest without court approval. “This abuse has traumatised families and tarnished reputations, leaving targets feeling like second-class citizens,” according to Human Rights Watch’s Izza Leghtas. Far right parties are fanning the flames of racism.

We need to stand against Islamophobia, and the efforts to scapegoat refugees and Muslims for terrorism.

Belgium has sent troops to the war in Afghanistan, as well as Mali and Libya, and participated in bombing raids in Iraq in 2015

RACE, CLASS AND THE REPUBLICAN PARTY BEHIND THE RISE OF DONALD TRUMP

Donald Trump has tapped into the rage and insecurity of white workers in the US with his own brand of racism and populism, writes **Hannah McCann**

MANY AROUND the world are looking upon the rise of Donald Trump in the US presidential election primaries with horror. Even the Republican Party elite are worried.

Meanwhile, media commentators and election analysts are struggling to understand his popularity. Trump first ran in the Presidential primaries in 2000 for the third-party centrist Reform Party, but didn't enjoy much success. Why are people listening to Trump now?

Racism is a central part of Trump's campaign. For example, after the San Bernardino shootings in California last year Trump suggested there should be a "total and complete shutdown of Muslims entering the United States". In March this year, Trump promised to pay the legal fees of a white supporter who punched an African American man who was protesting at a Trump Rally.

However, understanding his popularity merely as a reflection of racism in America misses a bigger picture about Trump's relationship to class. Trump is drawing on racist sentiments and promoting racist ideas as part of his appeal to disenfranchised white workers in the US.

The racism from Trump is an extension of the kind of appeals many within the Republican Party have been making for some time.

Their efforts to stir up the Tea Party, as a populist movement against "big government", unleashed a torrent of racism against Democratic President Barack Obama. This strategy is now coming back to haunt the Republican Party, as Trump reflects a more overt and extreme politics of fear and hatred.

Trump's background is in business. Born in Queens, New York City, he is the son of real estate developer, Fred Trump. As a student he worked in father's company Elizabeth Trump &

Son, but in 1971 when he was given control he renamed this "The Trump Organization".

Trump's business is in developing real estate, casinos, golf courses and hotels, as well as other ventures such as hosting reality TV program, *The Apprentice*. It was only in June last year that he announced he would run as a Republican in the presidential primaries.

Economic crisis

Understanding Trump's popularity has to start with looking to the effects of the 2007-2008 economic crisis on the US population.

Although unemployment is down from its high of 10 per cent in 2009, many remain "under-employed", with low hours and minimal wages. On average, wages have fallen by 6.5 per cent since 2007. The 20 richest people now own more wealth than the bottom half of the American population combined (that is, around 152 million people!).

With the White House bailing out the big banks after the crash, there has been growing dissatisfaction and rage at the political system. Obama's eight-year period as President has seen a continuation of the bailout strategy, opening up a space for right-wing opponents of the Democrats to capitalise on Obama's failure.

Looking to this recent history, we can start to see why Trump has been able to rally angry white workers so successfully.

In proclaiming that he will "make America great again" he is acknowledging falling living standards, the hardships being faced by people, and promising something better. Contrasting this with his main Republican opponent Ted Cruz's slogan "Courageous conservatives", we can see how Trump is appealing specifically to class concerns that are not being

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Trump's approach is to direct people's anger at minority groups rather than big business

picked up by his rivals.

However, unlike traditional Republicans who reliably act in the interests of business and free trade, Trump is also willing to break with support for free trade policies and openly promote protectionism. As he stated recently: "You have to bring in jobs, you have to take the jobs back from China, you have to take the jobs back from Mexico".

Trump's absurd proposal to build a wall between Mexico and the US must be seen in this context. Trump's approach is to convince people that it is immigrants and other minorities who are taking American jobs. He explicitly attacks Mexicans as rapists; using racism to direct people's anger at minority groups rather than big business.

Trump's appeal to the working class is reflected in a number of other unexpected positions, such as his stand on healthcare. He has stated: "Everybody's got to be covered. This is an un-Republican thing for me to say... I am going to take care of everybody. I don't care if it costs me votes or not. Everybody's going to be taken care of much better than they're taken care of now".

Trump's healthcare promises are no more than a vague populist claim. But this idea of "taking care of everybody" is central to Trump's campaign.

Class

The class basis of Trump's popularity is further supported by a recent study by the RAND Corporation which concluded that, "Trump supporters form a powerful populist coalition". They found that Trump performs well with Republican voters who both agree that: immigrants are a threat and that women who complain about harassment cause problems, as well as those who support taxing the rich and who support labour unions.

Another particularly unhelpful evaluation of Trump is the idea that he is a fascist. Although he is willing to encourage a certain violence at his meetings, Trump isn't forming a violent para-military street movement of the kind that distinguishes fascists from other right-wing figures.

He is making his case within the boundaries of a democratic process. We need to understand Trump as another sign of the far right within Republican Party, as a populist.

Just as it was wrong to label Pauline Hanson supporters as simply racists, it does not help to understand Trump supporters as ignorant fools being duped by a demagogue.

He has been able to tap into sections of the working class who have been hit hardest by the economic crisis.

If Trump wins the Republican nomination and if Hillary Clinton is his opponent, the Democrats will try to draw Bernie Sanders supporters and the left back by arguing for a vote for the Democrats as "the lesser evil" to "stop Trump".

But the kind of left-wing arguments coming from Sanders are a much more effective way to win people away from Trump than anything being pushed by Clinton.

A class analysis helps us to understand why many who might have voted for Bernie Sanders may look to Trump if Clinton is the nominee.

There is currently a reasonable cross-over between Sanders and Trump supporters, with roughly 20 per cent of Democrat voters recently surveyed saying they would switch to voting for Trump if Clinton is the candidate. For these voters it is "Sanders no. 1, Trump no. 2". There are also stories of people wearing Sanders t-shirts being thrown out of Trump rallies, but having pro-Trump members of the crowd giving them the thumbs up.

Analyses show that this crossover is largest amongst white, low income voters. In other words, Sanders and Trump both appeal to working class concerns, in part because they present themselves as being against the usual political elites. This shows that the discontent can be pulled in two directions.

The difference is that while Trump uses scapegoating and draws people to the right, Sanders is arguing for solidarity, drawing people to the left.

The Republican Party elite are concerned to stop Trump because he is a loose cannon who does not



Above: A protester inside one of Donald Trump's meetings shows his disgust for Trump's racism

always follow the usual Republican script. Trump's argument for an end to US free trade deals—i.e. bringing manufacturing back to the USA—would potentially affect major companies like Apple, and relationships with countries like China and Japan.

However Trump's future as the Republican candidate is not secured. Rival nominees Ted Cruz and John Kasich are still in the race, and the split vote means that Trump may not reach 1237 promised delegates needed to guarantee nomination in the first ballot at the Republican Convention.

Under Republican voting rules, delegates are technically able to vote for any candidate they like in the second round, even if they were elected to support Trump. Some in the party are hoping they can use this to reject Trump, and decide to run a candidate who hasn't even appeared in the primaries.

Whether or not Trump is the candidate, his ideas have already garnered a lot of attention and air-time across the world. This means something to an Australia context—if Trump's views continue to get a major platform, this will add to the confidence of the kind of right-wing sentiment we have already seen expressed here by right-wing sections of the Liberal Party.

We also need to understand how Trump has used racism to pull sections of the working class to support the right, because that is a tactic also frequently used in Australian politics.

For example, in the politics around refugees understanding how racism is used as a scapegoating tool is essential for challenging Liberal slogans like "stop the boats".

These arguments cannot be won by appealing to humanitarian concerns alone: they must also be formulated to address the class concerns for which they are being used.

It is not enough to say "refugees are people too", rather we need arguments like, "refugees don't take jobs: Malcolm Turnbull does". Trump is another example of the dangers of politicians who use racist ideas and appeals intertwined with working class concerns.

Without an understanding of the class basis of Trump, the danger is that the left will just be pulled to support the corporate-funded Clinton Democrat election campaign.

What is really needed is a socialist approach, which looks to movements like Black Lives Matter, the recent Chicago teachers' strikes and fast food workers' fight for a \$15 an hour minimum wage, independent of the dead end politics of the Democratic Party.

RACISM, FASCISM AND THE FRENCH FRONT NATIONAL

The Front National in France, which seeks to build a mass fascist movement, has built a sizeable electoral following through racist populism writes **Miro Sandev**

THE FASCIST party the Front National (FN) is on the rise in France, with its leader Marine Le Pen leading the polls for preferred president on 27 per cent.

Across Europe there is a growth of far right and fascist parties, feeding off terror attacks, austerity and the refugee crisis. Both the AfD, which received double-digit shares of the vote in recent German state elections, and the Sweden Democrats who are the third largest party in their country, have successfully modelled themselves on the FN. But where did the FN come from?

It emerged out of an initiative by the revolutionary nationalist movement *Ordre Nouveau*, bringing together the disparate forces of the French far-right in the 1970s. Despite cultivating respectability and running in elections the FN wanted an authoritarian nationalist state to replace the democratic Fifth Republic in place since the Second World War.

Led by former army lieutenant Jean-Marie Le Pen, the party's platform celebrated economic inequality, featured explicit racism and demanded "national preference"—priority for French nationals over foreigners in jobs, housing and welfare support.

Throughout the 1980s and 1990s the party radicalised its immigration policy to include restriction of nationality to blood right, review of all naturalisations, caps on immigrant children in schools, forced deportation of immigrants convicted of a crime, a ban on mosques, and repatriation of three million non-European immigrants.

Because of the revulsion most people have towards explicit Nazism, the FN play down their links to the Nazis in an attempt to cultivate respectability. FN's approach is differ-

ent to that of Golden Dawn in Greece who openly use Nazi symbols and salutes and have organised squads to murder opponents. But this is a question of tactics only—both aim to build the same kind of party.

One of the goals of fascist parties, as distinct from other right-wing groupings, is to create a powerful street force, capable of organising violent attacks against people of colour, migrants and ultimately against workers and trade unions.

The FN has created internal military units called the Department of Protection and Security, composed of ex-military or gendarmes personnel, which the party says are used to provide security for its leaders. But it is clear that they are primarily used to carry out violent attacks within the poor, largely migrant populated estates—the banlieues.

One group, known as The Ghosts, had over 200 former soldiers and its job was to infiltrate anti-racist groups to spy on them and disorganise them, as well as leading attacks on young migrants in order to fuel unrest and support for the far right. Other violent organisations which the FN has been associated with are the Bloc Identitaire, GUD and Maison du Peuple Flamand.

The FN regularly talks down its links with these groups as it tries to build electoral support.

The 2002 presidential election saw Le Pen beat the Socialist Party in the first round with 16.9 per cent of the vote, before losing comfortably in the second. The campaign in 2007 continued the effort to move into the political mainstream and for the first time the party drew on the French Republican values of "liberty, equality, fraternity".

.....
The major parties' embrace of Islamophobia has helped normalise the FN's policies

It continued down this line until Marine Le Pen took over the reins in 2011. The shift to a new, younger face provided an opportunity to remove the stigma still attached to the party.

Marine tried to distance herself from the FN's old anti-Semitism and present it as a mainstream party. She cemented her position the following year by winning 17.9 per cent in the presidential elections, improving on her father's best effort of 16.9 per cent.

Marine's tenure has seen largely cosmetic changes to the party's brand, but a maintenance of its core policies on immigration, national identity and Islam.

Some candidates for the 2014 municipal elections were expelled for explicitly racist remarks and the party's links to jackbooted paramilitary groups have been pruned, but not eliminated. Former leader and Marine's father Jean-Marie Le Pen was expelled from the party following a notorious public spat with Marine over his racist comments.

Some policies have been dropped while others have been sharpened such as: extending the list of public sector jobs open only to French nationals, deporting foreigners convicted of crimes even before serving their sentence; and exiting the Eurozone as an immediate imperative.

On other social issues such as gay marriage and abortion rights, the party's regressive views have not changed substantially.

In the March 2014 municipal elections, the party distanced itself from the more radical elements of its agenda and instead highlighted its organisational competence and fitness for office. Marine Le Pen's strategy was vindicated by the party winning

11 municipalities. In the European elections two months later the party picked up first place with nearly 25 per cent of the vote and 24 seats in the European Parliament.

Islamophobia

Coinciding with the FN's Republican turn has been an orientation away from the explicit racism and anti-Semitism of Le Pen senior, in favour of Marine's anti-Muslim racism deployed through the denigration of Muslim culture and religion.

Whilst vulgar racism occasional seeps in, the FN has skilfully deployed the Republican catchcry of "laïcité" as a more palatable dog-whistle.

This secularist notion has been traditionally associated with the separation of church and state, and initially targeted powerful Catholic bishops. But in the FN's hands it has become a rallying call for a range of policies that treat Muslims as a suspect community.

This has been used to repackage racially discriminatory policies as a defence of liberal values and personal rights. By doing so the FN has been able to court liberal voters who would normally vote for the Republican party.

The major parties' embrace of Islamophobia, and the acquiescence or even outright support of many writers and intellectuals, has helped normalise the FN's policies.

Right-wing President Nicholas Sarkozy emerged as a mainstream figure willing to initiate, rather than only mimic, racist attacks on ethnic minorities. The Socialist Party, which took power in 2012, vowed to uphold Republican values by, for example, banning any women's only aqua-gym classes in pools.

Socialist Party Prime Minister Manuel Valls publically supported the sacking of a nursery worker for wearing a hijab and personally intervened to condemn the serving of halal meat in a prison.

The left and even far left groups like the Communist Party and the Left Front have been disoriented by their commitment to this version of secularism and have willingly entered into the Islamophobic front.

The campaign to ban the wearing of the burqa and niqab in public was a led by a pair of MPs from the Communist Party and the main right-wing party the UMP. Left Front presidential candidate Melanchon said that women who wore the niqab were engaged in a spectacle of "self-humiliation"



Above: Current Front National leader Marine Le Pen wraps herself in the French flag

that amounted to a "breach of public order".

Even the New Anti-capitalist Party has failed to challenge Islamophobia in a concerted way. This emerged most prominently when Ilham Moussaid was chosen as the candidate for the party in the 2010 regional elections and her hijab immediately became a contentious issue.

Despite some support from the party, leading members refused membership to other women who wore the hijab, based on pseudo-feminist arguments. They also actively campaigned for the exclusion of Muslim students from school unless they uncovered their hair. The following year, Moussaid and a dozen activists resigned from the NPA because of the discrimination.

Economic patriotism

For a party that feeds off social discontent like the FN, the Hollande presidency has proved fertile ground. Unemployment stands at over 10 per cent. It's 24 per cent among those aged 18-24 and 46 per cent for young people without higher qualifications. Attempts to reduce the budget deficit through tax increases have hit middle and lower income households.

The FN has responded with populist rhetoric about the need for "economic patriotism". It bolstered its opposition to the EU as a threat to the French nation by calling for import quotas and tariffs, and a policy forcing public bodies to source their food products from France.

The other major change introduced by Marine Le Pen has been a turn

to support social welfare, although mainly as a way of demanding priority for French natives. In some regions the party has embraced the notion of the "big state", pledging itself to economic interventionism, the expansion of public services and high spending on welfare.

The stance has appealed to a portion of workers suffering from austerity, with Marine Le Pen's highest share of the presidential vote in 2012 coming from the lowest income earners (24 per cent).

The party has managed to take advantage of these concerns particularly in deindustrialised regions, combining economic populism with anti-immigration extremism.

Although it's important to not overstate these developments, as the party is populist and tailors its political line depending on the demographics of the area in question. So in the South-East, where the party's base is predominantly middle class, there is an emphasis on low-tax policies and smaller government.

The disorientation of the left has paved the way for the FN to present itself as the only credible alternative to the austerity of the major parties.

In order to beat back the FN, the left will need to throw itself into direct struggle against austerity as well as the state of emergency and confront the poisonous islamophobia of the French state.

The recent massive strikes and occupations of squares by workers and students against Hollande's pro-business reforms are showing the way forward.

WORKERS AND THE SECOND WORLD WAR TROTSKYISM AND THE 1945 BALMAIN DOCKS DISPUTE

As workers tired of wartime sacrifices, imposed with the aid of Communist Party union officials, Trotskyists in Balmain led a fight for democratic unionism, writes **Tom Orsag**

TROTSKYISM AS a political current has rarely led major industrial struggles in Australia.

However, in February 1945 in a combination of circumstances, Nick Origlass, Issy Wyner and Laurie Short and the small Communist League of Australia (CLA) led almost 3000 ironworkers in the shipyards of Balmain in a strike against the pro-war trade union machine of the Federated Ironworkers Association (FIA), then led by the Communist Party of Australia (CPA).

The CPA had led heroic unemployed workers struggles in the 1930s and strikes which recovered working class confidence and organisation, such as among the Wonthaggi coal miners in 1934 and the North Queensland sugar workers in 1935. It re-built unions on the waterfront, among seafarers and in the coal mines.

But it was fundamentally flawed by its support for Stalin's Russia. By the 1930s it operated as a tool of Russian foreign policy, doing the bidding of the new ruling class that had emerged on the ashes of the Russian Revolution.

That meant when the Second World War broke out in September 1939, the CPA opposed the war against Germany, as Russia had signed a "non-aggression" pact with Hitler.

When Hitler broke that pact and invaded Russia in June 1941, the CPA, made illegal in May 1940, became stridently pro-war in order to "defend the communist motherland".

Support for the Australian war effort resulted in its promotion of Australian nationalism and even racism and imperialism.

The Trotskyist paper *Militant* in 1938 condemned the, "vicious chauvinism implied in the pictorial representation of the Japanese as leering Orientals in the Stalinist posters."

In July 1941, the CPA's *Communist Review* wrote, "Every nerve must be strained, all else must be subordi-

nated" to victory in the war.

The CPA completely subordinated the class struggle in Australia to a war time alliance with the capitalist class. The party was un-banned in December 1942 by the Curtin Labor government because Labor understood the CPA's support was crucial to selling the war to the working class.

This was a real issue. In March 1940, NSW coal miners struck for 67 days over reduced hours for surface workers. By June, 750,000 days were "lost" through strikes, the highest number since the strikes of the late 1920s.

The rapid advance of Japanese imperialism across Asia in early 1942, and the apparent threat to Australia, assisted efforts to mobilise workers behind the war.

Conversely as any direct military threat dissipated, the demands to boost production and ensure labour "discipline" began to fall on deaf ears.

The CPA's union leaders, shop stewards and worker militants actively suppressed rank-and-file revolt against the privations and speed-ups the bosses wanted.

At Austral Bronze in Sydney in 1943, management tried to introduce speed-ups, but when the Ironworkers (FIA) went on strike their CPA union officials led strike-breakers onto the job. Metalworkers refused to work with the scabs and the scabbing operation collapsed.

When women metalworkers at the Richard Hughes factory went on strike to get the award wage of 90 per cent of the male rate, it was after six months of stalling by their Communist union officials. The union secretary urged them to return to work by invoking "the boys in the trenches". The women angrily retorted, "We know all about our boys in the trenches...they're our husbands and sons." They won award payment.

By contrast the Trotskyists, because they correctly viewed the

The CPA's union leaders actively suppressed rank-and-file revolt against the privations and speed-ups the bosses wanted

war as driven by competing imperialist interests, refused to hold back the class struggle to fight the war.

Bureaucratic control

The Communist FIA officials worked assiduously to gain centralised control of the ironworkers' union, breaking up local leaderships in Port Kembla, Newcastle and in branches across Victoria.

Finally in early 1945 they overreached in the local Balmain FIA, based on the Balmain docks and shipyards, including the large Mort's Dock and Cockatoo Island, with 2000 and 3000 workers respectively.

The ship yards were key to the war effort in the South Pacific, repairing ships for carrying supplies to Allied troops. Big and difficult repair jobs had to be done quickly at a port near the theatre of war. Experienced shipyard workers were classified as in a "reserved" occupation and were exempted from military service.

The local Balmain FIA branch was militant and independent of CPA control. Nearly 8000 metal workers, around one-third of them ironworkers, were employed in 29 yards around the Balmain and Birchgrove foreshore.

All metal tradespeople involved in the building and repair of ships, whether boilermakers, fitter and turners, welders or blacksmiths, needed assistants who laboured in carrying, fetching, holding and building scaffolds, or operated simpler machines. These made up the FIA.

The tiny Trotskyist group led by Nick Origlass allied it itself with local Laborites and stressed rank-and-file democracy against the CPA's top-down control.

It argued that only by workers "intensifying their struggle for the nationalisation of industries" could they "save us from the failure of the boss class to plan and systematically develop the industry" of shipbuilding.

Conflict had been brewing since

the middle of 1942, when the FIA's Federal Council of Management (FCOM) adopted the CPA's "all for production" policy. The FCOM passed a motion demanding that branches take disciplinary action against unauthorised strikes and absenteeism.

The independent local leadership of the Balmain branch was under continual attack from the FCOM in the latter half of 1942. Balmain workers had little disagreement with the broad principle of working hard to win the war. But they opposed sacrificing gains in wages or conditions to the bosses, using the war as an excuse.

Public holiday pay

In June 1942, the government cancelled the King's Birthday public holiday. Cockatoo Island workers went on strike and refused to work, as public holiday double-time rates would not be paid.

In early 1943, 50,000 workers in Sydney walked off the job against the government's decision to cancel New Year's Day as a public holiday. They demanded payment at double-time rates. The CPA opposed the strike, as did the FIA leaders.

Most manual workers had only just won annual leave, and this was now heavily restricted by the government. So cancelling public holidays for many was the last straw.

Such was the popular support for double-time pay for public holidays that the CPA was forced to support the next one-day strike on 3 May for the Anzac Day holiday.

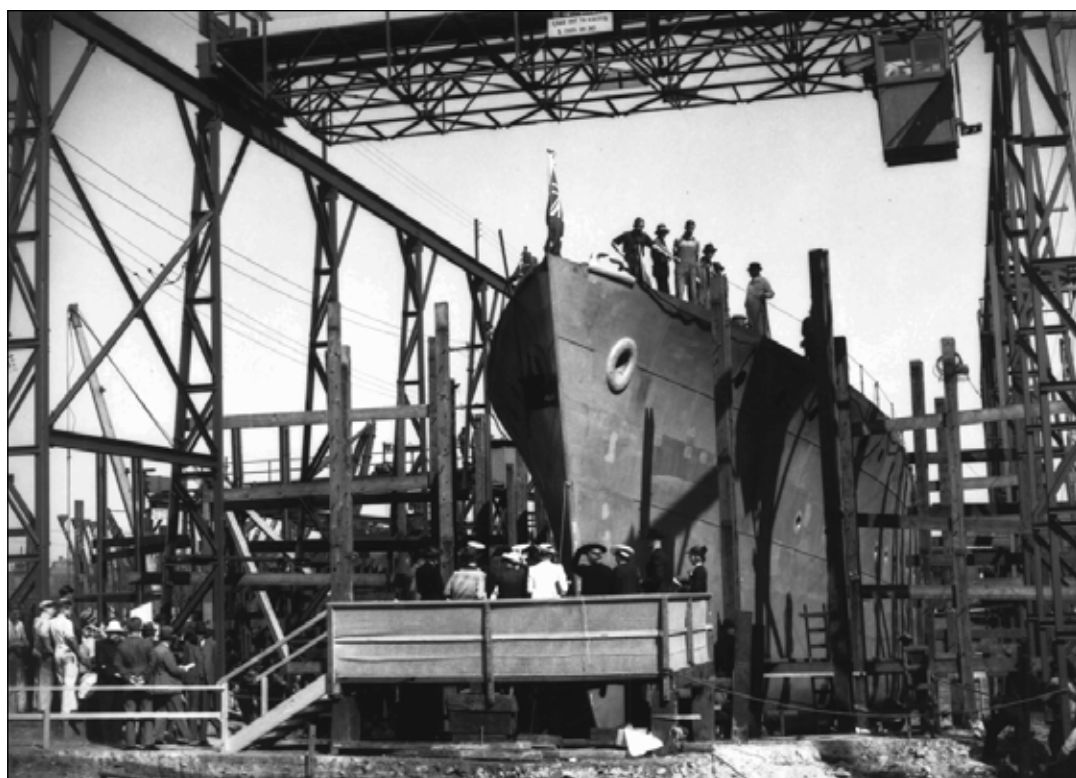
The docks' workforce participated enthusiastically in all these actions.

Nick Origlass, as alternate branch delegate to the NSW Labour Council, also clashed with the Communist Party when he argued for the support of 800 women workers on strike at the Duly and Hansford munitions plant. The women workers held out for ten weeks in defence of the principle of a 100 per cent union factory.

At the end of 1943, the Stalinist CPA won a clean sweep in the elections for the Balmain branch executive, despite the fact that they had been outvoted at every mass meeting.

The CPA had manoeuvred prior to the election to win the returning officer position. An old corrupt union saying went, "A group that has the returning officer and can't win an election, doesn't deserve to." Years later the CPA would be implicated in widespread ballot-rigging in the FIA and other unions.

But Origlass continued as the job



Above: Mort's dock at Balmain performed work on naval vessels during the Second World War

delegate at Mort's Dock in Balmain. In November 1944, a mass meeting of Mort's Dock metal workers passed a motion put by Origlass calling on the Labor government to unpeg wages, raising the basic wage in line with inflation, and to immediately introduce a 40-hour week. These demands contravened the Labor government's National Security regulations and the policies of the CPA.

Then in January 1945, on Cockatoo Island's shipyards, the CPA lost all elected delegates positions and Laurie Short, a Trotskyist, became the new ironworkers' delegate.

The CPA officials of the Ironworkers decided to act against Origlass and seven of his fellow Mort's Dock militants. They laid charges against all that they had not informed the union before striking in a dispute with the employer over the suspension of union members. The other seven received fines and raps on the knuckles.

Origlass was singled out and removed as job delegate, an over-the-top punishment—and seen that way by the Balmain rank and file. The two other job delegates resigned in protest.

When the Balmain rank-and-file tried to re-nominate Origlass as job delegate, the FIA said he was banned and imposed loyal CPA members in the positions.

On 16 April, 200 ironworkers at Mort's Dock came out on strike in defence of Origlass. Boilermakers and crane drivers refused to work with

ironworkers who followed the FIA officials' instruction to remain at work. They were suspended. The next day, all the remaining ironworkers struck.

Over 600 workers went to next Balmain-wide branch meeting. The CPA leadership of the union walked out after being unable to control the meeting. Hundreds of workers remained to organise to spread the strike.

An unofficial strike spread to 23 waterfront workshops, including Cockatoo Island, involving 2900 workers. Further mass meetings of over 1600 workers, in May, reaffirmed their right to elect their own delegates and restored full union rights to Origlass.

After six weeks on strike, Origlass was re-instated with the mass support of the membership.

For Trotskyist Issy Wyner, then working at Cockatoo Island, the strike was turning point of his political life, "Until then the Communist Party was always slandering us [the Trotskyists] as agents of the bosses and fascists, and we were isolated and marginalised. Now here were thousands of workers on strike and in the middle of it all was Nick. It was such a vindication of all we had stood for."

Balmain workers stood by Nick and other delegates against the attack from their union officials because certain rights, conditions and aspirations—including democratic unionism—were worth holding onto and pursuing, despite the war.

OBITUARY

By Paddy Gibson

SOLIDARITY WAS shocked to hear of the death of Gurindji man P. Inverway (PI) in Darwin in March. PI died of a heart attack at just 46 years of age.

Many of us became friends with PI during the campaign against the NT Intervention. He embarked on a national speaking tour in 2010 to build awareness about the shocking exploitation of Aboriginal workers under the Intervention.

He was a warm, humble and generous man who could instantly have strangers laughing along and listening intently to his stories about the struggles facing his people. He was also a strong leader who refused to be intimidated by the corrupt bosses and petty-dictator bureaucrats who try to rip off and control remote communities.

PI was proud of the history of the Gurindji and their famous walk-off from Wave Hill station in 1966, demanding equal wages, land rights and self-determination. His death comes as the community prepares to mark 50 years since the walk-off. His father, Mick Inverway, was a key leader of the struggle. PI followed in his footsteps, organising a strike of workers in the communities of Kalkaringi and Daguragu on 20 October 2010 to protest against the Intervention.

PI was particularly outraged about the working conditions that had come with the Intervention. The Community Development Employment Program (CDEP) was abolished, throwing thousands of Aboriginal people onto the dole. In its place came a new scheme, which forces Aboriginal people to work for Centrelink payments, half of which are “quarantined” onto a BasicsCard which can only be spent on approved items at government approved shops.

Despite his years of experience working with heavy machinery in mines and on the Alice-Darwin railway project, PI was subject to these humiliating conditions. In 2010 he was working on a building site in Kalkaringi, constructing an Art Centre for the equivalent of \$4.80 per hour.

In his speech to the striking workers and community members on 20 October, PI said:

“Back in 1966, Gurindji mob they walked off. What did they walk off for? [Being paid in] tea, sugar and flour. They had the longest strike in Aboriginal history. In 1975 Gough Whitlam came up here from the ‘cool room’, from Parliament House to Daguragu and put that soil [in Vincent

PI—a fighter for justice for his people



Above: PI on his speaking tour to Sydney with MUA Sydney branch Secretary Paul McAleer

Lingiari’s hands]. And now, we are going backwards now, because of that BasicsCard... I follow my father. We can’t go back, we need to stand up and fight for our rights”.

Speaking tour

On his national speaking tour, PI worked with anti-Intervention campaigners in Darwin, Melbourne and Sydney to connect with the trade union movement. Just like the striking Gurindji back in the 1960s, he addressed smoko meetings on unionised building sites, stop work meetings on the wharves, spoke at the Trades Hall and did interviews in the national media.

Workers could hardly believe what they were hearing when he held up his BasicsCard and explained how he was being paid for doing work exactly the same as them.

The Construction Division of the CFMEU played a central role in organising the tour. Strong links were made between two of the Howard government’s most draconian attacks—the NT Intervention, which demonises Aboriginal people and singles them out for special controls, and the Australian Building and Construction Commission (ABCC) introduced to target building workers.

From the experience of the 1960s, PI recognised the potential strength of winning organised workers, the “union mob”, to the cause of his people and worked hard to build these links. He joined an NT delegation to the Australian Council of Trade Unions (ACTU)

Indigenous workers conference in 2011.

PI secured properly paid work in 2011, traveling across remote communities in the NT to undertake housing maintenance. But he continued to blow the whistle on shortcuts taken by the multi-national companies awarded these contracts, leaving Aboriginal people living in squalid conditions while they pocketed millions in profits.

He was constantly advocating for his Aboriginal co-workers, many still being paid on the BasicsCard. His own pay supported countless family and community members.

When I last spoke to PI a few weeks before he died, he was angry about being recently sacked from his carpentry work, believing he had been targeted for speaking up. But he was looking forward to returning to Gurindji land, being back with his family and restarting the fight to win proper employment and self-determination.

Solidarity would like to extend our deepest sympathies to the family, the Gurindji and all community members suffering from the loss of PI. In the short time we knew him, he enriched the lives of so many of us. We can’t imagine how much he meant to you. We know he carried very important community and ceremonial responsibilities. We know he will be with us all as we celebrate 50 years since the historic Wave Hill walk-off, a legacy he proudly carried forward with a spirit that will continue to inspire the fight for justice for many years to come.

.....
PI was particularly outraged about the working conditions that had come with the Intervention

Spotlight: powerful expose of elite's collusion in Church abuse

Directed by Tom McCarthy
In cinemas now

“THIS IS how it happens isn't it? ... A guy leans on a guy, and suddenly the whole town just looks the other way”.

The film *Spotlight* is a true story about the *Boston Globe* newspaper's investigative reporting team Spotlight, and its campaign in 2001 to uncover widespread, systemic child abuse by Catholic priests in Massachusetts.

They team find evidence of a church hierarchy systematically moving paedophile priests between parishes and schools, setting up undisclosed “treatment centres” for them in suburban streets, and paying victims paltry amounts of compensation and binding them to silence.

By the end of their investigation, the team have found that at least 87 priests within Boston alone have abused children. The now-adult victims are dealing with trauma; many driven to drugs or to suicide.

Cover up

“If it takes a village to raise a child, it takes a village to abuse them”, says Mitchell Garabedian, the lawyer who represents abuse victims. He is referring to the collaboration of the church and the local courts, who worked together to keep evidence documents sealed when they should have been public.

The police, too, had received reports of abuse for decades without making them public, or even recording them in some cases.

This scenario has played out all over the world, where institutions of the state have system-



atically colluded with the clergy to conceal abuse. A list of a staggering 209 cities and towns, where similar scandals have thus far been uncovered, is shown at the end of the film.

None of this is unfamiliar in Australia now. The Royal Commission into Institutional Responses to Child Sex Abuse was established in 2013, after years of resistance from the Church and other authorities. It was partially sparked by an investigation by journalist Joanne McCarthy into the rampant abuse within the Maitland-Newcastle Archdiocese.

Church institutions in numerous other places around the country, including Sydney, Melbourne, Hobart, Ballarat and Wollongong, have since been implicated.

In every place the evidence shows that members of the police and other authorities were aware of what was happening.

It also shows the way

the Church deals with those who do their dirty work. Boston Cardinal Bernard Law, shown in the film, was made archpriest of a Basilica within the Vatican itself after Spotlight's investigation.

Why has the Church been allowed to get away with this level of abuse in so many places?

Common interests

In a scene at a Catholic Charity fundraiser ball, members of the Boston elite, including the *Boston Globe* editors, rub shoulders with the Catholic clergy. This reflects the reality in cities across the world where the Church holds any power. Politi-

The police had received reports of abuse for decades without making them public

cians, police chiefs, big business owners and judges move in the same powerful circles as the clergy.

The Catholic Church itself is also extremely wealthy. It has investments in businesses and owns vast tracts of property around the world. The Church hierarchy is very much a part of the ruling class.

The state and the clergy share an interest in maintaining the status quo and in keeping poor and working class people obedient and submissive, in order to preserve their own power.

Community and control

In Boston, the Catholic Church permeates the life of the community and provides a significant amount of social welfare, which the state relies on.

“We can't throw out all of the good he's ([he Cardinal] doing over a few bad apples”, says one

school superintendent who's trying to justify his turning a blind eye.

The Church also provides people a kind of solace and support. At the same time it teaches people to obey and not to speak out against authority, whether before the pulpit or at work. It works as an agent of social control that suits the state.

The Church's role in the community means priests can easily take advantage of the people in their care, and maltreatment becomes a means of exerting power. This situation is greatly exacerbated by the Church's obsession with sexual restraint and control. The victims are most often vulnerable, poor children, who are dependent on the Church for their survival.

Spotlight is a well-made, gripping film that may add something more to the growing crisis within the Catholic Church internationally.

Caitlin Doyle

DEFIANCE AND PROTEST CAN CLOSE NAURU

By Ian Rintoul

EVERY AFTERNOON since 20 March, asylum seekers at the family camp on Nauru, women, men, teenagers, and children, have staged a protest at the main gate to the camp.

The protesters are calling for their claims to be processed; for an end to the discrimination against them; for Nauru to be closed and for them to be brought to Australia.

Broadspectrum and Wilson Security have tried to stifle the protests—fences have been erected to prevent the protesters from reaching the gate of the supposedly “open centre”; Nauruan police have blockaded roads to prevent refugees living outside the centre showing support for the protesters; and police have confiscated refugees’ phones to prevent photos and video clips of the protests from reaching the outside world. But each day brings another protest.

On 3 April seven teenagers staged a tent-top protest—everyone lives in tents in the family camp—resulting in a letter from the protesters being sent to Border Force in Canberra. The letter outlined the many ways those on Nauru have been discriminated against—being arbitrarily selected to be transferred to Nauru while others on the same boat or arriving even later will be processed and resettled in Australia; detained for almost three years without a refugee determination; and the fact that 267 people from Nauru and Manus remain in Australia contradicting government policy.

But the Border Force reply given three days later simply dismissed the concerns, repeating previous declarations that nobody sent to Nauru would be resettled in Australia and suggesting that refugees return to their home countries or consider going to Cambodia.

Adding insult to injury, the letter compared education on Nauru to education in Australia and boasted of providing “a safe environment for all people living in Nauru.”

In the protest that followed, Wilson security guards lashed out with fists and boots at teenagers and their families, leaving a number with minor injuries.

Dutton denied that children were involved despite the photographs of the protest and of the injuries inflicted



Above: Protests at the Nauru family camp

on teenagers by the guards.

The abuse, the contempt, the blatant lies and injustice fuels the protests.

For many of the asylum seekers Good Friday, 25 March, marked 1000 days on Nauru. On 5 October last year, the Turnbull government welcomed the announcement from the Nauru government that all asylum seekers waiting for a decision would be processed “in a week.” It was a joke. Six months have passed and people are still waiting. And Turnbull has said nothing.

But the facts speak for themselves. It is now over two months since the High Court ruled that detention on Nauru was legal, and the government declared that the 267 who were in Australia would be returned to Nauru or Manus Island.

While Immigration Minister Peter Dutton continues to say that the 267

will be moved offshore, since the High Court decision no one has been returned. In fact almost 200 of the 257 are in community detention, including all the families with children.

Dutton now says it was always the government’s intention to get children out of detention—that’s another lie. It was the public outrage of the Let Them Stay campaign and the refusal by the Lady Cilento hospital to release baby Asha to Nauru that has stopped the Turnbull government, so far.

But that success won’t be secure until the 267 are allowed to stay and resettle in Australia. And until the women, men and children on Nauru and Manus Island are brought here too. It will be by building on the defiance and the protests in Australia and Nauru that we can turn “Let Them Stay” into “Bring Them Here”.

Detention lines the pockets of Nauru elite

AN ABC investigation has revealed how millions of detention dollars are being channeled into the hands of government politicians and elite Nauruan landowners.

While the previous Nauruan government bought land for the family camp, that site was never used. Instead the camp sits on land owned by the Daimon clan which includes Nauru’s Minister of Justice and Border Protection, David Adeang.

Consequently, the rent for the site, at least \$480,000 a year goes to the Daimon clan, not the Nauruan

government. The mother of Nauru’s Environment Minister, Aaron Cook, earns rent worth \$30,000 a year, making her the second largest beneficiary of all 256 landowners listed.

David Adeang’s cousin is also the Nauruan appointed operations manager at the camp.

On top of this the land owners will be the direct beneficiaries of the more than \$20 million detention infrastructure in the family camp. The buildings will become the landowners’ property when the camp closes.

For many of the asylum seekers Good Friday, 25 March, marked 1000 days on Nauru