

TERROR ATTACKS: DON'T BLAME MUSLIMS STAND UP TO RACISM



CORBYN

Radical left policies are popular

TERRORISM

What are the real causes?

RECOGNITION

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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

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Things they say

I don't know what is happening in British politics...I have no idea.

John Woodcock, right-wing Labour MP, after the election, who had predicted Corbyn was leading Labour to catastrophe.

Money is a great scorecard of success or one of them.

Anthony Pratt, head of Visy, on being number one on the 2017 rich list. His wealth is inherited.

This is not a tree-hugger group.

Harvard Business Review on the who's who of US bosses that urged Trump to remain in Paris Climate Agreement.

It's all good until it isn't.

Treasury Secretary John Fraser, explaining to Senate Estimates how the relationship between household debt and the Australian economy works.

If Australia's wealthy don't share their wealth we will end up with awful, far-reaching consequences. We could have people with pitchforks in the street like the French revolution.

Businessman Dick Smith explaining why he is donating \$640,000 to the Salvation Army.

Thank God for Peter Dutton

Tony Abbott supporting the sacking of Administrative Appeal Tribunal members after figures revealed they were overturning 40 per cent of immigration decisions made by Dutton's department

The consequence of this [closing the gap] will be that among the indigenous population there will high wealth individuals and hundreds of successful indigenous businesses employing indigenous people and contributing to the Australian economy.

Professor Marcia Langton provides a business perspective on closing the gap for the indigenous entrepreneur... never-mind indigenous health and education.

CONTENTS

ISSUE 103 JUNE 2017

Terrorism, Islam and imperialism

7 US says no to Islamophobia

8 More police powers won't make us safe

14 What causes terrorism?



11 Corbyn surge shows support for left alternative

16 Recognition: Pearson's advisory body won't bring change

18 Ten years of the NT Intervention



Unions

6 CFMEU rallies for industrial manslaughter laws

6 Sydney Uni moves towards strikes

20 Sydney bus drivers fight privatisation

Refugees

9 Dutton's arbitrary deadline

9 Refugees not to blame for terrorism

International

10 Greek general strike fights Syriza

12 Trump, two states and the Middle East peace process

13 Trump trashes climate deal



Reviews

19 Not Quite Australian: How temporary migration is changing the nation



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INSIDE THE \$YSTEM

'Wealth boom' for richest 200

THE *FINANCIAL Review*'s annual "Rich List" has declared a "wealth boom". The combined wealth of Australia's 200 richest people reached record levels in 2017 at \$233 billion. The top ten richest Australians were worth \$75 billion alone.

The list broke further records with the number of billionaires on it reaching an all-time high of 60. A record number of people have amassed more than \$10 billion in wealth: manufacturing tycoon Anthony Pratt topped the list with \$12.6 billion, followed by property developer Harry Triguboff on \$11.4 billion and mining magnate Gina Rinehart with \$10.4 billion.

Google says gender equity check too expensive

TECH-GIANT GOOGLE has argued that a government audit of its pay practices is "too expensive" to comply with. Google is currently battling the US Department of Labor (DoL) in court, accused of gross pay discrimination against female employees. Surveys have revealed a widespread problem of women earning less than men in the same roles in the tech industry in the US.

Google argued in Federal Court in May that it would take 500 hours of work and \$100,000 to comply with the government request for pay data across the company. Kristin Zmrhal, Google's senior legal operations manager, testified that retrieving the gender pay data "became too burdensome". DoL lawyer Ian Eliasoph mocked the company's defence saying, "Google would be able to absorb the cost as easy as a dry kitchen sponge could absorb a single drop of water."

With a \$28 billion annual income Google is one of the most profitable companies in the US. In 2015 Google announced with great fanfare that it would be spending \$150 million on "diversity initiatives".

Household share of income nears 50-year low



PROFITS SURGED 40 per cent in the year to March, while wages barely grew at all. Wage growth was just 0.9 per cent in the last year, including the impact of fewer hours worked. This is well below the rise in the cost of living of 2.1 per cent.

The wages share of Australia's GDP is approaching a 50 year low at 51.5 per cent, down from 54.2 per cent towards the end of last year.

New analysis by Paul Dales from Capital Economics has shown a 40-year downward trend. Dales said in a note to clients that households have not seen "one cent" of the extra wealth created by the mining boom because, "it's all gone into the pocket of business". He also pointed out that the, "share of GDP, the compensation of Australian employees lies towards the bottom of the international ladder." By contrast, "Back in 1975, Australian households received a bigger share of the economic pie than households in the US, France and New Zealand. Only in the UK did the compensation of employees account for a larger share of GDP."

Chevron fights for right to pay no tax

IN WHAT could be the largest single matter before the Australia Tax Office, US energy giant Chevron is contesting an attempt to claw back over \$1 billion in unpaid tax. Chevron paid no corporate tax in five of the last seven years but is fighting tooth and nail to avoid paying \$1.062 billion in back taxes.

According to Fairfax the unpaid tax dollars could pay for a new 400 bed hospital or 17 new high schools. Chevron evades tax by charging excessive interest to its Australian subsidiary on a \$42 billion loan. Although the inflated interest is simply transferring money from one part of the company to another, on paper it reduces Chevron's profit in Australia. The scheme is known as "transfer pricing" and is a clever way for multinational companies to "export" profits.

The current dispute with the ATO comes off the back of a transfer pricing case Chevron lost in April. Although promising to contest the decision in the High Court, they were forced to repay \$340 million in taxes, penalties and interest. In that case Chevron's Australian arm paid its US arm \$1.84 billion in interest on a loan that cost Chevron in the US just \$110 million to service.

Research and writing by Adam Adelpour

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

Murdoch throws tantrum over Corbyn result

RUPERT MURDOCH reportedly "stormed out" of *The Times* election night party in London following the release of exit polls showing a surge in support for Corbyn. Murdoch's papers campaigned viciously against Corbyn, with *The Sun* urging readers to, "rescue Britain from the catastrophe of a takeover by Labour's hard-left extremists" and running front page headlines including "Jezza's jihadi comrades" and "Don't chuck Britain in the Cor-bin". In the past *The Sun* has boasted of swinging elections, leading both major parties to court Murdoch's favour.

The UK Labour leader and socialist increased his party's vote share more than any Labor leader since 1945, despite hostility of the bulk of the media and most MPs in his own party.

Asset manager shuts shop in fear of market meltdown

AUSTRALIAN ASSET manager Altair has made a dramatic decision to hand back hundreds of millions of dollars to investors and liquidate its Australian funds. Phillip Parker, who serves as the fund's Chairperson, released a statement in May outlining the plan to return money in order to protect clients' interests.

He told Fairfax, "We think that there is too much risk in this market at the moment, we think it's crazy". The threats cited by Parker included Australia's east coast property prices, predictions that China's overheated property sector would implode "later this year", an "unpredictable" political situation in the US and an "overvalued" Australian equity market. "Australia hasn't had its GFC event, we've been living in this fool's paradise. But if China slows down the way the guys think it will towards the end of this year, then that's 70 per cent of our exports [affected]." he said.

EDITORIAL

Take the fight to Tory Turnbull's war on workers

JEREMY CORBYN'S spectacular success in the British election should have worried Malcolm Turnbull. The Tories were humiliated for their agenda of cuts, in the face of socialist Jeremy Corbyn's promise to tax the rich to fund services.

Turnbull is a Tory who stands for the same war on workers with cuts to penalty rates, attacking union rights and workers' conditions in the construction industry and cutting corporate tax. His budget has done nothing to help recover his standing. If an election was held this month, Labor would win by around 20 seats.

So his government is ramping up racism and division in an effort to consolidate support. Peter Dutton is always on hand to spread lies and smears about refugees. Most recent was his dishonest labelling as "fake refugees" those who are yet to submit asylum applications.

Following the terror attacks in the UK, and the siege in Melbourne Turnbull also dialled up his rhetoric. He spoke of "a growing threat from Islamist terrorism" and described it as "a disease... lashing out to destroy and undermine our way of life". Along with the Islamophobia, he is pushing yet another round of new police powers.

When Turnbull came to office, many in the Muslim community welcomed him, thinking he would break with Tony Abbott's pointed attacks on the community. He even hosted an iftar dinner at Kirribilli House during Ramadan with prominent Muslim leaders. Now Turnbull sings from Tony Abbott's song sheet. This year, there will be no repeat event.

Penalty rates

The Fair Work Commission has announced that the cuts to penalty rates will begin to be phased in, with penalties cut by 5 per cent from 1 July, and cuts of 10 and 15 per cent a year following that.

An active union campaign could stop bosses implementing these cuts and finish Turnbull off.

A modest campaign by Professionals Australia, representing pharmacists, has forced the Chemist Warehouse chain to maintain penalty rates, but only for existing employees. The ACTU has launched a video to pressure Members of Parliament. Turnbull is already under pressure



Above: The CFMEU has shown the way in fighting Turnbull's attacks, calling stopwork rallies on 20 June

because of the penalty rate cuts.

In Victoria, Trades Hall is rolling out yet another marginal seats campaign—targeting independent MP Cathy McGowan. Hers is one of a number of target seats in Victoria where they are already organising street stalls and electorate-based actions. Unions are buying up advertising, and union members are being mobilised to petition to call on her to oppose the cut to penalty rates.

A serious industrial campaign could kill off the cuts to penalty rates.

Unions NSW is showing how it could be done. A combined unions delegates' meeting has been called for 28 July. Other states should follow their lead. Delegates and activists are spending in the next few weeks getting resolutions from workplaces and union branches to support an August stopwork rally against Turnbull's war on workers.

The 20 June CFMEU construction union stopwork rally against the Australian Building and Construction Commission (ABCC) and the Construction Code will be the next chance to take the fight to Turnbull and the construction bosses.

The ACTU secretary, Sally McManus, made headlines when she said unjust laws have to be broken. The ABCC and the code are certainly unjust. The CFMEU's strikes show how to fight.

It's not enough to simply campaign for Labor to win the next federal election, due in two years' time.

Bill Shorten hopes to tap into the same disgust with cuts and neo-liberalism that drove Jeremy Corbyn's campaign in Britain. In the aftermath of the election result he declared, "Australians also want to see policy which looks after most people, not just the top end of town." But Shorten is a long way from Corbyn, and Labor has nothing like Corbyn's radical platform.

In 2007 Labor came to power under Kevin Rudd promising to tear up WorkChoices. But the bulk of the anti-union laws, including restrictions on the right to strike, remained in place. In its last year in office, to "balance the budget", like Turnbull it cut \$2.3 billion from universities and cut single parents' payments.

Labor is still committed to supporting the Liberals' offshore detention and anti-refugee policies. Shorten's "Australia First" slogan has been used to scapegoat temporary foreign workers for unemployment.

In 2005, stopwork rallies launched the Your Rights at Work campaign and took the fight against Howard into the workplaces and the streets.

To fight for real change we need more socialists in more workplaces and movements to build the union struggles and the anti-racist movements for refugees and against Islamophobia.

.....
Unions NSW is showing how it could be done. A combined unions delegates' meeting has been called for 28 July

Construction workers strike over industrial manslaughter

THOUSANDS OF Brisbane CFMEU construction workers took another day of illegal strike action on 23 May, marching off the job to Parliament House to demonstrate against the Labor state government delaying industrial manslaughter legislation.

The union movement has been raising the need for industrial manslaughter laws for years; the Beattie Labor government canvassed them in 2000. It was raised again at the state Labor conference in 2005. Industrial Relations and Racing Minister, and former secretary of the Queensland Council of Unions, Grace Grace, promised at the state Labor conference in 2016 that laws would be introduced, but nothing has happened.

Under existing laws workers lives are cheap. Under Queensland Workplace Health and Safety laws a breach, causing death, carries a maximum fine of just \$60,000.

Grocon was fined \$250,000 for safety breaches that resulted in the deaths of three people when a brick wall collapsed on passing pedestrians in Melbourne in 2013. Yet, in 2015, the CFMEU was fined \$545,000 for “unlawful, intimidating and coercive conduct” during an enterprise bargaining dispute with Grocon.

One construction worker dies every week across the country. In October 2016, two construction workers in Brisbane were horrifically crushed to death between two concrete panels that had been incorrectly braced. Only a few days before, a rigger had walked off the job because of safety fears, saying that someone was going to get killed on the site.

Queensland, Tasmania and the Northern Territory are the only states that do not have industrial manslaughter laws of some kind. The CFMEU will picket the next Queensland state Labor conference in July. Unless legislation is introduced, another strike and demonstration is planned for 9 August.

Meanwhile CFMEU members are preparing for another day of strike action on 20 June, over the federal government’s efforts to re-introduce the ABCC and to take away union rights and safety conditions by demanding EBAs are “code-compliant” with their anti-union laws.

CFMEU members are showing the way; bad laws do have to be broken. Determined action can break the anti-union laws and stop the fines.

Ian Rintoul



Above: Construction workers walk off the job in Brisbane to demand industrial manslaughter legislation

Queensland, Tasmania and the Northern Territory are the only states that do not have industrial manslaughter laws of some kind

Sydney Uni staff move towards strike action

A PACKED meeting of 250 NTEU members at Sydney University on 8 June voted to begin balloting for industrial action.

The union is currently negotiating a new enterprise bargaining agreement covering working conditions and pay for the next four years.

Prior to the meeting, university management had already been forced to back down from their proposal to scrap the 40/40/20 clause in the current agreement. This stipulates academic staff should have a workload of 40 per cent teaching, 40 per cent research and 20 per cent administration. Management wanted to force academic staff to individually negotiate their workloads with supervisors. Instead they now want to be able to appoint teaching only positions—a way to achieving the same goal of forcing some academic staff out of research.

They also want to scrap Scholarly Teaching Fellowships and Early Career Development Fellowships. These positions were won in bargaining in 2013 and offer one of the few paths out of casualisation.

Management also wants to be able to externally advertise professional staff positions without first internally advertising them. This will affect staff career progression.

They have also refused to agree

on any of the NTEU core claims. The NTEU is arguing for a provision to prevent forced redundancies—important given the recent history of mass dismissals. The Provost, Stephen Garton, has said there will be redundancies as part of the impending university restructure.

Management is also resisting claims around casuals’ conditions including payment for all work undertaken, equal superannuation to that of on-going staff, access to resources, and paid sick leave.

The mass meeting is an encouraging sign that there is the mood to fight. Staff members are sick of the ever increasing workloads and the lack of consultation on changes at the university.

The anti-union laws mean that legally NTEU members now have to wait for the electoral commission to run a ballot on whether staff want to take industrial action and what kind of action they support. This will take at least six weeks. More than 50 per cent of members must return their ballot paper, and a majority of them must vote for industrial action.

UTS and UWS are also currently bargaining. Coordinated industrial action would really hit the university bosses and could begin to turn conditions around for the better.

Vivian Honan

By Tooba Anwar

UTS stands up to Islamophobic attacks

OVER 150 students and staff gathered at UTS in Sydney on 23 May to protest and condemn a series of targeted Islamophobic attacks.

Students and staff spoke out and marched to the site of one of the attacks, chalking messages of “welcome” and “no to Islamophobia” to reclaim the campus.

Aishah Ali, a member of the UTS Muslim Society spoke at the rally and commented that, “To have a diverse group of students unify in solidarity for a common initiative shows great strength and acceptance for the Muslim female community, but it monumentally enhances our lived experience on campus.”

On 11 May, four women wearing the hijab were assaulted in a series of unprovoked Islamophobic attacks by a 39-year-old journalism student. Four women who expected to be able to walk safely to university became victims of a hate crime. In response, the university put up a Facebook statement proclaiming that they had provided counselling sessions for people who had been subject to this vile act of racism.

The rally was organised by members of the NTEU at UTS and student activists including members of Solidarity.

Kais Al Momani, one of the academics who spoke, witnessed the attacks and helped facilitate meetings between the students and staff.

UTS likes to pride itself on its support for social justice and diversity, running a “Racism it stops with me” campaign through its Equity and Diversity Unit.

Verity Firth, head of the unit, told the rally, “We are determined to create a campus culture of inclusion and acceptance”.

But the pressure it puts on its staff, 78 per cent of them on casual or fixed term contracts, is at odds with allowing them the time to properly create such a culture on campus. UTS is at the forefront of attacks on education with its recent introduction of trimesters.

Nor is action on campus enough to get to the root cause of such racism. These attacks are not anomalies, and are the result of racism which comes from the top of society, trickles down and festers, breeding xenophobia.

The “fear” of Muslims is manufactured by continual scaremongering about terrorism from the government



Above: Students at UTS rally at the site of one of the Islamophobic attacks

and the media. Their racism gives confidence to individual bigots to carry out such attacks. This needs to be acknowledged if we are to try and end islamophobia and racism in all its forms.

The rally at UTS showed how to respond both to individual racist attacks and the wider climate of Islamophobia—bringing together people from across society, united against racism.

Electricians at Brisbane City Council beat plan for 24/7 rosters

ELECTRICIANS AT Brisbane City Council have beaten an attempt to impose new rosters requiring them to work any time of day, seven days a week.

The 21 workers were locked out for two and a half weeks, after they took industrial action imposing work bans during enterprise bargaining.

The council’s hard line left the public in danger, as the electricians carry out repair work on traffic signals. In the event of an accident or breakdown, this could have led to traffic chaos.

The council gave in after 200 AMWU members indicated that they would join them on strike the next day.

The new rosters would have made work around the clock and at weekends part of ordinary working

hours, and forced some people onto permanent night shift.

“The proposed rosters are a joke,” Queensland and Northern Territory AMWU secretary Rohan Webb told the media.

“These rosters mean that employees won’t be able to plan a trip with their families because they will constantly be on call.”

ETU Queensland and NT Organiser Brenton Muller said, “These members have spent nearly three weeks on the grass fighting not only for their own rights, but the rights of more than 5000 Brisbane City Council who also faced the same attack from Brisbane City Council management”.

Their win shows that when unions take action together, solidarity action can beat the bosses.

James Supple

.....
The rally was organised by members of the NTEU at UTS and student activists

More police powers won't keep us safe from terrorism

By Miro Sandev

THE TURNBULL government is ramping up fearmongering about terrorism as it struggles in the polls with an unpopular, anti-worker agenda.

Turnbull has stepped up his rhetoric, talking of the “growing threat” of “Islamist terrorism”.

He is using the attack carried out by Yacub Khayre in Brighton as an excuse for bringing in further draconian measures.

Following a meeting with the state premiers, Turnbull said laws would be strengthened to create a presumption against bail and parole for people who have “demonstrated support of, or links to, terrorist activity.”

Spy agency ASIO will share information about “radicalised inmates” with prison authorities to keep them locked up.

Turnbull’s response opened the door to even more extreme calls. Pauline Hanson took the opportunity to call for the internment or deportation of all those who are on “terror watchlists”. Alarming she received backing from retired general Jim Molan and sections of the media.

Hanson also mimicked Donald Trump’s call for a total ban on Muslim migrants, declaring again that “Islam is incompatible with Australian values”.

Australian politics is following the same pattern of attack and then increased repression characteristic of France and the UK.

None of the waves of repressive “anti-terror” legislation have made people safer or prevented future attacks. In fact it has just meant Muslims have been further harassed and discriminated against, increasing the resentment within the Muslim community. This only makes it easier for the Jihadist groups to recruit new people.

France has been under a state of emergency for almost two years now, meaning police can ignore normal civil liberties like issuing warrants when raiding homes and only detaining people when they have been charged with a crime.

But none of this prevented the truck attack in Nice seven months after the state of emergency was declared or a number of other deadly incidents.

Likewise, in the UK successive governments have implemented ever



Above: Police in Melbourne after the Brighton siege

more punitive policies against Muslims such as the hated Prevent programme, which is a spying operation on children and teenagers. This did not prevent the Manchester or London bridge attacks occurring.

More measures

Victorian Labor Premier Daniel Andrews is pushing for an even harsher response from Turnbull and will be proposing more measures at a terrorism summit later this year.

Andrews said police should be handed “some tools and some powers that they don’t enjoy today”, conceding this could curtail the “rights and freedoms of a small number of people”.

Andrews wants to ramp up preventive and post-sentence detention, meaning people can be jailed without having committed a crime, or forced to stay in jail even after completing their sentence.

Both these measures go against basic legal principles like being innocent until proven guilty, and not having your liberty deprived if you have served a punishment.

Andrews is also arguing for the bar to be lowered for the use of repressive control orders that restrict movement and impose curfews. He wants bans on associating with certain groups, and potentially bans on internet access or certain search terms. All of these laws have been almost

exclusively used against Muslims.

There are also calls for people who have “supported” terrorism to be stripped of citizenship, and to force internet companies to decrypt messages sent by suspects.

These policies have been branded a “threat to democracy” by civil rights lawyers, but Andrews wasn’t too fussed by that.

One barrister said: “It’s completely unwarranted and presupposes the existence of a police state”. “These kinds of authoritarian measures do nothing to affect the crime rate but carried forward into legislation they threaten our democracy.”

Not to be outdone, NSW Premier Berejiklian will introduce a ‘shoot-to-kill’ policy to allow police to murder terror suspects with impunity. She is also arming riot police with high-powered assault rifles that are normally only used by the military. In addition, there are plans to segregate Muslim inmates away from non-Muslim inmates in the Goulburn supermax prison.

We don’t need more draconian laws and police powers. These create more of the anger that fuels terrorism in the first place.

To deal with terrorism we need to tackle its underlying causes. This means ending the racism against Muslims in the West and a withdrawal of Western troops and Western bombs from Muslim countries.

.....
Anti-terror laws have meant Muslims have been harassed and discriminated against, increasing the resentment within the community

By James Supple

PETER DUTTON has threatened to deport or cut off income support to thousands of refugees living in the community. In a disgraceful piece of dishonesty he branded 7500 of them “fake refugees” for not yet lodging their refugee claims. He has set an arbitrary deadline of 1 October for all of them to submit.

Yet it is the Immigration Department that has been refusing to allow them to lodge. A large number were not allowed to apply until last October.

The group, known as the “legacy caseload” are made up of asylum seekers who arrived by boat after August 13, 2012, when Labor announced its “no advantage” rule and re-opened Nauru. The Coalition refused to begin processing them until it had passed legislation in December 2014, stripping them of the right to permanent visas. This means years more of uncertainty on a Temporary Protection Visa, or a SHEV if they can move to a regional area.

They cannot submit applications until they are formally “invited” to do so by the Immigration Department.

Of the original 30,000 in the group there are only the 7500 left to apply.

Legal funding

The application form they have to complete is 41 pages long, and must be completed in English. It is all but impossible to fill out without legal help.

But the government also cut funding for refugee legal services. As a result legal providers are scrambling to fundraise, and rely on volunteer lawyers to complete the applications.

All the legal centres have long waiting lists of asylum seekers who need help with their claims. In response to the new October deadline, legal providers told the government that between 3000 and 4000 of them were already on their waiting lists.

Earlier this year the Immigration Department began issuing letters to asylum seekers, threatening to cut off their income support payments unless they lodged their paperwork within 60 days.

This has forced the centres supporting them to speed up their work. Immigration Department boss Mike Pezzullo admitted in Senate estimates that the 1 October date was actually their estimate of how long it would take them to submit all 7500 remaining claims. But he was unable to explain why Dutton imposed this as an arbitrary deadline.

As part of its 2014 legislation, the

Dutton’s deadline threat to asylum seekers



Above: Iraqi asylum seekers protest their situation on Temporary Protection Visas and bridging visas waiting for processing

Coalition also imposed new rules that strip appeal rights from asylum seekers and ensure more of them will be refused refugee status.

Under this so-called “fast track” process, the rate of refusal for asylum seekers has grown from 5 per cent

to 30 per cent. Those denied refugee status are immediately cut off any income support, and face deportation.

The treatment of these refugees is another example of the cruelty and abuse designed to stop them coming here. It has to stop.

Refugees are not a terrorism risk

IN THE wake of the Brighton siege, the right-wing media is again scaremongering about refugees and terrorism. *The Australian’s* Chris Kenny declared that the country had experience four fatal terrorist incidents involving, “four dead terrorists, and all four of them here under our refugee program.”

But it simply isn’t true that terrorists are arriving as refugees or somehow getting through government screening. Not a single refugee who arrived by boat has been involved in terrorism. Yet it is refugee boat arrivals that are the main target of the fearmongering about refugees. Refugees also arrive by plane or as part of the official government selection process from camps overseas.

Three of the four incidents Kenny referred to involved people either born here or who arrived as very young children. Yacub Khayre, who staged the siege in Brighton on 5 June, arrived in Australia aged seven. It was his experience of growing here that turned him into a petty criminal, addicted to drugs, who spent more time inside prison since age 16 than outside it.

Similarly Numan Haider, shot after stabbing a police officer in 2014, arrived here when he was around

eight. The family of Parramatta shooter Farhad Jabar arrived in Australia around the same date he was born.

The only one who arrived here as an adult among the four was Man Haron Monis. He arrived on a business visa, but stayed as a refugee. Monis lived here for 18 years before he staged the Martin Place siege. Far from the usual picture of a hardened extremist, a psychologist told the inquest into the event that he was “a disturbed individual with delusional thoughts and narcissistic tendencies”. At one point he boasted of connections to Iranian intelligence. Among other bizarre acts, he ran a “spiritual healing” business advertising numerology, astrology and magic spells.

None of these four refugees had the slightest connection to terrorist extremism when they arrived in the country. Their lengthy periods of life in Australia before becoming involved in terrorism mirror the experience in Europe. All but two out of the 18 people involved in the November 2015 Paris attacks, for example, were either born in or grew up in France and Belgium. As even ASIO chief Duncan Lewis has said, statistically, refugees are not more likely to be involved in terrorism.

.....
The government cut funding for refugee legal services, leaving them to fundraise and rely on volunteer lawyers

General strike in Greece as Syriza enforces brutal austerity demands

TENS OF thousands of workers flooded the streets of central Athens in Greece in late May, as the country was brought to a standstill by a general strike.

Workers across the private and public sectors came out against the latest round of cuts demanded by Greece's creditors. It came on the eve of MPs from the ruling Syriza party and its allies from the Independent Greeks forcing the latest "memorandum" austerity package through parliament.

The new austerity measures are required so the Greek government can keep repaying its debts under the third bailout deal since 2010 with the European Union (EU) and International Monetary Fund (IMF).

Even the IMF thinks the debt is not repayable, delaying the bailout because it fears the conditions being demanded are unsustainable.

The Greek economy has gone back into recession. Seven years since the first austerity memorandum there is still no end in sight to the demands for austerity.

Workers' Solidarity journalist Giorgios Pittas, from Solidarity's sister organisation, said, "The general strike was successful, but the strikes and protests have to go on after the vote in parliament tonight.

"They can vote the memorandum through but we have the power to stop them on the streets and in the workplaces. Workers across the public and private sectors are saying we need to fight."

Ship workers started a four day strike in the lead up to the vote. Doctors stayed out for an extra 24 hours after the general strike and council workers began a new 48 hour strike the following week.

Air traffic controllers struck for four hours, grounding scheduled flights across Greece. The Poesy journalists' union organised a 24 hour strike.

Giorgios told *Socialist Worker* that bus workers in Thessaloniki are on all-out strike. And women shop workers came out for the first time during the general strike against Sunday working hours.

Migrant agricultural workers led one of the marches to join thousands of people in Athens city centre. Protesters converged on Klauthmonos square for a rally called by various



trade unions.

As politicians debated the conditions for the latest bailout package, some 15,000 workers marched on the parliament building.

Brutal

People's lives have been ripped apart by the brutal austerity. It has been implemented by the ruling Syriza party, since it came into office in 2015, at the behest of the EU.

Syriza, a party from the radical left, took government on a promise to end austerity measures.

But within 12 months it capitulated to the demands of Greece's creditors and is now imposing the very measures it previously opposed. In the face of blackmail from the EU that it would send Greece's banking system into meltdown, Syriza was not prepared to break with the Greek bosses and their desire to remain within the EU.

This stands as a warning to left-wing leaders in Europe like Jeremy Corbyn in Britain, Jean-Luc Melancon in France or the Podemos party in Spain.

All have won support through promising a government that will tax the rich and end the dismantling of public services.

But the ruling class and global

Above: Workers in Athens join the general strike in late May

financial institutions will put up fierce resistance to efforts to break with the neo-liberal, austerity agenda.

The unemployment rate in Greece stands at 23 per cent, rising to 48 per cent for people under the age of 24.

The conditions for the latest bailouts include a further cut to pensions and lowering the threshold at which people pay income tax.

Some people have seen their pensions slashed by as much as 50 per cent.

In a statement the Adedy civil service workers' union said, "No to the new looting of salaries and pensions."

The strikes and rallies sent a clear message to the government against the implementation of the bailout.

People on the protest slammed the Syriza-led government for its sell-outs. "They told us they would end austerity and tear apart the bailouts," said pensioner Paraskevi Tsouparopoulou. "Instead they brought us disaster."

"People can see how Syriza's solution doesn't work," said Giorgios "The bailout proves to everyone that the social democratic solution doesn't work."

It is the strikes and the workers' struggle from below that can pose a solution.

Adapted from Socialist Worker UK

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Some people have seen their pensions slashed by as much as 50 per cent

UK election shock: Corbyn surge shows support for left alternative

By Jean Parker

JEREMY CORBYN'S dramatic success in the British election shows the wide support for left-wing ideas. After Trump took the US presidency, and the far right National Front did well in the French presidential election, some said the right was on the rise globally.

It shows that socialists and the left can also tap the anger at the political system.

The idea that social democratic parties like Labour (and the ALP here) are only electable if they are pro-market, centrist and neo-liberal has been blown out of the water.

Despite universal ridicule from the media, the Tories, and many Labour MPs, Corbyn achieved a 9.5 per cent swing, reversing a long trajectory of British Labour's decline.

Prime Minister Theresa May, who called the snap election confident that her 20-point lead would result in a landslide, has been humiliated. She now holds government only with the support of the bigots of Northern Ireland's Democratic Unionist Party. Her minority government will be weak and unstable. May is already under challenge as the Tories bicker over her leadership.

Most commentators mistakenly put May's defeat down to her appalling campaign and the U-turn over her pledge to privatise home care for the elderly. But this ignores the popular surge towards Corbyn that increased the voter turnout. Seventy-two per cent of young people between 18-25 voted, up from 43 per cent in the last election.

Corbyn's manifesto included pledges to increase the minimum wage, re-nationalise railways, power and the post, 500,000 new council houses, free university tuition, one million new jobs through public investment and the repeal of anti-union laws. He promised to pay for this by increasing taxes on corporations and the rich.

These policies proved more powerful than all the media accusations that Corbyn had "loony" policies or was sympathetic to terrorism.

But as we saw with the example of the radical Syriza government in Greece in 2015, being elected with a democratic mandate does not deliver the power to make change. Even if Corbyn had won, the kinds of reforms promised in his manifesto are never



Above: Jeremy Corbyn addresses a rally of thousands in Gateshead in the final weeks of the campaign

delivered without struggle outside parliament.

Waiting for a Corbyn win at the next election would be a mistake. The rallies for Corbyn during the campaign, some attracting tens of thousands, show the potential to turn support for Corbyn's policies into a force that can fight the Tories to win them.

Politics matters

Crucial questions face Corbyn and the movement around him. His position as leader may be secure but the right still dominates the Labour MPs. The hypocrites who tried to knife Corbyn now congratulate him for a "strong campaign" but they remain just as determined to pull Corbyn to the right.

Chris Leslie, who resigned from Labour's front bench when Corbyn was elected leader, told the media, "We should not pretend that this is a famous victory... I will never apologise for my view which is... that you can actually move from protesting about a government to being the government." Such right-wing Labour MPs will have to be fought.

On another crucial issue, Brexit and free movement of people, Corbyn has wavered.

In the aftermath of the Brexit vote, Corbyn was pressured to pander to the arguments that migrants take jobs or run down government services. Corbyn rejected this, but now accepts that free movement will end after Brexit (while avoiding to say whether immigration should rise or fall).

Such concessions politically weakened his campaign and only disarm

Labour supporters in the struggle ahead.

In response to the two terror attacks during the election, Corbyn said the war on terror had failed and made mild references to Britain's war-mongering in the Middle East. But he then attacked May from the right, accusing her of making Britain less safe by cutting police numbers.

But more police will do nothing to stop terrorism. They will be used to harass and intimidate Muslim and migrant communities, increasing the racist divisions that fuel it.

The lessons of Corbyn's success have been completely lost on Australian Labor. ALP National president Mark Butler told reporters there is no need to find a Jeremy Corbyn-like leader in Australia. "We've been united, we've been disciplined and we've been holding this government to account." But Shorten is leading a Labor Party that is hide-bound by neo-liberalism when what is needed is a stand for refugees, for the right to strike, and against Turnbull's cuts.

The leadership of The Greens should also take note. Under Richard di Natale, the Greens have been moving to the right, in the name of "responsible pragmatism". However, Corbyn's success shows the possibilities of winning working class support for a radical social democratic platform.

All those inspired by Corbyn, and who want to see a real fight for change—for socialism—need to become part of the resistance on the campuses, on the streets and in the workplaces.

.....
Corbyn's manifesto included pledges to increase the minimum wage and re-nationalise railways, power and the post

Has Trump killed the Israel-Palestine ‘peace process’?

By Erima Dall

IT MIGHT be too early to declare the death of the so-called Palestinian “peace process” but after Donald Trump’s visit it is sicker than ever.

Too shameless to hide the truth, he gave Israel a green light to expand deeper into the Palestinian West Bank.

In February he stood alongside Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu in the White House and said he wasn’t fussed between a “one state” or a “two state” solution and was happy with whichever “both parties like”.

Coming out of Trump’s mouth, “one state” can only mean total colonisation of Palestine, as part of the “Greater Israel” project. Trump was publicly stating that his administration would not insist on a future Palestinian state.

The peace process began in 1993, allegedly to negotiate a separate state for Palestine. The Palestinian leadership was co-opted into the process, but in reality it is all process and no peace. The years of talks have provided cover for Israel expanding its settlements deeper and deeper into the occupied West Bank. Since talks began, the number of illegal settlers has gone from around 100,000 to over 400,000 (the figure is 750,000 including East Jerusalem, annexed by Israel 50 years ago).

The peace process has also done nothing to stop Israel blockading the Gaza Strip or periodically launching murderous bombing raids on the Palestinians.

Journalists were quick to label Trump’s comment as a break with decades of US policy.

There is no doubt Trump is a particularly rabid friend of Israel. He provocatively promised to move the US embassy to Jerusalem. And his ambassador to Israel, David Friedman, is a fierce supporter of, and fundraiser for, settlement building.

And yet Trump also wants to be seen as the ultimate “deal maker”, boasting that he alone can reach a settlement.

So, while ramping up the tough talk, he offered a few hollow words when he met Mahmoud Abbas, leader of the Palestinian Authority (PA), in Washington, pledging to “get this done”.

He also visited Bethlehem in the West Bank, and tentatively suggested



to Netanyahu that he, “pull back on settlements for a bit”.

No break

Trump’s position is in fact a version of US policy since 1993. Israel is the number one US ally in the Middle East—a watchdog and imperialist partner that receives more US aid than any other country.

First and foremost, the US wants to shore up this alliance. But without the fig leaf of peace negotiations, Israel’s expansion brings international condemnation and further regional destabilisation through increased resistance from Palestinian and the wider Arab populations.

The peace process was begun specifically to politically stifle repeats of the First Intifada (uprising) in 1987, when Palestinians heroically fought Israel’s occupation.

Yet the idea of a two state solution becomes more fantastical by the day. Netanyahu went to Israel’s 2015 election stating there would be no Palestinian state on his watch. His “prerequisites” are that Palestine recognises Israel as a Jewish state, and that, “Israel retain overriding security control over the entire area west of the Jordan River”.

This amounts to a demand to give up the right to a sovereign state altogether.

Resistance

But a two state solution has never been just. It would keep Palestinians in fragmented enclaves, yet ensure Israel remained intact as a specifically

Above: Palestinians protest outside an Israeli settlement in the West Bank

“Jewish state”, ethnically defined, with discrimination and population control at its heart. A single, democratic, secular state encompassing all of historic Palestine, with one vote per person, is the only just solution.

The mood for fresh resistance against Israel is growing, as is Palestinian frustration with the corrupt leadership of Palestinian Authority. The PA plays the role of policing Palestinian resistance for Israel. It is deep in collaboration with Israel, is economically dependent on it and has nothing to show for selling its soul. Far from ending the occupation in over 20 years, it has let it run rampant right under its nose. Now, 64 per cent want Mahmoud Abbas gone.

At the same time, Hamas—the elected but unrecognised leadership of Palestinians in Gaza—is edging rightwards. For the first time, they have dropped their opposition to recognition of the Israeli state.

The recent hunger strikes by Palestinian prisoners in Israeli jails lasted for 40 days, accompanied by widespread protests. Trump’s visit was met with a general strike in the West Bank.

Trump’s visit might have encouraged Netanyahu but global opinion is turning against Israel.

In practice, Israel-Palestine is already a single state—the imperialist apartheid state of Israel. A new struggle is needed to expose the reality. Real justice for the Palestinians will mean tearing down the apartheid wall and the checkpoints, abolishing martial law, and winning right of return for refugees.

.....
The peace process was begun specifically to politically stifle repeats of the First Intifada in 1987

Trump abandons climate deal as world dithers on action

By James Supple

DONALD TRUMP'S decision to quit the Paris climate treaty has been condemned worldwide. It means one of the world's two largest carbon polluters has abandoned the global effort to tackle climate change.

Although it will take the US three and a half years to formally withdraw from the treaty, Trump has announced that all efforts to implement it will end immediately.

His move strengthens efforts by climate deniers and big polluting companies everywhere to avoid action in order to keep pumping out more emissions.

Five Coalition MPs called on the Australian government to follow Trump, including Craig Kelly, the chair of the Coalition's environment and energy committee.

But many governments who are dragging their heels on climate change also criticised Trump. Malcolm Turnbull opposed his decision, while his government prepares a \$1 billion loan to help Adani build Australia's largest coal mine.

Even big business in the US was strongly critical of Trump's move.

Some companies think they can make money out of renewable energy, like battery manufacturer Tesla and its CEO Elon Musk.

But oil companies including Exxon and ConocoPhillips also called on Trump to stick with the Paris deal. This is not because they support an end to the use of fossil fuels. Exxon CEO Darren Woods noted that under the Paris deal, demand for oil would keep increasing.

The fossil fuel companies also see the Paris agreement as a way of avoiding any action on climate change that might damage their profits. ConocoPhillips appealed to Trump to remain part of the deal by arguing, "It gives the US the ability to participate in future climate discussions to safeguard its economic and environmental best interests".

The Paris agreement will not deliver the kind of action needed to halt dangerous climate change. It is based on voluntary, non-binding pledges by individual countries to cut their emissions, with no penalties for those that fail to do so.

As a result the pledges under the Paris deal will lock in global warming of between 2.7 and 4 degrees. Yet



Above: Trump has tried to present climate action as an attack on jobs

the deal itself noted the need to keep warming to 1.5 degrees—the point where a number of Pacific island nations will begin to disappear.

Market solution?

The mayors of almost 200 US cities declared they would continue to support the Accord, and take their own actions to reduce emissions.

Many businesses have also jumped on board. In the last two years, over 50 per cent of all power generation installed globally came from renewable energy. The cost of installing solar PV has fallen by half and wind energy by two-thirds since 2009. And this trend is set to continue.

This has led some to believe that the free market will soon have us on track for a 100 per cent renewable energy future, even without government subsidies.

In his response to Trump's decision, former US President Barack Obama claimed, "the private sector already chose a low-carbon future... the Paris Agreement opened the floodgates for businesses, scientists, and engineers to unleash high-tech, low-carbon investment and innovation on an unprecedented scale."

But the World Energy Council, attached to the UN, estimates that fossil fuels will still provide between 50 and 70 per cent of global power by 2060. To have any hope of avoiding dangerous warming, the world needs to stop burning fossil fuels entirely well before this.

Australia currently draws 17.3 per cent of its power from renewable energy, and most of this is decades-old hydro power like the Snowy Mountains scheme.

The Finkel review, released in June, outlines plans to reduce energy emissions by 26-28 per cent by 2030, the target Australia tabled at Paris. This leaves unexplained how emissions from other sources like transport would be reduced. And even by 2050 almost 30 per cent of Australia's power would still come from coal and gas.

Scaling up to 100 per cent renewable energy requires building large solar thermal power plants, with storage technology that can produce power 24 hours a day.

This is currently more expensive than rooftop solar panels, or coal and gas power plants. That means it cannot be left to the market and private investors to build it.

What we need is government funding to build renewable energy on a massive scale. Alongside this there must be planning to end emissions from cars, trucks and all forms of transport, both through the expansion of public transport and a shift to electric vehicles powered by renewable energy.

Trump has set back the fight to save the climate. But the governments that signed the Paris deal, and the corporations behind them, are not the answer either. It will require a mass movement to fight for the action we need.

.....
Fossil fuel companies see the Paris agreement as a way of avoiding action that might damage their profits

HOW THE WEST CREATES TERRORISM

It is not Islam or extremist ideas but the destruction of the Middle East by Western imperialism, and the racism accompanying it, that causes terrorism, argues **Miro Sandev**

IN THE wake of the London bombings and the incident in Melbourne, Turnbull has stepped up his fear mongering about Muslims and Pauline Hanson is calling for an end to Muslim immigration. The calls to “name” Islam as the cause of terror have been growing louder.

Head of spy agency ASIO, Duncan Lewis, parroted the line that has been used by many governments in the war on terror: it is a violent interpretation of Islam that causes terrorism.

Western leaders often say that Islamic terrorists attack us “because of our values” or “who we are” as opposed to anything we do. They try to present the supposedly progressive, democratic values of the West as the target of the backward worldview of the terrorists.

Terror “experts” warn constantly that radicalisation can happen simply by watching the wrong YouTube videos by a Muslim preacher, or going onto the wrong Facebook pages.

But this ignores the fact that most attackers are inspired primarily by wanting to avenge brutal Western wars against Muslim majority nations, as well as the anti-Muslim racism they face at home.

Violent imperialist invasions have always provoked violent reprisals. Robert Pape’s study of every suicide attack carried out between 1980 and 2004 concluded that it was political issues, usually foreign occupations, which were the main motivators for attacks.

This shows there is nothing inherently Islamic or even fundamentalist about suicide attacks in particular, or terrorism in general. Suicide terror attacks have been carried out by Christians, Buddhists and atheists.

A study by Olivier Roy of around 100 Franco-Belgian Muslim terrorists found that none of them were particularly devout in their religion nor had religion played an important part in their “radicalisation”.

Almost all of them had an “ambivalent relationship” to their mosque and

many of them had even been expelled from mosques because of their violent attitudes.

Right-wing commentators have tried to play down the role of imperialism in causing terrorism by saying that the 9/11 attacks in the US came prior to the destructive wars in Afghanistan and Iraq.

But the West’s brutal interference in the Middle East has a much longer history.

Imperialism

Western nations colonised and pillaged Egypt and North Africa in the nineteenth century. The French and British carved up the Middle East between them following the fall of the Ottoman Empire after the First World War.

The West also instigated the formation of Israel and the ethnic cleansing of the Palestinians in 1948.

As well as launching its own wars, the West has backed dictators, and funded and trained numerous armed groups. Many of the Islamist groups Western leaders now claim to despise were once funded by the West.

US President Jimmy Carter’s national security advisor, Zbigniew Brzezinski, boasted that in 1979 the CIA secretly started funding and arming the Mujahideen, Islamic insurgents who were fighting the regime in Afghanistan.

Brzezinski hoped to lure the Soviet Union into invading Afghanistan to support the regime, and get them stuck in a drawn out war like the US’s war in Vietnam. This is precisely what happened.

At least half a million civilians died, and the country was left in the grip of rival warlords whose influence continues to this day.

When he was asked if he had any regrets about supporting the Mujahideen, Brzezinski said: “What is more important in world history? Some agitated Muslims or the liberation of Central Europe and the end of the Cold War?”

Most attackers are inspired primarily by wanting to avenge brutal Western wars, as well as anti-Muslim racism

Some of those “agitated Muslims” went on to destroy the World Trade Centre in 9/11, which George W. Bush then used to justify launching the war on terror.

The person who masterminded the attack, Osama Bin Laden, began his involvement in militant networks during the war in Afghanistan. He formed Al Qaida towards its end, setting it upon the West following the Gulf War in 1991 when the US went to war with Iraq.

This pattern of the West using insurgent groups to do its bidding only to see them turn on their former masters has played out many times.

Some of the Mujahideen fighters involved in Afghanistan were from Libya, and returned home after the war. In 1990 they formed a group dedicated to fighting the dictator Muammar Gaddafi, calling themselves the Libyan Islamic Fighting Group (LIFG).

They were given financial and military support by the UK government to fight Gaddafi, just as the Afghan Mujahideen had been by the US.

This ended briefly in 2004, as part of the war on terror, when UK Prime Minister Tony Blair struck a deal with Gaddafi. UK authorities placed many Libyan exiles on control orders and helped in the rendition of two senior LIFG leaders to Tripoli.

But in 2011, after the popular uprising against Gaddafi, the US, UK and France ordered air strikes against the regime and deployed special forces soldiers in Libya, seeking to take advantage of the situation for their own imperialist aims. The UK facilitated the return of terror suspects including members of the LIFG to Libya to fight Gaddafi.

Authorities returned their confiscated passports to them despite the fact that some of these people had been subjected to counter-terrorism control orders. They were not asked further questions.

Salman Abedi, the man responsible for the terrorist attack in Manchester

last month, fought alongside his father in Libya in 2011. His father had been a member of the LIFG.

Yet hardly anyone in the media or political establishment has criticised the UK government over its bloody intervention in Libya or for supporting the LIFG.

When Labour leader Jeremy Corbyn said the war on terror had failed and linked the attacks to Western imperialist wars, he was savaged by the political establishment who called him a “terrorist sympathiser”.

This history underlines the utter hypocrisy of blaming the Islamic religion, migrants or Muslims for terror attacks. Horrific attacks like those in Manchester ultimately come out of the horrors created by Western imperialism and racism.

Iraq invasion

The US invasion of Iraq in 2003 also played a major role in encouraging terrorism. The US war killed over a million Iraqi civilians and completely destroyed the country.

The jihadist group Islamic State (IS) emerged from the conditions of the brutal US occupation, which encouraged sectarianism between Shia and Sunni Muslims to try and control Iraq and divert the insurgency against American troops.

The creator of IS, Abu Mos’ab al Zarqawi, was a peripheral figure before the invasion of Iraq. Prior to this, Al Qaeda had no influence in the country at all. After the Americans removed Saddam Hussein, Iraq descended into chaos, with widespread looting, kidnapping and violent crime. Al Zarqawi created Al Qaeda in Iraq (the precursor to IS) in the chaotic post-war situation.

The US quickly faced mass popular resistance to the occupation. This had become a full blown armed insurgency by 2004, helped by the fact the US had disbanded the entire Iraqi army, sending hundreds of thousands of unemployed men back to their homes with their weapons.

But the US quickly developed a strategy of dividing the insurgency by consciously inflaming sectarian tensions.

The US was able to buy-off a section of Shia leaders by offering them lucrative positions in the provisional government.

They then carried out counter-insurgency using sectarian Shia militias who terrorised Sunni communities and brutally punished those who continued armed resistance.



Above: Unmarked graves of war victims in Basra, Iraq

This sectarian strife created the perfect conditions for Al Qaeda and Al Zarqawi. His group carried out vicious and indiscriminate terror attacks on Shia communities as well as attacking the occupying forces.

While the US killed Zarqawi, a coalition of army officers from the old Baath dictatorship and veterans of occupation prisons built IS. It then moved into Syria during the turmoil of the uprising and subsequent military conflict.

In 2014 they captured huge swathes of territory across Iraq and Syria and declared a Caliphate.

The West responded by further bombing in Iraq and Syria in their bid to destroy IS. But the bombing only adds to the list of imperialist crimes. The independent site, Air Wars, estimates that civilians killed by coalition bombing in Syria, Iraq and Libya are around 4000.

Racism

Western governments reject out of hand any idea that their imperialism is what fundamentally creates the conditions for terrorism.

This means they can only explain the appeal of Islamist extremist groups by using racist stereotypes about Muslims and Islam. The most explicit is the idea that the Islamic religion is inherently prone to violence and extremism.

So there are constant calls for “moderate” Muslim leaders to pub-

licly condemn terror attacks, as though they are responsible for every act by someone who identifies as Muslim. Likewise, Muslims are under pressure to explain how their religion is peaceful and compatible with democracy.

Bogus government “inquiries” have been held into halal food and Islamic schools, so as to incriminate all Muslims.

Teachers are forced to spy on Muslim school children and report them to security services if they spot “signs of radicalisation”. Bigots are mobilised to oppose local council approvals for mosques. All of this puts Muslims under siege.

Even the claim that “extremism” is a misinterpretation of Islam points the finger at Muslims and away from its real cause—the oppression that Muslims face.

The far right has been taking advantage of the Islamophobia of the mainstream parties. Parties like One Nation have taken up the most extreme positions against Muslims. This anti-Muslim hatred that is boosted from the top of society helps fuel the resentment that pushes individuals toward terrorism.

But admitting this does not fit the priorities of Western governments, as they use Islamophobia to justify their brutal wars in the Middle East.

The cycle of wars and terrorism will not end until we stop Western imperialism and the racism against Muslims.

RECOGNITION AND THE ULURU STATEMENT: PEARSON'S ADVISORY BODY WON'T BRING REAL CHANGE

Noel Pearson's plan to enshrine a toothless advisory body in the Constitution will change nothing for Aboriginal people, writes **Paddy Gibson**

AFTER THE conclusion of a major Aboriginal conference at the Yulara resort near Uluru in May, many Aboriginal people and supporters across Australia were rejoicing. Press reports said that the conference had rejected the farce of "constitutional recognition" in favour of treaties, a real voice and serious structural change.

But the constitutional amendment being proposed by the Referendum Council following the conference offers Aboriginal people no rights whatsoever. They are advocating a toothless advisory body, to be completely shaped and set up by government.

Tellingly, the idea of "constitutional recognition" was floated by John Howard just after he launched the NT Intervention in 2007. Howard wanted a tokenistic preamble to the constitution that did nothing more than acknowledge Aboriginal prior occupation of Australia.

When Labor took office they continued to support constitutional reform. Julia Gillard funded an "Expert Panel" to look at possible options for change in 2010. From 2011, Reconciliation Australia, with Commonwealth support, began funding a flashy marketing campaign, first called "You me Unity" and then "Recognise" to popularise the idea of constitutional change.

In 2012, the Expert Panel came back with recommendations for self-determination and a treaty process, but also said that this would fail at a referendum. The panel did however call for a new clause that would prohibit racial discrimination and specify that laws could only be made which were of benefit to Aboriginal people.

Predictably, the Liberal party rejected the recommendations. But they did continue to fund Recognise, which now faced growing protests in Aboriginal communities.

Seeking to broker a compromise, in 2014, the conservative Indigenous figure Noel Pearson called for an

Indigenous "voice to parliament" to be enshrined in the constitution. Legal academic Anne Twomey from the University of Sydney worked with Pearson's Cape York Institute to draft a proposed constitutional amendment.

Crucially, the "voice" under this plan would be purely advisory and have no real powers. Twomey told *The Australian* it was, "developed specifically to bring the far right on side". Pearson has worked hard to win support in the Liberal party and business community. A conservative organisation, Uphold & Recognise, with supporters including Liberal MPs Tim Wilson and Julian Leeser, is campaigning for the proposal.

In 2015, Turnbull appointed a Referendum Council to advise the government. The Council has tried to position itself as separate from the tainted Recognise and co-chair Pat Anderson, a long term rights campaigner has helped give the body some credibility. But the Council includes Tanya Hosch, a former Recognise director and is stacked with right wingers. Other members include former Howard government Minister Amanda Vanstone, a key architect of the push to close remote communities and pro-Intervention Aboriginal figures Pearson and Galarrwuy Yunupingu. One of the co-chairs is a prominent pro-Israel campaigner Mark Leibler.

In the last six months, the council has held twelve "dialogues" with Aboriginal communities around Australia to discuss possible reform options. The dialogues also elected delegates to travel to Uluru for a final conference, designed to establish a consensus recommendation for change to go in a Referendum Council report to government on 30 June.

The discussion paper prepared for these dialogues put forward a number of proposals sanctioned by the Council and approved by both Malcolm Turnbull and Bill Shorten

.....
The "voice" to parliament under this plan would be purely advisory and have no real powers

for discussion. These all reflected the options for change initially advanced by the expert panel with one key addition—Noel Pearson's proposal for the "voice to parliament".

Pearson triumphant?

The "regional dialogues" were invitation only and capped at 100 participants. Despite this, they did reject the idea of tokenistic constitutional reform.

Key themes at all the discussions were demands for treaty, sovereignty and an end to the skyrocketing rates of child removal, incarceration and policies like the Intervention. Almost universally, the Recognise campaign was condemned.

These themes again dominated the Uluru discussion. Speaking to the press after the conference, Referendum Council co-chair Pat Anderson said acknowledgement in the constitution had been "totally rejected".

The conference's "Uluru statement from the Heart" made two demands, for "a First Nations Voice enshrined in the constitution" and a "Makarrata Commission to supervise a process of agreement making between governments and First Nations and truth-telling about our history".

The call for a "First Nations Voice" has widely been seen as an endorsement of the constitutional amendment advocated by Pearson. On the ABC's Q&A, flanked by other Referendum Council members Megan Davis and Pat Anderson, Pearson spelled out the details:

"The constitutional provision would say that parliament would legislate the voice. It would be up to parliament to set out the design, how people would be elected to it, what functions it would perform and what powers it would have."

He was clear that the "voice" would lack any veto powers, with Pearson confirming, "It wouldn't have a role in the legislative process of the parliament. It will have salutary politi-



Above: Conservative indigenous figure Noel Pearson at the summit near Uluru

cal effect”.

Such a change to the constitution would change nothing at all for Aboriginal people. It would be the same kind of tokenism that has already been rejected by the Aboriginal dialogues that led up to Uluru.

Already, Aboriginal communities and organisations are heavily involved in debate which surrounds legislation that effects their communities. The “Stronger Futures” legislation, passed in 2012 to continue the racist powers of the NT Intervention, came after a multi-million dollar consultation process, not just with representative bodies, but with communities on the ground. The government simply ignored their voices, as they could easily do with this proposed “voice”.

Pat Anderson told Q&A that one attraction for the Uluru delegates of having a “voice” enshrined in the constitution was ensuring that, “it doesn’t get dismissed by the stroke of a pen by some current minister”. Over the last 50 years, numerous national Indigenous bodies have been abolished by government when they became politically inconvenient, most recently ATSIC in 2005.

The constitutional amendment proposed by the Cape York Institute however, would do nothing to stop any “voice” being abolished by government, who could simply pass new legislation creating a “voice” more to their liking. Anne Twomey told *The Australian*:

“the idea was that although the Constitution said there had to be a body, it was up to the parliament to

decide how it should be composed...

The reason for this was to avoid the ATSIC problem—the concern being that entrenching something like ATSIC in the Constitution, if it becomes dysfunctional you can’t get rid of it.”

Opposition

Opposition to Pearson’s proposals emerged during the Uluru conference itself. On the second day, 19 elected delegates walked out, along with a number of activists who attended the conference to observe and protest against recognition.

Wiradjuri leader Jenny Munro said, “It’s not a dialogue, it’s a one-way conversation. They are not looking at any alternative options other than the Noel Pearson road map... that is about validating their sovereignty [the Crown] on our land, not ours.”

Since the conference, there have been growing concerns from participants. Ghillar, Michael Anderson from the Sovereign Union wrote, “In my opinion the conclusions that occurred at the Referendum Council’s National convention at Uluru were totally betrayed by the Q&A panel.”

Josie Crawshaw, one of the NT delegates, told a panel discussion in Darwin, “Pearson’s model, the advisory body... has been ruled out by every dialogue and Uluru. It needs to have some delegation of powers that the Federal Government has now... powers to make policies and programs. And we need a guaranteed source of revenue”.

Crawshaw is part of a “working group” of 29 delegates elected at

Uluru. The group is meeting to finalise an endorsed model for the “voice”. A clear rejection of the Referendum Council’s interpretation of Uluru as a mandate for Pearson’s “advisory body” model is needed to do justice to the deep hostility to “symbolic change” expressed through all the dialogues.

“Agreement making” as discussed by Referendum Council leaders Noel Pearson and Megan Davis since the Uluru statement also poses no real challenge to the status quo. They have compared the process as similar to the negotiation of Indigenous Land Use Agreements (ILUAs) under the Native Title Act.

For many Aboriginal people, ILUAs are instruments of dispossession. They are pressured to agree to extinguish their meagre Native Title rights, often in exchange for crumbs under heavy pressure from powerful interests.

No wonder Jennifer Westacott, Chief Executive of the Business Council of Australia, spoke in support of the call for “Agreement making” on ABC radio. Native Title has provided no threat to capitalist interests. This is a far cry from the calls to fundamentally shift power relations imposed by colonisation that drive many Treaty campaigners.

The Uluru statement rightly condemned the exploding rates of child removal, incarceration and youth suicide and spoke of the “torment of our powerlessness”. Many delegates who voted to support the Uluru statement want serious change. But the constitutional change road is a dead end for these aspirations.

Even the tame call for an advisory body has been totally rejected by Deputy Prime Minister, Barnaby Joyce. Turnbull is reported as being cautious warning that “constitutional change would be very difficult”. That’s a “No”.

ALP leader Bill Shorten called on politicians to “keep an open mind” and said Labor would not shy away from the “big questions” but, cautiously, he also says he wants to study the long-term implications of an advisory body. Given Labor’s record, Shorten will want to be sure that any advisory body is toothless and token.

Real power will never come from proposals designed to be acceptable to big business and the Liberal party. Just like any major changes that have ever improved the lives of Aboriginal people it must be built through grassroots, collective organisation, protest and demonstrations reaching out to the

NT Intervention: a decade of racist brutality

By Paddy Gibson

IN MAY this year, events were held to mark 50 years since the successful 1967 referendum, a campaign widely seen as winning full citizenship for Aboriginal people. But June is the ten-year anniversary of John Howard's Northern Territory Intervention, a policy that has turned black people into second class citizens, once again.

The Intervention was based on the disgraceful lie that "pedophile rings" were operating in Aboriginal communities. The Australian Crime Commission was granted "star chamber powers" to investigate, but found there was no evidence of pedophile rings at all. But the vicious demonisation of Aboriginal culture, and Aboriginal men in particular, continues to do its damage.

Howard waged a long war on Aboriginal self-determination. He cut community organisations to pieces, gutted Native Title and then abolished representative body ATSIC in 2005.

Howard fought for a "white-blindfold" view of Australian history, denying Aboriginal genocide while celebrating the "achievements" of colonisation, including the mission system and Protection Acts that had subjugated Aboriginal people throughout the 20th Century.

The Intervention re-established a Protection regime in the NT, and brought a new wave of assimilationist policies. Introduced by Howard, it was shamefully rolled out, in 2008, by the incoming Rudd Labor government.

Labor delivered another blow to the anti-Intervention campaign in 2012, when it essentially extended the Intervention for a further ten years, under its "Stronger Futures in the Northern Territory" legislation.

Alcohol and pornography remain prohibited in Aboriginal communities. Police have massively expanded budgets and special powers to enter homes and vehicles on Aboriginal land without a warrant. The number of Aboriginal men in prison in the NT has doubled since 2007 and the number of female prisoners has increased more than four times over, making the NT a world leader in incarceration rates.

"Child protection" teams focus entirely on surveillance and removal of black children. The number of Aboriginal youth in detention has doubled and the number of children going into foster care is more than four times higher than 2007. Former



Above: Convergence on Canberra to protest the Intervention in 2008

NT Children's Commissioner, Howard Bath, summed up the Intervention years, saying, "on the whole, the child well-being indicators in remote communities are getting worse".

Child abuse

Ironically, while the Intervention was pitched as necessary to "save the children" from abuse, the Don Dale Royal Commission is currently investigating the systematic torture of Aboriginal children by government employees in detention centres. The Commission is also hearing of forced removals, with children taken hundreds of kilometres, denied their language and abused in foster care; treatment that is identical to that of the Stolen Generations of the past.

Just like the Protection regime that paid Aboriginal people in rations rather than cash, under the Intervention welfare payments are quarantined. Half is paid on "BasicsCards" that can only be used to buy "essential items". But Aboriginal medical services are reporting widespread, chronic hunger in communities, with incomes cut because of Centrelink breaches.

Aboriginal unemployment rates across remote Australia have skyrocketed from 11 per cent before the Intervention, to 28 per cent today. Thousands of young black people aren't even registered with Centrelink because of onerous conditions, and receive no income whatsoever.

Prior to 2007, the Community Development Employment Program (CDEP) paid poverty wages, but enabled Aboriginal people to make a life on their lands.

Howard, however, announced

"Aboriginal people have no place outside the Australian mainstream" and that remote communities were "economically unviable". The Intervention abolished CDEP to try and force people to migrate. Under a new scheme, CDP, people have to work 25 hours per week to receive quarantined welfare payments—approximately \$5 cash per hour.

The racism and assimilation of the Intervention has set devastating new norms for Indigenous politics nationally. Now, the only government solutions for chronic poverty and associated social problems created by dispossession are various forms of welfare quarantining. A new "Healthy Welfare Card" is set for trial across regional and remote WA despite the enormous administrative cost and the documented failure of the BasicsCard.

The government decree that Aboriginal communities are not "economically viable" culminated in 2015 with the withdrawal of all Commonwealth funding for essential services for remote communities, followed with threats from the WA government to evict people.

In 2007, as the Intervention began, Aboriginal women from "prescribed areas" burned copies of the legislation. Years of campaigning has followed.

A protest convergence on 24 June in Alice Springs will mark ten years of the Intervention. In a welcome move the Australian Council of Trade Unions have formed the "First Nations Workers Alliance" to fight the CDP scheme. And the Don Dale Royal Commission is facing consistent protests.

For Aboriginal rights to go forward anywhere, the corrosive politics of the racist Intervention must be defeated.

Aboriginal youth in detention have doubled and the number of children going into foster care is four times higher than 2007

Temporary migration in Australia under the microscope

**Not quite Australian:
How temporary
migration is changing
the nation**

**By Peter Mares
Text Publishing,
\$32.99**

PETER MARES' book, published mid-last year, argues there has been a significant shift towards temporary visas away from permanent migration in Australia. He sets out to uncover the impact on temporary migrants, who can go years living in uncertainty without the rights held by other workers.

Migrant workers on 457 temporary work visas have been scapegoated for unemployment by Malcolm Turnbull, the unions and Labor leader Bill Shorten alike. Turnbull has now replaced 457s with two similar temporary work visas.

But those on temporary visas also include international students, working holiday makers, New Zealanders and even refugees. They are denied a whole host of rights that come with permanent status.

Mares illustrates the pitfalls of temporary migration through the personal stories of, among others, a new wave of Italian migrants resulting from Europe's economic crisis and Greek migrants recruited to work with the Greek population in an old people's home.

Mares looks at how temporary migrants have less rights when something—whether losing their job, an injury at work or relationship breakdown—goes wrong. Swan Services Cleaning, which went broke in 2013, owed millions in unpaid wages and annual leave entitlements to its 2500 workers. A federal government scheme established



to deal with corporate collapses guaranteed the money owed to Australian citizens and permanent residents. But many of the company's workers were international students, who got nothing. The same is true of workers' compensation benefits if someone injured at work on a temporary visa has to leave the country.

This lack of rights also leaves them vulnerable to exploitation—particularly in the case of temporary work visa holders. If they lose their job, they must find a new employer within 60 days, or face deportation.

Most want to become permanent residents. This requires employer sponsorship after three years of working for the same company, putting workers at the mercy of their boss. Turnbull's changes mean some migrants on temporary work visas lose any chance to transition to permanent residency. Some might be able to switch to a different visa, such as a partner or student visa. Most won't stay.

Abuses

Because of their vulnerable position, temporary visa workers have sometimes been exploited, with

companies paying them less than either the market rate or the minimum \$53,900 wage required by law.

Mares has tried to quantify this using Fair Work Ombudsman investigations. Breaches of the law have been found at one quarter of the workplaces employing 457 visa workers investigated. This is likely to overstate the problems, he argues, as the Ombudsman targets companies where there have been complaints or suspicion of abuses.

Workers on 457 visas have been labelled as a threat to "Aussie jobs". Mares rightly rejects the idea there is any, "simple equation between adding a foreign worker and taking an Australian job". He points out every extra migrant needs housing, food and other services, creating more demand

**Mares illustrates
the pitfalls
of temporary
migration through
personal stories**

and more jobs. A migrant who fills a skills shortage can mean a company employs other workers, for instance, "a foreign cook... may create jobs for Australian wait staff or butchers or vegetable growers or delivery drivers".

New Zealand citizens in Australia are also classed as temporary migrants, Mares explains, even though they have an automatic right to live and work here. Since 2001 they have been denied welfare payments including unemployment benefits and must pay up-front fees for university courses.

Unless they can move onto another visa, most likely a skilled migrant visa, New Zealanders have no pathway to permanent migration and citizenship rights. As many as 200,000 New Zealanders work in low skilled jobs and have no prospect of this. One result is that New Zealanders, particularly Maori, end up living on the streets, including kids who migrated with their families.

Here to stay?

The number of workers on 457 visas alone is small—there were just 81,300 in

Australia at the end of 2016, around 0.7 per cent of the workforce.

But overall temporary migration has grown by three quarters in the last ten years, so that there are now over one million people living in Australia on all kinds of temporary visas. Mares estimates they make up 8 to 9 per cent of the workforce.

Many of those who arrive on temporary visas are not simply here temporarily. Australia's immigration program is now largely a "two-step program", Mares argues, where migrants arrive on a temporary visa before gaining permanent migration status.

He shows that 457 visa workers are among the most likely to end up settling here permanently—over 40 per cent who arrived in the last decade did so.

Turnbull's recent changes mean most people on the new Temporary Skills Shortage visas will not be able to move onto permanent visas.

There are estimates that 15,000 people a year will lose this right, reducing the percentage of the permanent skilled migrant quota who have arrived on temporary visas from roughly 60 to 50 per cent a year. But temporary migration will remain an important path towards permanent residency.

If unions continue to blame temporary migrants for unemployment, they will cut themselves off from a large and growing part of the workforce. Campaigning to keep out temporary migrants is the wrong approach. We need to fight for them to have the same rights as permanent migrants so they are less vulnerable to exploitation and abuse.

James Supple

BACK SYDNEY BUS DRIVERS, NO TO PRIVATISATION

By Matt Meagher

BUS DRIVERS in Sydney's inner west are fighting privatisation, staging strike action in defiance of the Industrial Relations Commission.

Despite being told in December that all public bus contracts would be maintained, Transport Minister Andrew Constance has announced plans to contract out the inner west region's bus services. At least 59 routes from Sans Souci in the south to Olympic Park in the west as well as another 150 school services in the inner west and south Sydney will be put into private hands.

"Drivers are panicking, morning and afternoon, in the depots," one Tempe depot driver told *Solidarity*.

Rail, Tram and Bus Union (RBTU) Bus Division Secretary Chris Preston said the Government's decision would, "result in rolling closures of bus services and bus stops for commuters across Inner Western Sydney, affecting tens of thousands of commuters."

"Private bus operators put profits before the public. To make money they'll slash services and cut back on maintenance. We've seen it happen before. Less popular, less profitable bus routes get the chop and commuters are left stranded."

After already cutting 200 back office staff, a further 1200 public transport workers' jobs are on the line.

While drivers were ordered by the Industrial Relations Commission (IRC) not to take industrial action, hundreds of bus drivers at depots in Leichhardt, Burwood, Kingsgrove and Tempe voted to hold a 24-hour strike against the surprise announcement.

Despite a second order from the IRC, drivers and the RBTU followed the strike with a region wide fare-free day on 1 June.

"At ground level it really raised community awareness around bus privatisation, people appreciated us notifying them and we received a lot of support," said a Kingsgrove depot driver.



Above: Bus drivers during the 24-hour strike

Drivers were issued letters from the government threatening fines for taking any further fare-free day actions. But with their jobs at stake some drivers tore the letters up in front of depot managers.

"The union acts as a watchdog for the community and the workers in any given sector. If something isn't right we can yell out, we keep the government honest," he added.

While the transport minister has justified the decision citing lateness and a high level of complaints, including buses refusing to stop to pick up passengers, one Tempe depot driver explained that, "in peak hour our buses are often jam packed full, if it's full we can't stop". The solution is not privatisation, but more buses.

Step up the fight

While 11 of Sydney's 15 bus regions are already in private hands, the remaining four run by the State Transit Authority (STA) carry the vast majority of passengers. Large private enterprises Keolis Downer and Transit Systems are desperate to get

their hands on Sydney bus services, including the new bus corridor known as the "B-Line" from Sydney's CBD to the lower north shore and northern beaches opening next year.

The NSW Liberal government is selling off practically everything in sight. It has privatised the power industry, the Land Titles Office, hospitals, ports and disability services. Sydney's government-owned ferries were sold off to a private consortium in 2012. Steffen Faurby, the former boss of Sydney Ferries, has now become the chief executive of STA and is at it again.

This is a fight that can win. There is enormous public opposition to privatisation. If the bus drivers are prepared to step up the strike action, and spread it beyond immediately affected depots, they can force the government to back down.

The Liberal state government will not rule out further bus service privatisations. This means it is not just bus drivers and services in the inner west that are at threat. This is a fight that everyone must get behind.

Hundreds of bus drivers voted to hold a 24-hour strike against the plan

Solidarity