

SCRAP THE CITIZENSHIP BILL STOP TURNBULL'S RACIST DIVIDE AND RULE



GREENS

New move on Lee
Rhiannon and NSW left

TURKEY

Syria, imperialism
and the Kurds

LEFT PARTIES

Corbyn, austerity and
left reformism



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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

Commonwealth Bank believes people have the right to express their views as long as they do so in a peaceful manner in compliance with the law and common standards of courtesy. Apparently the Commonwealth Bank found Adani mine protests outside its branches during the Students of Sustainability conference annoying.

The last thing I want to do is be difficult

Tony Abbott on his revenge campaign against Turnbull

Normally the business conditions we are seeing would be consistent with non-mining growth in demand of around 4 per cent plus. But it's not actually happening at present.

NAB chief economist Alan Oster, trying to say that wages are falling and underemployment is increasing—but profits are good

There is a sense that if we screw this up, a Marxist government steps into the breach

A senior British Tory MP quoted in the *Financial Times* on the threat of Jeremy Corbyn

I certainly don't think he's a racist, if that's what you're inviting me to say. I certainly don't believe that.

John Howard on Donald Trump

I find him very easy to deal with... in the sense that he is frank and forthright and you know where you stand. Malcolm Turnbull on dealing with Trump

The problems Africa faces are...civilizational... a fight against corruption, a fight for good governance, and successful demographic transition where countries today have seven or eight children per woman

French President Emmanuel Macron on why he won't provide aid money to Africa

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INSIDE THE \$Y\$TEM

Border Force sends Australian citizens to Christmas Island

IN LATE June the Australian Border Force admitted to illegally detaining two Australian citizens on Christmas Island. The two men were detained and sent there under section 501 of the migration act. This allows for the detention and deportation of a non-citizen who is judged to have failed the “character test” by the minister or a delegate. Section 501 is usually applied when a non-citizen commits a criminal offence.

However, despite being born in New Zealand the two men were both Australian citizens. This means there was no legal basis for sending them to the island prison camp.

Since the Coalition lowered the character test threshold in 2014, almost 1000 New Zealand citizens have been deported or detained. They include people who arrived here and children and have spent their whole lives in Australia.

This is not the first time Australian residents have been illegally thrown into one of the government’s detention hell-holes. Vivian Solon, an Australian citizen, was wrongly deported to the Philippines in 2001, while permanent resident Cornelia Rau was detained for ten months between 2004 and 2005.

Turnbull expands \$4 an hour intern program



THE LIBERALS have announced an expansion of the \$4 an hour “internship” program launched in the 2016 budget. ACTU President Ged Kearney pointed out that young people in these placements would be compensated at a rate of about \$4 an hour and described the program as, “bordering on slavery”.

The government program called “PaTH” pays businesses \$1000 up-front to take on so-called interns for nothing. Workers employed under the program get a \$200 top-up on their fortnightly Centrelink payments instead of real wages. The scheme is aimed at 120,000 people aged 18-24 who will be targeted for 12-week placements. The government claims it is preparing the unemployed for ongoing work—but only 82 of the 620 people who have been on PaTH placements since April have been given any kind of ongoing employment.

Employment Minister Michaela Cash has revealed the expansion of the PaTH program is taking place in “partnership” with the Australian Retailers Association. Retailers such as Bakers Delight and Coffee Club have already eagerly signed up for the scheme. This will see “interns” doing entry-level retail jobs serving coffee or taking orders without getting paid. As Clara Jordan-Baird from Interns Australia said, “It shouldn’t be normal to pop into your local Coffee Club and see an ‘intern’ waitress working for free.”

Terror attacks involving Muslims get four times more coverage

RESEARCHERS AT Georgia state university in the US have found terror attacks get four times as much media coverage if they are carried out by a Muslim. The gross bias was revealed after analysing media coverage of all terror attacks in the US between 2011 and 2015. Muslims carried out just 12.4 per cent of attacks but these received 41.4 per cent of news coverage. That meant a 449 per cent increase in coverage when the perpetrator was Muslim.

The 2013 Boston bombing, where two Muslim brothers killed three people, received one-fifth of all media coverage over the five year period. A massacre at a Sikh temple in 2012 in Wisconsin left six dead. But it was carried out by a white man—Michael Page—and got only 3.8 per cent of total coverage. Another white man, Dylan Roof, killed nine at a black church in South Carolina but only received 7.4 per cent of coverage in the period. According to the authors: “Based on these findings, it is no wonder that Americans are so fearful of radical Islamic terrorism. Reality shows, however, that these fears are misplaced.”

Research and writing by Adam Adelpour

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

Could Grenfell fire happen here?

THE GRENFELL Tower fire killed at least 80 people with the death toll still rising. The horror has become a symbol of all that is wrong with austerity and capitalism in the UK and beyond. The flammable cladding used at Grenfell is banned in the US and Germany because it is so combustible. But it has been used in Australian public housing too.

The contempt of the local Tory-run council for local public housing tenants is beyond belief. Their prime concern has always been the rich tenants of the expensive houses and luxury apartments across the area.

Grenfell’s Tory council chose the cladding because it was \$3.40 per square metre cheaper than less flammable alternatives. It was installed partly to appease wealthy residents in the gentrified area surrounding the tower. They un-clad tower spoiled their nice views.

Following a 2009 fire at another tower block in South London, councils were advised to install sprinklers to prevent deaths. This advice was dismissed as too expensive.

Since taking power the Tory government has cut millions in funding from the fire service, reduced fire safety audits by 25 per cent and even suppressed reports into tower block fire safety.

Disgracefully some of the residents who survived the fire are still receiving no government help at all and remain homeless.

A fire at an apartment block with similar cladding in Melbourne in 2014 should have been a warning. Fire spread rapidly up the cladding, with loss of life only prevented by sprinklers installed in the building.

A report produced two years ago estimated as many as 2500 buildings in NSW alone may be covered in similar flammable cladding.

Executive pay at big banks \$300 million

SENIOR EXECUTIVES at Australia’s big banks took in a combined \$300 million last year in salaries.

The figure includes executive pay at the Commonwealth, Westpac, ANZ, National Australia Bank and Macquarie, those targeted in the government’s new bank tax. That’s one third of the amount the bank tax itself is scheduled to raise.

Macquarie Bank alone paid its executives an eye-watering \$126 million.

Commonwealth CEO Ian Narev took in \$12.3 million alone, just behind Macquarie CEO Nicholas Moore on \$18.7 million and its head of asset management, Shemara Wikramanayake on \$17.3 million.

EDITORIAL

Weak and divided—United action can beat Turnbull

MALCOLM TURNBULL'S headaches are growing larger and larger as he falls further behind in the opinion polls. If an election was held today, Labor would win decisively. Even Treasurer Scott Morrison has admitted the public is just not listening to Turnbull any more.

Things went from bad to worse following Turnbull's speech in London as he tried to claim the legacy of Liberal Party founder Robert Menzies, for himself. It has blown up in his face, as the Liberal Party tears itself apart over whether or not they are conservative. They are!

But as Turnbull falls further in the polls, the divisions in the Liberal party get deeper. There are arguments over climate change, renewable energy, and equal marriage.

And Tony Abbott fuels the divisions in the background, sniping over immigration, submarines and school funding.

Turnbull has made a fool of himself by refusing to say Abbott's name in media interviews.

Meanwhile, Labor's Bill Shorten is tacking to the left, promising to reverse Turnbull's tax cuts for millionaires and high-income earners, and overturn the cuts to penalty rates.

Desperate to gain some political advantage, the Liberals have resorted to fomenting more racism and Islamophobia with their amendments to the Citizenship Act. Its university-standard English language test and extended four-year wait time are discriminatory and divisive. The "Australian values" questions are Islamophobic and racist.

In a very welcome move, Labor has broken its usual unity ticket with the Liberals over national security. After umming and ahing over the citizenship bill, Labor now says it will oppose it. A defeat for the bill will be a serious setback for the Liberals.

But Labor is a long way from embracing the kind of radical platform that boosted Jeremy Corbyn and Labour in the recent British election. Such a platform of bringing back free education, renationalising the power industry, stopping work for the dole, and increasing benefits and pensions, is something that the union movement will need to fight for.

The Liberals are weak and divided. Now is the time to build a united fightback against Turnbull.

The Greens could be a central element of that fight. They are closer to



Above: The CFMEU construction union staged its second national day of stopwork action to fight Turnbull on 20 June

Corbyn's radical platform than Labor. That is one reason why the position taken by the majority of the Australian Greens parliamentarians to negotiate with Turnbull over his (private) school funding plan, Gonski 2.0, was such a mistake.

If leader Richard Di Natale had got his way, The Greens would have given Turnbull a win and shot themselves in the foot at the same time.

Thankfully, Senator Lee Rhiannon and the NSW Greens opposed voting for Gonski 2.0—which would have boosted funding to private schools at the expense of public schools.

The Greens avoided a Democrats-style GST moment, this time. Socialists have an interest in supporting Lee Rhiannon and the NSW Greens against The Greens "party room". The fight against Turnbull will be stronger if The Greens are unequivocally a part of it.

Build a fightback

The ACTU has begun to campaign to "change the rules" over strike action, tax and the minimum wage, pointing out that laws like the Fair Work Act and the Australian Building and Construction Commission (ABCC) are stacked in favour of corporations and the rich.

Stopwork rallies played a key role in the union Rights at Work campaign that was crucial to defeating John Howard's Liberal government. But so far, despite ACTU's Secretary Sally

McManus backing union action to break bad laws, the ACTU campaign is focussed on the next election with videos for social media and appeals to contact MPs.

We need nationwide stopwork action to mobilise the whole union movement for the fight against Turnbull's war on workers.

Construction unions have now held two nationwide stopwork rallies in their fight against the Construction Code and the ABCC. The CFMEU is discussing further stopwork action against the Code in August, and has called for a combined unions' delegates meeting on 28 July in Sydney to discuss an all-union response.

The stopwork rallies have helped give workers confidence to say no to the bosses' efforts to impose new "Code compliant" enterprise agreements that would strip away workers' conditions and union rights.

Workers at De Martin & Gasparini, a Boral subsidiary in Sydney, have voted down a new agreement, and are now defying its threats to sack them all.

That's the kind of resistance that the whole union movement needs to mobilise to take on Turnbull, and to kill off the NSW Liberal government's plan to privatise buses in Sydney's inner west.

It is strikes and grassroots movements that can build the struggle for real change, against Turnbull and against the system that runs for big business and the rich.

.....
The ACTU has begun to campaign to "change the rules" over strike action, tax and the minimum wage

Gonski 2.0 shovels cash to private schools at expense of public system

By Chris Breen

MALCOLM TURNBULL presented his Gonski 2.0 package as a breakthrough delivering a significant funding boost for schools. This is an enormous con. It locks in significantly higher funding for private schools even than the original Gonski deal.

The Greens were wrong to enter negotiations with Turnbull and offer their support. This only helped the government pretend its package was reasonable. Greens Senator Lee Rhannon was right to oppose it. Eventually, The Greens did end up voting against the package, after Turnbull secured the votes he needed to pass it from the Senate crossbenchers instead.

Under Turnbull's deal, private schools will actually get more new funding than goes to public schools. Private school funding is up by \$9.3 billion compared to just \$8.7 billion for the public system. This is significantly worse than the existing Gonski funding deal, which at least ensured public schools received 80 per cent of the extra funding when fully implemented.

Gonski 2.0 will see the federal government fund 80 per cent of private schools' School Resourcing Standard (SRS) compared to just 20 per cent for public schools. The changes also abolish the existing provision for federal funding to increase until schools reach their full SRS. As a result most public schools will never reach 100 per cent of the SRS.

A school's SRS requirement is designed to allow them to get 80 per cent of students to satisfy NAPLAN standards, with extra funding based on socio-economic status and student disadvantage.

The state governments currently fund the bulk of public schools' needs, mostly providing a level around 70 per cent of SRS. They will now have to move towards 75 per cent, but there is no requirement to ever get funding to the full amount.

The Turnbull government is simply handing the funding problem to the states. Education Minister Simon Birmingham has made clear that the funding level, "is a matter of policy priorities for them."

But private schools will get more than their full allocation. State governments also give funding to private schools. In Victoria for instance, the effect of combined federal and state



Above: Education unions were right to oppose Gonski 2.0, which takes money away from public schools

funding will now provide them 105 per cent of the SRS.

Needs-based funding?

Both versions of Gonski claimed to be "sector blind", funding all schools on the basis of need. But this was always wrong as a funding principle. Guaranteeing funding to public and private schools alike only maintains the existing inequality between schools.

The original Gonski plan maintained state funding for private schools, and entrenched the narrow focus on NAPLAN scores. But Gonski 2.0 doesn't even pretend to fiddle with inequality.

Total funding to non-government schools is well over \$12 billion per year, making up 70 per cent of income for Catholic schools and over 40 per cent across other private schools. Government funding more than covers the total Catholic school wages bill. The government should either take over private schools or cease funding them.

Private schools losing money?

The government's claim that private schools would lose money under the new deal, along with Catholic school opposition to it, has been a source of confusion. But there are only 24 elite schools around Australia that will lose a small amount of funding.

Most "independent" private schools will gain—which is why the sector has embraced the deal. Elite private schools including Caulfield Grammar, Wesley College and Scotch

College in Melbourne and The King's School and Newington College in Sydney will get a funding boost. The percentage of independent schools funded above their SRS will increase from 17 to 65 per cent.

Exactly what Gonski 2.0 will mean state to state, and school to school, remains unclear. But Labor's Tanya Plibersek may well be right that public schools in Tasmania and the Northern Territory will be worse off. The Coalition plan will deliver \$17 billion less than Labor had committed over the next decade.

The Australian Education Union has rightly opposed Gonski 2.0, but its campaign for "Gonski funding" has been badly damaged. David Gonski's backing for Turnbull's plan has exposed the flaws that were always built into the Gonski model. "Needs-based funding for all schools" was code for continuing to fund private schools.

Well-funded public schools could reduce class sizes, increase teacher preparation time, and reduce social segregation. Government funding of private schools is a hand-out from workers to the rich that increases inequality—it must end. The relentless narrow competition that NAPLAN and the My School website foster also drives inequality, and must be opposed. We need an industrial campaign for public education. Public rallies organised by the education unions to oppose Gonski 2.0 and demand public funding for public schools would be a good start.

.....
Under Turnbull's deal, private schools will actually get more new funding than goes to public schools

Greens' direction at stake in attack on Lee Rhiannon and NSW left

By Ian Rintoul and James Supple

THE DECISION by Greens members of federal parliament to exclude Lee Rhiannon was a disgraceful attack on her, the NSW Greens, internal party democracy and the left in the party.

Although the party room, as The Greens MPs call themselves, used the fig-leaf of a local group's leaflet endorsed by Lee's office to attack her, the real issue is the NSW Greens' ability to bind how MPs vote.

Greens leader Richard Di Natale and The Greens parliamentarians want to fully embrace parliamentary deal-making and drag the party to the right. Lee Rhiannon and the left in the NSW Greens are regarded as an obstacle to this path.

The compromise announced by Richard Di Natale, to establish a pretentiously named "Balance of Power Subcommittee" involving all the other Greens MPs except Lee, does not resolve anything.

The subcommittee is simply another way to exclude her from discussions.

If there was ever any doubt, the party room's concern to privilege MPs is graphically exposed by the formation of that committee. And the party room's request, "that National Council work with Greens NSW to end the practice of NSW MPs being bound", still stands.

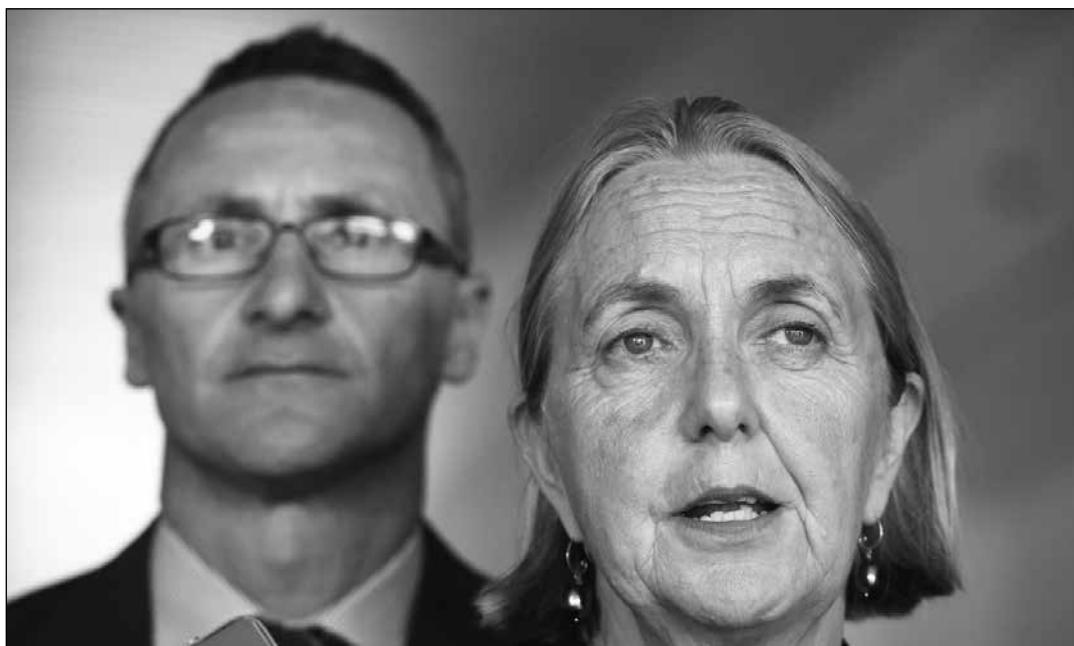
Former Greens leader, Christine Milne, joined the fray, using the national media to attack the NSW Greens as undemocratic. She put the position for a free vote for MPs very clearly, "They [Greens MPs] have the party policy as the basis for decisions but daily have to decide whether to support matters that come before parliament, regardless of whether there is a policy on them or not."

The issue in The Greens is not a constitutional one. It is a fundamental question of whether or not The Greens' membership has control of its MPs and what happens in parliament.

Binding MPs

The party room has a top-down view of who should control the party. It sees binding MPs as something that makes it impossible for them to operate in parliament. It is a view that puts parliament, not principles, at the centre of politics.

Parliament is a ruling class institution and a central cog of the capitalist



Above: Greens leader Richard Di Natale with NSW Senator Lee Rhiannon

system. It inevitably exerts conservative pressures on MPs to compromise with the prevailing political establishment.

In its early years, before the party had moved so far to the right, the Labor Party membership had similar battles to control its own MPs and insist they implement party policy in parliament, rather than do compromising deals with other parties.

Without real accountability to the party membership, MPs are pulled to the right, and bend or break party policies in the name of pragmatism, or as Richard Di Natale puts it, "achieving outcomes".

Never mind that the outcomes might go against party policy.

The Greens came very close to supporting Turnbull's Gonski 2.0 school funding proposal—a proposal that favours private schools. It was the NSW Greens' opposition to Gonski 2.0 that got in the way of the deal and saved The Greens from a GST moment.

The attack on the NSW Greens is just the latest episode in a long-running effort to squeeze out the most left-wing elements of the party in NSW. After last year's federal election, former Greens leader Bob Brown used the national media to declare, "They need a clean out in NSW", following a small decrease in the party's vote.

The NSW Greens' State Delegates Council (SDC) rebuffed the right, expressing full support for Lee Rhiannon and requested, "that NSW MPs be fully reinstated without restriction to

the Federal Party Room for all meetings, discussions and decisions."

It would seem that the compromise proposed by Richard Di Natale falls short of the SDC resolution. The very existence of the "Balance of Power Subcommittee" is an affront to party democracy.

In any case, the next phase of the struggle inside The Greens is going to be played out over the pre-selection of Lee Rhiannon for another term in the Senate. The NSW membership will vote on a candidate by the end of the year. That will be followed a few months later by a pre-selection battle over the left's David Shoebridge's NSW upper house seat.

There has been wide-ranging support for Rhiannon. Almost 200 NSW Teachers Federation delegates signed a petition supporting her stand. But the right will certainly contest Rhiannon's (and Shoebridge's) pre-selections. The right inside the branch has been emboldened by its success in the past two pre-selection contests in NSW.

Understanding what is at stake is the first step to mobilising The Greens' membership and supporters. The future of The Greens as any sort of left-wing party of protest is going to be largely determined by these pre-selection battles.

The most left-wing elements of The Greens understand that the real struggles to change the system are outside parliament. Over the coming weeks and months, the left is going to have to fight for that.

.....
Greens leader Richard Di Natale wants to embrace parliamentary deal-making and drag the party to the right

Turning the screws on Manus refugees

By Ian Rintoul

PNG IMMIGRATION and Australia's Border Force are relentlessly turning the screws on Manus refugees and asylum seekers to try to force them out of the detention centre.

As the October deadline for the end of Ferrovial's Manus management contract gets closer, the government is becoming more desperate to find a way out.

The detention centre has been declared illegal and the contract for running the centre is ending but the government has nowhere to re-settle the refugees, or the hundreds of asylum seekers still unprocessed or denied refugee status.

Despite the US resettlement deal, it is clear that hundreds are going to be left behind. Yet the government is ratcheting up the pressure on Manus Island.

In late June, another notice was posted inside the detention centre warning asylum seekers that they have until 31 August to agree to return home, if they want to get the \$25,000 bribe paid to those who agree to return "voluntarily".

To try and make the point, the notice is headed in bold "Manus RPC will close in 123 days".

The notice also warns that, "You are expected to cooperate with the closure..," and, "US authorities will take your history into account when deciding whether to offer you an opportunity to settle in the US."

Foxtrot closure

Border Force has already gone to extraordinary lengths to pressure refugees since announcing that Foxtrot compound inside the detention centre would close by the end of June. Twenty-eight refugees were forced to relocate when N block (inside Foxtrot) was closed at the end of May. But they found other places in Foxtrot and other compounds.

Refugees who moved into disused medical buildings adjacent to Foxtrot were also forced back into the compound. These buildings have now been partially demolished to prevent them being used again.

Since then, the gyms in Mike and Oscar compounds have been closed so there is even less to do inside the Manus prison.

Now Border Force has effectively



Above: The detention centre on Manus Island

shut down the canteen. Only phone cards, pens, and cigarettes are still available.

As *Solidarity* goes to press ten refugees who moved out of Foxtrot a month ago are still living in the disused Charlie Compound.

Despite the threats of eviction and to cut off the power, their electricity is still on.

Lorengau centre

Immigration is also stepping up the pressure on individual groups of refugees to move to the separate transit accommodation centre at East Lorengau, near the main town on Manus Island.

Afghans and Pakistanis were summoned to a meeting in early July and told, "you had better go to Lorengau, there are still rooms for you." But they left the meeting, telling Border Force on the way out, "We won't go to Lorengau."

Despite being told that moving to Lorengau would not interfere with any offer of resettlement in the US, Immigration has been demanding that people in Lorengau sign papers agreeing to be resettled in PNG.

Two refugees at East Lorengau, who had been asked to sign for PNG resettlement, moved back to the detention centre last week, but were

arrested by police inside the centre and taken back to East Lorengau.

There are just 65 people in the Lorengau centre.

Most of them have been interviewed by US officials regarding resettlement, but only five have had follow up medical checks. No-one believes that US resettlement is likely (Nauru refugees are still waiting eight months after their first interview) and life at Lorengau is just as deprived and even more dangerous than at the detention centre.

Rations are delivered twice a week because refugees there cannot afford to buy enough food.

The Australian government has agreed to pay \$70 million to all those they sent to Manus Island; compensation for false imprisonment and for the physical and psychological damage they have suffered on Manus Island.

It is an admission that the Australian government is responsible, but not a lot of money for four years of torture on Manus.

But the money can't buy a secure future; it won't reunite families; it can't buy freedom. The Australian government still owes them that.

The refugee movement still has to continue fighting to bring all the refugees and asylum seekers here.

.....
The gyms in Mike and Oscar compounds have been closed so there is even less to do inside the Manus prison

By James Supple

Dutton's citizenship changes a racist attack on migrants

THE COALITION'S citizenship changes are facing defeat in parliament, after Labor's decision to oppose them. Labor's move is a welcome shift, after Bill Shorten initially suggested he might accept them, and months of hesitation.

The changes are simply a political stunt aimed at spreading fear about migrants and trumpeting the government's hardline approach. Turnbull and Dutton proved this when they accused Labor of endangering national security by opposing them.

There has been shock from many new migrants at the plan to make them wait longer for citizenship, requiring four years on a permanent resident visa. People who spend years in Australia on temporary visas, like student visas or temporary work visas, could end up waiting over ten years before they can apply.

Tuğçe Guler, who helped organise a rally against the changes in Melbourne, explained, "I got my permanent residency visa in August 2016 and have been living in Australia since February 2013. I had just six days until I was eligible for citizenship and now I have to wait three and a half more years".

In a further piece of unfairness, Dutton wants to make the new requirements apply from the day of the bill's announcement, 20 April. So despite the fact the legislation has not passed through parliament, the government is refusing to process 81,000 citizenship applications in the hope it can apply the new procedures to them.

The Human Rights Commission says the revamped language test would require a higher level of English than "many Australian-born citizens". The standard is equivalent to that required at university, according to Race Discrimination Commissioner Tim Soutphommasane.

Some may struggle to ever become citizens. As many as 30,000 to 40,000 less people would gain citizenship each year, analysis by Peter Mares suggests. Refugees, who sometimes arrive with low literacy skills in their own language, would be among the worst affected.

Labor's Tony Burke pointed out that, "This introduces permanently in Australia a large group of people—an increasingly large group of people—who... will always be told by the Australian government they don't completely belong".

Already, the government is



Above: Rallying against the citizenship changes on 1 July in Sydney

discriminating against refugees who arrived by boat by refusing to finalise their citizenship applications. This means it is almost impossible for them to bring family members here.

Taqi Azra, a Hazara refugee from Afghanistan, told the Melbourne rally, "I came to Melbourne in 2010 and in 2016 passed my citizenship test as well, but I am still waiting [for citizenship]. Thousands of people from my community who came by boat are facing the same issues."

Further evidence of the racism behind this is the new "values test", which suggests that Australians have superior values to migrants. Applicants will be asked questions such as whether it is lawful to strike your spouse or

to deny education to girls. These play to racist prejudice about migrants, and Muslims in particular.

Migrants will also have to present proof that they are, "behaving in a manner consistent with Australian values", through working, volunteering in the community and sending their children to school.

Labor has focused its opposition on the language test, but won't criticise Dutton's racist "Australian values" test, with Bill Shorten saying, "we believe everyone should sign-up to our values".

The outcome of the legislation will be up to crossbench Senators including Nick Xenophon. There is every reason to think these changes can be stopped.

Victory against casualisation at Sydney Uni

CASUALS HAVE had a significant win against outsourcing at Sydney University, as negotiations continue for a new enterprise bargaining agreement (EBA). The university runs an employment agency for students called SydneyTalent. Since 2012, it has been using this agency to employ thousands of people, including in ICT, the library, finance and as research assistants. Staff receive far lower pay and worse conditions than if they were employed directly through the university.

Casual staff raised their experiences with the agency when they began meeting earlier this year. One staff member was offered a job earning \$20 an hour less than if he was employed directly.

When the NTEU bargaining team met with university management recently they told them that casuals were planning to expose the exploitation of staff through SydneyTalent. Management caved and have agreed that anyone who works at the university through SydneyTalent will be covered by the next EBA on the same pay and conditions as regular staff.

But there is more to be done. The university has refused to include other outsourcing agencies under the EBA. We need to step the campaign up to win the same rights for these workers and secure better conditions for all casuals. Balloting is currently underway to allow NTEU members at the university to take industrial action.

.....
The "values test" plays to racist prejudice about migrants, particularly Muslims

Mass protests against poverty and repression shake Morocco

By Jasper Bell

ORDINARY PEOPLE in Morocco have again taken to the streets, as the protest movement which started last October spreads. Last month, hundreds of thousands of protesters filled the country's capital, Rabat, after activists were arrested as part of a crackdown on opposition.

The protest movement began in the country's northern Rif region. It was originally sparked by the brutal police murder of a young fishmonger, Mohsin Fikri, from the city of al-Hoceima last October. He was crushed to death as he tried to retrieve his wares from a garbage truck, after they were confiscated by local authorities.

For many in Morocco, the murder was symbolic of widespread social injustice and the corruption of state officials. Protesters organised around demands including an end to inequality and repression, and the right to protest.

In Rif in particular, where unemployment is high and economic opportunities non-existent, demonstrators took aim at the regime's crony capitalism, which has seen state funding diverted into the business ventures of a wealthy elite connected to King Muhammad VI, while most people are denied vital services.

The Rif region, in the north of the country, has historically been marginalised and economically neglected by the central government.

Protesters have faced intense repression from the regime, as the military poured into the Rif.

But demonstrations in the Rif have continued unbroken since October, often under the slogans of ending state repression.

Arrests

In May, authorities arrested dozens of activists. This led to mass popular demonstrations across Morocco on 11 June, with hundreds of thousands taking to the streets in major cities in what Moroccan activist Mehdi Rafiq described as, "the largest political mobilisation since the 20 February movements in 2011, at the time of the Arab revolutions."

In 2011 mass uprisings shook the Arab world. Masses of people took to the streets, often for the first time in a generation, to challenge repressive rule, demand political rights and



Above: Demonstrators take to the streets in the Rif region of Morocco late last year

an end to corrupt regimes. Dictatorships toppled in Tunisia and Egypt, and the Assad family's 40-year rule in Syria was challenged. In Morocco, thousands organised around these same calls for rights and dignity, facing brutal repression from a regime deeply afraid of a mass challenge from below.

The latest protests have linked up with student struggles and mobilised broader layers of people through new

local organising committees.

The past few years have seen dictatorships reimposed and strengthened in countries like Egypt, Syria and Bahrain. But the poverty, corruption and authoritarian controls that ignited the Arab revolutions in 2011 remain as real as ever.

Popular movements like that in Morocco can re-emerge to challenge regimes just as they did in the Arab Spring.

Trump's racist Muslim ban revived

DONALD TRUMP'S racist ban against Muslims and refugees has been reinstated by the US Supreme Court. The judges unanimously agreed to uphold the ban, targeting the same six Muslim-majority countries as Trump's initial executive order.

But it has exempted people with a "bona fide relationship" with a person or institution in the US. This includes immediate family members, university students, or workers with a valid employment contract.

The ban is supposed to be temporary while the Trump administration finalises new "extreme vetting" procedures. Yet the initial ban was announced five months ago, and should already have expired by now.

Refugees are suspended from admission to the US for another 120 days, while travel from Libya, Iran,

Somalia, Sudan, Syria and Yemen is blocked for 45 days. This pushes the earliest arrival for any refugees admitted from Nauru and Manus Island under the US resettlement deal into November—a year after it was first announced.

The Supreme Court's ruling is temporary, before it can hear the full case after October, when court sessions resume. But the court is effectively washing its hands of the issue to avoid a decision angering the President.

By October the ban will be close to expiring and the issue is likely to lapse—putting the lie to the claim that the courts and institutions in the US would stand up to Trump.

In February Trump's Muslim ban drew spontaneous protests at airports across the US. These are the real hope for resisting his agenda.

James Supple

By Ian Rintoul

Poverty, terror and martial law in Mindanao

ON 23 May, the Philippines's President Rodrigo Duterte declared martial law over the southern island of Mindanao.

The declaration came after several hundred fighters in Marawi City in Mindanao clashed with the Armed Forces of the Philippines (AFP). The fighters are from the Abu Sayyaf Group (ASG) and the Maute Group, both of which are reported to have sworn allegiance to Islamic State (IS).

The fighting was triggered by an AFP raid targeting ASG leader Isnilon Hapilon, who has long been hunted by the AFP and US troops.

The Maute group achieved notoriety in December 2016, when it briefly took over Butig, a small town near Marawi.

The US has been quick to seize on the IS connection to step up its military presence. In Mindanao, US forces are directly involved in surveillance and intelligence operations as well as providing weapons and equipment, as part of its Counterterrorism Program.

Australia, too, says RAAF spy planes will fly missions across the southern Philippines. Visiting US general, David Berger, urged Australia to get more involved as, "Both of us have a long history of being an expeditionary force when needed".

Duterte's declaration of martial law raised concerns that his regime, already infamous for his brutal extra-judicial killings in the so-called drug wars, was about to plunge the Philippines into the kind of dictatorship imposed by President Marcos in the 1970s and 1980s. In Manila, there have been demonstrations against martial law, against bombing Marawi and for the withdrawal of US troops.

Much of the media commentary has focussed on alarmist concerns that, with IS facing defeat in Iraq, Mindanao was about to become the basis for a new IS caliphate.

It suits Duterte, the US and the Australian government to portray the fighting as a backyard terrorist threat. The fighters are certainly Muslim. Islam spread through Mindanao in the 14th Century, 200 years before the Spanish brought Catholicism. Mindanao repelled attempted foreign domination by the Spanish, the Americans and the Japanese.

It was land-grabbing and transmigration by imperial Manila (the central government of the Philippines) that marginalised the Muslim population and eventually resulted in armed con-



Above: Destruction in Marawi City in Mindanao caused by government airstrikes

flict with the Moro National Liberation Front (MNLF) in the late 1960s.

In 1996, the MNLF signed a "Final Peace Agreement", which was meant to give some autonomy to Muslim majority areas. But the Moro Islamic Liberation Front, (MILF) which had split from the MNLF in 1984, continued the armed struggle until it too entered peace talks in the late 1990s. In March 2014, it signed a Comprehensive Agreement on the Bangsamoro with the government.

New groupings

But other groups were not satisfied. The Abu Sayaf Group split from the MNLF in 1991 and continued fighting, although at times ASG was more a bandit force known for kidnapping (and sometimes beheading) foreigners to raise ransom payments.

There have always been limited connections between the Muslim independence movements in Mindanao and other Islamic struggles.

The founder of the ASG, for example, fought against Russia in Afghanistan. But there is little evidence of substantial ties between the Filipino groups and groups in the Middle East.

The Maute family is well connected to the MILF hierarchy, but they too have long opposed its leadership and the peace process it negotiated. The Maute brothers were educated in Egypt and Jordan. Their parents, who own houses and businesses in Mindanao and Quezon City, have been watched by intelligence for at least a decade.

Raising the black IS flag in

Mindanao seems a tactic to gain prominence in the local struggle for influence. Despite the media concern about the presence of foreign fighters, the AFP says it has found the bodies of just 11 foreigners, only three of them from the Middle East (two Saudis and one Yemeni).

In Mindanao, there is nothing to show for the peace agreements or the 25 years of promises by the central government to develop Mindanao. Four of the five poorest Filipino provinces are in Mindanao.

Marawi City sits within a province that is the poorest in the Philippines. The proportion of the population living below the poverty line has increased from 44 per cent to 75 per cent between 2006 and 2015.

The incorporation of previous independence movements is shown by the fact that when martial law was declared, both the MNLF and the MILF were reassured that the AFP would not interfere with the areas under their control. The MNLF even offered up to 5000 fighters to join the government forces at Marawi.

It seems only a matter of time before the AFP regains control of Marawi City, although much it has been destroyed by aerial bombing.

But it won't be the last we hear of "terrorists" in the Philippines. The successive movements in Mindanao have grown out of poverty, discrimination and the failure of central governments to deliver on their promises.

As in the Middle East, imperialist involvement by US and Australia will only make that worse.

There is nothing to show for the peace agreements or the 25 years of promises by the central government to develop Mindanao

Blockade on Qatar highlights Middle East rivalries

By Jason Wong

On 5 June this year, Saudi Arabia and its Middle East allies made the shock decision to sever diplomatic ties with Qatar, cut off transport access and expel Qatari citizens from their territories. The blockade was called in response to positive comments about Iran, supposedly made by the Emir of Qatar, published on a Qatari state news website. Qatar and the US FBI maintain that the comments were planted by hackers.

On 22 June the Saudi-led bloc gave Qatar ten days to comply with a 13-point list of demands for the embargo to be lifted. The demands included cutting diplomatic ties with Iran, ending military cooperation with Turkey, shutting down the Qatar-owned Al Jazeera news station and severing ties with “terrorist groups”.

The demands also include payment of reparations for loss of life and finances “caused by Qatar’s policies”, submission to audits of state finances for the next ten years, and the handing over of intelligence on opposition groups in those Gulf states.

The bloc that Saudi Arabia is moving against Qatar, which consists of the United Arab Emirates, Egypt, Bahrain and several others, have accused Qatar of funding and supporting “various terrorist and sectarian groups aimed at destabilising the region”.

That same claim could easily be made about both Saudi Arabia and Iran, who have spent the last few years funding sectarian militias on both sides of the Syrian Civil War and elsewhere. As two of the most dynamic centres of capital in the Middle East, Saudi Arabia and Iran jostle for imperialist influence. Turkey is the third largest player and is a key regional ally to Qatar.

Independent role

Qatar has developed a more independent foreign policy than the other Saudi allies, based on support of the Arab Spring (except in Bahrain). This is at the heart of the dispute. When Saudi Arabia refers to “supporting terrorists” what it really means is the Islamist political movement the Muslim Brotherhood, which is the main opposition force in Saudi Arabia and other countries in the region.

As the Arab Spring unfolded, Qatar began supporting the Muslim



Brotherhood’s President Morsi in Egypt, along with some Syrian opposition groups and rebels in Yemen. Qatar has also supported Hamas, which is linked to the Muslim Brotherhood.

This is not because Qatar is a champion of freedom. It hopes to co-opt these movements giving them a pro-capitalist, moderate leadership, which it can bend to its own will.

But Morsi was overthrown in a military coup that was supported by Saudi Arabia, the UAE and Jordan. And the Syrian uprising has been turned into a bloody civil war. So Saudi Arabia has felt emboldened to consolidate the attacks on the Muslim Brotherhood by going after their sponsor Qatar.

The objective of the 22 June ultimatum is transparent. The Saudis are demanding that Qatar align itself with the policies of the other Gulf states. By shutting down Al-Jazeera and its affiliates, the Gulf states also hope to choke off a major source of mainstream support for opposition movements in the region.

Qatar hosts the US Air Force regional command centre and over 11,000 coalition troops, so US diplomats are scrambling to end the infighting between their allies. The US has been humbled by its disastrous interventions in the Middle East,

Above: Donald Trump with Saudi Arabia’s King Salman bin Abdulaziz Al Saud alongside Jordan’s King Abdullah II and Abu Dhabi Crown Prince Sheikh Mohammed bin Zayed al-Nahyan during a recent summit in Riyadh

and now prefers to let its regional allies deal with Iran. While it is working with Iran in Iraq, it is very concerned about Iran’s influence in Syria.

Since the blockade started Qatar has been surviving on food imports from Turkey and Iran. The responses of the Saudi, Turkish and Iranian ruling classes mirrors their role in Syria as the three sides attempt to secure their interests pending a possible military defeat of Islamic State at Raqqa.

We can expect Qatar’s foreign policy to remain flexible. While it once gave aid to the Shia Houthis rebels in the Yemeni Civil War, Qatar then joined the Saudi side. This is no different to pivots that have been made in the past by rulers like Syria’s Assad, once a US ally.

The instability in the Middle East, from Israel to Syria to Afghanistan, is the product of decades of imperialist intervention. It is Western meddling in the Middle East that gave rise to the sectarian tensions so often blamed for conflict in the region.

The players in this diplomatic spat, Qatar included, are a line-up of reactionary regimes. As the Middle East spirals further into crisis, we must look to the legacy of the Arab Spring, including the ongoing revolutionary movements in Tunisia, Morocco and within Syria itself, for hope in the region.

The Saudis are demanding that Qatar align itself with the policies of the other Gulf states

The handmaid's tale
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Don't let the bastards grind you down

THE HANDMAID'S Tale is dystopian TV with great timing. A story of women's oppression and state violence, it presents as a powerful warning—and a call to arms—against political complacency in the Trump era.

In the near future, the US has become the Republic of Gilead, ruled by a military clique of Christian men. Offred (skillfully played by Elizabeth Moss from *Mad Men* and *Top of the Lake*) is a handmaid—forced, as one of a small group of women who can still give birth, into the role of surrogate in the family of one of the ruling Commanders. A Biblical precedent, one of a few cherry-picked for their expediency for the regime, justifies this state-mandated rape.

In establishing Gilead, the Commanders have taken advantage of an environmental crisis that was producing the fertility crisis, and led a coup against the US state. Their creepy cult Christianity has echoes of US religious sects, while their obsession with spying and social control recalls fascist and Stalinist dictatorships.

The show is based on Margaret Atwood's 1985 book of the same name, and famously, all the wretchedness of her imagined society is drawn from real world events. Brought to life on screen, it's horrifying.

The whole complexity of Gilead's workings can't be summed up or explained in a review—for that, you have to watch the show. But one of the most striking changes from Atwood's book is that the script includes flashbacks to the present day. Offred—once June, now forced to take a name signaling the ownership



of her Commander, Fred (Ralph Fiennes)—and her best friend, Moira (Samira Wiley from *Orange is the New Black*), once went to college together, wrote essays on campus sexual assault, and went to parties, for runs, out to dinner, and for coffee dates. At the time when the Commanders took over, Offred worked at a publishing house, married with a daughter, and Moira was an out lesbian and feminist activist.

Warning

The “frogs in boiling water” message is not subtle. That the abnormal can become normal without resistance is a point rightly hammered home, and hammered home again. The warnings are written all over in the flashbacks. It's powerful, too, because the sexist apparatus of Gilead is only a few levels removed from present experience.

Offred reminds us of women whose financial dependence means they can be trapped in abusive relationships. Her Commander's use of his

power to manipulate her emotionally and sexually is hardly unknown in a world where the US President boasts of his ability to “grab them by the pussy”.

Then, as now, ruling class moral hypocrisy is breathtaking. When

the Commander's not ruling over his extremist Christian state, he's taking Offred to a secret hotel where women who “can't assimilate”, like Moira, live as the sex slaves of the regime's rulers.

While capitalism gives women and men apparent choice about the relationships we form—unlike Offred and Moira—economic, social and legal pressures mean the nuclear family model where women do the bulk of household work and child care remains the norm.

The homophobia experienced by Moira and other characters, labeled “gender traitors”, echoes the backlash to equal marriage in the US and the debate over trans people's right to use the bathrooms of their choice.

The denial of education and reading that the maids experience obviously draws from the US's slave history, while Moira and her family's efforts to flee recall the Underground Railroad, and the experiences of migrants crossing the border.

Interesting, too, is

the class differentiation between the women of Gilead—the privileged but trapped wives of the Commanders, the Handmaids beneath them in sexual slavery, and beneath that the domestic drudgery of the “Marthas”. Though oppressed themselves, the Commanders' wives seem to preserve most of their ire for the Handmaids.

Parallels

Gilead cannot be read as a plausible dystopian allegory of the Trump regime, or modern capitalism. For one, racism seems to play no role whatsoever—a strange omission.

Most importantly, perhaps, the show adopts Atwood's imagining of Gilead as primarily a backlash against feminism. A fascist American future may well prioritise subordinating women, but it will do it in the interests of capitalism, not just for the whims of bigoted men.

Overthinking that, however, would mean missing the real point, and the most powerful message of the show (and the book).

Running parallel to the brutality of Gilead is a green thread of hope—the promise of resistance. In the face of seemingly all-powerful oppressors, Offred and her co-conspirators make sacrifices for struggle, solidarity, and freedom.

Whatever they tell us, the truth is—in Gilead and in the real world—they need us to make the wheels of society turn. Collectively, we can bring them to a stop. Offred finds a secret message that she takes to heart: *Nolite bastardes carborundorum* (Don't let the bastards grind you down). Solid advice.

Amy Thomas

It's powerful because the sexist apparatus of Gilead is only a few levels removed from present experience

CORBYN, AUSTERITY AND LEFT REFORMISM IN EUROPE

The Corbyn surge shows that left alternatives to the political mainstream can succeed. But left reformism runs the risk of repeating the old parties' mistakes argues **Miro Sandev**

THE GLOBAL economic and political crisis has catapulted new left-wing parties and politicians into the lime-light.

The rise of Corbyn, Sanders, Melenchon in France and Podemos in Spain reflects the hunger for a left alternative to mainstream politics and shows the left can capture the discontent with the political establishment.

While the establishment parties of both the left and the right have suffered as the crisis has deepened, the social democratic parties of the left, the equivalent of the Labor Party in Australia, have fared worse. Their transformation into champions of neo-liberalism over the last few decades has involved hacking away at their own support base. The addition of austerity more recently has proved fatal in many cases.

In Greece, Pasok has been totally destroyed as a mainstream political force, receiving only 6 per cent of the vote in the 2015 election.

The Labor-like Socialist Party in France was humiliated in the recent presidential election, with its candidate also receiving just 6 per cent. In Spain, the PSOE reached 48 per cent of the popular vote in the 1980s, but this was more than halved to reach 22 per cent at the last election.

The Blairism of the Labour Party in the UK saw its share of the vote plummet by 13 per cent over three elections to reach 29 per cent, only to be rescued by the surge under Corbyn which pushed it back up to 40 per cent.

All these parties drifted to the right, embracing privatisation, public sector cuts, tough law and order policies, racist migration controls and imperialist wars. Their attacks on unions helped wither away the social base on which these parties had once been

constituted—organised workers.

In many places new parties of the left have emerged, positioning themselves as radical opponents of austerity and as a break from these old social democratic parties.

But as they have moved closer to taking office, they have softened their stance and begun implementing the same policies of the old hated parties. This isn't simply a question of all politicians being dishonest.

Reformism, whether of the old kind or the new left-wing variety, attempts to better the lot of workers but this is always second fiddle to the needs of the bosses. In boom times it can provide some crumbs to workers and call them "big wins". But when the interests of the bosses and workers come into sharp conflict, they will side with the bosses and maintaining their profits.

Syriza

Greece was the European country hardest hit by the global crisis following the financial crash in 2008. Pasok won government in 2009 with a vote share of 43 per cent. It had already been moving to the right under former leader Costas Simitas, but in 2010 it unleashed a vicious attack on working people.

It was unable to repay its debts after being forced to bail out the banks, and sought a rescue package from the "Troika"—the European institutions and the IMF.

This saw Pasok implement a series of austerity packages slashing public sector jobs and wages, cutting pensions, driving privatisation of public services and increasing consumption taxes on ordinary people. These attacks were met with huge general strikes. The austerity drove unemployment and poverty.

In many places new parties of the left have emerged, positioning themselves as radical opponents of austerity

At the next election Pasok was shattered, its vote share cut by 30 per cent.

The radical left party Syriza had emerged as a small force in the elections of 2004. It connected with the rising movements against austerity, positioning itself as a party that would end the cuts. This helped it come second with 27 per cent in the 2012 election.

But once within striking distance of governing, Syriza began to moderate its programme. It dropped its commitment to refusing to pay the debt. Its previous slogan of "not one sacrifice for the Euro (currency)" was thrown aside as it committed itself to staying inside the Eurozone, while trying to fight austerity at the same time.

Syriza won office in 2015, becoming the first of Europe's new radical left parties to form government. It tried to negotiate debt reductions and other compromises with the Troika, but instead the Troika cut off liquidity to Greek banks and threatened to cause a banking crisis.

Syriza could have escalated the fight by cancelling the debt, nationalising the banks, exiting the Eurozone and seizing the wealth of the rich to fund jobs and services. It was clear that the majority of workers were willing to resist the Troika, judging by the massive "No" vote against austerity in the 2015 referendum.

Instead Syriza capitulated and implemented austerity measures that were worse than previous rounds. Its commitment to the Eurozone and managing Greek capitalism meant that it chose to override the democratic will of the people. Since then, Syriza's vote has plummeted from 36 per cent to 16 per cent, while the right-wing New Democracy is back up over 30 per cent.

Left-wing parties that take power through parliament have no control over the bulk of the economy, which remains in the hands of private capitalists. Even the state bureaucracy is run by a management hierarchy that identifies with the interests of capitalism and the rich.

This means radical governments will always face opposition to their policies in the form of economic sabotage by capitalists and obstruction from bureaucrats in government departments. Syriza refused to draw on the power of the organised working class in Greece to stand against this.

The continuation of the strikes and demonstrations against the Syriza government's austerity show that the working class is willing to fight. What's needed is a party committed to smashing capitalism that can bring together the struggles in the workplace and the social movements to challenge the power of the state.

Podemos

In Spain a similar situation unfolded: the traditional parties the PP and the PSOE had taken turns in government implementing neo-liberal policies. Austerity made the economic crisis after 2008 worse, leading to 50 per cent youth unemployment, mass homelessness and poverty.

The main parties' combined vote fell from over 80 per cent to below 50 per cent. It also spurred mass movements including the Indignados occupation of the squares, four general strikes and campaigns against housing evictions.

A new political force, Podemos, emerged from the rubble, arguing against austerity and connecting with the sentiment against the "political class".

Podemos was initially organised around local "circles" that had autonomy in deciding their activities, hosting massive meetings some of which reached 1000 people. But after the leadership of the party asserted its authority in 2014 and oriented activists primarily towards elections, the circles became irrelevant and many activists dropped out. The previous radical calls for not paying the debt and nationalisation of key industries were eventually dropped.

Despite its rhetoric of changing the way politics is done, Podemos takes an opportunist approach to the development of mass struggle. Last year the party came third and, during talks with the PSOE over forming a governing coalition, Podemos leader Iglesias



said: "Things are changed through the institutions. That nonsense we used to claim when we were in the far-left that you can change things in the streets is a lie."

Now that the right-wing PP is in government and it would be suicidal for Podemos to go into coalition with them, there is more attention paid to mass campaigning. The leadership have launched *Vamos!* an initiative drawing together several campaigns against austerity. In January Podemos led the protests against electricity cut-offs affecting poor households and the 30 per cent rise in electricity bills.

However, if there were a snap election called, the leadership would undoubtedly shift back towards pure electoralism.

Corbyn's Labour

In the UK the story has been different: the left-wing resurgence has emerged within one of the traditional parties. And the level of social struggle in the UK has been nowhere near that in Greece and Spain.

Jeremy Corbyn has managed to shift the Labour Party to the left, producing one of its most left-wing election manifestos in decades.

He increased Labour's vote share by 9.6 per cent in the recent election, the most in one election since 1945. Almost half a million new members have joined the party and around 20,000 have joined Momentum, the group set up to support Corbyn.

But Corbyn has already made big

Above: Jeremy Corbyn in the UK has generated hope and enthusiasm not seen about the Labour Party for a long time

concessions to the right-wing in the party, including dropping his opposition to NATO and to the UK's nuclear arsenal Trident. He has also said that freedom of movement for EU nationals will be limited as part of Brexit negotiations, and suggested it would be a good thing for the UK to remain part of the neo-liberal European single market.

Momentum has been at its most active only around elections. They organised mass rallies when Corbyn was touring the country, but have done little to support the rallies against racism, against austerity or major strikes like the junior doctors or teachers.

It was good to see John McDonnell and Jeremy Corbyn support the 1 July march against the Tory government after the election. Both addressed the crowd in central London.

But the experience in Greece shows that if Corbyn wins, his government will come under huge pressure. Socialist organisation that stresses the struggle from below is the only thing that can improve the situation for the mass of workers whether under a Tory or Corbyn government.

The new parties of the left embrace parliamentary reform as the site of change.

But reformism, even in a radical left-wing variant, cannot touch the unelected sections of society: the heads of corporate boards, the army, police and bureaucracy. That's why these new reformist parties end up repeating the mistakes of the old ones.

TURKEY, THE KURDS AND THE WAR IN SYRIA

Yildiz Önen will visit Australia for the Keep Left conference next month. She spoke to Solidarity about Erdoğan's Turkey, the Kurds and the war in Syria

Can you explain the situation in Turkey following President Erdoğan's victory in the referendum to secure greatly increased powers earlier this year and his turn to increased authoritarianism?

Let me summarize the situation in Turkey as follows:

The main process of the last two years is a new alliance built between President Erdoğan and the state.

The Turkish state bureaucracy in particular the army was skeptical towards Erdoğan's AKP (Justice and Development Party) since 2002 when it won the general election.

The AKP tried to reduce the power of the army and its influence on politics in order to remain in government. [Turkey has experienced four military coups since 1960, the most recent in 1997, with the military reserving the right to have the final say in politics.]

After 2013 the AKP started to change its strategy; it started to act according to the so called policy of "the survival of the state". This was the long standing policy of the Turkish military and the state. In order to keep the state strong you could do anything necessary including trampling on and overturning democracy. President Erdoğan, with his mass support base, allied with the Kemalist state and built a nationalist alliance.

One of main reasons for this alliance is the war in Syria. After ISIS attacked Kobane, the Kurdish area in the north of Syria, the US and its allies supported the PYD (Democratic Union Party). [The PYD is the main Kurdish party in Syria and is linked to the PKK, which has waged an armed struggle for self-determination inside Turkey since the 1980s.]

After a while the PYD started to receive military support from the US and the European Union, the world's biggest imperialist powers.

The Turkish state and Erdoğan did not want a strong Kurdish party



Yildiz Önen

running an independent state on its border. So Erdoğan announced the end of the peace process with the Kurds in Turkey and resumed the war on the PKK which had stopped in 2013-2015.

The peace process in 2013-2015 showed that there is a democratic way of solving the Kurdish problem in Turkey. The end of the armed clashes in Kurdish areas meant there was a chance to talk and discuss Kurdish rights.

With the end of the peace process more than 6000 people were killed according to the state, around one million people had to move out from their homes, and thousands of HDP (Peoples' Democratic Party) members [the political party that supports Kurdish rights] are in prison. Every day soldiers are killed, and there are big funerals all around Turkey which boost nationalism.

We have to understand that the new strategy of Erdoğan is linked with the Syrian war. If not we could not understand why Erdoğan has changed his strategy.

Just in 2013 Erdoğan said that "we will trample nationalism". Now he is building an alliance based on nationalism.

This change did not affect only the Kurdish population in Turkey. Turkish foreign policy towards Syria

Erdoğan is now building an alliance with the military based on nationalism

changed as well. Turkey started bombing raids in Syria, and Turkish troops entered Syrian territory.

Last week we heard that the Turkish army is ready to enter the Afrin area of Syria where there is one of the Kurdish cantons.

Of course the Syrian war was not the only reason for this shift. After the success of the HDP (Peoples' Democratic Party) in the 7 June election in 2015—winning 80 seats in the parliament—the AKP had a big shock. Plus the effect of economic crisis forced the AKP into the new alliance.

After the 7 June election the AKP could not form a government, there was a political instability, and bombings took place in different cities which all created a sense of danger among the people.

All of these events led people to vote AKP again in the 1 November election re-run and the AKP won. Although the AKP won the election, political and economic instability continued.

While the war in Syria, economic instability, and the state pressure on the Kurds continued we then had the military coup attempt on 15 July last year.

It was a big shock all across Turkey. In all 248 people died including 200 civilians, the parliament was bombed, TV stations were captured.

It was ordinary people who saved the democratically elected government and stopped the coup attempt. Crowds took to the streets and stood in front of tanks, testing the army's resolve.

But there was shock when the government announced a state of emergency in response. The state of emergency was used to arrest the people who staged the coup attempt but at same time to put pressure on democratic rights in Turkey.

The state of emergency strengthened Erdoğan's new alliance. Thousands of police and public sector workers who the government claimed

to be members of the Gulen movement were sacked; thousands of them arrested; thousands sent to prison. [The Gulenists are a mass Islamic movement who fell out with Erdoğan and were blamed for the coup.]

At the same time thousands of members of the HDP including its party leaders, MPs and mayors were arrested and sent to prison. Thousands of members of left-wing trade unions were sacked and some were arrested. The state appointed administrators to take over the municipalities run by the HDP.

At same time the state of emergency caused an economic and state crisis. The economy was shaken, the value of the currency dropped and people suddenly become poorer in a few days.

The sacking of thousands of public sector workers created problems in a lot public offices including the education, justice and police departments. The state of emergency effected relations with the EU. Its criticisms about infringing democratic rights were answered quite harshly by Erdoğan and other ministers.

The new nationalist alliance was designed to save the state, but the military coup attempt and the state of emergency created a major state crisis.

In January 2017 there was a new shock not only for Turkey but for the world generally: Donald Trump was elected.

The Trump presidency encouraged the right-wing all across the world, which worsened the political situation in Turkey. Trump showed that he would be more aggressive in the Middle East and even in the Pacific region.

This new American policy suited Turkish policies in Syria, as well as encouraging the Saudis' move against Qatar etc.

Erdoğan had wanted to change the Turkish political system to a presidency for a long time. The coup attempt and the state of emergency gave him the chance to do it.

[This was designed to install a US-style President with wide powers to form a government and appoint judges, and abolish the post of Prime Minister responsible to parliament as head of government.]

Erdoğan won the referendum on 16 April this year under the continuing state of emergency but only with 51.5 per cent of the vote.

Although the new presidential system will not come into force until the



Above: A mass rally in Istanbul in July at the end of the opposition Republican People's Party's march from Ankara against the state of emergency

2019 elections, Erdoğan has already started to act as the only leader and ruler of the country.

In reality this has not changed a lot because since the AKP's Binali Yıldırım became the prime minister everything had already been under the control of Erdoğan.

Why were the sackings in schools and the public sector so large, and has there been much resistance?

When you look at the whole process of building the alliance between Erdoğan and the state in Turkey there is no room for freedom of speech, especially when it comes to supporting the Kurdish people.

Academics for peace for instance were a threat to this new alliance as well as other democratic organisations which were willing to speak out against state policy.

When the attack on academics started, support and resistance started as well. The teachers' union organized many demonstrations to protest the sackings. They supported teachers and academics financially.

There have also been other forms of resistance for instance there are two teachers on hunger strike for more than 120 days following their sacking, and academics giving alternative lessons in different cities.

The no votes in the referendum were in a way also a protest against all the injustices of the state of emergency including the sackings.

On 1 May there were strong protest demonstrations all around Turkey. The march from Ankara to Istanbul, started by Kemal Kılıçdaroğlu, the leader of the main opposition party the CHP (Republican People's Party), starting on 15 June is another big protest against all the injustice of the state of emergency.

What is the situation for the millions of Syrian refugees who had fled into Turkey, and now remain trapped there with the EU having sealed its borders?

Over the last few weeks there have been terrible attacks against Syrian people including vigilante attacks on Syrian refugee shanty towns.

Syrians do not have proper refugee status in Turkey. The Turkish state gives refugee status only to people from Europe. If you come from elsewhere they grant only temporary status which gives you only the right to stay in Turkey, no right to work, study or anything else. And as soon as they decide you can return you are sent back.

Living conditions in refugee camps are quite poor, you have to live on a small amount of food and clothes, far away from the cities and population centres.

Yildiz is a member of Academics for Peace in Turkey and the Revolutionary Socialist Workers Party (DSIP).

RUSSIA'S ROAD TO WORKERS' POWER THE BOLSHEVIKS AND THE JULY DAYS

By July 1917, workers and soldiers in Petrograd were desperate to seize power. The Bolsheviks' decision to hold back the uprising averted disaster, explains **Sophie Joo**

THE JULY Days were the third major political crisis between Russia's two revolutions in February and October 1917. It marked a critical point as opposition to the Provisional Government increasingly grew. July 1917 provided significant lessons regarding the timing and nature of the revolution as well as the role of the revolutionary party.

After Tsarism was overthrown in February a Provisional Government was set up. However workers councils, Soviets, also emerged, resulting in a situation of dual power in Russia.

Whilst the Provisional Government controlled by the dominant capitalist party, the Cadets, held state power, the Soviets retained the support of the majority of people.

Lenin's April Theses won the Bolsheviks to the aim of a second revolution that would deliver all power to the Soviets.

Sections of the working class however, grew increasingly impatient. With the workers having gained a sense of their power to bring down governments, they were not going to sit idly by and wait whilst their material conditions continued to deteriorate.

The Provisional Government continued with the war effort. Land was not re-distributed. Despite nominal wage rises since February, rising inflation meant people were still starving.

Food prices continued to sky rocket. In April, bread rations were reduced. By May, coal needs were not being met. Over 500 factories went bankrupt, resulting in huge unemployment.

There was fervent desire for the food, the land and peace that was promised.

This led to growing support for the Bolsheviks. When the Menshevik leaders called a rally in Petrograd in

June in the name of the Soviets, it backfired with workers demonstrating under Bolshevik slogans. Bolshevism was not yet a majority force within Russia at that time but the workers of Petrograd who joined the enormous rally of 400,000 already wanted the end of the Provisional Government and Soviet power.

Soldiers in Petrograd were particularly enraged. On 18 June, the Provisional Government launched a new military offensive against Germany. When soldiers were ordered to prepare for a move to the front, a decision was made by the machine gun regiment that they would not go, "to the German front, against the German proletariat, but against their own capitalist ministers."

Another order to transfer to the front on 30 June served as a catalyst to the demonstrations in July.

The soldiers sent agitators to army regiments across the capital and into the factories calling for the immediate overthrow of the government.

Whilst the soldiers were organising for armed protests and possible insurrection, Lenin and the Bolshevik Party were arguing for patience. They recognised the need to win the majority of the working class before a successful second revolution could occur.

However, even rank-and-file Bolshevik members were swept up by the calls for insurrection.

The leaders of the Bolshevik Military Organisation in particular, who had closer interactions with the workers and soldiers in Kronstadt, supported calls for escalation.

The disjuncture between the Bolshevik Central Committee and the military organisation was clear in their respective papers, *Pravda* and *Soldatskaia Pravda*. Whilst *Pravda* emphasised the need to win over the

An uprising in Petrograd in July would have been isolated from the rest of Russia

masses, *Soldatskaia Pravda* called for an insurrection on their front-page article.

On 4 July, 500,000 soldiers and workers staged an armed demonstration. They carried slogans including an end to the Provisional Government and its ten capitalist ministers. People were on the streets, demanding for all power to be given to the Soviets.

However, when the rally called on Lenin to speak, rather than a call to arms he raised the need for "firmness, steadfastness, and vigilance" and told them only that their calls for insurrection would eventually triumph.

After two days the Bolshevik Central Committee issued an appeal for an end to the demonstrations and for a return to work, and managed to wind down the movement.

Premature insurrection

Lenin and the Central Committee's reining back of the attempt at insurrection disappointed and confused many rank-and-file workers and even some Bolshevik Party members. There was a growing impatience with the Provisional Government as people's lives continued to worsen.

In Petrograd, workers and soldiers were ready to seize power. But Petrograd was far in advance of the rest of the country. At the nationwide Congress of Soviets that began on 3 June, the Bolsheviks had only 105 out of the 777 delegates.

Even in Moscow, the majority of workers and soldiers did not participate in the July demonstrations.

As in any revolution, the political development of the working class was uneven.

A layer of workers in Petrograd in particular already wanted to take power. But for the revolution to succeed, the majority of the class would also need to reach that conclusion. In

July, the attempt at an insurrection was premature.

The Soviets, still consisting predominately of Mensheviks and members of the Socialist Revolutionary (SR) party, were not willing to take power.

The Menshevik and SR parties had joined the Provisional Government, and proved time and time again to side with bourgeois interests at the expense of workers and peasants.

The workers' frustration with the Soviet leadership was symbolised in the actions of a sailor from Kronstadt, who demanded SR leader Chernov during the July days to, "take power you stupid bastard when it is being handed to you on a plate!"

This epitomised the great paradox of the crisis of July. Workers in Petrograd were calling for Soviet power, whereas the Soviets' reformist leadership were opposed to this. The majority of the working class needed to be won to the idea of Soviet power before this situation could shift.

Bolsheviks' response

If the Bolsheviks had seized power in July, they would not have been able to hold it.

In October, it was not the actual act of overthrowing the Provisional Government that proved most difficult but defending and maintaining the revolution afterwards.

An uprising in Petrograd in July would have been isolated from the rest of Russia and crushed, with thousands killed and the most militant section of the Russian working class destroyed.

And so, whilst April saw Lenin fighting the conservatism within the Party, he now had to make the argument for patience. What he and the central committee recognised was that the majority of the working class still needed to be won over. Only then could the revolution succeed.

The Central Committee rightfully recognised the huge importance in retreating from an insurrection.

At the same time, as Lenin wrote, it would have been a betrayal had the Bolsheviks abstained from the spontaneous armed demonstrations. Whilst the party vehemently opposed calls for an uprising, they took to the streets to join the protests.

As Lenin wrote, "Mistakes are inevitable when the masses are fighting, but the communists remain with the masses, see these mistakes, explain them to the masses, try to get them rectified, and strive perseveringly for



Above: A demonstration in Petrograd during the July days, as Provisional Government troops open fire with machine guns

the victory of class-consciousness over spontaneity."

The revolutionary party

The retreat came at a cost. The government unleashed a wave of counter-revolution in retaliation.

The most rebellious regiments were broken up and sent to the front and attacks on workers intensified. Far-right, anti-Semitic gangs, the Black Hundreds, also came out in attack.

Bolshevik leaders were arrested, *Pravda's* offices were seized and Lenin as well as other Bolshevik leaders went into hiding.

However, this was not the decisive defeat for the workers that would have resulted from a premature uprising. Nor was Bolshevism destroyed.

The July Days demonstrated the strength of the proletariat and the growing respect for the Bolsheviks.

Holding back the attempted insurrection was no mean feat. It was only possible because of the existence of a revolutionary party which commanded deep respect amongst the working class.

The mass membership and influence of the Bolsheviks within the most militant layers of the working class meant that they were able win the argument against an insurrection. Even before the revolution in February, the Bolsheviks had almost 24,000 members.

This support had been built up over years of activity in the lead up to 1917, not least in the failed revolution

of 1905.

Despite many individual members and some party committees initially defying the leadership, Lenin and the Central Committee were ultimately able to maintain party discipline.

Events in Germany in 1919 showed the consequences where such a party was missing.

The year before workers and soldiers led a revolution that overthrew the monarchy, as in Russia in February.

But in 1919 the militant minority of workers were provoked into a premature insurrection in Berlin. The leadership of the newly formed German Communist Party opposed the uprising, but its lack of support in the factories or of any capacity to act in a united way meant it could have no influence on events.

As a result, the attempt to seize power was crushed and the counter-revolution saw many of the most militant workers killed. The Communist Party's best leaders, including Rosa Luxemburg and Karl Liebknecht, were executed. The hope of a socialist revolution in Germany was squandered.

Despite experiencing a minor setback immediately following the July Days, the influence of Bolshevism in Russia soon began rising again. On 31 August, the Bolsheviks took the majority in the Petrograd Soviet for the first time.

By October, when the opportunity arose again, the party and the masses were ready for Russia's second revolution.



CONSTRUCTION STRIKE TAKES THE FIGHT TO TURNBULL

By Adam Adelpour

THOUSANDS WALKED off construction sites around the country on 20 June as the CFMEU construction union took its second national day of action against the Australian Building and Construction Commission (ABCC) and the new Construction Code. Many were defying anti-strike laws that deem such action “illegal” and punishable by fines.

“It’s a good showing to the government that we mean business and we won’t be walked over and dictated to,” as one CFMEU delegate in Sydney told *Solidarity*.

The action itself was a major show of force with numbers growing since the last CFMEU day of action in March. In Melbourne 20,000 workers took to the streets and shut down the CBD, 10,000 marched through Sydney and at least 500 marched on the office of federal Employment Minister Michaelia Cash in Perth. In Brisbane 4000 swarmed the ABCC headquarters in the CFMEU’s sixth major action in seven months. Opposition industrial relations spokesman Jarrod Bleijie even complained Queensland had become the “strike capital of Australia”.

The action hit construction bosses hard. The Queensland Master Builders Association (MBA) said that every big CFMEU day of action costs employers at least \$8 million state-wide. The Victorian MBA said over 100 construction projects were shut down.

Workers were particularly angry about pressure to re-negotiate their

Above:
Construction union members take to the streets in Sydney on 20 June

agreements to comply with Turnbull’s construction Code. On 1 September companies without Code compliant EBAs will be blacklisted from government work. This is designed to force compliance through denying access to billions in lucrative contracts. Code compliance would mean giving up many avenues for union access to sites, opening the door to labour-hire and greater casualisation and even giving up the right to fly union flags.

Luke Hilakari from the Victorian Trades Hall Council told the Melbourne rally that the ABCC was “devastating legislation” that led to the deaths of 330 workers last time it was introduced. CFMEU Secretary John Setka damned the ABCC as, “an attack dog for the government-driven zealots who hate unions and workers in general”. The ABCC gives anti-union inspectors star chamber powers, takes away workers’ right to silence and threatens them with six months’ jail if they refuse to co-operate with investigations.

Deadline looms

Tensions are ratcheting up further as the deadline for Code compliance approaches. Companies are currently in a “transition period” where they can tender for government work regardless of Code compliance, but they cannot be awarded work unless they have compliant agreements.

Building material giant Boral has taken a hard line to try and force its workers to accept a Code compliant agreement. At its NSW concreting sub-

siary, De Martin & Gasparini, Boral threatened to sack 110 workers if they refused to sign a new EBA. Bosses have threatened that “all existing EBA employees could be made redundant”. But the code friendly agreement was voted down 64 to 34. According to CFMEU National Secretary Dave Noonan the agreement would have removed a guaranteed six weeks off per year and the right of casuals to permanent jobs after six weeks’ work.

However, further action will be essential to hold the line. The CFMEU has pledged to oppose new Code compliant agreements, as at Boral.

But the *Financial Review* has cited “industry sources” claiming that the CFMEU has begun to negotiate on new agreements with some companies in every state except Queensland.

Other unions such as the AWU and AMWU are accepting new Code compliant agreements, and major builder John Holland boasts that all its agreements already comply with the Code.

In a setback, Lendlease Engineering NSW ambushed workers to push through a compliant agreement in June. The CFMEU opposed the agreement but Lendlease used a sneaky long-weekend ballot of its unionised workforce to narrowly pass the agreement with 50 votes out of 96.

When parliament resumes in August a Senate disallowance motion against the Code may be a focus for further CFMEU actions. Every union needs to pull out stops to show support.

Tensions are ratcheting up further as the deadline for Code compliance approaches

 Solidarity