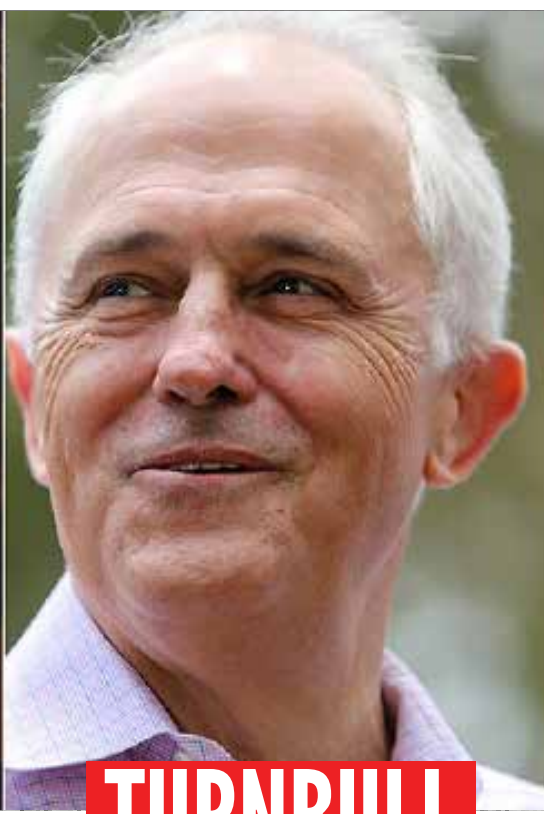


GET RID OF THIS RACIST GANG



CASH



TURNBULL



DUTTON

STOP SCAPEGOATING MIGRANTS

RACISM

Gangs panic scapegoats migrants for crime

PALESTINE

Thirty years since the First Intifada

INVASION DAY

Racist celebration no good on any date



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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

Arthur Philip was an enlightened person. He was given orders to make peace with the natives. Now, that may not have gone perfectly well, but it is our history.

Assistant Home Affairs Minister Alex Hawke defends invasion day

If we're not careful, if you end up with really wealthy people and lots of poor people, in the end the poor people will rebel.

You look at what happened in Russia in 1917 where they ended up with the tsar and the tsar's friends who are all equivalent billionaires.

Multi-millionaire Dick Smith has some advice for his rich pals

I don't think anyone is sitting at home covering with the sheets over their heads.

Victorian Police Commissioner Graham Ashton on the media panic about "African gangs"

Trickle down is a really inappropriate term

Malcolm Turnbull says that everyone will benefit from his corporate tax cuts

Firms going bust is not capitalism failing, it is capitalism working. It is, of course, distressing for those personally affected.

The UK Daily Telegraph on Carillion, a 200-year old building and services company, collapsing and threatening 43,000 jobs.

Sometimes when a boat arrives, it actually doesn't. It depends on where it comes from.

A Border Force officer answering a Senate Estimates question about why a boat that arrived on Sabai Island with six Chinese on board was not counted by Operation Sovereign Borders as arriving in Australia.

Its parabolic rise is close to climax, dwarfing even the tulip fever that gripped Amsterdam in the 17th century.

Kerr Neilson, billionaire founder and CEO of Platinum Asset Management, on Bitcoin, comparing it the first ever stock-market crash in the Netherlands.

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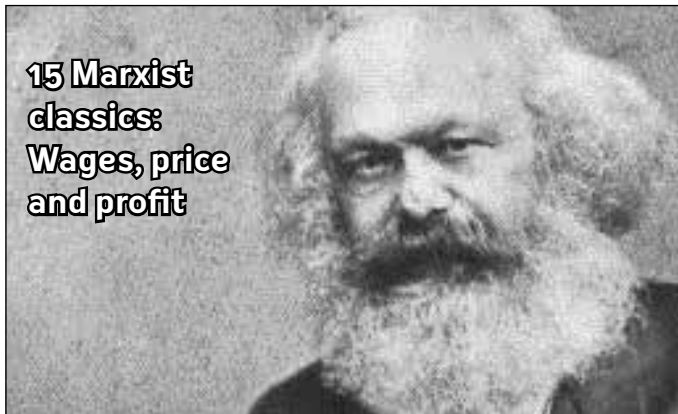
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INSIDE THE \$YSTEM

Study slams media racism

A STUDY of mainstream media reporting has found more than half of all reporting on race related issues in Australia would likely contravene industry codes on racism.

Some 62 of 124 race related opinion pieces published between January and July 2017 were racist according to the standards. The study focused on the eight Australian newspapers and current affairs programs with the largest audiences.

Muslims were overwhelmingly in the crosshairs. They were the subject of over half the opinion pieces. Of those 63 per cent were negative, including 43 of the 124 opinion pieces, which often conflated Islam and terrorism. *The Daily Telegraph*, *The Australian* and the *Herald-Sun* were the most racist in print, while *A Current Affair* topped the list for broadcast media. The research was published in December by not-for-profit group All Together Now and the University of Technology Sydney.

This January the racism of the media was on full display when Channel Seven interviewed Blair Cottrell of the fascist United Patriots Front about anti-African vigilante actions they were organising in Melbourne. Cottrell has been convicted of racial vilification and expressed public admiration for Hitler. Yet the segment introduced him and his Nazi cronies as “concerned citizens” who had, in the words of the Channel 7 presenter, “come together to help average Australians deal with what they are calling an immigrant crime crisis”.

Pineapples left to rot in Queensland

HUNDREDS OF tonnes of pineapples are being left to rot across Queensland due to a glut in the market. Ideal growing conditions have seen a bumper crop this year that has forced down the price of the fruit. With the price falling below charges for transporting it interstate and the Golden Circle cannery unable to process more fruit, it has gone to waste. For example, Damien Berra who farms 50 kilometres north of Townsville has left 40 tonnes of pineapples to rot or be used as feed for livestock.

World's richest 500 increased wealth by \$1 trillion in 2017



The world's richest 500 people have seen their wealth jump by a massive margin in the past year, according to the Bloomberg billionaires index. This group brought their collective wealth to \$5.3 trillion—an increase of around \$1 trillion or 23 per cent in 2017.

Another report—the UBS/PwC billionaires report—found there are now 1542 dollar billionaires globally. The author of the report, Josef Stadler, said his mega-rich clients feared a “strike back” by the poor. The world's 3.5 billion poorest adults make up 70 per cent of the world's working population but hold just 2.7 per cent of global wealth.

Australia's ultra-rich have matched the trend. In the last year the number of “Ultra-High Net Worth Individuals” worth USD \$50 million or more has increased by around 30 per cent. There are now around 3000 of them according to the latest Global Wealth Report.

Another study from Oxfam revealed that there are now 33 billionaires in Australia, eight more than a year before and up from 14 in 2008. It shows that the top 1 per cent of Australians hold more wealth than the bottom 70 per cent combined. On a world scale the gap between the ultra-rich and the rest is at its highest point in around a century.

Selfishness makes the rich happy

A NEW study has found selfishness makes rich people happy. The study, published by academics Paul Piff and Jake Moskowitz, surveyed 1519 Americans, asking them questions about their household income and emotional state.

Piff said they showed that, “wealthier individuals may find greater positivity in their accomplishments, status and individual achievements, less wealthy individuals seem to find more positivity and happiness in their relationships, their ability to care for and connect with others.”

Upper class participants tended to agree with statements indicating they felt amusement, “Many things are funny to me”; contentment, “I feel satisfied more often than most people” and pride, “It feels good to know that people look up to me”.

In contrast participants from lower class were more likely to agree with statements that indicate they feel love, “I develop strong emotions toward people I can rely on”; awe and compassion, “Nurturing others gives me a warm feeling inside”.

Research and writing by Adam Adelpour

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

Subsidy cut for hormone replacement therapy

THE DEPARTMENT of Health has announced it will end the subsidy for the most common medical transition drug for transgender men and non-binary people assigned female at birth from 1 February. A spokesperson for the Federal Department made a statement saying, “Primoteston Depot (testosterone enantate 250 mg injection) will be deleted from the Pharmaceutical Benefits Scheme (PBS) on 1 February 2018.”

A transgender community advocate from WA, Kai Schweizer, told OUTinPerth, “Primoteston is the preferred method of hormone replacement therapy.

“Once the PBS remove it, trans people will be stuck with choosing between paying exorbitant prices for Primoteston or relying on an inferior method with greater side effects”.

Wages crash in new Agreements

LOW WAGES are entrenched across the country in both the public and private sectors.

An average pay rise across the public sector of 2 per cent came out of the latest bargaining round—expected to mean a pay cut next year as inflation increases. The Reserve Bank expects inflation will increase from 1.9 per cent to 2.25 per cent by the end of this year.

The average 2.4 per cent wage increase in private sector agreements struck in 2017 is the lowest since Enterprise Bargaining was introduced.

Some of the biggest private sector agreements have savagely reduced pay. The Ikea agreement covering 2000 staff will pay a pitiful 0.9 per cent increase per year. The largest private sector agreement, covering 3300 long-haul Qantas flight attendants, paid only 1.8 per cent.

EDITORIAL

Break unfair work laws to fight inequality and low pay

MALCOLM TURNBULL managed to hang on in the Bennelong by-election in December, maintaining his slender parliamentary majority. But his political demise is only postponed.

Turnbull has trailed Labor in the polls consistently for almost a year and a half, and by a wide margin.

As the Liberals slump they are constantly looking to scapegoat migrants and refugees, stirring up racism and fear in an attempt to maintain or claw back support.

Dutton and Turnbull are constantly boasting of how they have “secured our borders” through torturing refugees on Manus Island and Nauru.

But Peter Dutton set a new low in January with efforts to whip up racism about “African gangs”, following a media beat-up about gangs and crime in Melbourne. But his scare campaign about people being too afraid to go out for dinner met with considerable opposition—on social media, from lawyers and the Sudanese community. It was dismissed on Melbourne radio. Even police said talk of a gang problem was misleading, with the Victorian Police Commissioner calling Dutton’s comment “garbage”.

This racist campaign won’t save the government. But it has already resulted in an increase in racist abuse directed at people of African backgrounds.

The government’s political agenda remains deeply unpopular.

Treasurer Scott Morrison is stepping up their campaign for corporate tax cuts, using Donald Trump’s tax cuts in the US to try to sell them. But following Trump isn’t exactly a path to popularity. And neither is shovelling more money to massive corporations, who aren’t paying tax anyway.

The government can try to talk up jobs growth and the economy. But record low wages growth means most workers don’t feel any better off. Average wages have been dropping in real terms for the last five years, and remain below 2010 levels.

The latest figures show the number of private sector workers covered by an enterprise bargaining agreement has declined by 40 per cent in the last four years. Most have moved back onto the basic award conditions, which are usually far lower.

There are more and more examples of bosses using the law to slash wages and conditions.

Workers at Port Kembla’s coal ter-



Above: A picket of union members and supporters shut down the VICT terminal at Webb Dock in Melbourne in December for almost three weeks

minal are the latest to face the termination of their enterprise bargaining agreement. This would see them lose years of accumulated conditions and pay rises. When they took industrial action, management locked them out, using scabs to do their work.

At the Glencore mine at Oaky North in Queensland, workers have been locked out for over six months, with the bosses demanding cuts to conditions around union representation, rostering and a pay cut.

The ACTU “Change the Rules” campaign has used disputes like these to show how the Fair Work rules are stacked against unions and workers. But its focus is on looking to a future Labor government to change this.

Labor has committed to some changes, including overturning the penalty rates cuts, abolishing the ABCC, making it harder for bosses to terminate agreements and introducing new regulations for the use of labour hire.

But none of these will fundamentally change bargaining under the Fair Work Act or remove the restrictions on the right to strike.

Last year, ACTU Secretary Sally McManus said that unions were right to break bad laws. Those words need to be turned into action. If the ACTU backed the Port Kembla coal terminal workers with industrial action at other terminals and at other ports, it would be a major blow against the employers’ offensive.

Back Sydney train drivers

Train drivers in Sydney are showing how to fight. Their strike is putting in-

dustrial action at the centre of politics with their action to break the wage cap imposed on state government workers.

Every worker needs to back the train drivers. Unions NSW and the ACTU could organise solidarity by calling mass rallies to back the drivers. Their win will shift the industrial mood and show that militant action can face down the bosses and the Liberals.

Labor really should change the rules, not just tinker with them. But its changes will be modest.

It will take an industrial campaign to beat the bosses and win the right to strike.

The mass picket at Melbourne’s Webb Dock just before Christmas showed how effective industrial action that stops business-as-usual can be. Shipping containers were stranded inside the port for almost three weeks.

But it also demonstrated that using “community pickets” is no alternative to industrial action.

The Federal Court ruled that the community picket was being organised by the union movement anyway. As a result the company is now pursuing damages against the MUA and the CFMEU for up to \$100 million.

We need stronger rank-and-file union organisation in every workplace to turn the “Change the Rules” campaign into a real fight to break the legal chains on the unions.

And we need stronger socialist organisation to build the fight against the bosses’ system of inequality, low pay, and the racism they use to divide us.

.....
None of Labor’s measures will fundamentally change bargaining or restore the right to strike

All out—Sydney rail workers vote to strike

RAIL WORKERS are set to shut down Sydney’s transport system, voting to strike for 24 hours on Monday 29 January and impose days of overtime bans. They deserve everyone’s support.

Workers rejected a pathetic, last minute offer from the NSW government by a crushing margin of 94 per cent in a snap poll via text message.

Following years of job cuts, creeping privatisation and the loss of conditions this is a chance to smash the government’s 2.5 per cent pay cap and win a decent deal.

Train drivers are well organised and have the power to shut down the transport system. Employers across Sydney will be hit hard, facing big losses due to disruption.

The NSW government has already created weeks of transport chaos through a shortage of drivers and a new timetable that puts workers under more pressure, reducing margin for error.

The 2.5 per cent pay cap for NSW public sector workers is barely above inflation and is effectively no pay rise at all. It has been imposed across the public sector by the NSW Liberal government since 2011—and by the state Labor government before that.

The government had offered a pay increase of just 2.75 per cent, barely



Above: Trains are set to ground to a halt in Sydney on Monday 29 January

above the pay cap, plus a sign-on bonus of \$1000. It only began to seriously negotiate when strike action was threatened.

The drivers’ strike action can set the scene for a union fightback, and not just in NSW. The NSW Liberal government rushed to the Industrial Relations Commission seeking orders against the strike. Workers need to be

prepared to defy any court orders to end their industrial action and stand up to any threats of fines.

A victory for the train workers can set the bar for teachers, nurses and other public sector workers and show the power of strike action to end low pay, overwork and privatisation.

Their win will be a win for all workers.

Lockout at Port Kembla as company moves to terminate agreement

By Steven Kwon and Jean Parker

WORKERS AND supporters have picketed the Port Kembla coal terminal, after 60 workers were locked out for four days starting on 7 January.

They are the latest to face bosses’ new tool for slashing workers’ conditions—terminating their Enterprise Agreement. “We’ve seen a lot of solidarity and support from fellow unionists from around Port Kembla”, Paul, a CFMEU member on site, told *Solidarity*.

The Port Kembla Coal Terminal (PKCT) jointly owned by multinational mining companies South 32, Glencore, Peabody Energy, Centennial Coal and Wollongong Coal wants to reduce the scope of their Enterprise Agreement and slash benefits such as superannuation that employees have fought for, foregone pay rises for, and

won over many years.

The CFMEU and PKCT have held over 60 meetings in the last two and a half years and each time the union thought it was close to agreement the company have stonewalled.

Management balloted workers on an agreement in September which was overwhelmingly rejected. But this was simply a pretence to clear the way to apply to the Fair Work Commission to terminate the agreement.

The union responded by imposing work bans and taking strike action over Christmas, only to face a lockout.

Management claims that the business is uncompetitive compared to other ports. But the company itself has put up its shipping charges after spending \$300 million to mechanise operations.

Glencore and Peabody were part of the decision to make these investments, but are now sending coal to

Newcastle instead of Port Kembla.

The laws under the “Fair Work” Act are rigged against working people.

PKCT’s application to terminate follows in the footsteps of Aurizon, Griffin Coal, Murdoch University and Streets Ice Creams. If Fair Work rules in its favour workers will lose years of accumulated conditions and be forced back onto the basic Award conditions and pay. At Streets this would have meant pay cuts of 46 per cent.

The terminal continued to operate during the lockout with scab labour. Mass pickets are needed to blockade the site and stop the scabs getting in.

In December workers at the Webb Dock in Melbourne showed how shutting down the port can deal a blow to the boss. Stopping the scab operation at Port Kembla will need this same willingness to fight. Stepping up the industrial action and shutting down PKCT is the way to win.

PKCT’s application to terminate follows in the footsteps of Aurizon, Griffin Coal, Murdoch University and Streets

Changing the date won't give us anything to celebrate

By Lucy Honan

THE MOVE to change the date of "Australia Day" is gaining momentum.

In the last year three Melbourne councils have voted to either not recognise Australia Day on 26 January or to move citizenship ceremonies to a different date. Hobart City Council is encouraging councillors to participate in this year's Invasion Day march. Triple J's Hottest 100 has shifted to the fourth weekend in January. And Greens Leader Richard Di Natale has declared changing the date a "top priority".

But no matter what date Australia Day was held, there still would be nothing to celebrate.

The argument behind #ChangeTheDate is that it's not sensitive or inclusive to celebrate on the date that Indigenous dispossession began—26 January, the day the "First Fleet" arrived.

But any idea of recognising Australia's history of genocide is too much for Turnbull's Coalition government. They have stripped Yarra and Darebin councils of their ability to hold citizenship ceremonies. They also threatened the Freemantle council, but it gave in. Not surprisingly, Labor leader Bill Shorten and Victorian Labor Premier Daniel Andrews think there is something to celebrate, and have also opposed shifting the date.

However the racism and injustices against Aboriginal people did not end with the last of the massacres or their recognition as full citizens. They are intrinsic to Australia's foundation, and are ongoing. The recent epidemic of Indigenous youth suicides, the revelations of torture and abuse that came out of the Royal Commission into Youth Detention in the NT, the persistent and growing "gaps" in health, education and life expectancy are all evidence that Australian government policies discriminate against and oppress Aboriginal people.

The struggles of the 1970s for land rights and self-determination won important concessions from Australian governments. They showed that Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal people can fight together.

But the gains have been reversed by a new wave of assimilationist policies. The Northern Territory Intervention, begun in 2007, seized control of Aboriginal townships and community assets,



Above: Changing the date would still mean a celebration that attempts to whitewash the ongoing racism and poverty inflicted on Aboriginal people

and imposed white managers. Many remote communities have been closed.

"Stronger Futures", the extended version of the NT Intervention, continues, as do the punitive, paternalistic measures like alcohol restrictions and suspension of Centrelink payments for poor school attendance.

Aboriginal people are 2 per cent of the population but make up 27 per cent of the prison population. This has doubled in the last 25 years.

Aboriginal children today are being removed from their families in larger numbers than during the years of the Stolen Generations. Billions of dollars are being spent on "out of home care", surveillance, and prisons that could be invested in Indigenous housing, education, jobs and community controlled programs.

Yet jobs in remote communities have been scrapped and Aboriginal people forced to work for the dole under the "Community Development Program" (CDP) with half their money quarantined onto a BasicsCard.

Nothing to celebrate

Regardless of whether Australia Day celebrations shifted to another date, it would still mean celebrating a country that is continuing to dispossess the Indigenous population, and leading the world in systematic torture of refugees.

Some argue that we could focus on celebrating the diversity of Australia, and the positive moments in our history. There are certainly inspirational struggles of Aboriginal and working class people, where black and white have united to fight for justice for

Aboriginal people: William Cooper's 1938 Day of Mourning, the 1972 Black Moratorium, the momentous Gurindji strike and the Aboriginal Tent Embassy to name a few.

But that is not what Australia's political elite celebrate. Look at Tony Abbott's sickening defence of Australia Day, celebrating European invasion as the day "western civilisation" came to Australia.

A national day is designed to bolster the idea that we all have something in common as Australians. It is designed to obscure the class divisions between workers and the ruling class that runs society and uses racism—against Aboriginal people, and against Muslims—to try and divide us.

Australian capitalism needs racism to justify the dispossession and the ongoing poverty it inflicts on Aboriginal people. Racism against Aboriginal people, refugees and migrants is also a way of scapegoating them for problems like unemployment and cuts to services.

Changing the date, like the toothless "Indigenous voice in parliament" that conservative Aboriginal leader Noel Pearson promotes, would not change the ongoing injustices. It would only maintain the myth of a "fair go" and a harmonious Australia without racism and without class divisions.

Whatever date "Australia Day" was held on, we would still need to protest. We have to fight the ongoing racism and nationalism used to maintain oppression and inequality. We don't need to change the date, we need to change the system. Protests against Australia Day are part of that fight.

.....
It would still mean celebrating a country that is continuing to dispossess the Indigenous population

Flemington residents stand up to racism and police violence

By Jasmine Ali

A 250-STRONG crowd, including 60 local residents, faced down police threats to rally against racism and police violence at the Flemington public housing estate in Melbourne on 17 December.

The rally was called in response to a brutal attack by riot police on residents, following a speech by far right extremist Milo Yiannopoulos in the adjacent Melbourne Pavilion.

For hours after the Milo event, police had protected fascists yelling racial abuse at the mainly black and Muslim residents at the estate. Then police went on a rampage through the flats, chasing young people, trying to force their way into homes and attacking residents indiscriminately with batons and pepper spray late into the night.

A community meeting called by local activists with Greens MP Adam Bandt documented numerous injuries. The meeting also showed the depth of anger at police in the flats and a willingness to fight back. Mothers and grandmothers spoke about the constant racism they face and said they felt they had brought their grandchildren to Australia only to be “hunted” by the police.

Along with Bandt, speakers at the rally included Greens state MP Lidia Thorpe, a teacher from the local school and a representative from the Islamic Council of Victoria.

Sajda Yaqub, of the Flemington-Kensington legal centre, told the rally that the police attack was part of a long history of racist harassment, “we have documented proof that in this community police continue to racially profile us based on the colour of our skin or what we wear on our heads.”

Intimidation

It was a victory the protest took place at all. Police had spent the entire week running a disgraceful fear campaign to try and shut it down.

As soon as the rally was called, police held their own meeting with more conservative community leaders and threatened more violence if the rally went ahead. They said the rally organisers would be charged and fined. They argued the rally slogan “Black Lives Matter” was an incitement to violence. Police contacted the local school and pushed them to tell students not to attend.

We worked to counter these threats by building broad support and insisting



Above: Protesting racism in Flemington

the rally would not be provoked by police or fascists. The endorsement of the Islamic Council of Victoria and trade unions helped build confidence.

The rally was a demonstration of the kind of unity and defiance needed to confront racism.

Sajda Yaqub called for continuing resistance, “We want freedom from historical oppression and stigma because we are Muslim, because we are black, because we are different. I can assure all the authorities that we will never stop fighting.”

Webb dock shows need to defy the law

FOR THREE weeks in the lead up to Christmas a mass picket shut down operations at the Victoria International Container Terminal (VICT) on Melbourne’s Webb Dock. The new terminal’s bosses have tried to keep out the union and introduced an enterprise agreement undercutting industry wages by 40 per cent, getting rid of penalty and overtime loadings, and ditching limits on casualisation.

Jobs are also under threat from automation. Cranes are controlled by offsite computers, allowing management to give crane controllers an ultimatum: either meet managements’ efficiency targets, or have their jobs done remotely by workers in the Philippines earning \$15,000 a year.

The MUA has been attempting to unionise the site. But in late November, management sacked the main union delegate. This was met with a 24 hour a day community picket which blocked all goods coming in or out of the terminal—putting a total freeze on the VICT operator’s profits.

Unions often use community pickets staffed by retired unionists and other supporters to get around the laws that prohibit strike action outside bargaining periods. But this time, the courts ruled that the MUA were in fact organising the unofficial picket, and issued injunctions against their officials returning to the site.

For the first time, they also issued injunctions against the CFMEU and Victorian Trades Hall for supporting and speaking at the picket too. MUA officials defied the injunctions to return to Webb Dock. Union official Will Tracey said it was “a way of escalating this that the federal and state officials come down today and defy the federal court injunctions”.

It was an important move. VICT lost \$2 million in revenue, showing how union action can hit bosses’ profits. The company then agreed to keep paying the sacked union delegate, pending a court case—and the union called off the picket.

The court decision against the community picket shows that there is no easy way around the law. Unions will need to defy the law in order to win. Strike action by workers on site is the strongest weapon unions have.

Workers at VICT are still employed on a dodgy enterprise agreement that massively undercuts wages and conditions on the docks. The union aims to wait until the current enterprise agreement expires, so that workers can legally take action to demand a better agreement.

But if VICT succeeds in sacking the union delegates, the union will need to act. Illegal industrial action is needed to force the bosses’ hands. **Jasper Bell**

.....
Police went on a rampage through the flats, trying to force their way into homes and attacking residents

Campaign of racist hate against Sudanese is the real crime

By James Supple

THE MEDIA panic about “African gangs” went into overdrive in January, as news outlets including Murdoch’s *Herald-Sun* in Melbourne declared “an explosion of African gang crime”.

Peter Dutton tried to whip up a racist scare campaign, telling a radio shock jock, “people are scared to go out to restaurants of a night time because they are followed home by these gangs”.

Prime Minister Malcolm Turnbull backed him, claiming there was, “growing gang violence and lawlessness” in Victoria. The Liberals will take any opportunity to attack Muslims, migrants and refugees in their shameless efforts to scapegoat and stir up fear.

In a blatant political attack, Dutton accused the Victorian Labor government of telling police to “go soft” and called for tougher criminal sentencing.

Victorian Liberal leader Matthew Guy also chimed in, renewing his call for mandatory sentencing. This is all political posturing in the lead up to the Victorian state election in November.

But Victorian Labor has also gone out of its way to talk tough on crime, with Premier Daniel Andrews saying he would accept no excuses for offending and would, “make sure the arrests are made and people feel the full force of the law”. Deputy Premier James Merlino promised to “throw the book” at young offenders. And federal Labor leader Bill Shorten attacked Turnbull from the right for cutting funding to the Australian Federal Police.

Much was made of an out of control party in late December where Sudanese youth damaged a house in Werribee, generating days of media coverage.

But when 100 youths ran riot in the Victorian beachside town of Torquay on 4 January, throwing bottles at police and forcing them to lock themselves in their cars, it was barely reported. None of those involved were Africans or migrants.

Although they are over-represented in crime figures, Sudanese-born offenders make up only 1 per cent of those linked to crimes in Victoria. And overall crime in the state was down 6.2 per cent in the year to September 2017.



People of Sudanese and African background face racism and discrimination on a daily basis

Even Victorian Police Chief Graham Ashton said claims Victorians were too scared to go out to eat were “complete and utter garbage” and declared “Victoria is one of the safest places in the world to live”.

The media frenzy was the latest in a string of scaremongering about “Sudanese gangs” in Victoria. In 2016 the media discovered the so-called “Apex gang” following a brawl at the city’s Moomba festival. They were blamed for a youth crime wave involving burglaries and carjackings.

Talk of the “Apex gang” was used as shorthand for African or “ethnic crime” to create a racist panic about migrants.

There was just one problem. According to police, “a large cohort

of that gang was in fact Australian-born offenders.” Neither was Apex an organised crime gang with any formal structure or even gang colours. Police described them as simply a group of young people, “connected effectively by social media”.

Deputy Police Commissioner Shane Patton told a parliamentary inquiry there had only been 130 people involved in the gang. And by early 2017 it had effectively ceased to exist.

Racism

The media vilification of Sudanese communities has already led to a rise in racist attacks. Dave Anei, a South Sudanese man in Brisbane, filmed a torrent of racist abuse from a man who followed his wife and two children home.

There is already rampant racism and discrimination—particularly from police. “Young people of Sudanese background find themselves constantly being stopped [by police and]... randomly checked [to see] if they are gang members”, Deng Maleek, a South Sudanese youth worker, told the ABC.

Victoria police agreed to a settlement in 2013 with six young African Australians from Flemington and North Melbourne who took court action after facing constant racial profiling.

“I was pretty much stopped almost every second day for just riding the train or walking through the streets of Flemington”, Maki Isse, who was born in Somalia, told the media.

In December, police spent hours harassing residents of the Flemington flats following a protest at far right provocateur Milo Yiannopoulos’ meeting nearby (see opposite page).

Discrimination has also led to a shocking unemployment rate of 28.6 per cent among people of South Sudanese background.

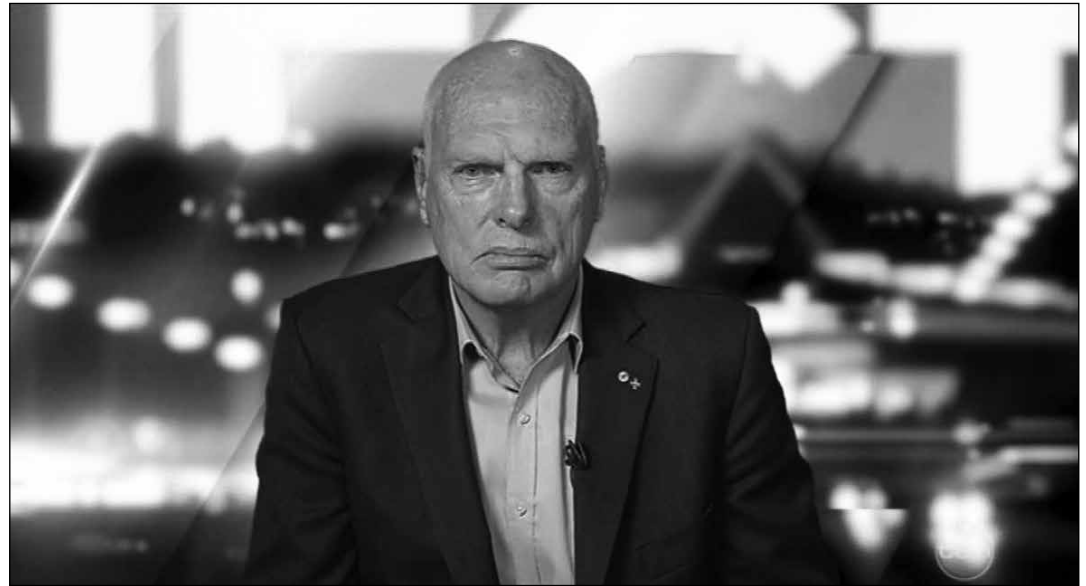
Many Sudanese migrants also arrived as refugees and are still affected by trauma from the decades-long civil war at home.

Dutton and Turnbull’s comments will only fuel racism. But Victorian Premier Daniel Andrews’ tough on crime approach won’t help either.

A protest against the criminalisation of African communities will take place in Melbourne on 4 February. We need to unite against the racism being whipped up by the Liberals and the media and demand funding for jobs and services for migrant communities.

Sudanese-born offenders make up only 1 per cent of those linked to crimes in Victoria

Jim Molan—war criminal, now Senator



Above: Jim Molan will be a fierce advocate of more war, military spending and efforts to keep out refugees

THERE IS now a first class war criminal in the Senate, with the Liberals' Jim Molan taking the seat vacated by the Nationals' Fiona Nash, due to her dual citizenship.

Molan played a key role “running the war in Iraq” from 2004, as his modestly titled book implies. His job as Chief of Operations saw him commanding the movement of US and Coalition forces.

Tony Abbott then appointed him as architect of the Coalition's military operation against refugee boats, Operation Sovereign Borders, in 2010. Molan describes it as a “policy success” and something “every Australian should be extraordinarily proud of”.

In Iraq, Molan was in charge of making the call on bombing targets across the country, using battlefield footage beamed into his office from predator drones.

In his book he boasts of favouring, “a relatively new type of 500-pound bomb called a JDAM—Joint Direct Attack Munition... it could ‘pick up’ a whole house and dump it in the street”.

Among his achievements is his estimate that, “we wiped out the enemy leadership in Mosul twice and about one and a half times in Baghdad” through missile and drone strikes. For Molan that was “very satisfying”.

He helped direct operations against Fallujah in November 2004, the scene of some of the most horrific US war crimes in Iraq. The US laid siege to the city in order to wipe out insurgents, cutting off all exits to the remaining 30,000 to 50,000 civilians. Medical clinics were bombed and the Red Cross prevented from taking in medical supplies. At least 800 civilians were killed. The US has admitted to using white phosphorus there in violation of international law.

While Molan details his efforts to comply with the letter of international law, to him the Iraqi resistance were all simply terrorists and criminals, defined by their “illegality and brutality” and “slaughter of innocents”. He forgets to point out that this was a resistance movement against the US's illegal invasion of their country.

Molan's first foray after learning he'd become a Senator was to demand more funding for the Australian military. Not satisfied with the government's record \$34.6 billion spending this year, Molan wants an increase because, he says, Australia can't simply rely on the US anymore. But we can rely on Molan—to back every military adventure and every escalation of the government's war on refugees.

James Supple

.....
He helped direct operations against Fallujah, the scene of some of the most horrific US war crimes in Iraq

Dual citizenship—demand for MPs' loyalty to 'Australia' needs to go

By James Supple

PARLIAMENT'S DUAL citizenship fiasco looks like it might never finish. Nine Senators have now departed and two lower house Coalition MPs, John Alexander and Barnaby Joyce, have survived by-election after all were found to be ineligible to sit in parliament.

The saga is set to continue in 2018, with Malcolm Turnbull and Bill Shorten refusing to agree on which MPs still have a case to answer. It now seems that Labor has the greater potential problems, with four of its lower house MPs facing questions. Two of them hold marginal seats, including David Feeney, who would struggle to survive a challenge from The Greens.

With the Turnbull government holding just a one seat majority, the loss of any more MPs could see it fall. That would be a prospect to relish.

But the whole idea that dual citizenship should exclude someone from parliament is ridiculous. It's not just that almost a third of the population was born overseas.

The idea behind the ban is that holding the citizenship of another country puts a person's loyalty under question. As the offending section

of constitution puts it, the, “acknowledgement of allegiance, obedience, or adherence to a foreign power” is the barrier to entering parliament.

What this really means is loyalty to Australia's rulers and the Australian state. For there is no one singular “Australian” interest. The Australian population is divided by fundamentally different interests—most importantly the interests of workers and bosses.

We are living through a period of record low wages growth, with most workers earning less after inflation than we were in 2010. Yet profits are up 20 per cent in the last year and the share market hit a record high.

Governments have often demanded the population show its loyalty during wars, in ordinary people sacrificing their lives and their living standards to aid the war effort. And the whole essence of the argument for neo-liberalism is that we need to sacrifice—through wage restraint and deteriorating public services—so that the national economy can keep growing. But it's not workers who reap most of the benefits.

The constitution should be changed. But more importantly, we should reject the idea that there is any need for loyalty to Australian nationalism, Australian governments or Australia's ruling class.

Electoralism no road to shifting Greens to the left

GREENS MEMBERS and supporters are understandably enthused at recent electoral successes in Brisbane and Melbourne. As Turnbull falls in the polls, the need for a party to the left of Labor to take up the fight for refugees and to change the laws that shackle the unions is more urgent than ever.

In November, The Greens won a seat in the Queensland election and significantly increased their vote in inner city seats such as South Brisbane.

Some in the party see this as a model for winning votes using radical arguments and policies.

The Greens' platform included progressive demands such as "building one million affordable homes", "rolling back electricity privatisation" and \$1 public transport fares.

But this was a wish list of demands concocted for the election. A left campaign needs to relate to existing campaigns and raise demands that can form the basis for community campaigning and mobilisation.

The Greens campaign ignored one of the central concerns of the election—the likelihood of an LNP/One Nation coalition. While Labor campaigned strongly to "put One Nation last", The Greens' campaign was deliberately silent on the threat.

The Greens missed the opportunity to make common cause with the union campaign against One Nation.

This decision could only have come from electoralist concerns that targeting One Nation would not win The Greens votes. Subordinating political principles and priorities in order to maximise your vote is one of the hallmarks of an electoralist politics that will drag the party to the right.

The Queensland campaign was actually a continuation of The Greens' strategy of looking to win inner city seats, like Jenny Leong's campaign in Newtown in Sydney and Adam Bandt's in his seat of Melbourne.

This means an almost exclusively electoralist vision for the party. South Brisbane candidate Amy McMahon told a post-election meeting that their campaign was built around, "door-knocking teams going out every weekend over the course of a year".

Between campaigning in state, federal and council elections, such an enormous mobilisation to get the vote out leaves little time for building activist campaigns and movements.

The other limitation of this strategy is that without a consistent focus on Labor's working class base, The



Above: Greens activists campaigning in the Queensland election in South Brisbane

Greens' reach does not extend beyond the inner cities into Labor heartlands.

While The Greens implicitly recognised that there is a difference between Labor and the Liberals by directing preferences to Labor, the Queensland Greens persistently positioned themselves as being hostile to the two "old parties".

But this position, equating Labor with the LNP, alienates the unions and workers that have both the interest and the power to use their industrial strength and their base in the community to fight privatisation—as their recent struggles have shown.

The Greens may have raised the issue of re-nationalising the power industry—but it is the unions and workers that have both the interest and the power to use their industrial strength and their base in the community to fight privatisation—as their recent struggles have shown.

Di Natale's electoral vision

This strategy does nothing to reverse the party's embrace of parliamentary compromise and its focus on one day forming a "stable, effective and progressive government", as Victorian Greens leader Samantha Ratnam put it after winning the Northcote by-election in November.

This is also the ambition of Greens leader Richard Di Natale. On the night of the Northcote by-election he repeated his underwhelming goal of winning 25 seats in the next 25 years.

Richard Di Natale is leading the drive to pragmatic electoral politics

nationally. In NSW it is Jeremy Buckingham. These are the forces that have declared war on the left in NSW—resulting in Lee Rhiannon's defeat in the recent pre-selection ballot.

There is no point winning more seats if the party is going to be hide-bound by its electoralist ambitions.

To pretend that the left can go forward by focussing on winning seats while the right relentlessly takes control of the party will reduce the left to the role of the orchestra on the deck of the Titanic.

There is now an open fight for the soul and future of The Greens. In NSW, that fight is now focussed on David Shoebridge's pre-selection battle with Jeremy Buckingham over a spot in the NSW upper house.

Di Natale's trajectory is a dead end. That was graphically on display when he attempted to do the deal with Turnbull over support for Gonski 2.0, ignoring the strong views of Greens teachers and the education unions.

There needs to be an openly organised left faction in The Greens that systematically fights to mobilise the party for the struggles outside parliament: for the industrial days of action against Turnbull's war on workers, the refugee rallies, climate action, and the fight against Islamophobia.

The party that is needed is not one primarily focussed on winning parliamentary seats. It needs to be focussed on building the struggles outside parliament to win change.

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The Queensland campaign was a continuation of The Greens' strategy of looking to win inner city seats

Iranian workers' revolt against inequality holds the key to freedom

By Mark Goudkamp

IN LATE December a wave of mass protests in Iran began that spread to all corners of the country. Spontaneous protests erupted in nearly 70 cities, many in provincial areas where there is high unemployment. At least 22 people have been killed by the authorities and more than 1500 arrested.

This is the largest display of public defiance since 2009—when protests against electoral fraud were brutally repressed. This time the revolt has been strongest in cities with a large impoverished working class.

The regime has hit back, deploying its Revolutionary Guards to savagely repress the movement.

The initial protest in Mashhad, Iran's second largest city, was organised by regime hardliners in an attempt to undermine "reformist" president Hassan Rouhani. But it was taken over immediately by ordinary people looking to voice their frustration over unemployment and economic hardship.

The immediate catalyst for popular rage was the annual budget, where Rouhani's government gave huge handouts to clerical institutions and the military while cutting subsidies for the poor. The economy has actually started to recover, following the easing of sanctions and the resumption of oil exports. But the mass of poor people have barely benefitted.

Price rises, including a 40 per cent jump in the price of eggs, unemployment officially at 12 per cent but in reality much higher, unpaid wages and rocketing rents have all made life harder. Many retirees haven't received their pensions, and others have lost money because the banks went bankrupt.

Unlike those in 2009, the protests have raised slogans against both factions of the regime: the liberal "reformers" and the conservative hardliners. Despite its religious framework the Iranian regime is fundamentally capitalist. Both factions have imposed neo-liberal austerity and embarked on privatisation in an effort to attract foreign investors and restore relations with the West.

Chants have included both "Death to the Dictator", targeting Supreme Leader Ali Khamenei and "Death to Rouhani".

Protesters have also opposed Iranian government spending on



wars in Syria and Iraq while ordinary Iranians suffer poverty, with chants including "Forget about Syria—think about us".

There have been calls for independent trade unions, and the fall of the Islamist regime.

Women have been at the forefront of the protests, often defying the compulsory wearing of the hijab.

As in any real movement there are also conflicting ideas. There have been some nationalist slogans raised such as "Neither Gaza, nor Lebanon, I give my life for Iran" and "We are Aryans, we don't worship Arabs".

Don't trust Trump

Donald Trump has positioned himself as a supporter of the Iranian masses. Nothing could be further from the truth. Iranians are among those banned from entering the US under Trump's travel ban. He has slashed the refugee quota, and is intent on scrapping the deal over Iran's nuclear program which has eased sanctions.

The Australian government also wants to keep out Iranian refugees, many of whom fled the regime's crackdown on the 2009 protests. It has imprisoned hundreds of Iranian asylum seekers on Manus Island and Nauru.

Western governments are no friends of ordinary Iranians struggling for freedom. They simply hope to replace the Iranian regime with a government supportive of Western control of the Middle East.

But it is an insult to the brave protesters to present them as somehow

Above: Students at a university in Tehran hold a protest as part of the recent wave of unrest

manipulated by the US and Israel as the regime's supporters are doing.

Workers' movement

In the mass revolutionary wave that overthrew the Shah in 1979, workers played a central role, before Ayatollah Khomeini suppressed all expressions of independent working class organisation in an effort to restabilise Iranian capitalism.

Workers in Iran continue to resist the privatisation of the steel and oil industries, the widespread use of subcontracting and the imprisonment of union leaders.

According to Agence France-Presse, "Minor protests have been bubbling away in the weeks leading up to the current unrest," with "hundreds of oil workers and truck drivers protesting the late payment of wages; tractor makers in Tabriz against their factory's closure; and Tehran tire workers at bonuses being delayed."

A successful uprising in Iran could undermine the bitter sectarianism between Shia and the Sunni that has riven the Middle East over recent years. Syrian and Egyptian revolutionaries for example, have already been inspired by the revolt. Egypt in particular, which was at the heart of the Arab Spring of 2011, has a large working class that has fought to build independent trade unions.

A mass uprising of the Iranian working class demanding freedom and an end to inequality would inspire workers across the region to fight their own ruling classes.

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Spontaneous protests erupted in 70 cities, many in provincial areas where there is high unemployment

Saudia Arabia and the West create human misery in Yemen

By Jason Wong

YEMEN IS in the grip of what the UN has called the world's largest humanitarian crisis. This month Save the Children said it faced "the worst diphtheria outbreak in a generation" with at least 52 deaths already.

A Saudi-led coalition has enforced a blockade on the country, cutting off trade and sometimes aid deliveries. NGOs have estimated that 50,000 children died last year as a direct result, with hundreds of thousands more affected by famine. Last year cholera killed 2200 people.

Yemen's civil war is into its third year, as its desperate people find themselves sandwiched between their ousted Saudi-backed government, led by President Abd Rabbuh Mansur al-Hadi, and Houthi rebels who took control of the capital in September 2014.

A Saudi-led coalition consisting of Gulf States and Western powers including Australia has pounded Yemen's cities with close to 100,000 airstrikes, deliberately targeting infrastructure including schools and hospitals.

From the beginning the Saudi strategy has been to attempt to starve the Houthis and anyone living in their territory into submission.

Both sides have cracked down brutally on peaceful protests, arresting hundreds of activists, many of whom were active during the Arab Spring uprising in Yemen.

At times the situation has edged dangerously close to open regional conflict.

The two main regional powers, Saudi Arabia and Iran, are jostling for influence across the Middle East. Iran has been a strong supporter of the Assad regime in Syria, while the Saudis have given arms and funding to elements of the Syrian opposition.

Houthis

The Houthi rebels, who now claim control of Yemen's capital Sana'a and much of the west of the country, are a Shia group originating in Yemen's northwest, near the Saudi border.

While they were once solely a religious group, decades of repression by the Yemeni government drove them to armed struggle.

Driven by opposition to the US invasion of Iraq and to state repression, the Houthis won significant popular



Above: At least 16 civilians were killed in the Saudi bombing raid that killed this man's family in the city of Sa'ada

support in the north. The violent suppression of protests against Hadi after he doubled the fuel price in late 2014 was the last straw. Hadi was forced to flee to Aden as Houthis descended on the capital Sana'a.

The Houthis receive rhetorical support from Tehran, and both the US and Saudi Arabia insist that Iran also sends money and weapons. But whatever military assistance Iran provides is dwarfed by the scale of the Saudi intervention.

The United Arab Emirates has also jumped into the fray. Although it shares the Saudis' opposition to the Houthis, it has also tried to build up separate armed groups and support the Southern Transitional Council, a group based in the southern port of Aden that has declared independence from northern Yemen.

An American drone war programme is being deployed against the Houthis and the US is the primary enforcer of the Saudi naval blockade.

The Obama Administration listed Yemen as a "country of concern", paving the way for Yemen's inclusion under President Trump's Muslim travel ban.

Yemen's former president Ali Abdullah Saleh was a puppet of the US and Saudi Arabia. After holding power for 33 years, massive protests in 2011 during the Arab Spring forced him to step down. The US and Gulf States brokered an agreement to install his then vice-president Hadi as leader.

Despite this, Saleh opportunistically made an alliance with the Houthi rebels in a bid to return to power.

Saleh's alliance with the Houthis came to an abrupt end last December, when he announced he would seek to negotiate a ceasefire with the Saudis. The Houthis turned on him, killing Saleh.

End the siege, end the famine

The continuing protests in Yemen demanding an end to the siege are a reminder that popular movements are the only true alternative to both imperialist schemes, and to discontent being pulled in a sectarian direction.

There is a hidden history of worker's organisation and struggle in Yemen.

The southern port of Aden lies in a region with strong separatist sentiments, and its people successfully drove out the British in 1967. At the time, the British considered the Aden Trade Union Congress their greatest obstacle, with its strong leftist and Arab nationalist tendencies.

The US, Saudi Arabia, Russia, Iran, Australia and other imperialist powers have jumped from country to country in the Middle East leaving nothing but a trail of destruction, in which Yemen is only the latest victim.

All parties to the Saudi coalition must lift the blockade and withdraw from the country immediately. The longer it continues the longer the Yemeni people will suffer as sectarian groups lay claim to the spoils.

The two main regional powers, Saudi Arabia and Iran, are jostling for influence across the Middle East

Dangerous, hackneyed rubbish: don't watch Romper Stomper

Romper Stomper
 Directed by Geoffrey Wright, Daina Reid and James Napier Robertson
 Streaming on Stan

THERE IS a lot wrong with the new adaptation of *Romper Stomper*, but the worst part is its fanciful and dangerous representation of anti-fascists, and Muslim and African youths.

The six part series is partly a story about contemporary Australian fascism and its anti-Muslim obsession. A new generation of Nazis are connected to the original set of thugs from the 1992 film through a rather contrived plot, and some returning cast members.

At the centre of the film is a group of Nazis, Patriot Blue, quite obviously modelled on the real life United Patriots Front, and, as the promotional material explains, their conflict with “their anti-fascist counterparts”, Antifash. The show deliberately equates the violence of Nazis with those who resist them.

This is especially troublesome because the series wants to be realistic, and it uses real world events as motors for the plot. The first scene centres on a protest by Patriot Blue outside a Halal food festival, mirroring a real life protest in Sydney in 2016 (the show is set in Melbourne). But it is Patriot Blue who end up viciously beaten—by Antifash. Muslims end up injured not by Nazis but by the melee that ensues between left and right: a very unsubtle metaphor.

Whatever the strategic nous of punching Nazis, nothing remotely like this has happened during the actual anti-racist counter-rallies against the far right



in Australia that the show aims to portray. A few episodes later, Antifash set upon the funeral of the former leader of Patriot Blue, Blake, armed with weapons. This too is miles from reality.

At another point, a group of young Africans are harassed by the Nazis. A few scenes later they have kidnapped one of the Nazis and are torturing him with a Stanley knife in the back of a van. While the Australian media hypes up a pretend South Sudanese crime wave in Melbourne, this portrayal is downright irresponsible. It also seems to have nothing to do with the plot.

In another scene, a young Muslim boxer gets into a fight in a car park that leaves his white opponent nearly dead. This spurs Patriot Blue to wild violence. The implication is that the hatred is “spiral-ing”; and in some way, the young Muslims share the blame.

Sometimes the series gets its realism right. David Wenham is great as Jago Zorick, an Andrew Bolt-like TV shock jock whose heroes are his friends the fascist brutes.

He tricks outspoken young Muslim Laila into appearing on his show alongside Blake, and then demands she apologise on behalf of all Muslims for all acts of terror, a racist public shaming that recalls the experience of people like Yassmin Abdel-Magied. But then Laila just becomes a pawn, played by both sides.

Resistance to Nazism and racism is portrayed as just as problematic and morally dubious as those who idolise Hitler.

Even worse, perhaps, is that this isn't really a TV show about racism or Nazis. *Romper Stomper* uses the clash between fascists and anti-fascists as background in a hackneyed psychological story about a rising young Nazi,

The show deliberately equates the violence of Nazis with those who resist them

Kane, whose primary motive in winning Patriot Blue's leadership seems to be hatred for his mother. The characterisations are painfully two-dimensional, and the dialogue is so unnatural at times that serious scenes end up verging on comical.

When the state and politicians play a role—there is a nonsensical plot that revolves around an Immigration bill and a crossbencher quite obviously modelled on Nick Xenophon—it is as if they are just being strung along by the contest between far left and far right.

Racism comes from the top

The small fascist groups in Australia are dangerous, but whatever their fantasies, they are not leading the charge. The sewers that Australian Nazis swim in have been constructed by years of racist mainstream policy and discourse.

Wave after wave of anti-terror legislation alongside cultivated panics about “death cults” have created an environment where extreme anti-Muslim hate is given

oxygen, and where the far right has more confidence to actively attack Muslims and other minorities. The Islamophobia Register has documented hundreds of hate crimes; their stats show that 70 per cent of victims are women and 30 per cent of attacks have happened in front of children.

The original film was rightly criticised for its romanticisation of Nazis. The TV show gives the oppressed groups and anti-fascists more airtime, but it does so with sparing empathy and context. Perhaps this is no accident. Speaking to *The Australian*, director Geoffrey Wright echoed the racist concerns of his main characters: “We are at a point in the West, amid significant waves of immigration, where we are asking: what do we stand for? What do we want? And how do groups contribute to the West, to our society in a meaningful way?”

One good thing about *Romper Stomper* is the paywall—it's only available on Stan. Hopefully that means less people watching it.
 By Amy Thomas

KARL MARX—WAGES, PRICE AND PROFIT

Daniel Cotton looks at Marx's 1865 pamphlet *Wages, price and profit*, explaining where profit comes from and its relationship to wages and the prices of commodities

WHY SHOULD we fight for higher wages? On one level, the answer is obvious to every working person. But as socialists, we need to know that wage struggle is an essential part of the class struggle that can build the kind of movement we need to transform capitalism.

In one debate in the 1860s, a man named John Weston argued that wage increases would lead to price increases. He believed that these price increases would outstrip wage increases, meaning there would be no advantage for workers to the higher wage.

Weston, as a follower of the progressive British industrialist Robert Owen, opposed trade union struggles, arguing employers could simply be convinced to treat workers better.

In response, Marx wrote the pamphlet *Wages, price and profit*. He set out his own economic theories and explained the heart of Weston's economic mistake: where profits come from. He showed that both profits and prices come from one source: labour. Prices are not merely set according to the whims of the capitalist. Marx argued that every commodity had a "value" in comparison to other commodities. Value is the underlying measure behind which supply and demand fluctuations take place. Its value sets the long-term average price—or what Adam Smith called the "natural price".

This value is determined by labour, equal to the quantity of "socially necessary labour time" that is required to make it.

So if it takes three hours of labour to produce a shirt (over its entire production from start to finish) and six hours of labour to produce a pair of shoes, then the shoes will cost twice as much as the shirt, if the commodities are sold at their value.

Socially necessary labour time refers to the amount of labour required at society's level of productivity and skill. So if I handweave a top in twenty hours that could be made in three under the average conditions of production, its value is still only three hours of socially necessary labour.

What workers sell to the capitalist is not simply labour but our "labour power"—our ability to work (as the boss orders) over a certain period. "Labour" refers to the actual number



of labour hours the capitalist extracts.

Value of labour

Our labour power has a value, determined just like anything else: the quantity of labour required to reproduce it.

We require a certain amount of food, accommodation, recreation, and so on, to be able to function as workers: what Marx called the, "value of the necessaries required to produce, develop, maintain, and perpetuate the labouring power". This value is what the worker receives as a wage.

It takes the worker only a certain number of hours to produce the value of their own labour power—or their wage. But the capitalist can force us to keep working through the week past this point. Marx draws a line between this necessary labour to sustain the worker that we actually get paid for, and the surplus labour that we don't.

With all of the surplus labour we put in, we produce surplus value. Because the capitalist doesn't pay us for these extra hours, they pocket this surplus value as profits.

Armed with this economics, we return to the question of what happens when we fight for higher wages.

Pushing up wages doesn't necessarily push up prices. Neither prices nor wages are set through the will of the capitalist; they both track the underlying value determined by the quantity of socially necessary labour contained in a commodity.

Higher wages in one workplace don't come at the expense of lower real wages for everyone else. They come at the expense of the profits of the capitalist, reducing the amount of surplus value they extract from a worker. So pushing for higher wages improves the workers' conditions at the expense of the capitalist.

Capitalists will try to push wages down as much as possible. Inflation, changes in the intensity and extent of work, market price fluctuations and business cycles can all be used to put downward pressure on wages.

Wage struggle is needed to fight back this onslaught, and prevent the absolute degradation of the position of workers. For Marx, "the necessity of debating their price with the capitalist is inherent to their condition of having to sell themselves as commodities".

Similarly, as labour productivity increases, the total product increases. If wages are stagnant against such increases, the gains will go entirely to the capitalist. This is merely fuels social and economic inequality.

Workers wanting to maintain their relative social position rightly demand higher wages in line with the productivity increases. For all these reasons, wage struggle is a necessary and progressive element of class struggle.

But we should not limit ourselves to wage struggle. The slogan of "a fair day's pay for a fair day's work" does not challenge capitalism. There's nothing fair about submitting yourself to the dictatorship of your boss at work. There's nothing fair about getting cheated out of part of the value of your labour, and working to enrich a boss.

As long as there is wage slavery, there will be alienation, growing inequality, and a fundamentally undemocratic society. As Marx ended his pamphlet, socialism, the emancipation of the working class requires, "the ultimate abolition of the wages system".

Above: Marx speaking in London. The pamphlet was first delivered as a speech to the International Working Men's Association, or First International

Wages, price and profit is available online at the Marxist Internet Archive at www.marxists.org/archive/marx/

THE WAR FOR SYDNEY GENOCIDE AND RESISTANCE

The British occupation of Sydney Cove in 1788, and the brutal tactics of settlers and the military, led to almost immediate Aboriginal resistance, writes **Paddy Gibson**

WHEN CAPTAIN Arthur Phillip planted the Union Jack on Gadigal land at Warrane (Sydney Cove) on 26 January 1788 he proclaimed British sovereignty over half of the Australian continent, New Zealand and surrounding Pacific Islands. This was the biggest single act of land theft in world history. Consolidating control over these lands required a genocidal war which lasted almost 150 years and left hundreds of thousands of Indigenous people dead from murder, starvation and disease.

It was the emerging system of industrial capitalism in Britain that propelled the First Fleet half way around the world. They had two main motivations. Firstly, the British were locked in fierce competition with other imperial powers, trying to exclude rivals from trade routes, markets and access to raw materials. Phillip’s claim was made to forestall the French, whose ships visited Botany Bay just a few days after he arrived.

Secondly, Britain needed penal colonies. The newly independent United States were refusing to accept convicts from England. Transportation was just one form of terrorism used against the poor and dispossessed in Britain and Ireland to enforce a regime of private property. Peasants were being thrown off their lands and forced into the slums of new cities to become fodder for the growing factory system. Seventy per cent of Irish convicts and 60 per cent of the English on the “First Fleet” were first time offenders, most transported for petty theft.

Phillip’s fleet carried about 1000 convicts, 200 British marines and some civilian officials and free colonists. The new colony imported a brutal form of military rule, based on forced labour, arbitrary whippings, rapes and execution.

The contrast with Aboriginal society could not have been stronger. Military surgeon Watkin Tench wrote, “excepting a little tributary respect which the younger part appear to pay those more advanced in years, I never could observe any degrees of subordination among them”.

The initial penal colony was established where the Botanic Gardens are now, an open meadow long maintained by Gadigal people around a fresh water stream that was quickly fouled. At first Aboriginal people were happy to assist the newcomers in finding food and water, and traded for useful tools. But when it became clear that the British wanted exclusive possession, desecrated sacred sites and were quick to use lethal force, local people began to fight back.

They began killing convicts who wandered out of the settlement, following instances of rape and robbery against the Indigenous people. By October, military officer Collins wrote that it was, “absolutely necessary to compel the natives to keep at a greater distance from the settlement”.

This resistance began to pose an acute crisis. The soil both at Sydney Cove and nearby Balmain was too sandy to grow food.

Phillip knew that there was fertile land at the head of the Parramatta River. But in November 1788, there was a large show of force—between 400 and 2000 Aboriginal people armed with spears—at the “brick-fields” near the Sydney colony. This confirmed the fears of many officers that there were not enough marines to defend an additional settlement at Parramatta.

Phillip dispatched a letter home saying another 600 marines would be necessary. But colonists were already dying from disease and malnutrition.

.....
When it became clear that the British wanted exclusive possession and were quick to use lethal force, local people began to fight back

The future of the colony hung in the balance.

Then in early 1789 a smallpox epidemic hit the Aboriginal people, wiping out more than half the population of the Sydney basin. There is both Aboriginal oral history and academic work suggesting that the British deliberately introduced smallpox as a weapon of war. None of the Europeans had smallpox at this time and the first Aboriginal people affected lived some way from the Sydney colony. Records show that smallpox scabs were kept in vials on a British ship in the harbor. Marines had experience lacing blankets with smallpox in North America.

The initial phase of Aboriginal resistance collapsed following this catastrophe. It was only then that successful farming began at Parramatta, allowing the colony to sustain itself.

Pemulwuy’s insurgency

The calm did not last long. In 1790, English diaries started carrying stories of a new figure who would lead a black insurgency over the next decade—Pemulwuy, a Bidjigal man.

In December that year, at Botany Bay, Pemulwuy speared John McEntire, Phillip’s personal game hunter, a man hated by Aboriginal people for carrying out numerous rapes and murders. McEntire died five weeks later, but Phillip’s reaction was immediate. He ordered a military party to march to Botany Bay, kidnap and execute men at random and cut off ten heads.

Tench said these tactics were designed, “to strike a decisive blow, in order at once to convince them of our superiority and to infuse a universal terror”. But the marines failed to capture a single person.

Soon attacks began on the new farms that were spreading out from Parramatta to Toongabbie and Pros-

pect. Huts were burned, colonists speared and crops were both raided for food and burned to try and stop colonial expansion.

Phillip first armed the convicts working the farms and then in 1792 ordered that at least three marines must be stationed at every farm house. These troops often lead massacre parties out into the bush. A favoured tactic was to attack Aboriginal camps while people were sleeping, sometimes mutilating the dead bodies. A similar pattern of warfare soon began against Darug people to make way for farming on river flats around the Hawkesbury.

Throughout the 1790s, Pemulwuy appeared at the head of parties attacking farming settlements across the large area now known as Sydney's Western suburbs and around his traditional country on the Georges River to Sydney's south. Numerous farms were abandoned as a result.

In 1797, Pemulwuy was part of a group of 100 Aboriginal people pursued through the night north of Parramatta. When the colonists entered the township to rest, Pemulwuy led his group right into the heart of the settlement and started a pitched battle. Five Aboriginal people were killed and Pemulwuy himself was hit by buckshot in the chest and head, captured and shackled. Incredibly, he not only survived, but managed to escape and lead further attacks.

Enforcing the racial divide

The military regime in Sydney Cove faced another major challenge through the 1790s—convict resistance. From 1788 there were examples of convicts fleeing into the bush and attempting to survive outside the colony. In the 1790s whole groups sometimes ran away, surviving by raiding farms to feed themselves. Those captured were severely flogged or executed.

A small number of the absconders lived or co-operated with Aboriginal people and launched joint raids on settlements. Historians John Maynard and Victoria Haskins have written that in the Hawkesbury:

“By the mid-1790s, there was open warfare in the district. There is no doubt that despite the intensity of the conflict, numbers of white men and youths were attracted to life with Aboriginal people and that the Aboriginal people were similarly willing to accept them”.

One well known example was the freed convict John Wilson. The Judge Advocate Collins wrote that Wilson, “preferred living among the natives to



Above: The frontier wars began in Sydney in 1788

earning the wages of honest industry by working for the settler”.

Some convicts working on government farms also built genuine friendships with Aboriginal people—co-operating as they struggled to beat chronic hunger and avoid the brutality of colonial authorities.

In the late 1790s many Irish political prisoners were transported to NSW. They included veterans of the 1798 uprising, the “United Irishmen Rebellion”. Serious plans began for an uprising that would overpower the military and seize ships to sail back to Ireland. One detailed conspiracy in 1800 involved a plan to co-ordinate with Aboriginal fighters. The ring-leaders were betrayed and severely punished.

In this situation, behind every Aboriginal attack military officers believed there was a treacherous convict providing leadership. This was a racist fantasy. But in an effort to decisively crush the black insurgency, they moved to drive a wedge between Aboriginal people and any sympathetic whites.

In 1801, Governor King called for Pemulwuy to be brought in “dead or alive”, along with white absconders William Knight and Thomas Thrush, thought to be fighting with him. At the same time, King gave an order that all Aboriginal people must leave farms in the districts of “Parramatta, the Georges River and Prospect Hill”. Colonists were compelled to use lethal force to remove them if necessary.

New orders also stipulated that when called upon, whites must join militia for punitive raids against Aboriginal people. There was some

resistance to this. Historian Grace Karskens gives one example:

“When the Reverend Samuel Marsden ordered Parramatta’s convict servants to join soldiers on reprisal raids, George Caley’s servant refused to go. This man got on well with the Parramatta Aborigines and would not join... Marsden instantly had the man gaoled.”

Within seven months, Pemulwuy was killed by an “explorer” named Henry Hacking. His head was put in a jar and sent to England as a present for Joseph Banks, the famous botanist who had accompanied Cook on his 1770 voyage charting the Australian coast. It has still not been returned to this day.

Pemulwuy’s death was a turning point in the war for Sydney. The centre of guerilla war against the settlers now shifted further out, to the Georges, Nepean and Hawkesbury rivers. The genocide would take on a faster pace as it became clear that seizing land could make colonists a fortune producing agricultural commodities for the world market. In the 1820s the NSW mounted police were created specifically to kill Aboriginal people and protect sheep runs expanding on the plains over the Blue Mountains, exporting wool to Britain’s textile factories.

But, just as in Eora and Darug country, the colonists would have to fight for every new settlement. The resistance of Pemulwuy and many others continues to inspire struggles for justice today. Aboriginal people and all workers have a common struggle against the capitalist system in this country built on genocide.

THE FIRST INTIFADA— 30 YEARS SINCE PALESTINIANS ROSE UP AGAINST ISRAEL

Thirty years ago Palestinians rose up against Israel in the first intifada. **Nick Clark** looks at the Palestinians' struggle and the lessons for resisting Israel today

PALESTINIAN RESISTANCE organisation Hamas called for an intifada—uprising—after Donald Trump described Jerusalem as Israel's capital in late December. It came on the eve of the 30th anniversary of the first intifada.

In December 1987 resistance exploded onto the streets after decades of oppression at the hands of Israel and imperialism.

The rebellion lasted almost five years—and inspired similar revolts across the Middle East.

It was sparked by a shocking act of brutality. Hundreds of Palestinians from the Gaza Strip were returning home from a day's work in Israel when they witnessed a gruesome killing.

An Israeli tank transporter drove at a line of workers' cars at a check-point—crushing four Palestinians to death and injuring another seven.

Funerals for three of the men that night in the nearby Jabalia refugee camp turned into a 10,000-strong demonstration that marched on the police station. The following day Israeli soldiers attacked another demonstration in Jabalia.

They killed 20-year-old demonstrator Hatem el Sisi—leading to another mass demonstration.

Palestinian journalist Safwat Khallout witnessed the protest. "We felt something new was happening," he said. "Students gathered, surrounded the military trucks and started throwing stones.

"The Israeli soldiers hid in a house and started firing in all directions".

Israeli soldiers tried to crush every protest with lethal violence. But with each killing came more funerals and more demonstrations until the whole of Gaza was caught up in the revolt.

Phil Marshall described those first days in his book *Intifada—Zionism, Imperialism and Palestinian Resistance*. "Tens of thousands joined demonstrations that carried forbidden Palestinian flags and chanted national-

ist slogans," he wrote.

"Twenty years of frustration and bitterness at unemployment, overcrowding, poverty and repression was exploding in a collective rejection of the Israeli occupation."

The revolt quickly spread across the whole of Palestine—including the parts encompassed by the Israeli state.

There were protests and riots right across the West Bank and inside Israel itself. "Arab Israelis"—Palestinians who hadn't been forced out of Israel—joined a general strike in solidarity with the people in the Occupied Territories.

Clashed

Palestinians in Israeli towns such as Jaffa, Acre and Lod demonstrated and clashed with police.

The Israeli government responded to the uprising with an "iron fist". Defence minister Yitzak Rabin told Israeli forces to crush the demonstrations with "force, power and blows".

Within one month Israeli soldiers had killed—by their own count—more than 20 protesters, wounded over 200 and detained 1200.

An army report was leaked to Israeli newspaper *Haaretz*. It described how, "Officers or commanders in the field are giving orders to break property and break hands and feet."

Halimeh Jermi remembers how her daughter, Sahar, was killed on one of the first demonstrations in the Balata refugee camp. "The Israelis started shooting. About 30 people were injured," she said. "People said 'your daughter's been killed.'"

On one demonstration Halimeh herself was arrested. "I saw the Israelis fighting with young people. I grabbed stones and threw them at the Israelis.

"They handcuffed me and took me away. I got six months in jail."

By December 1988—one year since the intifada began—the Israeli army reckoned it has used 10,000

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The young Palestinians leading the revolt grew up under an occupation that treated them with brutality

troops a day to put down the uprising.

It imposed curfews on refugee camps, limiting supplies of food and water. Soldiers raided Palestinian homes, firing tear gas into houses and dropping gas canisters from helicopters. Yet none of this could crush the intifada.

The young Palestinians leading the revolt grew up under an occupation that treated them with utmost brutality and wrecked their society. Now they were rising up.

In January 1988 the Israeli newspaper the *Jerusalem Post* wrote, "The streets in Gaza, the West Bank and in East Jerusalem are in effective control of the youth. It is a case of our 20-year-olds battling their 20-year-olds. Ours using armour, helicopters and guns, theirs, clubs, rocks and primitive Molotov cocktails".

Israel's powerful military that had defeated the armies of Egypt, Syria and Jordan couldn't contain a mass uprising of ordinary people.

Everyone in Palestine had a role to play. Strikes were a major weapon aimed at weakening the Israeli state.

Israel had wrecked Palestinian agriculture in the Occupied Territories. It then used the mass of unemployed Palestinians as a source of cheap labour.

A huge proportion of Palestinians from the Occupied Territories travelled to and from Israel each day to do menial jobs on subsistence wages.

Now that Palestinian working class used its power to hit back at Israel. On selected days the majority of workers from Gaza and the West Bank stayed at home—sometimes for weeks at a time.

Palestinian shops also closed in defiance of Israeli authorities who tried to force them to stay open. And Palestinians organised a boycott of Israeli goods, growing, buying and selling only Palestinian produce wherever they could.

Everything was coordinated through a network of local activists' committees known as the Unified Na-

tional Leadership of the Uprising. “By mid-1988,” writes Marshall, “even the most remote hamlet of the West Bank was engaged in the movement.”

All this activity undoubtedly had an effect. Palestinian strikes hit some Israeli industries such as construction and textiles fairly hard.

Images of the uprising—and of the brutal Israeli response—drew sympathy for the Palestinian struggle across the world. And the sheer effort and cost put into holding down the rebellion caused some Israelis to question whether the occupation was sustainable.

But it wasn’t enough. Israel’s racist society excluded Palestinian labour from some skilled jobs in core industries including transport, manufacturing, finance or the public sector.

As Marshall pointed out, “The 11 per cent of the Israeli workforce composed of Palestinians from the territories occupied ‘dirty’ jobs and took seasonal employment on the land”.

So although Palestinian strikes did some damage, they couldn’t deliver a decisive blow. More importantly, the strikes couldn’t touch the massive aid payments from the US to Israel in return for defending its interests in the Middle East.

Imperialism

During the 1980s the US paid Israel some \$28.5 billion, 56 per cent of which went on the military.

This relationship with imperialism is integral to Israel’s foundation and its existence today. The first Jewish colonisers in Palestine sought backing from the British empire in return for policing its Arab population. Israeli politicians saw that major support from the US was integral to Israel’s survival after it was created in 1948.

The key to victory for the intifada was the resistance it inspired in other countries across the Middle East.

Arab rulers declared support for the intifada, but suppressed major solidarity demonstrations fearing that they could turn into revolts of their own.

A mass movement against the government in Algeria took inspiration from the intifada. The opposition leaders told protesters to “unite and take measures into your own hands like the Palestinians”.

The solidarity movement in Egypt quickly turned its fire on its own government’s close relationship with Israel and the US. Workers from the giant Mahalla textile mill in northern Egypt joined a demonstration early on in the uprising. Slogans against Israel turned into demands for Egypt to



Above: Palestinian youth throw stones at the Israeli military during the First Intifada

break ties with Israel and the US.

There were even calls to bring down Egyptian dictator Hosni Mubarak who was eventually toppled in the 2011 revolution.

The biggest fear of the US-backed regimes in the Middle East was that the revolt could spill out of Palestine.

This threat is what eventually pushed the US into dragging Israel into peace talks with the official Palestinian leadership in the Palestine Liberation Organisation (PLO).

Yet the PLO, led by the Fatah faction, actively helped to stop the national liberation movement from growing into a bigger revolt across the region.

The PLO had waged a heroic guerrilla struggle against Israel throughout the 1960s and 70s. Yet it never looked towards mass resistance among ordinary Palestinians, and its strategy was based on pressuring other Arab regimes into supporting its demands.

It hoped to win a Palestinian state in partnership with other Arab states. It would never encourage resistance that would challenge other Arab regimes and the status quo dominated by US imperialism.

This left it open to betrayal by Arab governments, leading to devastating defeats in Jordan in 1970 and Lebanon in 1982.

And it meant PLO leaders were prepared to make serious concessions.

In 1989 the PLO declared independence and a Palestinian state in the Occupied Territories.

The intifada had rescued the PLO and helped its factions put themselves back at the leadership of the resistance. But the declaration also gave away a significant concession.

Until then the PLO had never accepted the state of Israel’s claim to Palestinian land as legitimate. It had called for a single state in Palestine where Jews and Arabs would live as equals.

Declaring independence in just the Occupied Territories meant the PLO was now prepared to recognise Israel and accept a state in only part of Palestine.

Among other things this meant effectively abandoning the right of Palestinian refugees to return to the land they were expelled from in 1948.

The Oslo Accords in 1993 marked the end of the intifada and the start of the “peace process”. This saw the PLO renounce armed rebellion and agree to suppress Palestinian resistance.

In return the newly-formed Palestinian Authority was given the vague hope of a Palestinian statelet under the thumb of Israel, sometime in the future.

More than 20 years later even that meagre promise looks as if it will never be fulfilled. Yet ordinary Palestinians never forgot the lessons of the intifada. After Trump’s speech ordinary Palestinians took to the streets again, once more defying the Israeli military with rocks and burning tires.

Once more they were joined by protests in solidarity across the Middle East.



MANUS & NAURU WE STILL NEED TO BRING THEM HERE

By Ian Rintoul

MORE REFUGEES from Manus have been flown for resettlement in the United States this month. Forty from Manus left on 23 January. Another 18 from Manus, and more than 130 from Nauru, will fly in February.

This will bring the total to just 230 people resettled in 14 months. The process is unbelievably, excruciatingly slow. In comparison, Canada resettled 25,000 Syrians in four months between November 2015 and February 2016. Hundreds of refugees have been left wondering whether the US deal will ever apply to them.

Trump's current travel restrictions ban or limit people from Iran, Syria, Chad, Somalia, Libya and Yemen entering the US. Although there has been no official explanation, it is painfully obvious that there are no Iranians or Somalis on the next flights from Manus or Nauru.

Anyone who questioned the Resettlement Support Centre about their status got an evasive reply, "Under the Executive Order issued October 24, 2017, the United States government is currently undertaking an additional review of refugee resettlement from selected countries worldwide and we will temporarily prioritise refugee applications from other countries."

Iranian and Somali refugees on Nauru protested on 22 January against the resettlement delays and their "temporary" exclusion from the US scheme.

But there were no answers to their questions. Another protest is planned for 29 January.

What is certain about the US deal

Above: Refugees at the new West Haus detention centre continue their protests

is that there are hundreds more refugees on Manus and Nauru than the US has agreed to resettle. Yet the Turnbull government has again point-blank rejected the offer from New Zealand to resettle 150 refugees a year.

The uncertainty on Nauru is taking its toll. Alongside the despair, there are more bashings; more robberies; more Border Force vetoes on urgently needed medical transfers off Nauru, punctuated by emergency medical evacuations.

There are growing signs of the move to consolidate Nauru as a long-term offshore detention provider to the Australian government.

A new state-owned company, the Nauru Regional Processing Centre Corporation, has been set up to "manage service contracts" in the camps and settlements, to ensure that the largesse of the Australian government contracts will go directly to the Nauruan elite.

Some refugees will get to the US—but only after many more months of hell on Manus and Nauru. There is still an urgent need for the refugee movement to maintain the demands to evacuate Nauru and Manus and bring all the refugees and asylum seekers to Australia.

Tensions on Manus have spilled into the open with local landowners blockading the three detention areas

Three months after the brutal siege of the detention centre on Manus Island, nothing is resolved. Hillside and West Haus camps are still unfinished. East Lorengau is over-crowded. Health facilities are inadequate. Mental health treatment is non-existent.

In mid-January, Hillside was blockaded by local Manus residents because of the stench and health concerns caused by an open drain carrying

sewage from the compound across their land.

With the refugees no longer on the naval base, they have now become hostage to open squabbles between local landowners and Australian government-favoured companies with detention contracts worth tens of millions of dollars.

Tensions on the island have spilled into the open over the past few weeks with local landowners and companies blockading the three detention areas to try and force the Australian government to give contracts to local companies. Paladin guards were driven out of Hillside on 15 January by the local security company, Kingfisher.

Paladin Solutions has an Australian government contract for \$72 million to provide Manus "garrison services" (overseeing the detention camps) for just over four months. No wonder Peter Dutton is refusing to release the details of the contracts to the Senate. Dutton claims releasing the information would damage international relations. More likely it would damage the government's credibility. Offshore detention is a multi-million dollar scandal.

But while security companies are paid millions, the Hillside asylum seekers have not been paid their promised allowance since they were forcibly relocated there in November.

After an angry protest by asylum seekers in Hillside, Border Force has opened a canteen. But while Paladin is being paid \$585,000 a day, asylum seekers are getting just 15 points a week (about \$7.50) to spend at the canteen. 24 January was the 175th day of protest on Manus. And the protests will continue.

Solidarity