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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.

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Things they say

A socially progressive economic reformer

The *Sydney Morning Herald* shows its true colours, editorialising on why voters should back Turnbull

Many of the issues that she campaigned on are ones that we've already taken some way to address
Nationals' MP Mark Coulton on Pauline Hanson

I've got a lot of support from him over the years.
Bob Katter on Nick Xenophon, another right-wing independent

You'd say that we are an election-winning machine in the Liberal Party.

Chris Pyne was obviously watching a different election to the rest of us

I think in the end he should be asking himself if he has done the Liberal Party a service or a disservice. People should examine their conscience, think about their contribution to this disaster and then I would prevail on them to do the right thing.
Liberal Senator Cory Bernardi on Malcolm Turnbull

Malcolm Turnbull, you're the man who broke the Liberal Party's heart.
Peta Credlin, Tony Abbott's former chief of staff—still carrying a torch for Tony

She's had to have spent in the six figures on this wardrobe overhaul
Patsy Cisner, LA-based political image consultant, on Hillary Clinton \$12,000 Armani jacket worn to a speech on income inequality

CONTENTS

ISSUE 92 JULY 2016



Turnbull's election humiliation

5 Editorial

6 Greens' electoralism a road to nowhere

7 Labor promised services, but also cuts

8 Pressure on for new equal marriage vote

8 What does Xenophon stand for?

9 Pauline Hanson fed off official racism and anger at the elite

Features

15 Why Islam is not to blame for homophobia

18 Hillary Clinton: the Democrats' corporate candidate

20 PNG and Australian neo-colonialism

4 Inside the system

Reports

11 Let SCA stay campaign kicks off

11 CPSU campaign

International

12 US corporate giant beaten in 45 day strike

13 Corbyn plotters launch challenge

14 Fallujah assault entrenches sectarianism

24 Brexit vote was a revolt against the elite

Reviews

22 Talking to my country

23 The Greens: from social movement to Australia's third party

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INSIDE THE \$Y\$TEM

Billionaire responds to election result by calling for dictatorship

BILLIONAIRE FOUNDER of the Harvey Norman retail chain, Gerry Harvey, has vented his frustration at the public's rejection of the big business agenda.

Harvey was confounded by the fact that the election result amounted to a rejection of austerity, saying that the country needs cuts but, "Neither side can do anything about it because the minute they do they're hammered."

Instead he suggested a dictatorial one party state: "The only cure we've got is to have a dictator like in China or something like that. Our democracy at the moment is not working".

To bolster his call for the end of parliamentary democracy Harvey pointed out, "there's a great deal of dissatisfaction with mainstream politics and the people are showing their frustration." But, sadly for Gerry, it's not the lack of budget cuts and tax breaks for business they are angry about.

New MP Linda Burney oversaw record child removals

LINDA BURNEY'S election in Barton has been celebrated as the first time an Indigenous woman has been elected to the House of Representatives.

Burney was Community Services minister in the NSW Labor government between 2008 and 2011, taking office during the largest boom in Aboriginal child removal in history.

During her time as Minister the number of Aboriginal children in "out of home care" in NSW increased from approximately 4300 to 5800. Over the same period, the proportion of Aboriginal children placed with Aboriginal relatives or kin declined from 58 per cent to 50 per cent.

She was also responsible for introducing laws which mean that if the Department of Family and Community Services (FACS) has already taken one of your children and you have a new baby, they essentially have automatic rights to that child. This is a cruel policy whose violent effects are still being felt every day in hospital wards across NSW.

Sunrise paid Hanson for election comment



IT HAS emerged that Channel 7's Sunrise program paid Pauline Hanson for regular appearances on their breakfast program in the lead up to the federal election. Channel 7 ensured the far-right racist was not only given a platform, but actually encouraged to spout her bigotry to a national audience.

She was invited to appear following the terrorist attacks in Paris in late 2015, twice in January this year, twice in March and her campaign launch was televised on the eve of the election. She used her paid appearance following the Paris attacks to viciously demonise refugees as terrorists and to broadcast her racist call for an end to all Muslim immigration. Hanson's One Nation has won at least two Senate seats.

Schools run by Christian cult get more funding than public schools

ACCORDING TO the MySchool website, the Exclusive Brethren Christian cult's schools get more funding than one third of public schools. Homebush West has had to ban children from running in the playground due to overcrowding, yet it gets \$800 less per student than the Brethren's schools.

The Brethren have been at the centre of controversy regarding child sexual abuse, prohibit their members from eating or socialising with "worldly" people and funnelled hundreds of thousands of dollars into John Howard's election campaign in 2004. More than 600 schools across NSW receive less funding than the Brethren institution, spread over multiple campuses with 1000 students, which enjoys record funding of around \$10,000 per student.

Hillary proposes debt relief for 'start-up' founders

HILLARY CLINTON has floated a new proposal to help students in the US deal with crippling college debts. Her plan is to allow business "start-up" founders to defer their debts for three years. She also proposed student loan forgiveness of up to \$17,500 after five years for "young innovators" who either launch a new business in "distressed communities" or "social enterprises that provide measurable social impact and benefit". Entrepreneurs overwhelmingly come from well-off upper and middle class backgrounds.

Last year 70 per cent of college students took out loans to cover the cost of their education. The average loan was \$30,000. Tuition at a public college will cost \$10,000 per year on average. At a private college that figure hits over \$30,000.

Research and writing by Adam Adelpour

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

US proposes social media check at the border

THE US Government is proposing that disclosure of social media accounts be part of the visa screening to get into the country. The US Customs and Border Protection's plan is open for comment until 22 August.

According to the government, snooping into social media accounts will afford the, "Department of Homeland Security (DHS) greater clarity and visibility to possible nefarious activity and connections". If the actual proposal goes ahead it will mean visa applications contain a request to provide social media usernames so the authorities can check public accounts.

The US had 77.5 million visitors in 2015. If the spying goes ahead it could result in US authorities constructing of one of the largest databases of social media information that exists.

7-11 bosses spend \$3 million on property while robbing workers

TWO 7-11 bosses, Haiyao Xu and Yiran Gu, have been exposed for building up a \$3 million property portfolio while underpaying workers. The thieving franchisees were busted tampering with their payroll data by a Fair Work Ombudsman.

The scheme involved only recording half the hours worked by employees to hide massive underpayment. In a 12 month period in 2013 and 2014 the couple underpaid 12 staff by more than \$84,047 at their Parkville store in Melbourne. Some were paid as little as \$11 per hour. At their CBD store they underpaid 11 staff more by than \$100,000. During this period the pair bought a \$1.35 million home in the posh suburb of North Balwyn, another property for \$959,000, a third for \$540,000 and a fourth for \$400,000. The Federal Circuit Court hit the pair with a \$150,000 fine. It will barely put a dent in their ill-gotten wealth.

EDITORIAL

Weak and divided—the Liberals can be beaten

THE ELECTION has delivered a savage blow to Malcolm Turnbull and the Coalition government.

Turnbull's attempt to convince voters he could offer jobs and stability failed. The Coalition's efforts to fear monger about boats and border security couldn't save them. The last ditch attempt by Immigration Minister Peter Dutton to link refugees to terrorism went nowhere—Dutton barely kept his seat.

Now, the Coalition is tearing itself apart. The infighting started on election night, and some are already baying for Turnbull's blood. Right wing Liberal Senator Eric Abetz is hinting at moves to overturn the Liberals' superannuation changes—the centrepiece of Turnbull and Morrison's budget.

Right-wing Liberal Cory Bernardi is setting up his own Australian Conservative movement. Right-wing commentator Andrew Bolt denounced Turnbull as “a disaster” who has “led the party to humiliation”.

Turnbull has crossbench support to form a minority government. But he will struggle to get legislation through the parliament and certainly the Senate. Any government Turnbull forms will be unstable, and it is unlikely to go full term. Turnbull says he will put the anti-union ABCC legislation to the parliament again, but he is unlikely to have the numbers to get it passed.

Turnbull is reeling and in retreat. He has already flagged postponing the corporate tax cuts and backtracking on the Medicare cuts to try and bolster the Liberals' popularity. But Turnbull's agenda is very clear.

This is our cue to go on the offensive—and finish Turnbull off.

Disaffection and the right

Despite the swing against the Coalition, the disaffection did not all flow to Labor or The Greens. Mirroring the turmoil in politics we've seen in the Brexit vote in the UK or the rise of Donald Trump in the US, this election showed that disaffection with mainstream politics can also be pulled to the right.

There will be a more right-wing Senate crossbench, with Liberal-lite Nick Xenophon and his team, shock jock Derryn Hinch, and a collection of racists including Jacqui Lambie, and worryingly a revived Pauline Hanson.

Turnbull's anti-refugee racism, the dog-whistling over terrorism and the



Above: Malcolm Turnbull, humiliated on election night

shootings in Orlando, all boosted by the Murdoch press, have encouraged Islamophobia and legitimised the rise of Pauline Hanson.

To effectively fight Hanson, we will have to fight Turnbull's cuts and the racism behind the Liberals' policies.

Bill Shorten claims that “Labor is back”. Certainly, opposing the corporate tax cuts, and raising class issues such as the attacks on Medicare helped expose the Coalition's explicit rule for the rich.

But Labor also made concessions, singing from the same neo-liberal song sheet as the Liberals, competing to get the budget back into surplus, and accepting a number of cuts they had opposed since the Abbott's 2014 horror budget (see p7). There was also no difference between Labor and the Liberals when it came to turning back refugee boats and maintaining offshore detention.

Labor got its second worst primary vote since 1949. The ACTU's marginal seats campaign mobilised 16,000 union volunteers to help get the swing out against Turnbull. Now the focus has to be on the industrial action that has the real power to stand up to the bosses' attacks, defend penalty rates, stop the trade-offs and finish Turnbull off.

The union deals like those with Coles, Woolworths and now Dominos that have resulted in wage cuts and the trading off of workers' conditions have to stop. We need an uncompromising fight to defend jobs and conditions.

We need a “Your Rights At Work—Worth Fighting For” campaign to build solidarity with every struggle and get the unions back on the picket lines and the streets.

Although The Greens did improve their vote slightly, their focus on electioneering has produced a disappointing result (see p6).

Any Turnbull minority government will be a weaker government. But we can't just rely on Liberal legislation or the next round of cuts being blocked in the Senate.

The next few weeks are crucial for setting the political agenda and building the struggles we need.

Refugee rights, equal marriage, saving Medicare, protecting penalty rates and action on climate change will not be determined by what happens in parliament. The fight against racism and austerity will be determined by what happens in the streets and the workplaces.

Public servants are still fighting against the Liberal government's job and wage cuts. The industrial campaign needs to be stepped up.

Refugee and equal marriage rallies are already planned for August. We need demonstrations to defend Medicare and action on the campuses to stop fee increases or cuts to university spending. We need a serious approach to fighting Islamophobia and standing with the Muslim community.

And we need to build socialist organisation to strengthen the fight in every campaign and to fight for a socialist system that produces to meet human need, and not for profit.

.....
Any government Turnbull forms will be unstable, and it is unlikely to go full term

Greens' moderate electoralism a road to nowhere

By James Supple

"IT'S ONLY a matter of time" before more seats go Green, leader Richard Di Natale said, after missing out on any new seats in the election. Given other independents and minor parties picked up record votes, this result was a disappointment.

Under Richard Di Natale the party has adopted a more pragmatic style. During the election campaign he celebrated the way The Greens have become part of parliamentary wheeling and dealing and "used our influence and demonstrated our ability to negotiate important reforms".

The Greens' period working in minority government with Labor, and more recently working with the Liberals to pass bills through the Senate, has made them look more like part of the political establishment.

There was a modest increase in the Greens lower house vote of 1.5 per cent, recovering some of the losses of the last election. But they lost one Senator, in South Australia, as their vote declined in the upper house.

The party's best results were in Melbourne, where it came close to winning the seat of Batman. Alex Bhathal received a 10.5 per cent increase in her primary vote but Labor has held on.

There were also large increases in their vote in Wills, Melbourne Ports and Higgins. Adam Bandt easily retained his seat of Melbourne with 44.5 per cent of the primary vote.

Grayndler, where The Greens had their best chance in Sydney of winning a seat, was a major disappointment. The Greens' vote actually declined and the party remained in third place behind the Liberals.

Sections of The Greens have attacked the NSW branch for running a campaign in Grayndler that was "too bolshy". Labor attacked Greens candidate Jim Casey as a socialist who wanted the end of capitalism.

This was just a cheap shot. The Grayndler campaign was no more left-wing than elsewhere, focusing on the local WestConnex motorway and climate change (read coal mining) rather than a clear anti-Turnbull stance. Labor's campaign in defence of Medicare, public education and opposing Turnbull's tax cuts for big business offered a more explicit defence of working class interests.

Casey made a point of his background in the firefighters' union, but



there were no unions that formally backed his campaign. This was a crucial component of Adam Bandt's initial breakthrough in 2010, which received endorsement and donations from a number of left unions. Local Labor MP Anthony Albanese also retains a left-wing reputation and Labor still have deep community roots to draw on.

The Greens' support for Senate voting reforms, which opened the door for the re-introduction of the ABCC, did not help. The Greens were attacked by left unions like the CFMEU, which had previously supported them in the Senate. But The Greens simply ignored the issue, helping contribute to the view that workers' rights were not a central priority.

Electoralism

The Greens' successes in Melbourne have been based on an increasingly single-minded electoralism and a professionalised machine that organised months of door-knocking and phone calls to voters.

This simply results in a Greens campaign that tailors its approach to maximise votes. And it is part of a strategy based on the idea that social change can be brought about by a process of winning this or that seat in successive elections.

They even made Higgins, a blue ribbon Liberal seat, one of their four

"target seats" in Victoria.

But taking such a seat requires winning over significant numbers of Liberal voters from some of Melbourne's wealthiest suburbs, including Toorak. Focusing on seats like this creates a pull to the right in order to appeal to traditional conservative voters.

Di Natale showed where all this is taking the party in his pre-election address to the National Press Club. In the event of a hung parliament, he outlined the same approach the Greens took with Gillard in 2010, when they demanded the limited concessions from Labor that reduced action on climate change to the disastrous carbon tax.

Only this time The Greens' aims seem even more modest with Di Natale simply saying, "political donations reform and the establishment of a corruption watchdog will be one of the key issues in any negotiations". Afterwards he described The Greens' opposition to detention on Manus Island and Nauru as "the starting points of any negotiation", indicating that closing Manus and Nauru would not be a threshold issue for any deal with Labor.

Whether over refugees, equal marriage or fighting further cuts, it is not The Greens' actions in parliament that will be decisive. What matters is the strength of the movements in the workplaces and on the streets. If The Greens continue to ignore that, they will be left on the margins.

The Greens' successes in Melbourne have been based on an increasingly single-minded electoralism

Labor promised to fund services, but also backed cuts

By Amy Thomas

“LABOR IS back”, claimed a triumphant Bill Shorten in his election night speech. But in truth, the result was Labor’s second lowest primary vote in history. Of an overall 3.71 swing against the Coalition, only 2.27 per cent went to Greens and Labor.

Liberals have moaned about what they are calling the ‘Mediscare’ tactic of Labor and the unions. Turnbull, in his bizarre election night speech, said the cops would investigate a text message sent from the user ‘Medicare’ on the day before the election, warning of Medicare cuts.

Labor were both telling the truth (the Coalition has frozen Medicare rebates and has cut funding to bulk-billing for essential tests), as well as drawing on voters’ understanding that the Liberals can’t be trusted with Medicare.

A union-run marginal seats campaign, Build a Better Future, chimed in with Labor’s Medicare message with door-knocking, phone banking and distributing leaflets at the polls.

The detested Peter Dutton complained of “union thugs ringing old women at night, scaring them on the issue of Medicare and misleading text messages being sent out across marginal seats as well as in our own seat”.

While the Medicare campaign, and Shorten’s opposition to corporate tax cuts, spoke to working class concerns, overall Labor’s promises were quite modest.

The unions were embarrassed in the lead up to the election when Labor said it would respect a Productivity Commission decision on penalty rates (meaning if the Commission decided to cut them, it would do nothing).

While opposing Coalition attacks on Medicare, Labor promised to restore only \$4.9 billion in the next four years of \$57 billion in cuts to hospitals over a decade.

The truth is that Labor is just as committed to running capitalism as the Coalition. During the campaign, Labor was anxious to show they would make sure that the budget would be returned to surplus.

They announced on 12 June that they would accept some of Tony Abbott’s 2014 budget measures in the name of fiscal responsibility. Such measures included cutting the Family Tax Benefit, leaving families on more than \$100,000 with half their pay-



Above: Labor rightly pointed out that the Liberals can’t be trusted on Medicare

ment. Like the Coalition, they also want university graduates to pay their debt back sooner, axe the Schoolkids Bonus and make changes to the age pension.

Labor’s history of implementing cuts and attacking its own voting base while in power has seen its membership shrink since the 1980s. It has not achieved a 50 per cent primary vote in a federal election since 1983, after which the Hawke government led the party’s embrace of neo-liberal politics.

Worryingly this time, some of the discontent went the way of racist populists One Nation, who received high votes in Labor marginal seats like Herbert, in Queensland and Paterson, in NSW. That’s even more concerning when the unions were often using the slogan of ‘Aussie jobs’.

Union campaign

Peak trade union body the Australian Council of Trade Unions (ACTU) is claiming victory for its campaign to put the Liberals last in major seats. It does seem the campaign was successful in cementing a swing. Key organiser Sally McManus claims out of 22 seats targeted, 12 have gone to Labor and 5 may still.

Thousands of union activists slogged it out, knocking on doors and calling voters. Shorten thanked “the mighty trade union movement” in his election night speech.

But the disproportionate role the unions played hasn’t won workers any guarantees.

We learnt this the hard way when a massive Your Rights at Work campaign sunk all resources into getting Kevin Rudd elected in 2007—only to have him keep most of the hated Work-Choices and anti-union ABCC intact.

As we go to press, a ramshackle Turnbull government looks likely. If so, it will be a weak government, vulnerable to resistance.

Public servants, rather than continue their industrial campaign against the government’s pay cuts, joined the marginal seats campaign. But now, it will be their strikes and protests against the government that determine whether a Turnbull government continues its assault on their conditions.

If the 25 organisers employed by the ACTU had organised in workplaces and built industrial action, we would now be in a better position to stop any attempt to attack penalty rates, Medicare, and education, and defend the public servants.

That is what needs to happen now.

It has been protests that have made refugee rights and equal marriage such big issues. It is because the CFMEU organises effective strike action that the Liberals were so keen on trying to attack them.

We don’t get change by relying on Turnbull’s misfortunes or our putting hopes in Labor.

.....
They announced they would accept some of Tony Abbott’s 2014 budget measures in the name of fiscal responsibility

Pressure back on for parliamentary equal marriage vote

THE CLOSE election result has thrown the issue of equal marriage back into uncertain territory.

Malcolm Turnbull wants to hold a plebiscite before the end of the year for the public to vote on the issue.

But Australian Marriage Equality director Rodney Croome has called on parliament to simply put a bill for equal marriage to the vote saying, “There’s an increased majority of MPs in favour of marriage equality. If there was a free vote, there’s no doubt that the legislation would pass.”

With the Liberals lacking a majority in their own right, there is likely to be a renewed push for this to happen. Four of the five crossbench MPs in the lower house support marriage equality, and could bring on the vote in the lower house.

There is no need for a plebiscite. It is already clear that the vast majority of the public support equal marriage. A Fairfax Ipsos poll just before the election found support had increased further, to 70 per cent of the population.



The plebiscite has only ever been a way for the Coalition to delay, and to paper over the divisions in the ranks of the Liberal Party on the issue.

But unless Labor binds its MPs to support equal marriage, the bill will not be able to pass while the Liberals continue to oppose it.

It would need the support of all Labor MPs to stand a chance of passing the lower house. At last year’s party conference, Labor put off a binding vote until after the next election in 2019.

This could mean the situation is stuck where it was before the election—as long as the Liberals refuse a conscience vote and Labor refuses to bind its MPs, there are not the numbers for marriage equality to pass.

Rightly, there have already been demonstrations called to demand a marriage equality bill is put directly to a parliamentary vote.

The delays have gone on long enough—they can’t be allowed to last another three years.

Kingmaker Xenophon’s sympathies are with the Liberals

NICK XENOPHON will be a kingmaker in the new parliament after winning around 29 per cent of the vote in SA.

His party now has three Senators, who support Turnbull will need to get his legislation through, and one seat in the lower house. But many have been left wondering what exactly Xenophon and his team represent.

Xenophon calls himself a centrist and often presents himself as “above” major party politics. This obviously struck a chord with voters who are disillusioned with the cynical two-party system of Liberal and Labor, expressed in the record-high vote for minor parties.

In the lead up to the election Xenophon was presented by some media commentators as a progressive political force.

But Xenophon is far from progressive or left-wing.

Progressive?

Xenophon started out as a member of the Young Liberals at Adelaide University in the 1970s. He split

He has indicated that he would support abolishing penalty rates for businesses with up to 20 employees

with the group after a feud involving voting fraud and accountability and has always run as an independent in elections.

His most consistent platforms have been restricting poker machines and calling for political transparency. Xenophon was first elected to the South Australian upper house on a “no pokies” ticket.

He has also opposed free trade deals including the Trans Pacific Partnership, saying they are destroying manufacturing jobs.

This has won him a lot of support in a state whose once large manufacturing sector has been decimated in recent years.

Since 2013 he has voted down some of the Liberals’ worst attacks, such as university fee deregulation, giving him a progressive sheen. But his decisions to vote down these bills had more to do with their deep unpopularity amongst the public than any matter of principle. A quick look at Xenophon’s time as Senator shows that he is little more than a right-wing opportunist.

In 2014 Xenophon voted to pass

the Maritime Powers Bill, which allows the Australian navy to detain asylum seekers on the high seas, fast-tracks deportations and gives the Immigration Department the right to complete secrecy.

He opposed Labor’s negative gearing changes—which would end the use of billions of dollars of public funds to pay for the losses on investment properties, explaining that his father was a “modest property developer”.

And he has indicated that he would support abolishing penalty rates for businesses with up to 20 employees.

Meanwhile, he supports an Emissions Trade Scheme, which in Europe has proven useless for combating climate change, and has campaigned against the introduction of wind power to SA.

Xenophon and his team are not progressives. They cannot be relied upon to stop the passage of neo-liberal or racist policies under whatever government comes to power.

Caitlin Doyle-Markwick

Hanson fed off Turnbull's racism and rage at political elite

By James Supple

THERE HAS been widespread shock at the news that Pauline Hanson has won a Senate seat in Queensland. Her racist One Nation party could take up to three seats in the upper house, including in NSW.

One Nation has fed off the racism stirred up by Tony Abbott and Malcolm Turnbull, as they talked of the need for "border security", presenting refugees as a threat to jobs and services, and whipped up Islamophobia by spreading fear about terrorism.

Following the Orlando attack, Hanson issued a revolting video where she demanded "no more Muslims in Australia". She wants to ban Muslim immigration and new mosques and has called for a Royal Commission into Islam.

But she also appealed to the disenchantment with the major parties and people's contempt for politicians. She attracted many of the same people who voted for Clive Palmer in the Senate at the last election.

The party won 4.1 per cent in the Senate nationwide and 9.1 per cent in Queensland. There were big votes for Hanson in Queensland in areas hard hit by job losses from the downturn in the mining industry. In Capricornia, which covers the Bowen Basin coal mines as well as Rockhampton and Mackay, One Nation polled 15.7 per cent. In Flynn, which includes Gladstone but also a number of mining areas, One Nation polled 16.8 per cent in the lower house.

Many of these are also people that could be won over by the left on the basis of opposition to the political system that targeted the real enemy—capitalism and the rich.

After her election in 1996, Hanson set out to build a racist party with a national speaking tour and an effort to launch branches across the country. But One Nation membership collapsed under the pressure of continual demonstrations at her meetings and a campaign to brand the party as racist.

So far there is no indication that their vote reflects any growth in One Nation membership, with reports from across Queensland that despite standing in 12 lower house seats they were unable to staff most polling booths. But we need to keep close watch.

The combination of a grouping of One Nation members and fellow Islamophobe Jacqui Lambie in the Sen-



ate will give bigotry a dangerous boost. But the main reason for the growth in Islamophobia is the fearmongering

coming from Turnbull and the political mainstream. We have to fight both of these sources of racism together.

Thousands died: Blair lied—and so did Howard

THE CHILCOT report into Britain's involvement in Iraq has overwhelmingly condemned the decision to go to war. It says bluntly that then British Prime Minister Tony Blair deliberately exaggerated the threat posed by Saddam Hussein; the UK chose invasion before it had exhausted peaceful options; and that British intelligence produced "flawed information".

Blair wrote to US President George Bush eight months before the invasion offering his unqualified support for war, saying, "I will be with you, whatever... Getting rid of Saddam is the right thing to do." Blair insisted that the removal of Saddam Hussein would "free up the region" even if Iraqis may "feel ambivalent about being invaded" and "decide to offer resistance".

Everything the report says about Blair also applies to then Australian Prime Minister John Howard. The report says that Blair and Howard were so determined to go to war that they discussed how to cut the UN out completely, "The implication would be that the US, UK and Australian troops should stay in the region indefinitely." Howard says he was "embarrassed" that there were no weapons of mass destruction in Iraq but insists the war was morally right.

Foreign minister Julie Bishop, who was part of the Howard Cabinet, repeated the lie that the invasion was

based on the best information.

Andrew Wilkie, now an Independent MP, then worked for the Office of National Assessment. He resigned when it became obvious Australia was about to join the war. He said at the time, "[Iraq's] military is very weak... Its weapons of mass destruction program is very disjointed and contained... And there is no hard intelligence linking the Iraqi regime to al-Qaeda in any substantial or worrisome way." That intelligence was ignored.

Early on 18 March 2003, US President Bush called Howard to ask that Australia commit troops to the war. A few hours later, Howard's Cabinet agreed. Blair used Howard's decision the same day to bolster his case to the British parliament to join the "Coalition of the Willing".

Estimates of the numbers of Iraqis killed range from 200,000 to over one million. The invasion created a sectarian government and turned Iraq into a killing field. In October 2014, Australia joined a renewed US bombing campaign in Iraq.

Hundreds of thousands demonstrated to stop the war in Australia, joining millions worldwide. The Chilcot report is a chilling reminder that the anti-war movement was right. Bush, Blair and Howard are war criminals. And we still have to fight the warmongers.

Ian Rintoul

One Nation has fed off the racism stirred up by Tony Abbott and Malcolm Turnbull

Turnbull hanging by a thread—where now for the refugee campaign?

By Ian Rintoul

IN THE last weeks of the federal election, Turnbull, increasingly desperate for votes, played the refugee card. But it didn't work. Rather than secure the election, the Liberals lost seats by the bucketload.

First came Immigration Minister Dutton's scandalous effort to whip up anti-refugee sentiment by declaring that refugees were illiterate and innumerate and they were taking Aussie jobs. Then miraculously, in the middle of the election campaign, the Channel Nine program *A Current Affair* (ACA) got permission to go to Nauru. They called their segment, "A story that will stun Australia," but it was predictably a stunning, selective white-wash.

The headlines of *The Australian* and the *Daily Telegraph* ramped up the government's refugee bashing with screaming headlines: "Here They Come" and (the very misleading) "Labor's Message to Asylum Seekers—Welcome."

However, despite their efforts, the swing against Dutton was double the Queensland average.

As *Solidarity* goes to press, a Turnbull government is just hanging by a thread. The refugee campaign needs to go on the front foot.

Both major parties are committed to turning back asylum boats and maintaining offshore detention. Yet the election has opened up cracks among Labor candidates. *The Australian* claims that there are 50 candidates or sitting members who have opposed Labor's offshore detention policies in some way—many of them were part of the "Let Them Stay" campaign. And Australia's detention regime is fraying.

Half of the offshore detention system is finished—Manus Island will close. The next sitting of the PNG Supreme Court is 15 July. But the court has already ruled that the Manus detention centre is unlawful.

No more asylum seekers can be sent to Manus; the only question is, where are the people there going to go? When Manus prisoner and Iranian refugee, Behrouz Boochani, sent a Q&A video question to Malcolm Turnbull asking why he is still in the Manus prison, "What is my crime?" Turnbull had no answer. He pathetically repeated the lie that refugees on Manus Island or Nauru are the responsibility of PNG and Nauru



Above: Rally for refugees at Sydney Town Hall before the election

governments.

The government has spent the months since the 26 April Supreme Court decision pretending that the decision has nothing to do with it—but Manus has to close and Australian High Commission officials are at every PNG court hearing.

Action in Australia is going to be needed to press the demand for all those on Manus and Nauru to be brought to Australia.

Meanwhile the protests continue on Nauru—108 days and counting as *Solidarity* goes to press. The pressure is also mounting there.

Movement's impact

Early in the election campaign, Labor leader Bill Shorten said, if he was elected Prime Minister, he would send shadow immigration minister, Richard Marles, "to try to strike an urgent deal with the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees about a possible third country".

Later, when New Zealand repeated its willingness to take 150 refugees a year from Australia, Shorten didn't rule it out.

This is posturing by Labor; no third country is going to take refugees who are Australia's responsibility. But the shift in rhetoric and the 50 "dissenting" candidates are encouraging indications that the refugee campaign has had a real impact on the bi-parti-

san support for offshore processing.

It is five months since the High Court ruled that offshore detention on Nauru was lawful. But despite the ruling, and the threats from the Immigration Department, none of the 267 asylum seekers who were part of that High Court case have been sent back to Nauru or Manus.

That is the real measure of the strength of the campaign so far. The movement needs to press home its advantage against a severely weakened Turnbull government, and also press to open the cracks in Labor even wider.

Since the February High Court case, another 60 people have been brought to Australia from Nauru and Manus Island for medical reasons. Any attempt to remove any one of the people from Manus or Nauru has to be resisted.

In the lead up to the election, Turnbull's, Dutton's and other MPs' offices became the focus of pickets and occupations. Around a thousand people attended refugee rallies in Sydney and Melbourne a couple of weeks before the election.

The election has pushed back the Liberals. There is an opening for the movement to step up the pressure to end offshore detention. Rallies have been called in Sydney and Melbourne for 27 August, to tell whatever government, Liberal or Labor, to end Fortress Australia and "Bring Them Here".

Since February, another 60 people have been brought to Australia from Nauru and Manus Island for medical reasons

By Dylan Griffiths

FOUR HUNDRED students marched on the University Senate meeting on 4 July against plans to close Sydney College of the Arts (SCA). University of Sydney management has released plans to move SCA and close its current site in Callan Park, Rozelle.

The university has signed a heads of agreement with University of NSW Arts and design and is continuing to negotiate with them. Students would be moved to UNSW as early as semester one next year.

To facilitate this process the university has stopped taking enrollments into its Bachelor of Visual Arts. But with SCA's studio space, staff, and facilities under threat it is clear that this is not a merger but a closure.

Deputy Vice Chancellor Tyrone Carlin has made it clear that if the "merger" falls through the college will move onto the main Sydney University campus.

SCA is housed in Callan Park's historic Kirkbride buildings. Management claims that the site is too expensive to maintain, or as the VC puts it, "the Business School is paying for SCA".

The university claims SCA ran a deficit last year of roughly \$5 million. But this is based on an invented "space tax" imposed by the administration. According to Provost Stephen Garton, every faculty pays the space tax but because SCA requires more space it falls into deficit.

But we know the university has money! The strategic plan states that, "the university is in a stronger position, both academically and financially than it was in 2011". Last year it completed the \$180 million Abercrombie precinct to house the business school. Tables and chairs alone cost \$4.2 million, an amount almost equivalent to SCA's deficit.

Students are outraged that university management is placing their education in jeopardy and have started the "Let SCA stay" campaign. The campaign demands the reinstatement of the bachelor of Visual Arts, that negotiations between Sydney University and UNSW end immediately, and that the current studio space, staff, and specialized facilities at Rozelle such as the largest printer in the southern hemisphere, kilns and glassblowing workshops are all preserved.

The campaign drew over 250 people to its initial meeting and has held sizable campaign meetings since. When Garton came to address students in an attempt to placate dis-

Building the fight to 'Let SCA stay'



Above: SCA students march on the University Senate meeting

Photo: Liam Kesteven

sent, they took over the meeting and escorted him off campus. The "Let SCA stay" petition currently has over 4000 signatures.

Can we win?

In 2012 Sydney University put 340 jobs on the chopping block. Student activists organised leafleting and talked to students in lectures to reach out across the university. Mass rallies

and successful occupations of administration buildings were able to stop most of the cuts.

Open organising meetings are a vital part of ensuring a broad democratic campaign. The 700 students at SCA must look to the community and main campus for support. Only a mass campaign can challenge management's plans to end visual arts at Sydney University.

Time to reignite CPSU campaign

THE SEVERELY weakened Coalition government should give confidence to unionists in the federal public service. The election has shown the support for Medicare, public services and union rights gained a boost, strengthening the CPSU's campaign for decent EBAs.

However, our conditions remain under threat from the Turnbull government which wants to take away working conditions and deliver below-inflation pay rises.

Delegates remain frustrated after two years of campaigning that has not resulted in acceptable EBAs in the major agencies covering more than 80 per cent of federal public sector workers. It is about three years since these public servants received a pay rise. In Victoria officials organised a successful meeting just before the election where about 25 delegates

were briefed on the campaign to put the Coalition last in the election.

Delegates and members must be more involved in planning future campaigns. With the election behind us, the union needs mass meetings to discuss the result and where next for our campaign. Delegates need to come together and organise to build the meetings, or to pressure the union if they won't call them.

While Labor have made promises to rip up the Liberals' dirty work, we don't know what policy they want to replace it with. They have also promised a welcome \$75 million to give permanency to casuals in Centrelink.

Public sector workers cannot leave our working conditions in the hands of the politicians. We will need to ramp up action to win decent EBAs.

CPSU delegates in Victoria

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Students are outraged and have started the "Let SCA stay" campaign

US corporate giant humbled after 45 day strike

By Mark Gillespie

US UNIONS scored a significant victory when 39,000 workers from the Communications Workers of America (CWA) and International Brotherhood of Electrical Workers (IBEW) humbled the telecommunications giant Verizon after a solid 45 day strike.

Verizon wanted to impose a new contract on its workforce meaning the end of unionised jobs with decent pay and conditions.

On their agenda was a massive increase in outsourcing of call centre work, higher health care costs and reduced retirement benefits.

They also wanted the ability to transfer employees throughout their entire network that stretches from Massachusetts to Virginia for up to two months.

For a lot of established union workers with families, this was a “make or break issue”.

“If Verizon has its way”, explained one construction worker, “it will break the union and turn this into a twenty-dollar-per-hour job with no retirement and little or no health care and ultimately the end of the union”.

After seven months of fruitless negotiations the union finally called a strike on 13 April, the biggest in the US since 2011.

The strike received national and international attention when Democratic Presidential candidate Bernie Sanders came to their picket line to support their cause.

Verizon raked in a massive \$5.4 billion in profits over the previous quarter and Sanders used their struggle to highlight his campaign against “corporate greed” and thanked them for “telling corporate America that they can’t have it all”.

But Sanders’ support also helped them win over the public and boosted their morale. “You don’t feel like you’re alone. We had bagels delivered almost daily on the picket line, pizza from other unions, contributions from retirees” said chief steward Dennis Dunn from Long Island.

Verizon’s strategy was to use managers and scabs brought in from outside the district to break the strike. The workers’ health insurance, too, was cancelled increasing the pressure on them, particularly those with young families, to break ranks.

But these heavy handed measures only increased their resolve. “One day



Above: Verizon workers during their strike

longer, one day stronger” was their slogan.

In mid-May US Secretary of Labor Thomas Perez intervened and an agreement was reached. While some concessions were made it can only be described as a victory for the unions.

Outcome

At a time when wages are stagnant or declining the Verizon workers won a 10.5 per cent wage increase over four years and increased contributions to their pensions. The company also dropped its demands for concessions on job security and flexibility and agreed to employ an additional 1300 people.

Workers in seven of Verizon’s retail stores, for the first time, won a union contract. This gives the union a toe hold into the otherwise completely unorganised wireless sector.

Also removed was the hated Quality Assurance Review system which was used to harass and micro-manage workers.

It wasn’t the negotiating skills of aspiring Democratic vice presidential candidate Thomas Perez that won the dispute, but the enthusiasm of the workers who persistently rallied and picketed and maintained a solid strike front.

While sightseeing in early May in New York I stumbled across two of their vibrant picket lines outside the company’s wireless retail stores. Decked out in their trademark red shirts, they cheered every member of the public that walked away from the

store entrances.

A day of action on 5 May saw the Verizon workers joined by other unionists and community groups and more than 400 retail stores were picketed.

The Verizon workers had a strategy of making life hard for the scabs too. They were followed to find out where they were staying and early next morning a picket-line would assemble to give them a “wake up call”. On a number of occasions hotel management kicked the scabs out, either because organised hotel staff were refusing to cross picket lines or hotel guests were being inconvenienced.

Verizon managed to get injunctions against the pickets and police even transported scabs to workplaces, but this came much too late to break the workers’ morale.

The strike stayed solid, and in the end the scabs and managers weren’t able to maintain the network. New customers for the company’s lucrative fibre-optic installations were being told they’d have to wait until July or August for the service.

A New York CWA shop steward drew out the lessons: “This should put to bed the question of whether or not strikes can win...there were many factors that went into the strike...but the main thing was the strike itself—it was the disruption of work. It was the declining revenue, both at Wireless and landline.”

What remains now is to generalise this lesson across the union movement.

Workers’ health insurance was cancelled increasing the pressure on them to break ranks

Corbyn stares down Labour plotters after Brexit vote



By Chris Breen

BRITAIN'S VOTE to leave the EU has opened up a profound political crisis. The referendum caused deep splits in the Tory party and Tory Prime Minister David Cameron resigned hours after the vote.

This should have opened up an opportunity for the Labour Party to push back Tory racism and austerity. But just when the Tories were weak and divided, the right wing of the parliamentary Labour Party instead chose to turn on left-wing leader Jeremy Corbyn.

Three quarters of Corbyn's shadow cabinet resigned to try and force him out. Corbyn lost a no confidence motion amongst Labour MPs by 172 to 40. However he has defied calls to resign, saying he will not betray those who elected him.

Corbyn was elected leader of the party nine months ago on an anti-racist and anti-austerity platform. Thousands flooded into the Labour Party to back him and he was elected leader by 59 per cent of Labour members.

In one of his first speeches after his election he addressed a 50,000 strong rally for refugee rights. He also made a solidarity visit to the "Jungle" refugee camp in Calais.

The right-wing MPs cited Corbyn's failure to convince Labour voters to remain in the EU. But

Above: Corbyn supporters rally outside Westminster

Corbyn claims that under his leadership, "Labour has repeatedly forced the Government to drop damaging policies, won every by-election with an increased share of the vote, and beaten the Tories in May's local elections."

In reality they never wanted the left-wing leader and are contemptuous of the members who voted for him. Last year, the right-wing Labour MPs went along with the £2 billion of cuts in the Tory Welfare Bill, whereas Corbyn voted against. They mostly voted for the Iraq war, Corbyn voted against. Corbyn can use the recent Chilcot report on Britain's involvement in the Iraq War to go on the offensive against the war-mongers.

The possibility of an early election, opened up by the Tory crisis, helped trigger the move on Corbyn's leadership. The MPs opposing Corbyn are just as terrified that he might win an election as they are of losing. They agree with Tony Blair who said, "I wouldn't want to win on an old fashioned leftist platform. Even if I thought that was the route to victory I wouldn't take it."

No compromise

The Corbyn campaign needs to resist making further compromises with the right. Corbyn had historically opposed the European Union as anti-democratic and neo-liberal, but agreed to support it in the referendum. Had he channeled anti-austerity sentiment behind a left

exit campaign, it would have undercut the right's racism, and boosted his position.

There are also worrying signs that Corbyn might accept a peace offer. While refusing to resign, he offered to "reach out" to his opponents in a *Sunday Mirror* article.

Union leader Len McCluskey's support could be critical. But both McCluskey and Corbyn's key ally John McDonnell have recently questioned the free movement of people within the EU, an appalling concession to anti-migrant sentiment. Corbyn keeping his leadership, but watering down his policies would be a betrayal of the kind of politics which has inspired people to back him.

The right won't step back from their assault. Corbyn needs to take them on, even if that leads to a split in the party.

Corbyn's election mirrors the rise of new left-wing parties Syriza in Greece and Podemos in Spain, but in the UK this took place inside the existing Labour party.

Another 100,000 people have joined the Labour Party to back him since the challenge began. Membership has now grown from 250,000 at the time of the last leadership election to 500,000.

His popularity should be a lesson for Bill Shorten on refugees, and The Greens about the possibility of tapping into the opposition to austerity and the political system through class politics.

Union leaders are backing Corbyn for now. On-going mobilisation and union support motions can add to the pressure on them to hold the line. But it would be a mistake if Corbyn's supporters limit the struggle to battles inside the Labour Party.

Importantly thousands of people turned up to back Corbyn at a rally organised by the left Labour campaign group Momentum outside parliament at a few days' notice.

The left's greatest strength is on the streets and in the workplaces. With the Tories in crisis, and a likely early election, the focus needs to be mobilisation to kick out the Tories out on the basis of anti-austerity and anti-racist politics.

This is the kind of struggle that can defend Corbyn, draw in much wider numbers and turn the tables on the Labour right and the Tories.

Another 100,000 people have joined the Labour Party to back him since the challenge began

Fallujah assault deepens Iraq's sectarian divide

By James Supple

CIVILIANS FLEEING Fallujah have been tortured and abused by Shiite militias, inflaming further the country's sectarian divide. Iraqi government troops recaptured the city in June, driving Islamic State fighters from the city.

Fallujah was a symbolic centre of Sunni opposition to the US occupation. The US stormed the city in 2004, bombing hospitals and killing at least 800 civilians in an effort to crush resistance fighters.

The city had been held by IS since January 2014, longer than any other city in Iraq.

IS is now steadily losing territory, as the combined weight of US air-power, Iraqi troops and Iranian-back militias grind down. It has now lost half the area it once held inside Iraq.

But Iraq itself remains just as divided. The military victories over IS are further entrenching the sectarian hostilities that produced its rise in the first place.

The Iraqi army's weakness was shown in 2014, when it simply crumbled in the face of an assault on Mosul by a vastly smaller force of IS fighters. So the government has relied heavily on Shiite militias in the war to drive it out.

These sectarian militias have looted and destroyed recaptured Sunni areas, in a reign of terror against civilians. In Fallujah, there were further atrocities.

Over 80,000 people have fled the city in the last few months as the fighting worsened. Those who survived faced torture at the hands of the militias.

Eyewitnesses reported that, "armed groups operating in support of the Iraqi security forces are intercepting people fleeing the conflict...detaining the males for 'security screening', which in some cases degenerates into physical violations and other forms of abuse", according to UN High Commissioner for Human Rights Zeid Ra'd Al Hussain.

One man captured by the militia, Abu Muhammad, described how, "They would beat us with water pipes; they would take turns to torture us. My hands were tied behind my back, and one of the militants sat on my chest after he got tired of beating me. He just threw himself on me. I felt my ribs breaking."



Human Rights Watch says it has, "received credible allegations of summary executions, beatings of unarmed men, enforced disappearances, and mutilation of corpses by government forces".

Sohaib al-Rawi, the governor of the province where Fallujah is found, al-Anbar, told *Al Jazeera* that he believed that, "more than 49 civilians have lost their lives under torture", with over 600 more missing.

Things were little better for those who avoided the militias, with nothing like adequate preparations to assist the tens of thousands made homeless. "People are sleeping out in the open and waiting for tents to be given to them," Karl Schembri, working with the Norwegian Refugee Council to provide aid, said.

"The scenes are straight from an apocalyptic picture, where there is a sandstorm every day, the heat is unbearable, up to 50 degrees centigrade".

Food and water are in short supply, in an area just one hour's drive from the capital, Baghdad.

Sectarianism

This treatment of Sunni civilians will only breed more anger and disgust at the Iraqi government, still run by a sectarian Shiite party, and inflame the country's sectarian divisions.

But the sectarian system is under renewed challenge.

Above: Conditions for those fleeing the fighting in Fallujah are appalling, with shortages of water common

In both April and May, mass protests stormed Baghdad's "Green Zone", the fortified administrative centre established by US occupation forces after 2003.

Hundreds of people took over the parliament building, driving out MPs. The Green Zone symbolises the corruption and wealth of the Iraqi elite, as a city within a city where there are mansions, well paved roads and manicured grass, far removed from the life of ordinary Iraqis.

The wider population is fed up with the country's constant electricity shortages and unemployment. Around 2.5 million people in Baghdad live in shanty towns.

Iraq's oil wealth, instead of providing decent services and rebuilding the country, has been pilfered to benefit the political elite.

Demonstrators called for an end to the government "quota system", which sees ministries and jobs distributed on the basis of ethnicity and religious sect. This arrangement was set in place by the US occupiers as they tried to establish American control. The protests called for a technocratic government, run by Ministers independent of the corrupt, sectarian parties.

Islamic State may eventually be defeated militarily. But unless the mass of ordinary Iraqis are able to break the sectarian political system, the sectarianism and poverty that produced it will continue.

Sectarian militias have looted and destroyed recaptured Sunni areas, in a reign of terror against civilians

WHY ISLAM IS NOT TO BLAME FOR HOMOPHOBIA

Singling out Islam or other religions misunderstands where homophobia comes from and why it persists, argues **Amy Thomas**

THE MASS murder of LGBTI people at Pulse nightclub in Orlando, Florida in June was a homophobic hate crime. But yesterday's homophobes are trying to drape themselves in the rainbow flag to use the attack to drum up Islamophobia.

They point to the attacker's religion, Islam, and his claim of allegiance to Islamic State, to argue that Islam is uniquely homophobic. That the shooter Omar Mateen had no connections to organised terrorism has given them no pause.

Article after article in the Murdoch papers has "uncovered" Muslim homophobia, and attacked Malcolm Turnbull for inviting an Imam who had made homophobic comments to his Ramadan Iftar.

This is shameless manipulation of anti-homophobia to fuel racism. Many of the same writers in the same papers cheered on Turnbull's gutting of anti-LGBTI bullying program Safe Schools.

Singling out Muslims is part of an ongoing project by right-wing ideologues to push the idea that there is a problem with Islam as a whole.

It is this mainstream Islamophobia that has bolstered Pauline Hanson. Her shocking video response to Orlando, as did Donald Trump's, called for a ban on Muslim immigration and likened Muslims to pit bulls, helping propel her into the Senate.

The danger of such a response was obvious as soon as the devastating news of the attack broke.

First Turnbull refused to mention it was an anti-gay crime. Even when he did admit it, he called it, "a hatred of the freedoms...that we all enjoy", and talked up the bombing of Iraq and Syria. In the US, Hillary Clinton declared the need to, "redouble our



Above: A rally following the Orlando shooting

efforts to defend our country".

Islamophobia has been used to justify wars and explain terrorism relentlessly in the West since 9/11. Muslims face racist hate, including attacks on the streets, discrimination in employment, and police harassment.

That's why Islamophobia has to be opposed.

It was a major mistake that the vigils in response to Orlando across Australia, including one organised by the Socialist Alliance in Newtown, Sydney, did not make a serious effort to invite the Muslim community or explicitly deal with Islamophobia.

A speaker who condemned the Abrahamic religions—Judaism, Christianity, and Islam—was given a massive cheer and nothing was said in response.

We must reject the idea that Islam, or religion in general, is to blame for homophobia.

There is no evidence that Muslims in Australia are more homophobic than other religious people. More than that, we cannot explain the oppression of LGBTI people in the West, or in Muslim majority countries, through religion.

The figures

Part of the immense irony of the Islamophobic backlash is that it is being pedalled by those famous for their hatred of LGBTI people. Miranda Devine, for instance, is famous for blaming the 2011 London urban riots on equal marriage and a "fatherless society"!

When Penny Wong and her partner

FEATURES

had a baby, Devine used the occasion to moan that straight people were now being forced into the closet.

Even after Orlando, hard right Liberals and columnists like Andrew Bolt are blaming Turnbull's election trouncing on his personal support for equal marriage and arguing for a return of arch social conservative Tony Abbott.

These are the people holding back LGBTI rights—not Muslims.

Disgracefully, some homophobic MPs have tried to blame migrants for their stalling on equal marriage. Anti-gay marriage Liberal Senator Concetta Fierravanti-Wells claimed in August 2015 that, "The silent majority [against equal marriage] includes our multicultural and multi-faith communities for which marriage and family values are very important and are strongly supported."

But a poll from September 2015 found that 60 per cent of those born overseas support equal marriage. Polls consistently show that those *least* likely to support equal marriage are white men aged over 55 or high school boys.

Public support for equal marriage is at its highest level ever. The latest Fairfax/Ipsos poll has support at 70 per cent.

While it is hard to find data breaking down homophobic views by religious belief in Australia, a 2003 survey by the Australia Institute found Baptists the most homophobic, with over 60 per cent agreeing with the statement that homosexuality was immoral. In "Other religions" including Judaism and Islam, only 40 per cent agreed with the statement.

There is no evidence of higher homophobic hate crimes in multicultural areas. There are actually higher instances in rural Australia, which is less multicultural.

Capitalism, not religion

Yet while many reject the idea of solidarity from Trump, Devine or Turnbull, it is common to think that Islam, and other religions, are responsible for homophobia and should all be equally condemned. But this misunderstands the role of homophobia in society.

It was the Hegelian philosopher Ludwig Feuerbach who first said that "religion is the root of all evil". For him, religious beliefs were the root of conservatism that held society back. But this cannot explain where such beliefs come from in the first place.

Marx, writing in response to

Feuerbach in 1845, explained (unfortunately referring to humanity as "man"), "Man makes religion; religion does not make man. Man is the world of man, the state, society. This state, this society, produce religion." In other words, religious ideas are the product of society, not the other way around.

That's why religion is malleable and can express a number of conflicting ideas, both regressive and progressive.

Islam was a religion of pride and resistance for Muhammed Ali and Malcolm X, but it is religion of repression for the Saudi ruling class. Christianity can be a religion of hate for Cory Bernardi but something different for those Christians (the majority) who support same-sex marriage and refugee rights.

Homophobia is no doubt a staple of conservative religious organisations, like the Westboro Baptist Church in the United States that picketed funerals of Orlando victims.

But these groups are a product of the homophobia of capitalist society. Homophobia persists because it serves the interests of those who have power in society. To quote Marx again, "The ruling ideas in society are in every epoch the ideas of the ruling class".

In pre-class societies and some class societies predating capitalism, there is evidence of different ideas about gender and sexuality; in some cases a "third gender", in others, socially acceptable sex and relationships between people of the same sex.

It was capitalism that created homophobia as we know it today.

In the late 19th century, the British ruling class became concerned about the conditions for women and children in the factories, which were destroying working class families and threatening the reproduction of the labour force.

The ruling class worked hard to establish the ideal of the nuclear family, with strict gender roles for men and women.

Women in the family were to stay home and take on the burden of raising the next generation of workers. The ruling class has benefited because women perform this task within the family unpaid.

Gays, lesbians, transgender people and those who broke these norms were seen as a threat. In fact the very notion of a "homosexual" person, rather than just a set of acts, emerges

Homophobia persists because it serves the interests of those who have power in society.

at this point in history, laying the basis for LGBTI people to be oppressed and excluded.

As capitalism spread throughout the world, so did homophobia. The British exported it throughout their Empire.

Christianity, too, has played a particular role in enforcing homophobia in the West. But these attitudes ultimately persist because of the benefit to the ruling class as a whole.

Though the more far-sighted members of today's ruling class want to incorporate LGBTI people into the family and support same-sex marriage, this does not mean an end to the family structure or the associated repressive gender norms that fuel homophobia. Nor has the battle for equal rights been won.

In the US, more than 200 anti-LGBTI bills have been introduced in 34 states in 2016. In Indiana and Mississippi businesses can refuse service to LGBTI people. A majority of states have no protections for LGBTI workers. And the "bathroom bill" in North Carolina stopping trans people from using public toilets that match their gender identity has garnered international outrage.

It is this homophobia, generated by capitalist society, which drove the massacre in Orlando.

Colonialism and homophobia

Many point to homophobic repression and laws against homosexuality in Muslim countries to argue that Islam is especially homophobic. But state-sanctioned homophobia in these states is inseparable from their Western colonial history.

Anal sex between men was banned through the whole British Empire in 1861. That empire included countries now part of the "Muslim world"—Pakistan, India, Iraq, Palestine, Oman, Egypt, Sudan, parts of Malaya, as well as non-Muslim countries in Africa and the Caribbean.

In many cases, anti-gay laws still on the books in former colonies are colonial laws.

Such discrimination had not existed in the same way before. As Brian Whitaker points out in his 2011 book, *Unspeakable Love: Gay and Lesbian Life in the Middle East*, Arab societies were seen as more tolerant than other societies in the past: "Evidence of... previous tolerance can be found in Arabic literary works, in the accounts of early travellers and the examples of Europeans who settled in Arab countries to escape sexual persecution

at home.”

That reputation for tolerance persisted into the colonial era. Famous gay male figures like author E M Forster travelled to the Arab world to meet men in the 1910s.

Many of the leaders of the struggles against colonisation after World War II were Western educated. They accepted the homophobia of their previous masters and incorporated it as part of the ideology of the new capitalist states. Many were influenced by Stalinist politics and the idea of state-led development.

But Stalinism was homophobic and homosexuality was illegal in the USSR. (Poet Allen Ginsberg was famously kicked out of Cuba for calling Fidel Castro “cute” in 1965, then kicked out of Eastern bloc country Czechoslovakia for his “obscurity”).

This history explains why it is not in exclusively Islamic countries where LGBTI people face severe oppression. Secular Arab states like Syria and Egypt outlaw homosexuality. LGBTI people in Syria are both targets of Islamic State and Bashar al-Assad’s army, which is known for torturing gay men.

Former colonies like Jamaica, Kenya and Uganda are predominantly Christian and are some of the world’s most dangerous places for LGBTI people.

In Christian countries in Africa, Western evangelicals have stoked homophobic violence and opposed the use of condoms to deal with the HIV/AIDS crisis.

LGBTI people experience horrific oppression in autocracies like Iran and Western ally Saudi Arabia, where being gay can mean the death penalty. Such repression goes along with autocratic rule based on binding the population together through religion.

As a result of the history of colonialism and imperialism anti-Western sentiment is popular. This means that the solution to homophobia cannot come from outside or above.

As Whitaker explains, “attitudes towards homosexuality have become entangled in international politics... Cultural protectionism is one way of opposing Western policies that are viewed as domineering, imperialistic, etc., and so exaggerated images of a licentious West, characterised in the popular imagination by female nudity and male homosexuality, are countered by invoking a supposedly Arab morality.”

Western activists lining up with



Above: Opposing homophobia and Islamophobia at an Orlando vigil in Britain

their own rulers to condemn Islamic and Arab societies can only help reinforce this dynamic. This is the effect, for instance, of Israel promoting itself as an LGBTI-friendly destination in order to “pinkwash” their apartheid policies in Palestine.

All the freedoms enjoyed by LGBTI people in Western countries are the product of the struggle for rights that began with the Gay Liberation movement at Stonewall in 1969. It is movements like this—emerging through struggle from below—that can liberate LGBTI people around the world.

And unlike many modern LGBTI organisations, the Gay Liberation movement was infused with anti-capitalist politics that saw oppressions as linked and solidarity between struggles as crucial.

That’s why they took their name from the National Liberation Front in Vietnam.

Today, the conditions for LGBTI in Muslim majority countries mirror those in the West prior to the emergence of the Gay Liberation movement.

Whitaker reports about how gay family members in countries such as Egypt, Jordan, and Lebanon, are often referred to psychiatrists to be cured. Such a practice was common in

Australia and other Western countries before it was targeted by the gay movement.

Building solidarity

You wouldn’t know it from the anti-Muslim coverage of Orlando in the mainstream press, but Muslims around the world have expressed their solidarity with the victims in Orlando. An Australian statement, signed by dozens of Muslim organisations and individuals read in part, “The LGBTI community has a long history of experiencing prejudice, vilification and violence... There is no justification for such homophobia”. It contained a special appeal to LGBTI Muslims.

Muslims in Orlando held a prayer vigil, and a Muslim organisation in Florida raised over \$100,000 for the victims in donations from Muslims.

LGBTI organisations need to stand with Muslim communities against racism.

Like in the film *Pride*, depicting the story of how LGBTI activists stood with striking British miners, extending such solidarity can help break down any homophobic ideas that do exist.

This is the unity we need to fight our common enemy. We can’t let them divide us.

HILLARY CLINTON

THE BEST PRESIDENT US CAPITALISM COULD ASK FOR

Hillary Clinton reflects the true values of the Democratic party, argues **Lachlan Marshall**

THE DEMOCRATIC National Convention this month will see Hillary Clinton anointed as the Democratic candidate for November's US Presidential election. While he is yet to endorse her, self-declared socialist Bernie Sanders does not have enough delegates to win the nomination.

Clinton wants to co-opt the mass enthusiasm unleashed by the Sanders campaign. Sanders gave expression to the rage felt by many against inequality, racism and a system rigged for the rich.

But Clinton's reputation as an establishment politician is an obstacle to her mending the rift with Sanders supporters.

So the Democrats are now positioning her as the lesser evil to Donald Trump. Sanders is now telling his supporters, "I am going to do everything I can to defeat Donald Trump" and saying he will vote for Hillary.

This argument for the Democratic candidate as the "lesser evil" has been used to draw the left behind the party and derail genuinely left-wing candidates for decades.

But the Democratic Party operates as one of the two parties of US business. It is funded and controlled by big business, just like its Republican opponents. And it has always set out to loyally serve American capitalism.

Her campaign is awash with corporate donations. So far she has received the majority of Wall Street donations, winning back the support of donors that Obama lost in the 2012 election against Mitt Romney.

Former Republican strategist and adviser at the Securities and Exchange Commission Andrew Weinstein, explained Wall Street's support: "They know Hillary. And they know that she is not anti-business."

Wall Street's confidence in Clinton is based on her decades-long record of serving the interests of American

capitalism, in positions from First Lady, US Senator, Secretary of State as well as sitting on the board of the union-busting multinational Walmart. She has even received backing from long-time Republican supporters in the business world, such as former General Motors CEO Dan Akerson and AT&T executive Jim Cicconi.

According to Bloomberg BusinessWeek, in her time as Secretary of State, "Clinton turned the State Department into a machine for promoting US business." She spent her time directly negotiating high level contracts for companies including Boeing, Lockheed and General Electric, Kevin Young and Diana C. Sierra Becerra have written.

First Lady

Bill Clinton ran his presidential campaign on the slogan of "two for the price of one," referring to the prominent role Hillary would play in the presidency. The policies of Bill Clinton's administration are therefore the product of a political partnership which Hillary shares responsibility for.

Two key policies of the Clinton years that have made life worse for the majority of Americans deserve particular attention: welfare reform and the Crime Bill.

Declaring "the end of welfare as we know it," in 1996 the Clinton administration enacted the Personal Responsibility and Work Opportunity Reconciliation Act (PRWORA).

It limited the time poor families could access welfare support to five, and in many states as little as two, years. But there simply weren't enough jobs for all the unemployed losing their welfare, and it plunged single mothers, blacks and Latinos into poverty.

As Bernie Sanders pointed out during his campaign, the US has the

So far she has received the majority of Wall Street donations

highest child poverty rate in the world, a situation which the Clintons' welfare reforms helped create.

A report from the National Poverty Centre at the University of Michigan concluded that "The prevalence of extreme poverty rose sharply between 1996 and 2011. This growth has been concentrated among those groups that were most affected by the 1996 welfare reform."

Hillary defended the policy and pilloried the victims of welfare reform, claiming in a 2002 interview that at least they were "no longer dead-beats—they're actually out there being productive."

Hillary's campaign has presented a Clinton win as a win for women, launching an ad featuring footage tracing the progress of women's rights, from the suffragists to women's and gay liberation, and finally with Hillary figuring as the climax of this movement.

Clinton certainly owes her position to these historic struggles. But as a ruling class woman she has little in common with most American women, and the policies she supports have made life worse for them.

Hillary has attempted to give welfare reform a progressive gloss, claiming in 2000, "Since we first asked mothers to move from welfare to work, millions of families have made the transition from dependency to dignity."

But the kinds of jobs women were forced to accept—if they could find one at all—were mostly poorly paid. Her hypocrisy is revealed by the experience of Lillie Harden, a 42 year old African American woman who, at the invitation of the White House, stood beside President Clinton at the signing of PRWORA. She was presented as a success story because she found a supermarket job and went off welfare.

But, as Alejandra Marchevsky and

Jeanne Theoharis write in *The Nation*, “her ‘success’ was short-lived. After suffering a stroke in 2002, she asked journalist Jason DeParle to relay a message to Clinton ‘asking if he could help her get on Medicaid. She had received it on welfare, but had been rejected now, and she couldn’t afford her \$450 monthly bill for prescription drugs.’ Harden died in March 2014, at the age of 59.”

The Black Lives Matter movement has drawn attention to President Clinton’s Crime Bill of 1994 and its contribution to the epidemic of mass incarceration.

The Crime Bill expanded the application of the death penalty to a spate of new offences, mandated life sentences for repeat offenders under the ‘three strikes’ rule, and set aside billions of dollars for new prisons and an expanded police force to harass communities of colour.

As academic Loïc Wacquant noted, President Clinton cut \$17 billion from public housing while increasing funding for the construction of prisons by \$19 billion, ‘effectively making the construction of prisons the nation’s main housing program for the poor.’

Hillary justified these policies, explaining, “We need more police, we need more and tougher prison sentences for repeat offenders.” The outcome is that today the US, with 5 per cent of the world’s population, has 25 per cent of its prison population, disproportionately people of colour.

Foreign policy hawk

It’s in her attitude to foreign policy that Hillary Clinton probably offers the most continuity with previous administrations.

A *CNN* article comparing Hillary’s 2008 and 2016 presidential campaigns, noted that, “Clinton is unapologetic in expressing her hawkish views this cycle.”

Republican foreign policy experts are lining up behind Clinton, with endorsements from former National Security advisor Brent Scowcroft and Deputy Secretary of State under George W. Bush, Richard Armitage.

In contrast to the unknown quantity of a Trump presidency, the establishment knows Clinton has the best interests of US imperialism at heart.

In 2002 Clinton voted for the Iraq War in the Senate. As Obama’s Secretary of State she supported the coup in Honduras against the democratically elected President Manuel Zelaya, presided over the escalation in Obama’s drone war, and the 2009 troop surge in Afghanistan.



Above: Hillary has tried to brand herself as a feminist candidate, but she offers nothing to working class women

And Clinton has been willing to go even further than Obama on key questions of foreign policy, such as advocating a no-fly zone in Syria.

According to the *New York Times* Clinton, “backed Gen. Stanley McChrystal’s recommendation to send 40,000 more troops to Afghanistan, before endorsing a fallback proposal of 30,000 (Obama went along with that). She supported the Pentagon’s plan to leave behind a residual force of 10,000 to 20,000 American troops in Iraq (Obama balked at this).”

The Democrats – a lesser evil?

Trump’s mad antics will push many to grudgingly vote for Clinton.

But neither Trump nor Clinton are popular. A poll by *NBC News* in May found that, “Nearly six in ten Americans said they either ‘dislike’ or ‘hate’ Clinton, while slightly more—63 per cent—expressed negative opinions about Trump.”

The American public is deeply alienated from official politics. Workers’ wages are stagnating or in decline, yet Clinton will not bring the changes people are crying out for.

In response to Trump’s “make America great again” slogan the Clinton campaign produced baseball caps featuring the lame phrase, “America is already great”, a message which will leave a bitter taste in the mouths of millions fed up with the status quo.

In 2008 Obama told people to vote for him to stop the Republicans’ racist immigration policies—only to preside

over the largest mass expulsion of migrants in American history. Many hoped he would extricate America from wars in the Middle East, only to witness another invasion of Iraq and Syria.

Every escalation of the war against IS, which Clinton is signed up to, legitimises Trump’s Islamophobic rantings. Trump’s vow to build a wall to keep out Mexicans comes in the context of an already militarised border.

One way to push back Trump’s racism and hate was shown in March when a demonstration of thousands of anti-racists in Chicago forced him to cancel a campaign rally. On the economic front, a six week strike this year by 40,000 telecom workers won pay rises and forced their company, Verizon, to retreat on outsourcing and cuts to pensions.

And it wasn’t the courage of her convictions that drove Clinton to come out in support of marriage equality. For a decade she opposed it and backed Bill Clinton’s 1996 Defense of Marriage Act, which barred federal recognition of same-sex marriage. In 2013 she flipped to support same-sex marriage when majority opinion turned in favour of it. Years of grassroots campaigning produced this result.

In a political system rigged for the rich, the support for Bernie Sanders has shown the potential for a left alternative. But this will only be built outside the Democratic Party.

AUSTRALIAN NEO-COLONIALISM AND CORRUPTION IN PNG

The legacy of Australian colonial control has left PNG underdeveloped and prone to political corruption, writes **James Supple**

PNG WENT to the brink of another political crisis in May as police opened fire on protesting students. There have been protests for months demanding Prime Minister Peter O'Neill resign and submit to questioning over corruption charges.

O'Neill became Prime Minister in 2011, promising to clean up corruption. He established Task Force Sweep as a national anti-corruption body. It successfully prosecuted three former and current MPs, four senior public servants and a number of businessmen over millions of dollars in corrupt payments.

But when the task force unearthed corruption allegations against O'Neill himself in 2014 and obtained an arrest warrant against the Prime Minister, he moved to disband it, cutting off its funding.

Turmoil and corruption in PNG politics is not new. But the source of these problems is underdevelopment and the neo-colonialism of the Australian government.

Australia ran PNG as a colony for decades until 1975. This began with control of the territory of Papua, on the south-east of New Guinea in 1906, with the German colony to its north added in 1914.

Australia's main interest in PNG was strategic. It sought "to deny the use of the area to any other power", as External Affairs Minister Paul Hasluck put it in 1961. The area was considered part of a "forward defence shield" for the Australian mainland. This obsession continues with the 2016 Defence White Paper declaring that, "Geographical proximity means the security, stability and cohesion of Papua New Guinea contributes to a secure, resilient Australia with secure northern approaches."

Australia showed little concern for developing PNG's economy, content

to allow white settlers to establish plantations growing copra, cocoa and coffee. Local villagers were employed as indentured labour, described even by Lieutenant-Governor Murray as "really rather like slavery". The locals would not work for the European settlers unless they were forced. A strike in 1929 by the entire workforce of 3000 in Rabaul was put down with arrests. Its leaders endured three years' prison and regular beatings.

Any development was only to take place on terms benefiting Australia, seen in the prohibition of exporting crops that would compete with Australian companies, such as sugar and bananas.

It was decades before any attention was paid to building up basic services for the local population. Academic John Connell records that school education was not expanded until the 1960s, when the number of schools was increased from just two to 60. In 1968, just seven years before independence, the country had only four university graduates.

Even mining was hardly developed despite the discovery of gold in the 1930s. The country is rich in natural resources from gold, copper and nickel to oil and gas.

Even today much of the population remains in the informal sector, with 80 per cent continuing to rely on subsistence agriculture. About 40 per cent live in absolute poverty, around three million out of its population of 7.5 million.

Neo-colonialism and corruption

Despite formal independence, Australia has continued to dominate PNG and subordinate the needs of the impoverished population to the profits of Australian companies. Alongside this sits its needs for a political regime compliant with Australian strategic interests.

Australia showed little concern for developing PNG's economy, content to allow white settlers to establish plantations

This has been achieved through using desperately needed aid money as a tool of control, maintaining a presence of Australians in influential positions throughout the PNG bureaucracy and the continued presence of military and police forces throughout the country. Australia also continues to dominate PNG economically, with Australian companies accounting for 58 per cent of Foreign Direct Investment, with almost three quarters of this is going into mineral and petroleum projects.

Since independence, exploitation of the country's mineral and petroleum resources been promoted as the "solution" to PNG's poverty by both Australian and PNG elites. The first big project was Rio Tinto's Bougainville copper mine, which supplied 15-20 per cent of the government budget over its first 15 years. The commodities boom from the early 2000s brought unprecedented funds into the state coffers, with natural resource rents accounting for 36 per cent of GDP in 2011. But inequality increased markedly, making PNG the lowest ranking country on the UN Human Development Index outside sub-Saharan Africa.

Given the chronic poverty and lack of independent economic development, control of the state is one of the major sources of wealth in PNG. This breeds corruption and political instability. As a US embassy cable from 2008 released by WikiLeaks put it, mining revenue and aid money has been used, "more to enrich the political elite than to provide social services or infrastructure. There are no large-scale local businessmen, but numerous politicians are relatively well off".

MPs are granted so-called "electorate development funds" which can be spent on any project in their electorate they wish. These have reached enormous sizes. In 2007 the

then Prime Minister paid out \$40 million to MPs for the funds, despite complaints from the Ombudsman Commission that the bulk of MPs had failed to account for the previous year's spending.

All the major political leaders are corrupt.

Current Prime Minister Peter O'Neill took power in 2011 by ousting the sitting Prime Minister Michael Somare, while he was overseas receiving medical treatment. Somare, the first leader of PNG after independence and Prime Minister three times, was questioned by anti-corruption officers about how he obtained two properties in Cairns at a cost of over \$1 million.

Peter O'Neill's takeover was ruled unconstitutional by the PNG Supreme Court. But he managed to secure the support of parliament and the police force to keep the job.

Now he is accused of helping lawyer Paul Paraka steal \$31 million of government money by signing an authorisation to take the funds. Despite this, O'Neill claims 90 out of the 110 members of parliament now support his government.

His success has been based on the proceeds of the mining boom. Between 2008 and 2015 government spending doubled. As part of this O'Neill has increased the control of local MPs over government funds, putting them in charge of multi-million dollar "district support improvement funds", essentially MP slush funds. One MP, Vice Minister for Provincial and Local Level Government Affairs Joe Sungi admitted recently that, "because DSIP is there that's why we will be in the government and support the O'Neill-Dion Government... so long as you have the money, you will master the numbers".

It is not just distribution of state revenues that fuel corruption, but also the greed of major corporations operating in a largely unregulated environment. In 2015, Thulsi Narayanasamy, a director of Australian NGO Aid Watch said, "a recent Commission of Inquiry into Special Agricultural and Business Leases, or SABLs... found a number of Australian companies had engaged in fraudulent leases. One of these companies benefitted from the largest lease in PNG history and that is a Queensland-based company. Australia has done nothing to bring these companies to account".

O'Neill has postured against Australian interests in PNG, expelling 15 Australians working in senior roles in the PNG public service at the



Residents of the village of Mindere in PNG protest destructive mining projects

start of 2016. He has also courted aid money and loans from the Chinese government. Chinese aid to PNG was second to Australia between 2006 and 2013, according to the Lowy Institute, although its total over this period was still only what Australia spends in any one year.

Both the US and China are now "engaged more extensively with Papua New Guinea in the diplomatic, aid and economic realms", according to academic Joanne Wallis. "Other external powers, such as Japan, Malaysia, Korea, Indonesia, Iran, Cuba, Russia and the United Arab Emirates are also becoming involved in PNG and the South Pacific as aid donors and diplomatic partners", she adds.

But despite this, Australia maintains its dominant position, providing more aid in the last year than the Chinese government has over the past decade. On top of the more than US\$460 million annual aid payment, in the 2015 financial year, the Australian government also provided \$556.7 million to support the Manus Island detention facility, turning a blind eye to how it is spent and allowing O'Neill to shore up his position.

Protest

Anger at the deep corruption in PNG's political system has boiled over this year, with student protests culminating in an indefinite boycott of classes starting in April.

The demand that O'Neill step down has won mass support, with boycotts closing down major campuses such as UPNG in Port Moresby,

the Technical College in Lae and a number of high schools. The police shooting of student demonstrators on 8 June injured scores, some critically. Severe police repression of the movement has continued in the wake of the shootings, with many student leaders currently underground. Two students have been murdered in Lae, a result of bitter feuds that have followed the repression. UPNG has now cancelled the academic year.

The protests have come in the context of deep social unrest in PNG, as the commodity boom has come to an end and the government launches a wave of savage austerity to reign in its declining budget, including cuts of between 30-40 per cent to healthcare and education. Recently there have been delays in paying public servants' and teachers' wages.

The PNG National Doctors Association and Nurses Association have joined student calls for O'Neill to step down, as well as protesting against cuts to wages and positions. Similar calls have also come from the Aviation Sectors Union and the Maritime and Transport Workers Union.

The crisis in PNG is set to deepen in the coming months, with more budget pain expected and O'Neill increasingly willing to use force to crush protests. Building solidarity with the trade union and student movements in PNG can play an important role in strengthening their fight against the corrupt O'Neill government. It can also help loosen the chokehold Australian state and corporate interests have on PNG.

Exposing history of racism but without any solutions

Talking to My Country
By Stan Grant
HarperCollins \$29.99

STAN GRANT'S book is a memoir, a conflicted memoir that sometimes reads like he is talking to himself, as much as he is talking to his country.

That Grant is talking to "Australia", the state founded by invasion, is a contradiction that he never resolves. He desperately wants to find a place in Australia.

Many readers will be shocked at the racism and disadvantage of Grant's childhood. And shocked, too, as Grant reveals the murderous racism of European invasion that is embedded in the history of his country—the "Poison Waterhole Creek" on the way to his parents' place.

Those casual markers of Australia's black history—Skull Creek, Slaught-house Gully—scar the highways, marking places that remain deeply etched into Aboriginal memories and lives. They are stark reminders of the bloody dispossession that underpins the contemporary injustice and the gaps the politicians pretend they want to close—in jobs, health, education, imprisonment, life span.

There are some odd, jarring references in the book. Grant mentions "taking pleasure" at seeing Australia beaten on the sporting field and says he cheered on, "the All Blacks or Springboks." The Springboks?! The sporting ambassadors of apartheid?

It is clear that the booring of Adam Goodes at AFL matches in the winter of 2015 had a profound impact on Grant. Grant says, "I love Australia and I must love its people... My country: Australia." Grant's patriotic sentiments would easily fit with



those of John Howard.

That is why the Adam Goodes incident was so shocking to Stan Grant. "Here was everything I had thought—hoped—we had left behind." In that incident, Grant's Australia turned on him.

Grant admits that he and Goodes, "...sometimes sit uneasily too among our own people." A few pages later, Grant says that Goodes described himself as "an assimilated man." Then perhaps the punchline of the book, "If Adam Goodes can be laid so low, then we are all at risk."

Grant recounts the 1993 incident when, in response to racial taunts, another AFL footballer, Nicky Winmar, lifted his shirt to proudly point to his black skin, and the 1995 protest march from Melbourne to Canberra by another AFL player, Michael Long: "Adam Goodes may have thought those battles had been fought and won. He was wrong."

Celebrity status

Since Grant's powerful speech in 2015 and the publication of this book, he has been elevated

to Indigenous celebrity status. He was happy to be appointed to the [Constitutional] Referendum Council, by none other than Malcolm Turnbull and the Opposition Leader. In April, he wrote for SBS, "In 1901 our voices were not heard. I am humbled that in 2016 a son of the Wiradjuri and Kamilaroi will be heard." But whose voice is really being represented?

The majority of Indigenous Australia reject the official Constitutional Recognise campaign. At a suicide prevention conference, in May, an Indigenous academic and Treaty supporter challenged Grant's position saying, "Why don't we want it [constitutional recognition]? ... Because we don't want to be recognised by the perpetrator of the violence." Grant defended his Council position, but replied that having constitutional recognition did not stop the possibility of a treaty.

In June this year, following ALP leader Bill Shorten's indication that he was open to the idea of a Treaty, Stan Grant fol-

lowed suit in *The Guardian*, saying that "a treaty has a greater chance of success now than in the 1980s." Although Grant is silent on what "things of substance" would be covered in any Treaty.

In the book, he is also ambivalent about "community closures". He says the remote communities do "present challenges... they are far from hospitals, shops and schools"—as if services can't be provided. He is brought up short, when an old Aboriginal man at the Grama festival bangs the table and says, "We will not be moved."

In March 2015 he told Sky News, "Sometimes people fall prey to this idea that 'we need to keep people in remote communities, that's where the real blackfellas are and that makes me feel better about my identity.' That's fine for someone like me living in a city with the opportunities I've had. It's not so fine for the kid who's growing up there to make me feel stronger about who I am and my identity."

Grant does spell out some history of government neglect and failure—

despite Rudd's apology to the Stolen Generations, "the number of indigenous children being removed has increased 400 per cent"; despite the Royal Commission into Black Deaths in Custody, Indigenous incarceration has increased 100 per cent.

He writes, "We die younger, we go blind, babies are born deaf, our communities are in crisis," but he never seems to grasp that the neglect and inequality is built into his country, Australia.

Grant doesn't offer any solutions—the fact that he can favourably quote "Professor Marcia Langton"—who he admits supported Howard's Intervention and "sought alliances with big business and government"—is an indication of how far he is from finding one.

Racism not only has to be "recognised", it has to be fought.

He ironically quotes the national anthem, "Where is our wealth for toil?" But that wealth will have to be taken back from those who are still stealing it.

Ian Rintoul

Who are The Greens? What the numbers tell us

The Australian Greens: From activism to Australia's third party
By Stewart Jackson
Melbourne University Press, \$59.99
(ebook \$16.99)

STEWART JACKSON has set out to examine The Greens' transformation from a small party linked to social movements to a professional electoral party. He studies the changes in internal party structures and in attitudes and activities of members.

Using academic categories, Jackson concludes that The Greens are on the trajectory to becoming a professional electoral party, organised around professional staff and geared towards electoral success—but retain many social movement features.

He examines the origins of The Greens and their electoral history, from 1972 when the United Tasmania Group stood the first Green candidates, through to the establishment of the Australian Greens in 1992.

Fast forward to 2016, and the conservative pull of parliamentary pragmatism is dragging The Greens to the right, endangering the possibility of shifting politics to the left.

The book provides a wealth of detail about The Greens' membership, mainly sourced through his own surveys of party members. As a former Greens national convenor and a member of the party since 1990 he has had unique access to the party.

He covers everything from how often members attend Greens meetings, protests, and handed out election material.

Although only one in five wanted the party to be more left-wing, its



members and activists generally see it is a left-wing party and situate themselves on the left. This stands in contrast to what we normally hear from most of the Greens federal MPs and Senators, who are anxious to avoid the term.

There is a division between more right-wing members, usually single-mindedly interested in climate change and environmental issues, and those further to left who are more concerned with economic and social issues.

In the last year the party has grown nationally to reach 14,000 members, an increase of 30 per cent. But the party's parliamentary success has encouraged more conservative people to join over time. He writes that, "Those who joined more recently—after 2001—strongly disagreed with moving the party to the left whereas those who joined earlier were more likely to be evenly split or ambivalent."

The changing membership seems likely to assist in moving the party further towards electoral

pragmatism.

Greens members are rather old, with the average age of members 54. This is similar to the age profiles of the major parties, but in marked contrast to The Greens' electoral support, which is strong among younger voters.

The changing membership seems likely to assist in moving the party further towards electoral pragmatism

The wealth of statistical information here is useful, but inevitably makes for rather dry reading.

Are The Greens middle class?

Jackson characterises The Greens as "middle class radicals", citing the fact that almost three-quarters of members are in "managerial or professional roles". But the picture is more complex.

He also notes that 30 per cent of Greens members, and 40 per cent of those in employment, are union members. This is close to double the rate among the general population.

The Greens' leadership can be fairly described as middle class. Greens leader Richard Di Natale makes very little attempt to appeal to working class voters, pitching The Greens to middle class voters instead by saying they can offer, "leadership...that's prepared to tackle climate change and manage what is the real economic transition here."

He says he in politics to get "outcomes". One example of what this

means in practice was The Greens' putting reform of Senate voting laws ahead of defending unions from the ABCC.

Yet a substantial proportion of The Greens' vote comes from former Labor members. Statistics from the ANU's Australian Election Studies show that in elections where The Greens significantly increased their vote, in 2001, 2004, and 2010, between 30 per cent and 40 per cent of those who voted Greens said they had voted Labor the previous election.

The Greens do have many working class members. Those counted as "professionals" in The Greens include doctors, accountants and engineers, but also white collar workers such as teachers and nurses. The bulk of unionists among Greens members are found among education, public sector and services unions, making up 77 per cent of Greens unionists. By contrast only 15 per cent of Greens unionists are in blue collar unions.

Jackson's analysis of the conservatising impact of parliament is disappointing. Because there is still member involvement in setting national policy, he downplays the influence of the "party room" in influencing policy and political focus. Yet The Greens' leadership moves in opposing inheritance tax, BDS, and cutting private school funding, demonstrate their influence in toning down policy in order to win right-wing votes and appear respectable.

Despite this, the book is a useful source to aid an understanding of the nature of The Greens as a party and where they are going.

James Supple

BREXIT VOTE A REVOLT AGAINST ELITE

By Ian Rintoul

BRITAIN'S VOTE to leave the European Union has caused a political earthquake. The far right has tried to claim credit for the vote. Cory Bernardi was quick to tweet his support for the racist right-wing UKIP leader, Nigel Farage.

Monarchist Tony Abbott welcomed the decision, and looked forward to a free trade agreement with Britain.

Many on the left have illusions in the EU and see the vote as a win for racism because much of the official "Leave" propaganda was scare-mongering about asylum seekers and "EU migrants" taking jobs or crowding the health system in Britain.

No doubt, some people voted Leave for anti-immigration reasons. But it is a mistake to see the vote as a vote for the right, and for flag-waving little Englanders.

This was also a revolt against big business and the politicians. The Remain camp had the official support of all the major political parties, practically every business organisation in Britain, the bankers and major world leaders. Many workers in Britain have seen living standards go backwards as a result of neo-liberalism and cuts. Polling showed one third of Labor and one quarter of Green supporters voted Leave.

As Labour leader Jeremy Corbyn put it, "One clear message... is that millions of people feel shut out of a political and economic system that has let them down."

Don't defend the EU

Nor is the EU an anti-racist institution. The EU provides no haven for asylum seekers. Britain's membership of the EU didn't stop Prime Minister David Cameron from maintaining a blockade at Calais and effectively closing Britain's borders.

Turkey's membership of the EU was obviously a carrot offered to pave the way for the disgraceful refugee deal that has allowed asylum seekers to be expelled from Europe to Turkey.

The experience of Greece shows that the EU has no respect for democ-



Above: The EU referendum has forced out Prime Minister David Cameron

racy, or workers' rights. Syriza, the democratically elected government, was held to ransom by unelected bankers as savage austerity measures were ruthlessly imposed.

The EU has been no help to the French workers staging massive strikes against France's Socialist government as it tries to deregulate French labour laws—moves that will lengthen the working week to 46 hours from 35, and make it easier to sack workers.

In fact the new law is part of the same process of loosening the labour market and reducing employee protections that has long been happening across the EU.

The EU is a bosses' club. This is why there are some signs of panic now that Britain has voted to leave.

Nor has the EU been a brake on imperialism or war. Twenty-two of the EU member states are members of NATO. They did nothing to moderate NATO's bombing of Libya. The EU looked on while Britain and France began bombing Syria. The EU has played a direct role in fomenting the war in the Ukraine as it held out the possibility of Ukraine joining the EU, with the signing of the Ukraine-European Union Association Agreement in June 2014.

Brexit has forced Prime Minister David Cameron's resignation, and left a deeply divided Tory party.

The racist right wants to capitalise

on the turmoil. Geert Wilders in Holland and Le Pen in France have called for referenda. But those in the UK in the Left Leave campaign have been at the forefront of defending refugees and migrants. Uniting to mobilise in support of refugees and migration will be crucial in the months ahead.

Now is not the time for hand-wringing. The bosses' crisis is our opportunity.

The hopes for a socialist Europe lie where they always did—in the fantastic scenes of ordinary people opposing racism to welcome asylum seekers into the cities of Europe, in the struggles by French workers against labour deregulation, or by Greek workers against austerity and privatisation.

In Britain we have seen the first ever junior doctors' strike against Cameron in defence of the British National Health Service (NHS). Their strike was a major blow to the British Tories plans for the privatisation of the NHS. There is no doubt that Malcolm Turnbull does have similar plans to privatise Medicare here.

He wants to outsource the Medicare payments arrangements, and his rebate freeze will inevitably see increasing co-payments for visits to the doctor.

Like the British junior doctors, and the French and Greek workers, we will have to organise to demonstrate and strike back.

Britain's membership of the EU didn't stop a blockade at Calais and effectively closing Britain's borders

Solidarity