

Solidarity

Issue No. 81 / August-September 2015

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KICK OUT THE RORTERS

HANDS OFF

PENALTY RATES

HANDS OFF THE UNIONS



GREECE

July 1965 and Greece's history of revolt

REFUGEES

Turn-backs and the Labor Conference

LGBT

Stonewall and the birth of Gay Liberation



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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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SOLIDARITY MEETINGS AND BRANCHES

Sydney

Fortress Australia and the case for open borders
6.30pm Thursday 23 April

Sydney Solidarity meets 6.30pm every Thursday at Brown St Hall, Brown St, Newtown
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Things they say

It just beggars belief that there isn't something that, in the unlikely event Corbyn wins...is done swiftly and quickly to restore the party to its sense.

John McTernan, former adviser to Tony Blair and Julia Gillard, on Jeremy Corbyn's run for British Labour leader

Yeah but who cares about the grassroots?

McTernan shows his concern for the views of Labour Party members

Abbott is a fine friend who sticks through the hard times. I admire him for it and have been a beneficiary of it.

Andrew Bolt, News Limited columnist, defends Abbott after he sacked his 'friend' Brownyn Bishop.

Neither Mr Pyne nor his family have ever seen the New Year's Eve Sydney fireworks.

A spokesperson for Education Minister Christopher Pyne explaining away his travel claim for his family to visit Sydney over New Year's Eve in 2010

There are no crooks in politics, in my judgment

Government frontbencher Peter Dutton isn't too concerned about travel rorts

Sure, it raised some money for the local party, but it was an opportunity to learn more about the way our country works

Tony Abbott thinks Liberal Party fundraisers will give him an insight into the country's inner workings

Lots of homosexuals don't want to get married, Dolce & Gabbana never got married

Eric Abetz, using his deep knowledge of what LGBT people want to try to sway the Coalition party room

I can remember my own university debates with gay friends and the idea that the gay community would in those days have wanted to embrace a bourgeois institution like marriage would have been unthinkable, but things change.

Tony Abbott on AM

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INSIDE THE \$YSTEM

Hillsong rakes it in

THE HILLSONG mega-Church is raking in over \$100 million a year according to recent financial reports. Its tax-exempt status as a religious charity means it doesn't have to pay a cent of tax on the millions it makes from music royalties and its childcare and tuition services. When asked by the *Telegraph* Hillsong would not reveal the salary of its Senior Pastor Brian Houston. A spokesperson described the tens-of-millions in donations the church sucks-up from its 34,000 followers as "giving a percentage of income to God".

UK puts three-year-old on extremism register

THE UK government has placed a three-year-old on its anti-extremism register, according to a report by the *Independent*. The government's so-called "Channel" process is part of de-radicalisation program to which hundreds of under 18s have been referred since September 2014. The three-year-old is part of an East London family targeted for "suspect behaviour".

The shocking revelation coincides with the passing of the draconian Counter-Terrorism and Security Act in the UK. Unbelievably, the bill was accompanied by a 39 page consultation document that directs childminders and nursery school staff watching toddlers to "identify children at risk of being drawn into terrorism".

Luxury car sales hit record high

Australian luxury vehicle sales hit a record in the 12 months leading up to May, says Commsec. Its Luxury Vehicle Index leapt 16.7 per cent compared to the previous year. The index includes a parade of luxury car names—Audi, Aston Martin, BMW, Bentley, Ferrari, Jaguar, Lamborghini, Lexus, Maserati, Maybach, Mercedes-Benz, McLaren, Porsche and Rolls Royce. Rising house prices are making homes unaffordable for most of us, but they're a boon for the rich who have more spare cash to burn than ever.

Major parties close ranks to protect travel perks



LABOR AND the Coalition have effectively called a truce in an effort to get the scandal over parliamentary expenses off the front pages, after Tony Abbott and Christopher Pyne chose not to criticise Labor's Tony Burke over a \$12,000 trip to Uluru. His whole family flew business class and claimed it as a parliamentary expense.

In the wake of Bronwyn Bishop's downfall the major parties have decided it's better not to go too far and wreck a good thing. And no wonder—the revelations are endless and just about everyone is in on it. Pyne himself charged \$7000 for his wife and kids to travel to Canberra to watch him on the first day of parliament in 2013, and another \$5000 for a six day trip to Sydney on Boxing Day in 2009. Employment Minister Eric Abetz spent \$7018 going home to Tasmania and back in a chartered flight in 2014 and Joe Hockey charged the public purse \$9000 to fly his family to Perth during the 2013 Easter holidays.

Every year between 2010 and 2014, Philip Ruddock took a free trip to Cairns with his wife either in January or during a long weekend. He claims all but one of the trips were for official meetings—despite their timing.

Mark Bishop, a former Labor senator, claimed \$126,350 in expenses between July 2010 and the end of his senate term last year. The entitlements don't end when you retire either. If Bronwyn Bishop retires by the next election she will continue to get \$255,000 a year from the government, plus ten free domestic return flights a year.

Warren Truss' 21K flight

NATIONAL PARTY Leader and Deputy Prime Minister Warren Truss spent over \$21,000 on a chartered flight to give a speech about the virtues of the Government's austerity budget in May last year.

The tax-payer funded cash splash was revealed after an examination of parliamentary expense claims following the revelations of Bronwyn Bishop's \$5000 helicopter flight.

The \$21,570 charter flight between Canberra and Brisbane was booked so Truss could speak at Brisbane's Conservative Breakfast Club. He did this despite the fact there are regular flights between the two cities. Even a business class flight is a bargain comparatively, at around \$800 each way.

According to an online transcript of his address, after stepping off his chartered flight, Truss went on to say, "The Budget takes steps to ensure the government is living within its means, and to rein in the age of entitlement".

Research and writing by Adam Adelpour

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

Charter flights all the rage for the rich

IT'S NO surprise Bronwyn Bishop has such a taste for helicopter rides. Charter rides on helicopters and private jets are gaining in popularity among the filthy rich, according to charter operators.

The *Financial Review* says, "A staggering 1200 people descended from the sky over four days at last year's Melbourne Cup Carnival, despite the price tag of \$390 for a one-way, five-minute ride from Melbourne City to Flemington Racecourse."

Helicopter rides have joined trips by private jet as an "affordable luxury", according to the *Financial Review*. After all, it's just \$10,000 to \$12,000 for a return trip by jet from Sydney to Melbourne.

German company top tax evader in Greece

GERMAN CHANCELLOR Angela Merkel and Finance Minister Wolfgang Schauble have spearheaded attempts to make Greek workers pay for the bankers' crisis since 2008. But Greece's biggest tax evader is a German company, according to an Athens court.

A giant German construction company, Hochtief, ran the Athens International Airport until 2013. The airport opened in 2001 and since then Hochtief refused to pay Value Added Taxes to the tune of \$750 million, as well as evading its contributions to social security.

Some estimates suggest that combined these outstanding payments could top \$1.5 billion. The latest bailout program approved by the Tsipras government included a VAT increase from 13 per cent to 23 per cent. This will be a crippling blow to ordinary people already struggling under the weight of previous austerity programs. Meanwhile Germany's elite are living it up with stolen tax dollars.

EDITORIAL

Abbott on the ropes again after same-sex marriage debacle

IN THE aftermath of the Bronwyn Bishop travel rorts affair, Abbott has slumped in the polls. Labor is leading 54-46 according to Newspoll. Abbott is as discredited and isolated as he was six months ago when he was challenged for the leadership. Nobody can believe it took him so long to dump Bishop.

Now, unable to shift a millimetre from his white-picket-fence conservatism, Abbott has shot himself in both feet over the same-sex marriage issue. It is hard to see how he can recover from here.

The LNP is left bitterly divided over same-sex marriage. And Abbott has guaranteed that the issue will dog him to the election. If Abbott stays, the next election itself will be a plebiscite on the question. For Abbott and the conservatives, it is a recipe for disaster. The ghost of Ireland is waiting in the wings, carrying a very big stick.

Abbott's economic conservatism is also centre-stage again as he prepares new attempts to attack unions and drive down workers' wages.

Abbott took no time at all to follow Liberal NSW Premier Mike Baird's call to increase the GST to 15 per cent, and declare that an increase in the GST was "on the table", urging state premiers to "keep an open mind".

The government's Productivity Commission draft report into industrial relations was delivered in early August. Given the public outcry about WorkChoices, and the backlash against Abbott's efforts to cut Medicare, pensions and universities, the Commission tried to argue for modest changes that could be sold to the public.

So it noted that, "There are ethical and community norms about the way in which a country treats its employees."

But the direction it charts is clear enough. Penalty rates are again under attack, with Sunday rates to be reduced to the Saturday rate, but specifically targeting hospitality, entertainment and retail workers. This could cut Sunday penalty rates by up to 75 per cent.

It also proposes "enterprise contracts", a form of individual contract that could be presented on a take it or leave it basis, without any need to negotiate with employees or unions.

Unfair dismissal laws would be watered down, and minimum wage



Above: Rallying to demand same-sex marriage in Sydney

increases lower.

Employment Minister Eric Abetz was quick to rule out implementing any of this immediately, but said the government is considering changes to take to the next election.

The ACTU has seized on the plans, calling on people to "door knock to knock off Abbott" at the next election.

Time to fight

Abbott's crisis should be an invitation for the union leaders to go on the offensive. Abbott has rarely been weaker. But it is no good simply waiting for the next election.

The Labor National Conference showed how weak an alternative a Labor government would be. On all the key controversies, Shorten took a right-wing path, whether delaying a binding vote on same-sex marriage or refugee boat turn-backs.

Workers at Hutchison Ports in Sydney and Brisbane are showing how to fight, after the sacking of 97 workers. In Sydney, those still employed by the company have refused to go back to work, joining protests outside the terminal.

They are fighting back against a multi-billion dollar multinational company, the biggest port operator in the world. Hutchison's actions make it clear who the real threat to jobs is—profiteering bosses and their mates in the Liberal Party, not Muslims or Chinese workers.

The dispute has shown how badly the law is stacked against workers, with the Hutchison workers who were still employed forced to defy the law and refuse to turn up for work, just to force the company to talk to them.

Similarly, Woolworths warehouse workers at Laverton in Melbourne have been forced to take unlawful strike action to stop management flouting their enterprise agreement to hire casual staff through a labour hire company.

Labor says it supports the workers but will not reinstate the right to strike, or reverse any of the anti-union laws John Howard introduced.

Labor will say nothing to oppose Abbott on refugees or his scaremongering and scapegoating of the Muslim community.

The fightback against Abbott—against his racism, and his anti-union laws—needs to start now. It's up to us to build a stronger fightback for change.

In the last week, thousands have rallied for equal marriage rights; hundreds more medical workers have taken a stand against the Border Force Act; workers at Hutchison and Woolworths in Victoria are on strike for jobs and against casualisation, and in defiance of the law.

That's what the fight against Abbott needs to look like. If we link the struggles together and stand united, we can win.

.....
Abbott's crisis should be an invitation for the union leaders to go on the offensive. He has rarely been weaker

Lacklustre right-wing line wins the day at Labor conference

THE NATIONAL Labor Conference was designed to position Labor to return to government, in time for the election due by the end of next year.

But it only confirmed Labor's drift to the right.

Leader Bill Shorten confirmed the party's agreement with the Liberals over the need for cuts to balance the budget, promising that he "understands fiscal responsibility" and would be "prepared to make hard choices". He simply believes Labor cuts would be "fair savings".

Shorten attacked Abbott from the right for doubling the budget deficit and damaging business "confidence". He repeated the neo-liberal mantra of "productivity, growth and jobs", while assuring business that "Modern Labor believes in the operation of markets, in competition and profits."

So there was little serious talk of taxing corporations or the rich to pay for decent spending on schools, hospitals and services.

The sole measure floated was the "Buffett rule", to force anyone earning over \$300,000 to pay a minimum 35 per cent tax. The Australia Institute estimates this could raise \$2.5 billion a year.

But there was no commitment to abolish or even reduce the use of negative gearing on investments, which Labor has also flirted with.

Equal marriage

Bill Shorten also derailed the push to bind Labor MPs to support same-sex marriage.

He struck a compromise where the party will still allow its MPs a conscience vote until 2019, beyond the next two elections. This means bigots within the Labor caucus can continue to vote against equal marriage rights, making it less likely a bill would pass.

Shorten tried to position himself as a supporter of marriage equality by promising to introduce a new bill within 100 days should Labor win the next election.

Shorten's two big triumphs of the conference were to stare down the left over refugee boat turnbacks and same-sex marriage.

All he has done is confirm Labor's determination to race Tony Abbott to the right. That means Labor's crisis will continue—and Abbott is still in with a chance.



Above: Shorten's target of 50 per cent renewable energy by 2030 was designed to give him a progressive veneer

.....
Bill Shorten confirmed the party's agreement with the Liberals over the need for cuts to balance the budget

Deja vu on climate: Labor's only promise on renewables is emissions trading

ONE OF the big announcements at Labor's National Conference was the plan for 50 per cent renewable energy by 2030. This was a bid to differentiate from Abbott, and the Greens, before the 2016 election. But the devil is in the detail—and the devil here is that there is no detail.

Labor is not promising to increase the Renewable Energy Target—currently set to reach 23.5 per cent by 2020. Their only promise is an Emissions Trading Scheme (ETS). But an ETS will only encourage speculation and new financial markets, not investment in renewables. This is what happened in Europe, where the price of pollution permits crashed to below €1. An ETS would mean a price on carbon, just like the carbon tax. The main effect, as former Labor Climate Change Minister Greg Combet admitted, would be "bringing on baseload gas-fired electricity generation", not renewables.

Labor will formulate an "Energy Modernisation Strategy" to review "options for delivering on Labor's goal of 50 per cent". But note the word "goal".

It is entirely likely that the share of renewable energy will increase under a Labor government. Bloomberg New Energy Finance

has estimated that, "just the market naturally—without any new policy—will move to 37 per cent renewable by 2030". But this would have a minimal impact on actual emissions, reducing them by only 9 per cent below 2000 levels. And it is emissions that have to be tackled to prevent climate change.

Shorten has made one thing clear: he will not interfere with the market, or step on the toes of fossil fuel giants. Any renewable energy policies will be based on a "consultative and consensus approach" which minimises the impact on "existing generators and networks".

One bright spot was a plan to set up, "an agency to oversee redeployment, retraining and income support" for workers in existing fossil fuel industries. More encouraging still is that the CFMEU—the union covering these workers—seconded the resolution, but warned Labor delegates to vote for it "with eyes wide open" because the union would run a concerted campaign to "get what was promised" if Labor does not deliver.

It is only government funding to build renewable energy and green jobs that can deliver. And we need to be prepared to fight both Abbott and a future Labor government to get it.
Erima Dall

Labor votes to turn asylum seekers away

By James Supple

THE FEDERAL Labor Party lurched further to the right, after leader Bill Shorten won majority support for the turn-back of asylum boats at the Labor National Conference in July. Shorten has even signaled his willingness to consider turn-back directly to Sri Lanka or Vietnam, although he says there would be “qualifications”.

The move cements Labor’s disgraceful bipartisan agreement with the Liberals’ anti-refugee policies, including offshore detention on Manus Island and Nauru and the denial of resettlement in Australia to all refugee boat arrivals.

But there are significant divisions inside Labor. The debate over turn-backs was the most heated of the Labor Conference. Forty two per cent of delegates voted against turn-backs after the Left moved amendments to rule out the policy. Tragically, two of the traditionally most left-wing unions, the MUA and the CFMEU, broke ranks with the Left and backed Shorten.

Despite the Labor leadership’s capitulation, the vote has helped to harden opposition to turn-backs inside Labor, as well as within the community generally. It is a far better result than Shorten simply getting his way without any debate or opposition.

The challenge for the refugee movement now is to fan the flames of dissent inside Labor, and draw more unionists and rank-and-file Labor members into the campaign in the workplaces and on the streets.

Outside the conference, 400 people rallied to demand Labor reject turn-backs and end its support for mandatory detention. There were banners from refugee groups across the country and a large contingent from Grandmothers against the detention of refugee children.

Tamil refugee and FSU organiser, Aran Mylvaganam, told the rally, “We are here in solidarity with the Labor delegates and rank-and-file members who are in there fighting for the closure of Manus Island and Nauru detention centres...and fighting Bill Shorten and the Labor leadership.”

The rally was also addressed by Afghan refugee Mohammad Baqiri, ACT Labor MP Yvette Berry and Michele O’Neil, National Secretary of the Textile, clothing and footwear union, who brought the conference to



Above: Around 400 people rallied outside the Labor conference in support of refugees

its feet when she spoke in the debate that followed.

Inside the conference, Bill Shorten claimed he was “following my conscience”, citing the concern that, “People were getting on unsafe boats and they were drowning.”

Labor’s Shadow Immigration Minister Richard Marles declared that, “A future Labor government must have at its disposal the full suite of measures to keep this journey [between Java and Christmas Island] shut.” And former Immigration Minister Tony Burke even cried crocodile tears for the asylum seekers that died at sea during his time as Minister.

But as Michele O’Neil pointed out, “when you turn a boat around, you are turning a boat around into a risky, unsafe perilous journey”. At least 300 Rohingya died due to boat turn-backs by Indonesia and Malaysia in May this year.

As she told the conference, “It’s not a turn-back boat policy, it’s a turn-back desperate people seeking refuge policy”.

Regional solution?

Shorten portrayed the policy that was finally adopted, involving an increase in the refugee intake to 27,000 and increased funding for the UNHCR in countries like Indonesia and Malaysia, as “a new direction”. But the increase to 27,000 will be made over ten years!

The day after the vote the Left’s Anthony Albanese argued that, “what we’ve adopted...will ensure indeed that boats don’t have to be turned

around because I don’t believe the boats will come”.

Labor is promoting its policy as a version of the “regional solution” promoted by some sections of the movement. Shorten indicated “a portion” of the increased intake would come from countries in our region like Indonesia and Malaysia, although how many is not clear.

But Labor sees this as going hand in hand with offshore processing, and the use of detention on Manus Island and Nauru to keep out anyone who arrives by boat.

Guaranteed resettlement from Indonesia, to give asylum seekers an alternative to taking a boat on the last leg of their journey, has long been advocated by the refugee movement. But this cannot be an excuse for capitulating to the xenophobia about boat arrivals. Whatever happens in Indonesia, we will still need to welcome boats of asylum seekers. The boats that arrive directly on Australian shores from Sri Lanka and Vietnam cannot be turned around without handing people back to their persecutors.

Labor’s policy still contains some improvements on the Liberals’—such as abolishing Temporary Protection Visas, as well as other minor changes like restoring access to the Refugee Review Tribunal.

But it is clear that Shorten wants to keep pandering to the racism against refugees, and that the campaign will have to fight Labor in power just as hard as Abbott.

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Despite the Labor leadership’s capitulation, the vote has helped to harden opposition to turn-backs

Strike action hits airports as CPSU campaign continues

WORKERS IN Border Force, Immigration and Agriculture took stop work action again on 3 August, with rolling four-hour stoppages across the country. There was significant disruption to international airport queues, with management forced to move into frontline positions to cover for striking workers.

Their union, the CPSU, staged protests at airports on the day nationwide.

CPSU National Secretary Nadine Flood explained, “Workers are walking off the job at airports, ports and mail centres around the country to protest the government’s attacks on their rights, conditions and real wages.”

A Customs worker in Melbourne told *Solidarity* their strike was, “not the first and it won’t be the last.”

He said under the government’s pay offer workers would be “going backwards”, with management “telling us you’ll get a pay rise but have to work more hours, so our hourly rate was actually going to go down slightly. They want to force us to work 20 minutes more a day, and take away our shift allowance.”

“They want to take away our 36.5 per cent shift penalty, that compensates us for starting at 4.30am in the morning or working until 3am, and for working weekends. They want to put us onto shift penalties that would allow them to manipulate the rosters so that you lose any penalties.”

Across the Federal public service, workers are facing pay cuts after inflation and widespread loss of conditions are part of the Abbott government’s bargaining policy. Workers in Customs have been particularly hard hit, due to the merger into the new Border Force agency, and some stand to lose \$8000 a year due to loss of penalty rates and conditions.

The government suffered a shock loss in early August with a 71 per cent no vote in the 1200-strong Infrastructure Department to their proposed pay deal. Only one in five Infrastructure staff are union members. The deal offered pay rises of just 1.5 per cent a year—effectively a pay cut—and demanded “productivity offsets”.

A similar deal is set to be put to the 34,000 staff in the Department of Human Services, covering Medicare and Centrelink, but the union expects workers to again vote no.

Workers in Immigration and



Border Protection are also handing out one million flyers to the public, according to the CPSU, in an effort to pressure the government and see it voted out at the next federal election.

But voting in Labor won’t be enough to end the job cuts and cost cutting in the public sector. Ramping up industrial action across the public service is the way to win.

Defend Johnny Lomax: in court for winning a pay rise for workers

IT WAS a bitter morning in Canberra but the 120 of us at the rally in front of the ACT Magistrates’ Court in early August in support of Johnny Lomax were not phased. The comradely feelings and chanting and stamping and clapping kept the cold away.

Lomax is an organiser with the building union, the CFMEU. He is charged with blackmail. His crime? Lomax put pressure on an employer to sign an Enterprise Agreement and pay higher wages, up from \$17 an hour to \$26 an hour.

The employer says he suffered loss as a consequence of this pressure. But that is what wage increases do. They take some of the money from the exploiting boss and put it back in the hands of the exploited workers. Lomax did no more than what any good union person does; he successfully persuaded an employer to pay higher wages. He received no personal benefit.

We were there to support Lomax

and to defend unions. If this prosecution is successful it would return us to pre-1820s industrial law where unions were per se a criminal conspiracy and winning wage increases a crime. It is no exaggeration to say that Johnny Lomax is the modern day equivalent of the Tolpuddle Martyrs, transported to Australia in 1834 for the crime of organising a union and asking for higher wages.

This prosecution threatens to criminalise all union activity and all unionists fighting for better wages. It’s why the head of Unions ACT Alex White was there and spoke about the danger to all Australian workers. It is why CFMEU National Secretary Dave Noonan stressed all unions and unionists need to unite to fight for Lomax and the right of unions and unionists to organise.

It is why there were unionists from a large number of unions there: to defend Johnny Lomax and defend our unions.

John Passant

Hutchison workers defy company, courts, Abbott to fight for jobs

NINETY-SEVEN wharfies are fighting for their jobs after being callously sacked by text message and email from Hutchison's port terminals in Sydney and Brisbane on 6 August. But the workers are fighting the sackings with pickets in Sydney and Brisbane, ongoing as we go to press.

"They have picked heads—most of the 50 who got the message [in Sydney] were members of the MUA union committee, or Health and Safety Reps—anyone who spoke up," one worker explained.

In Sydney, those still with jobs are refusing to go back to work, in defiance of orders from Fair Work Australia.

"I couldn't go in while these guys are out here! No way," explained another worker on the picket line, one of the 70 who were not sacked in Sydney. "I think we are all in the firing line anyway. I think they are just taking turns in coming at us."

The dispute highlights how restrictive the Fair Work Act is. The Hutchison workers have shown that the laws against industrial action must be defied to organise an effective strike and picket.

In Brisbane, some workers have obeyed the Fair Work direction and returned to work, though a protest remains.

The workers' union, the Maritime Union of Australia (MUA), was set to argue in court for an order against the sackings as we went to press.

But whether Hutchison caves in will depend on the strike remaining solid. The union has the power to bring off workers across the rest of the ports, an action that would cost the companies millions of dollars.

The sackings are a major attack on union organisation. If Hutchison gets away with it, it will have ramifications for workers employed by other port operators, Patrick and DP World.

New terminal

Hutchison is newly established in Sydney and is the biggest private port operator in the world. It is owned by Hong Kong billionaire Li Ka Shing, who also owns Vodafone Australia.

Australia's main ports have historically had two container terminals, Patrick and DP World. The establishment of a third container terminal was designed to break up the waterfront "duopoly" and drive down stevedoring costs.

Hutchison won 30 to 40 year con-



Above: Protest at Port Botany in Sydney to fight for Hutchison jobs

tracts to operate both the new Sydney and Brisbane terminals in 2008 and 2009.

The company then spent over \$700 million building the terminal and bringing in the latest automated heavy machinery and cranes, most of it never before used in Australia. Following suit, Patrick Port Botany and DP World Brisbane sacked workers as they introduced automated equipment.

Hutchison workers, however, won an agreement including a 30-hour full time week and full permanency; the Financial Review bemoaned that the agreement rolled back "gains" that companies had won through the 1998 Patrick dispute.

In July, Hutchison indicated it would be mothballing its Australian operations and the financial press tut-tutted that Hutchison had been too generous with its EBA and advised company that it needed to take on the union.

A little over a week before the sackings, it circulated a memo announcing it would sack 40 per cent of its 225 workers across both ports. Now the company is playing hardball, refusing to even talk to the union.

Worker Martin explained, "The company is telling us they've lost work. But we know that's not true," According to *The Australian*, "it is understood the company has subcontracted the bulk of the work to rival Patrick Stevedoring."

Workers say they have heard management talk about a secret operation called "Phoenix Rising", indicating Hutchison may have a plan to replace the existing unionised workforce with workers on worse conditions.

Recent government projections show trade rising 6 per cent a year in Brisbane and 4.5 per cent a year in Sydney. The colossal investment the company and the states have made seem to indicate the company is not going anywhere.

But one thing is for certain—the company has declared war on the MUA in a new round of union busting on the waterfront.

Solidarity has poured in for the wharfies. MUA members working for other port operators as well as delegations from across the union movement have visited the picket lines. Students, marriage equality activists and members of the Aboriginal Tent Embassy have visited and collected donations for the striking workers.

International support has poured in from dockworkers and seafarers in places like Hong Kong, India and Indonesia.

Holly Matthewson, one of the five women employees to get the sack, told *Solidarity*, "We've all got to stick together. The company wants to divide us but we've got to stay strong. No one should go through the gate. Come down and help us fight. Save our jobs. We have to fight this government."

In Sydney, those still with jobs are refusing to go back to work

Reclaim Australia on the nose—time to unite against Islamophobia

By James Supple

FAR RIGHT protest group Reclaim Australia has been humiliated, after their second round of anti-Muslim protests on 18 and 19 July flopped spectacularly.

Practically everywhere they were outnumbered by anti-racist counter-rallies, and could only draw one or two hundred people. In Melbourne, organiser Mike Holt from Restore Australia told Fairfax media, “I can’t believe how small the crowd is. It’s terrible.”

Yet the fight against Islamophobia isn’t over. Reclaim is fuelled by the political mainstream—graphically illustrated when one of Abbott’s MPs, paranoid racist George Christensen, spoke at the Reclaim rally in Mackay. The Coalition refused to condemn his participation.

It is right to rally against Reclaim Australia. Allowing organised racists to gain confidence leads directly to a rise in violent racist attacks on Muslims and immigrants.

The counter-demonstrations have helped isolate Reclaim Australia, meaning anyone who attends their events cannot escape being branded a racist.

But the focus on physical confrontation at some of the counter-rallies needs to be avoided in future if the counter-rallies are to draw substantial numbers.

The police have made it clear that they will protect the racists and help them hold rallies. A massive police presence in Sydney meant anti-racists protestors failed to take the space of Reclaim’s rally and were pushed right to the opposite end of the Martin Place mall, far away from the Reclaim rally.

In Melbourne, a group of racists from the United Patriots Front were given a police escort to allow them to join the event. The police used a new kind of pepper spray indiscriminately on the anti-racist crowd.

The most crucial part of demoralising Reclaim is to draw in much larger numbers of people and show the huge political opposition to what Reclaim stands for.

Simply attempting to shut down Reclaim undermined this, narrowing the anti-racist rallies so that they involved fewer people beyond the far left. It meant many of the rallies did not try to have organised speakers



from groups like The Greens, unions or the Muslim community.

Islamophobia

Reclaim Australia has been attempting to mobilise racist crowds, not on the basis of neo-Nazi street fighting, but by appealing to racism against Muslims. Once again they attempted to insist that they “weren’t racist” and to cover up their neo-Nazi links.

Neo-Nazi groups were clearly present at the Reclaim rallies. But there are tensions between the neo-Nazis within Reclaim and those who simply see themselves as anti-Islam.

The negative attention has already forced a split from Reclaim, with the formation of the ridiculously named “United Patriots Front”, a more hard-line fascist outfit. Police found a gun on their bus travelling from Sydney to Melbourne to join the protest, but released its owner without charge.

In Queensland, too, some organisers have split to form a harder racist group, Australians against Islam.

Continuing to expose the neo-Nazi links and mobilise against Reclaim can help prevent the movement providing a breeding ground for the Nazis. Far right Dutch MP is visiting Perth to launch a new anti-Islam party in October—we will need protest to hound him wherever he tries to spread his hate.

Crucially, however, with Abbott continuing to beat up fear about Muslims and terrorism, the ideas that fuel

Above: Rallying against Reclaim Australia in Melbourne

Reclaim Australia are not going away.

Reclaim Australia is a product of the mainstream Islamophobia coming from the government. Abbott has seized on every opportunity to whip up fear about terrorism, concocting successive rounds of new anti-terror legislation and laws to strip people’s citizenship.

The Guardian reported that one Reclaim organiser, Oliver, “has taken heart from a series of moves ... by the Abbott government,” referring to the citizenship laws, a senate inquiry into Halal food certification, and a massive boost of \$1.2 billion to ASIO’s counter-terror program. He said the Coalition was doing a “fantastic job” and said “we’re getting everything we ask for.”

George Christensen, who backed the Senate inquiry, ranted at the Mackay rally about a supposed “culture of appeasement to radical Islam”.

To combat Abbott’s racism and stop the growth of groups like Reclaim we also need a broader campaign against Islamophobia. This should include demonstrations uniting a broad cross-section of groups including the Muslim community as well as unions, The Greens and other ethnic community groups.

Sydney will host a Communities United demonstration on September 19, supported by a range of unions and community groups.

Together we can help forge the unity among working class people needed to turn back Abbott’s racism.

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With Abbott continuing to beat up fear about Muslims and terrorism, the ideas that fuel Reclaim Australia are not going away

Racist abuse of Goodes fanned from the top of society

By Tom Orsag

THE BOOING of Sydney Swans star Adam Goodes has exposed the fault-line over racism in Australia. When the racist targeting drove Goodes to contemplate an early retirement, we saw a tidal wave of support for him from across the country.

Goodes, the Australian of the Year for 2014, became immediately unpopular with every racist in the country for using that platform to speak out about Aboriginal issues and dispossession. The persistent targeting of Goodes by football fans began last year, and has intensified through this AFL season.

The AFL did nothing to defend Goodes and stop the booing. It took a “war dance” by Aboriginal team-mate Lewis Jetta, challenging the crowd in Perth, to bring the issue to a head.

There was an outpouring of support for Goodes, with fans flocking to the hashtag #IStandwithAdam. The following weekend many made home-made signs in his support and took Aboriginal flags to games.

Aboriginal players from both the AFL and NRL did their own celebratory dances and players from across the league displayed red, black and yellow colours in solidarity with Goodes.

This push from below forced politicians, the AFL Commission, and even major corporations including Qantas, NAB and Lendlease to come out in support.

Even Tony Abbott, while refusing to be drawn on whether the treatment of Goodes was racist, added his voice to say, “The last thing we want in Australia is anything, anything at all that smacks of racism.”

The AFL, while trumpeting itself for its celebration of Aboriginal players, has always been slow off the mark to challenge racism.

It took the actions of Aboriginal player Nicky Winmar in 1993 for it to sit up and take notice of the racism in its supporter base. Winmar lifted his jersey, pointed at his skin and told the crowd, “I’m black—and I’m proud to be black!” following a torrent of racial abuse from Collingwood fans.

The AFL realised that it had to address club and supporter racism, as it was drawing on larger numbers of Indigenous players, scouring remote areas in WA and the NT for football talent.



Above: There has been a wave of support for Adam Goodes after his racist targeting

Today more than 10 per cent of players in the league are Indigenous.

Who’s responsible?

Many people see football fans and the working class as the source of the racism in sport.

Yet despite politicians’ and the ruling class’s condemnations of racism in cases like Goodes, it is their policies that breed and sustain racist attitudes towards Aboriginal people, as well as Muslims, refugees and immigrants.

The Northern Territory Intervention, supported by both Liberal and Labor, has created a formal system of racial segregation in the NT, justified by lies about “pedophile rings”.

Earlier this year Colin Barnett, Liberal Premier of WA, justified plans for the further closure of Aboriginal communities by saying, “Those communities, 273 of them, are not sustainable into the future. They cannot look anyone in the face and guarantee the safety of little boys and girls.”

Abbott supported him with his

disgraceful comment that living on a remote community was a “lifestyle choice”, displaying racist contempt for Aboriginal culture.

Anti-Aboriginal racism is built into a social system based on their dispossession. Mining companies have made billions of dollars through desecrating Aboriginal lands, often in defiance of the local Aboriginal population.

The ruling class also uses racism to divide the working class, and to legitimise imperialist wars overseas. But uncontrolled racism can have severe costs for the it.

By the 1960s, the White Australia Policy had become a barrier to trade and diplomatic relationships with the newly-independent Asian ruling classes.

Australian racism and exclusion towards southern European migrants fuelled industrial militancy amongst migrants workers in the 1960s and 1970s, culminating in the strike at Ford’s Broadmeadows plant in 1973.

The ruling class responded with limited anti-racist policies. As Prime Minister Malcolm Fraser set out to redefine Australian nationalism so that it could incorporate migrants from outside Britain.

This brought the Racial Discrimination Act, multiculturalism, and the provision of real, though limited, services to immigrants—English classes, SBS TV and radio and funding for migrant welfare organisations.

Multiculturalism was aimed far more at winning a commitment that immigrants be “loyal” Australians, than at breaking down entrenched racist attitudes.

We are seeing a similar attempt to incorporate and assimilate Aboriginal people.

Aboriginal people are being encouraged to embrace “self-reliance”, the free market and the conservative values of Aboriginal elites like Noel Pearson and Warren Mundine.

Abbott’s support for the Intervention and community closures sits alongside a token commitment to “recognise” Aboriginal people in the constitution - while offering them no rights.

Politicians and the ruling class are willing at times to oppose explicit and outright racism. But they will never be consistent opponents of racism—their system relies on it.

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It is politicians’ and the ruling class’ policies that breed and sustain racist attitudes

Greek activist: Fight against Syriza's austerity has already begun

OFFICIALS FROM the Troika have returned to Greece to resume the enforcement of austerity measures agreed as part of the new Memorandum agreed by the Syriza government.

The Troika of institutions the IMF, European Central Bank and the EU are imposing strict supervision of government decisions as the bailout deal is finalized over the next few months.

A 10 per cent increase in VAT, the Greek GST, is already in force. In total there are \$20 billion in new cuts and tax increases plus \$75 billion in privatisations.

Manolis Spathis, journalist on the Greek socialist newspaper *Workers Solidarity*, talked to *Solidarity* about the speed of the radical left Syriza government's capitulation:

"In February just after the election of Syriza when the negotiations were taking place there were rallies outside the parliament which were supporting the Greek government in the negotiations, and encouraging them not to capitulate.

"Back then you could see Alexis Tsipras tweeting pictures of the rallies when he was in the negotiations, implying the bond between Syriza and the movement.

"Six months after that the situation is quite the opposite. Syriza's leadership is using riot police to protect the parliament from the working class masses when they are voting for austerity agreements."

Syriza divided

The decision to agree to the new austerity deal has divided Syriza. Up to 39 Left Platform and other MPs inside the party have voted against the deal in parliament.

Tsipras has launched a witch-hunt against the left, saying they threatened to bring down the left government and insisting it was better to have Syriza implementing the deal than a government of the right.

At an emergency meeting of Syriza's Central Committee Tsipras managed to win a vote for postponing a special party conference until September, after the austerity deal has been finalised.

Their commitment to fighting inside Syriza means the Left Platform is unwilling to build opposition to the new austerity deal outside parliament.



Left Platform leader Panagiotis Lafazanis, after voting against the government in parliament, told the media, "Everything went fine. Syriza is united with its differences."

But workers and the revolutionary left have already begun the fight to stop implementation of the new austerity measures.

As Manolis Spathis told *Solidarity*, "Very quickly the majority of the working class has shifted from trusting Tsipras to trusting more traditional struggles and strikes, which we've been doing all the time for the first five or six years.

"People are still supporting Syriza but in their trade unions have decided to resist the implementation of the agreement which Syriza brought. We've seen big strikes in the past couple of weeks, including a strike called by the confederation of public servants [on the day austerity measures were voted through]. Some smaller unions in the private sector also followed.

"The unions that day called two demos, one strike demo in the morning, which wasn't so massive, and one in the afternoon during the vote which was massive, more than 50,000 people.

"The cleaning ladies of the Ministry of Finance, who were in full support of Syriza before the elections and the months after, are iconic in the Greek working class movement after

Above: Despite the huge support to say "Oxi" to the austerity deal, Syriza has signed it

fighting for almost two years, and Syriza took them back to work. Now they will be fired again as a result of the agreement.

"Part of the demands of the Troika is to undo everything the left government did in its first months until the agreement.

"I remember talking to a leading figure of these cleaning ladies in that demo, she was saying she's really confused and her mood changes rapidly, one moment she hates the government the next moment she wants to wait and see what's going to happen.

"But she said, 'Whatever mood I am in I know that my place is on the streets to fight for my rights'. She's a very good example of the contradictions in the minds of the working class.

"The same day I also had the chance to speak to a guy in the Central Committee of the Syriza youth. He was furious, calling what's happening now with the EU a coup, but not an excuse to capitulate to austerity. He wanted to build a movement to overthrow Syriza in the streets and the universities.

"The police attacked with tear gas, with riot police in every street around the central square so there wouldn't be an easy way out.

"This is how it feels to have a left government during a crisis of capitalism—and also class struggle from the left."

‘OUT OF THE CLOSET AND INTO THE STREETS’: THE STONEWALL RIOT AND LGBT LIBERATION

It was the radical politics of the Gay Liberation movement that emerged from Stonewall that set in motion the shift in attitudes on LGBT rights, explains **Amy Thomas**

ON A hot June night in New York in 1969, hundreds of LGBT people and their supporters rioted after a police raid on the popular gay nightclub, the Stonewall. Why talk about it today?

While Australia’s parliamentarians can’t bring themselves to put and pass a bill for equal marriage, their conservative obstinance bucks the general trend.

The US became the twenty-first nation to legalise same-sex marriage in June, and Ireland the first nation to do so by popular vote not long before. Many Western leaders have recently, and reluctantly, come to accept the inevitability of same-sex marriage.

Just less than 50 years ago, life as an open gay or transgender person in countries like Australia or the US was nearly impossible.

Stonewall, and the Gay Liberation movement that emerged out of it, changed all that. It is to that radical legacy we owe our advances, and to that legacy we can look to see why, even with equal marriage, LGBT equality will be incomplete.

The stage

The situation in Australia and the United States in the 1950s and 1960s for LGBT people was broadly similar. Post World War II, there was a crack-down on homosexuality as part of a drive to reconsolidate the nuclear family.

All over the US, sodomy was illegal, and there were no legal protections against discrimination on the basis of sexuality or gender identity. Men were regularly entrapped by police in “beats” (places where men would go to have sex or be with their male partner) and arrested.

An arrest could ruin your life; your name could be published in the paper, you could lose your job, your home, and your family, you could be jailed or committed to a psychiatric hospital.

Gays were prohibited from work-



Above: The Gay Liberation Front was formed in the aftermath of the Stonewall riot, echoing the name of the National Liberation Front of Vietnam

ing in the public service or schools. Alongside this ran titillating tabloid exposés that described homosexuals as wrong, deviant, sick, criminal—and even Communist!

For “transvestites” (the language of the time), drag queens or butch lesbians, there was another risk in New York—it was illegal to wear less than three pieces of clothing that matched your sex. Police would physically examine people they suspected of gender bending.

Yet ironically the increased media coverage publicised LGBT hangouts and so helped subcultures develop in a few major cities, such as in New York’s Greenwich Village. Here, some of the most down-and-out young LGBT people, left homeless by homophobia, created a life for themselves on the streets.

Some gay venues operated, but the situation was volatile and

dangerous because a law in New York meant that if a bar served one “known homosexual”, they could be declared “disorderly” and closed down. In the absence of legal bars, the Mafia stepped into the breach to exploit the situation.

The Stonewall was opened in 1967 by three mobsters who invested such a small amount of money and charged so much for their watered-down drinks that they made back their whole investment on the first night of business. They regularly paid off the cops, who would routinely raid the bars to give the appearance of doing something.

Of course, those who paid the highest price for the raids were the customers. But at the Stonewall, you could dance, and kiss, and hold hands, so it quickly became the most popular gay bar in New York.

This was happening at the same time as mass social movements were

FEATURES

shaking the world. During the Prague Spring and the French May in 1968, workers and students had brought nations in the East and West respectively to the brink of revolution.

In the US, the civil rights movement had been marching for nearly a decade when Martin Luther King was shot and killed in Memphis. The Black Panthers, an armed, revolutionary black organisation, had formed earlier in the year, tapping into a mood of anger and militancy with their rejection of non-violent resistance.

Alongside black politics, the Vietnam War was a defining issue for a generation. Student occupations, like that at New York's Columbia University, had exposed links between the education system, the state and the war machine, while hundreds of thousands had marched against the war.

For a lot of young radicals, the intensity of police violence against peaceful protests at the Democratic Party Convention in August 1968 in Chicago changed their lives and their perception of the world.

Some of those who danced at the Stonewall had been at Chicago, dodged the war draft, marched for civil rights or joined the first demonstrations of the second wave women's movement, or knew someone who had.

It was only a matter of time before these radical ideas began to extend to sexuality and gender identity.

The raid and riot

The raid on the Stonewall on 26 June, 1969 has been described as routine—and mostly it was, except that the police had notably stepped up their efforts and five other bars had been shut down for good that month. And it followed a riot at the Stonewall only the night before.

The police sent in four undercover female officers, followed by four other police who entered, turned on the lights and demanded everyone get to one side. They separated the transvestites, to examine them.

Almost immediately, there was trouble. Some bar-goers talked back. Some transvestites had to be forced into the bathroom for their examination.

Police began to release those with ID—but instead of leaving, the patrons gathered out the front. They began to discuss the raid the night before, and their anger. They began to cheer as their friends were released, one by one.

The police were confused by the

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“Everyone in the crowd felt like we were never going to go back. It was like the last straw”
— participant Michael Faber

situation. Later, the officer-in-charge reflected, “Usually, everybody disappeared. Instead of the homosexuals slinking off, they remained there, and their friends came. It was a real meeting of the homosexuals.”

The police got rougher as the paddy wagons arrived, and they began to roughly shove their arrestees in. One transvestite took the imitative and smacked a man-handling officer in the head with her purse, and got a fierce clubbing in return. The crowd booed and refused police orders to move back.

And then it really started. Historian David Carter recounts that, “the next patron to be taken was a lesbian, and she was decidedly not in a good mood”. One woman described, “Everything went along fairly peacefully until a dyke lost her mind ... kicking, cursing, screaming and fighting.” A police officer hit her in the head with his club for talking back. So she began fighting back. It took three or four policeman to put her in the paddy wagon—but after her second, valiant escape, she pleaded with the crowd, “Why don't you guys do something!”

The crowd surged in, yelling, throwing coins at the police cars, trying to overturn the paddy wagons before they sped away.

Terrified of a crowd of hundreds of homosexuals surging towards them, the police retreated—they went back into the Stonewall and barricaded themselves inside. The crowd went wild. One man explained the feeling of victory in the documentary *Stonewall Uprising*, “We, the lowliest of the low, had forced them into retreat.”

Many accounts say it was black transgender activist Marsha P Johnson who, at this moment, threw the first brick.

Then the crowd, which had grown to at least a few hundred at this point, began throwing everything they could at the Stonewall—trash cans, cobblestones, bits of wood and bricks, objects on fire. Then a parking meter was up-ended from the street and used to ram the door repeatedly.

A participant, Michael Faber, describes the breakthrough moment this way:

“We all had a collective feeling like we'd had enough of this kind of shit. It was just kind of like everything over the years had come to a head on that one particular night in the one particular place ... Everyone in the crowd felt like we were never going to go back. It was like the last straw ... mostly it was total outrage, anger, sorrow, everything combined.

“It was the police doing most of the destruction ... we felt that we had freedom at last, or freedom to at least show that we demanded freedom ... we weren't going to be walking meekly in the night and letting them shove us around. There was something in the air, freedom, a long time overdue, and we're going to fight for it. It took different forms, but the bottom line was, we're not going away. And we didn't.”

The police eventually got reinforcements and escaped the Stonewall. But they had an extremely rough night. For hours on end, young people outwitted the police on the streets. Some formed up kick lines in front of riot police, taunting them, chanting and singing songs like, “We are the Stonewall girls, we wear our hair in curls, we wear no underwear, we show our pubic hairs”.

Chants of “gay power” and “we want freedom” rang through the streets. Others yelled “We are the pink panthers!” Once the genie was out of the bottle, it couldn't be put back in. The riot continued on the following night, and then again, two nights later. Support grew, with student activists, the Black Panthers and others joining the fray.

It was a real “festival of the oppressed”, with unity between LGBT people, radical activists, Blacks and Puerto Ricans. The demonstrations were infused with a new spirit of open, public pride in defiance of homophobia.

Gay Liberation is born

Activists saw history unfolding and seized the initiative. A leaflet, “Get the mafia and the cops out of the gay bars”, was distributed by activists the day after the raid, followed by another titled, “Do you think homosexuals are revolting? You bet your sweet ass we are”.

Within a few weeks, the Gay Liberation Front—named after the National Liberation Front fighting the US in Vietnam—was formed.

The group described themselves this way: “We are a revolutionary homosexual group of men and women formed with the realisation that complete sexual liberation for all people cannot come about unless existing social institutions are abolished.

“We reject society's attempt to impose sexual roles and definitions of our nature. We are stepping outside these roles and simplistic myths. We are going to be who we are ... society has fucked with us. We, like everyone else, are treated as commodities.

We're told what to feel, what to think ... We identify ourselves with all the oppressed: the Vietnamese struggle, the third world, the blacks, the workers ... all those oppressed by this rotten, dirty, vile, fucked up capitalist conspiracy."

And so began a movement. They produced a newspaper, *Outcome*, held street demonstrations (a record 2000 people marched one year after Stonewall in the first ever gay Pride march), protested against profiteering gay bars, homophobic media, and stalked bigoted politicians. Inspired, gay liberation movements formed around the Western world.

The results and prospects

Despite the political confusions that would first split the movement then contribute to its decline, Gay Liberation achieved several things. The most important was to reject a quiet, polite approach of appealing to oppressors and instead stand up to them through proud resistance and struggle.

Many activists emphasised solidarity between the oppressed, and saw unity as necessary to victory. Gay liberation groups took banners to demonstrations against the Vietnam War and for abortion rights and gave donations to the Black Panther Party.

This approach won them supporters across the movements for change. Black Panther leader Huey Newton said at the time that "homosexuals are not given freedom and liberty by anyone ... they might be the most oppressed people in the society".

The pre-Stonewall gay rights movement, called the homophile movement and organised around a group called the Mattachine society, had focused on lobbying and presenting homosexuals as respectable by conforming to gender norms.

Gay Liberation's uncompromising stance radically challenged societal perceptions and started an immense transformation in social attitudes that reverberates still.

They picketed psychiatrist conferences with the slogan, "It's not me that's sick but the society that calls me sick", and won the removal of homosexuality from the American Psychiatric Association's list of mental illnesses in 1973.

Crucial rights, such as anti-discrimination laws, and the right to employment, jobs in schools, and so on, were won by Gay Liberation movements in the Western world.

They were concerned however, not just with simple reforms, though they demanded those, but with liberation



Above: A Gay Liberation rally in the US shortly after Stonewall

and revolution. Some began to identify the heterosexual nuclear family and gender roles as oppressive structures that benefited the state and capital.

However, the movement was divided between those who saw revolution as about fundamental social change, and those who wanted to focus on simply living the change in their own lives.

Alongside this, versions of identity politics that argued men, women and other oppressed groups must organise separately to each other caused strife, and the movement split into smaller and weaker fragments.

And the movement's very success also opened up the space for gay capitalism and official, conservative LGBT politics.

Pride parades are now mainstream and corporate events, a demonstration of major companies competing for the profits to be extracted out of the LGBT market (like the ANZ bank and their famous Mardi Gras "GayTM"). Those complicit in LGBT abuse, like the police force and government agencies, are regularly invited to participate and sometimes even run such events.

Stonewall itself has been made safer for mainstream politics. It is the subject of a blockbuster feature film, to be released in Australia later this year. The trailer features Barack Obama's 2013 speech celebrating Stonewall as a crucial moment in the struggle for civil rights.

Many mainstream LGBT organisations—including a UK lobby group called, ironically, Stonewall, and the group Australian Marriage Equality—confine their activities to lobbying for piecemeal change.

It is common to hear that same-sex marriage is the final step to achieve full equality.

But formal legal equality and liberation are different things. The experience of formal equality so far shows that while the changes have been very important, benefits have been distributed unequally, meaning the most disadvantaged, who fought the hardest in many of the struggles, have benefited the least from formal equality while economic equality remains elusive.

It's one thing for Penny Wong's partner to have the right (to pay) to access IVF treatment, quite another for a homeless transgender person to contend with a hostile world in the context of a shrinking welfare state and the under-funding of health and education.

The oppressive structures of the nuclear family and gender roles may have taken a battering, but they live on as crucial elements of modern capitalism.

A recent study by BeyondBlue, reported on ABC Radio's *AM* program, "found that 40 per cent of teenage boys felt 'anxious or uncomfortable' around same-sex attracted people, more than a third wouldn't be happy to have a gay person in their social group, and a quarter felt it was okay to use the term 'gay' as a derogatory term." Rates of suicide and homelessness among young LGBT people are far, far too high—an indicator of how far we have to go, even while we celebrate how far we have come.

Note: This account of the riot relies heavily on David Carter's seminal study, *Stonewall: the riots that sparked the gay revolution*

GREECE'S ROYAL COUP— LESSONS OF THE JULY DAYS

The current battle against unelected institutions in Greece isn't the first. **Dave Sewell** looks at the July Days in 1965—and how that movement could have won

FIFTY YEARS ago the streets of Athens shook with mass strikes and protests. A king's undemocratic attempt to overturn a popular vote provoked the "July Days".

Poet Fontas Lathis wrote one of the definitive first-hand accounts. He told *Solidarity's* sister newspaper in Greece, *Workers Solidarity*, "The July Days were unique.

"Never before had there been such spontaneous mobilisations. For months people only went to their houses to rest—they had made the streets their home.

"The demonstrations were dominated by optimism and a fighting spirit that made them unpredictable, and escaped the narrow confines planned by the leadership.

"As part of the masses, for the first time everyone felt strong."

Alkis Rigos, a student activist at the time, told *Workers Solidarity*, "We are talking about a society whose every molecule was on the boil."

The "royal coup" came on 15 July 1965. Prime minister Georgios Papandreou wanted to take on the role of defence minister. The king vetoed the cabinet, and told Papandreou to accept it or resign.

He had a successor ready to take over—and bribed "apostates" from Papandreou's party to back him. But their government lasted barely a month.

Alkis said, "People revolted against the naked intervention of the palace to remove the elected prime minister.

"They came out in the streets in a mass movement for 70 days, and told the king, 'The people don't want you, take your mother and off you go'.

"In short, the people in the streets were saying what the political system never dared articulate."

Papandreou came close to backing down, but the opposition in the streets led him to demand a reversal of the coup.

His Centre Union party had no mass membership. The banned Com-

munist Party (KKE) and its legal front organisation, the United Democratic Left (EDA) did—and they dominated the movement.

The Communist Party retained great prestige as a result of its role in the resistance movement during the Second World War.

They wanted a constitutional monarchy that would allow them to form a government, and opposed demands for the removal of the King. But protesters frequently left them behind.

Fontas remembered, "Each time we marched it was the majority—not just a few hotheads—who wanted to carry on to the palace. The leadership had difficulty holding the crowd back."

Police arrested hundreds on a demonstration on 21 July. Student Sotiris Petroulas, an EDA youth leader, was killed. The state blamed the teargas—but neck wounds suggested strangulation.

Alkis explained how the state tried to bury his corpse in secret—but protesters blocked the mortuary.

"This thwarted the government's plans and ensured there would be a proper funeral," he said. "And the funeral became a mass popular mobilisation."

The following week workers defied a call by the EDA leadership for them to go home quietly after a general strike.

They pushed past EDA rally marshals and marched through Athens shouting, "Sotiris lives" and called for an end to the monarchy.

It was the first political general strike since 1946. Athens was brought to a complete standstill, with shops closing, the last public transport services and taxis stopping and workers taking over the centre of the city.

One government fell on the 20 August, another on 22 September. Three more would go over the next two years.

No government could satisfy the movement on the streets and the anti-

"People revolted against the naked intervention of the palace to remove the elected prime minister."

democratic "deep state".

But the EDA leadership's electoral focus began to demobilise the protests.

Elections in May 1967 would have likely seen it enter the government. But right wing army officers seized power in a military coup on 21 April.

They arrested everyone from street protesters to right-wing politicians, ushering in seven years of dictatorship.

The movement that could have stopped them had been frittered away.

Historian Michalis Limberatos told *Workers Solidarity* it was an unnecessary tragedy.

"If instead of paralysing the movement the left had embraced the demand to expel the king, it would probably have won it," he said.

"This would have paved the way for other victories, and changed everything.

"That possibility frightened the king then—and the colonels two years later. But the inability of the left to take a revolutionary perspective gave them time to organise their coup."

The KKE had looked to the Soviet Union. But by the 1960s splits between different regimes that called themselves Communist saw new groups form.

The struggles of July—and the later 1973 Polytechnic Uprising that brought down the military regime—brought new lessons. A new left looked to workers' strength instead of putting faith in state institutions.

Fontas said, "The July Days were a catalyst for the development of left forces which searched for greater radicalism.

"It was the birth of questioning and challenging old ideas.

"But there wasn't enough time for it to develop. What was needed was a second round."

Maria Styllou, editor of the Greek Socialist Workers Party's *Socialism From Below* magazine believes that second round may be upon us.

But now prime minister Alexis Tsipras' party Syriza is in place of



Above: Masses of people flooded the streets in a general strike following the killing of student leader Sotiris Petroulas by police

EDA and the unelected European Central Bank in place of the king. The European institutions today, like the old monarchy, have contempt for the democratic wishes of the Greek people—demonstrated in the recent “no” vote in the referendum—to end the crippling austerity measures.

In a new edition of a book she co-wrote on the movement Maria wrote, “Without a complete strategy of confrontation, governments of the left are not able to implement their promises.

“And in 1965 the revolutionary left was practically non-existent.

“People in the streets who were told to stop by EDA had no alternative political organisations to turn to. Today this is different.

The July events of 1965 in Greece were a prelude to the wave of struggle that was to sweep the entire world a few years later in 1968. As the 1968 generation did in other countries, in Greece the events of 1965 produced the birth of a new revolutionary left.

“The generation that lived through the July Days and the Polytechnic Uprising has left us a valuable tradition”, writes Maria.

“There is a new wave of anti-capitalism with a strategy of overthrowing the system. Its role in the coming period could be decisive.”

Socialist Worker UK
Translation by Demetrios Hadjidemetriou

Economic change and social turmoil led to political crisis

THE GREEK ruling class and British army attacked the Communist-led Greek resistance after the Second World War.

The civil war that followed left in place a regime democratic in name only.

At its centre was an army and monarchy that claimed to have refounded the nation by crushing the left. But by the 1960s an economic boom was reshaping society.

Student numbers increased from 11,000 in 1952 to 68,000 in 1965.

Working class people entered universities that had been the preserve of the rich. They demanded funding for education—not the royal family.

By 1962 peasant struggles were taking off. In the region of Iraklion, grape farmers occupied a building and tobacco farmers clashed with police.

Even some bosses were frustrated at widespread poverty as they tried to sell to a home market.

And a construction strike in December 1960 ushered in a new working class movement.

The Greek police couldn’t stop strikers’ demonstrations. Some 115 local unions combined to launch Greece’s equivalent of the ACTU.

One worker said, “It was the first time I had such an experience, the first time I was part of such a carnival. We felt like we were drunk, like we were capable of anything.”

This social turmoil fuelled a political crisis. By 1958 the United Democratic Left, the front organisation of the Communist Party, was the official opposition.

The US military and secret services had backed the Greek regime as a bulwark against Communism. They began to fear it was becoming too brittle to survive an explosion from below.

They encouraged more liberal MPs who formed a new party, Centre Union.

The assassination of left wing MP Gregorios Lambrakis by right wing extremists in 1963 caused a crisis.

Prime minister Konstantinos Karamanlis called an election, lost it, and fled to France.

The US hoped a new two-party system could offer a “safety valve” for people’s anger. But Papandreou took office after winning 52 per cent of the vote, and the demonstrations and strikes increased. And his moderate programme didn’t spare him from royalist plots.

SLAVERY AND THE ORIGINS OF RACISM

Feiyi Zhang argues that racism has not always existed, but is a modern phenomenon, a product of capitalism and the trans-Atlantic slave trade

RACISM IS a fundamental feature of today's world, whether in Tony Abbott's Operation Sovereign Borders keeping out asylum seekers, or his fearmongering that stereotypes all Muslims as terrorists. Abbott's shocking comments dismissing life in remote Aboriginal communities as a "lifestyle choice" to justify closures is another example.

When racism is pushed so viciously from the top of society, and seemingly accepted by many people, it can seem like it is inevitable and will never disappear.

But racism as we know it today did not exist only a few hundred years ago, prior to the rise of capitalism and the modern slave trade.

Racism means discrimination against a group of people because of perceived innate characteristics. While racism is often associated with physical features like skin colour, it can also involve supposedly innate characteristics or stereotypes such as laziness, lack of intelligence or greediness.

This is clear in the case of anti-Semitism or racism towards Irish people, both as physically white as other Europeans.

Prior to the modern slave trade and the origins of the capitalist system there was simply no conception of racial inferiority or prejudice as we know it today—even in the forms of slavery that existed for thousands of years.

Classical Greek and Roman societies were based on slave labour. Slavery could result from being captured as part of the spoils of war or where a whole city or tribe had been enslaved. Most slaves in ancient Greece and Rome were white in today's understanding.

The Ancient Greeks and Romans did consider some peoples inferior. But this was not because of race. They had another standard—civilised and barbarian. Some barbarians had white skin and there were also blacks considered civilised.



Above: It was only with the need to justify the horrific treatment of African slaves on the New World plantations that racist ideas emerged

Encounters in the ancient world between Europeans and black Africans did not produce an upsurge of racism towards Africans. Classicist Frank Snowden found substantial evidence of integration of black Africans into the ancient Mediterranean empires and Black-white intermarriage. There were no institutional barriers or social pressures against black-white unions.

As academic Ellen Wood observes, "In Ancient Greece and Rome, despite the almost universal acceptance of slavery, the idea of natural inequalities between human beings never caught on."

A racial justification for slavery was never considered necessary because of the already strictly hierarchical order in Ancient Greek and Roman societies.

The social order was maintained by what Marx called "extra-economic force"—direct physical violence.

Slaves subject to the clearly brutal control of a master who could beat, torture, rape or kill them. But slavery was merely one of a spectrum of unequal relationships, requiring no special explanation.

The economic and political origins of Black Slavery

The Atlantic slave trade involved horrendous brutality. About 13 per cent of the 12 million Africans taken on the voyage from Africa to the plantation economies of the Caribbean and North America died before they arrived. Once there slaves worked 18 hours a day, subject to torture and denied basic rights.

Notwithstanding the horrible conditions African slaves endured it is critical to understand, as Eric Williams argues in his book *Capitalism and Slavery* that, "Slavery was not born of racism: rather racism was the consequence of slavery".

For most of the 1600s, plantation owners in the British colonies in North America relied predominantly on white indentured servants, who agreed to work for a particular master for three to five years, in exchange for passage from Europe. Others were prisoners or even kidnapped from the streets of Liverpool or Manchester and put on ships to the New World. Initially they worked alongside African slaves.

But colonial leaders became increasingly frustrated with white labour. They had to continually worry about recruiting new servants as their terms expired, and former servants set up their own farms.

Blacks could be kept as slaves for life, and once the direct import of African slaves to the North American colonies began in large numbers, they became cheaper to purchase than indentured labour.

Instead of importing African slaves, the plantation owners could have converted white indentured servants into slaves for life.

But Barbara Fields argues that this was impossible given the balance of forces between exploiters and exploited in England. The 1600s were a time of revolution and civil war in England, when ideas of individual freedoms were challenging old hierarchies based on royalty.

Fields argues it would have been: “a dangerous undertaking considering that the servants were well-armed, that they outnumbered their masters, and that the Indians could easily take advantage of the inevitably resulting warfare among the enemy.

“Moreover, the enslavement of already arrived migrants, once news of it reached England would have threatened the sources of future immigration. Even the greediest and most short-sighted profiteer could foresee disaster in any such policy.”

The shift towards reliance on African slavery was also tied to related concerns about a slave uprising.

Indeed there were a series of uprisings in the New World, the largest being Bacon’s Rebellion in 1676.

Several hundred farmers, servants and slaves initiated a protest to press the colonial government to seize Indian land for distribution. Planter Nathaniel Bacon helped organise an army of whites and Blacks that forced the governor to flee and held out for eight months before the Crown managed to defeat it.

This alliance struck fear in the hearts of the Colonial Government and was a turning point. After the rebellion

For most of the 1600s, plantation owners in North America relied predominantly on white indentured servants

ended, planters moved towards full-scale racial slavery, while offering concessions to white freeman like the vote.

The majority of the 20,000 African slaves brought to the North American colonies in the 1600s came in the 24 years after Bacon’s Rebellion.

The formation of racist ideology

Slavery in the colonies helped produce a boom in the 18th century that provided a launching pad for the industrial revolution in Europe.

Slavery provided one of the chief sources for the initial capital accumulation that helped propel capitalism forward in Europe and North America. Throughout the 1700s there was a “triangular trade” between the colonies, European mother countries and the Western African coast.

Ships to Africa took slaves which were then carried to American colonies, then loaded slave-produced products to be sold in Europe, and returned to Africa to continue the circuit again.

Racist ideology began to develop among the plantation owners, who profited enormously from slavery.

After bringing in African slaves in large numbers to cultivate cash crops, the planters moved to develop the institutions and ideas that would entrench Black slavery.

The slave owners tried a number of justifications, including Noah’s curse on Ham from the Bible. They argued that Black people were descended from Ham and thus born to serve. In the end they preferred the idea that Black people were a different and inferior species.

Laws and ideas to uphold the subhuman status of Black people, the ideology of racism and white supremacy, emerged fully over the next generation.

In 1680 the author Morgan Godwyn could comment that the slave owners were not confident in the correctness of their ideas about Black inferiority, and express shock at the notion. But by 1774 when the plantation owner Edward Long published his *History of Jamaica* he was willing to proudly assert that Africans were subhuman.

Ideas of an inherent inferiority of African slaves fed into the racialisation of Indigenous peoples across the world, being exterminated by European powers in wars of conquest. When the British colonised Australia in 1788 they brought with them an ideology of racial superiority which

justified outright genocide to gain control of the land.

By this period the most influential thinkers of the day had taken up these racist ideas, such as David Hume and Thomas Jefferson (who wrote the Declaration of Independence during the American Revolution in 1776).

The permanent slavery of Blacks required special justification, given the declarations of universal equal rights associated with the American revolution and the rise of capitalism.

For example, the American Declaration of Independence of 1776 proclaims, “That all men are created, that they are endowed by their Creator with certain unalienable rights, that among these are life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness”. And the Great French Revolution of 1789 was waged under the banner of Liberty, Equality, Fraternity.

The bourgeoisie desired freedom primarily in the end of the fixed social order of feudalism where birth, not talent or ambition, was the basis of wealth.

And while forced coercion was the basis of ancient slave societies and the feudal order, under capitalism even the exploited class of wage workers is nominally “free”.

The labourer is, Marx says, “free in a double sense, free from the old relations of client-ship, bondage and servitude, and secondly free of all belongings and possessions, and of every objective, material form, free of all property.”

The lack of freedom of American slaves had become a glaring anomaly.

Capitalism, despite its ideology of freedom, benefited enormously during a critical phase in its development from colonial slavery. The “triangular” relationship continued well into the Industrial revolution.

Racist ideology survived the abolition of slavery between 1834 and 1865 in Britain and America and received further theoretical elaboration in the shape of the pseudo-scientific biology of races which drew on a vulgarised version of Darwin’s theory of natural selection.

This reflected the interests of a handful of European colonial powers who saw it was in their interests as the white “races” to govern the world.

Racism persists today because it continues to benefit our rulers to scapegoat and divide people, and reinforces nationalism.

Understanding that racism is a very recent creation and not something that is part of human nature means we can fight to eventually get rid of it.

QLD TEACHERS OPPOSE TRANSFER OF ASYLUM SEEKER STUDENT

By Ian Rintoul

OUTRAGE IS growing in Queensland over the transfer of a re-detained Iranian asylum seeker from the Brisbane Immigration Transit Accommodation (BITA) to Wickham Point in Darwin.

The 21 year old, Mojgan Shamsalipoor, was re-detained eight months ago and had been completing school at Yeronga High School. But with 12 weeks to go, Mojgan was abruptly transferred to Darwin.

The transfer has ended her hopes of completing high school this year as well as separating her from her Iranian husband, Milad Jafari, a refugee and permanent resident.

The move by the Immigration Department has angered teachers, parents and students at Yeronga, who turned out in numbers to join a 200-strong Border Force Act protest in Brisbane on 8 August to take a stand against Mojgan's transfer.

Now, the Queensland Teachers Union has backed the Yeronga teachers and called a protest for Friday 14 August, outside the Brisbane Parliamentary Offices at Waterfront Place. At least two other children were pulled out of Brisbane schools when their families were transferred to Darwin the same day as Mojgan.

Yeronga teacher, Jessica Walker, said Mojgan's sudden removal from Brisbane had left fellow students "distracted" and teachers and parents in shock.

"Forty-seven of our students, including Mojgan, are on these bridging visas or with no visas," Walker said.

"Other kids now in community detention were at the same detention centre in Brisbane as she was. So they're now thinking, if that happened to her, what's now going to happen to us?"

Another Yeronga teacher, Ken Myers, said, "It is heartbreaking, it is extremely disruptive..."

Mojgan and her brother are among the scores of Iranian asylum seekers who were re-detained at the end of last year, and scheduled for removal to Iran, despite the government knowing that Iran would not accept asylum seekers forcibly removed from Australia. Iran re-stated this position against



Above: Teachers, parents and students at Yeronga High turned out to protest Mojgan's removal in Brisbane

the efforts of Foreign Minister Julie Bishop when she visited Iran earlier this year.

Mojgan's transfer has highlighted the complete contempt with which Immigration deals with asylum seekers—ripping people out of school, separating husbands, wives, partners, families, and support networks. It has also highlighted the fact that the re-

detained Iranians are pointlessly being held in indefinite detention.

The union action is a very welcome development in the aftermath of Labor's national conference anti-refugee decisions. It shows the very real possibilities of building the deeper community links for the refugee campaign that really can push Abbott back.

Assault cover-up raises tensions on Manus

FOR TWO days last month, scores of PNG police were mobilised outside the Manus Island detention centre as a precaution against threatened attacks by locals against Wilson and Transfield personnel.

The attack threats came after Wilson guards were flown off the island after allegations that the three ex-pat guards had raped a local worker in mid-July. The family of the alleged rape victim had demanded that the guards involved in the incident be handed over.

The incident has re-ignited local tensions against the detention centre. Manus Island MP, Ron Knight, said bluntly, "If the law doesn't seem to be taking its course then someone will take the law into their own hands."

The PNG Police Commissioner even threatened to arrest Wilson

managers unless the guards were handed over. Needless to say the guards have not been brought back to PNG to face any investigation.

The locals' threats raised fears among the asylum seekers that they could be facing a similar situation to the attacks of February last year when Reza Barati was killed.

The lack of justice has uncanny similarities to the killing of Reza Barati, when ex-pat guards allegedly implicated in his killing were also allowed to leave the island and have avoided subsequent police interest.

Ron Knight told the *Guardian* that the incident entrenched the view among locals that Australian employees are above the law. It has added to the fears among the asylum seekers that there is no guarantee of their safety on Manus Island.

The Queensland Teachers Union has backed the Yeronga teachers and called a protest