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Rise and rise of the extreme right

Melbourne Anarchist Communist Group

1 September 2016

Despite a burst of publicity at its first appearance, Reclaim Australia (RA) has been eclipsed by the certifiable fascists of the United Patriots Front (UPF). The UPF announced themselves in May last year, when they attempted to march on Richmond Town Hall, but they got a hiding. They have had similar experiences on repeated occasions in Melbourne, either being blocked by anti-fascists or cowering behind masses of cops. Their mobilisations in Bendigo, however, have been far more successful, each time outnumbering the anti-fascists who came out to counter them.

This hasn't been all. Alarmingly, on 1 November the UPF visited the Melbourne Anarchist Club and radio station 3CR, in unspoken but clear acts of intimidation. Then, on 26 June, the UPF and the even more thuggish True Blue Crew decided to counter an anti-racist rally in Coburg. To cut a long story short, the fascists eventually got another hiding, but not before things nearly went the other way.

Meanwhile, overseas, fascist groups attack refugees in Greece, Italy, Germany and Sweden – often with impunity.

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The Ku Klux Klan and other white supremacists rally in the United States, inflicting grievous bodily harm on anti-fascists who come out against them. The rise of Fascism is world-wide.

Fascists are not, however, merely thugs with swastika tattoos and convictions for violent assault. There are many open fascist parties in parliaments in Europe, including Golden Dawn in Greece and Jobbik in Hungary. The Front National in France and the Freedom Party of Austria, though less extreme and denying their fascist heritage, are on the verge of taking over government. Finally, though Donald Trump in the United States is not a fascist, his extreme Right populism is providing fascists an umbrella under which to organise.

Back here in Australia, we see the return of Pauline Hanson, who has come out on top in the struggle to be the mouthpiece of the extreme right. Having been granted uncontested space to spew her racist bile on morning television, her party has reaped a swag of Senate seats in the recent election. Like Trump, she isn't a fascist, but her party is infested with them and they will likely grow in influence while she's publicly engaged in her infamous xenophobia.

It is a burning necessity that all working class organisations mobilise against the far right, both populist and fascist, before the menace grows even larger. The UPF is the most powerful fascist organisation in Australia for 80 years, while Hanson has the most successful extreme right parliamentary presence ever. Both tap into a deep well of Islamophobia nourished by years of media and government demonisation of Muslims. Their claim that the jihadis and their crimes are representative of all Muslims is a dangerous lie.

The return of Hanson is both a threat and an opportunity. Her policies are deadly dangers, but by seeking to scapegoat both Muslims and Asians simultaneously, she makes herself more opponents and renders herself easier to rebut in arguments with workers who might be attracted to some of her ideas.

All efforts must now be made to bring the unions into the struggle. This will be difficult, though, due to the cowardly nature of the union bureaucracy. The message must be got through to all unionists that racism is fatal to working class solidarity.

THE TIME TO ACT IS NOW