

The First Nations of Australia Can Stop the Divisive Politics of Hate and Defeat Pauline Hanson

By [Peter Boyle](#)

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Pauline Hanson came across a racist and incoherent [cartoon character on the ABC's Q&A program](#) on July 18, 2016

But it would be a mistake to think that Hanson, and the more than half a million people who voted for her in the July 2 federal election, can simply be laughed away. They represent, in a distorted way, the deepening contradictions in our society that have to be addressed at their root.

The myth of the egalitarianism of Australia is cracking up after 50 years of [Coalition and Labor Party governments](#) helping the super rich get even richer at the expense of the rest.

Fear and insecurity are on the rise and governments of both stripes have implemented policies that encouraged people to blame minority groups for the pain they have inflicted.

Globally, we are in a time of great conflict. But what else can we expect when capitalism has made the richest 1% wealthier than the other 99%?

War has become permanent in a much of the world and this war is spilling over into the richest countries.

There is growing fear and insecurity and, especially in the richest, whitest countries, people are looking for easy solutions and looking to blame people. It's easy for the Pauline Hanson's of the world to blame the newest migrants to this country, whether they are Asians or Muslims.

Hanson trades on being sneered at and dismissed as a "bogan" by people who can be seen as part of the "elite" in society.

Yet, notice how she seldom attacks the rich while she goes for members of the "cultural elite" and takes a sideswipe at nameless "multinationals" and "foreigners" of all kinds.

Meanwhile, she remains quietly committed to the bipartisan policy of putting corporate profits first.

Hanson's cartoon-like character is a political asset: it is a way of getting her supporters to see her as the victim.

But Hanson is not the victim.

Every hate-filled racist outburst of hers results in countless unreported acts of racist violence against children in schoolyards, people perceived to be non-white or of Muslim appearance on public transport, in the streets, shopping centres and workplaces.

It was good to hear this point scored strongly by a crew of First Nations militants at the front of the anti-racist protest outside the Sydney ABC studios when Hanson appeared on Q&A.

Led by Uncle Ken Canning and Aunty Shirley Lomas they forcefully argued that Hanson is not the victim here, so let's not do anything that helps Hanson claim that she is.

In the 1990s, Hanson made Asians and "Aboriginals" her main target of hate. Today she is focussing her hate speech on Muslims. It was inspiring at the anti-racism protest to hear one First Nations militant after another welcoming Muslims and other refugees to this country.

This small protest was very significant. It followed hot on the heels of [Murrandoo Yanner telling Hanson she was not welcome](#) at the Cairns Indigenous Art Fair on July 16.

Hanson had showed up with a *60 minutes* TV crew in tow, but they were turned away by Yanner.

"Now you are kicking the Muslims around, you are just a racist redneck with your red hair," Yanner said as Hanson and her media entourage retreated.

"Go away, go back to Ipswich and your fish and chip shop, you're disgraceful, you are intellectually dishonest and you are not welcome here."

In the future, we may look back at this time and say, this is where the new movement against the return of Pauline Hanson recognised a First Nations leadership with the wisdom and power to roll it back.

The First Nations peoples of this continent are the most oppressed section of the community that has survived genocide and the most vicious racism for 228 years.

Their leadership in any anti-racist movement has a powerful moral and political authority and brings with it a rich experience in fighting racism.

A movement led by First Nations militants determined to deny Hanson her undeserved victimhood, to rebut her claim to speak for the downtrodden and to demolish her patriotic posturing, could quickly grow broad and strong.

Such a movement can unite communities of all colours and build alliances with militant trade unions and progressive groups to put Hanson and her racist followers back in the dustbin of history — where they belong.

Peter Boyle is a member of the Socialist Alliance. He was a migrant in Malaysia in the 1970s and has had a long involvement in Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander rights and other anti-racism campaigns.

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