

Solidarity

Issue No. 119 / October 2018

\$3/\$5

**BANK CRIMES—WE PAY, THEY PROFIT
BREAK THEIR RULES
BREAK THEIR SYSTEM**

ALL OUT ON 23 OCTOBER



TRADE

Union anger at Labor's
TPP backflip

MIGRANT WORKERS

A proud history as
part of our unions

DEATHS IN CUSTODY

Locked up and killed
by a racist state



SOLIDARITY. NET.AU

Full content from the magazine / Online-only updates / Up to date details of demonstrations and meetings



FACEBOOK

Search for "Solidarity Magazine" or go to facebook.com/solidaritymagazineaustralia



TWITTER

@soli_aus
twitter.com/soli_aus



EMAIL

solidarity@solidarity.net.au

SOLIDARITY: WHO ARE WE?

Solidarity is a socialist group with branches across Australia. We are opposed to the madness of capitalism, which is plunging us into global recession and misery at the same time as wrecking the planet's future. We are taking the first steps towards building an organisation that can help lead the fight for an alternative system based on mass democratic planning, in the interests of human need not profit.

As a crucial part of this, we are committed to building social movements and the wider left, through throwing ourselves into struggles for social justice, against racism and to strengthen the confidence of rank and file unionists.

Solidarity is a member of the International Socialist Tendency. Visit our web site at www.solidarity.net.au/about-us for more information on what we stand for.

SOLIDARITY MEETINGS AND BRANCHES

Sydney

Sydney Solidarity meets 6.30pm every Thursday at Brown St Hall, Brown St, Newtown
For more information contact: Jean on 0449 646 593 sydney@solidarity.net.au

Melbourne

Melbourne Solidarity meets every Wednesday at 6pm, Room G09, Old Quad Building, Melbourne Uni
For more information contact: Feiyi on 0416 121 616 melbourne@solidarity.net.au

Perth

For more information contact: Phil on 0423 696 312

Brisbane

For more information contact: Mark on 0439 561 196 or brisbane@solidarity.net.au

Canberra

For more information contact: John on 0422 984 334 or canberra@solidarity.net.au

Magazine office

Phone 02 9211 2600
Fax 02 9211 6155
solidarity@solidarity.net.au

SUBSCRIBE

Solidarity is published monthly. Make sure you don't miss an issue—send in this form along with cheque or money order or pay by credit card online at www.solidarity.net.au/subscribe and we will mail you *Solidarity* each month.



- 5 issues—\$15
- One year (12 issues)—\$36
- Two years (24 issues)—\$65
- I would like ___ copies to sell

Name

Address

.....

Phone

E-mail

Cheques/MOs payable to Solidarity Publishing. Send to PO Box 375 Strawberry Hills NSW 2012 or phone 02 9211 2600 for credit card orders.

Solidarity No. 118
September 2018
ISSN 1835-6834
Responsibility for election comment is taken by James Supple, 410 Elizabeth St, Surry Hills NSW 2010.
Printed by El Faro, Newtown NSW.

Things they say

The climate was always dangerous. We didn't make it dangerous, [and] it's fossil fuels that protect us from that climate.

Liberal MP and climate denier Craig Kelly

We announced our new forestry plan, which is which is a plan to build one billion trees

New Environment Minister Melissa Price outlines her policy on tackling climate change

Climate change happens naturally through the sun and through the moon and it's.. it's.. it's just natural occurrences that have happened for centuries.

Pauline Hanson revealing that she is not just a racist

It's just common sense, I don't see what people are getting so precious about

Morrison on using the Opera House as a billboard

My predecessor and opponent in the Liberal Party, Tony Abbott, who is, sort of, a very right-wing character, to say the least...

Malcolm Turnbull, hypocritically boasting from New York about his achievement of same-sex marriage.

No better than schoolchildren. In fact, not as well behaved as schoolchildren.

Julie Bishop, former Liberal Deputy leader and Foreign Minister, on the leadership spill that knifed PM Turnbull.

A very practical leader

Scott Morrison admiring President Trump

CONTENTS

ISSUE 119 OCTOBER 2018



Labor, the unions and Change the Rules

- 6 Victorian delegates meet, but electoral campaign dominates agenda
- 6 Esso worker on the right to strike
- 7 Unions condemn Labor's backflip on TPP



14 Migrant workers and the unions



16 Locked up and killed by a racist state

Unions

- 8 Staff rally against job cuts at Sydney Uni
- 10 Hutchison declare war on workers

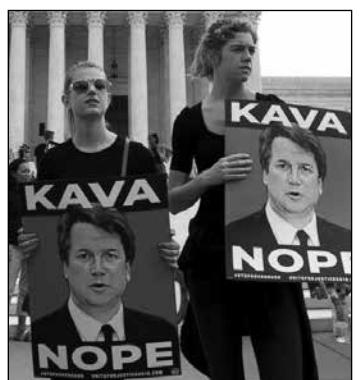
Reports

- 8 Right wins Sydney Uni student elections
- 9 Liberals' free speech crusade at universities
- 10 Dutton's deportation spree out of control
- 11 Cuts and lack of staff to blame for aged care crisis



International

- 12 Idlib caught up in imperialist power game
- 13 US Senators ignore sexual assault claims to back Kavanaugh



Features

- 18 Marx's most revolutionary idea

INSIDE THE \$YSTEM

Morrison's climate lies

AMONG SCOTT Morrison's first acts as Prime Minister was dumping the government's climate change policy, the National Energy Guarantee, and admitting that he has nothing to replace it.

Yet Morrison told ABC's *Insiders* in late September that Australia would meet its target under the Paris climate deal "in a canter".

It won't even come close. Under the agreement, it pledged to cut emissions by 26 per cent by 2030. Its own projections, last published in December 2017, show it is on track for just a 5 per cent reduction, a gap of 128 million tonnes.

And things are only getting worse.

On the Friday afternoon of the long weekend in October it quietly released emissions data for the quarter ending in March.

They rose to another record high.

CFMEU to face \$20 million in fines each year

THE CFMEU could face annual fines of \$20 million under the Coalition's legislation, the ABCC boss predicts.

The new penalties mean individuals can now be fined \$42,000 and unions \$210,000 every time they break the laws that penalise strike action.

"The increased penalties will start to bite, I've got no doubt about that," ABCC Commissioner Stephen McBurney told the *Financial Review*.

The new fines, eventually passed by the Senate in late 2016, apply to all strike action after December 2016. Even before the higher penalties came into force, the CFMEU was fined \$5.6 million in the 2016-17 year.

Australia's industrial laws make strike action outside narrow bargaining periods illegal—whether over safety issues or pay and conditions on sites. It shows why we need to win the right to strike.

Bonuses flowed as ASIC left banks' crimes unpunished



THE CORPORATE regulator ASIC has copped heavy criticism at the banking Royal Commission. Its cosy relationship with the big banks has led to a failure to rein in their bad behaviour.

Yet it's emerged that it has been paying out nice little bonuses to senior staff.

The practice began in 2008, according to an investigation by financial journalist Michael West, the year the global economic crisis began. That year senior staff bonuses averaged \$11,600, among \$4.3 million in total bonus payments. By last year the total pool had doubled to \$8.5 million, shared between 1258 staff. Again staff at the highest levels got the biggest bonuses, scoring \$18,400 each on average.

The bonuses certainly weren't for catching criminal behaviour. Kenneth Hayne's interim report from the Royal Commission detailed how, "when misconduct was revealed, it either went unpunished or the consequences did not meet the seriousness of what had been done"—allowing the banks to keep abusing their customers and recording record profits.

Lack of funding for tsunami warning cost lives in Sulawesi

OVER 1500 are confirmed dead following the earthquake and tsunami that hit Sulawesi on 28 September. But hundreds of lives could have been saved if the tsunami detection system in the area had been working properly.

The early-warning detection system has not operated for six years due to lack of funding, Indonesian authorities have admitted.

At least 832 people were killed in the cities of Palu and Donggala by a larger than expected tsunami following the earthquake. The new system was supposed to be installed following the 2004 Boxing Day tsunami in Aceh province that killed nearly 150,000 people. But none of the detection buoys have been working since 2012.

Armed police return to NT schools

ARMED POLICE will be stationed in NT schools with a high number of "low performing" and "at risk" students, beginning this month. This is a return to a program introduced in the 1980s, but shelved over a decade ago. Police will be left to decide how visible their guns are, but they will all carry weapons.

Minister Nicole Manison said the move was designed to give students a brighter future. But the treatment of children by NT police and juvenile detention officers at Don Dale shows what it really means for their future.

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

Half of Australian women depressed or anxious

NEARLY HALF of all Australian women suffer anxiety or depression, according to a national survey of 15,000 people.

Fully 67 per cent said they felt anxious or nervous for either at least seven days in the last month or almost every day. And 46.1 per cent had been diagnosed with depression or anxiety by a doctor or psychologist.

"Anecdotally we hear more and more about the 'sandwich generation' of women, who are trying to juggle busy careers with kids and ageing parents," explained Chris Enright, of the not-for-profit organisation Jean Hailes for Women's Health, which conducted the study.

As Louise, a 49-year-old mother of two and registered nurse told Fairfax, "You can feel overwhelmed by the drudgery, if life is all working and parenting and family commitments, it's exhausting."

Trump's fortune based on tax fraud

"MY FATHER gave me a very small loan in 1975, and I built it into a company that's worth many, many billions of dollars", Donald Trump claimed during his campaign for president.

But it turns out Trump's fortune is based on tax fraud, and an inheritance worth \$US413 million from his father's property empire, according to the *New York Times*. Its investigation cites a "vast trove" of tax return data from his father, Fred Trump, and his companies.

The Trump family established a fake company designed to strip millions of dollars from Fred Trump's accounts in order to avoid a tax on estates of 55 per cent, it said.

As for the loan from his father, it totalled \$60.7 million. Without it Trump would have been bankrupt.

EDITORIAL

Headaches mount for Morrison—all out in October to finish him off

THE WENTWORTH by-election (in Malcolm Turnbull's old seat) was set to take place just after Solidarity went to press. Even if the Liberals hold the seat, polls suggest the swing could be over 10 per cent—high enough to worry every Coalition MP.

Since becoming Prime Minister, Scott Morrison has focused on trying to fix the Liberals' most glaring electoral problems—such as shovelling another \$4 billion to Catholic and private schools.

Now, in an effort to blame migrants for the government's failure over infrastructure and congestion in major cities, they plan to force thousands of new migrants to live in regional areas for up to five years. This is a draconian policy that will make life harder for permanent migrants, and only increase racism and scapegoating.

Yet, even as the government lashes out, the setbacks for the government just keep coming.

The leaked report on "religious freedom" has recommended laws enshrining the right of religious schools to sack teachers and expel students for being LGBTI. Morrison has opposed discrimination against students, but not against teachers. It will come as a shock to most people that some states already have such laws. But in the face of the overwhelming support for marriage equality, Morrison's defence of discrimination will face a backlash.

The latest Intergovernmental Panel on climate change (IPCC) report also exposed that the Coalition has no hope of even meeting its Paris summit targets—let alone the targets that the IPCC recommends.

The banking Royal Commission's interim report was another blow to Morrison.

The Coalition desperately fought to prevent it taking place, with Morrison denouncing the idea as a "populist whinge". The scale of the banks' crimes and misconduct has exposed the Coalition as doing the bidding of the big banks.

Commissioner Kenneth Hayne said they had been motivated simply by "greed" and, "the pursuit of short-term profit at the expense of basic standards of honesty".

Since the Royal Commission began in March the evidence of their dishonest and outright criminal conduct has been astounding.

They have charged fees to dead people, charged fees for no service,



Above: The union stopwork rally in Melbourne in May

lost people's life savings, ripped off customers and preyed on the disabled.

At the heart of this has been a complete failure by government and the regulator to be bothered to crack down on the banks' shameless profiteering.

Waiting for Labor

Despite the best efforts of the media to talk up Scott Morrison's performance as Prime Minister, he remains far behind where even Malcolm Turnbull was in the polls. Labor maintains a crushing lead of 54 to 46 per cent, according to Newspoll.

Labor leader Bill Shorten released a new policy manifesto in early October, promising to boost spending on services, and announcing new funding to increase access to pre-school for three-year-olds. On schools it has released plans to spend an extra \$14 billion over ten years. On industrial relations, Labor says it will end employers' ability to terminate enterprise agreements and restrict the use of labour hire.

But over the Trans-Pacific Partnership trade agreement, Shorten chose to side with corporate interests, and agree to a deal that will allow investors to sue the government if it passes new laws that damage their profits.

There has been an outcry across the union movement at Labor's decision, which will allow the TPP to pass in parliament.

Shorten's move shows that we can't rely on Labor to deliver the changes needed.

Sally McManus has stepped up the union movement's calls to Change the

Rules, declaring that the "enterprise-only bargaining system is failing" and had delivered, "insecure work and low wage growth."

The ACTU is calling for an end to the ban on pattern bargaining and industry-wide bargaining. Labor is yet to commit to this, or to allowing unions the right to strike.

Mobilising for the Change the Rules rallies around the country on 23 October will be crucial to keep up the momentum to drive the Liberals from power—and to start putting pressure to Labor to back the changes workers need.

The mental health crisis on Nauru has also dramatically worsened, with dozens of people brought off the island for urgent medical care. The Nauruan government has now kicked doctors off the island and tried to prevent urgent medical transfers, all with the connivance of Peter Dutton and the Liberals.

Shorten has agreed it "isn't acceptable" for children who need medical care to "languish on Nauru". But after five years of torture, all the refugees and asylum seekers on Manus and Nauru have health problems of some sort. Labor needs to commit to getting everyone off immediately—and bringing them to Australia.

We can't just wait for Labor and the election; we need to step up the struggle—by going all out for the union rallies on 23 October, and the refugee protests on 27 October for kids off, and everyone off Nauru and Manus Island.

Its decision on the TPP shows why we can't rely on Labor to deliver the change needed

UNIONS

Victorian delegates meet, but electoral campaign for Labor on the agenda

By Chris Breen

MORE THAN 1700 workers attended Trades Hall's mass delegates meeting on 25 September, to plan for the next Change The Rules stopwork rally on 23 October—this time branded in Victoria as “Australia Needs a Pay Rise”.

Victorian unions led the way with 120,000 joining the stopwork rally in May. But the strategy at the delegates meeting this time was even more unashamedly electoral. After a brief discussion of the rally, the rest of the meeting was dedicated to signing delegates up for phone banking, door knocking, and train station leafleting for the elections.

Delegates were told that we needed to kick the Liberals out federally, “re-elect Daniel Andrews” and then the rules would change, and we would get a pay rise.

ACTU Secretary Sally McManus described Daniel Andrews as the “best boss ever”. Trades Hall Secretary Luke Hilakari told the Herald Sun that Andrews “would be the most progressive Premier we have ever seen in this state. He’s delivered more for working people than just about anyone else”.

This is the same Daniel Andrews that has just prioritised funding Catholic schools over government schools with a \$400 million sweetheart deal, and implemented laws criminalising the freedom of association of African communities. Andrews also privatised the Port of Melbourne and the Land Title Registry. More welcome is his statement that electricity privation in Victoria has not worked. But he is not promising to take power back into public hands.

The tottering federal Liberal government needs to go, and their racist clone Matthew Guy in Victoria must be stopped. But we can’t simply leave it to Labor to deliver the change we need.

This risks repeating the mistakes of the Workchoices campaign that went from “Your Rights at Work worth Fighting For” to “Your Rights at Work worth Voting For”. The mass rallies of 200,000 did not continue after the election and Labor did not deliver on our rights at work. The rules we are trying to change now are the ones that Labor put in place after getting elected in 2007.

Federally Labor is promising some modest changes including the restoration of penalty rates and an end to the termination of agreements. But Labor



Above: Delegates at the Melbourne meeting vote for action Photo: United Voice

won’t deliver on the one rule that really holds the union movement back—the right to strike. Nor has Labor made any promises around the ACTU’s call for industry wide bargaining. Shorten’s backflip to support the Trans Pacific Partnership is an indication that the ALP is still committed to supporting corporate interests.

But there was no room for debate, with the delegates meeting stage man-

aged. Motions or amendments to the official motion were not allowed on the basis that these needed to “come up through unions’ structures”.

We need to make the right to strike a key demand of the campaign and plan for an ongoing campaign of stopwork rallies beyond the federal election. A follow up delegates meeting and stopwork rally in the new year would be a good start.



Troy Carter

Esso worker speaks out on right to strike

Troy Carter from Esso in Victoria spoke to a right to strike meeting in Sydney on 23 September

People say there is a right to strike, you’ve just got to jump through 55 hoops to get there. But in our instance the Essential Services Act really muzzles us.

I represent the guys who work for UGL Kaefer. When it came to the end of the contract the company terminated the entire maintenance workforce. We got offered our jobs back on a new sham agreement they’d negotiated with five people in Western Australia.

They were trying to impose 40 per cent wage cuts and conditions stripped away overnight.

Although we say we’re on strike, realistically we’re just protesters. They can still enforce laws on us that stop us from protesting out the front of Esso and calling them scabs, they can take us to court and take away that right because they deem that “intimidation”. We can’t inflate a Scabby the Rat at our camp because again that’s seen as intimidation.

We need the right to strike in its entirety. Before we’d got to our position the Exxon-Mobil operators had taken some action in their own EBA. They jumped through all the hoops and got to strike but then the government intervened straight away and said you’re an essential service, you can’t go on strike, and ordered them back to work immediately.

That same thing would apply to us, lawyers said that as soon as you exercise your legal right and strike, they can just order you straight back to work.

As a group of workers we were engaged in a successful effort by a company to make money over seven years, but they have the power to decide, we want to attack these workers and strip them of their wages and conditions. And we can’t retaliate or take any action to oppose that. This isn’t fair and we want to fight this.

I also agree that the right to strike should be front of centre of Change the Rules, because everything is so stacked up against the workers and out of our favour.

Unions condemn Labor's backflip on TPP trade deal

Daniel Wallace, secretary of Hunter Workers, the Newcastle Trades Hall Council, resigned from the Labor Party in response to their decision to support the Trans Pacific Partnership-11 trade deal. He spoke to Solidarity.

Why are unions opposed to signing the TPP-11?

The matter had been considered by the rank-and-file of the Labor Party at national conference, and there was a decision that only under certain conditions would Labor support the TPP. That's been in their platform and was over-ridden in the caucus. Over-riding the rank-and-file doesn't sit well with a party that's supposed to represent the working class.

The TPP itself has the potential to bring labour in where skill shortages may not apply, like in regional areas and have an effect on local jobs. There's also concern about pharmaceuticals that minor changes to original products may extend the patent life and medicines may be dearer.

Who benefits from free trade deals like the TPP?

Corporations and the big end of town benefit, there's very little in the agreement that would assist workers. There's a number of clauses that they say have been ruled out but they've just been suspended until such time as the US rejoins in the future. Corporations benefit and the government's rights to regulate in the public interest are compromised.

What do you think of Labor's decision to backflip and agree to support the agreement?

When power privatisation took place in NSW, Labor MPs were threatened when they breached the platform they would be potentially kicked out of the party. There's MPs that are opposed to the TPP who spoke against it in caucus but now they're saying, because of caucus solidarity, they've got to support it. Unions are saying they don't have to support it because it goes against the platform. But they're not prepared to do it.

What's the response in the union movement been to this decision?

We've seen one union write to the Labor Party saying they're not participating in any events or donations because of the TPP. The national



Above: Unions rallying against the TPP

secretary of the ETU said they're disappointed and hope they'll change their mind. The CFMEU and even the ACTU have also commented.

What do you think this means in terms of relying on Labor to Change the Rules or deliver changes like the right to strike?

It's very clear in my view that if their own party members can't trust them to abide by their own decisions there's no way the union movement can trust them. The campaign on Change the Rules has got to hold them to account on any decisions made prior to the election and anything we'd like to see changed by any future government.

No to free trade, no to xenophobia

FREE TRADE deals are designed to benefit big corporations. Governments have used them to strike down laws that reduce corporate profits, including labour and environmental regulations.

The TPP-11, the version of the Trans-Pacific Partnership stitched together after Donald Trump ended US support for the deal, is no different.

Labor leader Bill Shorten's decision to wave it through parliament is about reassuring business that he will govern in their interests. He claims he would renegotiate side deals once in office to improve the deal, but it's unlikely other countries involved would agree.

It includes an Investor-State Dispute Settlement mechanism that would allow overseas investors to sue governments that pass new laws damaging their profits. Tobacco giant Philip Morris used a similar mechanism in a trade deal with Hong Kong to challenge Australia's plain packaging tobacco laws.

The agreement would also allow companies to bring in temporary workers who qualify under the existing temporary skills visa list, waiving the usual requirement for labour market testing.

'Over-riding the rank-and-file doesn't sit well with a party that's supposed to represent the working class'

This means there would be no requirement to advertise the jobs or to allow workers to apply locally—a change which should be opposed.

Some unions have opposed the TPP by spreading xenophobia about migrant workers. The AMWU said the deal would, "open the gates to foreign workers". The meat workers' union argued against immigration in general, saying the TPP would mean more workplaces like Thomas Foods in Tamworth where, "their workforce is made up of nearly 90 per cent migrant workers, in a region where youth unemployment is currently more than double the national average".

Workers on temporary visas are vulnerable to exploitation. They rely on their boss to be able to remain in the country. But the solution is to organise them into the unions and demand full permanent migration rights.

But it's a myth that immigration costs jobs. Job cuts and unemployment are caused by corporate profiteering and government failure. Telstra for instance announced 8000 job cuts in June, and thousands of jobs have gone in manufacturing through automation. We should say no to the TPP, but reject the scapegoating of migrant workers.

By Miro Sandev

OVER 150 Sydney University workers have held a feisty rally in their bid to stop forced redundancies and deskilling in support services.

Members of the National Tertiary Education Union (NTEU) and Community and Public Sector Union (CPSU) came together to protest the planned changes.

They delivered almost 1000 signatures against the proposal to the Deputy Vice-Chancellor Stephen Garton and boldly argued directly against him when he said the restructures were necessary.

Young members of the ICT helpdesk challenged him directly about the lack of evidence supporting the changes and argued the restructure would in fact worsen customer service. Garton had no comeback and was forced to slink away embarrassed.

The uni bosses are trying to put the wrecking ball through support services, aiming to axe 30 jobs. Staff who specialise in helping people with ICT, finance, campus infrastructure or HR issues would be forced into generalist roles and expected to answer questions on all four.

There would also be job cuts in finance and the extra workload pushed onto academics and remaining staff. The changes would prepare the ground for further outsourcing.

The strength of the petition and rally turnout showed the directly affected staff how much support they have and was a real step forward in the campaign. In previous restructures, there has been too much focus on responding within the “proper channels” of the Change Management Process. But the bosses just use this process to string workers along and prevent us from openly campaigning, all the while making facts on the ground by forcing people out of jobs.

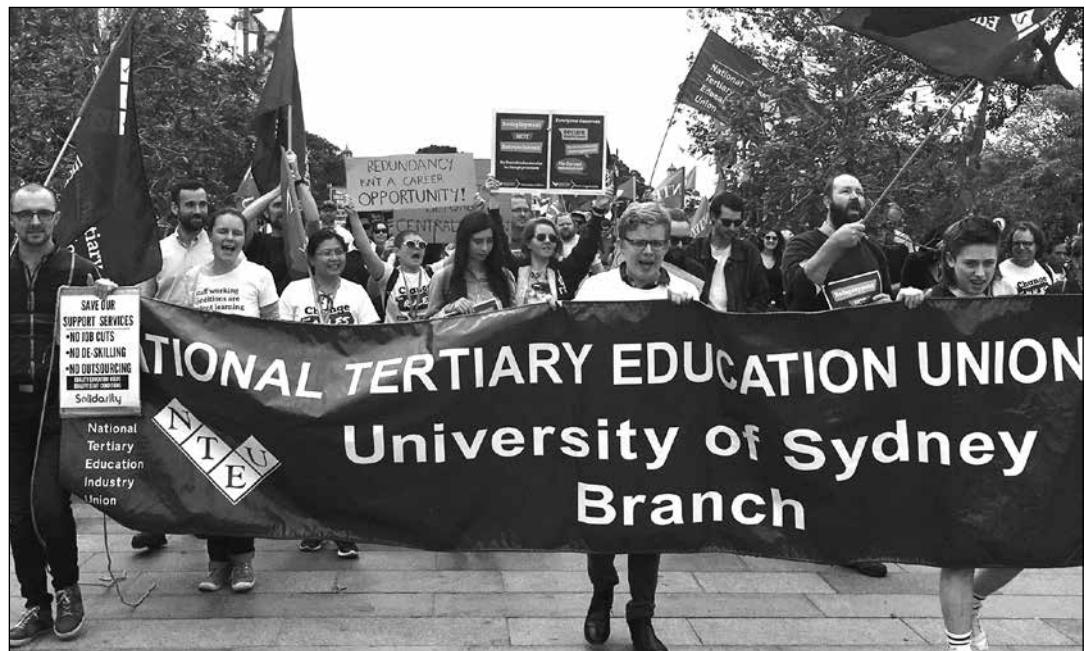
Earlier on, there was reluctance from some staff to organise a petition and hold a rally, thinking it might anger management and jeopardise consultations with staff. Through discussion, we were able to overcome these doubts and push forward.

After seeing the petition come out, management agreed to redesign one of the change proposals for ICT, where workers have fought the hardest.

There will now be even more pressure on them to meet the demands of no job cuts, no de-skilling, no workload increases and no outsourcing.

It's only through openly campaigning and taking industrial action that we can win.

Sydney Uni staff rally against job cuts and deskilling



Above: Staff at the rally at Sydney Uni on 3 October

Right-wing victory in Sydney Uni student elections—build the fightback

RIGHT-WING FACTIONS dominated this year's student elections at the University of Sydney. The left-wing fightback has to start now.

Jacky He has been elected Student Representative Council (SRC) President with the backing of international student based faction “Panda” and campus Liberals. Panda also won 11 of the 33 SRC council seats. This likely means a right-wing coalition of Panda and the Liberals will control the council.

Panda has become a major player in SRC elections. Despite posing as “non-political” they worked closely with the “moderate” Liberals.

The last time the Liberals controlled council, in 2011, they cut the budget of the Anti-Racism Collective to \$15 and refused the collective a stall at orientation day.

It will be crucial to fight any similar attacks in the coming year.

The few remaining weeks of semester should be seized on to ramp up the fight against the Ramsay Centre, the job cuts in Sydney Uni support services, and mobilise for the union rally against the government on 23 October and the protest over Nauru and Manus on 27 October.

International students

Chinese international students are an increasingly significant factor in elections.

But the hundreds of international students who voted for Jacky would have been horrified to find that they were supporting a ticket backed by Liberals who want to toughen the citizenship test, restrict permanent visas, and re-institute White Australia-style immigration policies.

A more left-wing grouping of international students, “Advance Revolution”, also stood in elections this year—showing that support for Panda is not guaranteed. They preferred the left-wing ticket Grassroots and their platform included no fee increases and anti-racist demands.

The weight of the Panda vote was also magnified by the left’s weakness. Despite an increase in international student participation in SRC elections over the last few years, the overall voter turnout this year was lower than in 2012.

This came despite the left’s control of the SRC this year. This shows that it is not automatic that control of the SRC means strong movements or a strong campus left.

Successful campaigns are the only way the student left can advance. The left must also learn from its defeat and abandon back-room deals over SRC positions. We need to build an outward looking and effective fight against the Liberals—both on campus and in the government.

The uni bosses are trying to put the wrecking ball through support services, aiming to axe 30 jobs

Liberals' 'free speech' crusade is an attack on right to protest

By Adam Adelpour

LIBERAL EDUCATION Minister Dan Tehan has launched an anti-protest crusade in the name of "free speech" on campuses.

In late September, he called on University Vice Chancellors from the elite Group of Eight universities to charge students for security costs if they wanted to protest on campus.

The proposal came after students at Sydney Uni protested a Liberal Club "Fake Rape Crisis Tour" event featuring Bettina Arndt. Arndt is an appalling right-wing ideologue who promotes the idea that there is no rape crisis on campus.

This is despite the Human Rights Commission report last August that revealed the alarming extent of sexual harassment and assault at universities.

Tehan postured as a defender of free speech to justify his attack on protesters, saying:

"We've seen some examples where groups have tried to prevent forums taking place, and I think what we have to ensure is that where that is happening, there is an ability—especially on our university campuses—for those events to go ahead".

Right-wing *Herald Sun* columnist Andrew Bolt also joined the chorus, railing against "thuggery from the Left", despite Arndt's Sydney Uni event going ahead as planned.

Donald Trump's Presidency in the US has given confidence to racists, sexists and homophobes the world over. Women face very real consequences if the kind of sexism Trump champions is further entrenched.

Liberal PM Scott Morrison was eager to give Trump's politics legitimacy, inviting him to visit Australia in November. And his government has backed Bettina Arndt's disgraceful "free speech" to the hilt. This only serves to underline why the likes of Arndt should be met with disruptive mass protests wherever they rear their heads. Their brand of viciously sexist politics shouldn't go unchallenged on campus or anywhere else.

Whose free speech?

The free speech of bigots and right-wingers isn't under threat.

Bettina Arndt is a columnist for Murdoch's *The Australian*, the only national daily paper in the country. Andrew Bolt gets to use the *Herald Sun* as a megaphone for his



Above: Students and workers have to constantly defend their right to protest and free speech from the powerful

views—one of Australia's most highly circulated tabloids. Not only that, but he also has a Fox News style TV show on Sky and a radio program.

The likes of Arndt and Bolt get a huge platform because they spout the kind of right-wing views that corporate media bosses approve of. Australia has one of the most concentrated media markets in the world. Murdoch's News Limited controls 70 per cent of newspaper circulation alone. There are only three commercial TV stations in each city.

All the big media outlets are owned by the rich and promote views that defend their basic interests. Even the ABC is desperate to show it is "balanced" by only permitting a narrow range of political opinions and excluding overly left-wing views.

The grossly unequal system of media ownership in capitalist society means there is no real freedom of speech.

The Liberals also have zero reservations about squashing freedom of speech when it suits them.

Espionage laws passed this year give the government the power to prosecute and imprison whistle-blowers who "prejudice national security" with harsher penalties than before. Anti-terror laws passed in 2015 threaten journalists who report on "special intelligence operations" with up to ten years' jail.

Workers who take stopwork action to rally over political issues are breaking the laws that ban strikes.

The Liberals have zero reservations about squashing freedom of speech when it suits them

It is the freedom of speech of the working class and ordinary people that needs to be defended, not the freedom of speech for bosses, corporations and right-wing ideologues.

No free speech for fascists

The hypocrisy of the Liberals' cry for free speech, and the massively unequal access to media platforms, doesn't mean we are for denying free speech to all right-wing speakers on principle.

We are for empowering workers and the oppressed to protest and disrupt appearances by the rich and powerful.

But the "no platform" approach—refusing to let groups speak or gather publicly—is non-negotiable only in the case of fascists. Fascists aim to build a street movement that can use physical violence to attack minorities, trade unionists and the left with the ultimate goal of installing a dictatorship. The far right is a growing threat, particularly in Europe. Many of these groups have fascist organisations at their core.

The Football Lads Alliance in the UK is one such organisation. It has organised thousands to take to the streets on anti-Muslim marches. They have done Nazi salutes and physically attacked trade unionists and minorities. Strong counter mobilisations that block their marches and deny them the "freedom" to go on racist rampages have been an absolute necessity. It is extremely dangerous to accept the idea of universal freedom of speech in the face of such a threat.

Case of Aboriginal man shows Dutton's deportation spree out of control

By Paddy Gibson

DANIEL LOVE, a 39-year-old Aboriginal man born in Papua New Guinea, was released from immigration detention at the end of September, after his lawyers appealed to the High Court to stop a looming deportation from Australia.

Love is just one of thousands of Australian Permanent Residents who have been taken into immigration detention centres pending deportation under the draconian section 501 of the Immigration Act, introduced in 2014.

Many, like Love, have lived in Australia since they were young children.

Section 501 allows the Minister for Home Affairs Peter Dutton to cancel any visa on "character grounds", usually following time in prison.

But cancellation of visas under s501 does not even require a criminal conviction. Discretion rests in the hands of the Minister to deport people at will.

'Non-citizens'

Martin Hodgson, from the Foreign Prisoner Support Service, told *BuzzFeed News* that he becomes aware of an Aboriginal person in immigration detention facing a similar threat almost every month. Most do not realise they are not Australian citizens before being threatened with deportation.

These cases highlight the racism, injustice and unaccountable power that characterises the entire deportation regime.

The Home Affairs annual report reveals a recent, sharp increase in deportations of "non-citizens", as the Liberal government has ramped up anti-migrant rhetoric, further militarised the Australian Border Force and thrown a shroud of secrecy over the operation of Home Affairs. In 2015-16 there were 4754 deportations of "non-citizens" and in 2016-17 the numbers jumped to 6948.

New Zealand citizens living in Australia make up more than one third of s501 deportations. Racism plays a strong role in the Department's decisions, with at least 60 per cent of these people being Maori or Pacific Islanders.

Other recent, shocking cases in-



Above: Aboriginal man Daniel Love, who the government wanted to deport from Australia

The Home Affairs annual report reveals a recent, sharp increase in deportations of "non-citizens"

clude Gregory Cameron, a 57-year-old man deported earlier this year, who died homeless on the streets of Auckland last month, after being "dumped at Auckland airport" by Border Force with no support, a friend told NZ Radio.

Former Kiwi Rugby League star Richie Barnett, who works mentoring deportees said that, "these people often have no family ties or connection" in NZ, citing the case of a 17-year-old who committed suicide after being deported following time in a youth detention centre in Australia, where he had grown up.

Hutchison signals savage attack on workers

HUTCHISON PORTS Australia (HPA) have submitted a savage log of claims which would decimate conditions of wharfies at its Sydney and Brisbane terminals.

The company is seeking to outsource jobs, eliminate the fixed roster, force a longer working week from a 30 hour week to 35-42 hour week, cut pay by regrading the jobs, implement a 12 month wage freeze, cease to pay for meal times, force mandatory overtime, introduce minimum shifts of just four hours, and abolish long service leave. These are just some of hundreds of claims.

In a major attack, Hutchison want to outsource key roles. These include shift leader, bus driver and first aider, mooring and unmooring operations in Brisbane, operating cranes (ASCs) that load trucks and monitoring refrigerated reefer containers. The latter are two of the four core jobs currently done by Hutchison wharfies. The company also wants to completely automate the stacking cranes, which would inevitably mean shedding jobs. They haven't ruled out outsourcing the crane operator positions to Hong Kong.

Maritime Union of Australia (MUA) wharfies have voted to reject every single claim and are preparing for a big fight. Hutchison say that as the stevedoring company with the smallest market share in Australia they face a "tough commercial environment". But they are one of the largest stevedoring companies in the

world, with 52 terminals globally. In 2015 they tried to sack half their workforce, but a year later they were expanding and hiring a new intake of 120 people at the Sydney terminal.

The workforce is demanding better conditions and higher safety standards across the board, after a near-fatal accident earlier in the year. Claims include a permanent safety facilitator elected from the workforce, and on-the-job training to be carried out by qualified wharfies. Another demand is a fixed roster for all workers. Currently, half the workforce receives work orders via a text message only one day in advance. Living by the phone is a nightmare for work-life balance, especially for families.

The current EBA will expire in November. After that, "protected" industrial action can take place over the terms of the new agreement. This will coincide with EBA negotiations at neighbouring terminal DP World. We have immense power across the waterfront.

The major Change the Rules union rally on 23 October provides an opportunity to show port bosses we are ready to fight by yet again shutting down all three terminals on the waterfront. The MUA will march behind banners demanding the right to strike, a right we will need to exercise during the bargaining campaign. We should be prepared to walk off the job even if the company won't agree to a four-hour shut down, as they have for previous rallies.

Cuts and understaffing produce aged care crisis

By James Supple

A *FOUR Corners* investigation has unearthed shocking evidence on the state of Australia's aged care system.

At the core of the crisis is a lack of staff and cost cutting driven by profiteering.

One resident was left to die alone, because casual staff members thought his condition wasn't urgent. The company tried to cover this up, and was only caught out because his daughter couldn't understand why the ambulance hadn't arrived an hour after it was called.

Neda Borenstein's son put a hidden camera in her room after she complained staff were mistreating and ignoring her. It showed her screaming for three hours some days for help to get out of bed, left unshowered and in soiled clothes.

According to Rebecca De Haan, who worked as a carer in nursing homes for ten years, staff have only, "six minutes per resident to have a shower and get dressed and get up".

Aged care worker Katrina Legzdins told *Four Corners* about having to cope with shocking rates of understaffing. "There was myself and a registered nurse in charge of 72 residents. There's no ratio... for number of staff to residents, so they can just get away with bare bones, bare minimum."

There is an acute shortage of qualified nursing staff trained to look after people with complex medical conditions.

According to academic Sarah Russell 83 per cent of nursing home residents are classified as needing high level care, with problems such as dementia, chronic pain and depression.

Yet there is no ratio for the number of qualified nurses per resident, as is required in hospitals and childcare centres, academics and the nurses' union point out.

Nurses now make up only 24 per cent of staff, with a decline of 5 per cent in the last ten years despite an increase in the healthcare needs of residents. They are being replaced by carers who have as little as six weeks training before they start work.

Some nursing homes spend just \$6 a day on food per person, and half of residents suffer from malnutrition, according to an academic study published this year.

"Dinner time was like a couple



Above: Staffing levels in aged care are far too low to provide decent standards of care

of patty pies and a scoop of mashed potato," Katrina Legzdins told *Four Corners*.

Jasmine Pitts, who worked as a chef in a nursing home, told Fairfax's Michael Bachelard that the cost cutting, "was just ridiculous. For example, tea bags: the residents would complain saying can we get better tea bags? We just want to enjoy it. The company was. 'No, we can't afford them'."

Coalition's cuts

Scott Morrison tried to short circuit any criticism of his government through announcing a Royal Commission the day before the first report aired.

Yet as Treasurer, he cut \$1.2 billion over four years to the basic subsidy paid to aged care providers (the ACFI). Its rate has been frozen since 2016. Aged care accountant Stewart Brown told *The Australian*, "ACFI residential care subsidies are now cumulatively increasing at a lower rate than the costs of providing direct care."

Government funding provides around 75 per cent of the income for residential aged care.

Morrison says the government's total spending on aged care is increasing. But most of that money has gone into alternatives to residential care. This year's budget increased the number of "home care packages", designed to allow the elderly to keep living in their own homes. There

There is no ratio for the number of qualified nurses per resident, as is required in hospitals and childcare centres

was funding for an additional 14,000 people, to cope with a waiting list of 100,000.

There have been more than 20 government inquiries into aged care since 1997, so the problems in the sector are already well known.

Another problem is profiteering by private aged care companies. The Howard government deregulated aged care in 1997 in an effort to encourage private profit making in the sector.

Private companies now provide around 40 per cent of the country's nursing homes, although not-for-profit providers still run just over 50 per cent of beds.

The private sector share of aged care is also increasing. The six largest private providers run 20 per cent of all aged care beds, according to a Tax Justice Network report released this year.

In 2016 the most profitable companies were making \$25,000 per bed per year, according to Fairfax.

The private companies have resorted to every trick possible to cut costs and boost profits—not only reducing the level of care but exploiting loopholes to reduce tax and exaggerating how sick residents are in order to get more government funding.

There are obvious solutions to the shocking treatment of elderly people in care. This must start with proper funding to meet basic levels of staffing, care and medical treatment, and to kick the corporate profiteers out of aged care.

Idlib's fate caught up in imperialist power struggle over Syria

By Mark Goudkamp

A LAST minute deal struck between Russia and Turkey in September halted plans for a massive military assault on Idlib—Syria's last rebel-held province.

Under the deal, a 15-20 kilometre-wide demilitarised buffer zone between government and rebel-held areas will be enforced. Turkey has agreed to force rebel groups to remove all heavy weaponry from the area, and to disarm hardline Islamist groups like HTS (Hayat Tahrir Sham, led by the formerly al-Qaeda-linked Jabhat al-Nusra). HTS leaders are resisting this.

In June, the UN announced that in the first four months of 2018 a record 920,000 people were displaced, partly due to the regime's offensive against Eastern Ghouta. Many of them fled to Idlib. As a result, its population has swollen to more than three million.

The deal provides short-term relief for millions of civilians. However, it further demonstrates how external powers are deciding the Syrian conflict's outcome. The latest deal was negotiated directly between Turkish President Erdogan and Russian leader Vladimir Putin.

Turkey has backed a number of rebel groups in Idlib, seeking to establish an area under its control along its border. Erdogan has sent troops to push the Kurdish PYD and its Syrian Democratic Forces out of the area.

He also wants to stem the flow of refugees into Turkey and, unlike Trump, has succeeded in building a wall—concrete slabs seal most of its 1000 kilometre border with Syria. Erdogan had threatened to send more refugees into Europe if an assault went ahead.

The US also threatened to bomb Syria again if the regime used chemical weapons in Idlib.

Russia realised that a full-scale attack on Idlib would come at a political price. Iran, whose militias on the ground have often been decisive, also signalled major misgivings.

The reactionary HTS is the strongest armed group in Idlib. But much of the population remain supportive of the initial democratic aims of the Syrian revolution. Activist networks and civil society organisations continually resist HTS's attempts to repress them.

Every Friday for weeks, courageous mass demonstrations have been



Above: Mass protests in Idlib have shown the continuing support for the initial aims of the revolution

held across Idlib province despite the threats of bombardment.

From the largest cities to the smallest villages crowds have united with slogans that reiterate the demands of the 2011 uprising—for social and economic justice, for dignity and democracy, and for the fall of the regime.

HTS fighters have attacked the crowds, firing live ammunition at protesters in Idlib City on 7 September. In some cases they have been driven away. In the village of Darat Izza one resident told Syria Direct, “people went out in protest, refusing the presence of HTS fighters inside Darat Izza.”

As Syrian revolutionary Joseph Daher writes, “These protests expose just how wrong it is to equate the millions of people in Idlib with their jihadist oppressors. Doing so is one of the tricks enacted by Assad and his so-called ‘anti-imperialist’ backers to justify his war against the Syrian popular classes.”

It is unclear whether the Turkey-Russian deal will hold. The deadly bombings already directed against Idlib occurred despite the region being part of a “de-escalation” zone agreed by Russia, Iran and Turkey in September 2017.

Russia's key role

The Syrian regime still hopes to retake the whole of the country. But Russia has its own interests.

Three years ago Russia's full scale military intervention into Syria, with

the assistance of Iranian and Hezbollah militias, sharply turned the war in the Assad regime's favour.

The Syrian Observatory for Human Rights estimates that Russian forces have killed at least 18,000 people.

Russia's aim is to show itself as a power capable of determining the outcome and influencing global politics. Its intervention showed the inability of the US to exert influence in Syria.

Russia has an estimated 4000 troops on the ground including several private military companies.

It has deployed its latest S-300 air defense missile system to ensure the safety of its Tartous naval base and its ships off the Mediterranean coast.

A 49-year agreement with Damascus gives Russia permanent control of the Hmeimim airbase in Latakia province, from where its airstrikes are launched. It is now effectively Russian territory.

Assad's “victory” has come at a massive price. The World Bank estimated in June 2017 that Syria's GDP plummeted from US\$60.2 billion in 2010 to US\$12.4 billion in 2016. A third of all buildings, and half of all schools and hospitals, have been damaged or destroyed.

Outside imperialist intervention has prolonged the war and increased the killing. We should oppose all the imperialist powers in Syria.

It is only a revival of the revolutionary movement of 2011 across the Middle East that offers any hope of an alternative.

External powers are deciding the Syrian conflict's outcome

US Senators dismiss sexual assault claims to back Kavanaugh

By James Supple

DONALD TRUMP'S nominee, Brett Kavanaugh, has been confirmed to the Supreme Court despite multiple allegations of sexual assault against him.

Professor Christine Blasey Ford gave public testimony saying he sexually assaulted her at a high school party in the 1980s.

Two other women, Deborah Ramirez and Julie Swetnick, have also accused him of sexual assault and involvement in gang rapes at parties at high school and university.

Yet the FBI was given just one week to carry out a cursory investigation. Neither Kavanaugh nor Ford were interviewed. Lawyers for Ford complained that some of the witnesses they put forward were not interviewed. And Ramirez said none of the witnessess she provided were even contacted.

US Republican Senators rushed his approval through so that they could vote before mid-term elections, where they face the prospect of losing their majority.

Trump, who has himself admitted to sexually assaulting women, defended his pick by trying to stir up the sexist base of his party and belittle survivors of sexual assault. He declared it was, "a very scary time for young men in America, where you can be guilty of something you may not be guilty of". He also mocked and imitated Blasey Ford in a campaign-style rally in Mississippi.

Republican Senators released uncorroborated claims about Julie Swetnick's sexual history in an effort to discredit her.

Shockingly, most of the Senators dismissed the allegations as having any importance in stopping Kavanaugh's elevation to the highest court in the country. "We got a little hiccup here with the Kavanaugh nomination", Republican senator Dean Heller of Nevada said. "We'll get through this and we'll get off to the races."

The whole episode has been a naked grab for power, as the right attempts to stack the US Supreme Court with judges trusted to deliver the decisions they want on issues like abortion and union rights.

The legitimacy of the court, one of the key institutions of the US state, has been seriously damaged. This shows that the idea it is an impartial institution that stands above politics is a myth.



Above: Protests on Capitol Hill in Washington against Kavanaugh's appointment

The Supreme Court interprets the rights contained in the US constitution, which makes it a powerful body. Among its key decisions are the ruling in Roe v Wade in 1973 that gave women limited rights to an abortion, and its 2015 decision granting the right to equal marriage.

Kavanaugh's confirmation means there is now a conservative majority on the court that could overturn a swathe of previous rulings. Appointments to the Supreme Court are for life.

Kavanaugh is a well-known opponent of progressive Supreme Court decisions. He worked as a senior official for George W. Bush during his presidency. He has publicly questioned the decision in Roe v Wade, and as a lower court judge ruled that an undocumented migrant who had been raped had no right to an abortion. Fortunately his view was not shared by other judges on that case.

Privilege

Kavanaugh's testimony before the Senate Judiciary Committee exposed him as part of a world of self-entitled wealth and privilege. Former classmates accused him of trying to lie his way onto the Supreme Court as he defended himself by saying he did not drink to the point of blacking out at high school.

Several of his college friends say this is hard to believe, given how

Former classmates accused him of trying to lie his way onto the Supreme Court

often they saw him heavily drunk at parties.

His school was notorious for a culture of binge drinking, sexism and treating women as sexual objects.

Kavanaugh also studied at Yale, another bastion of the US elite, a fact he made sure to mention four times in testimony before the Senate.

There have been protests across the US against his nomination. In New York 3000 people marched on the Yale Club, and there were walkouts from university campuses, schools and other workplaces in response to call from the Women's Strike organisers.

Protesters descended on Washington, repeatedly disrupting the confirmation vote in the Senate and marching to the Supreme Court.

The Democratic Party hopes to channel the anger into voting in the mid-term elections in November. But they decided not to fight Kavanaugh's nomination publicly, or to back the demonstrations across the country that were the only chance of building enough pressure to halt the process.

The success is pushing Kavanaugh onto the Supreme Court is a real blow against women's rights, unions and the fight against racism.

But the battle against the right and the new conservative Supreme Court will have to be fought in the streets, not by relying on electing more Democrats to Congress.

MIGRANT WORKERS— A PROUD HISTORY OF UNION STRUGGLE

The history of migrant workers' struggles in Australia shows that they are not simply victims of exploitation but potential trade union militants, argues **James Supple**

POLITICIANS ARE blaming immigrants for overcrowding and lack of services in cities like Sydney and Melbourne.

New Prime Minister Scott Morrison has been joined by NSW Premier Gladys Berejiklian in suggesting migrants are forced out of the cities and into regional areas.

This follows more open scapegoating from the likes of Tony Abbott, who declared earlier this year that immigration was to blame for "unaffordable housing and stagnant wages".

Some unions have also called to restrict workers on temporary visas from coming here. Temporary workers are too easily exploited and undercut wages, they claim.

Workers on temporary visas are in a precarious position with fewer rights than permanent migrants.

But bosses have always tried to exploit migrant labour, whether of temporary or permanent migrants. Instead of trying to keep them out, we need to organise migrant workers into the unions and forge a united fight for decent wages and more secure working conditions, including the right to permanent residency and an end to the threat of deportation.

There is a fine history in Australia of migrant workers standing up for their rights at work, often leading militant and explosive strikes.

As the government loosened immigration restrictions after the Second World War, tens of thousands of migrants began arriving from across southern Europe. They often faced racism and discrimination at work.

New migrants were usually at the bottom of the social ladder, forced to do the hardest, least safe and worst paid work.

At first many union officials paid little attention to trying to involve them in the unions. There was little

done to make sure, for instance, that they had translations so they could understand what the union was doing. And like today, there were some unions who made little effort to reach out to new migrants or stand up to corporate exploitation.

This meant anger from migrant workers often led to explosive struggles—as they were frequently forced to fight their own union officials as well as the boss.

One example was at Queensland's remote Mt Isa mine. Work here had always been hard. Even before the dispute half of the 4000 workers quit in one year.

In 1964 a mostly migrant workforce including 40 nationalities staged a months-long rebellion against both their bosses and AWU union officials. Although they were forced back to work, the bosses eventually increased wages and improved conditions.

But the most famous is the strike at Ford's Broadmeadows plant in Melbourne in 1973, where recent migrants were 80 per cent of the workforce. Anger at appalling working conditions exploded when 1500 striking workers fought police and trashed a section of the factory, then forced union officials to declare an indefinite strike that lasted 11 weeks.

The workers won a dramatic victory, with a wage increase, more toilet breaks and a slowdown of the assembly line.

The car industry at the time employed thousands of unskilled migrant workers across half a dozen major companies, producing almost half a million cars a year by 1970.

The 1973 strike was the third major strike at Ford, following a two week strike in 1963 and another for three weeks in 1969.

Some migrant workers had experience of union militancy from home.

.....
Anger from migrant workers often led to explosive struggles—against their own union officials as well as the boss

At the AMI plant in Port Melbourne in 1973, workers began to suspect the line was being sped up so that management could get more than the usual number of 50 cars completed in a day.

"Some people started keeping a count", Noel Tracy, an Irishman working at the plant, recalled. "On the day it came to a head word passed up and down as the fiftieth car passed and people stopped work (it was forty minutes early)."

At this time the factory employed a number of Mauritian, Spanish and Yugoslav workers, and the Spanish workers set the example in forcing the issue.

"The Spaniards who had led the action had been members of the illegal workers commissions that had organised mass strikes against the Franco regime", Tracy said.

The Mauritians had also been involved in strikes at home, "they talked of the general strike in Mauritius and how that had been put down by British marines. Their idea was that we needed a general strike in Melbourne too."

Vietnamese workers

By 1982, around 60,000 Vietnamese refugees had arrived in Australia, the first wave of large-scale Asian immigration.

At the time, many on the left opposed their arrival, since they were mostly supporters of the US puppet government in Vietnam, fleeing the Communist takeover when the US lost the Vietnam War.

The Labor Left MP Tom Uren even dismissed them by saying, "A lot of the refugees are coming here for a softer life." But in Australia the bulk of them were pushed into working class jobs in car factories or as mail sorters.

And like previous generations

of migrants they also showed their willingness to strike and stage militant union action.

In August 1980, 1500 workers at the AMI-Toyota car plant occupied the factory for ten days, demanding reinstatement of three workers sacked for supposed “abuse” of sick leave and the right for a union official to visit the plant.

The three workers sacked were all union militants—and one of them, Le Ban-can, was a Vietnamese migrant.

“Le was sacked when he had badly gashed the forefinger on his right hand with an air gun”, socialist newspaper *Direct Action* wrote at the time. “Although the finger was still badly bleeding, the company nurse told him to go back onto the line to work.

“Le requested that he be able to leave the plant to see his own doctor. In response he was sacked without notice.”

There had been a history of this sort of treatment of injured workers—with one worker on sick leave after catching bronchitis from fumes in the factory sacked a few months earlier.

One worker told *The Battler*, “The spot welding causes sickening fumes, but many of the workers have only eye goggles.

“Conditions are so overcrowded that fumes from cars and forklifts hang around for ages. On a hot day it makes you want to puke.”

Vietnamese workers were one of the largest groups of workers in the plant, among migrants from 20 different nationalities. Management told them to have nothing to do with the union, or they would be refused overtime work.

On the first day of the occupation, a group of 22 workers stayed in the plant overnight to keep the strike running. Two of them were Vietnamese. The whole group of occupiers were dismissed—but later won reinstatement.

“The Vietnamese made signs in their own language, participated in the demonstrations, and generally gave strong support to the struggle”, socialist newspaper *The Battler* reported.

Direct Action noted, “*The Herald* reported that one of the features of the sit-in was the Vietnamese soup brought by one of the striking workers. There was enough soup for 40 people.”

“There is a strong feeling of identity with the union on the part of many of the Vietnamese who have plastered their cars, jackets, and overalls with



Above: Strikers, including Vietnamese and other migrant workers, at the AMI-Toyota plant in 1980

union stickers and badges.”

Among the Vietnamese workers were some from more middle class backgrounds who had been students and teachers in Vietnam, as well as ex-members of the South Vietnamese regime’s army.

But their experience of working in Australia in terrible conditions turned them into strong supporters of the union.

After 16 days on strike, the workers forced the reinstatement of 22 workers sacked during the dispute, a union organiser was given right of entry to the plant, and better dismissal procedures introduced. Only one of the three workers initially fired got their job back, with the two other cases sent to arbitration.

But it showed how new migrants could become staunch unionists—even when they came from right-wing backgrounds at home.

When given the opportunity, migrant workers have embraced trade unionism. One area with a large migrant workforce, through to today, is the unskilled work in construction labouring on building sites.

Recent migrants made up “perhaps 70 per cent” of the membership of the NSW Builders’ Labourers Federation (BLF) in NSW by the 1970s, journalist Pete Thomas wrote in his book *Taming the concrete jungle*.

Under the left-wing leadership elected in the mid-1960s, the BLF published union material for its members in a variety of European languages, and pushed for, “programs to be carried out, paid for by the employers of government or both, to help

migrants learn English, in the employers’ time on full pay, and to help them with any problems of social services”, he recorded.

Jack Mundey, the union’s secretary and architect of many of its famous green bans, described how it was involvement in two big strikes in 1970 to demand safety at work that really began to give migrant workers a prominent role in the union.

“At each meeting, migrant workers gave addresses in their own tongues and each language was translated. Among the various nationalities, leaders emerged from the ranks and strengthened the resolve to fight...

“The mass meetings, at which up to half a dozen interpreters relayed all resolutions, broke down chauvinism and racism.

“The migrants felt that this was their union too. They were becoming involved on all levels, as delegates, organisers and members of the executive committee,” he wrote.

The union also appointed as organiser a Portuguese-born migrant, Viri Peres, able to speak not only Portuguese but Italian, Spanish, French and English, in order to better communicate with members.

Migrant workers have often experienced exploitation at work. But this history shows there is a proud tradition of migrant workers’ own struggles against it.

And there is also a tradition of trade unions and socialists organising them into the unions for a common fight for better wages and conditions. This is the approach we need more of in the unions today.

ABORIGINAL DEATHS IN CUSTODY KILLED BY A RACIST STATE

Aboriginal people are being locked up and killed in custody in increasing numbers, as government policies become more brutal and repressive, writes **Jasmine Ali**

DESPITE A Royal Commission into Deaths in Custody in 1991 and numerous well publicised cases since, Aboriginal people continue to die in police and prison custody in Australia at shocking rates.

Since 1991 an outrageous 400 black people have died in custody and since 2008 there have been 147 deaths. Aboriginal people have the highest incarceration rate of any group of people in the world. These statistics are driven by systemic racism, interwoven into the fabric of Australian capitalism, a system built on stolen land that continues to dehumanise and brutalise Aboriginal people.

The figures above come from a recent, in depth report by *The Guardian* called the “Deaths inside Database”, which examines all deaths in custody over the past ten years.

The most significant causes of death in this period were “medical issues”. Chronic racism leads to a basic disregard for the wellbeing of Aboriginal prisoners. Prison management, guards and health services have too often left Aboriginal people to die for want of basic medical care.

In 2012, NT police slammed Kwementyaye Briscoe’s head into a desk and then dragged him into a cell in the Alice Springs watch house. He was left for hours without a cell check, despite being unconscious, and suffocated in the position they left him.

In September this year, Nathan Reynolds died from an asthma attack in a minimum security prison in Western Sydney. Cell mates say they had been buzzing and screaming out for assistance, but it took 40 minutes before medical help arrived.

Negligence is particularly acute towards Aboriginal women on the inside. Of the 16 female deaths in custody since 2008, 50 per cent did not receive appropriate care, compared

with 33 per cent of males.

This was the case with Ms Dhu, who died on remand after 48 hours in custody in Western Australia in 2014. She was arrested for unpaid fines. Police dismissed her as “faking it” when she complained of pain due to advanced septicaemia from a broken rib. Despite being taken to hospital three times, doctors failed to realise the seriousness of her condition, once even failing to take her temperature.

Racism and negligence from custodial authorities also leads to self-harm and suicide in the prison system, accounting for 19 of the 147 deaths in the past decade.

An Aboriginal woman (“TLI”), who died in Townsville Women’s prison in 2010 is illustrative. After complaining for weeks of severe pain from a tooth abscess and car accident, TLI was denied pain medication, and eventually died from self-harm. Treatment and communication with doctors was botched and delayed. The ongoing pain, ignored by authorities, was a contributing factor to her despair.

Public knowledge about the systemic negligence towards Aboriginal people in custody is not new. The Royal Commission into Deaths in Custody in 1991 found that the overwhelming majority of deaths resulted from a failure of custodial authorities to exercise proper duty of care.

Brutality

Many deaths inside result from straight out brutality on the part of police or prison guards.

One recent high profile case is the death of David Dungay Junior at Long Bay jail in NSW. Following an altercation with staff over a packet of biscuits, David was so severely restrained by a pack of guards that he died from asphyxiation. Footage shown at the inquest showed David

.....
The rate of black incarceration in Australia is obscene and getting worse every year

in his last moments calling for help, as he repeated, “I can’t breathe”.

Similarly, in 2016, Wayne Fella Morrison died while on remand in Yatala Prison in South Australia. After an altercation with police Morrison had been severely restrained and pushed down by up to 14 guards, including with “handcuffs, flexi cuffs, and a spit mask”, and put in a van. During the inquest, it was found that a delay in receiving CPR caused his death.

In 2018, Patrick Fisher fell from the thirteenth floor of a balcony at a public housing block in Waterloo, Sydney after police raided his house in relation to two outstanding warrants. Fisher’s family told SBS that he would not have attempted to flee unless he felt fear of being bashed by police.

In September this year, police in WA chased two Aboriginal youth to their deaths. The boys were so terrified of the thought of being brutalised in custody they tried to escape by jumping into the Swan River, where they drowned.

Colonisation, racism and the police

The rate of black incarceration in Australia is obscene and getting worse every year. Aboriginal men are 14.7 times more likely to be imprisoned, women 21.2 times more likely and black youth 25 times more likely to be locked up than their non-Indigenous counterparts.

These statistics have their roots in the genocidal colonisation of Australia. In a number of areas, police units were established specifically to dispossess Indigenous people. Stories of mass murder of Indigenous families by the police exist as fresh memories in communities across Australia.

Throughout the 20th century, police played a central role in enforcing the “Protection” and “Welfare”

regimes that controlled every aspect of Aboriginal life and stole children in large numbers.

The hyper-surveillance and indiscriminate punishment of Aboriginal communities by police has never ended.

In NSW more than half of the youth on a secret police list, the “suspect target management plan”, are Aboriginal. This list identifies youth as potential “future offenders” who are closely monitored, stopped and searched for no reason. The NT Intervention in 2007 imposed special repressive laws targeting Aboriginal people, such as allowing police to raid houses on Aboriginal land without a warrant.

The Intervention is the most explicit example of a national policy environment where racism, punishment and control over impoverished communities intensifies, while services are cut back.

Since the Intervention began, black incarceration has more than doubled and NT prisons are 90 per cent overcapacity. Mandatory sentencing has made the situation much worse, and “paperless-arrest laws” are also filling up police cells.

The recent introduction of harsh bail laws by the NSW Liberal government in 2014 has doubled the number of unsentenced black prisoners. There is now a presumption against bail.

In Victoria, “law and order” panic has further fuelled the push for incarceration. Despite a major government inquiry decrying the large-scale incarceration of black youth, the only legal service designed specifically for Aboriginal children, Balit Ngulu, has been forced to shut down this month due to a lack of funding.

This closure will also lead to more Aboriginal children being forcibly taken from their families and put into foster care. Victoria has the highest child removal rate in the country. A recent report into young people sentenced or on remand in Victoria in 2015-2016 showed that 45 per cent had been subject to a previous child protection order. On top of this, the Victorian state government plans to build a new \$288 million, high security youth detention facility at Cherry Creek.

Nationwide the majority of deaths covered by the *Guardian* investigation were of people who had not been sentenced for any crime—they were either on remand, in “protective custody” or killed during police operations. “Deaths Inside” records the case of Eric Whittaker, a 36-year-old



Above: Rallying against Aboriginal deaths in custody

man who was refused bail because he lacked a fixed home address. An “un-specific incident” in Whittaker’s isolation cell led him to be hospitalised, where gruesomely he was shackled for two days while on life support.

No Justice

While even former Attorney-General George Brandis decries the rates of black incarceration as a “national tragedy”, all levels of government have systematically refused to implement the recommendations of the Royal Commission into Aboriginal Deaths in Custody (RCIADIC) released in 1991. Indeed, a number of recommendations designed to reduce incarceration have been openly flouted by recent “law and order” reforms.

The recommendations of RCIADIC emphasise the need for self-determination and justice.

Restoration of land and investment in community controlled development to lift communities out of poverty was seen as crucial—the polar opposite of the policy approach being adopted today.

Reactionary policies driving escalating black incarceration are part of a more general assault on democratic rights and social services in Australia.

The NT Intervention took place at the same time as the Howard government’s attacks on trade unions, which include special police powers to target construction unionists. Anti-terrorism laws are used to persecute Muslim communities. Refugees are dying in

offshore detention centres in circumstances of inhuman medical neglect that mirror experiences of black people in custody.

And the “law and order” push across Australia has led to increases in the prison population everywhere, to warehouse both Indigenous and non-Indigenous homeless, mentally ill and unemployed people.

The fightback against deaths in custody can link up with these wider struggles and build support for demands for justice and Aboriginal self-determination. The Victorian Australian Education Union’s opposition to the Liberal Party’s proposal to embed full-time police officers in schools is a welcome stand against the “law and order” agenda.

There are many Aboriginal families fighting hard to win justice for their loved ones, protesting during coronial inquests and beyond.

No custodial officer has ever been convicted for a death in custody. In the case of Ms Dhu, two of the police officers involved with her treatment subsequently received promotion. At the inquest currently underway for Wayne Fella Morrison, the seven prison guards involved in driving the van have refused to provide statements and answer questions about what happened in the critical few minutes before Morrison’s death.

Justice will not come without a serious fight against a system built on racism, which continues to see Aboriginal life as expendable.

WORKERS' POWER MARX'S MOST REVOLUTIONARY IDEA

Karl Marx's most important insight was the potential role of the working class to overturn capitalism and build a new kind of society, writes **David Glanz**

ON 4 June 1844, weavers marching for higher wages broke into the headquarters of the Zwanziger Brothers, a textile company in Silesia, and destroyed everything.

The next day, 5000 weavers and their families smashed machines and ransacked homes and offices.

Industrialists called in the Prussian military, who fired on the crowd, killing 35.

German radicals were appalled by the brutality, but most either saw the workers as helpless victims or criticised them for fighting for higher wages rather than for democratic reform.

The young Karl Marx (he had just turned 26) drew starkly different conclusions. First, he insisted that radicals should learn from the workers, not lecture them.

"Confronted with the initial outbreak of the Silesian revolt no man who thinks or loves the truth could regard the duty to play schoolmaster to the event as his primary task. On the contrary, his duty would rather be to study it to discover its specific character."

Second, he declared that in fighting over wages and therefore the terms of their exploitation, "the proletariat proclaims its opposition to the society of private property".

In other words, they were paving a path towards social and economic liberation, rather than just a parliamentary system that would leave economic privilege intact.

And third, he argued that as a consequence feudal Germany should see that "... only in the proletariat can it discover the active agent of its emancipation".

The working class, although small and still unorganised, offered leadership to all those sick of the old

society.

Four years later, writing the *Communist Manifesto* with his collaborator Frederick Engels, he brought his themes together more clearly.

"All previous historical movements were movements of minorities, or in the interest of minorities. The proletarian movement is the self-conscious, independent movement of the immense majority, in the interest of the immense majority."

"The proletariat, the lowest stratum of our present society, cannot stir, cannot raise itself up, without the whole superincumbent strata of official society being sprung into the air."

It was a remarkable insight. At that point capitalism held sway over only a tiny proportion of the world: Britain, zones in northern Europe and pockets of the north-eastern US.

Yet Marx was arguing that the emerging working class which capitalism was still in the process of creating had the agency—the power, the motivation and the potential—to overthrow the new system and take power, thereby liberating all humanity.

It was his most revolutionary idea.

Other classes of direct producers had fought back—slave revolts and peasant uprisings had shaken the wealthy many times over millennia. But while the poor could destroy the possessions and even the lives of their masters, they lacked the basis for forming a new, equal society.

The new working class, however, was not only central to production and therefore to the generation of profits, but was brought together in the workplace as a collective.

Workers cannot split a factory or workplace between them individually

as peasants can divide the lord's land. And workers have no subordinate class to oppress in turn. That's why, Marx argued, it is the class with radical chains.

Marx saw the crises of capitalism and working class resistance as two sides of the same coin

Capitalism and crisis
Marx was not merely a critic of capitalism, however. He was the first to grasp why crisis was endemic to the system.

Capitalism, he argued, was a system of many competing capitals. Each capitalist attempted to grab a larger share of the surplus being created. To do so, they would install the newest, most efficient machinery, thereby reducing the cost of each item being produced. New technologies introduced into British cotton factories during the industrial revolution, for instance, like the steam engine and the power loom, allowed cotton to be manufactured at a cheaper and cheaper cost.

But in doing so, they were reducing the proportion of workers in the system—either by cutting jobs or by making the same number of workers produce more.

In the short term, profits for the innovators would go up. But workers are the only source of surplus under capitalism—the only element of the system that generates more than it takes to reproduce itself.

By increasing the proportion of machinery (what Marx called "dead labour") to living labour, the overall rate of profitability falls, capitalists stop investing and the system goes into crisis.

Marx saw the crises of capitalism and working class resistance as two sides of the same coin.

But others then and now disagree. Marx's contemporary, the anarchist Mikhail Bakunin, was dismissive of

the idea that workers could take the fightback into their own hands, saying:

"There are about forty million Germans. Are all forty million going to be members of the government?"

He advocated revolution, but insisted the leadership would not come from workers themselves but from an exclusive and shadowy organisation, "the secret universal association of international brothers".

Journalist Daniel Ben-Ami, writing on the eve of the Global Financial Crisis, also dismissed the working class's potential to challenge for power.

"A lot has changed in the nearly 160 years since the *Manifesto* was written. For a start hardly anyone seriously believes that the spectre of communism is on the horizon. Even those sympathetic to the working class tend not to see it as a force that is likely to transform society in the short or medium term."

Confusion

Part of the problem is the confusion over what is meant by working class. A recent report from the Australian National University, *Class, Capital and Identity in Australian Society*, argues that there are six classes.

Social capital (prestige) and cultural capital (how you spend your free time) are seen important dividing lines, along with education and spending habits.

The report asks: "If you have the night off or away from the kids, what do you do? Do you go to see a movie? Or do you go and see the theatre or do you sit at home and play on Facebook?"

But for Marx, class was defined by people's relationship to capital. So a bus driver who goes to the Opera House and a driver who stays home and watches Netflix both have to get up early and report to the depot. Both need to join a union and fight back if they are going to improve their wages and conditions.

Another source of confusion is that many assume Marx was writing purely about a working class made up of blue-collar, manufacturing workers and that the rise of service industries makes Marx's views redundant.

This is wrong on a number of levels. During Marx's time, a significant section of the working class was made up of mostly female domestic servants.

Today, the service sector not only



Above: The March of the Weavers in Berlin by Kathe Kollwitz, dramatising the Silesian weavers' strike in 1844

includes office workers, shop staff and teachers but truck drivers, postal workers and council workers—all just as likely to join a union and strike as factory workers.

Understood that way, the working class is growing, not declining.

In the US alone, the working class grew between 1990 and 2008 by 27.3 million. Between 1980 and 2012, the global workforce grew from 1.2 to 3 billion.

Workers' potential

Critics also doubt the potential of the working class to challenge the system. In January 1968, the radical intellectual André Gorz wrote:

"In the foreseeable future, there will be no crisis of European capitalism so dramatic as to drive the mass of workers to revolutionary general strikes."

Four months later, ten million French workers were on strike, many occupying their workplaces, in a struggle with revolutionary implications.

Such struggles do not exist just in liberal democracies. In many countries in the 1930s and 1940s, working class organisation of any kind was completely wiped out.

Yet again and again, massive struggles burst to the surface after the Second World War.

In Japan, despite being under US

occupation, workers went on mass strike, taking over workplaces from the Yomiuri newspaper to coal mines and organising production themselves.

In Italy, where the fascists had been in power since 1922, workers at the Fiat factories struck in 1943. In Germany, where unions were banned in 1933, hundreds of thousands of workers were on strike in the Ruhr in 1947 and 1948.

France saw insurrectionary strikes by workers at Renault in Paris in 1947 and a mass strike by coal miners in 1948.

The strike wave arrived later in the Eastern Bloc, starting with the uprising of East German workers in 1953, Poznan in Poland 1956, Hungary 1956, Novercherkassk in Russia in 1962 and Czechoslovakia in 1968. Stalinist dictatorship could not stop workers fighting back, either.

The same lived experience that led the Silesian workers to act was being felt more than a century later, and can be seen again today in the teachers' strikes in the US or the 120,000 who took to the streets of Melbourne earlier this year.

For Marx, workers are not victims. They are the collective class who generate the wealth in society and who, when they move as one, can throw the whole rotten structure of capitalism into the air.

NAURU IN MELTDOWN

By Daniel Cotton

AUSTRALIA'S DETENTION regime on Nauru is spiralling out of control. The mental health crisis is accelerating among all age groups. And Nauruan elites and Australian officials are locked into a war of attrition against refugees.

Refugee service providers such as IHMS are increasingly unable to cope, with their clinic inside the RPC 1 compound breaching capacity on multiple occasions.

Following the failure to provide adequate care, a stream of Federal Court orders have forced the Australian government to transport dozens of refugees at imminent risk to Australia. Air ambulances are being used almost weekly to take desperately ill refugees for medical help in Australia.

Pouring fuel on the fire is a Nauruan elite addicted to detention. Officials are panicking that the crisis may threaten the feasibility of Australia's detention regime, and the tens of millions of dollars of Australian government money that pour into their pockets every year.

Nauru government officials are pulling out all stops to block refugee transfers off Nauru. They have stopped air ambulances landing, and denied exit permits to those seeking to leave the island.

They are increasingly hostile to the medical services that have been referring refugees to proper medical treatment. They have prevented IHMS taking patients into the clinic in the RPC 1 compound. Refugees have been ordered out of the Nauru hospital by Nauruan police. The panicked elite have even ordered Médecins Sans Frontières off the island, which has offered psychological and psychiatric help since 2017.

A new Nauru government order threatens any refugee who attempts suicide with arrest. In the last week of September, an Iranian refugee woman was handcuffed, arrested and taken to the police station after informing IHMS workers she was having suicidal thoughts.



A twisted development has seen Nauru using child protection orders to tear legal custody of refugee children from parents in order to prevent transfers, and to intimidate other refugees.

The Australian government—which has spent \$320,000 in the last financial year fighting court battles against medical transfers of refugees—is hardly worried about Nauru's campaign to prevent removals.

But an escalating war of attrition can only deepen the crisis for the Australian government—and for the refugees it continues to hold in torture camps.

Reports of Australia's bloody fingerprints on Nauru's actions continue to roll in—from revelations of Australian government endorsement of Nauru's media bans, to reports to the Federal Court about ABF's joint decision-making with Nauru's Overseas Medical Referral committee. Even Justice Debra Mortimer has ruled in the Federal Court that Australia cannot buck responsibility, having, “created this situation by establishing an arrangement of this kind for regional processing”.

As long as Australian detention dollars roll into the island, Nauru's elite will continue to keep refugees

Above: A refugee family on Nauru

trapped. The Australian government has guaranteed them \$31.5 million per year for operating refugee processing, as well as an additional \$26.1 million in Australian aid last year, which together represents 43 per cent of Nauru's USD\$115 million GDP.

Close the camps

The crisis on Nauru has outraged new layers of people, and highlighted the necessity of action. Legal orders can only get refugees to treatment in Australia in the most extreme cases. For most of those on Nauru, there is no legal solution.

The World Vision campaign to get all kids off Nauru by 20 November is garnering support, with over 250 organisations signing on, a poster ad campaign, and academics coordinating a day of action on 17 October. Pressure is mounting on the Labor Left to act in the lead up to Labor's national conference in December.

A poll in Wentworth found almost two-thirds in favour of bringing refugee children from Nauru to Australia.

The urgent task for refugee activists is to draw new layers into the protests in late October.

More than ever, we need to build the movement to get everyone off and end offshore detention.

**Nauru
government
officials are
pulling out
all stops to
block refugee
transfers off
Nauru**

Solidarity