

Solidarity

Issue No. 120 / November 2018

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VICTORY AS KIDS COME OFF, NOW



GET THEM ALL OFF MANUS & NAURU

UNIONS

Why do the union leaders back Labor?

BRAZIL

Far right president wins power

RADICAL HISTORY

100 years since the German revolution



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EMAIL

solidarity@solidarity.net.au

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SOLIDARITY: WHO ARE WE?

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

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

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

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

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Things they say

If you like living in the tropics, it's a very, very pleasant island.
Tony Abbott on Nauru

The opportunity, and the responsibility our nation now has, is to proudly tell the stories of what has been done in recent years in Afghanistan, Iraq, the Solomon Islands, and East Timor
Director Brendan Nelson on why the War Memorial needs a half billion dollar upgrade

We want to believe in our heroes
Brendan Nelson on why the inquiry into SAS war crimes needs to hurry up—and what verdict he wants

'Please vote for Dave Sharma'. Five words. He owned an IT company, I think he could have managed that
Barnaby Joyce blames Malcolm Turnbull for the Liberals' loss in Wentworth

I could have done the same thing myself, shat on the place and left but I didn't.
Barnaby's not bitter at all about Malcolm Turnbull

Today's a tough day, but the great days are coming
Scott Morrison does his best to rally the troops on the night of the Liberals' defeat in Wentworth. They could be waiting a while.

A great day for Australian democracy
Malcolm Turnbull's son Alex on the Wentworth result

If somebody wanted to preach communism and socialism, they would not be welcome in the Liberal Party.
Liberal Sen Eric Abetz explaining religious schools' right to discriminate against gay teachers and students.

Malcolm Turnbull was the socialist who came into the Liberal Party by subterfuge, [and] tried to change the party.
Bronwyn Bishop, explaining Turnbull's real political affiliations

All we really have is today. We just have today. Over and over and over again, the eternal return. The hero's journey. And Trump is on his hero's journey right now.
Kanye West at his meeting with his hero in the White House.

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INSIDE THE \$YSTEM

Indigenous funding used to oppose land rights

FEDERAL INDIGENOUS Affairs Minister Nigel Scullion has redirected money set aside to tackle Indigenous disadvantage for lobby groups to challenge land rights claims.

Scullion has admitted to giving \$500,000 to groups representing cattle ranchers and fishers to support legal submissions on how land rights claim would negatively affect them. Scullion himself was chair of one of the recipients, the Northern Territory Seafood Council, from 1994 to 2001 and was part of arguing that land rights claims would be to its detriment during his time there.

The NT Land Rights Act requires consideration of how land rights claims will affect other land users before they can be approved. A group of six claims have been delayed, some by 30 years, due to objections.

The money was diverted from Indigenous Advancement Strategy funding. Scullion directed \$150,000 to the NT Seafood Council, \$170,000 to the NT Amateur Fishermen's Association and \$165,000 to the NT Cattlemen's Association.

Walkout at Google against sexual harassment

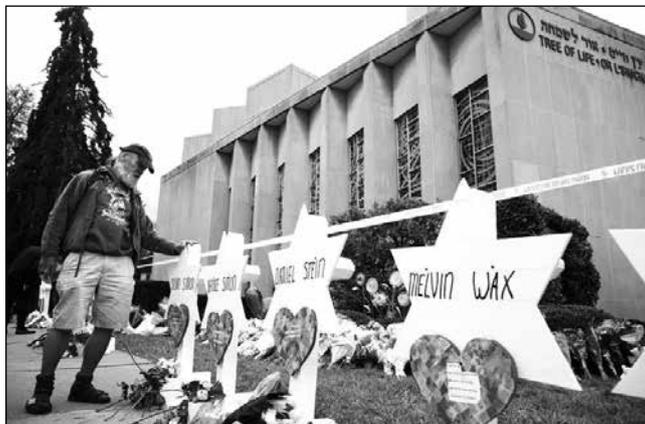
GOOGLE EMPLOYEES worldwide have staged walkouts to protest the company's handling of sexual harassment. The "Walkout For Real Change" saw protests at Google offices including Tokyo, Singapore, London, Sydney, New York and San Francisco.

It follows revelations that the company paid a \$90 million severance package to senior executive Andy Rubin, after he left due to sexual misconduct.

Another executive, Richard DeVaul, resigned in October after the New York Times reported allegations of sexual misconduct against a number of other figures at Google. The company admitted it had fired 48 employees in the last two years, including 13 senior executives, following allegations of sexual misconduct.

Women make up on 31 per cent of Google employees globally, and the company has received widespread criticism for its workplace culture.

Trump's racism leads to anti-semitic murders



ELEVEN PEOPLE were murdered in Pittsburgh in October in the deadliest attack on Jewish people in US history. Fascist Robert Bowers screamed "All Jews must die" as he burst into the synagogue with a semi-automatic rifle and two pistols.

His social media accounts were filled with white nationalist posts, including the anti-semitic fixation on Jewish people as part of a plot aimed at "white genocide".

The attack was the horrifying result of the growth of racism and the alt-right in the US, fed and encouraged by Donald Trump. The same week a series of pipe bombs were sent to Democratic Party politicians and other opponents of Trump—including George Soros.

Trump has pandered to anti-semitism, including through his notorious final campaign ad in 2016 that featured images of billionaire George Soros, a frequent target of anti-semitic conspiracy theories, as well as Federal Reserve's Janet Yellen, who is also Jewish. And he refused to condemn anti-semitic white supremacists at their Charlottesville demonstration last year after they chanted "Jews will not replace us".

In October Trump even claimed that Soros might be funding the migrant caravan of refugees trying to reach the US border through Mexico.

There was widespread disgust in Pittsburgh, including in the Jewish community, as Trump staged a visit following the shooting. Over 20,000 people signed an open letter from the local chapter of Jewish social justice group Bend the Arc saying Trump was, "not welcome in Pittsburgh until you fully denounce white nationalism". Around 2000 people joined a snap protest against his visit.

The city's major, as well as top four Democratic and Republican Congressional leaders, as well as local Senators and the state's governor, all refused to appear alongside him.

Tax office aids bosses' super rip-off

WORKERS ARE being short-changed \$2.85 billion in superannuation payments each year, the tax office estimates. Yet ATO deputy commissioner James O'Halloran has admitted to allowing businesses who admitted failing to pay to escape penalties.

Under the law the tax office is required to fine companies \$20 per employee for every quarter where they miss payments. ATO figures show that the number of employers who failed to pay superannuation on time surged by 60 per cent to nearly 180,000 companies over the past financial year.

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

US mercenaries work as assassins in Yemen

FORMER US soldiers were used as mercenaries in an assassination program as part of the war in Yemen.

A US company, Spear Operations Group, was employed by the United Arab Emirates, which is fighting as part of a Saudi-led coalition against Houthi rebels. Its founders, Israeli operative Abraham Golan and former US Navy Seal Isaac Gilmore, admitted their role in the operations to BuzzFeed.

Over several months the group worked to kill prominent clerics and Islamist political figures. Among the targets were people like Anssaf Ali Mayo, the leader of Al-Islah, an ordinary political party and branch of the Muslim Brotherhood.

They were paid \$2 million a month, with an extra bounty for successful assassinations. Among the team's members were a former CIA officer, a special forces sergeant from Maryland's National Guard and a former Navy Seal who was still employed by the US Navy Reserve. A former CIA official told BuzzFeed they were "almost like a murder squad."

War Memorial upgrade gets half a billion dollars

SCOTT MORRISON cries poor when it comes to increasing Newstart from poverty levels, funding pre-school places or increasing education funding. Yet he has managed to find \$500 million for a lavish redevelopment of the Australian War Memorial in Canberra.

The new facilities will even allow the public to watch current military deployments in real time. A new underground exhibition hall will be able to hold helicopters and jet fighters.

The Anzac Hall, only completed in 2001 at a cost of \$17 million, is to be demolished and rebuilt.

But as far as the government's concerned there's always money for war—and for promoting militarism.

EDITORIAL

Win over Nauru kids as Liberals implode— build the movement for change

THE REFUGEE movement is on the offensive and Scott Morrison is on the way out.

The Coalition has been forced to promise that all refugee children will be off Nauru by the end of the year.

This is an incredible victory. Morrison was the architect of the Abbott government's Operation Sovereign Borders and has championed anti-refugee cruelty. Now the campaign has forced him into retreat.

This win came as a result of enormous pressure from a mass public campaign that saw demonstrations, hundreds of thousands sign petitions and countless celebrities from Jimmy Barnes to the Wiggles all declare their support.

The Liberals are now pathetically weak. A historic 18.9 per cent swing at the Wentworth by-election has delivered victory to independent Kerryn Phelps and pushed the Coalition into minority government. The Liberals had held Wentworth since the party's inception in 1945.

Morrison can't seem to put a foot right. Like Turnbull, he is committed to hard right policies that are deeply unpopular—over climate change, homophobic discrimination and his backing for the big end of town.

If there was ever a time for Shorten and Labor to go for the jugular it is now. After refusing to act for weeks, the Liberals finally capitulated over children on Nauru when it was clear they ran the risk of losing a vote on the issue in parliament. Shorten could still throw the Liberals into further disarray by supporting independent Andrew Wilkie's Bill to bring all the kids from Nauru and separated families here immediately. But so far the ALP have been too hamstrung by their own commitment to refugee bashing to seize the opportunity.

This is all the more reason to continue the mobilisations to get kids off Nauru now, and everyone else off Nauru and Manus too. The fight to free the refugees must continue all the way up to the election (likely in May) and beyond.

In Victoria the Andrews government's commanding 54-46 lead in the polls is another sign that the Liberals are on the nose. They are set for a bruising defeat at the Victorian election this month.



Above: Around 2000 rallied in Sydney in October for "Kids off, All off"

Now that a Labor election victory federally is almost a certainty too, there is a burning question about what they are going to deliver. The tens of thousands that came out for weekday union protests to Change the Rules on 23 October showed there is a real mood for changes to the rigged IR laws.

But at the largest rally in Melbourne, the message was almost entirely simply to vote Labor.

Labor's changes

Labor is promising real changes, through reversing cuts to penalty rates, scrapping the ABCC, restricting the use of labour hire and removing bosses' ability to terminate enterprise agreements.

But it has refused to accept union bargaining across an industry, as the ACTU advocates, rather than simply at a company level. In late October Labor's workplace spokesperson Brendan O'Connor said Labor was only open to industry bargaining for low paid workers like cleaners and early childhood educators.

He also hosed down any idea of removing restrictions on strike action, saying, "we don't want to have a system that just ensures industrial chaos."

These limited changes aren't enough. As we go to print, Boom crane workers in NSW have been on indefinite strike for four weeks as part of their enterprise bargaining. They haven't had a proper pay rise in almost five years. Actions such as

solidarity strikes on construction sites where Boom Cranes are run by scabs would still be illegal under the limited changes proposed by the ALP. Workers need the unrestricted right to strike.

As the Liberals continue to disintegrate, they will ramp up their racism and bigotry. Scott Morrison initially supported schools having the power to expel LGBTI students. But he was forced to backtrack within days. Now the momentum is growing to change federal laws to prevent religious schools expelling LGBTI teachers as well. Labor has said it supports these changes.

Rallies on the anniversary of the Yes Vote for marriage equality on 15 November can help keep up the pressure.

We can't sit back and wait for Labor; whether it's around refugees, racism, workers' rights or fighting homophobia. When Kevin Rudd came to power he initially dismantled offshore processing, but then shamefully revived it, creating the "PNG Solution" and the horror on Manus. The Your Rights at Work campaign is what threw out the Liberals in 2007, yet Rudd gave us WorkChoices lite and kept the ABCC in all but name. Shorten's back flip to support the pro-business TPP trade deal shows we can't rely on him either. We need to drive out the Liberals by building movements that will also take the fight to the bosses and a Labor government to win real change.

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Now that a Labor election victory is almost a certainty, there is a burning question about what they will deliver

Victorian Labor set to hold on despite Liberals' law and order scare

By Daniel Cotton

THE VICTORIAN election has seen the Liberals resort to the same fear and racism as their federal counterparts Peter Dutton and Scott Morrison, in a desperate effort to win votes.

Victorian Liberal leader Matthew Guy is running a right-wing "law and order" campaign, feeding on racist media reporting against Sudanese and African youth. He is promising to put "the force back into police force" alongside harsh new mandatory sentencing laws. He is also blaming immigration for lack of services, pushing for a population commission and restrictions on where migrants can settle.

Guy also wants to axe Victoria's Safe Schools program and reintroduce religious education in government schools.

Labor Premier Daniel Andrews has committed \$3.8 billion to build 70 new schools, as well as upgrade 1300 existing schools. But this is still short of the 220 schools that the Grattan Institute says are needed by 2026 to keep up with Victoria's population growth.

Public schools in Victoria get the lowest per-student funding in Australia. Yet Andrews has prioritised funding \$400 million for Catholic schools.

He has also promised \$1.24 billion to help households buy rooftop solar panels. But investing in large-scale wind farms and solar plants is what's really needed. This could cut power prices and install 100 per cent renewable energy in ten years, according to a Beyond Zero Emissions report.

The unions are strongly backing Andrews, who marched at the head of their "Australia Needs a Pay Rise Rally" on 23 October.

But Labor has often failed to deliver. Andrews drew the ire of the MUA when he privatised the Port of Melbourne for \$9.7 billion.

Nurses welcomed Andrews' legislation implementing nurse to resident ratios in aged care, but this covers only the public sector—less than 10 per cent of the aged care workforce.

Over 200 ASU members protested the Victorian Health Minister's office in August after a \$75 million funding cut, introduced under the guise of transitioning to the NDIS, was estimated to leave 135,000 people without mental health services. In September, Andrews was forced to restore \$70 million in funding and promise a royal commission into mental health.



Above: Members of Melbourne's Sudanese community protest racist targeting in July Photo: Charandev Singh

Serious union campaigns can hold Andrews to account and win proper funding for public services.

The Greens are challenging Andrews from the left, advocating investment in public transport instead of Labor's West Gate Tollroad. Greens' MP for Northcote Lidia Thorpe addressed a rally of hundreds on 26 October, demanding a more inclusive treaty process, and an end to logging of native forests.

The Victorian Socialists are also

standing in the upper house and some lower house seats. Their efforts are concentrated on electing Steve Jolly to the Northern Metropolitan upper house region, demanding an expansion of public housing and public transport.

Daniel Andrews's Labor government looks set to be returned.

But to challenge racism and win adequate public services we will need stronger union and community struggles on the streets and in the workplaces.

Fighting Melbourne's racist panic

A *FOUR Corners* special report has detailed the "moral panic" whipped up in Melbourne about so-called African crime.

Chief Judge of the County court, Peter Kidd, criticised media sensationalism, saying, "if you're an African youth of South Sudanese background from the western suburbs of Melbourne... The media choose to report upon those cases".

Earlier this year Victorian Liberal campaign materials vilified African migrants as "gangs hunting in packs", in a coordinated attack with Home Affairs Minister Peter Dutton.

Sadly, Labor Premier Daniel Andrews has made concessions to Guy's racist fearmongering.

After a December Supreme Court case found children should not be held in high security adult facilities, Andrews turned Barwon maximum security prison into a nominal youth facility, redeploying 40 corrections staff "armed with batons and capsicum spray". After youth rioted against their treatment, Andrews promised that "these thugs will be

brought to order".

Andrews also moved to let police issue children as young as 14 with "anti-association notices" preventing them from interacting with individuals convicted of certain offences. Though the laws have now lapsed in the upper house, they were a push towards criminalisation that would target migrant and Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander youth.

Andrews has also committed \$2 billion to what he calls "the biggest roll-out of new police in Victoria's history". But introducing thousands of new police officers will only increase racial profiling and harassment, and do nothing to provide the services that people need.

A serious campaign against this racism is needed. Instead of criminalisation and scapegoating, migrant communities need funding to provide jobs, health and education.

The "Stand together against racism" rally on 10 November, backed by Victorian Trades Hall, The Greens and South Sudanese community groups, is an excellent start.

Over 200 ASU members protested the Health Minister's office in August after a \$75 million funding cut

Unionists stop work to rally for change—or for Labor?

By James Supple

THOUSANDS OF unionists walked out of work to join Change the Rules rallies on 23 October in Sydney and Melbourne.

Workers shut down the ports again in both Sydney and Melbourne. Stevedoring companies DP World, Hutchison and Patrick let the MUA use a clause in their agreement allowing a paid four-hour stopwork meeting to attend.

This time more unions brought sizeable numbers to Sydney's rally of 4000 people. Construction workers were again out in force. The NUW brought hundreds of union delegates, including the entire permanent workforce at some sites.

But Melbourne's rally dwarfed it. It was a stirring display of union power, as tens of thousands of construction workers walked off building sites.

Workers defied threats from the Fair Work Ombudsman, which wrote to employers reminding them that unlawful strike action can mean individual fines of \$12,600.

Trades Hall responded by threatening a name and shame-style campaign against any employer who threatened workers for attending.

These acts of defiance are crucial. Unions are going to have to break the laws that ban industrial action to change the rules and win the right to strike.

But, with the rally timed for a month before the Victorian state election, the focus was much more narrowly on the elections.

Almost every speaker from the stage made reference to what Trades Hall Secretary Luke Hilakari called "a time to make a change... two key elections", and the chance to re-elect Labor's Daniel Andrews in Victoria and kick out Scott Morrison in Canberra.

The ETU's Troy Gray even said, "We need to fix trickle-down economics by fixing our broken workplace laws and every state needs a Premier like Daniel Andrews. Do that and you'd fix the inequality."

The turnout was far short of the claims it would be Melbourne's biggest ever rally. Despite official claims of 170,000 attending, the turnout was smaller than the 120,000 in May.

Some unions have already shifted focus to doorknocking and phone banking for the election.



Above: Around 4000 joined Sydney's rally to Change the Rules on 23 October

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With Melbourne's rally timed for a month before the state election, the focus was much more narrowly on voting

But the limits of what Labor leader Bill Shorten is prepared to offer if elected are clear.

Labor is promising modest changes including an end to the termination of enterprise agreements, scrapping the Australian Building and Construction Commission, limitations on use of labour hire and overturning the cuts to penalty rates.

They will not commit to industry-wide bargaining, as the ACTU has proposed, or getting rid of the fines and other restrictions on strike action.

The union movement cannot afford to simply elect Labor and hope this will solve our problems.

Change the Rules needs to be turned into an ongoing campaign of stopwork rallies and protests, to drive the Liberals from power and force Labor to deliver.

Boom cranes strike into its fourth week

WORKERS AT Boom Logistics cranes in Singleton, Newcastle and Port Kembla were into their fourth week of an indefinite strike as *Solidarity* went to press.

In Singleton and Newcastle, bosses have used casual workers to undermine the strike. Workers at Port Kembla stopped a scab operation early on by forming a hard picket around the yard.

Luke Jewitt, a union delegate in Port Kembla, said casuals at the other yards were threatened with sacking if they refused to work. "To be threatened and bullied like that, and then [the company] have the hide to say we bully is a bit hypocritical," he said.

Crane hire services are in high demand due to the construction boom. But the workers have not had a pay rise for four years. "At the moment it's a race to the bottom," Luke said. "Everyone's pushing to win all this work so they're going in cheaper, and the way they're going cheaper is by pushing wages down."

The company is offering a 3.5 per cent increase, leaving pay significantly below the industry standard. Management gave themselves pay rises of 25 per cent over the last year.

The union is demanding 5 per cent a year. Workers at Port Kembla are want to be properly compensated for the three out of four weeks they spend working away from home.

Bosses are trying to play the Port

Kembla workers off against the other yards by offering them a separate agreement—which they refused.

Alongside workers at WGC cranes, their strike was initially banned by the Fair Work Commission after the CFMEU asked both companies to sign a template agreement with the same wages and conditions agreed to by other crane companies in NSW. This kind of "pattern bargaining" is currently illegal.

Workers were initially banned from striking for three months. On appeal the ban was reduced to two weeks—in exchange for concessions such as dropping a claim for back pay for 2017 at WGC. It's another example of how the law stops effective strike action—and why the Fair Work Commission needs to be defied.

The 80 workers at WGC cranes won new union enterprise agreements after two weeks on strike.

Darren, a union delegate at WGC cranes in Smeaton Gorge told *Solidarity*, "Since Freo Cranes bought us out they wanted to pay all the Wollongong workers at a lower rate than they're paying us at WGC's Smeaton Grange yard." The move came after the company was bought by a firm owned by billionaire Warren Buffett. Workers at the company's two sites have now won the same pay and conditions.

Solidarity from across the union movement can make sure the Boom workers win their fight too.

Radical solutions needed to save the planet from climate chaos

By Erima Dall

CLIMATE SCIENTISTS have warned that global temperature increases must be kept to 1.5 degrees to avoid catastrophic consequences. The latest Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) report, released in October, found that 2 degrees of warming, previously referred to as the safe limit, would be devastating.

The earth has already warmed by 1 degree. Unless emissions are halved in next decade, and at net-zero by 2050, we will reach 2 degrees of warming.

Prime Minister Scott Morrison's response was he would not bother spending money on international climate conferences and "all that nonsense".

But this report should be a wake-up call. Yet there is no evidence governments around the world are waking up to anything.

The last international agreement, the 2016 Paris deal, was a sham. Unlike Kyoto, it abandoned even the pretence of legally binding targets. The pledges countries made to reduce their emissions would still see global temperatures rise by between 2.7 and 4 degrees. And two thirds of countries are not on track for their target.

US President Donald Trump is a climate denier, and withdrew the US from its Paris commitments. The newly elected far-right President of Brazil has promised to do the same, and also to open the Amazon rainforest to agribusiness. Even those countries paying lip service to climate action are increasing their use of fossil fuels. As *The Guardian* reports: "Britain is pushing ahead with gas fracking, Norway with oil exploration in the Arctic, and the German government wants to tear down Hambach forest to dig for coal."

This is a result of the logic of capitalism, as governments put corporate profits ahead of everything else.

In Australia, greenhouse gas emissions went up 1.3 per cent in year to March. This exposes the lie from Scott Morrison that Australia is on track for its Paris target of 26 per cent below 2005 levels by 2030, which in any case is inadequate. According to the government's own modelling it is only on track for a 5 per cent reduction by 2020.

The Liberals now have no climate policy, after they scrapped the Na-



Above: We need a rapid plan to transition away from polluting fossil fuels

tional Energy Guarantee. Morrison is withdrawing Australia from the UN's global climate fund, designed to assist developing countries adapt to climate change. On top of this the Liberals are offering to pay ageing coal-fired power stations to stay open, and support new ones.

Labour backs a higher emissions reduction target of 45 per cent and has promised 50 per cent renewable energy by 2030. Yet this is basically what will happen anyway due to the falling cost of wind and solar energy. They still say coal will continue to play an important part of any future energy mix.

Labor refuses to phase out the coal industry or plan a systematic transition to renewable energy. They won't touch the \$4-6 billion of direct subsidies to the fossil fuel industry every year. This means power stations will continue to burn coal for decades.

System change not climate change

We need to fundamentally re-organise production and electricity generation if we are to seriously tackle climate change. A new study has shown that just 100 companies around the world are responsible for 71 per cent of emissions since 1988. Just 25 corporations account for half the world's emissions. In Australia seven corporations and three state governments are responsible for around two-thirds of

emissions. They include AGL, Energy Australia, Origin, Woodside, Rio Tinto and BHP Billiton.

Reducing our personal consumption is not going to solve the problem. We need a direct, planned approach where companies are regulated, nationalised and phased out to be replaced with sustainable power. And we need an organised and just transition to retrain workers in those industries into new green jobs. We can't afford to put our faith in indirect market mechanisms like a carbon tax which end up putting up ordinary people's power bills with no guarantee of investment in renewable energy.

If we forced companies to pay their fair share of corporate tax, we could fund a rollout of base-load solar, wind, high-speed rail, and refurbish buildings for insulation.

But governments committed to neo-liberalism and free market capitalism are not about to embark on a mass program of investment and job creation.

We need to build a fight that can challenge both governments and some of the most powerful companies on earth. This means appealing to the working class with solutions like public ownership, cheaper electricity, more jobs, and free training to transition to clean industry.

We have to be prepared to challenge capitalism, and demand system change, not climate change.

.....
Just 25 corporations account for half the world's emissions

Liberals' 'religious freedom' review backs discrimination against teachers

By Geraldine Fela

THE MORRISON government has refused to commit to ending discrimination against teachers in religious schools, as it struggles to deal with the fallout from the leak of the Liberals' "Religious Freedoms Review".

The review was commissioned by Turnbull in November 2017 to placate the hard right of the Liberal Party in the lead up to the introduction of Marriage Equality. The Liberals under Turnbull and then Morrison sat on the report for months, likely wary of a public backlash.

The report recommended amending the federal Sex Discrimination Act to allow religious schools to discriminate against students and teachers on the basis of sexual orientation, gender identity or relationship status.

This discrimination is already in place in some, but not all states—a fact that has surprised many people. Enshrining it federally would undermine the rights of teachers and students in states like Tasmania with existing protections.

It would also send a message to schools across the country that discrimination is legitimate.

Community outrage following the leak of the report forced Morrison to backtrack. With three days he had promised to amend the law to stop schools from discriminating against students.

Bill Shorten has called for further changes and an end to discrimination against LGBTI teachers as well, signalling that Labor will support The Greens' bill to remove all discrimination.

However, some in the right of the ALP are calling for changes to the bill which preserve school "ethos"—which could let discrimination in the back door.

It is encouraging that the Independent Education Union (IEU) has publicly opposed discrimination.

This is particularly important in the wake of letter from 34 Anglican schools in NSW urging Federal MPs to protect their right to sack LGBTI teachers. Thousands of current and former students have already signed a petition opposing this bigotry.

Safe Schools and marriage equality

Last year ordinary people voted overwhelmingly in favour of marriage



Above: Religious freedom has been a cover for the homophobic right in the US

.....
Community outrage following the leak of the report forced Morrison to backtrack

Forced adoptions will rip apart Aboriginal families

THE NSW Liberal Government has tabled an outrageous new bill to allow forced adoptions of children in foster care. Under current laws parents must consent to adoption. These laws remove the need for consent—parents may not even be notified there is an application in court to adopt their children.

Family and Community Services Minister Pru Goward delivered a formal apology from the NSW Government to the victims of forced adoption practices imposed from the 1950s-70s.

Now, with an election due in March and only six sitting days left of the current parliament, she is trying to force laws through to facilitate a repeat of these policies.

This would be a disaster for poor and marginalised families struggling to deal with a draconian child protection system. Already, parents suffering from acute poverty, homelessness, addiction, mental health or other problems are too often punished by ripping children away, rather than given access to resources and support.

There will be a huge impact on Aboriginal children, who are ten times more likely to be removed by this racist system. Over the past five years, a protest movement led by Aboriginal grandmothers has highlighted the "continuing stolen generations", with more children being removed now than ever before. Goward's bill will make it im-

equality—but the religious freedoms review is a reminder that homophobia and transphobia are alive and kicking. Less than a week into his prime ministership Morrison was banging the Safe Schools drum and attacking a Victorian school program that trains teachers to help trans kids, tweeting "We do not need 'gender whisperers' in our schools."

The Marriage equality campaign missed an opportunity when it refused to publicly defend Safe Schools and trans rights.

The fight to end religious discrimination in schools is a new opportunity to go on the front foot.

We need to fight to end all discrimination against teachers and students, and reintroduce the Safe Schools program.

possible for many children removed to be returned to their families. The laws impose a maximum two-year time limit to decide whether "restoration" is possible. If not, children must be put into a permanent "guardianship" placement, where the Department has no oversight and there are no rights for family members to even visit their children.

Guardians will also be able to apply to the Supreme Court for adoption, allowing them to change a child's identity.

As clearly documented in the recent Royal Commission into Institutional Child Sexual Abuse, these are precisely the circumstances that lead to abuse.

A snap protest on 7 November was jointly called by Greens MP David Shoebridge and Labor Shadow Minister Tanya Mihailuk. Labor have promised to repeal the laws if elected next year, but Mihailuk urged people to support further protests to try and knock them out now.

The rally was well attended by Community Legal Centres, Aboriginal rights groups, survivors of past adoptions and families battling the current system. Unions with members on the front line of this issue brought delegations, including the PSA, who represent child protection workers, the ASU and the Nurses Federation. Stop work action by the PSA and further demonstrations can create a crisis around the bill and kill it off.

Paddy Gibson

Abortion decriminalised in Queensland after 50-year struggle

By Judy McVey

QUEENSLAND HAS finally decriminalised abortion, after state parliament approved new laws on 17 October. It has taken 50 years of struggle and campaigning.

Abortion is now legal in Queensland up to 22 weeks of pregnancy. After that time, two doctors decide whether the procedure can go ahead. Doctors who are “conscientious objectors” can refuse to conduct abortions but must refer women to an appropriate alternative.

It took a major social upheaval in the 1960s and the rise of the Women’s Liberation Movement to create momentum for change.

By the 1970s some doctors were convinced to challenge the law, winning court rulings that allowed abortions in order to protect the wellbeing of the woman. Until then many women died accessing illegal backstreet abortions.

The struggle for abortion rights in Queensland has been particularly fierce. In 1980 Premier Joh Bjelke-Petersen attempted to ban all abortions except where the mother’s life was in danger or in cases of rape, incest or deformity of the foetus. His Pregnancy Termination Control Bill was introduced with little warning about its contents.

Anti-abortionists in the Right to Life spent up big on 100 advertisements in buses, radio broadcasts featuring heartbeats of foetuses and a “Celebrate Life” march.

But a militant campaign of opposition saw the government’s supporters drop away.

On the evening of the Bill’s last reading on 20 May about 5000 pro-abortion activists met in King George Square, supported by unions including the Trades and Labour Council. They marched tentatively on the footpath at first, and then illegally took the streets to parliament.

On arrival, iron gates were locked to keep people out. The protesters weren’t deterred. Pushing the gates over, they marched into the grounds and around the rose garden.

On the eve of the final vote the government gave up and converted the Bill to a private member’s Bill. Nineteen government members including four ministers crossed the floor and killed it. It was an election year, but the lesson was that tightening up abortion



Above: Demanding decriminalisation of abortion in Queensland

laws anytime was not worth the risk of the anti-government feeling unleashed.

Then in 1985 Bjelke-Petersen ordered police raids on the abortion clinic at Greenslopes, operating since 1976, and 20,000 patient files were removed for investigation. In response to a public complaint, the doctors Bayliss and Cullen were tried. They were found not guilty of procuring an illegal abortion—the law was too vague to guarantee a conviction, in the context of strong pro-abortion sentiment.

Decriminalisation ends ongoing potential jail threats and fines against women and abortion providers. As recently as 2010 a couple in Cairns were tried and acquitted of procuring an abortion.

Law reform

Abortion is a simple gynaecological procedure which is used by one in three women during their lives to end unwanted pregnancies. It is estimated that 80,000–90,000 women in Australia terminate a pregnancy each year. Improvements in technology have made the procedure safer and medical abortions (such as using the RU486 pill) make early pregnancy abortion much simpler.

Opinion polls continue to show 80 per cent support for a woman’s right to choose. This is why abortion should be totally removed from Criminal Codes, as it is in the ACT where abortion is regulated under the Health Act.

Law reform in every state and territory, except NSW, has made abortion legal on request up to various

stages of pregnancy. In NSW unlawful abortion remains a criminal offence, although established court rulings allow access.

However, there remain restrictions because of lack of services and funding, especially for women in regional areas who have to travel to access abortion. Tasmania’s only abortion clinic closed at the end of last year. And an ongoing stigma still surrounds the procedure.

Anti-abortion groups continue to protest outside clinics. The Queensland legislation prohibits such harassment within 150 metres of a clinic, as do similar laws in NSW, Victoria, the ACT and the Northern Territory. Anti-abortion campaigners are currently challenging these laws in the High Court, claiming they restrict “free speech”.

The unnecessary difficulties can only be explained by the systematic oppression of women. Capitalism benefits from women’s unpaid labour within the family, reproducing the next generation of workers. The efforts to restrict a woman’s control over her own body reflect the desire to promote sexist ideas and women’s role in bringing up children.

The progress on abortion laws is an important victory. But to fully win women’s liberation we need a socialist movement that can take on capitalism.

Growing participation in the workforce has permanently established women as capable of struggle as part of the working class. But women still do not have full control over their bodies. It’s a right still to be won.

.....
In 1980 Premier Joh Bjelke-Petersen attempted to ban practically all abortions

Resistance needed as far right president wins in Brazil

By James Supple

BRAZIL HAS a far right president after Jair Bolsonaro won 55 per cent in the final run-off election.

His victory, in Latin America's largest country with a population of 210 million people, is another sign of the rise of the far right internationally.

A former army captain, he has praised the methods of military rule under the dictatorship that ran Brazil from 1964 until 1985, including the use of torture.

His campaign centred on unleashing the police on a "law and order" campaign, saying they should be rewarded if they "kill 10, 15 or 20 at a time". Police shootings are already out of control in Brazil, with 895 killed in the state of Rio de Janeiro alone between January and July this year.

Bolsonaro has described himself as "homophobic—and very proud of it", said women should be paid less than men and told a female parliamentarian, "I would never rape you because you don't deserve it." He has called black people "animals" who should "go back to the zoo", fanning the racism in a country where there is still a racial hierarchy based on the legacy of slavery.

Despite his authoritarian rhetoric Bolsonaro as yet lacks the violent mass movement capable of imposing a fascist dictatorship.

Yet his links with the military and rhetoric threatening a "cleanup" against supporters of the Workers' Party (PT), the equivalent of the Australian Labor Party, show his contempt for democratic rights.

The fascist and extreme right in Brazil have been emboldened by his success, with a number of violent attacks on PT supporters.

Following the first round of the presidential elections there were, "at least 50 separate attacks, three of which were particularly serious," Brazilian socialist Valerio Arcary told Socialist Worker.

"In Salvador an artist was attacked and killed. He said publicly in a bar, 'I voted for the PT.'

"A young woman was attacked and marked with the swastika.

"And at a university in south Sao Paulo one young student was attacked and seriously beaten because he was wearing a red cap. We have also seen localised right wing mobilisations."



Above: Brazil's President elect Jair Bolsonaro

Bolsonaro was helped by a wave of sympathy after he was stabbed during the election campaign.

But his success is mainly a product of Brazil's economic collapse and disillusionment with the Workers' Party.

PT's failure

Until 2011 the country experienced an economic boom driven by exports to China. But in 2015 a severe recession began following a collapse in commodity prices, with the economy shrinking by 7 per cent in two years. Unemployment is still at 12 per cent.

"We're in the grip of the biggest recession of the last 50 years", Valerio Arcary said. "We've seen a fall in wages of between 15 and 20 per cent."

Brazil is a country of stark inequalities. An Oxfam study last year revealed that the country's six richest people have as much wealth as the poorest 50 per cent of the population, around 100 million people.

The PT held the presidency from 2003 until 2016, but agreed to accept a basic neo-liberal framework for running the economy.

It used the economic boom to increase welfare spending and the minimum wage. But when economic crisis hit, it moved to cut government spending in order to keep big business on side.

This left its working class supporters deeply disillusioned. In the presidential election around 30 per cent either refused to vote or spoiled their ballots, despite compulsory voting.

Since 2015, the right has been on the offensive, organising mass demonstrations against the PT and then impeaching Workers' Party President Dilma Rousseff in parliament.

Rousseff was accused of tampering with government debt figures to help win re-election. Senior PT officials were also caught up in a major corruption scandal during her time in office.

The right-wing parties that impeached her were also deeply implicated in the scandal.

Bolsonaro will face mass resistance.

He is committed to brutal neo-liberal austerity. His main economic adviser, the University of Chicago-trained Paulo Guedes, advocates privatising state-owned companies, further cutting spending on services and tax cuts for the rich.

In the head to head presidential run-off, the Workers' Party candidate, Fernando Haddad, received 45 per cent of the total valid votes.

There were massive demonstrations before the election organised by the women's movement. A Facebook group called Ele Nao! (Not Him) had three million members within two days of its launch.

One million people joined the demonstrations on 29 September.

This needs to be the beginning of concerted mobilisation by trade unions and the left—linked to building a socialist alternative independent of the discredited Workers' Party.

.....
The Workers' Party agreed to accept a basic neo-liberal framework for running the economy

Backlash against Trump in US elections, but Democrats a dead end

By Sofia Donnelly

THE DEMOCRATIC Party made big gains in US mid-term elections on 6 November, in what was widely seen as a referendum on Donald Trump.

Ever since he won office, the Democrats have set their sights on the midterms. Their hope was that two years living under Trump would help them unseat enough Republicans to win back control of the House of Representatives—and in that they succeeded. The Republicans retained control of the Senate.

The results confirm there is a huge audience who hate Trump and the Republicans. This “blue wave” of Democrat wins has let the party breathe a sigh of relief, but the fight against Trump and his agenda is far from won.

The Democrats are now preparing for the 2020 presidential election. But Trump just put a known sexual abuser and anti-choice bigot on the Supreme Court, told the army to open fire on the migrant caravan approaching the US-Mexico border, and plans to write transgender people out of legal existence. The worst anti-semitic attack in US history was carried out by a murderer inspired by Trump’s politics. Change can’t wait until 2020.

Resistance from below

The lead-up to the elections was marked by inspiring anti-Trump resistance on the streets. Survivors of sexual violence, women, and their supporters stood up to Trump’s Supreme Court nominee Brett Kavanaugh.

Although he successfully won the seat, mass civil disobedience in Washington DC and marches around the country leading up to his confirmation showed the kind of power ordinary people have to beat back Trump’s agenda.

Two brave survivors of sexual violence confronted Jeff Flake, the Arizona Senator who held a decisive vote, in an elevator during the Senate hearings on the nomination. Virginia activists, including a teacher strike leader, staged a sit-in at the office of Joe Manchin, the one Democrat who shamefully voted to confirm Kavanaugh. Together these actions forced the government to call a week-long FBI investigation into the attempted rape allegations.

Those of us in the anti-Kavanaugh resistance got a sense of our own power that week. Across the country



Above: Much of the opposition to Trump, including the protests against the Kavanaugh nomination, were channelled into the November elections

we gave and listened to speeches about how we would never again be silenced by the powerful men who abuse us. But mainstream women’s rights organisations dragged their feet calling large actions and the Democrats’ only offering to defeat structural sexism and defend abortion rights was to wait for the elections. It felt like most on-the-ground resistance was cancelled until after November, our inboxes filling up with get-out-the-vote messages.

Democratic Socialists

Some of this resistance has been channelled into supporting left-wing candidates like New York’s Alexandria Ocasio-Cortez and Julia Salazar—who ran as socialists on platforms against ICE (Immigration and Customs Enforcement) and for universal healthcare. During the primaries earlier this year, Ocasio-Cortez unseated corporate Democrat Joe Crowley. This win gave hope to tens of thousands of people disgusted with the Trump presidency and the feeble resistance most Democrats have offered over the last two years.

The candidates who won on left-wing platforms show the audience for the left. But Ocasio-Cortez’s win also demonstrated a problem.

Once pre-selected, she has quietly distanced herself from her socialist backers, the Democratic Socialists of America. Her original anti-ICE position changed to an argument to reform border control. When questioned on

Palestine, she sided with Israel. In the midterms she campaigned for the kinds of centrist Democrats that she defeated in her primary.

Another Democratic Socialist, Lee Carter, was an exciting prospect when he won local elections in Virginia a year ago. But he recently voted for a Medicaid expansion that was contingent on work-for-the-dole. He could have refused on principle. But once elected there is huge pressure to be pragmatic and play the political game, even if it means making concessions to the right.

This is the inevitable outcome for progressive Democrats who remain inside the party. No matter how left-wing their platforms are, they will face pressure to toe the party line.

In any case, the beneficiaries of the “blue wave” are overwhelmingly corporate or centrist Democrats—the very politicians who offered ordinary people so little and gave us the Trump disaster in the first place.

As we move towards 2020, the Democrats will try to blackmail ordinary people again, claiming that if we want to avert another Trump term in office, we need to vote blue at any cost.

In California, the bluest state of all, public school teachers are about to go on strike (because it is Democrats who have waged the austerity agenda here). Their action will be a welcome reminder that getting out into the street has more power than getting out the vote.

.....
The beneficiaries of the “blue wave” are mainly corporate or centrist Democrats

Brutal murder exposes dictatorship the West backs

By Tom Orsag

THE BRUTAL murder of journalist Jamal Khashoggi has thrown into sharp relief the relationship between the West and the Saudi police state in the Middle East.

The muted nature of the US and its Western allies' response to the extra judicial execution of a relatively moderate critic of the authoritarian monarchy shows the importance that Saudi Arabia has for Western imperialism.

US President Trump promised some sort of "retaliation" against Saudi Arabia when evidence emerged that the Saudi government murdered Khashoggi.

But he balked at endangering an arms deal with the country saying, "I would prefer we don't use as retribution [cancelling] \$110 billion worth of work, which means 600,000 jobs."

Western countries have withdrawn from going to a Future Investment Initiative Summit in Riyadh, capital of Saudi Arabia. Last year, Australia sent the then Trade Minister, Steven Ciobo, and a sponsored delegation of Australian companies.

In December 2016, Christopher Pyne, then Minister for Defence Industry also visited Saudi Arabia. That year the Defence Department approved four military export licences to the country.

Turkey leaked details of Khashoggi's murder to the media, inflicting serious damage on the Saudi regime. Khashoggi was murdered inside the Saudi Arabian consulate in Istanbul, Turkey.

Both countries are competing for leadership of the dominant, Sunni wing of Islam and for influence in the region.

The Saudi royal family has always claimed legitimacy from its role as keeper of the main Muslim holy places—Mecca and Medina.

Turkish president Recep Tayyip Erdogan's AK party stands for a more "modern", explicitly pro-capitalist version of political Islam. Turkey and Saudi Arabia have both sponsored and armed rival jihadi groups in Syria.

Trump sees the Saudis as a key ally in squaring off against the other regional power, Iran. The US is keen to bolster the Saudi's military.

Its killing of Khashoggi, who was living abroad as a columnist on the *Washington Post* newspaper, has



Above: Jamal Khashoggi, murdered and dismembered by Saudi regime thugs

caused uproar in the US capital.

According to Foreign Policy, "Some diplomats and analysts see in the leak campaign a clever Erdogan ploy to drive a wedge into what he sees as the worrisome alliance between Washington and Saudi Arabia." Turkey has been on the outer lately with the US.

Saudi Arabia contains an estimated one-quarter of the world's known oil reserves and supplied nearly half of the US petroleum needs in 1980.

For decades it has been a key ally of the US in the Middle East.

Oil led the US into Saudi Arabia in 1933, with four companies—Standard Oil of California, Esso, Texaco and Mobil—establishing the Arabian American Oil Company (ARAMCO).

ARAMCO lobbied to US government of the Democrat Franklin Roosevelt to prop up the Saudi King through aid payments.

The President's Secretary of Commerce and most trusted advisor, Harry Hopkins, was for providing the funds even though he said it was hard to "call that outfit a 'democracy'".

The country is as an absolute monarchy controlled by the Saudi royal family. Their current wealth is estimated at \$1.4 trillion.

In 1943, the US decided, "the defense of Saudi Arabia is vital to the defense of the United States." A US military mission arrived to train the Saudi army and to build an airforce base at Dhahran, near the eastern oil-fields.

It became the largest US air base between Germany and Japan and was operated by the US until 1962. Now a Saudi defence facility, US aircraft were again deployed there during the war against Saddam Hussein's Iraq in 1991.

Yemen war crimes

For three years, a Saudi-led coalition has been bombing Yemen, killing thousands of civilians and crippling medical services. The country is now on the brink of famine, according to the World Food Program. Australia is "complicit in this ongoing crisis", Amnesty's Diana Sayed says.

In June, Amnesty International noted that, "The Australian government in the last year and a half has been providing military exports to the Saudi Arabian regime... There is no transparency on what these exports contain." The US and Britain also support the attack as Saudi Arabia is a close ally.

The Saudi regime wants to restore ousted Yemeni President Hadi. He was installed after the Yemeni people forced out dictator Ali Abdullah Saleh in 2012 as part of the Arab revolutions.

Saudi Arabia's Crown Prince and Defence minister Mohammed bin Salman thinks the more Yemenis killed the better. He told Arabic media, "We want to leave a big impact on the consciousness of Yemeni generations. We want their children, women and even their men to shiver whenever the name of Saudi Arabia is mentioned."

This is quality of the West's bedfellows in the Middle East.

.....
For three years, a Saudi-led coalition has been bombing Yemen, killing thousands of civilians

THE TIES THAT BIND WHY DO THE UNION LEADERS BACK LABOR?

Union leaders see the Labor Party as a vehicle for their interests in parliament, argues **David Glanz**, even though Labor ultimately governs in the interests of capitalism

WHEN THE ALP's 48th national conference opens in Adelaide on 16 December, about half of the 400 delegates will be from affiliated unions. Many delegates elected from among the party's individual members will be union activists, too.

The union movement and the ALP are tightly interwoven. Former ACTU Presidents who have gone on to be federal MPs include Bob Hawke, Simon Crean, Martin Ferguson, Jennie George and Ged Kearney. About half of the ALP caucus are former union officials.

Yet there's a considerable gap between what unions want from Labor and what the parliamentary party is prepared to promise—whether on Change the Rules, the Trans-Pacific Partnership (TPP) or refugee policy.

How should we understand the relationship between unions and Labor? Which is the tail and which is the dog?

The starting point is to understand that the ALP was born of workers' defeat. It represented an attempt by union leaders to claw back through political means the influence that direct action no longer seemed capable of delivering.

From 1890 to 1894, with the economy in deep crisis, the ruling class went on the offensive. As one historian noted: "Within the space of three years the colonial unions had conceded almost every major concession won from the capitalist class to that date.

"The national confrontations between the unions and capitalist organisations involved all sectors of production. Seamen, waterside workers, shearers, coal miners, silver-lead miners, transport workers, were all locked out by their bosses.

"Police and military actions were used, thousands of special constables

were sworn in and detachments of light horse brought out from the barracks."

The union officials responded by turning away from industrial action to political action.

This in one respect was a step forward—it recognised that the working class had distinct interests and needed to organise separately from the boss class.

But from the beginning the officials made it clear that they wanted gradual reform and that they had no intention of challenging capitalism.

William Spence, leader of the Australian Workers Union, saw the Labor Party as, "introducing co-operation instead of competition... not because we are going to abandon the principles that guided men in the days of the old unionism" but because, "we must unite on the common platform when we speak, and when we vote for reforms that are necessary".

The parliamentary party

The second thing to understand is the relationship between the parliamentary Labor Party and its affiliates and members.

Officially, the party's policy is set by its national conference where, as we have seen, union officials would have a majority if they united.

Labor's constitution says the parliamentary party's decisions should be shaped by, "taking such action which may be possible to implement the Party's platform" and should not contradict the platform.

But the reality is different, for two reasons.

The parliamentary party has an immediate interest in maximising the vote, to keep their own seats and privileges. This often means acting against party policy to please the

The parliamentary party's overriding concern is the interests of Australian capitalism

media or the bosses.

When the Victorian Labor government smashed the Builders Labourers Federation in 1985, the Premier, John Cain, thumbed his nose at the party conference, which passed resolutions condemning the attack.

"For my part I had said to Conference on two occasions... that the government was not going to implement their decisions...

"So despite the oft-repeated phrase that Conference is supreme and decides policy, in effect, when the crunch comes, if the government is right... it can hold sway against Conference."

The second reason is that the parliamentary party's over-riding concern is the "national interest"—in other words, the interests of Australian capitalism.

This commitment—hard-wired into the ALP from the days of Spence and "co-operation"—is so strong that it can lead the ALP leadership to take decisions that result in it losing votes.

The Labor government of James Scullin took office a week before the 1929 Wall Street Crash that heralded the onset of the Great Depression.

On the advice of the bankers, Scullin cut government spending (including welfare) by 20 per cent and wages by 10 per cent and increased taxes—as unemployment rose towards its peak of 32 per cent.

The Labor vote, 48.8 per cent in the 1929 elections, collapsed to 37.6 per cent in the 1931 election, which saw the ALP trounced.

Similarly, in 1949, the government of Ben Chifley—who, as a railway worker, had been victimised for striking in 1917—sent in troops to break a coal miners' strike.

His Immigration Minister, Arthur Calwell, called the strikers scum and

pledged: “We will run up the Australian flag and it will cover Australian servicemen mining coal in Australia for the Australian people.”

Labor’s vote fell from 51.3 per cent in 1946 to 46 per cent in 1949, with the Liberals remaining in office until 1972.

So the parliamentary party has always been prepared to run roughshod over the interests of the union officials and their members in the interests of capitalism.

But it’s not all one-way traffic. Union officials also have a number of ways they can discipline Labor (although never to the point of a fundamental challenge to the system).

Union influence

Unions—including those not affiliated to the party—donate significant amounts to Labor.

In 2015-16, the SDA gave \$657,000; the CPSU gave \$395,000; the AMWU, \$300,000; the Victorian branch of the CEPU (Plumbers), \$95,000; the CFMEU, \$49,000; and so on. Other donations went to state branches.

If officials want to show their displeasure, they can limit donations or give money to Labor’s rivals (Greens, Katter, Victorian Socialists, etc). Sometimes they disaffiliate, only to return when the party’s position changes.

The AMWU recently spearheaded a campaign to punish Labor for giving too much ground on the TPP—in particular, for allowing what it regards as too many workers to enter the country on temporary visas.

National Secretary Paul Bastian said the union had made it clear to Labor that this was a threshold issue for its continued support of party candidates and campaigns.

The union stopped the flow of funds and in-kind support and threatened to protest outside an ALP event.

Labor refused to change its TPP vote but promised that future free trade deals would be subject to a range of considerations including labour market testing, which was enough for the AMWU to declare victory and reinstate its support.

What is important here is not so much the detail but the way that the episode highlights the pragmatic deal-making between union officials and the ALP, who, however much they quarrel, are very much partners.

Union officials can also try to win influence by throwing considerable forces behind Labor election cam-



Above: Union leaders are solidly behind Labor’s Bill Shorten

paigns.

In Victoria, Trades Hall is coordinating work on the ground in seven marginal state seats, with rank-and-file workers running street stalls and going door-knocking.

The ANMF, which is not affiliated, is hosting phone banking operations of up to 350 ALP members and supporters at a time.

The ACTU’s Change the Rules campaign is a positive step in mobilising workers.

But it is strategically entirely subordinated to the aim of returning a Shorten Labor government. Union officials are largely pessimistic about the chances of winning reforms any other way.

The result is that the ACTU is raising only those demands that it thinks the ALP might be prepared to deliver. Issues like the right to strike are quietly dumped in the too-hard basket.

So the relationship between union leaders and Labor is a complex one.

The ALP looks to the union movement for funding (although business also contributes heavily) and even more importantly, for an army on the ground that can significantly boost its election campaigns.

In return, the party knows it has to offer some prospect of the laws changing—for instance around penalty rates or abolishing the ABCC. How much Labor offers is carefully calibrated to offer union officials the minimum ac-

ceptable while avoiding a ruling class backlash.

On the other hand, union leaders have looked to Labor for more than a century to bring about reform through parliament.

For leaders on the right of the party, such as those from the SDA, this is pretty much the totality of their strategy.

For leaders on the left, there is occasionally a willingness to take on Labor, industrially or politically. So in Victoria, the RTBU struck twice for its Metro train EBA and then moved a right to strike motion at the state Labor conference.

But all union leaderships are united by a desire to see Labor elected. They share an approach that minimises potentially embarrassing demands before elections in the hope that the ALP can be lobbied once in office.

We are all desperate to see the end of this racist, reactionary anti-worker Morrison government.

However, history shows that Labor is prepared to sacrifice workers’ interests if it thinks that will help the viability of Australian capitalism.

The task for socialists continues to be to encourage independent activity by workers, to fight the Liberals until the last and to make it clear to Labor that if they do not deliver, we will continue the fight with them, too.

AUSTRALIAN SOCIALISM AND THE RUSSIAN REVOLUTION

Adam Adelpour looks at the impact of 1917 on the workers' movement in Australia

THE RUSSIAN Revolution of October 1917 shook the world. Its reverberations reached across the globe to Australia and left a mark that still lasts today.

The revolution itself saw Russian workers and peasants topple the 300 year old Romanov Monarchy in February 1917. By October they had overthrown the capitalist Provisional government led by Alexander Kerensky. The October revolution placed an immense country of 150 million under the rule of democratic workers' and peasants' councils, called "soviets".

It was the first time in human history that the exploited majority had seized power across an entire country.

The changes introduced by Soviet power were immense. Russia withdrew from the war and granted self-determination to nationalities formerly oppressed by the Romanov Empire. The landlords were dispossessed and the land handed to the peasants that worked it. Major industries were nationalised and placed under workers' control. For the first time in the world divorce was fully legalised. Homosexuality was decriminalised. It was what Bolshevik leader Vladimir Lenin described as a "festival of the oppressed".

The revolution was a beacon for all those that suffered under capitalism; its barbaric wars, its ceaseless exploitation and its brutal oppression. As Victor Serge, a French anarchist who joined the Bolsheviks, recalls:

"The newspapers of the period are astonishing... riots in Paris, riots in Lyon, revolution in Belgium, revolution in Constantinople, victory of the soviets in Bulgaria, rioting in Copenhagen. In fact the whole of Europe is in movement, clandestine or open soviets are appearing everywhere, even in the Allied armies; everything is possible, everything."

The combination of anti-war sentiments and economic grievances had

already created a working class radicalisation in Australia. In September 1917 the Australian ruling class was shaken by a general strike of 100,000 workers across NSW and Victoria; the biggest strike in Australian history.

At the same time, the campaign against conscription had mobilised unionists and the Labor Party rank-and-file, creating a mood of defiance.

Labor Prime Minister Billy Hughes was an enthusiastic supporter of the war effort, determined to bolster troop numbers that could no longer be met through voluntary enlistment. In 1916 he called a plebiscite designed to impose conscription. But against the backdrop of a growing Allied death toll, wage cuts and the savage British repression of the Easter Uprising in Ireland, Hughes only provoked working class rage. He lost the referendum and was expelled from the Labor Party.

As in Europe, Australia's ruling classes were keen to discredit the revolution. Its effect on the Allied war effort enraged them; and they dreaded the Bolshevik example would inflame radicalism on the home front.

As early as June 1917, Billy Hughes said he would prefer a pro-war Tsarist tyranny to a revolutionary Russia that withdrew from the war. Hughes denounced the revolution as a German plot and, "the most formidable manifestation of German propaganda that... since the outbreak of the war has been unceasingly working in the territories of the Allies and has dealt a deadly blow to our cause."

The capitalist press sang from much the same song sheet. The newspapers carried endless false reports about the imminent fall of the Soviet government, and labelled revolutionaries as German agents.

On 13 November, days after the revolution, the *Sydney Morning Herald* reported that "the liquidation of the Bolsheviks is only a matter of

Unionists reacted with enthusiasm to news of the October revolution

days". This wishful thinking continued for some time. On 27 December it still insisted that the Soviets faced imminent defeat and Lenin was "preparing to flee".

Workers welcome soviet power

In contrast, unionists in Australia reacted with a general enthusiasm to news of October, albeit often without a clear understanding of its significance. In most cases it was welcomed as a general victory for workers and a legitimate blow to tyranny.

Trades Halls flew red flags and passed motions declaring support. The ALP Federal Conference in Perth extended its congratulations. A NSW Labor Council resolution stated:

"We rejoice in the revolution in Russia and congratulate the people of that country on their efforts to abolish despotism and class privilege, and urge workers of other lands where similar conditions exist to follow their example with the same magnificent courage and determination."

However, the phrase "where similar conditions exist" indicates the reservations that were already surfacing about the applicability of the Russian example in Australia. These were made more explicit by ALP supporters in the pages of the Australian Workers Union's newspaper. Here it was argued that the Labor Party, purged of treacherous leaders, was a potentially revolutionary force; that in Australia, social democratic reformism would suffice to bring about socialism.

Labor and socialism

There were serious attempts to commit the Labor Party to introducing socialism through parliament in the period following 1917. The radicalisation within the labour movement, combined with the Russian example, saw a record number of successful motions advocating nationalisation at the ALP conference in 1919.

There was serious leftward pressure on the party both as a product of its leaders' betrayals and the desire to emulate the Russian Bolsheviks in forming a separate Communist Party. The General Secretary of the Miners Federation led a number of unions to break away in 1919 and form the "Industrial Socialist Labor Party". The NSW Labour Council participated in the formation of the Communist Party, through the influence of its Secretary Jock Garden.

In response, the ALP Federal Executive call a conference of all trade unions to "find a surer and shorter road to the socialist objective" in 1920. The 1921 ALP Federal conference adopted a "socialist objective", stating the ALP aimed at the "democratic socialisation of industry, production, distribution and exchange". Ted Theodore, the Queensland ALP Premier, complained that if the objective was adopted they, "might as well change their name to the Communist Party and be done with it". However, he had nothing to fear. After seeing off the pressure from the left, the ALP leadership qualified the objective to the point of meaninglessness, and shunted it off into obscurity.

The objective survives officially even today. However, its adoption ultimately represented an attempt to keep left-wing elements inside the Labor Party where they remained captive to its right-wing parliamentary leadership.

The small socialist groups that existed in Australia at the time recognised the significance of Russia's example far more clearly. They saw in it a vindication of the revolutionary strategy they had been advocating since the 1880s. They responded with a flurry of meetings that crowded parks and street corners around the country.

Russian political exiles in Australia also helped to shape understanding of the October revolution.

Many of them were political veterans who had escaped prison after the earlier attempted revolution had been crushed in 1905. Among them were Bolsheviks like Peter Simonoff, who became the Bolshevik consul-general in Australia, and Alexander Zuzenko, who headed the Union of Russian Workers in Brisbane.

The views of Russian exiles had a considerable impact among Russian migrants more generally. At the time of the October revolution, police files on labour unrest at Queensland's Mount Cuthbert mines complain that 70 per cent of the Russians working



Above: An image used by the Comintern, or Communist International, which aimed to help organise revolutionary parties outside Russia

there supported the revolution.

Communist Party of Australia

The Russian revolution only succeeded due to the new kind of mass revolutionary socialist party built before the revolution. The new Soviet government almost immediately set to work trying to spread revolution beyond Russia. It established the Communist International or Comintern, aimed at promoting the formation of revolutionary socialist parties around the world.

In October 1920 a conference of socialist and left-wing groups in Sydney resolved to form the Communist Party of Australia (CPA) and seek affiliation. Its formation was the most significant long-term consequence of the Russian revolution in Australia.

The CPA aimed to draw together the revolutionary minority of workers into a party in the tradition of the Russian Bolsheviks. This would be a party of activists that could win influence in the working class through leading struggles. This stood in sharp contrast to the ALP which aimed to encompass the widest possible sections of the working class in order to win elections. At first the CPA struggled to chart a course between the sectarian anti-Labor approach of some of the socialist sects that founded it and an unprincipled effort to curry favour in-

side the Labor Party by other sections.

The onset of the great depression in the 1930s saw the CPA develop into a mass activist party. As the existing union leaderships beat a path of retreat, the CPA organised the thousands of the unemployed and won wage increases on relief projects through the Unemployed Workers' Movement. It also built a rank-and-file base in the unions, leading major disputes from the cane fields of Queensland to the mines of Wonthaggi in Victoria. Following the Second World War it could boast a membership of around 12,000 and a powerful base in the unions, not least amongst miners and metalworkers.

But Russia's revolution remained isolated. By 1928 the last elements of socialism had been replaced by the monstrous Stalin dictatorship. But the CPA continued to see Russia as socialist and obey every instruction from Moscow.

As the horrors of Stalinism became undeniable by the 1960s, the Communist Party began drifting to the right, eventually dissolving itself when Russian Stalinism collapsed in the early 1990s.

But the early years of the CPA and its effort to build a socialist party in Australia continue to hold lessons about how to build the revolutionary organisation that is still needed today.

DAYS OF HOPE THE 1918 GERMAN REVOLUTION

A revolution in Germany 100 years ago this month rocked Europe’s rulers. **Tomáš Tengely-Evans** looks at how the revolt put workers power on the agenda across Europe.

THE REVOLUTIONARY Karl Liebknecht proclaimed a “free socialist republic” from the balcony of the Imperial Palace in Berlin on 9 November 1918. Thousands of hands of armed workers and soldiers shot up when he asked, “Who wants the world revolution?”

Four years before, German Kaiser Wilhelm II addressed a patriotic crowd from the same balcony as Europe plunged into the First World War. Now a revolution had toppled the Kaiser and ended the slaughter.

Troops mutinied while workers organised mass strikes and demonstrations. In many parts of Germany they set up workers’ councils that challenged the political authority of the central government.

One newspaper report from Bavaria described how, “no elegant gentleman or well-to-do lady dared show themselves in the streets”. “It was as if the bourgeoisie had vanished,” it said. “Only workers—wage slaves—were to be seen. But they were seen with arms.”

The German Revolution showed the power of the working class to challenge those at the top of society.

The upheavals were part of a wave of revolt that swept Europe following the Russian Revolution. In October 1917 workers seized power and began running society through workers’ councils, called soviets.

But backward Russia was left isolated and under siege from remnants of the old order and Europe’s rulers.

Germany was one of the most advanced capitalist countries with a big socialist and working class movement. Vladimir Lenin, leader of Russia’s revolutionary Bolshevik party, warned, “Without a German revolution, we are doomed.”

Germany’s revolt gave the revolu-

tion a chance to succeed.

Germany’s revolution began when sailors at Kiel’s naval base mutinied. Faced with mounting desertions in the trenches and growing unrest from workers, the German High Command knew the war was lost.

The Kaiser was forced to accept a new government that included Social Democratic Party (SPD) ministers in October 1918. The SPD backed the war, but was still the largest and most influential working class party.

Germany’s rulers hoped its inclusion would placate workers and let them cobble together a peace treaty that kept the old order intact. They underestimated the severity of the situation.

Their British and French imperialist rivals sensed an opportunity to redraw the map of Europe in their interests. They wanted the Kaiser’s total surrender, not a negotiated peace.

So the German High Command ordered the Kiel fleet to take on the British in an attempt to avoid humiliating surrender terms.

Boilers

In Wilhelmshaven sailors put out the ships’ boilers to stop the fleet leaving port. Less than a week later on 23 October, Kiel exploded in revolt. Following a week of disobedience and demonstrations, a mass meeting of 20,000 people elected a sailors’ council.

By the following morning, it had political control of the whole town.

And within 48 hours, unrest had returned to Cuxhaven and Wilhelmshaven. Mass demonstrations and general strikes gripped both port towns, then people elected workers’ and sailors’ councils that took political control.

As the revolution spread across northern Germany, workers began to challenge some of the labour movement’s more moderate leaders.

As the revolution took hold, the future of German capitalism hung in the balance

In Hamburg there was a meeting of the Independent SPD, a left wing split from the SPD. Some of its members such as Karl Liebknecht and Rosa Luxemburg were revolutionary socialists grouped around the Spartacist League. Others were reformists, but opposed the SPD’s support for the war.

The Independent SPD meeting called for all imprisoned sailors to be freed, but rejected calls for a workers’ council. This wasn’t enough for large numbers of revolutionary workers.

A 100-strong group took over the sailors’ union headquarters and called for a demonstration the following day. Some 40,000 people came onto the streets and voted for a “republic of workers’ councils”.

A new revolutionary newspaper in the city, *The Red Flag*, proclaimed, “This is the beginning of the German Revolution—of the world revolution.”

Revolution swept through other big industrial cities. Only in the capital Berlin did the ruling class cling to power. SPD ministers thought their party’s working class roots would allow them to hold back revolt. And the German High Command thought loyal troops and the police could maintain order. Both were in for a shock.

Liebknecht issued a leaflet calling for revolution, which matched the mood of many workers and soldiers in Berlin. One newspaper report noted with alarm that the supposedly loyal “Kaiser Alexander Regiment has gone over to the revolution”.

Metal

Tens of thousands of workers in all Berlin’s factories joined a general strike. The revolt was led by Liebknecht, the Spartacists and the revolutionary shop stewards movement based around Berlin’s metal workers.

Columns of workers and soldiers seized the Imperial Palace and the police headquarters. Conservative chancellor Prince Max handed over his position to the SPD leader Frederick Ebert in an effort to hold back the workers' movement.

The right wing SPD leadership was solidly opposed to revolution and had even dropped opposition to the monarchy. But it couldn't openly oppose the workers who were revolting. When thousands marched on the Reichstag parliament building Ebert's right hand man, Philipp Scheidemann, was forced to address the crowd. In increasing desperation at the crowd's revolutionary demands he declared, "Long live the German Republic."

The monarchy was gone but the old ruling class, the generals and the bosses were still determined to regain the upper hand.

As the revolution took hold, the future of German capitalism hung in the balance. Scheidemann's proclamation came just two hours before Liebknecht declared the socialist republic. Which would win out?

The workers' councils did not make a bid to seize state power. Instead they gradually handed it back to the government. And revolutionary socialists lacked the organisation to successfully argue against the retreats.

The ruling class used the breathing space to launch a vicious counter-offensive. The SPD government and the German High Command organised a new paramilitary force to restore order. The Freikorps was made up of middle class officers and shock troops loyal to the old monarchy.

They waged a campaign of reactionary terror against the left and workers' movement. It culminated in the crushing of a rising in Berlin in January 1919 organised by the Spartacists and the murder of Liebknecht and Luxemburg.

Up until 1923 there were chances for revolutionary struggles to break through. And despite its defeat, the November Revolution showed the potential for the working class to fight for its own liberation—and to stop war.

In her last written words Luxemburg said, "The leadership has failed. Even so the leadership must be recreated from the masses and out of the masses. The masses are the decisive element, the rock on which the final victory is built.

"Tomorrow the revolution will already raise itself with a rattle and announce with fanfare to your terror: I was, I am, I shall be."

Socialist Worker UK



Above: A crowd in Berlin in 1918 gathers to hear a proclamation of the end of the monarchy

How the Social Democrats restored order

Spontaneous action by workers and soldiers drove the spread of the revolution in November 1918.

But the SPD played a decisive role in helping the ruling class to regain the upper hand.

Germany's rulers had repressed the SPD. Yet faced with revolution, they saw no other option than to bring it back into the fold.

Gustav Stresemann, a leading bourgeois politician, said, "A government without the Social Democrats during the next two years seems quite impossible. Otherwise we shall stagger from general strike to general strike."

The SPD was officially a Marxist party and called for socialism to replace capitalism. It had grown into the largest working class party in the world with over one million members. But while its leaders talked of Marxism, they increasingly focused on winning reforms within capitalism rather than replacing it altogether. Its leaders ended up seeking to defend the capitalist state and backed Kaiser Wilhelm II's declaration of war in 1914.

The SPD still had a massive sway among the working class. It had been at the forefront of pushing for workers' rights and its reformism fitted with the majority of working class people's ideas and experiences.

Most workers can see it's possible to win reforms, but view capitalism as the way of the world. And even when workers are part of

revolutionary struggles, not all draw revolutionary conclusions about the need to smash the whole system.

The strength of the SPD meant that its reformism had a big impact during the revolution.

When mutiny broke out in Kiel, the government sent right wing SPD politician Gustav Noske to "prevent the rising spreading through the fleet". The leaders of the sailors' council suggested he take over its chairmanship.

This put Noske into a position to try to contain the revolution.

The SPD used a similar method after the fall of the monarchy in November. It invited the Independent SPD, made up of revolutionaries and left reformists, to join a "revolutionary government". Liebknecht saw through its rhetoric.

The SPD tried to organise an assembly of workers' and soldiers' councils, but the SPD machine moved to pack the meeting and marginalise revolutionaries.

There were opportunities for the revolutionary left. When the Communist Party (KPD) was formed in December 1918, it could draw on the support of tens of thousands of workers who looked to revolutionary change.

But the KPD was founded late and lacked the experiences of struggle. Many workers were unsure of who to put their trust in—and were pulled by reformist ideas. KPD leaders such as Luxemburg had trouble winning the large numbers of newly radicalised workers to the need for revolution.



KIDS OFF VICTORY NOW GET EVERYONE OFF NAURU AND MANUS

By Ian Rintoul

AS *SOLIDARITY* goes to press there are less than 20 children left on Nauru. Only six months ago, it took desperately fought legal battles in the Federal Court to get orders forcing the government to bring life-threateningly sick children off Nauru to Australia.

But over September and October, momentum grew along with the World Vision campaign to get #KidsOffNauru by Universal Children's Day, 20 November. In mid-October, almost 6000 doctors signed a letter to the government calling for them to get children and their families off Nauru.

Three Liberal MPs indicated that they had delivered an ultimatum to Scott Morrison to get the children off.

When Kerryn Phelps won the Wentworth by-election, Morrison was desperate to avoid the possibility of the now-minority government losing a vote on the floor of Parliament.

On 27 October, thousands attended rallies in Sydney and Melbourne calling for "Kids Off, Everyone Off." Opinion polls showed 80 per cent in favour of getting kids and their families off Nauru.

Five days later, Scott Morrison announced that all children and their families would be brought to Australia by the end of the year.

This is a big win for the campaign against a brutal government implementing a brutal policy.

But there are still five separated fathers on Nauru along with hundreds of other couples, and single women and men—and hundreds more on Manus.

With the families off, Morrison and other Ministers have taken a hard line over shifting anyone else as the government intends to hold them hostage to their election campaign.

Tragically, but true to form, Labor has again shown itself to be more concerned to support offshore detention than to put the boot into Morrison. Independent MP Andrew Wilkie has submitted a bill to get families off and reunite separated fathers. With the support of Phelps and dissident Liberals in the lower house, Morrison could be defeated in parliament. But Labor is refusing to support it.

Rather than push to defeat Morrison, Labor offered to make concessions to support a modified lifetime ban bill as long as it only applied to those resettled in New Zealand. But the government is now as opposed as it ever was to doing any deal over New Zealand.

The government is clearly on the back foot over its refugee policy. The whole movement has been energised by this win against the odds.

The task now is to maintain the momentum and turn this blow against offshore detention into a sustained movement that will finish it off.

Back the teachers' stand

That is why the teachers' walk-out actions on 20 November in Melbourne and Brisbane are so significant.

In Melbourne, rank-and-file teachers have won unanimous support from the AEU Victorian Branch Council for a walk-out from 2.30pm, to attend a rally at the State Library at 3pm. In Queensland, teachers backed by the

Above: Children in detention on Nauru

QTU will walk out to attend a rally at 4pm in King George Square. This is a major development for the campaign, and can help galvanise the unions to take their support to a new level.

In Victoria, the teachers are urging other unions to bring contingents to their rally. RAC in Sydney has called a solidarity rally and is urging union members to show their support.

Despite the Victorian Labor government declaring its support for the campaign to let the medical transferes from Manus and Nauru stay in Australia, the Department of Education has issued instructions to principals no to allow leave for the teachers' walk-off. The need for the right to strike links the unions' Change the Rules Campaign with the campaign to Change the Rules for refugees.

Union support has been a crucial part of the refugee campaign since the beginning. There have been important union actions before, including at Lady Cilento hospital in 2016, where the Queensland Labor Council backed medical staff and coordinated pickets of the hospital defending baby Asha from being sent to Nauru.

Teachers at Yeronga State High School also took action in support of an Iranian asylum seeker from their school, Mojgan Shamsalipoor, helping win her release from detention in 2016.

But the teachers' 20 November walk-out action in two states is a breakthrough in union action in support of refugees. It can also help send a message from the union movement to the Labor Party conference in December, that Labor's support for offshore detention has to end.

In Melbourne, teachers have won unanimous support from the AEU Victorian Branch Council for a walk-out