

Solidarity

Issue No. 142 / November 2020

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MORRISON'S BUDGET FRAUD

JOBSEEKER CUT
BUT THERE'S
BILLIONS
FOR THE
BOSSES

centrelink



UNIONS

FASCISM

INDIGENOUS HISTORY

Wharfies face new
attacks on right to strike

Victory as Greece's
Golden Dawn jailed

William Cooper—beginning
the Aboriginal movement

Solidarity WHAT WE STAND FOR

Capitalism is a system of crisis and war

Capitalism is a system of competition, crisis, and war based on exploitation of workers, producing for profit not human needs. Although workers create society's wealth, they have no control over production or distribution. Through environmental degradation and climate change capitalism has become a threat to humanity's future and life on earth.

Workers power and socialism

The working class has the power to challenge the existing system and create a better world. We stand for socialism, a society based on democratically elected workers councils which would control and plan the economy to produce for human need. The authoritarian states like Russia and China are not socialist but forms of state capitalism where workers have no power.

What about elections and parliament?

Parliament, the army, the police and the courts are institutions of the capitalist state that maintain the dominance of the ruling class over the rest of society. The capitalist state cannot be taken over and used by the working class, it must be smashed. Workers need to create their own state based on workers councils.

While parliament can be a platform for socialists, real change doesn't come through parliament. It is won by mass action in strikes, protests and demonstrations.

We are internationalists

The struggle for socialism has no national boundaries. We oppose everything that turns workers from one country against those from another; we campaign for solidarity with workers in other countries.

We oppose borders and immigration controls, and welcome migrants and refugees.

We oppose imperialism and support all

genuine national liberation struggles. We oppose Australian nationalism.

Australia is an imperialist power established through genocide on stolen Indigenous land. We support the continuing struggles of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people for land, justice and self-determination.

Oppression and liberation

We oppose sexism, racism, homophobia and transphobia. We fight against all forms of discrimination and the oppression of women, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people, migrants, and lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender and intersex people. We oppose discrimination against Muslims and people from the Middle East.

Linking up the struggles

We are active building movements for environmental and social change and economic equality. We are active in our unions and work to build the organisation and self-confidence of the rank and file. We work to bring activists together to strengthen each movement and build a common struggle against capitalism.

Educate, agitate, organise

Socialism cannot be introduced from above, by parliament or parties. The emancipation of the working class is the act of the working class itself.

Solidarity is an organisation of activists, anti-capitalists and revolutionary socialists committed to socialism from below. We are part of the International Socialist Tendency.

A democratic revolutionary party is necessary to deepen resistance to capitalism and to build a movement to overthrow the system. Solidarity members are beginning to build such a party out of today's struggles against the system.

SOLIDARITY MEETINGS AND BRANCHES

National

Online meetings via Zoom
6.30pm every Thursday
See fb.com/soliaus/events for details or contact solidarity@solidarity.net.au

Sydney

For more information contact:
Adam on 0400 351 694
sydney@solidarity.net.au

Melbourne

For more information contact:
Chris on 0403 013 183
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:
canberra@solidarity.net.au

CONTACT US

Magazine office

Phone 02 8964 7116
Fax 02 9012 0814

Email

solidarity@solidarity.net.au

Website

www.solidarity.net.au

Facebook

Search for "Solidarity Magazine" or go to fb.com/soliaus

Twitter

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Solidarity No. 142

November 2020

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.

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

5 issues—\$15 One year (12 issues)—\$36 Two years (24 issues)—\$65

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Cheques payable to Solidarity Publishing. Send to PO Box 375 Strawberry Hills NSW 2012.

Things they say

Nobody has to be punished. No one's standard of living will change, nothing would fundamentally change. Joe Biden to a gathering of wealthy donors at the Carlyle Hotel in Manhattan, promising not to increase their taxes

I know nothing about it. I do know they are very much against pedophilia. They fight it very hard, but I know nothing about it. Donald Trump trying to pretend he doesn't know about the QAnon conspiracy theory

I let my guard down for a couple of days inside the White House grounds and it cost me in a significant way. Republican and Trump backer Chris Christie after spending seven days in intensive care with COVID-19 contracted at the White House

I'd like to say 'you don't make a lot of money in responding to a pandemic, you do it in preparing for a pandemic. Bill Mezzanotte, CSL executive vice president, announcing a new project with the US government to produce bird flu vaccine

The marketplace by itself cannot resolve every problem, however much we are asked to believe this dogma of neo-liberal faith.
Pope Francis

Women can take advantage of driving on new infrastructure and roads, so to suggest the budget doesn't focus on women is wrong.
Liberal Senator Anne Ruston

There has been an unfortunate accident where my phones and iPad have been run over with a tractor. Disgraced former Liberal MP Daryl Maguire (via business associate Maggie Wang). He managed to lose a USB drive the same way

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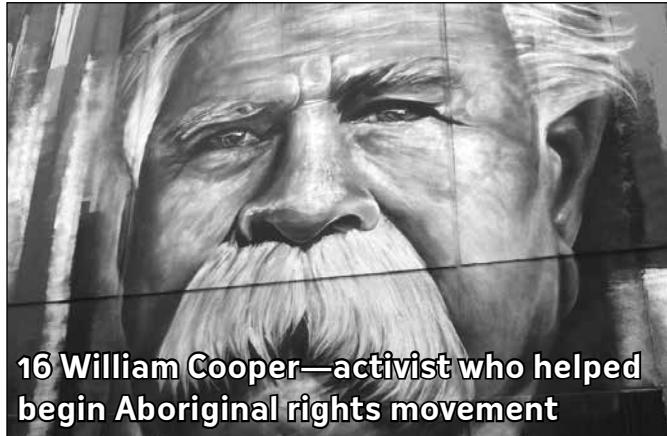
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INSIDE THE SYSTEM

Abetz demands Chinese loyalty pledge

LIBERAL SENATOR Eric Abetz has used a Senate committee to demand a loyalty oath from Chinese Australians giving evidence there. Abetz opened his questioning by demanding three Chinese Australians, “unconditionally condemn the Chinese Communist Party dictatorship” as part of their evidence.

The committee was considering issues within multicultural and diaspora communities, but the Chinese Australians were singled out.

One of those questioned, ANU researcher Yun Jiang, noted that, “similar questions were not asked of other people”. Even the government’s hand-picked Race Discrimination Commissioner was appalled, commenting, “No Australian should have their loyalty to this country questioned or undermined because of their ethnic origin, nor should they be required to prove their loyalty”.

Rich pandemic buy beach homes

THE RICH are buying up luxury beach homes during the pandemic, with real estate agents reporting strong sales on multi-million dollar get-aways.

Border closures and lockdowns mean they are looking to stack up yet another holiday property onto their portfolio. James Baker from McGrath Real Estate in Avalon told Mansion Global that, “for many who have holiday homes in New York, Greece or closer to home on Hamilton Island in Queensland, they can’t get to them.”

“They’re very wealthy and they want to know they’ve got a place to get away to.”

In the NSW Northern Beaches, one property, described as a “luxurious five-bedroom, five-bathroom property” attracted three offers before selling for \$5.5 million. Another beachfront house in Byron Bay on Marine Parade sold for between \$20 and \$22 million through LJ Hooker Avnu.

In Noosa Heads in Queensland, “COVID has kicked our premium market forward significantly,” Century 21’s David Conolly said. In September two apartments sold privately for \$3.5 million and a waterfront home went for \$6.4 million after 150 enquiries.

NSW Premier turns a blind eye to corruption



NSW Premier Gladys Berejiklian seems to have turned a blind eye to corruption by her then boyfriend, disgraced former Liberal MP Daryl Maguire.

Maguire has admitted to the NSW Independent Commission against Corruption (ICAC) that he used his parliamentary office to run a cash for visas scheme, and worked to get access to Ministers for property developers when he stood to gain payments from the developments. He even gave out the Premier’s personal email to business contacts.

Berejiklian has admitted to a “close personal relationship” with Maguire over five years, but says she knew nothing of his corrupt dealings. However the Commission heard a recorded phone call where Maguire boasted about a deal that could help pay off his debts where Berejiklian replied, “That’s good. I don’t need to know about that bit”.

In another call Maguire told the Premier that he had been helping racing heir Louise Raedler Waterhouse with a property development issue where she had, “got a big problem so I took her up to your office and said, ‘Here can you help solve it.’” Maguire brought one of Berejiklian’s staff into the meeting to help get Waterhouse permission to build a road through land she owned.

He admitted to ICAC there were parts of his business dealings that the Premier had not wanted to know about.

But before she became Premier in 2014, a text message exchange shows that Berejiklian knew he had received a commission on a property deal while serving as an MP.

The issue here is not the NSW Premier’s choice of partner, but how much she knew about his corrupt dealings—and why she did nothing about them.

Corporate advice doesn't come cheap

SCOTT MORRISON’S hand picked COVID commission of CEOs and gas company executives has had its budget swell to \$6.5 million over two years.

The body now has 20 staff and sits in an exclusive position within the Prime Minister’s own department. Commissioners are also paid \$2000 a day to work a maximum of two days a week.

Originally set up to help problem solve during the pandemic it has now become a personal advisory body for the Prime Minister to “provide advice to the government from a business and industry perspective”, as chair Nev Power puts it.

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

Fortescue refuses to pay royalties after destroying Indigenous land

ANDREW FORREST’S Fortescue Metals has withheld royalty payments to an Indigenous group since February, in retaliation for holding up further proposed mining leases on their land.

The Wintawari Guruma Aboriginal Corporation (WGAC) represents the Eastern Guruma people, native title holders in the East Pilbara in WA. They have a number of agreements with Fortescue and Rio Tinto over mining activity. Fortescue has withheld \$1.9 million in payments since February, the group told a parliamentary inquiry.

“FMG routinely withholds information from the corporation, contrary to the terms of our agreement,” the WGAC’s Joselyn Hicks told ABC news. Mining companies showed “little respect” for the Indigenous owners, she said.

The group refused to sign off on another mining lease earlier this year, asking for more information on its impact on sacred sites. “We know that when FMG is granted their mining leases, then we have no power to stop them destroying our sites and causing damage to places we care about”, Hicks said.

There have already been 434 heritage sites on their territory destroyed by mining, with another 285 inaccessible to traditional owners because they are near developments.

Billionaire wealth hits new record

BILLIONAIRES SAW their wealth rise 27.5 per cent during the first part of the pandemic, a report by UBS investment bank and PricewaterhouseCoopers has found. As millions lost their jobs and poverty rose in many countries, the stockmarket was boosting the super-rich.

Billionaires controlled \$14.2 trillion as a result on 31 July. Tech billionaires did even better, with their wealth up 40 per cent. The report followed the wealth of 2189 billionaires worldwide.

EDITORIAL

Morrison's recovery plan means cuts and casualisation—it's time to start the fightback

WHILE SCOTT Morrison's budget has handed tens of billions of dollars to business in tax breaks and wage subsidies, workers will be expected to sacrifice to deliver any economic recovery from the pandemic.

There are now almost one million unemployed, and another 200,000 who have stopped looking for work altogether. Yet JobSeeker payments have been slashed.

Treasurer Josh Frydenberg says unemployment won't fall below 6 per cent for at least another two years, but the Liberals are determined to maintain the status quo and protect profits. So aged care homes will left in private hands while the government refuses to provide the money needed for more staff and qualified nurses.

Despite spending gigantic sums, the Liberals have ignored the enormous social need in aged care, childcare, health and the transition to a carbon-neutral economy. The billions going to the bosses could have funded climate action and created hundreds of thousands of jobs to fund renewable energy, but Morrison is wedded to fossil fuels and his illusions of a "gas-led recovery".

Childcare services were briefly made free, for those that needed them while the country was under lockdown. But the Liberals have been completely unwilling to extend this.

The JobKeeper wage subsidy is being wound back, disappearing altogether next March. JobSeeker payments have already been cut, and are set to be cut back to pre-COVID poverty levels of just \$40 a day in December.

While Labor waved the government's business handouts through parliament, Leader Anthony Albanese has re-positioned Labor in the wake of the Morrison's budget. Albanese is promising to spend \$6.2 billion expanding childcare subsidies, and to "investigate" funding 90 per cent of the costs for everyone.

However Labor, too, has been careful to appeal to business, stressing that its child-care proposal was a "substantial economic reform" that would "boost productivity" for the bosses.

Albanese also gestured towards action on climate change, saying Labor would fund an overhaul of the electricity grid to accommodate



Above: Morrison is subsidising business instead of helping the unemployed

renewable energy. It is a small shift from Labor, but it is a far cry from the action that will be needed to drive a rapid transition to renewable energy, transport, buildings and land management.

Workers' rights

Morrison is also preparing new workplace legislation to provide further "flexibility" for employers to drive down workers' conditions and boost profits. His vision for economic recovery is based on the capitalist dream of forcing workers to accept lower pay and more casualisation.

Despite months of roundtable discussions between employers and the ACTU, the government is now determined to make its own decision on what will be included in the new workplace laws.

Morrison's appalling attack on the MUA over its dispute with Patrick is an indication of what he is planning.

Although the MUA was in a bargaining period for a modest wage increase and defence of existing conditions, Morrison lied about ships being held at sea and accusing the union of, "engaging in a campaign of extortion... in the middle of a COVID-19 recession".

University staff have been among the worst affected by the COVID recession. So far nearly 12,500 staff have been sacked, almost 10 per cent of the workforce. The cuts are still coming, but the union leadership has done little to fight the jobs massacre.

The push for the NSW NTEU post-budget rally on 13 October came from the rank and file. It was small, but it was

a step forward—and won authorisation in the Supreme Court so police could not issue fines.

Student protests against cuts at Sydney University have defied the police, despite one activist being charged, and over \$50,000 in COVID fines. There was widespread criticism of the police after they assaulted a law professor who was there as a legal observer.

Defiance and the push for the right to protest have won some concessions. NSW regulations now allow COVID-safe protests of up to 500. Students and unions will need to seize the opportunity to get back on the streets and organise even more significant protests.

Staff and student action can stop the cuts. At Macquarie Uni, plans to axe the Gender Studies major were reversed after an outcry and campus demonstrations. A number of history courses at Sydney Uni were saved following protests before the start of semester.

But it will take action on a much wider scale, involving larger numbers of students and staff, to reverse the campus cuts and force Morrison to deliver higher funding. This means planning for strike action in defiance of the law.

We need to fan every flame of resistance to Morrison and his corporate agenda. Larger protests of staff and students can build momentum and confidence and point to the kind of fightback that will be needed as the economy slumps deeper into recession.

Morrison's vision for economic recovery is forcing workers to accept lower pay and more casualisation

Gas plans designed to label climate action a threat to jobs

By Caitlin Doyle

THE NARRABRI gas project in northwest NSW's Pilliga region has been approved by the NSW Independent Planning Commission, despite widespread opposition amongst scientists, environmentalists, traditional owners and local farmers.

The \$3.6 billion project, proposed by the oil and gas giant Santos, would involve up to 850 coal seam gas wells across a 95,000 hectare site, which includes the Pilliga state forest and nearby grazing land. The wells would reach a kilometre underground and extract around 200 terajoules of gas every day for the next 20 years for domestic use, around 50 per cent of current consumption in NSW.

The project, for which the Planning Commission attracted almost 23,000 submissions, with 98 per cent opposed, is a disaster for both the local environment and the climate. Scientists predict the Narrabri gas fields will contribute almost 130 million tonnes to Australia's greenhouse gas emissions over the life of the project, and also poses serious dangers to local biodiversity and the groundwater that supplies local agriculture.

The project is a key part of the Morrison government's "gas-fired economic recovery", which would see Australia massively expand production of natural gas. Morrison claims the shift to gas will create thousands of new jobs and reduce energy prices, while also reducing carbon emissions.

But the claim that natural gas is a low-emission fuel has been widely debunked by climate scientists, who point to the fact that most calculations do not take into account the release of methane—a particularly potent greenhouse gas—during mining. And while Santos has said it will be able to deliver gas at \$6.40 per kilojoule, revised down from \$9.36 in its last minute submission, economists have cast doubt over the argument that it will reduce gas prices either.

Budget and renewables

The federal budget in October could have been an opportunity to deal with the growing climate crisis. Massive public investment in renewable energy production could create hundred of thousands of new jobs at a time when 20 per cent of workers are effectively unemployed, and drastically cut carbon emissions at the same time.



Above: There is deep opposition to the Santos development around Narrabri from local Indigenous people and farmers

Instead, the federal government poured money into propping up the fossil fuel industry, including \$53 million to gas and \$8.7 million to upgrade the Vales Point coal power station in NSW.

Unions and the climate movement will need to oppose the expansion of the destructive gas industry in Australia and continue fight for serious investment in publicly-owned, renewable energy.

Pay cut for NSW workers on pandemic frontline

OVER 400,000 public sector workers in NSW will have their pay rise slashed to just 0.3 per cent this year, following a decision in the Industrial Relations Commission.

It follows the NSW Liberal government's demand that they forego a pay rise, so it can save money during the COVID recession.

They include paramedics, nurses, teachers and other workers who have been on the frontline of responding to the pandemic, and are some of those most at risk of infection through their jobs.

NSW public sector workers have had their wage rises held to just 2.5 per cent for the past nine years.

Despite earlier promises the NSW Liberal government has now also refused to commit to restoring their 2.5 per cent pay rise next year.

"We didn't expect this level of disrespect," Alicia Rodgers, the nurses' union branch secretary at Nepean Hospital told *The Lamp*.

"Day in, day out, nurses and midwives turn up to work to fight COVID-19, knowing full well the risk of exposing ourselves and our families. This is not how you treat

our dedication and commitment."

Although Unions NSW Secretary Mark Morey said union leaders would "think about our legal options and our industrial options", there is no sign of any industrial response.

Since the beginning of the pandemic, Scott Morrison has demanded workers accept pay cuts, loss of shifts and changes to conditions to encourage employers to keep them in a job.

Too many union leaders have gone along with this instead of defending workers' pay and conditions.

The ACTU even agreed to sit down with employers in a series of government-sponsored working groups to consider changes to workplace laws—as if this would produce anything for workers. After their collapse ACTU Secretary Sally McManus was still claiming that, "agreement could be reached if employers also looked to find common ground".

But employers are only interested in finding ways to maintain their profits. To defend our pay and conditions, even in the context of the COVID recession, we are going to have to fight for them.

The project is a key part of the Morrison government's "gas-fired economic recovery"

Union should defy bosses' and the Liberals' effort to ban strikes

By Michael Douglas

SCOTT MORRISON has threatened wharfies at Patrick Terminals with federal government intervention for daring to request a pay rise “in the middle of a COVID-19 recession” accusing them of “a campaign of extortion against the Australian people”. His comments repeated hysterical and dishonest claims from Patrick’s media campaign against the union.

Morrison has claimed that “we’re all in it together” to protect jobs and tackle the pandemic. But his extraordinary attack showed what he really means—that workers must accept cuts and sacrifices to help restore bosses’ profits.

Workers at Patrick are all members of the Maritime Union of Australia. Their Enterprise Agreement (EA) expired in June. After the pandemic began, the union offered Patrick a rollover of their existing agreement for one year with a 2.5 per cent pay rise.

Instead in July Patrick offered a miserable 1.5 per cent annual pay increase locked in for four years that would barely keep pace with inflation. Patrick also proposed slashing 50 pages of conditions from the EA—clauses that govern rosters, hours of work, breaks during and between shifts to ensure safety, family-friendly provisions, rights to training, and limits on casualisation.

Their greed and arrogance forced wharfies to sacrifice pay by going on strike to defend hard won conditions. But under the Fair Work Act the MUA even faces bans on strike action during the period of EA negotiations, where it is supposedly protected.

Patrick is notorious for putting profits ahead of workers’ safety and job security. The previous Patrick EA took two years to complete.

Patrick is also infamous for conspiring with government. In 1998 Patrick locked out its entire unionised workforce and attempted to replace them with a scab workforce of ex-military mercenaries secretly trained in Dubai, all with the support of Liberal Prime Minister John Howard.

In August, after months of negotiations, workers at Patrick were balloted for protected industrial action. The union staged “a single 4-hour stoppage”, according to the MUA Sydney branch, “along with bans on working excessive hours.”



Above: The MUA has campaigned for the right to strike, and needs to defy the efforts to ban industrial action

The MUA then provided Patrick with several weeks’ notice that workers would strike for one day in October in Sydney and Brisbane. The response from Patrick was hysterical.

Banning strike action

Patrick immediately applied to the Fair Work Commission to ban all industrial action and launched a media campaign slandering the union.

Patrick claimed there was a backlog of 40 container ships sitting off the Sydney coast unable to be serviced at Port Botany which would take months to clear. But the actual backlog of ships was two and both were quickly cleared. The Patrick website confirmed to its customers that there were only minimal delays.

Patrick also claimed vital medical supplies were being delayed, some required for COVID-19 treatment. The claim was repeated by Health Minister Greg Hunt. Wharfies at Port Botany asked Patrick to identify any containers carrying medical supplies so they could be prioritised. The company was finally forced to admit that medical supplies had not been affected, after industry group Medicines Australia said no delays had been reported to the Therapeutic Goods Administration.

The company should have been punished after its lies were exposed, and its effort to use the law to stop legitimate industrial action defied. But instead union officials retreated.

In September, workers had the chance to take protected industrial action at the same time at Patrick, Hutchison, and DP World terminals

at Brisbane, Fremantle, Sydney, and Melbourne. Their protected action ballots included a motion agreeing not to work any sub-contracted ships.

This was an important step forward. Coordinated industrial action between workplaces has not been openly organised for decades on the wharves.

A common tactic of bosses during EA negotiations is to sub-contract the loading and unloading of ships to other companies. This has repeatedly allowed them to circumvent industrial action and defeat union campaigns to defend wages and conditions.

The MUA first called off industrial action at DP World, after the company ran to Fair Work for orders to terminate the union’s right to take strike action, fearing this would give Fair Work the final decision on the EA. The union accepted a 2.35 per cent pay rise.

Then they agreed to suspend all industrial action at Patrick, in the face of the company and the Liberal government’s moves to outlaw it through the Fair Work Commission. This was a missed opportunity to push back against restrictions on the right to strike.

A full hearing on the attempt to remove the right to industrial action at Patrick will begin on 26 October.

The anti-union rhetoric from Morrison against workers at Patrick is a taste of what is to come. Morrison is using COVID as an excuse to introduce new anti-worker laws, with draft legislation to be released in late October. It is going to take action in defiance of the law to defend workers’ rights.

Patrick applied to the Fair Work Commission to ban all industrial action

No time to delay in fight to save uni jobs

By Ruby Wawn

ACROSS THE Tertiary Education sector job cuts are coming in thick and fast, with international student revenue down and the Morrison government refusing to throw public universities a lifeline, denying staff JobKeeper payments. But private universities, including Notre Dame, Bond, Torrens, the University of Divinity and the Sydney campus of New York University all received an exemption.

At the Australian National University (ANU) 465 jobs have been lost, the University of New South Wales (UNSW) has made redundant 3.8 per cent of its workforce and at RMIT at least 1200 staff have been sacked. The actual number of jobs lost is unknown with many fixed-term and casual staff losing work hours or simply not having their contracts renewed.

Voluntary redundancy rounds have also been pushed through at a number of universities including RMIT, UTS, Macquarie University, Monash and UNSW.

We can't accept voluntary redundancies as inevitable. They will mean jobs lost permanently from the sector, and increased workloads for those who stay. And in a sector already plagued by casualisation and on-going wage theft, staff cuts inevitably mean cuts to the quality of education.

At most campuses the National Tertiary Education Union (NTEU) has done little to fight this, and in many cases is still pushing for workers to make concessions on wages and conditions.

However at the University of Sydney, the NTEU Branch has committed to campaigning against voluntary redundancies and lodged a change management dispute with the Fair Work Commission over the lack of consultation around the process.

With managers at Sydney University being asked to submit budget plans with up to 30 per cent cuts to staff budgets, the union is rightly concerned by the workload implications of voluntary redundancies.

Revenue losses for 2020 are better than initially projected and management is using the COVID crisis as cover for savage cuts and restructures that were already planned.

According to Sydney University NTEU Branch President Kurt Iveson, the University is now on track for



Above: NTEU members at Sydney Uni

a \$60 million surplus in 2020 and a projected surplus of \$100 million for the next five years.

Build the fight

In August a national assembly of university staff voted to support unprotected industrial action to fight job cuts. Protests and other forms of campaigning are vital to build towards this.

Given the difficulties of COVID restrictions, the NTEU NSW division rally on 13 October was an important step forward. Sixty union members gathered in Victoria Park in groups of 20 to protest Federal Education Minister Dan Tehan's funding reforms and the ongoing jobs crisis in the sector.

The rally was poorly advertised and no serious effort was made to turn out delegates. But it was significant that the union was able to successfully defend the protest in the NSW Supreme Court from police attempts to ban it using COVID rules.

This has opened up space for future, larger demonstrations against the cuts. Already the Sydney Uni NTEU branch has felt confident to call another protest against cuts and police repression on campus for 28 October.

Speakers at the 13 October rally included NTEU NSW State Secretary Michael Thomson, Greens Senator Mehreen Faruqi, Unions NSW Secretary Mark Morey and Sydney University NTEU Branch President Kurt Iveson.

NTEU NSW State Secretary Michael Thomson told the rally that it was important that members were gathering "under trying times"

because the "right to protest is central to what unions do." Workers' rights including leave and workload provisions, "were won because we struggled for them".

The protest also addressed the jobs crisis in the Tertiary Education sector with the NTEU estimating over 20,000 full-time equivalent jobs will be lost, with 30,000 workers being pushed out of the sector.

Ensuring the NTEU steps up the fight will require a push from activists across the campuses. The call for the October rally came initially from the National Higher Education Activist Network who got resolutions through the branch committees at Sydney Uni and UTS.

At the first members' meeting at UTS in three months on 21 October, a motion was overwhelming passed to organise a protest on campus for 18 November. This needs to spread to other campuses across Sydney and the rest of the country, to build a united struggle against the crisis facing the sector.

Across the board university management are sacking staff left, right and centre instead of drawing on their borrowing capacity and other non-staff saving measures to see out the crisis.

Unionists must stand together to challenge management's austerity measures and job losses. And we must continue to demand that the Federal government step in to fund the revenue shortfall. There can be an alternative vision for public education, but we're going to have to fight for it.

The University of Sydney NTEU Branch has committed to campaigning against voluntary redundancies

Defiant student protests fight to stop cuts at Sydney Uni

By Adam Adelpour

CUTS ARE raining down in universities across the country. Scott Morrison has managed to pass his Fee Hike Bill.

NSW Police have been breaking up attempts to protest these attacks, using the pretext of COVID-19 health orders.

But students at Sydney Uni have shown that it is possible to fight. Hundreds have mobilised repeatedly in the face of police repression. Students have walked out of classes, invaded the Vice-Chancellor's building, petitioned, passed motions and protested. Courses, jobs and hours have been won back.

Around 200 students and staff assembled for a "teach-in" protest and march against cuts and fees on 14 October. The protest came the day after the National Tertiary Education Union (NTEU) NSW Division held a staff protest of 60 people in Victoria Park, defeating a police attempt to stop the rally in the Supreme Court.

The police repression of the student protest has provoked a major public backlash. Law Professor Simon Rice was arrested, had his legs kicked out from under him and was pushed to the ground by police, despite not even being part of the rally. A number of students were also fined and brutally manhandled.

This has pushed the NSW government to relax protest guidelines, so that rallies of up to 500 people are now permitted.

The protest drew attention to students and staff who have been organising in Medical Science against massive cuts outlined in a "Draft Change Proposal". The cuts in individual departments and faculties must continue to be a key part of the campaign.

Oscar Chaffey, a student in the department, told the protest, "You'd think that amid a global pandemic the people who are trying to understand how diseases work would be some of the most important jobs to protect—but not according to Dean of the Faculty of Medicine and Health who has passed down brutal staff cuts. The School of Medical Sciences is actually going to fire the entire pathology and physiology departments and make them re-apply for half of the jobs that will be left. They are cutting pharmacology, the field that makes



Above: Campaigning against cuts at Sydney Uni

new drugs.

"I was talking to an academic who helps run the course that gives dentistry students clinical foundations so that they can do their placements in hospitals. Out of the seven staff who co-ordinate this course with dental degrees, five of them are about to lose their jobs.

"I may be one of the last students to graduate at this university studying physiology. I simply can't accept that."

Over 220 have signed a petition, dozens have participated in a photo petition against the cuts and Medical Science staff and students have mobilised for protests.

There are also looming cuts to student learning support which will hit international students particularly hard. Many students already face wait times of six weeks or two months when they try to book an appointment for assistance with their essays.

Building broader support

Mobilising hundreds has been a real achievement given the crackdown on the right to protest and the reduced numbers of students on campus. For the initial 16 September rally around 25 classes passed motions supporting the strike and hundreds signed a petition against the cuts. This took hour upon hour of conversations, stalls, contacting and lecture bashing to achieve.

Almost 120 students voted to strike in a student assembly in the lead-up. Two classes voted to move so

Police repression of the student protest has provoked a major public backlash

they could join the action, and another six adopted a position of "no penalty" for groups of students and individuals who left class to participate.

Another strength was the organisation of department and faculty contingents. These established organisation beyond the existing left and connected the protests to issues in individual departments. The law students' contingent grew from five on 16 September to 19 on 23 September. Medical Science students and staff have mobilised, drawing attention to the cuts they are facing. Philosophy, Linguistics, Government and IR, History, Art History, Architecture, Political Economy and others have also mobilised.

But it is a real challenge to build bigger, more disruptive and politically sharp actions. The 2012 job cuts campaign at Sydney Uni had rallies up to 1500 strong, and last year the climate strikes saw over 90 motions passed in lectures and 2200 join the September protest. This is significantly larger than the cuts campaign so far.

Resistance can deliver. In late September Executives at the Conservatorium of Music decided to cut the Jazz Course by 33 hours. This was reversed after a petition and collective pressure from students. The win followed a series of small protests and meetings about cuts at the Con in semester one.

In 2012 half of the academic jobs under threat at Sydney Uni were stopped by mass marches, occupations, student strikes and blockades. Every small fight creates sparks of resistance that can spread.

Billion dollar handouts for business in budget that fails workers and the unemployed

By James Supple

THE LIBERALS will shovel billions in subsidies and handouts to business and the rich, in a budget that fails those worst hit by the pandemic.

There are now close to one million people unemployed. They have already lost \$300 a fortnight in cuts to JobSeeker payments and face further cuts that would push them back well below the poverty line, living on just \$40 a day from the end of December. Yet high income earners have been handed big tax cuts.

Despite the crisis in aged care exposed in Victoria's COVID-19 second wave, resulting in over 660 deaths, there is nothing to boost staff or training in aged care centres.

And instead of taking the chance to fund the massive investment in renewable energy and climate transition that we need, there is money to prop up the Vales Point coal power station.

The largest tax cuts this year are for those earning over \$120,000. Treasurer Josh Frydenberg tried to claim that lower income earners get more back "as a proportion of tax payable".

But the size of the tax cuts for those earning \$40,000 are just \$580 a year extra compared to \$2430 for anyone earning over \$120,000. And the tax cuts for the rich are permanent, while those for low income earners expire after one year.

From 2024, when the next stage of the tax cuts kick in, the rich will rake it in. Anyone on \$200,000 will get back \$11,500 a year—including our overpaid federal politicians. But those on \$60,000 a year or less will get \$375 a year at most.

Not only is this hopelessly unfair, it is not even an effective way to boost economic demand, as the rich are much more likely to add the extra money to their savings rather than spend it.

The budget contains handout after handout for business. It is another exercise in neo-liberal trickle down economics that will punish workers.

The biggest new program is \$27 billion for investment incentives to allow businesses to buy new machinery and equipment. Instead of the government creating quality, well-paid



Above: Scott Morrison and Josh Frydenberg's budget shovels subsidies to business

jobs itself there will be a subsidy for businesses that employ new staff under the age of 35.

The government's push for more "flexible" work laws means many of them will be casualised and low paid. It is preparing new attacks on workplace rights to bring to parliament before the end of the year.

This is all designed to boost business profits at the expense of workers. And both measures will be open to almost every business in the country, regardless of whether they have suffered any losses due to the pandemic.

Morrison wants to ensure bosses reap the benefits from any economic recovery.

After years of record low wage growth, wages will actually go backwards in real terms over the next two years, even as the economy grows by 4.75 per cent next financial year.

Failure on jobs

Faced with the chance to borrow money at record low interest rates, the Liberals' focus is simply handing money to employers. The increase in spending on infrastructure projects is modest, at an average of around \$2.5 billion a year, mainly on building roads.

They have refused to fund the kind of investment that could have delivered a climate recovery, through projects like high speed rail between

cities, retrofitting buildings, and renewable energy.

Beyond Zero Emissions has produced detailed plans showing how this could create up to one million jobs. But this has simply been ignored.

The budget delivered nothing to fund social housing, despite widespread appeals from charities and economists alike.

The Everybody's Home campaign estimates that building 30,000 new social housing units could also create 18,000 jobs.

There is already a major shortfall of over 430,000 in public housing and affordable homes. This is set to get worse with a higher level of unemployment.

Hidden in the budget papers there are also some nasty cuts including \$41.3 million from homelessness services from next year, a cut of 5000 places from the annual refugee intake, and ongoing cuts to the ABC.

Scott Morrison and Josh Frydenberg have failed to produce a budget that either delivers on jobs, supports workers living standards or keeps the unemployed out of poverty.

As jobs keep disappearing with the end of the JobKeeper wage subsidy, unions and the left are going to have to fight for the measures we need to protect workers from the worst recession since the 1930s.

The budget is another exercise in neo-liberal trickle down economics that will punish workers

Protests at Indonesia uses pandemic to rip away workers' rights

By Vivian Honan

TENS OF thousands of Indonesians took to the streets from 6-8 October to protest the Widodo government's Omnibus Law on Job Creation. The bill is a blow to labour, indigenous and environmental rights.

The government rushed the bill through parliament ahead of schedule and without proper consultation. Unions fear that it will see an increase in job insecurity, lower wages, and a reduction in severance and paid leave.

Previous labour law stipulated that workers could only be employed for two years on fixed-term contracts, with one extension before being made permanent. Under the new bill, companies will be able to hire workers on insecure contracts indefinitely.

The outsourcing of jobs will become more rampant. Outsourcing was previously restricted to businesses' "non-core activities" but this requirement has been removed.

Changes to severance and paid leave will make it easier for employers to sack workers.

Changes to minimum wages will likely see many workers take a pay cut. Sectoral wages are to be scrapped while provincial wages will be determined either by inflation or economic growth.

Environmental organisations are also speaking out against the bill. Environmental Impact Assessments will only be required for "high risk business activities". The central government will also be able to approve investment in areas currently protected by a moratorium on deforestation. Indigenous groups fear the changes will lead to further land grabs.

Sickeningly, the Indonesian government has pushed through the law amid the COVID-19 pandemic. Indonesia has reported over 350,000 COVID-19 cases and more than 12,000 deaths. Despite the desperate need for greater healthcare and social assistance measures, the government has instead worked weekends to pass the Omnibus law.

The government has used COVID-19 restrictions on protests to pass the law, as well as other pro-business laws such as the Revision of the Coal and Mineral Mining Law.

Despite restrictions on the right to protest and the health risks involved, ordinary Indonesians have felt no other option but to mobilise in opposition to the bill. Statistics Indonesia



Above: A protest against the Omnibus Law in Indonesia

has reported a significant increase in poverty in Indonesia since COVID-19 hit. The Omnibus law will further entrench poverty.

Police repression has seen more than 1000 protesters in Jakarta alone arrested. The Jakarta Alliance of Independent Journalists reported at least seven journalists covering the protests experienced police violence, including

being punched and kicked and having their cameras seized.

Major unions plan on challenging the bill in the Constitutional Court. This, however, will be a long, drawn-out process unlikely to have a favourable outcome for workers. Strategic mobilisations and strikes, such as those that won significant wage rises in 2012, are key to opposing the bill.

Win for the left in Bolivian vote

AFTER ALMOST a year of an unelected right-wing government backed by the US, the people of Bolivia have voted to remove the coup regime.

Exit polls showed the Movement For Socialism (MAS) presidential candidate Luis Arce, the former minister of economy and public finance, had won the presidency with more than 50 per cent of the vote.

MAS is the party of Evo Morales who became the first indigenous president of the country in 2006.

Last year a right-wing coup backed by the police and the army—supported by the US—ousted Morales and forced him into exile.

Morales won his presidency on the back of mobilisations of mainly indigenous people in the early 2000s.

In power the administration granted more rights to indigenous people and cut poverty. But many were unhappy with his increasing closeness to agribusiness and energy multinationals.

Morales had been wrongly accused of election fraud by the Organisation of American States who demanded another election. He agreed to hold another vote but was still forced out.

In his place, conservative senator Jeanine Anez—who once described indigenous people as "satanic"—took over. She was backed by Trump in the US.

In the almost 12 months of the Anez administration supporters of MAS have faced persecution.

But mass protests undermined Anez. In August coup opponents dynamited Andean passes, scattered boulders across highways and dug trenches along rural roads. Sanitation workers in the city of Cochabamba led protests with what were described as "flaming brooms".

Although coup leaders were able to delay the election, the protests meant they could not avoid it entirely.

But this is far from the end of the struggle. The right will be seething at the election result and will seek further chances to assault the left.

The Bolivian people are showing that they firmly reject the right wing coup in their country in their continued support for MAS.

But only the mass mobilisation of workers outside parliament can win lasting change.

Sophie Squire
Socialist Worker UK

**Sickeningly,
the Indonesian
government
has pushed
through the
law amid the
COVID-19
pandemic**

Greek Nazis jailed after anti-fascist movement wins conviction

By David Glanz

THE LEADERSHIP of Greece's Nazi Golden Dawn party is behind bars, with leader Nikos Michaloliakos and six other former MPs sentenced to 13 years' jail and another 11 former MPs to between five and seven years.

A Golden Dawn member was sentenced to life for the 2013 murder of the anti-fascist campaigner and hip-hop artist, Pavlos Fyssas.

The sentencing follows a trial of 68 Golden Dawn members in which the court determined that the party was an organised crime group.

The outcome is a blow to Nazis everywhere. Tens of thousands of anti-fascists celebrated the verdict in the streets of Athens.

The news came as the Austrian fascist Freedom Party also suffered a setback, its vote in regional elections in the capital Vienna collapsing from 31 to 7 per cent. It went from being the second biggest party in the region to fifth.

Golden Dawn became Greece's third most popular party in 2012, entering parliament with half a million votes and 21 MPs.

Like all Nazi parties it had a dual strategy.

Alongside its "respectable" parliamentary presence it set out to build an army of thugs which could dominate the streets and strike terror into workers and the left.

Its parliamentary success helped it establish a network of offices where weapons could be stored and from which attacks could be launched.

From the early 1990s, Golden Dawn groups attacked migrants and left wingers on many occasions. Economic crisis in 2009 gave them the opportunity to grow.

Among the instances heard by the court was the attempted murder of Abuzid Embarak and three other Egyptian fishermen during a raid on the migrant workers' home in 2012.

Golden Dawn members were also found guilty of a brutal assault on members of the Communist Party of Greece and its PAME trade union.

Other attacks included an anti-migrant pogrom in the centre of Athens in 2011 and the murder of 28-year-old Pakistani Sakhzat Lukman.

The Nazis set out to terrorise migrant and refugee communities, trying to eject migrants who were selling in markets and checking how many



Above: Unions and the left demonstrate outside the court case on the day the verdict was handed down

children of refugees there were in kindergartens.

Anti-fascist movement

For a long while Golden Dawn got away with it, given cover by Greece's conservative New Democracy government and its own racist anti-migrant agenda.

But anti-fascists were determined to build a movement that could stop them.

Petros Constantinou from the anti-racist and anti-fascist movement KEERFA said: "Whenever even one refugee was attacked, we organised mass mobilisations with support from local authorities, trade unions, communities and the left, to get them out of the streets and also defend the migrants against police."

"In 2013 around 100,000 people mobilised locally city by city. There were Saturdays when there were seven demonstrations at the same time.

"Finally, in September 2013 they murdered [anti-racist rapper] Pavlos Fyssas, in the same area where they attacked trade unionists from the Communist Party.

"We managed to turn terror into a powerful movement.

"The same day he was murdered, 20,000 demonstrated. We campaigned for the trade unions to have a general strike against the fascists. They had already called a general strike around austerity.

"They decided to hold a concert. We didn't really agree with the

concert, but we organised a demo of 60,000 that marched on the headquarters of the Nazis."

The court case was not an alternative to mass mobilisations—in fact it was the movement on the streets that forced the government to act against Golden Dawn.

As Constantinou said: "Two days after the demonstration we woke up to see all 19 Golden Dawn MPs in handcuffs."

The case dragged on for more than five years. It took more rallies and protests to push it through to its conclusion.

The evidence in court helped undermine Golden Dawn's support and it lost all its seats in the 2019 election.

The jailing of the leadership marks the end of Golden Dawn.

But the threat of the far right will linger so long as there is economic misery and racism from the top of society.

Many Golden Dawn supporters switched their votes to New Democracy, which sheltered the far right after the Second World War and again following the collapse of a military junta in 1974.

As Greek journalist Yannis-Orestis Papadimitriou writes: "Golden Dawn's connections to both the political system and organised crime, the embrace of its agenda by the governing party, and its deep influence in the army and the police cannot be uprooted easily."

For now the Greek anti-fascist movement can celebrate. But there is still work to be done.

Golden Dawn became Greece's third most popular party in 2012, with half a million votes and 21 MPs

Biden no antidote to Trump's racism and the far right

By James Supple

MILLIONS ACROSS the world are horrified at the chance that Donald Trump could win again in the US presidential election on 3 November.

His rival, Democratic candidate Joe Biden, enjoys a huge lead in the polls.

Trump's own hospitalisation after he was infected with COVID-19 has only reinforced his disastrous and incompetent handling of the pandemic. Over 200,000 have died across the US, with infections still on the increase in a swathe of states across the northern mid-west.

But after Trump's shock win in 2014, few will write him off. If the result is close, there could be weeks of court challenges to dispute the outcome.

Trump could even call on his supporters to mobilise in an effort to pressure the courts. He has put encouraging far right violence at the centre of his re-election campaign, attempting to beat up a law and order scare over the nationwide Black Lives Matter protests, labelling the slogan a "symbol of hate".

During his first debate with Joe Biden, he refused to condemn white supremacists and militia groups, calling on the armed far right group "Proud Boys" to "stand back and stand by" and declared "somebody has got to do something about antifa and the left".

This was immediately used by the far right to rally their supporters.

In August, Trump defended 17-year-old Kyle Rittenhouse, after he shot dead two protesters at a Black Lives Matter rally in Kenosha.

Trump has consistently encouraged white supremacists and the far right during his time in office.

Trump himself is not a fascist. He did not come to power through the kind of violent street movements that genuinely fascist leaders have used to crush strikes and trade unions.

But he is providing circumstances in which fascist groups and the far right can grow.

Academic Alexander Reid Ross has documented, "64 cases of simple assault, 38 incidents of vigilantes driving cars into demonstrators, and nine times shots were fired at protesters" since the Black Lives Matter protests began on 27 May.



Above: Trump and Biden square off in one of the debates

Trump is feeding the polarisation in US society, but he is not its sole creator.

Inequality

Three decades of neo-liberal policies have crushed working class living standards and seen inequality rocket. Before the pandemic, income inequality was at its highest for 50 years.

As Kim Moody explained in his 2017 book *On New Terrain*, "So stagnant has been the income of the working-class majority that 30 per cent of the workforce... now relies on public assistance to get by."

Millions of Americans loathe the political elite who have presided over this.

In 2014, Trump tried to channel that anger by promising to bring back jobs and attacking a "rigged economy" run by "powerful corporations, media elites and political dynasties".

But under Trump, the COVID-19 crisis has made the situation far worse, pushing up unemployment and already alarming rates of poverty.

Joe Biden and the Democrats have no answer to these problems. He is another candidate of the corporate elite, taking at least \$70 million from finance and investment firms alone, according to non-profit Open Secrets.

He argues that he can end the chaos of the Trump administration and bring back business as usual. But it's precisely that approach which paved the way for Trump to take office.

Even if Trump loses, the danger from the far right will not disappear. He is more likely to become a regular

guest on Fox News and other right-wing media outlets, continuing to stir up racism and hate, than to disappear from the political stage.

His bluster about a rigged election and an establishment lined up against him will help fuel ongoing right-wing mobilisation.

And the base of the Republican Party is now firmly behind Trump, with Republican politicians adapting to this to secure their own careers.

Biden has no answer to this. But the far right can be driven back through mobilisation on the streets. In 2017 neo-Nazis and white supremacists from across the US gathered in Charlottesville.

Anti-racist activist Heather Heyer was murdered when one of them drove a car into a counter-demonstration.

In the aftermath far right protests across the US became impossible, after tens of thousands mobilised for counter-demonstrations against them whenever they tried to meet.

Another source of hope is the Black Lives Matter movement, the largest protest movement in US history according to the New York Times, which estimates 26 million people have taken part.

But Biden has already distanced himself from the movement's demands, and is not going to address structural racism and inequality. The real struggle for change in the US is going to have to happen outside the White House, through mass movements in the workplaces and on the streets.

Biden argues that he can end the chaos of the Trump administration and bring back business as usual

Armenia and Azerbaijan conflict fed by outside powers

By Tomáš Tengely-Evans

A LONG-RUNNING border dispute between Armenia and Azerbaijan has flared up with some of the heaviest fighting in four years.

The fighting underlines the potential for spreading military conflict in a world shaken by economic crisis and coronavirus.

Hundreds of troops have been killed from the two countries, straddling Europe and Asia. Two ceasefire agreements have failed to stop continued fighting. The clashes are over Nagorno-Karabakh, a disputed area located within Azerbaijan that has been ruled by Armenian separatist forces since 1991.

The fighting between Russian-backed Armenia and Turkish-backed Azerbaijan threatens to set off a wider regional war.

The Caucas Mountains region, which is crisscrossed by oil and gas pipelines, has become a focus for imperialist rivalries.

Azerbaijani rockets, shells, drones and bombs have pounded Armenian positions in Nagorno-Karabakh. It claims to have captured a number of villages to the south of Nagorno-Karabakh controlled by Armenia since 1994.

Armenia's prime minister Nikol Pashinyan said Azerbaijan had "declared war on the entire Armenian people once again".

He warned that the "situation could go beyond the region's borders and threaten international peace and stability" in an appeal for international backing from the West and Russia.

Outside powers

The West and Russia have tried to broker a ceasefire, fearing another prolonged war while their forces are focused elsewhere in the world. But the Turkish government—a member of the US-led warmongers' alliance Nato—is strongly backing Azerbaijan.

Armenian forces claim they are already facing Turkish F-16 warplanes and mercenaries.

Russia and Turkey have been ramping up tensions since July, when skirmishes in border areas killed four Armenian and 12 Azerbaijani soldiers.

Turkey and Azerbaijan carried out joint military exercises after the clashes. And Russia staged its own "surprise combat readiness check" with 150,000 troops, over 26,000



armaments, 414 aircraft and 106 warships nearby.

In the context of growing imperialist rivalries between the West, China, Russia and regional powers, a small clash could set off a deadly conflict.

Oil and gas interests

Oil and gas fuel imperialist rivalry in the Caucasus regions. Azerbaijan is a key energy and trade route between the US and Asia.

Its rulers want to export gas, which it has in the Caspian Sea, to European markets through the South Caucasus Pipeline Expansion Project.

The pipeline currently runs from Azerbaijan via Georgia to Turkey.

Their sponsor, Turkey, wants to become a chief exporter of oil and gas to the European Union.

Meanwhile, Russia wants to maintain some influence in both Armenia and Azerbaijan, but needs to contain a potential competitor to its gas exports to Europe.

The imperialist rivalries in the region are long-standing. After Russia's empire broke apart into 15 republics in 1991, its new rulers tried to maintain control over its former lands.

Free market shock therapy caused production to fall through the floor and devastated the military industry.

To build up influence, Russia relied on stirring up ethnic division and separatist conflicts in its "near abroad". Nagorno-Karabakh is a predominantly Armenian Christian region within the Muslim majority Azerbaijan.

Above: Hundreds of soldiers and dozens of civilians have died in fighting so far in Armenia and Azerbaijan

By 1991 Armenian separatists there had declared an independent republic, which isn't recognised by any state. In 1992 and 1993 Armenian troops—with Russia's backing—fought for control of Nagorno-Karabakh.

Destabilise

And when the conflict looked like it might destabilise Azerbaijan, Nato member Turkey threatened to bomb the Armenian capital Yerevan.

Meanwhile, US imperialism also sought to bring countries in Russia's "near abroad" into its orbit to cement its hegemony.

The US found willing partners among sections of the old Stalinist ruling class that was jockeying to keep its wealth and power.

In 2008 the US under President George W. Bush tried to bring Georgia, which borders both Armenia and Azerbaijan, further into the US orbit by granting it membership of NATO.

Georgia felt it would have sufficient backing to take military control of the disputed region of South Ossetia. But Russia launched an attack and inflicted a humiliating defeat on it.

After Azerbaijan declared independence, former KGB secret police chief Haydar Aliyev positioned himself as a key power broker and took control in 1993.

The former "communist" bureaucrat became a favoured friend of the West, doing deals with BP and other oil companies.

Socialist Worker UK

Azerbaijan is a key energy and trade route between the US and Asia

Our rulers benefit from racism, not ordinary white workers

**White Fragility:
Why it's so hard
for white people to
talk about racism**
By Robin DiAngelo

WHITE FRAGILITY is feeding a market hungry for ideas about how to join the fight against racism since the recent Black Lives Matter protests rocked the world.

Unfortunately, for workers seeking to build anti-racism in their workplace, this book is best read as a how-not-to guide. The book is actually built around author Robin DiAngelo's experiences of consistent, comprehensive failure to build anti-racist solidarity through the diversity training workshops she offers to businesses.

Rather than considering the flaws in her own identity politics theory and class-blind strategy, DiAngelo has doubled-down to conclude that white people are condemned to a pathetically fragile psychology and a permanently racist outlook. The best whites can do is to build up what she calls "racial stamina" and seize opportunities to be publicly called out (or given "feedback" as DiAngelo puts it.) There is no pathway to struggle and united resistance in this book.

White supremacy

A central flaw in DiAngelo's book is its acceptance that white supremacy means that all white people benefit from racism.

DiAngelo accurately describes the racially segregated society in the United States, and the racist ideology that enforces it. Most of her description could equally apply to Australia. Racism determines that in the scramble for jobs, housing, and education, white people consistently do better than



Black people. Systemic racist discrimination is disguised by meritocratic and individualistic illusions, which make it seem like white people fare better in general because of an innate or cultural superiority. So far, so true.

But DiAngelo accepts the myths pushed by the racists who run our society—that having white skin gives someone a stake in the system, and a material interest in participating in the oppression of Black people.

To support the theory of white supremacy, that all whites collectively hold power as a race, DiAngelo cites the domination of whites in ruling class positions—the richest and most powerful people in the US are, unsurprisingly, almost all white.

To DiAngelo, there is no difference between their power and the crumbs of relative advantage that (some) working class whites have, like, "a sense of belonging, a sense of self-worth, and the psychological freedom from racism". The theory of white supremacy says these crumbs are evidence of whites being complicit

Above: The Black Lives Matter protests have shown white people turn up in their thousands to fight racism

with systemic racism. In reality, despite the crumbs, white workers have more in common with black workers than their white bosses.

It is a tragic irony that in trying to break "white solidarity" DiAngelo actually focuses on convincing white people that they do have an interest in systemic racism. Her book is full of anecdotes of people in her work-

shops insisting otherwise, but DiAngelo turns their insight into grist for her (lucrative) diversity training mill. Having Black family members, participation in civil rights marches, having multi-racial co-workers, friends and neighbours, having experiences of other forms of oppressions all show how the lives and interests of Black and white workers intertwine, and the common interest we have in fighting racism.

But when her participants call attention to these common interests DiAngelo insidiously accuses them of refusing to own up to their racism and therefore their complicity in maintaining the racial status quo.

Class supremacy

DiAngelo acknowledges that race and racism were created to bridge the (bourgeois) ideology of social equality with the economic reality that the United States was based on, "the abduction and enslavement of African people and the displacement and genocide of Indigenous people and the annexation of Mexican

lands."

But, for DiAngelo, racism is no longer a tool used in the service of the ruling class, but something that upholds white supremacy with its own separate dynamic.

In reality, ruling classes around the world actively use racism to bolster nationalism and fear and justify oppression. While workers often accept their ideas, it is the ruling class that holds the levers of power, ideologically and economically. Workers do not create detention centres, run the racist media and police, set unequal pay rates, nor control the distorted school curriculum.

This blindness to the way capitalists use racism leaves DiAngelo and her participants in a disorienting trap. Diversity training like DiAngelo's—anti-racism through psychological flagellation of the workforce—offers bosses the perfect solution, to blame workers as the cause of racism.

With all participants looking inward and building their stamina for being called out, workers are deprived of the understanding that is needed to build stamina for the united protests and strikes needed to defund the police, raise the minimum wage, and fight together against racial discrimination in schools or workplaces.

The lessons of the Black Lives Matter movement have far more to offer than anything in DiAngelo's book. Black and white can, and do, unite to fight racism. From Portland to Sydney, white people have stood up in solidarity with Black people under the slogan, "it's not Black versus white, it's racists versus anti-racists".

Lucy Honan

WILLIAM COOPER FOUNDING THE ABORIGINAL RIGHTS MOVEMENT

Aboriginal activist William Cooper led one of the earliest Aboriginal political organisations to fight against discrimination and racism, writes **Feiyi Zhang**

THE BLACK Lives Matter movement has exposed the ongoing racism in both the US and Australia.

There is a rich history of resistance to racism here. One of the first political movements for Aboriginal rights in Australia was established by Aboriginal activist William Cooper when he helped found the Australian Aborigines League (AAL) in 1934.

The AAL built a strong base of support for Aboriginal rights in the labour movement and many churches. This was at a time when Aboriginal people were widely considered to be inferior and lived under the dictatorship of so-called “Protection Boards”.

Cooper and the AAL fought against daily discrimination and championed economic equality and full citizenship rights. They also articulated the demands of a colonised people fighting for the return of land and for self-determination.

These demands remain foundational for continuing struggles today.

Cummeragunja

Cooper was born in 1861 in Yorta Yorta country near the confluence of the Murray and Goulburn rivers, and the NSW-Victoria border.

Colonisation saw the Yorta Yorta dispossessed and their population reduced by 85 per cent due to disease and violence.

The Yorta Yorta were relocated to the Maloga Mission on the NSW side of the Murray River in 1874.

By 1888, they had moved to Cummeragunja, meaning “our home” in the Yorta Yorta language.

The land was granted to them as a result of pressure from the community for their own blocks of farm land.

In 1881, they had formulated demands for, “a sufficient area of land to cultivate and raise stock... that we may form homes for our families... and in a few years, support ourselves by our own industry.”

This, they argued, would be just compensation because, “all the land within our tribal boundaries has been taken possession by the Government and white settlers”.

These demands were finally granted after Cooper, along with other Yorta Yorta men, signed a petition to the Governor in 1887. Cooper also wrote to the local MP, requesting land for himself.

Cooper’s letter explicitly called on the government to grant him the land as a, “small portion of a vast territory which is ours by Divine Right”.

The Yorta Yorta managed to create a successful pastoral community. But in 1907, this was attacked by the newly formed Aborigines Protection Board, who seized control of the land from Aboriginal families and forced them to work it for the Board’s profit.

From 1908 onwards, many residents were expelled on disciplinary grounds and Cooper seems to have been among them.

He managed to earn a living as a shearer, drover, and rural labourer across several states. During this period, he was a member of the Australian Workers Union and supported many Aboriginal people.

Historian Richard Broome summarises the racist controls on Aboriginal people during this period:

“First, control was exercised formally by Aboriginal boards acting under special legislation, which incarcerated people on reserves, managed their daily lives and work, fragmented families, and denied them civil rights. Second, a blatant genetic racism, against Aboriginal people based on their skin colour—separating those who could attend school, those who were removed and preventing Aboriginal people from entering areas that white people could.”

The Great Depression saw Aboriginal people excluded from unemployment relief payments and forced

.....
Cooper became the secretary and motivating force behind the Australian Aborigines’ League

to accept ration payments on reserves. The NSW Protection Board insisted that Aboriginal people do several days’ work to earn their rations.

By 1933 there was a large camp of around 200 Aboriginal people just outside Cummeragunja, refused the dole because they were said to be “too Black”, and told they must go to the Protection Board for relief. But at Cummeragunja they were too white to receive rations because they were not considered “predominantly of Aboriginal blood”.

The racism and poverty Cooper and others from Cummeragunja experienced ignited a new movement for Aboriginal rights.

Australian Aborigines’ League

In 1933 Cooper left Cummeragunja, because residence on the reserve made him ineligible for the pension. At the age of 72, he moved to Melbourne.

Cooper became the secretary and motivating force behind the Australian Aborigines’ League, made up largely of exiles from Cummeragunja. He drew important support from fellow Christians, but there were also close connections between the AAL and the labour movement, including socialists in the ALP and the Communist Party.

Working alongside Cooper was fellow Cummeragunja exile Shadrach James, who in the late 1920s had been elected Secretary of the Goulburn Valley Food Preservers’ Union and vice-president of the local Trades and Labour Council.

In September 1933, there was a major national campaign against continuing frontier violence in the Northern Territory led by the radical labour movement and supported by union and church leaders. Cooper took this moment to launch a petition to the King that highlighted nationwide oppression.

This requested, “royal intervention to prevent the extinction of the race”, better conditions and federal

parliamentary representation. The petition was circulated in Melbourne and across reserves in NSW.

The AAL's immediate aim was the ending of all discriminatory practices against Aborigines, in "civic, political and economic" spheres. They demanded:

"Full Citizens Rights to all Aborigines, whether living on settlements or not. This is to include the payment of sustenance, as to Whites for all unemployed Natives. We claim the right to work for full wages or the payment of dole for those unable to work".

These economic as well as political demands were central to its definition of full citizenship rights.

Cooper's demands were always framed by the broader injustice of dispossession, "we are entitled to reasonable comfort, merely from the fact that this land was ours, with assured living before the whites came".

The AAL also called for the end of segregation in the NSW school system, of child removal and of the Protection Board's power to sever Aboriginal people's contact with kin and land by expulsion of reserve residents.

One of the most significant actions that Cooper helped organise was the Day of Mourning protest. This move towards public protest was triggered by Cooper's anger that his letters and petitions had been ignored by the authorities.

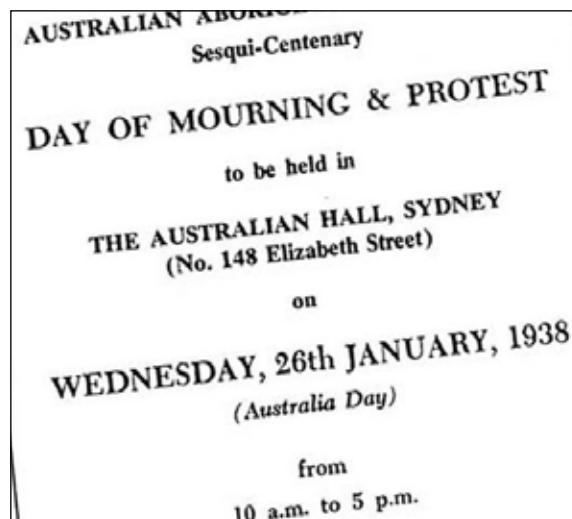
On 26 January 1938 the NSW Government held an official commemoration of the 150th anniversary of the beginning of colonisation.

Cooper proposed to the NSW based Aboriginal Progressive Association, involving Aboriginal activists William Ferguson, Pearl Gibbs and Jack Patten, that the day should be marked by Aboriginal people as a Day of Mourning.

They staged a protest march in Sydney followed by a mass meeting of Aboriginal people one kilometre from the Government re-enactment of the First Fleet's landing. Five days later, an Aboriginal delegation met with Prime Minister Joe Lyons to present a ten-point program.

Ferguson and Patten penned a manifesto titled "Aborigines Claim Citizenship Rights!" that began: "This festival of 150 years of so-called progress in Australia commemorates also 150 years of degradation imposed upon the original native inhabitants by the white invaders of this country."

It continued, "you took our land away from us by force. You have almost exterminated our people, but there are enough of us remaining to



expose the humbug of your claim, as white Australians, to claim to be a civilised, progressive and, kindly and humane nation."

By 1939, the situation at Cummeragunja was even worse, due to the appointment of the authoritarian manager Arthur McQuiggan. The residents sent a petition to the Protection Board demanding his dismissal. McQuiggan's response was to paste it up on the door of the station office and invite those who wished to remove their names to do so.

Cooper continued to believe that working through the proper official processes through letters and petitions to the government could deliver justice. These hopes would come to nothing.

The decision to begin the walk off from Cummeragunja was taken on 3 February 1939. It meant walking away from the land the community had been fighting to get back for 30 years.

The strike lasted nine months. The demands of the 200 strikers eventually extended to a call for a Royal Commission, return of the farm blocks to Aboriginal families, abolition of all Board control and full citizenship rights.

The strike support campaign mounted in Melbourne was by far the largest and most organised of any yet taken by an Aboriginal body. It began as a collection of necessities. The campaign received strong backing from left-wing unions, notably the Australian Railways Union, and Communist Party members.

In September 1939, 1200 people attended a meeting at the Hawthorn Town Hall demanding Aboriginal rights. This was organised by Communists and left-wing ALP activists and addressed by leaders of the Cummeragunja struggle, who put a resolution in support of the strikers' demands.

The strike was finally broken in

Above: Aboriginal activist William Cooper, alongside a notice for the Day of Mourning protest he helped organise

October 1939, when the NSW Protection Board convinced the Victorian Government to withhold food relief to strikers and deny their children access to the local school. But the strikers refused to return to the station where McQuiggan still held control. Instead, they dispersed into surrounding areas in NSW and Victoria, extremely bitter. Although the strike appeared to have been a failure, several months later McQuiggan was finally sacked.

Anti-Kristallnacht march

In November 1938 the Nazis led a pogrom in Germany where Jewish businesses, synagogues, homes and schools were destroyed, dozens killed, and 30,000 Jewish people taken to concentration camps. This was known as Kristallnacht—the night of broken glass.

The AAL had marched in anti-fascist rallies since 1934 and was formally affiliated to the Communist-led Movement Against War and Fascism.

Now, Cooper led a march to deliver a protest letter to the Germany embassy in Melbourne.

Prominent Aboriginal activist Gary Foley argues that this was a politically strategic way to, "draw attention to the similarities between what was happening in Germany and how Aborigines were being dealt with in Australia."

William Cooper himself argued, "We feel that while we are all indignant over Hitler's treatment of the Jews, we are getting the same treatment here."

William Cooper led a life of relentless struggle. He connected land rights and political struggle against racism with economic rights for Aboriginal workers and the unemployed.

Cooper's life should be an inspiration for the Black Lives Matter movement and ongoing fight for Indigenous justice today.

THE COMMUNIST PARTY OF AUSTRALIA'S RADICAL BEGINNINGS

100 years since its founding, there are key lessons from the role the Communist Party played in the militant union movement, writes **Judy McVey**, despite their flawed politics

INSPIRED BY the 1917 Russian Revolution, 26 people met in Sydney on 30 October 1920 to establish the Communist Party of Australia (CPA).

They came from two main groups: those associated with the Industrial Workers of the World and the One Big Union project, and members of pre-existing socialist groups hostile to the reformism of the Labor Party.

Based on the trade union bureaucracy, the Australian Labor Party had mass support amongst the working class.

While it had succeeded in winning enough seats in parliament to form government earlier than similar parties in Europe, its leaders had repeatedly betrayed working class people, especially during the First World War when they failed to defend living standards and pushed for conscription, despite enormous opposition in the union movement.

The Communist Party was based on the model of Lenin and the Russian Bolshevik Party, a revolutionary socialist party organised separately from reformist parties like the Labor Party.

The Bolsheviks had led the first workers' revolution in Russia and argued that socialists had to organise within the unions and the class struggle, and that socialism was only possible through a revolution against parliament and the state, rather than trying to use it in workers' interests.

The CPA became the largest socialist organisation Australia has seen. By the end of the Second World War, its membership reached its high point of around 20,000, with nearly 50 per cent of the delegates at the ACTU Congress, and a base among militant workers.

The party's best period was in the Depression years of the 1930s, when it organised militant struggles among

the unemployed and in the trade unions.

When the Arbitration Court, the equivalent of the Fair Work Commission of today, imposed a 10 per cent wage cut in 1931, the ACTU did almost nothing to fight it.

With a federal Labor government presiding over these savage cuts and little opposition from union leaders, the party's denunciations of the Labor Party struck a chord.

CPA members formed a Militant Minority Movement within the unions to organise resistance.

The party grew significantly to 3000 members by 1934, with its first dramatic political successes among the unemployed.

They won increased unemployment payments through staging "dole strikes" on work for the dole projects such as the Melbourne Shrine. A strike over wages at Como was led by a rank and file committee of 40 men and women. Wives organised social functions, collected money and food, wrote articles and led militant actions.

As unemployment rose to 30 per cent, similar militant defiance was applied to fight fascists and stop evictions. The famous battle between 40 police and 18 communists at 143 Union St Newtown (Sydney) resulted in injuries caused by bullets and batons on one side, against iron bars, chairs, and stones.

In the unions, the CPA's emphasis on rank-and-file control of disputes and militant industrial action helped build key trade unions, particularly in mining, clerical, engineering and manufacturing.

Central to their success were the committees of shop stewards (shop committees), combining union delegates from multiple unions across a workplace or industry, which built unity at the rank and file level, an

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CPA members formed a Militant Minority Movement within the unions to organise resistance

important lever in negotiations and strikes.

The party also took on racism and sexism. The CPA was a leading force in this period for women's rights and equal pay. They challenged White Australia and built solidarity with Aboriginal people's struggles, linking political and industrial action.

Stalinism

But the party suffered an enormous political weakness. Its support for Stalinism and belief that Russia remained a socialist society without exploitation and oppression led the party to dismiss atrocities like Stalin's show trials and labour camps, and defend Russia's every action.

Stalin's rise as dictator in the late 1920s saw Russia undergo a counter-revolution, establishing a state capitalist society locked in imperialist competition with the West.

The original revolutionary and socialist traditions of the Bolshevik Party were abandoned.

Stalin also imposed his own control over the Communist Parties worldwide, dictating local strategies according to needs of Russian foreign policy.

The CPA itself imposed an authoritarian regime, where dissidents were disciplined or expelled.

Initially Stalin imposed a wildly ultra-left Third Period strategy.

The Labor Parties were attacked as fascist and the Communists isolated themselves from the rest of the labour movement.

With the rise to power of genuine fascism in Germany, Stalin feared that Russia faced invasion.

So the Communist Parties backflipped, arguing for the widest possible unity against fascism. But this extended to forming alliances even with right-wing parties.

Eventually the “Movement Against War and Fascism” became a Popular Front and was used to shore up alliances with anti-fascist governments.

This meant the defence of the nation against certain fascist powers—Germany, Italy and later Japan.

The result in Australia was to undermine independent working class politics and drag the Communist Party to the right, in order to cement alliances with Labor Party politicians, progressive intellectuals and ministers of religion. From this point “left nationalism” became a key element of the CPA’s politics.

After Russia joined the Allies in the Second World War, the CPA became the most enthusiastic supporter of the Australian war effort. Its members worked to smother class struggle and discipline workers to accept sacrifice.

For example, they tried to prevent a huge strike wave of thousands of women workers over equal pay, undermining a struggle which took another 25 years to put back on the agenda.

Over time, the credibility of Russia as any kind of socialist alternative unravelled.

In 1956, USSR President Khrushchev dropped a bombshell, denouncing many of Stalin’s actions. The same year revolutionary workers’ councils in Hungary were put down with Russian troops.

The majority eventually tried to “de-Stalinise” the party. In August 1968 the party publicly opposed the USSR’s decision to send troops to crush the Prague Spring revolt in Eastern Europe.

Ardent supporters of Stalin left to found the China-aligned Maoists in 1963, followed by USSR supporters who founded the Socialist Party of Australia in 1971.

But in rejecting Stalinism, the CPA simply embraced the same kind of parliamentary reformist strategy as the Labor Party. It had drifted a long way from the revolutionary Marxist politics of Lenin and the Bolsheviks.

Union influence

Although it began to decline after the war, and the defeat of the 1949 coal miners’ strike, the party had won the leadership of a number of trade unions, and retained a base of thousands of key union militants and delegates.

The CPA was central to most important union campaigns, and led the battle to win back the right to strike.



When a union official refused to pay fines under the ‘Penal Powers’ and was jailed in May 1969, nearly one million workers walked out on strike—making the laws a dead letter.

Communists in the unions played an important role in the movement against the Vietnam War, including the huge ‘stop work to stop the war’ rallies in May 1970. CPA officials like Jack Mundey were behind the green bans in Sydney and beyond.

They helped support the Gurindji strike at Wave Hill, which became a defining struggle in the fight for land rights, organising speaking tours and collections across workplaces nationwide.

Shop committees were the backbone of wages campaigns which by 1974 saw the highest strike figures ever (over six million strike days were lost, in a population of 12 million), which between 1965-75, delivered a real redistribution of wealth to workers, when company profits as a share of GDP fell from a historic level of 15 per cent to 11 per cent.

But the growing number of union leaders in the party also led to problems.

The CPA regarded labour movement leaders who sold out struggles simply as bad individuals who could be replaced.

They did not understand the way that taking a role in the union bureaucracy exerts a conservatising influence on union leaders.

Above: The 1948 Queensland rail strike, one of the many where the Communist Party of Australia played an important role

Communist union officials increasingly relied on their own bureaucratic control of unions, as opposed to maintaining the strong rank and file organisation in the unions that had been the party’s strength in the 1930s.

CPA union officials became key collaborators on the Labor Party’s Accord with the unions in the 1980s, which produced a severe weakening of trade union power and organisation and led to collapse in union membership that lingers today.

The Australian working class had experienced important victories because of the actions of socialist leaders in the CPA, but the end result of the party’s drift to the right and embrace of reformism delivered a historic defeat for the working class movement. The experience added up to betrayal.

The CPA’s Stalinist politics were a gross distortion of genuine Marxism.

Yet there is still much to learn from the history of working class struggles in Australia, where the Communist Party played a key role. Their work in the unions demonstrated one of the central tenets of Marxism—the power of working class action to not only win reforms but challenge capitalism itself.

Socialists today need to build a new revolutionary party based on genuine Marxist politics that can help lead not just the revival of workers’ struggle we need but a struggle to replace the capitalist system altogether.

US REFUGEE DEAL WINDS UP WITH HUNDREDS IN LIMBO

By Ian Rintoul

MARC ABLONG, Deputy Secretary Resettlement and Cyber Security Home Affairs (yes, you read that correctly), told October's Senate Estimates hearing that the deal with the US to resettle refugees from Nauru and PNG would finish in March or April 2021.

According to figures presented to the Estimates hearing, by that time, up to 1140 refugees will have been resettled in the United States.

The deal, to resettle up to 1250 refugees, was first negotiated between Malcolm Turnbull and Barack Obama in November 2016, and then confirmed with Trump in February 2017. It looks like the numbers that will get to the COVID-ridden US will be 100 short of 1250.

The miserable end of the US deal reveals that it was never an acceptable alternative, made even worse when the level of COVID, and the scale of economic collapse, means the US offers far less than a safe or secure future.

But as *Solidarity* has reported since the deal was first announced, even if the US takes 1250 refugees, hundreds are being left with no future.

With 20 in PNG and about 30 in Nauru waiting to be transferred to the US, there will be 240 people still held offshore (125 in PNG and 115 in Nauru) with no future. Onshore there are 1226 (including those transferred under the Medevac Bill), who are being held in hotel-prisons and detention centres, or are in the community without a permanent visa.

In one final effort to push refugees

Above: Refugees including those in Kangaroo Point will still be stranded even after the end of the US deal

into returning home, the government is now depriving people of even the most basic support.

Hundreds of the 1226 people here are being driven into destitution on final departure bridging visas, evicting them from houses, cutting off income support and expecting them to find work in the middle of the COVID recession.

Churches, charities and refugee support groups are desperately trying to find housing and support for the hundreds being dumped in the community and deliberately driven into poverty.

They have joined the ranks of the million workers on temporary visas, the thousands of asylum seekers still waiting for their refugee assessments, and thousands more on temporary protection visas who are also being denied the basic welfare support of JobSeeker and JobKeeper payments. The refugee movement needs to renew its demands for full rights for refugees and asylum seekers onshore.

For the hundreds still in PNG and on Nauru, it still matters that the refugee movement continues to fight to, "bring them here, and let them stay—on permanent visas".

Stop the spread of the Australian solution

EUROPE'S LEADERS have long been attracted by the "Australian Solution". In 2003, then British Labour Prime Minister, Tony Blair, was explicitly inspired by Australia's "Pacific Solution" to propose establishing "transit processing centres" outside the borders of the EU.

In 2015, Australia's just-deposed Liberal Prime Minister, Tony Abbott, urged European leaders to adopt Australia's brutal border security policies. Since then, as European countries have increasingly slammed their borders shut, their leaders have increasingly adopted elements of the Australian Solution, in particular the interception, turnbacks, and denial of asylum that characterise Operation Sovereign Borders.

Thousands of lives have been lost as Europe's leaders abandoned rescues or turned back asylum boats on the Mediterranean Sea.

November 2018 saw the first

Hundreds of people are being driven into destitution on final departure bridging visas

desperate efforts of asylum seekers to reach safety in Britain by crossing the English Channel in makeshift boats. So far in 2020, 7000 asylum seekers have crossed the Channel.

Now, the Conservative British Home Secretary, Priti Patel, is openly considering the "Australian Solution" of detaining asylum seekers in remote offshore prisons. Britain is also considering a "turnback" policy of intercepting asylum boats (including the use of nets) and returning asylum seekers to France. Laws to implement the specific Australian policy of denying protection to asylum seekers who arrive in Britain by boat are already being introduced to parliament.

The insidious international export of the "Australian Solution" has given an added urgent dimension for activists in Australia to redouble their efforts to end offshore detention and free the refugees.

Solidarity