

THE UGLY FACE

OF WHITE

AUSTRALIA

NO TO RACISM

YES TO REFUGEES



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Patrick's effort to break the union 20 years on

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EMAIL

solidarity@solidarity.net.au

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SOLIDARITY: WHO ARE WE?

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

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

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

SOLIDARITY MEETINGS AND BRANCHES

Sydney

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

Melbourne

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

Perth

For more information contact: Phil on 0423 696 312

Brisbane

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

Canberra

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

Magazine office

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

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Things they say

The sites with wages fraud were often very profitable.

Caltex boss Julian Segal explaining the economics of the national wages rip-off of workers in Caltex garages.

I have the numbers of most of the top 50 CEOs in my mobile phone. The line of communication is very strong and open.

Labor shadow Treasurer Chris Bowen

Inspired and encouraged.

Malcolm Turnbull after visiting President Trump in Washington in February, and inspired by his tax handouts to big corporations

The control of the nation transferred from those with centuries of experience of stable governance, albeit ending under the appalling and unacceptable system of apartheid, and handed to those who struggled with internal tribal frictions for centuries

Chairman of the WA Liberal Party's policy committee Sherry Sufi pines for white rule in South Africa

South Africa and Australia both have good reason to celebrate their European heritage, while acknowledging that mistakes have been made and there will always be some who will see things differently.

And wants to defend Australian history through associating it with the people who gave the world apartheid

This may well develop into a national crisis.

Amanda Mansini of the Australian Mines and Metals Association, fumes on the MUA-CFMEU union merger. If only

Let them call you racist. Let them call you xenophobes. Let them call you nativists. Wear it as a badge of honour.

Steve Bannon, former Trump chief strategist, is happy to be called a racist

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INSIDE THE \$YSTEM

Exxon pay no tax until 2021

OIL AND gas multinational Exxon has admitted to a Senate inquiry that it did not expect to pay any corporate tax until 2021. That means eight years without paying corporate tax. Yet between 2013 and 2016 the company had revenue of \$24.8 billion.

According to a Tax Justice Network (TJN) report last year Exxon operates a global web of hundreds of subsidiaries in order to avoid tax. The Senate inquiry heard that its subsidiaries in the Bahamas and the Netherlands—both known for tax evasion—were not disclosed to the Australian Securities and Investments Commission or to a previous hearing of the Senate inquiry. After the release of the TJN report last year Exxon sued author Jason Ward for defamation. Exxon's Richard Owen told the inquiry that, "we have answered truthfully all the questions that have been put to us."

2891 anti-Muslim Murdoch media stories in one year

A DAMNING new study released in February has shown the true extent of the Islamophobic deluge pouring out of major media outlets in Australia. The study by an organisation called One Path, an alternative media outlet established by the Muslim community in Sydney, focused on Murdoch newspapers—*The Australian*, *Herald-Sun*, *Daily Telegraph*, *Courier Mail*, and *Adelaide Advertiser*. It found that in 2017 these publications alone spewed forth 2891 negative articles about Islam. That is about eight per day.

Negative stories about Muslims were not only pumped out in huge numbers—they were plastered on the front page again and again. The newspapers studied had 152 negative front pages about Muslims. This means that there were likely days when multiple Murdoch papers sported anti-Muslim front pages.

The study also looks at the track record of prominent Murdoch columnists. Andrew Bolt led the racist pack; 38 per cent of his 437 op-eds were anti-Muslim tirades. Data cited in the study shows Fairfax sings a similar racist tune but at a lower volume, publishing three anti-Muslim articles per day.

Sunrise's new Stolen Generation already a reality



CHANNEL SEVEN'S Sunrise segment that featured commentators calling for a new stolen generation is now notorious. But the new stolen generation is already a reality. During the segment Prue McSween sang the virtues of the original effort at genocide through the Stolen Generations saying, "Just like the first Stolen Generation who were taken for their wellbeing, we have to do it again, perhaps." She met with approval from fellow panellists Samantha Armytage and Ben Davis.

The segment was a response to comments by Federal Assistant Minister for Children and Families, David Gillespie. Sunrise claimed that the "Aboriginal placement principle" operating in many states and territories was preventing Aboriginal kids being placed in safe homes. According to this principle placing children with non-Indigenous families is a last resort.

But Aboriginal children are already routinely placed with non-Indigenous carers. Last year only around a third of Indigenous children in out of home care were placed with Aboriginal relatives. In the NT, where the number of children removed has more than tripled in ten years, it was only 27.6 per cent. Another 15 per cent are placed with other Indigenous carers.

And child protection authorities have already drastically increased the level of child removals. In the ten years following Kevin Rudd's apology in 2007 the number of Aboriginal children in out of home care more than doubled to 17,644. The new Stolen Generation McSween, Davis and Armytage want is already happening.

Billionaires make enough to end extreme poverty seven times

ACCORDING TO a new Oxfam report the increase in wealth amongst the world's billionaires in the past year was enough to end world hunger seven times over.

That is just the increase in their wealth in one year, not the entirety of the wealth itself. The world now has 2043 billionaires, more than at any time in human history. Their wealth increased by \$762 billion over the past year.

"The billionaire boom is not a sign of a thriving economy but a symptom of a failing economic system," said Winnie Byanyima, executive director of Oxfam International.

Research and writing by
Adam Adelpour

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

Macquarie bank pushes anti-Corbyn offshoring plot

MACQUARIE BANK is advising UK-based utilities companies to offshore their investments to frustrate efforts at re-nationalisation if a Corbyn government comes to power.

The research by Macquarie analysts had a tightly controlled circulation but excerpts were published by the *Financial Times* in March.

Macquarie argues that while legal protections for investors within Britain are already strong they can be bolstered through offshoring to entangle nationalisation attempts in EU and bilateral treaties. The *Financial Times* says:

"Macquarie's analysts point to the provision stating that any compensation should 'amount to the genuine value of the investment expropriated immediately before the expropriation or before the impending expropriation became public knowledge'.

"They claim that this would protect investors from the risk of politicians talking down the value of a company with a view to minimising compensation."

Utility shares have fallen about 30 per cent since the general election in May when Labour put forward a program of nationalisation.

Labour's shadow business secretary Rebecca Long-Bailey responded to the revelations by saying that:

"Transferring asset holdings overseas in pursuit of higher compensation shows total contempt for the British public.

"It is precisely this kind of behaviour that makes democratic ownership and management of our utilities so necessary and popular."

EDITORIAL

As polls keep falling, Dutton summons the ghost of white Australia

ON 2 April, Malcolm Turnbull will equal Tony Abbott's 30 negative Newspolls with the Coalition far behind Labor.

In response the government is stepping up its racism in a desperate effort to find some support.

Peter Dutton's call to fast-track visas for white South African farmers was a throwback to the worst kind of a racist, white Australia mentality that was a new low, even by his own standards.

His comments that they need help "from a civilised country like ours" were shocking, and drew international condemnation, but not from Turnbull or other Liberals. Tony Abbott and a chorus of hard right MPs even came out to praise Dutton's proposal.

Dutton's racism is even more astounding when the government has refused to consider any special intake for the 800,000 Rohingya living in desperate conditions in camps after fleeing genocide in Burma.

Instead Malcolm Turnbull has maintained military ties with the Burmese army that has carried out the killings.

And, of course, the government's compassion doesn't extend to the 1500 asylum seekers and refugees it has been torturing for nearly five years on Manus Island and Nauru.

Elements of "White Australia" racism were also on display in the same week with federal Assistant Minister for Children and Families, David Gillespie, calling to override existing practice and have for Indigenous child-abuse victims adopted by white families

And the Coalition is making another push to whip up racism against migrants, bringing back their citizenship changes rejected by the Senate last year.

This effort to impose a harder English language test and longer waiting times for citizenship is designed to scapegoat migrants for unemployment and declining services.

Minister Alan Tudge turned the racist rhetoric up a notch in a speech in March, claiming new immigrants were living "within a language and cultural bubble", and warning of the supposed "slow death of Europe", due to immigration "as groups effectively



Above: Dutton's comments on South African farmers were brazenly racist even by his standards

colonise parts of it" and threaten its "values".

The more the government resorts to racism, to divide and rule, the more we need link up the fights for migrant, refugee and Indigenous rights. But there was not a peep from Bill Shorten to condemn Dutton's comments about South Africa.

Labor's silence only helps the Liberals. The closer the federal election gets, the more we need to fight to break Labor's bipartisan support for offshore detention.

Make the bosses pay

Turnbull has launched a new offensive to get his corporate tax cuts through the Senate. He wants to hand another \$65 billion back to big business.

The Liberals have also launched a scare campaign against Labor's plan to end tax breaks for shareholders through dividend imputation. As if the Liberals care for pensioners.

The Liberals are horrified that Labor's plan targets the wealthy. Among

retirees, the richest 40 per cent hold 97 per cent of all directly-owned shares. Tax concessions for wealthy retirees have soared due to changes made under the Howard government. As a result, the Grattan Institute reports that, "the proportion of seniors paying tax almost halved in twenty years, from 27 per cent in 1995 to 16 per cent in 2014."

The change could raise almost \$5 billion a year.

It adds to the series of policies that Labor has announced, including changes to negative gearing, taxing the top 2 per cent of income earners and taxing family trusts, that could be used to fund hospitals, schools and jobs.

Labor has tacked left, but they are still committed to conservative financial management and running the system. We can't just wait and hope a future Labor government will deliver meaningful change.

The ACTU's campaign to change the industrial rules will shape the fight against Turnbull in the months ahead. So far its main action has been the release of a TV ad.

Sally McManus's speech to the Press Club on 21 March, billed as "the most important speech by a union leader in a generation" barely mentioned industrial action or the right to strike.

The ACTU remains focused on an electoral campaign aimed at getting Labor into office, although Labor's promises to change the law are nowhere near enough.

The unions' call in Victoria for a mass union delegates meeting on 17 April and a stopwork rally on Wednesday 9 May shows the way forward.

This needs to be replicated in every major city. The bosses are already trying to boost their profits, aggressively cutting conditions by terminating agreements and crippling unions with fines.

An ongoing industrial campaign can challenge the bosses' laws that restrict and fine union action.

To fight against casualisation and stagnating wages we need a fighting union movement willing to defy the bosses' laws and fight for the right to strike.

.....
The Liberals are horrified that Labor's dividend imputation plan targets the wealthy.

Right to strike must be at the centre of union campaign

By Miro Sandev

IT'S BECOMING clearer by the day that workers' fundamental right to strike is under attack.

The ban on the NSW train strike by the Fair Work Commission revealed that the Fair Work Act is loaded in favour of the bosses.

Our system of enterprise bargaining makes any strike action outside defined "bargaining periods" when an agreement expires, illegal. And even in a bargaining period, unions have to go through complicated procedures of balloting and giving notice before industrial action is approved.

On top of that, striking in solidarity with other workplaces is banned, as is going on strike for political reasons as the Builders Labourers' did with the Green Bans.

ACTU leader Sally McManus' speech at the National Press Club on 21 March was billed as the "most important speech by a union leader in a generation".

She rightly denounced casualisation, stagnating wages and rampant inequality. She also spelled out problems with enterprise bargaining and called for the right to bargain across a whole sector or industry.

However, there was virtually nothing about industrial action and winning the right to strike.

The unrestricted right to strike has to be at the centre of union campaigning, but we won't get this from the ACTU. That's because the ACTU's strategy is to change the government to "change the rules". Its goal is electing a Labor government, which means it will focus on campaigning for changes Labor is prepared to make.

Labor is suggesting some modest changes to the law around termination of agreements and restricting labour hire.

But it is not talking about removing constraints on striking. Those constraints were put in place by Labor under Paul Keating, when they introduced enterprise bargaining. John Howard's Workplace Relations Act ramped up the restrictions and then came WorkChoices. Kevin Rudd was elected with a mandate to scrap WorkChoices but his government retained most of the constraints on striking.

It's clear that the push for the right to strike to be at the centre of the ACTU's "Change the Rules" campaign will have to come from rank-and-file



Above: Construction unions staged unlawful stopwork rallies last year against the ABCC

union members and union branches.

We have no time to lose. We can't wait for a Labor government that would probably break its promises anyway.

Aggressive tactics

Bosses are using aggressive tactics of threatening to rip up expired agreements and force workers onto the lower award pay and conditions. This is intimidating unions into accepting cuts to wages and conditions.

Murdoch University and Griffin Coal terminated their agreements. Griffin Coal workers copped a 43 per cent pay cut and loss of entitlements and conditions when their agreement was terminated and they fell back onto the award.

Workers had to survive on award wages for 12 months, and eventually accepted a big pay cut in the new agreement they signed.

The bosses are following the same tactic at the Port Kembla coal terminal. Qube Ports has also applied to terminate its agreement with the MUA in Melbourne. MUA officials said that dockers would not return to work if the agreement is terminated. That's the type of response we need.

At Glencore's Oaky North coal mine Fair Work ordered an end to industrial action and a second vote on a proposed agreement on 27 March. Workers already rejected this shoddy offer back in January.

Despite this, the CFMEU leadership is telling members to vote yes or face termination of the agreement. The CFMEU could have won this dispute hands down if it had spread the dispute and shut down even a few of Glencore's other coal mines in Queensland and NSW.

This is just one example where breaking the law to go on strike could have clinched victory. But union leaders are increasingly hesitant to organise strikes outside the law.

And the noose is tightening around unions that do call illegal strikes. The MUA and CFMEU face millions of dollars of fines for organising an illegal picket at Melbourne's Webb Dock. The only way to stand up to this is to start refusing to pay the fines.

Victorian Trades Hall has called a delegates meeting for 17 April and a weekday rally on 9 May as part of "Change the Rules". This could be the start of the campaign we need—a mass industrial campaign willing to defy the law and win the right to strike.

But it is going to take an organised push from rank-and-file workers and union branches to put the unrestricted right to strike at the centre of the campaign.

And we have to be willing to walk people off the job to fight for it. Right to Strike Public Meeting in Sydney: Saturday April 14, 3pm at MUA Office, 365 Sussex St.

.....
There was virtually nothing about industrial action and winning the right to strike in McManus' speech

Greens' loss in Batman shows Di Natale's strategy a dead end

By Chris Breen

THE GREENS' Alex Bhathal has lost a very close contest to Labor's Ged Kearney in the Batman by-election. Kearney won 54.6 per cent to Bhathal's 45.4 per cent after preferences, a 3.6 per cent swing to the ALP.

The vote holds important lessons for The Greens. The Greens challenged Labor from the left on refugees, but The Greens' left credentials weren't so clear more widely. Working class booths north of Bell St again favoured Labor, and booths south of Bell St, where greater gentrification has taken place, favoured Bhathal.

Unions such as the nurses and the Rail Tram and Bus Union mobilised to campaign for Kearney. The Greens don't have the same roots in the working class as the ALP. A focus on issues like the Adani coal mine, without a simultaneous focus on more immediate questions like power prices and jobs, won't help win them.

Worse still was Greens leader Richard Di Natale's last minute appeal to conservative voters over Labor's plan to end a tax break for about one million shareholders and 200,000 self-managed superannuation funds.

Di Natale said, "Those people who might be inclined to vote for one of the conservative parties here [or] might be inclined to stay at home, well here's your chance to say what you think about Bill Shorten's attack on so many people in this community". Like Di Natale's flirtation with the Liberals over Gonski 2.0, this is the kind of electoral opportunism that led to the demise of the Democrats.

The Greens did campaign on inequality but their pledges were modest. They missed an opportunity to use the unions "Change the Rules" campaign to prominently talk about penalty rates or the right to strike.

More stridently supporting the low paid Australian envelope workers' strike in Preston could have demonstrated The Greens' support for working class interests.

When the workers were ordered back to work, despite jumping through all the hoops for legal strike action, speaking out in support of their right to strike could have exposed Labor's limited promises to "Change the Rules".

The internal Greens accusations of "bullying" against Bhathal did her no favours. There have been longstand-



Above: Richard Di Natale had Batman down as a key seat to win in his electoral strategy

ing tensions in the Darebin branch of The Greens. However sabotage was not the main reason for the loss, and Di Natale's threats to expel those responsible is a cover for his own failure.

Electoral strategy

The result, hard on the heels of a disappointing showing in the Tasmanian elections, leaves Di Natale's grand electoral strategy in tatters. Batman was supposed to be the next step in his plan to take the party to 20 seats, and his ambition of playing a balance-of-power role in federal government. But Labor has now consolidated its hold on Batman.

Di Natale's shift to the right has seen The Greens move away from building social movements in favour of single-minded electoralism and cutting parliamentary deals. The left can have much more impact on politics if it puts building movements outside parliament at the centre of its political vision.

Refugees

Whilst a win for Bhathal would have boosted the refugee movement, Kearney was forced to shift as the campaign progressed and Bhathal pushed the demand to bring the refugees on Manus and Nauru here.

Kearney went from telling the *Herald-Sun* that Labor's policy of supporting offshore detention is, "a reality I accept", to running advertisements saying she would be, "a voice

for refugees inside Labor". At one candidates' forum she played up her role mobilising people for the "Let Them Stay" campaign. No doubt some refugee supporters voted for her on that basis.

But Kearney wouldn't repeat the public calls to "Bring Them Here" she had made as ACTU President. If Kearney is going to be an effective voice for refugees, she will have to break with Shorten and speak out publicly as an MP.

She needs to be willing to cross the floor to vote with The Greens to close Manus and Nauru. This kind of action, rather than quiet arguments in ALP meetings, can give voice to the refugee movement and provide parliamentary pressure that can help shift Labor's position.

Ultimately building the refugee movement in the unions and on the streets is what can end the horror of Manus and Nauru.

The movement will be stronger with the active support of both Labor and Greens supporters. At a refugee rally during the campaign in Batman, Aziz, speaking from Manus Island, drew a large cheer when he called on Labor and The Greens to work together to fight the Coalition and end offshore processing.

If The Greens are going to be an effective force for change they need to take a clearer left-wing stand, and break with electoralism, in favour of building the movements outside of parliament.

Batman was supposed to be the next step in Di Natale's ambition of playing a balance-of-power role

Strike action stepped up as termination looms at Port Kembla terminal

By Erima Dall

WORKERS AT the Port Kembla Coal Terminal (PKCT) have stepped up industrial action as Fair Work prepares its decision on whether to terminate their enterprise agreement.

After a four day lockout in January, workers were locked out on 15 February, and again on 3 March.

“It’s tit for tat,” one worker explained, “Every time we put on work bans, they lock us out and bring in the scabs to turn the ships around as quickly as they can.”

CFMEU members and supporters have rallied outside the terminal with placards saying: “PKCT is attacking my future” and “They rob workers to pay managers”.

The workers have combined one-hour stoppages with bans on driving within the terminal, so that it takes them 25 minutes to walk across the terminal to get to the machines, and 25 minutes to walk back again!

With a ship in port on 15 February, PKCT locked out the workforce after they stopped work for the second time that day. One employee estimated the workers had taken 30 hours of strikes and stoppages since the company locked them out for four days in January.

While industrial action has shown their power to hit the company’s profits, PKCT is also undermining action through using lockouts to operate the terminal with scab labour (including supervisors, ex-employees and a crew brought in from Newcastle).

The lockout follows PKCT’s latest disgraceful “offer” of an agreement that would cut wages by up to 15 per cent, and cut additional superannuation contributions by up to 9 per cent. Management also wants a clause that will allow second tier conditions for new employees. The 60 workers overwhelmingly rejected the insulting offer.

To try and force them to accept the deal, the company has applied to the Fair Work Commission to terminate their existing enterprise agreement. It’s a vicious and increasingly common employer tactic to threaten workers with much lower award rates.

The hearings have been extended until the end of March and a decision could still be weeks away.

Paul, one of the workers, told *Solidarity*, “Multinational companies that pay no tax in this country are using the Fair Work Commission to help



Above: Port Kembla Coal Terminal workers rallying outside the Fair Work Commission hearing on the termination of their agreement

achieve their goals in breaking unions and workers. It’s time for all of us to stand up and fight back”.

This is just the latest in a string

of companies—including Murdoch University, Streets and Glencore at Oaky North—who have threatened to terminate agreements.

The Port Kembla workers have taken strike action, and brought a busload of workers to each day of the Fair Work termination hearing. On the second day in late February around 100 unionists joined them to rally outside the hearing. ACTU leader Sally McManus addressed the crowd, including construction workers from the city, and members of the MUA, AMWU, CPSU and TCFUA.

If Fair Work does rule to terminate the PKCT agreement, hard-won conditions will be under threat. Solidarity action from across the union movement will be needed to make sure that the PKCT workers are not left to fight alone.

Strike action backed by mass pickets that completely shut down the terminal and stop scab labour getting on site are needed. This is the way to deal a decisive blow against the company—even if it means defying the law.

Eight week strike beats back Australian Paper

OVER 90 workers at Melbourne’s Australian Paper (AP) factory, members of the Australian Manufacturing Workers Union (AMWU), have pushed back their boss with a solid eight-week strike.

The strikers won on two of their three main demands.

AP has dropped its effort to cut Rostered Days Off (RDOs) by 25 per cent and change the wages formula to deny 80 per cent of the workers a pay rise. The reclassified pay structure would have frozen the pay rates of long-term staff, until newer employees’ wages caught up.

“We’re not highly paid,” one striker told *Solidarity*. “The standard rate is \$21 an hour. People that have been here a long time, trained up on the machines and multi-skilled are getting \$28 an hour.”

The strike came after nine months of failed negotiations. The strikers, who make envelopes, playing cards and school books, also wanted a pay rise of 2.5 per cent each year. The company offered a four-year deal with a wage freeze for one year, 2 per cent increases in the second and third years and 2.5 per cent in the fourth.

Negotiations on pay are ongoing but according to AMWU Organiser Dean Griffiths, “we are only 1 per

cent apart.”

When the strike began to bite, the company ran off to the Fair Work Commission (FWC), to get orders to force the strikers back to work. The FWC, no surprise, ordered a suspension of the strike, under the guise of a “cooling-off” period. The AMWU appealed and secured a stay on the order. The strike continued for two more weeks, building pressure on the company, before the bosses eventually agreed to two out of the three key demands.

While the company cried poor, the Preston factory is the country’s biggest envelope manufacturer, producing some two billion envelopes a year. It had done the envelopes for the equal marriage postal survey.

Tony Piccolo, AMWU Print Assistant State Secretary, said the result was, “a great testament to the leadership, organization and discipline of the union delegates, that these workers stood strong for so many weeks.”

The strike hit production with AP at one point planning to import envelopes to break the strike. The determination these workers showed in keeping up their strike is an example to follow, whenever the boss pushes the envelope on conditions and wages.

Tom Orsag

PKCT is undermining action through using lockouts to operate the terminal with scab labour

Zelda D'Aprano—fighter for women workers and equal pay

By Phil Griffiths

EVERY GREAT social movement finds individuals who become its symbols—Rosa Parks for the American Civil Rights movement of the 1950s and 1960s; Eddie Mabo for land rights.

Zelda D'Aprano, who died last month at the age of 90, became a symbol of the struggle for Equal Pay in Australia in October 1969 when she chained herself to the doors of the Commonwealth Building in Melbourne. Zelda was protesting against a miserable, limited decision of the Arbitration Commission to only grant equal pay to women who could establish that their work was of equal worth to that of men. Ten days later, she was joined by two teachers who chained themselves to the door of the Arbitration Commission on the day that Victorian teachers went on strike for equal pay.

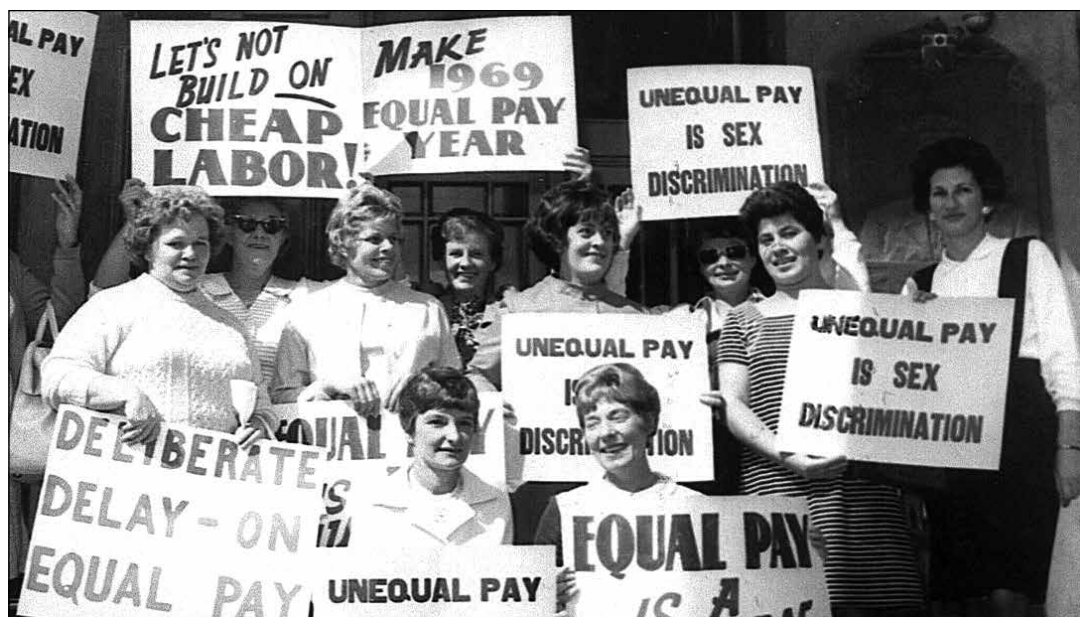
Zelda was front-page news for the first time in her life, but in reality these imaginative stunts were just two more actions in a life of bitter struggle, against poverty, exploitation, sexism, and the sluggish indifference of too many trade union leaders to the problems faced by women workers.

Her working life in Melbourne started at the age of 13. She moved through a series of dead-end jobs, many in the sweatshops of the clothing industry, before starting work as a dental nurse in a psychiatric hospital.

For 15 years she fought the vicious far-right leadership of the Hospital Employees Federation who did nothing for the wages and conditions of their members because their main concern was the Catholic Church's campaign to destroy communism.

She campaigned within the union to allow members in her hospital to have their own sub-branch so they could meet and organise for better conditions. She campaigned to get the union to demand higher wages, safer working conditions and was a leader in the union's first strike action against demoralising rosters. In her autobiography, she recalled that, "For an industry or service where stoppages were almost unheard of, the tension was terrible."

She argued against those who saw nurses as "professionals" who did not belong in the same union as tradespeople, and stood up against sisters and matrons who routinely humiliated



Above: Zelda d'Aprano (last on right) campaigning for equal pay in 1969

the staff they supervised.

In her personal life, after years living in single bedrooms in other people's houses, with all the tension and unhappiness that involved, she had threatened to sit in in the Victorian Housing Commission head office unless they stopped delaying and provided a home for her family.

Equal pay case

Exhausted by the demands of nursing, in 1969 she started working in the office of the Meatworkers' Union (AMIEU). The Meatworkers' were the test case for the 1969 Arbitration Commission decision on equal pay. The decision was a defeat for the union, and for women, giving just 5 per cent of women the opportunity to gain male rates of pay.

It was that decision that led to her chaining herself to the Commission's doors in October 1969.

Within the union, her militancy and determination to stand up for herself led to her sacking by its communist leadership. Zelda had been a committed party member for over 20 years and worked tirelessly in her suburb and union for the party. When the party was pressured into an investigation, the result was a bureaucratic whitewash which protected the high-profile union secretary.

Zelda shifted her focus. She was instrumental in setting up Women's Liberation in Melbourne and the Women's Action Committee. They organised the first public protest for abortion rights, campaigned against the objectification of women in the

Miss Teenage Quest, and refused to pay full fare on Melbourne's trams because they had been denied equal pay.

Zelda's story is nowhere better told than in her autobiography, *Zelda: the becoming of a woman*, first published in 1977.

It was written at a time when the voices of working class women were almost never heard; and indeed a period when activist women were routinely ridiculed in the media.

The book's greatness also lies in the clarity and honesty of her writing, and in the way that she integrates heart-rending accounts of all aspects of the oppression she experience—the fear of pregnancy, the pain of her abortions, the arrogance of doctors—alongside a love of humanity and a fierce determination to stand up for herself and others. The humiliations of class and poverty are interwoven with the humiliations of being a woman, and the child of immigrants.

Over the past fortnight, I've been surprised to find IWD activists and young, radical women trade union organisers who had never heard of Zelda.

That's a pity, because apart from being an inspiration, her work is unfinished.

For all the gains made by women over the past 40 years, we have a government determined to maintain the gender pay gap (by refusing to fund better pay for childcare workers), to do nothing substantial for women facing violence, and to maintain the family stereotypes that Zelda saw as underpinning it.

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Her working life started at the age of 13. After a series of dead-end jobs, she started work as a dental nurse

Gender self-identification and trans rights in the UK

By Amy Thomas

DURING THE marriage equality postal survey, the No campaign in Australia targeted trans people and gender diversity, “warning” of a future with schools where boys could wear dresses and where gender norms were under question.

Though they could not stop marriage equality, they were building on the right’s (successful) efforts to tear down LGBTIQ sex education program, Safe Schools.

Similar campaigns are underway in the US, following Donald Trump’s removal of an Obama-era decree allowing trans people to access the bathroom of their choice, and his attempt to ban trans people from serving in the military.

Now, the UK is facing a its own moral panic targeting trans people, pushed by the right-wing—but sadly, their anti-trans campaign has been joined by some on the left.

The context is a proposal to amend the UK’s Gender Recognition Act to allow people to self-identify, that is, choose to change their gender without going through a mandatory two-year transition process and providing medical evidence to a Gender Recognition Panel, as is currently the case.

While the current process does not require gender reassignment surgery, transitioning publicly before changing your gender on your legal documents can put people in dangerous situations where they are “outed” as trans against their will. The UK Trans Mental Health Review of 2012 found that 81 per cent of trans people avoided some public places, such as toilets, clothing stores and gyms for fear of discrimination.

The current law also creates a situation where the medical establishment can deny a trans person access to the care they need—the same review found that 30 per cent of trans people had experienced a health professional refusing to discuss a trans related health issue with them.

Trans people do not identify with the gender they were assigned at birth, and choose to transition from man to woman or vice versa.

Other trans people identify with neither gender.

In a society so based around gender roles and gender difference, trans people face extreme discrimination.



Above: Trans issues have come to prominence along with wider LGBTIQ struggles

In the UK, 79 per cent of trans people had experienced hate crime, according to the Galop Hate Crime Report in 2016. In the US in 2017, twenty-seven trans people were murdered.

Trans issues have come to prominence in recent years as LGBTIQ politics has gained a bigger profile, partly through the global push for equal marriage.

While the proposed changes to the UK act will not transform trans lives, they will make access to necessary services easier and potentially increase safety for trans people.

Women’s rights?

Unfortunately, some UK leftists, including teacher activists in the National Union of Teachers (NUT), and some in the Labour Party, have argued that trans rights threaten women’s rights and safety. This echoes the arguments of some radical feminists elsewhere, sometimes called “Trans Exclusionary Radical Feminists” (TERFs).

They argue that non-trans (or cis) women need women only safe spaces and bathrooms, and that trans women may pose a threat to other women in these spaces. Yet Ireland has gender self-recognition, and there is no evidence that trans women or men “posing” as trans women have attacked other women in such spaces.

There is evidence, however, that being forced into men’s spaces—like men’s prisons—has led to trans women experiencing violence.

Some feminists, such as Australia-

lian academic Sheila Jeffreys, argue that trans people “essentialise” or naturalise gender by changing gender, and because some trans people explain this as being “born in the wrong body”. But while socialists disagree there is anything innate about gendered behaviour, trans people are not to blame for gender roles. Rather, they face oppression precisely because of them.

The Murdoch press is currently running a campaign against gender neutral uniforms at Santa Sabina College in Sydney, while predominantly women childcare workers are taking industrial action against the governments and employers who impose exceedingly low pay. These are the structures of power that keep women oppressed, and divide men and women.

The fight for trans rights is linked to challenging gender roles. For example, the Safe Schools program in Australia both supports students to transition to another gender, while at the same time challenging gender segregation through specific uniform policies and homophobic policies (such as who teenagers can bring to school dances and formals).

All of us—trans or not—benefit from these freedoms.

Supporting the UK reform, and fighting for Safe Schools and trans rights at home, should be straightforward for everyone opposed to the rigidity of gender roles and oppressive ideas about masculinity and femininity that constrain human potential.

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Some UK leftists, have argued that trans rights threaten women’s rights and safety

Defending the union—the war on the waterfront 20 years on

TWENTY YEARS ago, during the night of 7 April 1998, Patrick Stevedores sacked its entire workforce in the most serious union-busting effort in decades, with the full support of the Howard government. *Solidarity* spoke to Bob Lee, a union delegate at Patrick at the time, and Glen Woods, then Deputy Branch Secretary of the Maritime Union of Australia (MUA) in Sydney about what happened.

How did the dispute begin?

Bob Lee: I was on my way to work and I heard over the radio that waterside workers had been locked out, dragged from their machines with guard dogs and security and taken off site. I got to work about 5.30am and they were all out the front. They had it well planned.

Glen Woods: Every port that was a Patrick's port was closed down, they all got the sack.

What was Patrick and Chis Corrigan trying to do when they sacked the 1400 Patrick workers?

Bob: He wanted to do away with the MUA. Unionised labour wasn't to his liking.

Glen: He also wanted to casualise the waterfront, pay no penalty rates, and have people on call 24 hours a day. He nearly succeeded in doing that after the dispute.

Given the Howard government's backing for Patrick's anti-union effort, what would the consequences have been if MUA had lost?

Glen: There would have been no transport workers union, no CFMEU, they would have deregistered all of them. It was a massive win for the MUA to prevent that.

What was the solidarity and support for the MUA like?

Glen: Massive—every union supported the MUA. We had a rally in Sydney on Good Friday that marched from Town Hall to Darling Harbour, and the crowd was still coming down Sussex St into Darling Harbour when the majority had reached the finish. It was enormous.

There was a picket line, a "peaceful assembly" down at the docks 24 hours a day. Someone from another union would run it because MUA officials got



Above: On the picket line in 1998

.....
**Patrick's
 wanted to do
 away with the
 MUA
 —Bob Lee**

subpoenaed off the picket line.

They had a phone tree to contact people and more people would turn up when needed.

Bob: It galvanised young blokes into being the great trade unionists they are today. Because they saw what you could do if you stuck together.

At Port Botany in Sydney, every afternoon, if there was bread left over or cakes the bread shop would bring it to the picket line. The butchers would bring sausages and pies.

How did the workers eventually get their jobs back?

Glen: It went to the Federal Court, and we lost the first case and then we appealed and won and the court said they had to be reinstated. Then the decision was upheld in the High Court.

Bob: But everything was transferred out of one company from Patrick's no.1 to no. 2 or no. 3. The company still employing Patrick workers was insolvent. Corrigan still had money it was just transferred into a new sham company. They bled the accounts so that nobody could get any money at all. If you had long service leave or annual leave entitlements it was gone.

The MUA had to negotiate with Patrick to get all their annual leave back, their sick leave back, it went on for months and months.

So because Patrick's sham restructure wasn't overturned, although the workers were reinstated the

MUA then lost conditions?

Bob: They let us go back to work, but working for no pay. I think it's the first time a company's been allowed to go back to work when it was in the red and we worked it back into the black. I went to creditor's meetings to see if they were going to foreclose.

Glen: Because it was a 24 hour cycle out there they'd had a kitchen so you could get a meal. That was gone, there was not even tea and coffee. They tried to make it as hard as they could when you got back in so that you didn't want to be there.

How did it feel when the dispute was over?

Glen: It was bittersweet. When the dispute was over Bob was one of the "undesirables" who didn't go back in. There were 12 all around Australia. They said the rest of the workers could come in but we don't want the union delegates.

Bob: I didn't get my job back until two months after we went back.

Glen: It changed the whole face of the waterfront, the bosses gained confidence and decided to have a go at people and attack conditions. All the companies changed. But at the end the waterfront was still unionised.

For a full analysis of the dispute see *Solidarity's* article written on the ten year anniversary at www.bit.ly/MUA1998

Zuma's fall a sign of ANC's failure of liberation in South Africa

By James Supple

THE DEMISE of President Jacob Zuma has exposed how far the ANC government of South Africa has fallen.

His mammoth corruption had been public knowledge for years. An investigation found \$26 million of public money had been spent on his private home constructing a swimming pool, amphitheatre, cattle enclosure and security upgrades.

Zuma presided over widespread looting of state contracts, symbolised by his ties to the wealthy Gupta brothers. Their family connections to Zuma saw them gain influence over lucrative contracts and ministerial appointments.

As much as 40 per cent of the government's \$45 billion procurement budget was being lost to corruption each year, according to former Treasury official Kenneth Brown, who resigned in December.

Zuma was undermined by big business concerns that his cronyism was destabilising the wider economy. The growing scandals also threatened to damage the ANC's chances in next year's elections.

The ANC executive finally voted to remove him from office, forcing his resignation. But his replacement is little better. New President Cyril Ramaphosa is a former miners' union leader who built a personal fortune of \$550 million through a string of business interests including the South African McDonalds franchise.

He was a non-executive director and shareholder of the Lonmin mining company in 2012 when it engineered the Marikana massacre, where police killed 34 striking workers. Ramaphosa personally pressured senior ANC figures to intervene, demanding "action".

Life after apartheid

The ANC under Nelson Mandela led the heroic struggle that toppled apartheid in 1994.

But they agreed to leave the economic power of the old white rulers essentially untouched, and accepted neo-liberal policies forcing cuts in government spending.

As a result, as Ronnie Kasrils, a member of the ANC national executive until 2007 puts it,

"In South Africa today the traditional economic power centres—mining, big agriculture, major industries—remain in essentially the same hands as they did under apartheid.



Above: Zuma was increasingly isolated as disgust at his corrupt amid widespread poverty grew

"Zuma and his acolytes, who weren't going to challenge that economic structure fundamentally, feasted on the state-owned enterprises."

A new black elite has used the reins of political power to build massive fortunes. Zuma and his cronies used the language of "black economic empowerment" to enrich themselves through the theft of state money and contracts.

But the black majority remains poor. An official report last year admitted that 56 per cent of the population, 30.4 million people, are living in poverty. Black unemployment is over 30 per cent.

Ramaphosa made clear in his first major speech that he wants to ensure "business confidence", promising new "special economic zones"—areas

with special corporate tax exemptions.

The ANC argued in 1994 that socialism, and the redistribution of the country's wealth to the black majority, had to be postponed until after the fight for democracy.

In practice this has meant abandoning socialism in favour of working with business to manage capitalism.

Ramaphosa remains committed to the same failed policies it has pursued since the end of apartheid—and to the interests of South African capitalism.

South Africa's workers have a magnificent history of struggle in the fight against apartheid. A number of union leaders have broken from the ANC and talked of launching a new workers' party. A new force to take up the fight for socialism is urgently needed.

White farmers threatened with land seizures

IN A piece of sickening hypocrisy Dutton has called for a special intake of white South African farmers due to threats to drive them off the land.

"They work hard, they integrate well into Australian society... and they're the sorts of migrants that we want," he said.

New South African President Cyril Ramaphosa has pledged to accelerate land redistribution. This is aimed at undercutting the demands of the Economic Freedom Fighters (EFF) party led by Julius Malema.

In 1994, over 80 per cent of South Africa's land was owned by whites. Despite the ANC's promise of land reform over the last 20 years the figure is still 72 per cent.

The land was stolen from the local black population through European colonialism.

A motion from the EFF calling for land seizures without compensation has passed parliament as a result of ANC support.

Ramaphosa has shunted it to a Constitutional Review Committee to report in August, since the move would require changing the constitution. He has also pledged that any change will be managed to ensure there is no reduction in agricultural production.

But Ramaphosa's desire to safeguard capitalist interests in South Africa will get in the way of real change.

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New President Cyril Ramaphosa was a director of Lonmin when it engineered the Marikana massacre

US school shootings a product of a sick system

By Sophia Donnelly

NEARLY A million US students walked out of class to protest gun violence on 14 March. They marched in response to February's brutal mass shooting at Marjory Douglas Stoneman High School in Parkland, Florida, where former student Nikolas Cruz gunned down 17 students and staff.

This month's walk-outs will be followed by national mobilisations on 24 March. Teachers and students are planning further actions on 20 April, the anniversary of the 1999 Columbine High School massacre.

Donald Trump's ludicrous response was to call to put more guns into schools by arming teachers. Since Trump raised the proposal, two different teachers have already accidentally fired shots at school.

Trump also used Parkland to grandstand about how he would have run into the school unarmed to confront the shooter himself. The suggestion that he might stand up to the reactionary National Rifle Association (NRA) lasted barely a few hours. So far Trump's only substantial move has been to ban bump stocks, the attachment that allows semi-automatic weapons to fire bullets nearly as fast as machine guns.

School shootings are disturbingly common in the US. According to the Gun Violence Archive, there have been at least 239 of them since the Sandy Hook massacre in 2012—that is an average of five school shootings every month. In that time 438 students have been shot and 138 killed.

Every time there is a mass shooting the right claims that it is not the time to discuss politics. Democrats call for more policing, background checks, incremental reforms around assault weapons, and the age at which people can buy guns.

But the reaction to Parkland is unusual. Within days of the shooting thousands of students marched on the Florida capitol building condemning politicians who take National Rifle Association donations and hitting back at officials' "thoughts and prayers" that offer no solutions to spiralling gun violence.

It's significant that the student walkouts were coordinated by the groups who called the Women's Marches, which last year brought up to five million people into the streets against Trump's inauguration—the



Above: Students have walked out of class across the US following the Parkland shooting

single largest day of protest in US history. And since last year the #MeToo movement against sexual violence has exploded online, after decades where sexism has plagued the entertainment industry.

These flare-ups and the student reaction to the Parkland massacre reflect a growing sentiment across the country: there is something deeply wrong with the system and the kind of oppression and violence it breeds. For many people, Trump is a manifestation of this sick system.

Violence at the heart of American life

Any meaningful change needs to look at the intense violence and alienation that pervade American capitalism. War is glorified and a culture of militarism is inescapable.

Cruz was in fact trained to use a gun by the US army's Junior Reserve Officers' Training Corps, which recruits in schools all over the country. He was also part of a rifle team which received a \$10,000 grant from the NRA while Cruz was at school.

Student demands to pull NRA money out of schools and politics are an important step for confronting the violence.

There is no more shocking example of this violence than the black lives lost at the hands of racist police. Last year 590 people were killed in mass shootings—but police killed nearly double that number in the same period!

Students walking out after Park-

land are making these connections. High schoolers took a knee in Atlanta, Georgia in the style of football player Colin Kaepernick, who kneeled on field to protest police brutality against people of colour.

In southwest Chicago students walking out issued demands to fund schools in black and brown neighbourhoods with the \$95 million currently earmarked for a nearby police academy. This kind of action has the potential to link up with the Black Lives Matter movement and feed the resistance against Trump's racist bigotry.

Shooters often have a background of untreated mental illness—a point Trump has raised several times. Cruz had a history of erratic behaviour, suspensions, and unresolved mental health issues.

As his sixth grade teacher commented following the shooting, "it shouldn't be this hard to get someone the help they need."

But Trump's latest budget will make it even harder to access care. Over the next decade it would rip \$1.4 trillion out of Medicaid, which covers healthcare to 70 million people. In 2015, 21 per cent of adults with mental illness and 26 per cent of those with serious mental illnesses accessed care through Medicaid.

The post-Parkland mobilisations have the potential to ignite wider movements against Trump. And they are an inspiring opening to begin challenging the horrific violence of capitalism.

Intense violence and alienation pervade American capitalism

By Daniel Cheers

West Virginia teachers' nine day illegal strike wins through

THIRTY THOUSAND teachers and public school employees in the US state of West Virginia have won a guaranteed 5 per cent pay rise after a historic nine day strike.

The strike has electrified unionists across the US, with teachers in other states including Oklahoma and Arizona now considering following their lead.

"This was almost completely a grassroots movement," said Erica Newsome, an English teacher in Logan County, "The unions kind of followed us."

Under West Virginia law the strike was illegal as public employees have no legal way of taking strike action or engaging in collective bargaining.

Teachers had been offered a pay increase of 1 per cent, alongside increases to health insurance premiums. The state agency for health insurance proposed changes that would see low income families hit with increased premiums. Katie Endicott, a high school English teacher, told the New York Times, "if you had a family plan, your health insurance was going to rise substantially... I only clear right under \$1300 every two weeks, and they're wanting to take \$300 more away from me."

Rank-and-file teachers in all 55 counties voted to reject an initial agreement negotiated by union representatives with the state governor after four days on strike. It offered a 5 per cent pay increase for teachers, and 3 per cent for other public school workers like bus drivers and cafeteria workers. But there was no guarantee it would pass through the state legislature—and the teachers refused to budge.

The final agreement includes a 5 per cent pay increase for all school employees, a freeze for a year on insurance premium rises and the establishment of a task force to examine public employees' health insurance.

The fight is not over. The state is using the cost of increased wages as a rationale for further cuts to social programs, including free community college tuition and low income health care. And while there are teacher representatives on the health insurance task force, it is still heavily weighted towards industry management and legislators.

Nevertheless, the breadth of participation in the strikes and the militancy of their illegal strike action has provided a model to other workers for how to fight back.



Above: West Virginia teachers at the state's capital during their nine day strike

Racists gain in Italian election as voters give centre left the boot

RACISTS DID well in the Italian elections in early March.

The Democratic Party government's vote halved to 19 per cent. The centre left party came to office in 2014 because voters rejected austerity, but it pursued cuts. And it opened the door to racism with clamp downs on migrants.

The populist Five Star Movement received 31.6 per cent of votes, the largest share, but not big enough to form government on its own.

Five Star has a strong anti-establishment rhetoric, but has joined in the anti-migrant attacks. While promising workers representation on company boards and a minimum wage for young people, it has had its fair share of corruption scandals.

Five Star prime ministerial candidate Luigi Di Maio has signalled he is open to coalitions mostly likely with the right—he maintains the party is against hate.

The right-wing bloc fronted by former Prime Minister Silvio Berlusconi received 37.6 per cent. The bloc includes his Forza Italia (Go Italy) party, the virulent anti-migrant League and the fascist Brothers of Italy.

Berlusconi cannot hold public office himself until next year because of a tax fraud conviction. And in another blow for him, Forza Italia

was outdone by its ally the League. The League got 18 per cent and Forza Italia 14 per cent. The Brothers of Italy got 4.3 per cent.

Berlusconi and the League's leader Matteo Salvini spent the campaign competing over who would deport the most people. That the European Union (EU) and business influenced Berlusconi as a restraining influence was an indication of the direction of Italian politics.

The campaign was marked by fascist rallies and the shooting of six African migrants by a Nazi who once stood as a candidate for the League. Some 20,000 people came out to protest, but far right violence is on the rise.

Five Star and the League have both criticised Italy's relationship with the EU, but neither campaigns to leave. Opposition to EU-backed austerity has repeatedly created crises for the establishment.

But racist scapegoating is enabling the right to capitalise. While the right are on the front foot it is fractious and fragile. Even the formation of a government is not certain.

People have taken to the streets against racist attacks and the growth of the far right. There will need to be more such mobilisations and a larger left alternative to austerity.

Public employees have no legal way of going on strike or engaging in collective bargaining

WHO WERE THE UTOPIAN SOCIALISTS?

We continue our series on Marxist classics as **James Supple** looks at Friedrich Engels' *Socialism: Utopian and Scientific*

MARX AND Engels were far from the first socialists.

Their ideas faced competition from a variety of other socialist thinkers. Engels' pamphlet, *Socialism: Utopian and Scientific*, was originally part of a longer polemic against a now forgotten German professor and self-declared socialist, Eugen Düring, written in 1877 and 1878.

The pamphlet became one of the most popular introductions to Marxist ideas. Engels approvingly noted in an introduction to it in 1892, that, "not even our *Communist Manifesto* of 1848, or Marx's *Capital*, has been so often translated. In Germany, it has had four editions of about 20,000 copies in all."

In it Engels traces the emergence of modern socialism following the French revolution, the defining event in European politics of the 18th and early 19th century, in the ideas of the "utopian socialists".

The revolution had been fought on the promise of liberating the whole of society, under slogans promising "liberty, equality, and fraternity" to all. But it was primarily the emerging capitalists who benefited.

The working class in the expanding cities faced degradation and impoverishment.

The first modern socialist ideas were a product of disappointment with the outcome of the revolution. The thinkers who gave inspiration to the French revolution sought to construct a society based on reason, ending the feudal order where rank depended on the accident of birth, and religious superstition held sway.

But early French socialists like Charles Fourier and Comte de Saint-Simon recognised that the new society was far from the rational that had been hoped for.

Their response was to draw up plans for a more perfect form of social life. They rejected the cut-throat competition of the new capitalist order and argued that a society based on co-operation could better ensure human happiness.

Fourier constructed detailed plans for model communities he termed phalansteries, to consist of around 1600 people, where each person could choose to rotate through the jobs they

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All of them looked to the rich and powerful to support their experiments

enjoyed doing.

All of them looked to the rich and powerful to support their experiments. Fourier famously advertised for wealthy businessmen to invest in establishing his model communities, "announcing in the press that he could be found in a certain cafe at the same time every week if any capitalist wished to find out about his projects". None answered his call.

In Britain, the industrialist Robert Owen used his own money to establish a model community at New Lanark, providing comfortable housing and better wages so his workforce could be spared the horrifying conditions of the industrial slums. His generosity extended to a reduction in the working day to ten and a half hours, "whilst his competitors", Engels explained, "worked their people 13 or 14 hours a day".

These utopian experiments spawned a whole movement of model communities. More than 30 separate communities were established in the US in the 1830s and 1840s.

The most successful lasted no more than a few decades. The idea remained popular enough in 1893 to inspire Brisbane-based socialist and radical journalist William Lane and 238 others to set up the ill-fated New Australia colony in Paraguay.

Working class power

Owen and Fourier looked to the wealthy and well-educated to adopt their model of generosity to the workforce, believing that their experiments would serve as an example convincing others of the benefits of rational planning.

But this meant expecting them act against their own class interests, by giving up part of their wealth.

Marx and Engels branded them "utopian socialists". This was because the utopians failed to identify any way of implementing their plans.

Marx's great breakthrough was to recognise the working class as the force with the potential to bring about socialism.

Engels points out that the ideas of the utopian socialists were a product of an early stage of capitalism's development. The working class had only just begun to emerge and was,

"as yet quite incapable of independent political action". Most of the utopians had any involvement or interest in the working class movement themselves.

Marx and Engels, however, were able to observe the power of workers' strike action, like the Silesian weavers' revolt in Germany in 1844, and to study the first great working class movements like Chartism in Britain in the 1830s and 1840s.

This helped them identify class struggle as a defining element through all of human history.

Marxism, therefore, was a "scientific socialism", Engels argued. It based its hopes for a new society not on schemes drawn up in the British library, where Marx spent decades researching, but on workers' struggles as they existed in the real world.

Today the charge of utopianism is frequently hurled at Marx himself. This is particularly the case in a period like the present where strikes are few and far between, and the possibility of workers' struggles transforming the world can seem small.

But Marxism is based, above all, on an understanding of history. The last 150 years have shown again and again, at the high point of workers' struggles, the possibility of the workers' revolution that Marx argued was the hope for another world.

Today, the utopian socialists are not simply of historical interest as a stage in socialism's evolution.

The belief that workers' co-operatives or versions of communal living can be models to inspire support for a new way of running society still exists in some anarchist circles.

And the utopian socialists were only the first of many who have placed their hopes in "socialism from above" through the actions of an enlightened elite.

The hope that either the action of a minority guerrilla army as in Mao's China or Cuba, Russian tanks or even a leader like Hugo Chavez or Jeremy Corbyn can transform society all owe something to the same idea.

But genuine socialism is only possible when the millions of working class people move to take control of society themselves. As Engels put it, "universal emancipation" is its "historical mission".

FRASER WANTED TO STOP THE BOATS

A new book on the origins of Australia’s refugee policies idealises the approach of the Fraser government. But it has plenty of evidence on why it’s no model argues **Ian Rintoul**

Asylum by Boat—Origins of Australia’s Refugee Policy
By Claire Higgins, UNSW Press

MALCOLM FRASER was the Liberal politician who became Prime Minister when Gough Whitlam was sacked by Governor-General Sir John Kerr in 1975.

In more recent years, Fraser became known as an outspoken critic of the harsh policies of successive Liberal and Labor governments towards refugees. He resigned from the Liberals in 2010, because he thought the party had moved “too far to the right”.

He even became a patron of the Asylum Seeker Resource Centre in Melbourne. His visage is now immortalised as a huge mural on the side of the ASRC building in Footscray.

Compared to the years of mandatory detention since its introduction under Labor in 1992, and the vicious detention regime established in the Howard years, the Fraser government’s record on paper looks creditable. Even so, while around 70,000 refugees were resettled between 1976 and 1982, only about 2000 were boat arrivals. Another 80,000 came through resettlement channels in later years.

Clare Higgins’ work unearthing Immigration Department archives has added invaluable information for understanding the Fraser government and the dark role of the Immigration Department in shaping immigration policy. It deserves to be read. Who knew, for example, that Christmas Island was first suggested as a detention island in 1978 by NT Chief Minister, Paul Everingham?

But her central thesis, that the present inhumane refugee policy has its origins in the mid-1980s, with the Liberal Party breaking with the approach adopted by the Fraser government, is questionable. There is plenty of material in Higgins’ book that shows present refugee policy is a continuation of the approach of the Fraser

government rather than any break.

In fact the political underpinnings of the present policy were established under Fraser.

We will decide

At the beginning of 1977, the Fraser government prepared a brief for a UNHCR conference which read in part that the Australian government, “will wish to retain its discretion to determine ultimately who can enter Australian territory and under what conditions newcomers may remain.” Sound familiar?

Fraser admits in his autobiography that the government’s willingness to accept more refugees was a product of increasing boat arrivals, not the scale of the refugee crisis itself.

Fraser didn’t use Abbott’s notorious slogan, but he did want to stop the boats. Fraser’s willingness to resettle Vietnamese refugees from camps in Malaysia, Indonesia and Thailand was fundamentally based on the assessment that resettlement could help prevent boats travelling to Australia.

Fraser went to extraordinary lengths to prevent boats arriving. Higgins herself recounts the stories of Immigration officers disabling and sinking asylum boats by drilling holes in their hulls to disable the boats and prevent them being used to travel on to Australia.

This was the sharp end of Fraser’s determination to “stop the boats” and ensure that the Vietnamese stayed in countries of first asylum.

But the “border protection” politics that we are now so familiar with were also on display when asylum boats first arrived.

On 22 November 1977, Fraser’s Immigration Minister Michael Mackellar spoke to the NSW branch of Institute of International Affairs, saying, “No country can afford the impression that any group of people who arrive on its shores will be allowed to enter and remain.”

.....
Fraser’s willingness to resettle Vietnamese refugees was designed to prevent boats travelling to Australia

On 26 November 1977, the *Sydney Morning Herald* ran a front page headline, “Fraser Warns Refugees,” that they were liable to be returned.

Similarly, in November 1977, Fraser’s Foreign Minister told Radio Australia that, “Australia could not be regarded as a dumping ground.”

The international commitment from Canada, the US and France to resettle the Vietnamese from the camps in south-east Asia was crucial to “stopping the boats” getting to Australia. In April 1978, an Australian government delegation went to the US to urge it to use its influence to ensure that Malaysia, Thailand and Indonesia prevented the Vietnamese from leaving the camps to sail on to Australia.

Dog whistling

Space limitations prevent a discussion here about who first coined the “queue jumpers” phrase, although Whitlam certainly used the term in the 1977 federal election. For our present purposes, it is enough to know that then Labor shadow Immigration Minister, Moss Cass, recalls an immigration department official using the term at a bi-partisan briefing in April or May 1978. That meeting decided that processing refugees in offshore camps would be prioritised over those who arrived by boat.

In April 1979, Mackellar told *The Australian* that he, “no longer considered refugees arriving by boat to be ‘queue jumpers’.” The camps in south-east Asia were full and more boats were thought to be on the way to Australia.

But just seven months later, when a boat of 50 people arrived off the West Australian coast, MacKellar issued a press statement expressing concern at the resumption of boat arrivals. “The whole Indo-Chinese refugee program could be placed in jeopardy if refugees continue to arrive in such a manner”, he said. “Apart from the enormous risks involved in such a perilous journey, it is unfair to those

in refugee camps who are prepared to wait for orderly processing”.

Mackellar may not have been using the term “queue jumpers”. But his public comments, just as surely, spelled out the queue jumper argument in terms that are still used by politicians today.

People smuggling legislation

Higgins tells the story of the threatened arrival of the *Hai Hong*, a large steel-hulled vessel carrying 2500 Vietnamese asylum seekers, in November 1978. Indonesia denied it entry. Malaysia refused to allow the passengers to disembark unless there were guarantees of resettling countries. The *Hai Hong* was left in limbo off the coast of Malaysia as diplomatic cables flew around the world.

Australia made it clear that it would not resettle any asylum seekers on the *Hai Hong*. But the Fraser government was very worried that the *Hai Hong* might head for Australia.

Advice prepared in 1978 by the Immigration Department canvassed the whole range of possible mistreatments of boat arrivals that have been progressively imposed over the years. They included, to try and intercept the ship and turn it around at the then three mile ocean boundary; to hold the ship in a remote location and try to force it to leave; to establish a transit camp in a remote locality; and, if compelled to land the passengers, they could be given refugee status but denied resettlement in Australia.

By managing to control the number of boat arrivals, the Fraser government avoided implementing these options. But the proposals were not rejected for all time. In May 1979, Mackellar was still telling Cabinet that a, “detention centre in Darwin” could be necessary.

The government, however, did respond to the possibility of large numbers arriving with the Immigration (Unauthorised Arrivals) Act 1980. It was Australia’s first anti-people smuggling legislation, introduced into Parliament by Mackellar’s successor, Ian Macphree.

Macphree’s introduction repeats the now familiar refrain, that, “Australia would not always be in a position to accept without question large numbers of refugees who push their claims for resettlement ahead of those of their compatriotes (sic) who wait patiently in the camps.”

Fraser in context

Any consideration of the Fraser government’s approach as a compas-



Above: Malcolm Fraser is honoured on the wall of the Asylum Seeker Resource Centre in Footscray

sionate alternative also has to consider the overall political context. Foreign policy considerations played a major role in determining refugee policy.

In October 1976 dozens of students at the Thammasat University demonstrating against military dictatorship were killed by the Thai military. Unlike Whitlam, who had allowed all Vietnamese students in Australia to stay after Saigon fell in 1975, Fraser did not allow all Thai students to remain in Australia.

Fraser had little sympathy for the students who were considered left-wing. He also did not want students from other regional dictatorships, like Indonesia, getting any ideas. Many Thai students were subject to deportation orders.

Fraser’s flexibility on human rights can also be seen in regard to East Timor. In 1978, Fraser followed Whitlam’s shameful de facto recognition of Indonesia’s 1975 annexation, and gave de jure recognition in 1979.

It is understandable that refugee supporters look back positively on a time when there was no mandatory detention and when the government organised for around 150,000 Vietnamese to be brought into the country.

As Higgins puts it, “Fraser used his own record to be a vocal critic of policies under later governments... he painted a picture of his own government’s decision making in which [there was] ‘a moral and ethical’ obligation to accept Vietnamese boat arrivals...”

But in fact, ideas like stopping the boats, queue jumpers, making a distinction between good, deserving refugees who stayed in camps to be selected and bad refugees who

arrived in Australia by boat, were all approaches that Fraser’s policies pre-figured.

If the refugee campaign had been around under Fraser, it would have had to fight against “stopping the boats” and against vilifying asylum seekers as queue jumpers, just as we do today.

When refugee supporters hanker for the Fraser government, it represents a hope for a genuinely humanitarian refugee policy, where refugees who arrive in transit countries are processed and resettled in Australia, where asylum boats desperately trying to gain protection are welcomed and assisted, rather than being turned back; and where asylum seekers arriving in Australia are not subjected to punitive detention, and certainly not expelled to offshore prisons.

That is what the refugee movement is fighting for. But to end mandatory detention, to close Manus and Nauru, we need to understand the significant ways that means breaking from the politics of the Fraser government.

Influential commentators like Robert Manne, Tim Costello, John Menadue and Frank Brennan have argued that the refugee movement should accept turnbacks in return for the closure of Nauru and Manus Island.

Others argue that the movement should put forward proposals that would be more acceptable to the Labor and Liberal parties—ideas like “regional processing” and “burden sharing” (note the name!) are drawn from the Fraser experience.

The refugee movement needs to fight for a welcome refugee policy that does not compromise human rights.

STATES OF EXCLUSION

The nation state with distinct borders is a recent idea, tied up with the development of capitalism. **Phil Marfleet**, writing from Europe, looks at how the ruling class uses them

WHY ARE borders so important to the modern state? Why do politicians and the media obsess about “border security”?

Until the early modern era (17th to 18th centuries) borders between local kingdoms and principalities in Europe were fuzzy and seldom closely controlled. Most of the population was tied to the land but many people moved relatively freely as merchants, artisans, itinerant labourers, pedlars, seafarers and pilgrims.

Change was under way however. In “absolutist” states the monarchy used increasingly centralised means of control to impose religious conformity and large numbers of people said to be unbelievers or apostates were expelled.

Millions of Jews and Muslims were evicted from Catholic Spain and Portugal; later Calvinists were expelled from France, and religious dissenters and political radicals removed from Britain—most sent to its American and Caribbean colonies. Borders took on new significance as a means of including or excluding certain categories of people.

These developments became much more pronounced as industrial capitalism shaped new nation states. Rising capitalist classes were eager to establish rights in private property, to enact systems of law that entrenched their privileges, and to regulate the movement of volatile populations deeply affected by industrialisation and urbanisation.

They sought novel forms of authority based on allegiance to “the nation”—a community of interests defined by language, religion and cultural practice, and by stories about common origins and shared destiny.

The new nations, argues Benedict Anderson, emerged as “imagined communities” in which the mass of people were encouraged to pursue a collective agenda as if they shared underlying interests. Territorial borders enclosed these national collectives, marking their presence as against other, different—and alien—national groups.

Ruling classes of early nation states such as Britain, the Netherlands and France expended much energy



Above: Refugees crossing into Europe in 2015 challenge border controls

attempting to convince populations within such borders that they were British, Dutch or French.

They built institutions of the state focused on coercion (the armed forces, the judiciary, the police and prison systems) which intervened in rising class struggles and enforced national conformity by targeting “internal” enemies including members of linguistic or regional groups.

In the case of France “non-national” languages and dialects were suppressed or treated as corrupt patois versions of authentic metropolitan French.

Loyalties

The new rulers focused upon ideas of national belonging—inclusion within and exclusion from the nation. Earlier loyalties, to the local aristocracy, to church or to sect, were less important than allegiance focused on symbols of nation and on stories of national achievement and national superiority.

External borders had territorial significance and a powerful socio-cultural meaning. They were a key means of identifying those with an entitlement to be part of “the nation”; at the same time they were means to differentiate and to exclude.

These arrangements presented their own problems. There was no

necessary “fit” with capitalists’ relentless drive for profit. Members of the capitalist class needed the nation state but were not always in agreement about how to mobilise nationalism or how to implement borders as part of the politics of control.

In Britain this surfaced in various ways, including in debates about free trade and protectionism and in fierce arguments about whether to admit foreigners freely.

In the mid-19th century some British politicians backed unrestricted immigration; others asked why subversives such as Karl Marx were permitted to live in London, declaring that migrants were dangerous to the health of the nation.

In 1870 Marx himself observed how national sentiment and the politics of exclusion served capitalist interests. Writing of the hostility generated among English workers towards the Irish, he commented: “[this] antagonism is artificially kept alive and intensified by the press, the pulpit, the comic papers, in short, by all the means at the disposal of the ruling classes”.

It was, he said, “the secret of the impotence of the English working class, despite its organisation... the secret by which the capitalist class maintains its power. And the latter is

quite aware of this.”

Nationalism and the politics of the border were intimately linked: they served the state but could also inhibit profit-seeking among some sections of the ruling class.

In the mid-19th century the United States government arranged for millions of people to travel from China to work in construction and on the railways. These migrants were integral to the rapid growth of US capitalism. Following the American Civil War there was a rise in nationalist sentiment and in anti-Chinese racism, and in 1882 Congress passed the Chinese Exclusion Act. Migration from China came to an end, causing huge problems for employers in key sectors of the economy who eventually turned to Japan and later to Mexico as sources of labour.

These contradictions appeared repeatedly, with some factions of the ruling class—often linked to populist politicians—arguing for tight border control and for exclusion. Other capitalists called for free movement, largely because of their insatiable desire for cheap labour.

The First World War brought the world’s dominant nation states into traumatic conflict. Borders were policed with unprecedented vigour and passports and visas required for the first time for travel in Europe and North America.

In the 1920s international migration collapsed and for the next 20 years border controls locked most people into the territories of their designated nation states.

Colonial

The demands of the market eventually ruptured these controls. After the Second World War international migration resumed as employers, including public authorities of the nation state, competed to attract labour from far and wide.

Agencies of Western European states drew migrants from Southern Europe and from colonial networks. In the United States, government agencies re-established migration from Central America, notably through the Bracero Program, which brought millions of Mexicans to work in construction, horticulture and the service sector.

As the world economy grew, controls on movement were viewed by most ruling classes as an obstacle to growth. Borders that had been viewed as sacrosanct were bypassed or disregarded. In the United States

Insecure in the face of economic crisis, states have focused on the border as a means of displacing responsibility from those with wealth

employer violation of laws on the employment of “illegal” migrants (those who crossed borders without official papers) were ignored.

In France sans-papiers—“undocumented” migrants—were encouraged to enter, even if they violated official controls. During the 1960s more than 80 percent of migrants were technically “illegal” entrants: in 1966 the French Minister of Social Affairs commented that, “clandestine immigration in itself is not without benefit, for if we stuck to a strict interpretation of the rules and international agreements, we would perhaps be short of labour”.

When the post-war boom came to an end in the early 1970s, governments in many states attempted to reimpose controls.

However they faced major problems. In Europe influential employers had become dependent on regular supplies of labour from certain regions and declined to accept restrictions. At the same time, migrants evaded the new controls, not least because economic crisis that brought recession in the Global North affected their own regions of origin much more severely.

Most people arriving in Europe were readily integrated into the labour market and by the 1990s each of the major economies was dependent upon large numbers of undocumented migrants.

Across Europe and North America millions of “illegals” were regularised (granted rights of residence and often of citizenship) in response not only to the demands of migrant organisations but also of powerful employer lobbies.

When some states attempted to restrict “irregular” movements they faced resistance from influential employer groups.

The nation state had long both accommodated and rejected migrants, depending on the contingent demands of local capitalism and on the relative strength of nationalist sentiment. The border could be implemented more or less vigorously to suit.

Over the last decade, however, border politics have become increasingly important. Insecure in the face of economic crisis and aspirations for change, states have focused on the border as a means of displacing responsibility away from those with wealth and privilege.

Many states of the Global North have taken on the agendas of the extreme right, fostering a climate of fear

and hostility toward migrants.

In Italy, where employers clamour for migrant labour, a government campaign to arrest and deport refugees has been accompanied by demands from the neo-fascist Northern League that immigrants be tattooed with identification codes. This blatant reference to Nazi practices of the 1930s demonstrates how official policy fosters a politics earlier dismissed as barbarism.

Migrants have been targeted by increasingly aggressive legal measures to track and exclude potential entrants; “hardened” borders with fences, walls and electronic surveillance systems; and militarisation of the border zone.

Today the border is again a site at which governments attempt to display their authority, projecting their role as guardians of an imagined national interest. Unwilling to address growing inequality and insecurity they project the vision of external threat and of their own role as champions of national integrity.

Citizens

In the 1990s theorists of globalisation began to argue that economic change would soon produce a “borderless” world. Capital would flow freely across national frontiers and the nation state would become a relic of old rivalries and conflicts.

This was always a fiction. Nation states are integral to industrial capitalism—to supervise the process of exploitation and to generate and disseminate ideas about national loyalties. The modern state also requires borders—both territorial frontiers and ideas about inclusion and exclusion of citizens and “others”.

The state in the early modern era worked tirelessly to convince people of their “national” identity. It called for deference to monarchs and parliaments said to embody national traditions, for patriotism and for “love of country”. Ideologues of the nation depended upon such loyalties coupled with hostility towards those beyond the border.

Today a system in crisis invokes the same agendas of inclusion and exclusion.

Genuine internationalism challenges the border and all border controls. We welcome those said to be “outsiders”, understanding from history the contradictory and ultimately false idea of separation by nation and national identity. Migrant lives matter—refugees are welcome here.

Socialist Review UK

RESETTLEMENT FARCE: SET THE DEADLINE, BRING THEM HERE

By Ian Rintoul

THE PNG Immigration Minister's declaration that the Australian government must get the asylum seekers and refugees out of PNG has made the "Bring Them Here" demand of the refugee movement even more important.

Almost exactly two years ago the PNG Supreme Court ordered the PNG and Australian governments, "to cease the unconstitutional and illegal detention of asylum seekers" on Manus Island and to stop the breach of their human rights.

Yet more than 600 people are still held on Manus Island, and almost 100 more in Port Moresby.

The farce of PNG resettlement came to a dramatic end on 20 February, when PNG police raided the houses of 13 refugees who were supposedly being resettled in Port Moresby. They were arrested and forcibly returned to Manus Island. The PNG Immigration Minister, Petrus Thomas, was stating the obvious when he told the ABC that PNG refugee resettlement had failed.

Now the PNG Minister has declared it Australia's responsibility to find a third country to resettle the refugees. PNG has even set up a task force to negotiate with Australia's Home Affairs Department to ensure all refugees from Manus Island are resettled in a third country.

Ongoing crisis

The task force is one more sign that nothing is resolved on Manus Island, and that it remains a problem for the government. While it is not the first time that the PNG Immigration Minister has said PNG expects Australia to get the refugees off Manus, the announcement will keep the pressure on the Australian government.

For years, Peter Dutton has lied that the Coalition was seeking safe, third countries. He told the media in 2016, "We are keen to get people off to third countries... We are working with a number of countries now."

But Foreign Affairs Minister, Julie

BILOELA SAYS BRING THE TAMIL FAMILY HOME



AS *SOLIDARITY* goes to press, almost 100,000 people have signed a petition calling on the government to return a Tamil asylum seeker family that Border Force officers snatched from a rural town in Queensland. Nades and Priya have lived and worked in Biloele for four years. Their two children were born in Australia.

Despite a pending court hearing, Border Force tried to forcibly remove the family from Australia,

Above: Priya and Nades with baby Dharuniga
Sign the petition at www.change.org/p/peter-dutton-bring-priya-back-to-biloela

bundling them onto a plane to Sri Lanka only a day after the court documents were lodged.

The family was taken off the plane in Perth at midnight after lawyers were alerted to the removal and initiated an urgent court hearing.

Biloele is shocked at the government's actions. One Biloele resident put it simply, "[This family] is a part of our community. Our neighbours have been taken and we want them back."

Bishop, says that Cambodia is only country other than the US that will take refugees. That's also a lie.

When New Zealand Prime Minister Jacinda Ardern was in Australia in March, she repeated her government's offer to take 150 refugees a year; but no mention of that from Julie Bishop.

The stakes are high. At a recent Senate Estimates hearing, Border Force admitted that up to 500 asylum seekers and refugees could be left on Manus regardless of the US deal. More will be left on Nauru. Refugees

Border Force admitted that 500 asylum seekers and refugees could be left on Manus regardless of the US deal

have been held on Manus and Nauru for almost five years, yet the government's only response is to maintain the hell-holes. And Labor is as much to blame. Its bi-partisan support for offshore detention has allowed the brutality and the scapegoating to continue.

Thousands of people around Australia will protest and march on Palm Sunday, 25 March, to tell the government to free the refugees, evacuate Manus and Nauru and bring all the asylum seekers and refugees to Australia.

Solidarity