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Aboriginal campaigner took up a faraway fight for the oppressed

70 years on, one man's protest against the Nazis is remembered, writes **Carolyn Webb**.

IN 1938, William Cooper was 77 years old. No one would have begrudged the Australian Aborigines' League founder, a life-long indigenous rights campaigner, if he had put his feet up and retired.

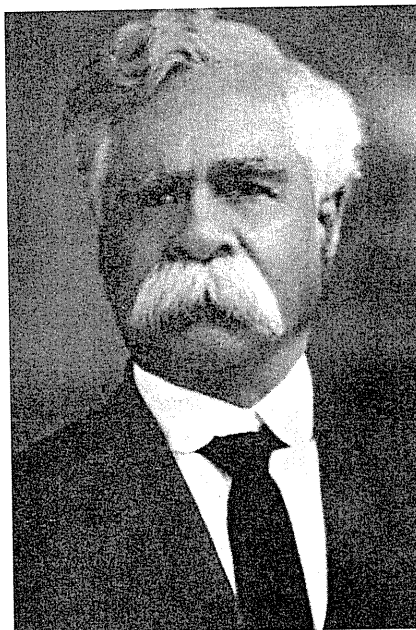
But a new, non-Aboriginal cause spurred an angry Mr Cooper into action.

Tomorrow marks the 70th anniversary of Kristallnacht, or Night of the Broken Glass, when Nazis went on a rampage through Jewish communities in Germany and Austria.

In two days, November 9 and 10, 1938, 91 Jews were murdered and 30,000 deported to concentration camps. Hundreds of synagogues and homes were burnt down and stores were looted.

Officially, according to the Yad Vashem International School for Holocaust Studies, Kristallnacht was launched in retaliation for the assassination on November 7 of Ernst vom Rath, a German embassy official in Paris, by a young Jewish refugee named Herschel Grynszpan, but the Nazis used it to institute more severe anti-Jewish measures.

The director of the Jewish



Community Council of Victoria, Geoffrey Zygier, said few people overseas bothered to protest the atrocity.

But William Cooper did, in a small but powerful way. On December 6, 1938, he led a delegation of Aborigines who

walked from his Footscray home to the German consulate in Albert Road, South Melbourne.

The *Argus* newspaper reported the next day: "A deputation from the Australian Aborigines' League, which visited the German consulate yesterday, with

the intention of conveying to the consul (Dr R.W. Drechsler) a resolution condemning the persecution of Jews and Christians in Germany, was refused admittance.

"The resolution voiced, 'on behalf of the Aborigines of Aus-

tralia, a strong protest at the cruel persecution of the Jewish people by the Nazi government of Germany, and asks that this persecution be brought to an end."

On December 2 at state Parliament House, the Israeli

ambassador to Australia, Yuval Rotem, will present Mr Cooper's grandson, Boydie Turner, with a certificate stating that 70 Australian trees will be planted at the Yad Vashem Holocaust remembrance centre in Jerusalem in Mr Cooper's honour.



LEFT: Aborigines' League founder William Cooper, "a fighter, a leader and a visionary". ABOVE: A pedestrian looks at the wreckage of a shop after Kristallnacht in Germany in 1938. RIGHT: Cleaning up after the rampage that left 91 Jews dead.

PICTURES: GETTY IMAGES, AP

National Party tipped to win NZ election

Australia cited in push for change

By **TONY WRIGHT**
NATIONAL AFFAIRS EDITOR
AUCKLAND

NEW Zealand National Party leader John Key has cited Kevin Rudd's election win in Australia last year and this week's victory by Barack Obama in the US to justify his claim to the top job when his nation goes to the polls today.

As four weeks of campaigning finished last night, Mr Key sensed a strong move for change in New Zealand, "underpinned by the change we've seen in Australia and the US".

But Labour's Helen Clark, who has been Prime Minister for nine years, said this was no time to place the country in the hands of an inexperienced National Party leader who

believed in deregulation and privatisation.

Miss Clark and her Labour Government face a battle to retain power, with newspaper and TV polls this week all predicting Mr Key's National Party would be able to form government after today's vote.

A Fairfax/Nielsen poll published yesterday had the National Party within a whisker of the votes it would need to win government outright — a feat no party has achieved since New Zealand introduced its hybrid

mixed member proportional voting system in the late 1990s.

The Fairfax/Nielsen poll found National support was at 49% while Labour was on 31% and the Greens on 8%. On these figures, the National Party, in coalition with minor parties such as ACT and United Future, would take 67 of the 120 seats. A Labor-Greens Coalition would be left with only 50 seats.

If this poll proved correct, the Maori Party — which wants to win the majority of seven seats allocated to Maori candidates —



John Key meets supporters.

would not be required to help either party over the line. The Maori Party had been considered a potential "kingmaker". A DigiPoll in the *New Zea-*

land *Herald* gave the National Party a more modest lead over Labour, 47.9% to 36.4%, but calculated that the party would be able to form a coalition government with ACT and United Future, relegating Labour and the Greens to Opposition.

Miss Clark has struggled to persuade voters that they should retain trust in her experience, with the global financial crisis and the US election overshadowing a largely uninspired New Zealand campaign.

Her cause is not assisted by a

recession and the budget falling into deficit.

Mr Key, who was brought up in a housing commission home after his father died and who made a fortune as an exchange dealer, was little known when the campaign began. But he has won support for his claim on knowledge about the economy, his promise to improve education system and a vow to "keep the streets safe".

► Fringe parties cloud long, grey campaign **INSIGHT 4**

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