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### **Mark Latham. What his leadership means to working people**

Labor supporters are cocky again. Now they have a leader who represents something, has strong and strident ideas and can score points of John Howard. Simon Crean is living testimony to the bankruptcy of the trade union bureaucracy which he had been part of for most of his life. He was arid is a weak and insipid bureaucrat, unable to pull punches let alone score knockouts, even when handed issues on a plate. It is extremely understandable mat no one had any faith in him, not even the Labor faithful. Hs percentage support was the lowest in ALP history. He had to go.

Latham won leadership in a two person contest with former leader Kim Beazley. Beazley lost last time but he is a man with more presence than hapless Crean. Justifiably be considers himself unlucky as he won more votes than Howard even though he won less seats. Latham won narrowly Beazley, considered to be the most right wing leader in Labor's history had the support of the Labor left including Anthony Albanese. This exposes the lefts total and utter bankruptcy. But there is absolutely no basis for supporting Latham either. The Left in the ALP is basically defined in terms of defending Australian manufacturing. Socialism has long ago been thrown out the window.

So who is Mark Latham? Latham is proud of his western Sydney roots. These are indeed real. Latham grew up in Miller part of the district known as Green Valley. Working class mates put in so he could attend Sydney University. He has indeed been successful.

In the case of Mark Latham it is not a case of him rejecting his roots in Green Valley. but who he represents in Green Valley. Mark Latham claims his constituency as the "aspirational" voter.

Aspirational voters are those who aspire to climb the class ladder. They may start at the bottom but with a bit of investment and land speculation they hope to make a small fortune. Mark Latham defends Their right to try. But the reality is that most of the aspirationals flat on their face. The belief that the poor can climb the class ladder is a pretty cruel form of false consciousness. No doubt a few who have succeeded may be grateful for Latham's assistance. But the majority of the proletariat will suffer.

But basically, the logic of supporting those who aspire to be capitalists is to promote capitalism. For example, the aspirational voter wants to his or her own home. So public housing takes a back seat.

In fact it is sold out so many really want to own their own home. The real proletariat, probably the majority of the residents of Miller and for that matter the electorate of Werriwa have no chance of "aspiring". It is extremely unlikely that they will find the money to afford home ownership. The aspirational voter supports higher land values because he or she aspires to make a profit from their home. A house for them is an investment. But for the proletarian, higher land values make it more difficult for them to buy a home. It means higher rates. It also means higher rent.

Basing yourself on the "aspirational voter" also means adapting to their reactionary prejudices. This includes their racist prejudices. Latham has previously dismissed the refugee question as a trendy inner city issue. It is an issue that trendy inner city people take a stand on. And unfortunately Free the Refugees and RAC have no working class perspective. Their campaign involves students greenies, some churches plus token representation from unions and ethnic communities. The issue is one which concerns the whole of the working class. Howard is using it to galvanise support for his reactionary agenda. So there is more than just humanitarian reasons for freeing the refugees from their barbaric incarceration. Free the refugees! Let them stay!

But an important reason why there is little westy support for refugee freedom is that people like Latham refuse to take a stand. In fact they capitulate to Howard!

As new leader of the Labor Party, Latham has been forced to announce policy. Latham promises to be easier on refugees but harder on people smugglers. People smugglers will get life in prison if convicted. Despite a bit more humanity Latham will still maintain the barbaric reactionary detention centres. In fact refugees could have to stay there two years. And they will be deported if they are not "real refugees". This policy, reactionary and racist as it is, constitutes a turn to the left as far as Latham is concerned; or rather it is a capitulation to rank and file pressure. In relation to Tampa, Latham at the time opposed Howard from the right, arguing for stronger border protection.

One reactionary policy Latham threatens to introduce is id cards for foreign born workers. This id will contain details of passport, work permit and tax file number. Latham is concerned that an estimated (his estimate) sixty thousand workers who originate from other countries are working here illegally. He wants to tighten the borders. He promises serious penalties for bosses who utilise illegal labour. Although he gives it a workerist thrust, placing the emphasis on "bosses who use illegal workers" what he is doing is attacking working class people. depriving us of the right to work in whatever country we choose. There should be no such thing as an illegal worker.

There is one issue dear to the hearts of aspirational voters — taxation. Latham has actually attacked the Howard government for economic irresponsibility. Before his ascendancy to leadership, the Murdoch press gave him a degree of support against the proposers of big spending such as Doug Cameron AMWU. Mark Latham wants a few sweeteners, a few of which are progressive. But, basically he plans to introduce no new taxes. His promises will be funded from the existing revenue, - oils tributed a little bit. Howard doesn't believe him. So despite the few sweeteners, none of the major issues will be tackled by a Latham government. This induces health, education housing and jobs. A Latham Government would continue the privatisation of Telstra. making it completely privatised. Latham is philosophically committed to the discipline of the capitalist economy. Mark places emphasis on family. But in no way will endorse a shorter working week without loss of pay Nor is there any sign that he will stop the progressive increase in the working week. While Labor voter work up to seventy hours per week, Latham says nothing.

So is Mark Latham a winner? We say maybe. The Howard government boasts of prosperity but many Australians see little material benefit for the alleged prosperity. Latham is offering them something. Howard's credibility is also at a low with sections of the electorate. People realise that he is dishonest. He lied about Tampa, He lied about "weapons of mass destruction" and therefore took Australia to war under false pretences. Many have a closer affinity with Latham, a real westie and not a party machine hack. Latham's victory is in no way guaranteed though. The Howard Costello machine attempt to scare middle Australia about "big taxing government".

Latham is now on the offensive. No doubt many disillusioned are now returning to the fold. They feel that Labor now has a leader who relates to them — ordinary working people. A positive with Latham is he shows that from the housing estates of western Sydney, intelligent leadership can emerge. The problem is that whilst he is from the working class, the class he really serves is the capitalist class. Latham is on the other side of the class line. Don't be fooled by his sweeteners! When it comes to the crunch, Latham will either administer a capitalist austerity programme or make way for someone who can.

Latham, before becoming opposition leader used some colourful language "brown nose" to describe Howard's crawling and total subservience to US imperialism. However after one visit to the US Embassy for serious discussions, he appears to have straightened up. Now he boasts his continuity with Chifley and Curtin, both lackeys of US imperialism. Latham will criticise US imperialism but only to the degree permitted by the US State Department. The still continuing war in Iraq does not require Australia's token involvement.

#### **Murris and Kooris: for a workers campaign to return the stolen wages!**

In the Sixties, the North Australian Workers Union, fought their guts out getting equal pay for "Aborigines". They succeeded. Today their efforts are opposed by Padraec Pearse Mc Guiness who stated his opposition clearly and publicly in a debate against Bob Gould,. Mc Guiness claims station owners did not employ them thanks to equal pay. He condones racism. He endorses slavery. The station owners should be attacked for their racist prejudice, not the NAWU nor their left supporters who fought for wage equality.

However were the Black station workers actually paid? It has now been exposed that they weren't. Their meagre pay packets were expropriated by Aboriginal Affairs officers and pocketed by their appropriate state Government. It has been estimated over \$150 million was taken by the Queensland government. Their wages were stolen. All they received was food and shelter. This racist slavery is now being acknowledged. The Beattie government of Queensland is offering compensation. But how much is it offering? Peanuts! Murri and black activists throughout Australia consider the offer to be an insult. We completely agree. The Queensland government has not merely stolen money, it has invested it and made millions of dollars. This is a racist disgrace. The Black people who earned that money out of their sweated labour have lived and still live lives of poverty. Not just the wages should be returned but also interest and compensation should be handed back to the victims and their families. The workers movement must act so the stolen wages adjusted for inflation plus adequate compensation is returned

## Iraq One year after the invasion

March 20 will mark the first anniversary of the US led Coalition invasion of Iraq. They can hardly say that they are totally victorious. They claimed that the invasion was successful on May 1. But shortly after they were forced to admit that although they had won the formal, military war, they were now facing guerrilla warfare. This has been going on for ten months and has no sign of abating. Every day we receive news of a new suicide bomb. More US military personnel have been killed in the guerrilla war than in the formal military invasion. America has captured Saddam but his capture has made no difference.

It appears that the US will remain in occupation for the foreseeable future. They know that if they withdrew, the country would bow up in their faces. There would be civil war! They also know that there is a lot of work to be done reconstructing infrastructure. There is also a lot of work to do establishing their provisional government as the real administration of the people. It is the Shiite religious leaders who probably have the most authority over the largest minority, perhaps even the majority of the population. But a Shiite religious government is not what America wants. It would certainly be a major setback to the proletariat of Iraq.

There has been some debate over whether elections should or could be held now. European powers such as France, Germany and Russia want them. So too do the Shiites of Iraq. But a date is still yet to be fixed. This is understandable. US still does not know when Iraq will be safe for democracy — on America's terms. America has given contracts to American and Coalition companies who stand to make billions. The Iraqi's were not consulted. America will not tolerate a government which will threaten imperialist interests. So much for democracy.

The biggest embarrassment at the moment though is weapons of mass destruction. There were none! This has been established by George Bush's appointed weapons inspector David Kaye. He said pretty categorically that there was no weapons. He said there was a major problem with intelligence. This worries the imperialists. Bush Bair and now Howard have called for major inquiries. It now appears the Blair's claim that Saddam's regime could launch a nuclear warhead within forty five minutes merely referred to a conventional warhead. Blair was way off beam.

Bush, Blair and Howard cannot use intelligence as an excuse. When there was contrary intelligence put out before the invasion, Bush, Blair and Howard not only refused to consider it. They attacked it as weak, unpatriotic and helping Saddam. They were so gung-ho confident, they refused to allow weapons inspector Hans Blix to finish his mission. They must take full responsibility irrespective of how much they were misled by a hawkish bureaucracy.

For revolutionaries, weapons of mass destruction, real or otherwise, is not an issue. We would oppose an invasion if Iraq was armed to the teeth. We oppose UN resolutions scapegoating Iraq so it is immaterial whether Saddam is in violation or otherwise. Those resolutions were moved to give imperialism a veneer of international legality to justify conquest.

For the workers movement, the situation remains the same. Action is required to smash the imperialist war drive. A workers movement must be built for this purpose. Working people must be shown that by defeating the imperialist war drive we can defeat the war against working people in Australia. After one year of war, the imperialists have resolved nothing.

### **Socialist Alliance: Bob Gould versus the Democratic Socialist Party.**

There has been a debate going on. The forum has been mainly the internet. But there also have been many wordy statements, leaflets and confrontations at meetings. Both sides support some sort of Socialist Alliance. Bob has explicitly stated his support for the Socialist Alliance programme. But the DSP supports a Socialist Alliance which stands candidates against the Labor. This Labor loyalist Bob can't support and can't join lest his precious ALP membership be jeopardised.

Bob in fact wants to enlist the far left into his agenda. Basically he stands for a broad Socialist Left which he hopes will take over the ALP From within this he will fight for his liquidated reformised version of the Transitional Programme. Bob has been consistent. He has maintained his agenda since the sixties. This debate goes back to the early seventies. Bob had a major split with the Percy Brothers within Resistance in 1970. The Percy's won the majority. The issue which split the group was whether Resistance should have a formalised programme including support for liberation movements, women's liberation, workers control etc. Bob thought that even this basic programme would be a barrier for Resistance organising radicalised youth. At that time the Percy Brother had the support of the Socialist Workers Party of the USA. Barry Shepherd came out to Australia. In the process of faction fighting Bob maintained control of the Third world bookshops, of which he was the legal owner.

Bob seeks both revenge and historical vindication. Bob's major weapon is a web site called OZLEFT where he is republishing important documents of Australian new left history. QZLEFT also documents faction fights within Socialist Alliance/DSP and the International Socialist Organisation.

Well things moved on since the split in 1970. The Percy's built their organisation which became successful. During the seventies it was second largest to the Aarons led Communist Party, Today it is the largest. But today the far left is smaller numerically than at any time this century relatively to Australia's population.

After splitting with Resistance, Bob suffered a split from his wing of Resistance when a majority joined the newly forming Socialist Labour League, then Workers Action. This is now the Socialist Equality Party. The Percy Brothers had their high profile Socialist Youth Alliance and later, the Socialist workers League. Their paper Direct Action strident and multicoloured.

But on paper they had similar positions on the Labor Party. SWL called itself a League on principle, so as not to be in conflict with the "mass party of the working class." SWL members carried out entrist work and were undemocratically expelled from Labor in Victoria.

A key arena of conflict was the short lived NSW Socialist Left. All the contending Trot groups Workers Action, SWL, International (Origlass) and Gould had their alternative perspectives. Jim Mulgrew and Phil Sandford who became leaders of the Socialist Labour League argued that Women's Liberation was "fascist or "potentially fascist" The SWL paper was submitted by Roger Barnes. This won the battle of perspectives. The next year Bob Gould was NSWSL delegate at ALP National Conference Hobart. The SWL may have won the majority of NSW SL members to their perspective. But they did not take their SL orientation seriously. Bob Gould is quite justified in his annoyance of SWL for allowing the SL to run down. After all, they were party to it and claimed to believe in it. SWL

behaviour was based on pragmatic priority not on any principled break from reformism. This led Roger Barnes and supporters (notably Sylvia Hale) to split from SWL. The NSW SL degenerated..

SWL pursued their semi-independent course promoting mass movements and Direct Action. Bob concentrated on his bookshops which now specialised in pornography. The aim was to make money to be a big wheel in the labour movement.

The Percy Brothers influenced by James P Cannon were believers in tight organisation. During 1974 they concentrated on organisation. Their centralism was bureaucratic. There was no real right of tendency or faction except before party conferences. They hardened even more when a group of Brisbane Mandelites joined. splitting three years later recruiting some SWL cadre.

For the December 1975 election, SWL stood candidates for the first time. This was a big step as previously they opposed the CPA not just for their Stalinist programme but for standing at all as Labor was the mass workers party". In 1976 they became a fully fledged party. The Percy Brothers had an ally — the United Secretariat. As part of their solution to the factional gulf between them and the SWP US they ordered all USec supporters. notably the Communist League. to fuse with the SWP on its terms. Those who did not fit in to this framework were forced out.

Meanwhile, Bob Gould had joined the Healyite Socialist Labour League after being a significant donator of money. He joined as an enterist. He still operated in the Labor Party. His SLL operation was successful. By the end of 1977 he had around him a group who wanted to orient to both the Labor Party and alternative leaderships in the trade union movement. Included were some who broke from him in 1970. This group, though closeted 'as affiliated to Gerry Healy's International Committee of the Fourth International. In the adult Labor Party Bob formed the Socialist Left with his former wife's husband and old time Trot George Petersen MLA for Illawarra.

Gould's Young Labor grouping was expelled from the Steering Committee supported official left Radical Leadership Grouping. They were expelled for advocating socialist policies. They formed the Socialist Leadership Grouping. It is interesting to note that "supporters of Direct Action" did not get expelled from the RLG and were basically indistinguishable from them at Young Labor meetings.

For five years or so, SLG were a significant minority winning executive positions. The Gould/Petersen Socialist Left was big enough to be noticed in bourgeois commentary on the ALP but hardly a threat to the power of the two main factions..

Gould and friends also made an impact on the trade union front. SLG leader and Young Labor activist Paul Ford was a shop steward at GMH car plant Pagewood when the bosses decided to close it down. He led a contingent to NSW Parliament house demanding the NSW Labor government nationalise.

Bob also sponsored a number of rank and file groups. These included Health and Research, Flour millers, VBU and sponsored a rank and file waterside bulletin put out by former CPA member Peter Ellstone. But his main success was in the NSW Nurses Federation. His group started from a Fight the Health Cuts campaign which was formed to fight the Wran governments cuts in inner city hospitals rationalised with claims of moving hospital beds to the western suburbs. Jenny Haines was elected NSW state secretary. Jenny was to her credit, the only delegate at the ACTU Congress to vote against the notorious Prices and Incomes Accord.

Basically, there has been nothing revolutionary about neither Gould's ALP work nor his work in trade unions. His programmes have always been minimalist and opportunist. In the Flour Millers Gouldite Mark Adler stood on a ticket whose main thrust was affiliation to the ALP. The union leadership were not affiliated.

Bob's opportunist deals were most clearly exposed through his campaign for housing in Inner Sydney. Opening his public meeting was Lord Mayor of Sydney Doug Sutherland, a right wing Laborite. Not only was Doug not a defender of working class tenants, he was actively supporting the developers, facilitating evictions. He was clearly on the other side to the many thousands of tenants, Labor voters on the whole, who suffered from rampant development. But Gould was giving him credentials no doubt as part of some ALP deal. Gould's proposals in housing were, of course, minimalist. It was only revolutionary class struggle which could have defended working class tenants.

Gould was active in the Fightback Committee, unionists united against the Prices and Incomes Accord. During the eighties Irish solidarity was an issue as there was much attention paid to hunger striker Bobby Sands and the barbaric conditions in H Block. Sands struck for political status. The British Government treated him as a common criminal. The British military occupation of the six counties Northern Ireland' has been truly barbaric.

Bob Gould prioritised Ireland because he believed that as Anglo Celtic Australia had Irish roots there would be a stronger response than Latin America. He was wrong.

The SWP who prioritised Latin America gained more support from their solidarity. Their solidarity was dialectically linked into their degeneration into Stalinism. Of course it all started with the US SWP analysis that Cuba was and is a healthy workers state. But the Australian's took the analysis even further. Previously revisionist Trotskyists have argued that Castro became an "unconscious Trotskyist" The Australian SWP took the logic further and attacked Trotskyism outright! Essentially they have argued that Lenin was a Stalinist, adapting to the peasantry and with a two stage theory of revolution. Castro in their eyes was not an unconscious Trotskyist but a consistent Leninist. Trotskyism, in their eyes is sectarian revisionism. Leading SWPers have argued that had Trotsky's advice been taken, the Chinese revolution would never have been won. They joined Denis Freney in stabbing the Vietnamese Trotskyists in the back, justifying their slaughter, rehashing Stalinist arguments

On the basis of this the SWP gave uncritical support to Sandinistas in Nicaragua, the guerrillas in El Salvador and the New Jewel Movement in Grenada. All the above were "following the Cuban road" and therefore revolutionary. It was precisely because they "followed the Cuban road" that revolutions failed. In those countries. Adapting to the peasantry is never the recipe for a successful revolution. In fact it is usually the recipe for counter-revolution — especially when it is linked to a bourgeois programme.

The SWP rejected Trotskyism outright. They rejected the final political class line between Stalinism and Trotskyism. They repudiated the Fourth International and resigned from the United Secretariat

The Socialist Workers Party also readjusted its strategy in relation to Australia. Basically these amounted to strategic manoeuvres to regroup Stalinism. to become the new Communist Party. These have included a failed entrust incursion into the Nuclear Disarmament Party. a joint bloc with

the Socialist Party (now the Communist Party) and an attempt to “build a new party with the degenerated remnants of the old (Aarons) Communist Party on route to total degeneration.

The SWP changed its name to Democratic Socialist Party. It was influenced by the Gorbachev reform movement in the Soviet Union.

The DSP has suffered from many controversies which have lost it members. These include allegations of theft from the Tasmanian Unemployed Peoples Union and support for the Croatian Movement for Statehood. There have been many splits concerning bureaucratic practices. Gould plans to pick up the pieces,

The Socialist Alliance is their latest attempt at forming their communist party.. Because of size the DSP have immense power within the Alliance. Because of overseas pressures, the International Socialists are virtually captive..Bob Gould is offering a ticket out of captivity.

The Socialist Alliance has a few problems. The biggest one is lack of electoral clout and a social base mainly of the radical left, Of course, the takeover move by the DSP has made constituent organisations unhappy with the project. The ISO see Socialist Alliance as a halfway house between themselves and the Labor Left. So Bob Gould has quite a few target groups

Disaffected DSP members. There have been many splits from the DSP/SWP over the years and there are many who hate John Percy's and Doug Lorimer's guts.

Demoralised Socialist Alliance members. With results such as those obtained in Adelaide, many will be asking “why bother”. Elections do cost money. The DSP talk about an “alternative to Labor” but the SA programmes are so minimal that they don't constitute an alternative to reformism.

Trade union oriented activists. In the past Workers Liberty have argued against standing candidates as it puts a barrier between revolutionaries and working class militants. Here Workers Liberty are adapting to the politics militants have— reformist and Stalinist. Many have similar views but not sophisticated political framework. Their attitude is basically ‘the rank and file struggle is the real struggle so why bother standing for parliament.’ Yes putting your politics on the line in elections does alienate people — who are reformist. But this alienation is not avoidable if your aim is to revolutionise the working class. If you submerge your politics to make a bloc with reformist militants, you cannot put forward a revolutionary alternative to the bureaucracy. Bob Gould also has a lot of money. He can finance rank and file groups properly. Correctly he attacks the DSP efforts as ‘dabbling’.

The International Socialist Organisation and breakaways. The ISO have split three ways. The main ISO, Socialist Alternative (who are anti electoralist) and a group called Solidarity led by Ian Rintoul who take mass movement work seriously. ISO have argued that the new DSP controlled Socialist Alliance is a barrier to their proposed half way house Socialist Alliance. They consciously want a reformist Alliance. DSP pretend the minimalist SA is revolutionary. Gould will try to seduce the Solidarity group with Labor supporters, MP's and bureaucrats for mass work such as refugees.

The revolutionary left is not doing very well. Bob is utilising this, fear of small size and isolation by dangling a big carrot — the labour bureaucracy, Bob is also orienting towards the Greens. There are

many old Trots in the Greens, notably Origlass supporters and USec. An electoralist Socialist Alliance is a barrier to Bob regrouping these forces.

Though it is not entirely plain sailing for Bob. What he lacks is youth power. The DSP ignite the passion of youth for revolution by their solidarity work. They offer the intrigue and romance of Cuba, Latin America and Che Guevara. ISO appeal to youthful energy through their high profile pr and militancy. Perhaps he can seduce Socialist Alternative to fulfil this function.

Also, Bob whilst he has earned some Labor Party credence, he hardly has been an outstanding success either in the Labor Party or in the union movement. Any socialist left he forms will not challenge the Steering committee within the foreseeable future. Bob can shout about how much in the wilderness Socialist Alliance election campaigns are. But anyone who talked even left let alone socialism would be extremely isolated at the Federal ALP conference which swept Latham to leadership. Bob promises not only isolation. He promises the prison of the labour bureaucracy.. He too has a bad image and reputation amongst sections of the left.

Bob in his Internet article Labor to power argues for a Labor Party orientation. His two main points are 1) that the old Trots did it and 2) so you won't appear eccentric and isolated. He would acknowledge that the old Trots worked in a different environment. The Labor Party had a much healthier class composition. It contained militant workers who are not present there today. And just because the old Trots did it is not in itself an argument. Australian Trotskyism was isolated from the world movement. Who were these Left ALP candidates which they campaigned for. These is no one in the federal parliamentary ALP who deserves the description "left."

Bob also lacks the international solidarity. Some on the left romanticise bourgeois nationalist, guerillaist forces as a substitute for their lack of revolutionary strategy. They cheerlead for revolutions and national liberation struggles overseas. Unfortunately they also glorify the bureaucratism and revisionism. This is, of course, the environment, the milieu from which DSP wants to recruit from and ideologically dominate.

The DSP are regrouping independent Stalinists internationally. These third worldists are in many cases hostile to Labor. So an orientation to the Labor Party would be an inconvenience to the process

The important point :though is that this polemical fight is not between principled revolutionists albeit with flawed perspectives.. It is a failing out amongst revisionists. The DSP orients to who identify with Stalinist solidarity movements. The DSP through Socialist Alliance support a reformist alternative to Labor. Gould identifies with Trotskyism but offers left variant of reformism within the Labor Party.

### **For a revolutionary communist international Twenty one points from five groups.**

The following five revolutionary groupings are calling for an international conference of Trotskyists with the purpose of founding a new revolutionary international. They are the Communist Workers Group New Zealand. Group Bolshevik pour Construction de Party Outrider Revolutionnaire de Internationale Ouvrier Revolution (France) Groupe Obrero Internationale cuatre Internationale (Chile) Liga Onrero Internationalista Cuarto Internationalista Democratic Obrereo (Argentina) Lucha

Marxista (Peru) who constitute the Collective for an International Conference of Principled Trotskyism.

We, Communist Left of Australia, endorse such a call. A revolutionary communist international based on the traditions of Lenin and Trotsky is well and truly needed. We agree that the formation of such a revolutionary international is a matter of urgency. But it is not good enough to call yourself a Trotskyist or Leninist, fundamental principles have to be spelt out. Ostensible Trotskyist organisations have dragged the tradition through the mud. Here it is not merely an issue of differences. Mainstream “Trotskyism” such as United Secretariat has crossed class lines. So to have supporters of Lambert, Moreno and other international tendencies That is why it is necessary to spell out the basis for a conference in terms of the concrete principles which constitute Trotskyism. This the twenty one points achieves.

We stress that this constitutes a minimum basis for a conference. A tighter document with more clarification is required for the formation of a new international or for a fusion on the international level between CLA and any other international grouping. for example the organisers all support Trotsky's formation of the Fourth International and identify with its programme. But they are divided over whether to call for a fifth communist international or to re-establish the fourth International

Of the statement we make the following comment. Point 16) correctly reaffirms Trotsky's correct decision to found the Fourth International and the validity of the Transitional Programme. Given the fact that revisionists have caricatured the programme, turning it effectively into a minimum programme, it is important to also reaffirm key demands. These include For the expropriation of the bourgeoisie. For a revolutionary workers and small farmers government. The statement reaffirms opposition to Stalinism. But it is also important to spell out the class line that separates Stalinism and Trotskyism Correctly the document talks about the working class leading the peasantry.. Many ostensible Trotskyists hate the bureaucratism of Stalinism. But they adapt empirically third world Stalinists under the gun who adapt to the peasantry. They adapt to the peasantry, just as the Stalinists do. Of course, they are stagiest and nationalist. The Leninist Trotskyist analysis, the Marxist analysis, of the relationship between the proletariat and the peasantry must be reasserted. We must reject the revisionist lie that there was a division between Lenin and Trotsky and that Trotsky “underestimated the peasantry”.

The Statement lists a whole series of tendencies that do not constitute principled Trotskyism and have no place at such a conference. We agree. But it would help if the statement clarified the principles concerned.

Although it relates to all parts of the globe, this document has a South American emphasis. This we agree with. The twenty first century has already witnessed revolutionary upsurges in Argentina (notably Salta) and Bolivia. It is extremely urgent that revolutionary proletarians draw a balance sheet and learn the lessons. As well in South America there are radical governments with mass support — Chavez in Venezuela, Lula in Brazil. These popular front governments are potential death traps for working people in those countries. Revolutionary alternatives must be built as a matter of urgency

A successful proletarian revolution in Central or South America would have massive repercussions throughout the world, It could be a springboard for world revolution.

This statement however reaffirms that socialist revolution is on the political agenda throughout the world. It clearly and emphatically opposes all forms of class collaboration, the labour bureaucracy, the United Nations, bourgeois nationalist misleaders such as Arafat and Chavez, Stalinists such as Fidel Castro. It fights counter-revolution in what remains of the post capitalist states and defends colonies and semi colonies unconditionally from imperialist invasion. It rejects revisionist abandonments of Lenin including neocapitalism, permanent arms economy etc.

We though believe that there is a “crisis of subjectivity” But we agree that “without a social revolution in the next historical period all human civilisation is threatened with catastrophe The crisis of subjectivity can only be resolved by putting revolution on the agenda. The revolution requires consciousness — revolutionary class consciousness. And the struggle for that consciousness begins now irrespective of how close or far away a revolutionary situation may be.

Communist Left has endorsed this statement as a basis for an international conference. We urge tendencies and individuals to study the statement and send commentary, proposed amendment and statements of support to Communist Workers Group cwgnz@pl.net The statement is reproduced from Class Struggle #51 July/August 2003 publication of the Communist Workers Group New Zealand

#### **Programmatic agreements for an international Conference.**

We call for an international Conference in which groups, fractions, militants who are for the following principles and programmatic points will be able to take part.

1) All kinds of pseudotheories have been developed or invented by revisionists to explain that capitalism can overcome the crises and develop the productive forces without limits “technological and scientific revolution ‘monopoly state capitalism’ “neocapitalism” “the permanent arms economy” “neoliberal globalisation” “new economy” etc. against all these false theories, we reaffirm that for the whole of the imperialist epoch, capitalism has exhausted its progressive role and is reactionary through and through. The current imperialist counteroffensive and the war against Iraq is proof that this capitalist system is in its dying, destructive, imperialist phase, survives only by ferociously exploiting wage earners and casting millions of workers out of production where they are condemned to misery, destroying the productive forces by means of economic crises and wars each time more parasitic and destructive than the last and threatening to destroy the whole of human civilisation

2) All the imperialist powers in the present crisis phase and the recurrent failure of the world economy— that since 1997 has struck from Asia and Japan, to Brazil and Russia to Argentina and Turkey and has now arrived in the heart of the United States itself — as well as exploiting their own working masses, urgently need cheap sources of commodities, slave labour and reserves of unemployed to boost their superprofits by superexploiting the colonial and semicolonial world, so they can resolve the present crisis and restore the rate of profit.. The present colonising offensive by US imperialism is for a new repartition of the world at the expense of imperialist powers of second and third order. The second war against Iraq carried out by US and Britain, despite opposition from

France and Germany, illustrates the inevitable increasing imperialist rivalry among the imperialist powers. If the revolutionary proletariat does not stop it first, imperialism will take humanity to new depths beyond that seen in the 20th century

3) Revolutionaries must join forces with every oppressed nation attacked by imperialism and be for military victory for that nation and for the military defeat of imperialism. But we fight for proletarian leadership of the war and to transform that was into a socialist revolution both against the country attacked and also the aggressor imperialist aggressor imperialist nation. We proclaim to all those who will listen, that those who, in the imperialist countries, are not unconditionally for the defeat of their own imperialism and for the victory of the working class and the oppressed nation are neither revolutionary nor anti-imperialist. We call on the US working class totally confined within the straitjacket of AFL-CIO and the Japanese and European working classes to fight to break subordination of workers organisations to the bourgeoisie and ally with their class brothers and sisters in the colonial and semicolonial countries, to overthrow their own bourgeoisies, their governments and their states, on the road to socialist revolution.

4) We fight against the reactionary utopia of a united capitalist states of Europe and call on the European working class to oust the monarchy and the reactionary government of Aznar of Spain and Gaullist 5th republic of France, the antiworker imperialist government of the United Germany and the monarchy and the imperialist government of Tony Blair in Britain etc. In other words we call on all to defeat the governments and states of imperialist powers by overthrowing the bourgeoisie. by demolishing the bourgeois state and putting in its place workers and small farmers governments in these countries, opening the road to a United Socialist States of Europe.

5) We reaffirm the theory of permanent revolution against the policy of "anti-imperialist front" refuted after the tragedy of the Chinese Revolution of 1927. We support the widest anti-imperialist unity in action which takes even a small step forward in the struggle against imperialism for the working class and the exploited always maintaining our absolute and political independence

6) We denounce the surrender of the Iraqi bourgeoisie and of Saddam's antiworker officers and the Republican Guard before imperialist attack, for betraying the national war of the Iraqi people and the anti-imperialist struggle of every Middle Eastern country which today allows many leaders of the Baathist bourgeois nationalist party to collaborate with the Yankee and British occupiers. We denounce bourgeois leaders of the oppressed Kurdish people because they were allies of the invading Yankees and British in their war of colonial occupation against Iraq, and who deepen their oppression and crush ever struggle of their people for self-determination, including their right to secede from Iraq, Turkey, Syria and Iran. We denounce the governments and states of Persian and Arab bourgeoisies of the Middle East who kept "neutral" in the war against Iraq. refusing to constitute against the imperialist military coalition, a coalition of all oppressed nations of the Middle East, to send arms, military equipment and supplies to fight against imperialism in Iraq.

7) We denounce the Palestinian bourgeoisie and its political leadership, the PLO of Arafat who gave up revolutionary struggle of the Palestinian people and who kneel before imperialism before the two states plan of the UN and before Zionism. The Palestinian bourgeoisie wants to administer a caricature of a state as an agent of imperialism, in exchange for the blood of the martyred people. We declare war against the treacherous Leadership and the renegades from Trotskyism who support the Zionist state by endorsing the counter-revolutionary policy of "two states" of the UN

and the imperialists. We fight for the destruction of the state of Israel and for a secular, democratic and non-racist Palestinian state with a workers and small farmers government of self-organised and armed Palestinian masses on the road to a Federation of socialist republics of the Middle East.

8) We denounce Chavez and the Bolivariano movement for giving up the anti-imperialist struggle of the Venezuelan masses. Chavez sat on the negotiation table with governments like that of Lula and with “ambassadors of democracy” Carter and Alfonsin in which signed over everything the imperialists and putschist reaction had not been able to achieve on the streets in two counter-revolutionary attempts was handed over to them. We denounce also in Bolivia, the truce made by the CCBQuisipe and Morales— leader of the WSF—with the murderous government of Sanchez de Lozada, thereby preventing the working class and the peasants from making the uprising that started last February victorious., In Columbia, for years. the truces and agreements of the FARC with the successive genocidal governments of the country have isolated the peasants war in the country from the proletariat of the cities who face the fascists “death squads” At the same time the leadership of FARC refuses to expropriate a single oil well or a millimetre of territory that it controls Down with the truces and agreements For the independence of workers organisations from the regimes, governments and their lackey bourgeoisies Only with a such a proletarian strategy will we be able to set up a workers and peasants movement that united with our class brothers the American workers tight to put an end to slavery and misery in the “backyard” of Yankee imperialism, It is from this perspective that we raise the cry: Yankees out of Cuba, Ecuador Puerto Rico, Columbia and the whole of Latin America! Out with the European powers who are as much exploiters as the Yankees! British out of the Malvinas! For a Federation of Socialist Republics of Latin America!

9) We call on the Russian working class to take the road of red workers soldiers and peasants who in October 1917 made the first triumphant workers socialist republic. The fight to create new workers states in the territories of the former USSR is an urgent task for the European and world proletariat. We fight against Kim Song II of North Korea, Fidel Castro and the Cuban restorationist bureaucracy and the new Chinese restorationist bourgeois who adopted the reactionist anti-worker pseudotheory of “market socialism” which as is shown by the brutal exploitation of the Chinese working class, and by the advance of restorationist measures in Cuba and the submission of the Argentine working class is the counter-revolutionary policy of the World Social Forum to make the working class subservient to the capitalists. At the same time, in the case of the bureaucratised workers states that still remain in existence, we unconditionally defend them from imperialism in order to overthrow the bureaucracies that are so anxious to restore capitalism in these states.

10)We declare war on those leaderships who cling to the coat tails of the bourgeoisie, on their policy of class collaboration and their policy of “popular fronts”. History has shown time and time again that conciliation of class interests between capitalists and workers leads to defeat and massacre of the masses. There is no possibility that the situation of the world proletariat nor the emancipation of the exploited class can be improved by submitting to the interests of the exploiters

11) We denounce and declare war on all the servants of the United Nations including the majority of the renegades from Trotskyism who kneel before it. They follow their new leader Gladys Mann of the treacherous Chilean Stalinists General Secretary of the Latin American Communist Parties conference that meets twice a year. She is the spokeswoman for Fidel Castro who abandoned the Chilean revolution in 1973, the Central American revolution in the 80’s and who went to Argentina

to support Kirsner against the revolution.. Fidel and Gladys Mann, mainstays of the World Social Forum, have declared “another world is possible” without expropriating the capitalists and continuing the exploitation of the working class. They call for a “redistribution of wealth” as do the liberal democrats hand in hand with the United Nations ‘thieves kitchen’ of the imperialist gangsters. The same UN which approved the first war against Iraq, the genocidal blockade is today trying to get back into Iraq to defend the interests of French and German imperialists. The same UN which in 1948 established the state of Israel, and which supports the Zionist massacre of the Palestinian people with its policy of “two states”. The same UN that promoted and supported the war against Korea in 1950 etc.

12) We proclaim that as it has been clearly demonstrated by the Argentinean revolution, in a revolutionary or pre-revolutionary situation the basis of any revolutionary programme must be direct democracy and self-determination to enable the development, extension, centralisation and arming of masses organisations such as popular assemblies. the occupied factories, the commissions of the factories won from trade union bureaucracy and picquetoro movement, which are expressions of movements of the masses to create organs of dual power. In other words, when a revolution starts, those who do not fight for power and for a creation of a workers and peasants governments are no more than servants of the bourgeois state. This is why at congress of COTP-Cl we put forward the demand “for a government of the Third National Assembly of workers, unemployed and popular assemblies with their self-defence organs

13) We declare war on pacifism that infects the consciousness of the working class. We also oppose the petty bourgeois policy of individual terror that separates itself from the masses and disarms the masses. The uprising of the Bolivian working class and peasants with their cry “Guns and grapeshot Bolivians will not stay silent” shows the necessity to arm the proletariat. The bourgeois and counter-revolutionary leaderships, the formation of workers militia, and the destruction of the officer caste of the bourgeois armed forces. This is proved in Palestine where Yassar Arafat and the bourgeois leadership of the PLO along with Hamas and Hezbollah prevent the generalised arming of the Palestinian people and sacrificed them to the murderous Sharon and his genocidal army. Despite this, we defend all anti-imperialist fighters in the world.

14) Everywhere we confront the bureaucracies of all shades in the workers organisations, bribed and corrupted by large capital; the bourgeois nationalists, social democrats, and Stalinist trade union bureaucrats, paid by the state to confine workers to their narrow economicistic interests and to the interests of the bourgeoisie and imperialism; the leaderships of the organisations of piqueteros that dominate the Argentine working class, now begging for crumbs from the reformists and that prevent the unity of occupied workers and the unemployed and divide the workers ranks. The trade unions that were created to defend workers interests have been transformed over several decades by the trade union bureaucracy coming out of the aristocracy of labour, into apparatuses where the bureaucracy is paid to collaborate with the bourgeoisie and its state to subordinate and impoverish the workers. We Trotskyists fight in the trade unions to eliminate the bureaucracy and to win workers democracy. We affirm that this is not possible without the complete independence from the bourgeois state which incorporates and corrupts them. We fight to impose workers democracy based on factory committees and the strike pickets; for the renewing of the leadership of the unions by resolutely putting militant delegates at critical times to form a revolutionary leadership in the trade unions.

15) We proclaim that any people that collaborates in the oppression of another people is unable to liberate itself. The imperialist bourgeoisie oppress what remains of their colonial empire (Puerto Rico, Northern Ireland, Martinique. Guadeloupe, New Caledonia...) and occupies again dominated countries (Bosnia. Afghanistan, Iraq. ...) We are for the independence of all protectorates and all colonies from imperialism. We are for national rights of those peoples kept under armed oppression within bourgeois states (Basques, Kurds, Kabyles, Tamouls...) We categorically support the oppressed and invaded Chechen nation against the genocide it suffers at hands of the white counter-revolutionary army of Putin and the Russian bourgeoisie , today the agents of imperialism. We are for the unconditional right of self-determination of all oppressed people , including the right to separate if the majority demands it. In no case do we adapt ourselves to petty bourgeois nationalism. Only the right of self determination of oppressed people ensures the unity of the proletariat. For the same reason we pronounce ourselves for freedom of movement and settlement of workers and complete equality rights of all workers.

16) We affirm the validity of Leninist -Trotskyism, of the programme of the fourth International, as the revolutionary strategy founded by the Third International of Lenin and Trotsky. It is from this strategic position that we call all currents that say that they fight for the interests of the working class to break from the bourgeoisie. and to start the struggle for power based on armed organisations of the masses, in the process of this combat we are prepared to enter all united fronts with any workers current ready to "make a single step towards to advance our class.. But as Lenin would say while we are ready to strike together. we march separately. Before during and after any such action we wi11 not weaken our criticism of reformist leaderships that are obliged to leave their luxurious offices and put themselves at the head of action of the masses.

17) The social democrat and Stalinist reformists poison workers with the claim that capitalism can be reformed by means of the bourgeois state. It is useful for the plans of the bourgeoisie that the political apparatuses of social democracy and of trade union allies with it through "participatory" or "popular" democracy and manages their state to prevent proletarian revolution. Social democrats and Stalinists are agents bought by the capitalist enemy.

18) Pseudo Trotskyist centrism has claimed to be revolutionary for fifty years while in practice it was subordinated to reformist apparatuses. The Pabloist IC-Usec, the Lambertist IC-ALT, the Morenoist LIT, UIT, MAS and CITO, the Hardyist UCI-LO. the Cliffite IS Tthe Grantist ICT or the Militant Altamiraist CI, the Loraist POR etc represent tendencies which have broken from Trotskyism to reformism.

19) Social democrats Stalinists and the trade union bureaucracies have liquidated the most elementary principles of morals of the class. The centrists, revisionists and liquidators of the Fourth International are following in their path. The proletariat wants staunchness, honesty, loyalty and the broadest workers democracy. To discuss, to decide and o act workers and youth must expel from workers organisations, the method of lies, misrepresentation and physical violence introduced by these leaderships who try to suppress or conceal the political differences inside the workers movement.

20) We affirm that the 21st century has begun in the same way as the 20the finished, as the epoch of crises, wars and revolutions highlighting the characteristics of capitalism in decomposition .Against all the revisionists of Trotskyism who want to put the of the defeats of the

masses and to hide their own capitulations and treacheries by saying that the problem is a crisis of subjectivity" of the masses or its "backward consciousness", we state that the start of the 21st century confirms the central premise of the programme of the Communist International and of the Fourth International without a social revolution in the next historical period , all of human civilisation is threatened with catastrophe. Everything depends on the proletariat and on its revolutionary leadership, the crisis of humanity is reduced to the crisis of revolutionary leadership.

21) Those who call for this international conference proclaim the necessity for revolutionary internationalists to build revolutionary workers parties and the world party of socialist revolution, from the forces emerging out of the struggle of the masses. With such organisations, the proletarian revolution insurrection will be able to triumph, world revolution will be able to succeed and socialism will be able to develop.

### **Redfern upsurge! Defend the Block!**

The death of TJ Hickey who was being chased by police and the subsequent militant response was an incident bound to happen. White Australian racist capitalism offers Koori youth nothing except, poverty, racist degradation, poor housing, or homelessness, police harassment and with no future apart from drug and alcohol addiction. Over decades, successive governments have cut their spending on social services and basic amenities such as housing. Because of racist prejudice, the black people have been low priority. In Redfern there has been a conscious decision to run the Block down. Today there is gaping empty space where homes used to be. After the last major upsurge in 1990 the state government made a conscious decision to destroy the Block. Black bureaucrats have cooperated. by not renovating

The young Kooris of Redfern declared that they had had enough and declared war on their oppressor. Their bitterness and anger exploded on to the street. Their actions were well and truly warranted. They have our full support. But of course this struggle had its limitations. The Koori youths have a subjective hatred and antagonism towards the racist Australian state. They are prepared to fight it. But they do not have the programme to overthrow it. There struggle remained isolated and isolated struggles against the state will be defeated by the state,

But where is the mainstream working class? At community meetings after the 1990 upsurge Communist Left (then Communist Tendency) argued for workers and Black self defence. We did not merely argue for this in the abstract, we put forward a concrete perspective which would make this ideal a reality. Our perspective had a degree of grass roots support. But it was rejected by bureaucrats and reformists, black and white and by influential clergy. "Redfern is not a no-go area" they said in unison. They hoped that by praying on their knees to the government and the state that cops would somehow behave in a nicer way, respecting their community. Subsequent police behaviour has shown the folly of these views. Had the Redfern Block been declared a no-go zone TJ Hickey may be alive today!

Redfern does not have a Black problem, it has a police problem. The state is a racist institution which will attack Black people —especially Black proletarians. The Block occupies a valuable piece of real estate. Capitalists have a vested interest in removing it in order to line their pockets. It will also push up the land prices in Redfern Chippendale Darlington and Waterloo The removal of the block will assist the removal of other tenants in the area also.

Of course the mainstream politicians want to attack the community. Brogden accuses Carr of going too softly softly. He wants to move in with bulldozers. What happens to the community after that? Brogden doesn't care! Carr is fully behind the racist police force. He wants to move at a slower pace towards the same end — the destruction of a community.

Of course the mainstream politicians only think in terms of police. They don't think about spending money to make the houses decent, decent amenities or providing decent jobs with full pay.

As in 1990 Communist Left supports workers and Black defence against racist police attacks. A practical programme of action must be developed. Around the clock police action must be fully observed. A telephone tree must be organised for unionists to converge at any time when a racist attack occurs. Legal back up must be organised.

Redfern block was built through worker Black alliance in struggle. It is a similar alliance which can defend the Block against continuing attacks. Current threats and the proletarian youths within it.

Make no mistake If working people don't act more kids like Hickey will die at the hands of racist cops.

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