

# February 2006

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### Cronulla Riots. Malignant Aussie racism explodes.

The near murderous racist violent riot which occurred in Cronulla Sydney, on Sunday December eleven has become famous not just in this country but internationally

The day started with a carnival atmosphere. One commentator noted that it “ had the spirit of a one day cricket match” with plenty of Aussie icons and flags. As the crowd gathered to a number estimated at five thousand, the mob sang Waltzing Matilda and Advance Australia Fair .They then declared war on anyone who they perceived to be Middle Eastern in their social origin. These attacks were near murderous. A couple of the victims were lucky to have survived.

This was not something that went out of control fuelled by alcohol. These racist attacks were clearly planned. The text messages which promoted this rally advertised its purpose as to bash “Lebs and wogs”. Present at the rally were the grotesquely notorious fascist/racist Australia First. Skinhead fascists were amongst the crowd egging on the racist thuggery.

The general ideology of the rally was fascist. Those present were overwhelming white Anglo Australian They came from the lower middle classes and labour-aristocracy. They used direct action to defend their material privileges, and their political privileges linked to white skin, at the expense of .the proletarians from poor Lakemba who have a Middle Eastern background.

It is understandable that Australia First saw Cronulla as a potential recruiting ground. But as we understand it most of the participants were mainly interested in their suburb as opposed to reclaiming white Australia. Nevertheless, those who participated were a highly malignant reactionary movement. It shows the potential for a fascist explosion coming from middle Australia. It is an eventuality which we must prepare for. Fascism is by no means off the agenda in this country.

The Cronulla riot drew out the violent, racist and reactionary consequences of Australian chauvinism. The Australian flag is a symbol of white privilege, both over the Koori and Murri indigenous populations and over the peoples of South Asia and the Pacific. Historically it has stood for white Australia privilege. The white tribe of Cronulla believe in fighting for that privilege. The victims were proletarians of Middle Eastern descent.

That these riots occurred in Cronulla is no accident. It is a middle class white privileged labour aristocratic area from which fascist tendencies often develop. However, whilst such a movement is more likely to occur in Cronulla, it could develop in many areas where there is white Australian chauvinism. The Cronulla riot is the logic of the racist chauvinism which dominates the ideologies of both the major parties, Liberal and Labor. The fight against fascism requires a fight against chauvinist politics

John Howard was caught out by his reaction to the riot .He categorically denied that there was any serious underlying racism amongst mainstream white Australia, and urged as not to jump in too quickly by condemning the riot as racist. Well text messages calling on participants to bash” Lebs and Wogs” spell out the racist message loud and clear.

John Howard has a vested interest in covering for the Cronulla racists. Firstly he considers the Cronulla people to be his people. Cronulla he considers to be the epitome of middle Australia, the middle Australia he loves.

Secondly he doesn’t want any perception that his astute use of racism, the boat people, the war on terror (for examples) has the potential to explode into violence. The genie is out of the bottle and Howard must minimise the damage.

Howard has been politically skilful utilising such issues as Iraq, the war on terror, refugees, to galvanise Aussie chauvinism. Be proud to be Aussie, scapegoat migrants and the unemployed whilst we accept the economic rationalist offensive is his message. He has been blessed by the demise of One Nation and hopeless opposition from the ALP. His next move is to denounce the rioters merely as criminals, denying the political and social roots of their crime. The war on terror has intensified racism against those whose social origins are Middle Eastern and galvanised hatred against those who practice Islam. Some of victims were denigrated as “terrorists”

Premier Iemma plays a similar tune. He disagrees with Howard, acknowledging the riots as racist. But his solution is law and order, law.. He also proposes children learn to become better Australians by being forced to sing Advance Australia Fair at school This should encourage more chauvinism. One of his measures is giving the police the right to shut down whole areas. In practice this will be used against Lebanese, Arab and Koori areas. The first victims of this legislation are the Koori community of Gordon near Dubbo. This is consistent with ALP policy in fighting terrorism. It is just too bad luck if you just happen to live in a community where action is going on yet have nothing to do with it. You too will suffer.

Those whose social origins are Middle Eastern are the victims of this riot. Yet they are being scapegoated. One politician who is adept at playing wedge politics is Liberal leader Peter Debnam He made a well publicised outburst at the apparent lack of prosecutions concerning the revenge riots. This put Iemma on the back foot. You see if arrests start occurring, Middle Eastern youth are victims, Debnam is seen as setting the agenda and pleasing the racists. If nothing appears to happen, Iemma is exposed as appeasing the politically correct and right wing Lebanese who helped the Right ALP faction stack branches. Skilfully, he has used a racist attack to promote racism and win the electoral support of racists.

In no way are politicians thinking of improving the lifestyle of unemployed and poor youth who join gangs. All they offer is law and order.

Many have covered for the racist rioters by claiming the riots were an understandable or even justified reaction to gangs of Middle Eastern origin misbehaving, attacking women or lifesavers. Most of the victims had nothing to do with gangs. Nor did they even look like gang members. The aim of the racist rioters was to attack those who appeared to be Middle Eastern. In no way did these people deserve to suffer for the sins of a few gangsters who happened to have the same ethnic background or religion. However, we have been informed that the surfing community has a record of racism going back decades. The surfies have always believed Cronulla Beach is the property of white Anglo Australians, for their use only. In the eighties they concentrated on protecting it against Greek Australians.

In no way do we put the white Anglo rioters and the Lebanese Muslim gangs on an equal footing. The white rioters were fighting for white middle class privilege. The behaviour of the Middle Eastern gangsters is a response to racist exclusion from a privileged white society...

Apart from Kooris, those whose ethnic origins are Lebanese or Middle Eastern are at the bottom of the social ladder. They suffer the highest rate of unemployment. When they work they are paid the lowest wages. They have the poorest social amenities. Youth have less prospect of climbing the “ladder of opportunity”. They are humiliated and excluded by racists They are harassed and attacked by a racist state apparatus. Now Debnam wants to jail them

Their response to this oppression is to form gangs. Much of their behaviour is unacceptable. But this is a response to oppression. The point is to fight oppression. This politicians don’t even think about ensuring these young people have a decent future, all they think about is locking them out. Peter Debnam wants pre-emptive arrests. As far as he is concerned, there are gangs wandering around out there and if the government had the guts they would lock them up.

As far as the workers movement is concerned, all racism should be fought unconditionally. We must actively oppose all immigration controls and allow all proletarians to come to this country, irrespectively if they are technically refugees or otherwise.. We must act to free the refugees in barbaric detention centres. We must organise workers defense to fight both racist and police attacks on Kooris and ethnic communities. We must oppose the war on terrorism and the scape-goating of those who practice the Muslim religion.

**We must place no reliance on the racist capitalist state. Workers must develop workers defense to fight all racist attacks.**

The rioting happened in Cronulla. A suburb noted for its white racist privilege and chauvinist ideology. Whilst it is easier for fascists to manipulate to successfully achieve their reactionary riotous action in such a suburb, others could erupt in a similar way as long as the racist chauvinist agenda dominates political consciousness in this country. For example both South Africa and Sri Lanka cricket teams complained about racist barracking from Australian cricket fans. We must fight politically, opposing discrimination and racist scape-goating. We must fight physically with workers defence.

## **Palm Island. Black defendants face Court.**

Whilst all attention is on the Bali drug runners, facing court in Denpasar, twenty one Murris are facing court in Townsville. The defendants were part of a riot which burned down the court house and the police station They have our full support. Communist Left do not merely defend the Murri people of Palm Island. We wholeheartedly support them attacking the state.. They acted in response to the death in custody of Milrunji Doomagee. With so many black people killed in custody by a racist police force, it was time something was done.

It is also time something was done about this racist, oppressive exploitative society which keeps Black people, workers and unemployed in poverty. The Palm Island Murris stood up against this system. Their struggle is out struggle.

After the Palm Islander's attack police replied with heavily armed raids on houses where suspects were supposed to have lived. They wore balaclavas to hide identity. They have been .accused of handcuffing non-suspects. The Crime Misconduct commission have investigated ., declared the raids illegal but have not charged any coppers. Even if they lay charges they will only be replacing one lot of racist police with another. The whole police force is an institution of racist oppression

Praxis has well and truly vindicated the Marxist understanding that you can get no justice from a racist police force You certainly wont get any from a Royal Commission. Despite many Blacks getting murdered in custody, no police officer has been charged of anything let alone murder.

Most Royal Commissions are whitewashes. The best a Royal Commission can do is establish the facts. Even when done diligently, the racist institutions would remain. We must smash these institutions, not merely establish their guilt. This is the task of a united working class. Uniting the working class requires recognition of the right to self-determination of the Koori Murri, Nungah, Torres Strait Island and other indigenous peoples.

The Palm Island Murris are way ahead of white workers in terms of revolutionary consciousness. Whilst they don't have a programme to smash the state completely, they have no faith in the state and are prepared to fight it physically. Currently the majority of white workers are crawling to it. A large section of migrants are waving the Australian flag . It is this situation the revolutionary left must change. The Palm Island Murris must not remain isolated.

Communist Left endorsed a rally organised last year by Lyall and Jenny Munro and the Spartacist League breakaway Trotskyist Platform. Those who attended were mainly Black Several unions were represented

It important that Kooris and Murris, the radical left and the union movement stand up and make our opposition visible. We didn't agree with much that was said by many of the speakers some of whom had a Black religious perspective .We are confident that when the organised working class shows its mettle, Black activists will be won over to a materialist perspective. There was a small union presence. We blame ,not the organisers but the union movement who fail to understand that an injury to one is an injury to all. The union movement which passively accepts racist attacks against Black people, accepts a system of exploitation – the oppression of the working class.

## Hamas Victory. What now for Palestine and Israel?

For decades the US imperialists have put pressure on the Palestine authority to hold free and democratic elections. Arrogantly they assumed that Palestinian people and others would be grateful to them and vote for their choices for moderation and collaboration..

Well the elections were held, the Palestinian people have spoken but the imperialists don't like what they say. The vote for Hamas was not necessarily a vote for terrorism. But it was a vote against compromise. What had the Palestinian people gained from decades of compromise? Bugger all!

Basically, the reactionary state of Israel still exists and PFLP have effectively given up any struggle against it. Israel is still trying to seize land from the Palestinians. The Palestinians remain poor, ghettoised. Basically, the mini-state does not adequately resolve the national question in relation to Palestine.

Peace may be the grand schema of politicians and imperialist but this election result shows that the Palestinian people feel that they have little to gain from it. They feel that they have nothing to lose by fighting..

Israel was created as imperialist conspiracy to use the Jewish people for them to gain a toehold into the Middle East. Everyone had sympathy for the Jews as victims of Nazi Germany's holocaust. Out of guilt there was much liberal support for Britain's attempt to give them a nation out of Palestine. The United Nations created Israel. They brought in the Jewish people. The Palestinians were chucked into refugee camps. They have been fighting back ever since. A tired leadership wants to make peace with Israel but not the people.

Of course, the fundamentalist version of the Islamic faith is gaining support though out the Arab world. This includes Palestine.

The other country tired of compromise is Israel. That is why that country voted Ariel Sharon as its president. Sharon is now effectively politically dead and is mourned not just throughout Israel but in the west as well

.Israeli's wanted action. Sharon not merely has a reputation for action he is a war criminal. Not for nothing is he known as Butcher of Beirut. He is responsible for the deaths of many thousands of Palestinians. Israeli's not only knew of Sharon's record, they voted for that record. Conciliation for them hadn't worked either. Their previous leader Barak pleaded for peace but pleased no-one.

On taking office Sharon decided that a new strategy was needed. This strategy is build a wall and ceil Israel off. The wall is being build and in the process, Israel is stealing more Palestinian land. But there have been controversial decisions to make. Giving Palestinians the Gaza strip meant kicking out Israeli settlers which his previous government had placed there. This meant controversy especially in his ultraconservative Likud Party. Sharon split to for a new centre party with former leader Israeli Labour Party Simon Perez. Imperialism has been pleased with his efforts. He has served them well.

Israel was a creation of imperialism to serve their interests in the Middle East. This state must be opposed unconditionally and categorically by revolutionaries. Military support must be given to any force fighting it especially the Palestinians.

Communist Left supports unity between Arab and Jewish workers. But this unity can only be forged by recognising the need for justice for the Palestinian people. In no way must we put the national question for both Israel and Palestine on an equal footing. We urge no political support for Hamas. But the rise of Hamas reflects the bankruptcy of compromise politics of the Stalinist influenced PFLP.

We urge a proletarian party to be built. The key demand of this party would be a revolutionary workers and small farmers government. Whilst it would support class unity between Palestinian and Israeli, it must acknowledge that Palestine has been deprived of its national right as opposed to the Israeli privileged state.

## After November 15. What now for the trade union movement?

Over half a million union supporters marched throughout Australia on November 15 and this was the largest mobilisation of workers in Australia's history. It was a pretty flash affair aimed at appealing to middle Australia's sense of fair play. Feminist pop star Debra Conway sang the national anthem with gusto.

The main speakers were based in Melbourne included ACTU leader Greg Combet and Sharon Burrow. Their speeches were broadcasted around Australia on Sky TV After the Melbourne rally was shown local marches did their own thing. However, at every major centre the message was the same. Effectively this amounted to a plea for fair play. They believed that by showing the unfair/unAustralian aspect of this new legislation, dinki di Aussies will support them having a fair go and perhaps the Liberal Party would retreat under the weight of public opinion. They, of course, presented them selves and the union movement as thoroughly and utterly respectable, concerned with "our country" and its economy. The Libs were accused of extremism.

This plea was directed at the minor parties, aspirational voters in areas influenced by the Hillsong Church and potentially dissident National or perhaps Liberal Mp's who might have a whiff of conscience and cross the floor.

The prime target has been maverick National Barnaby Joyce. He showed some concern for the legislation because he feared that holidays such as Christmas, Easter and Australia Day were essential for the Australian nation and he feared that with no holiday pay and forced labour, the holidays which he considers an important part of Australian lifestyle. might be liquidated away.

The ACTU had hopes about Joyce being persuaded to cross the floor. They presented to him a petition of 80,000 signatories. Barnaby claimed that a few minor amendments satisfied his concerns. He was unmoved. Howard's legislation was carried without any serious obstacles.

So what now for the union movement? Well their fundamental strategy of sucking up to the aspirational voter, the virtues of fair play has not fundamentally changed. anything. It certainly wont stop the Liberals.

What all this shows is the trade union movement is respectable and weak. The language which the aspiring middle class listen too is force. Yet force is what the trade union bureaucracy don't believe in. They make this blatantly clear. This is the road to defeat. The upwardly ,mobile aspirational voters won't be impressed. Promoting the "aspirational voter" means attacking the working class. Aspiring businessmen know to get up in the world they have to kick the working class and that is what they are prepared to do. They believe in them selves and not "fairness" So strategically, the union bureaucrats are on the wrong track.

### **Bring down the Howard Government !**

To fight reactionary industrial reform, the working class must fight the totality of the ruling class offensive. This included attacks on the unemployed, Blacks, refugees, women's rights to abortion. We must fight the government which is carrying them out.

This poses the vital question of working class leadership. Beazley Labor will not fight this government. Labor has abandoned the struggle to scrap the reactionary goods and services tax. He has stated that a future Labor government will not scrap Australian Workplace Agreements. Beazley opposes the legislation because he believes in state rights. The alternative to Howard's anti union legislation is not the reactionary state legislation which exists now. Ask a Victorian militant what she or he thinks of Bracks' reactionary alternative. It is no anti-union legislation at all.

For a real fight against Howard we need to build a revolutionary communist party committed to not another parliamentary government but a revolutionary workers and small farmers government.

### **Murriss burn the Australian flag.**

They call it Australia Day We call it invasion Day. It is the day when British imperialism took control of this continent The victims have been the Koori , Murri and indigenous peoples who have face two hundred years of colonisation which have meant social exclusion and degradation.

Need it be mentioned the attempted and almost successful genocide of the Tasmanian Aboriginals, the many Black people who were shot to establish stations and farms, those who died through disease and malnutrition.

Given this history, including recent history such as Black deaths in custody, we wholeheartedly support the Murrists in Brisbane burning the Australian flag.

This Australia Day witnessed an orgy of patriotism. More Australian flags were waved than in any previous Australia Day in Australia's history. This reflects the reactionary character of Australian politics today.

In Queensland, the RSL responded by lobbying Premier Beattie to make burning the flag illegal. Fortunately they were not successful. Rightwing Liberal Bronwyn Bishop is also trying to cash in on this reactionary atmosphere by moving a private members bill in Federal Parliament to make burning the flag a crime. This won't be carried as even Howard does not want to go this far.

Communists oppose the Australian flag as a flag of reaction . For a start it has the reactionary imperialist union jack in one corner which reflects Britain's political domination of Australia. The Queen is still head of state.

Secondly it stands for the subordination and colonisation and almost genocidal conquest of the Koori's, Murri's Torres Strait Islanders and all indigenous peoples in this country

. Thirdly it stands for Australia's mini-imperialism in South Pacific and South East Asia. It is indeed a reactionary flag.

## **Down with the Commonwealth Games!**

This year the Commonwealth Games will be held in Melbourne. Whilst communists have nothing against sport, these games represent the British Empire. They have a reactionary role in promoting it. This is true despite the pretence that countries are independent. Britain may not rule the waves, these days but it still economically and politically controls a lot of countries. British imperialism is still a major force for reaction, world wide. Any infrastructure which glorifies this is reactionary and must be abolished. This especially includes the Commonwealth and therefore the Commonwealth Games. In acting against the Games we must also oppose Australia's reactionary role in relation to South Pacific, South East Asia ,a pawn of US imperialism in the "war against terror" and against the indigenous people in this country.

## **Bolivia. Morales betrays socialism!**

The major upsurge in Bolivia had the capitalists running scared. Unfortunately, though the politics of compromise which dominated the political parties supported by the masses meant demobilising struggle in exchange for an election which was won by the reformist Movement Towards Socialism (MAS) The new president is Evo Morales . This is of, course a parliamentary government. It was elected by the workers and peasants of Bolivia to stop the imperialists ripping off Bolivia's gas. It is doubtful if it will achieve even this minimum objective.

It is indeed remarkable for Bolivia that it has one party ruling with a clear majority in its own right. Generally Bolivian parliamentary government's have been coalition governments. It is remarkable that a majority gave a clear mandate for socialist change. Morales cannot claim "lack of public support" for his failings. The majority are on his side It is clear that they are going to be let down.

Morales has just been elected. He is not under any specific pressure, political or economic. What is staggering is how low he is bending down to the capitalists and the imperialists. He had an encounter with them and promised as follows "I do not want to harm anyone. I do not want to expropriate anything I want to learn form the industrialists I do not have professional background it will be an important complement to us" he said "You have the professional capacity and I the social conscious." Morales offers kid gloves to those who rip off the resources, workers and peasants and indigenous peoples of Bolivia, leaving them and the country in general in abject poverty.

In fact not only does he oppose confiscation of the bourgeoisie he also supports privatisation. The Mutin mine on the border with Brazil is rich in iron ore. It is also the richest manganese mine in the world. The quote about “not wanting to harm anyone” was made in the context of guaranteeing private ownership of Mutin for the next forty years! No doubt whilst being generous with Bolivian resources, he hopes to persuade the capitalists to be generous, and caring. At best they will pay a minor amount in exchange for ripping off Bolivia ! He stressed that in no way was his party opposed to foreign investment!

So far this is music to the ears of capitalists. “He spoke more than we requested and spoke on the creation of work , legal security, attraction of investments and other subjects It is what we have been planning in Santa Cruz and now we can hop that it can be fulfilled It is necessary to work with him after his commitment to Santa Cruz” To quote rightist Gabriel Dabdoub president of Chamber and Commerce Santa Cruz “he is not against tendering for Mutin, that is satisfying” for him it is.

The capitalists accept demands that they be “socially responsible” for the moment. Basically the spectre of revolution still haunts Bolivia and a bit of money for social concerns is a small price to pay for control of the economy and natural resources which the still have.

However, to guarantee the capitalists their economic ownership and control he will have to demobilise the workers and peasants? We hope the won't accept this. Revolutionary leadership is well and truly on the agenda for Bolivia. In fact developing such a leadership could well be a matter of life or death.

### **Break from the treacherous MAS now!**

Following the Morales road means either going back towards imperialist controlled poverty. It might mean a military coup when the capitalists decide that Morales is disposable. That is what happened in Chile. September eleven 1973..Many thousands were jailed, tortured or murdered for the simple “crime” of supporting socialists. Chilean leftists and workers were bathed in blood.

The election was a clear betrayal of a revolutionary movement. The Bolivian people voted for socialism. The imperialists and capitalists have no intention of allowing them their elected option. Morales had no intention of introducing socialism. That will only be achieved by revolution. To survive workers of Bolivia must build a revolutionary party

### **Communist Left stands for**

