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20,000 more troops to Iraq. Bush pushes the panic button

Throughout the world, the US led invasion of Iraq is extremely unpopular. The world knows that the war has cost hundreds of thousands of Iraqi lives. It has cost thousands of American troops killed and injured. The people of the United States of America understand this now. There is no end to the war in sight. The elected government of Iraq has no authority. The country has erupted into civil war!

George Bush is a president faced with a hostile congress and Senate. Like Richard Nixon, Bush does not want to be seen as overseeing a major US military defeat. This is a strong possibility. So what does he propose? Send in another twenty thousand troops! This is the act of a desperate man!

The Iraqi resistance promise to send them back in coffins. That could well be their fate. But the solution to the situation in Iraq is not military but political. The divisions in the country cannot be resolved by force. Even if the extra troops give America more military success it solves nothing!

Bush can gloat at the execution of Saddam Hussein. Saddam was given a fair trial. He was guilty of mass murder. The problem is, his death actually exacerbates the situation. Though he was hated by the majority, sections of the population actually wanted him. Sunnis have used his death as a rallying point. They have made him a martyr and vow to fight the guerrilla war even harder – both against their Shia rivals and against the US occupiers. His death has intensified the civil war raging there.

There are many crimes which Saddam should have been made to account for. He should have been forced to account for the mass murder of the Kurdish minority and many other crimes against the Iraqi people. Now he has been assassinated this can't happen.

There has been nothing progressive achieved by the US invasion. Instead of being one nation, Iraq is now divided along religious lines, fighting itself. There may be elections, but it is the US which controls the economy. It is stealing Iraqi oil! If its plans were successful, it would use Iraq as a military base to control the Middle East and rip off its oil.

Thanks to the Howard Government, Australia is up to its neck in the Iraqi invasion. It a situation which workers in this country must change, urgently. Not just through speeches but through action. Workers' direct action against Australia's military involvement is a matter of urgency and must begin now!

Rudd's new look Labor for the yuppies.

Kim Beazley wasn't cutting it so understandably Labor was looking for an alternative. The immediate options were Right v Right. The Left was divided as to which faction of the right wing they would support. Anthony Albanese and those aligned with the Australian Manufacturing Workers Union supported Kim Beazley. Peter Garret and Julia Gillard supported Kevin Rudd. Rudd, a likeable personality has had the ability to seduce the Left. In reality he is as right wing as hell. For anyone who has any sense of socialist belief, voting for either, critically or otherwise, is totally and thoroughly unprincipled. Kim Beazley was Labor's most right wing Labor leader ever. We don't know his full position as he never got the chance to present his complete policy statements. From what we know, Rudd is not close behind.

Rudd claims to be a Christian. His version of Christian is populist. He is the quiet, caring type and not a zealous Bible bashing bastard. This has put the Liberals on the defensive. Tony Abbot at the Young Liberals' conference made a speech suggesting that Rudd is "shaming Christians into voting Labor". In fact, Abbott has used the Christian card to also suggest that Christians should support the Liberals. We think Abbott's outburst reflects desperation, a fear that Liberals might lose Christian support. Whilst Rudd has no hesitation in expressing his faith, he has yet to use it as a political weapon, to pressure people. We wouldn't put it past him though!

Rudd has yet to give us a full policy but what there is of it is clearly right wing. He opposes Workchoices which (doesn't) "get the balance right between fairness and flexibility for working families" Yet he rejects the idea of ripping up the legislation. Is he talking about reforming this legislation? He doesn't say. Julia Gillard made it crystal clear on ABC TV that Labor is committed to a "modern economy" and that Labor would act "in the national interest" as opposed to bowing to any sectorial interest. This included unions. Translated this means: Unions beware!

The Legislation should be ripped up and anything else that sells out working people. Kevin Rudd has been to Tasmania, making sure he left Peter Garret behind. His main purpose was to ensure the logging industry of its support. The logging industry has the support of workers who fear for the loss of their jobs. Workers are justified in wanting to defend their jobs. With a shorter working week without loss of pay both jobs and old growth forests could be defended. Rudd would never support this.

Many voters will endorse Rudd's support for a Bill of Rights. This is linked to explicit rejection of nationalisation and Labor's socialist objective. This is a turn to the right. Rudd also refuses to campaign for a republic. He claims he can handle an elected president "when the Australian people want it". It's clear Rudd won't be campaigning for it.

The most serious attack threatened by Rudd is against those with disabilities. Last year Howard made some horrendous attacks on social welfare. If you are less disabled than 18% you are forced to satisfy the work test, look for work or perhaps do work for the dole. Some with serious illness such as cystic fibrosis have been affected. Rudd supports all this and wants to go further. His emphasis is on training. He wants forced training for the disabled. Those who refuse will be breached. He proposes to tighten the definition of who is disabled. If you are capable of working fifteen hours a week or more, then you will be put on Newstart, and expected to perform as able-bodied unemployed.

Shadow minister Penny Wong says Labor wants to be a "party of workers" as opposed to "one of welfareism". These pernicious attacks will save the government money. But the poor will suffer. It is a myth that the crisis of unemployment can be solved by more training. This applies to both disabled and able-bodied workers.

The Iraq war is an objective factor in favour of Rudd. Howard is beating the American drum. The problem is that the Coalition is losing the war. As a result, the war is very unpopular in the United States as it is here. Rudd. Can claim an alliance with the US Democrats who now control both houses of Congress. Howard has an alliance with the unpopular Bush administration. Rudd may distance himself from some US imperialist measures. But US bases will remain on Australian soil and America can count on Rudd, when it matters! . Rudd image is far removed from working class people. He wants a Labor Party for middle class yuppies. Rudd reflects the new Labour of Blair in England and Helen Clark in New Zealand. These leaders are anti-working class reactionaries. So too is Rudd. Class conscious workers should reject his thoroughly degenerated version of social democracy

The many crises of Morris lemma

In Australia, the Liberals control the Federal government but Labor controls every state and territory.. of course, the Liberals want to get back into government in the state arena. New South Wales has appeared to be their best bet. Not a week goes by without some embarrassing even. Recently commuters complained about being packed like sardines on Sydney suburban trains. There have also been crises concerning hospitals and health, housing, water and desalination(the list goes on. Labor's attempts to establish public-private partnerships have blown up in their face.

Then there are also crises concerning the behaviour of certain ALP Mp's such as the member for Macquarie Fields found guilty of bashing his wife and another charged with underage sex. All this is extremely embarrassing.

But, it appears, lemma Labor will be returned to office. Morris has managed to create an image of trust and decency. He has not been found guilty of any indecency. Many will be voting for the premier. Other issues will be ignored.

People do not trust Peter Debnam, the Liberal leader. His attempt to scandalise Bob Debus fell flat on its face. People do not trust the Liberals in general. They are notorious for cutting back. There is also opposition to the Federal Liberal Government's policy of Work choices, exposed as a measure for attacking workers wages, conditions, working hours and safety. lemma has a reactionary industrial policy but it is not so blatantly pro-boss as the Liberals So lemma flies the flag of fighting workchoices He should gain some electoral advantage.

lemma has a massive majority. The Liberals will make inroads. But it is a tall order for them to win government. It appears that they won't.

The causes of lemma's crises are many and varied. Firstly, his Labor crew are guilty of incompetence. This is certainly true in relation to water. where they have lacked a consistent plan.

Partly, it is due to the new right policies of the Carr Labour government which failed to spend adequately on infrastructure in the name of economic stability. NSW is now suffering the consequences. NSW has also been treated unfairly by the Howard government, getting less than its fair share of the GST money allocated to the states. This contributes to Labor's financial crisis.

In an attempt to overcome problems getting the right money for infrastructure, lemma has launched private public partnerships. The idea is this: you get private enterprise to launch the project and then buy it back so it becomes, eventually, a state enterprise. This has been tried with disastrous consequences with the Airportlink railway service and the Cross City Tunnel.

The problem is that in the years, before the government takes over, business must make a profit. In the case of the Airport line, customers have to pay an extra eight dollars per trip. Labor has phased out the cheaper bus service, forcing people to use the train if they are going to the city and most suburbs

The Cross City Tunnel was a major disaster. The government closed roads to force people to use the tunnel which they were forced to pay to use. People didn't like it and the company went broke. The company is now in receivership but people are still forced to pay.

Australia is going through a period of economic prosperity. But the states that are booming are those with mineral resources. Queensland and Western Australia have below national average unemployment. NSW has a level higher than the national average. NSW is the most populous state. It therefore need more money . It is not getting it. Yes we think this partly a Liberal conspiracy to win back this state.

lemma is, of course, a full blooded supporter of capitalism. His mission to create a slightly humanised version in the state of New South Wales will fail. Ordinary working people will pay the price.

This election, lemma is opposed from the left by the Greens, the Socialist Alliance and the Socialist Equality Party.

The Socialist Alliance is standing on some important issues such as Black rights, privatisation and Workchoices. The Alliance is very involved in the campaign against Howard's reactionary legislation. They point out correctly that this is a state issue also as should the Liberals achieve office, they could allow the federal government to take over all state awards.

The problem with the Alliance campaign is that it doesn't transcend the capitalist system. Socialist Alliance is campaigning for a more enlightened capitalism, not for its overthrow. In relation to the murder by the state of TJ Hickey, Socialist Alliance wants to jail the killer cops. But the issue is not a few cops gone bad. The capitalist state is an institution of racism, repression and murder. This message the Socialist Alliance is not giving.

Vote SEP!

The party which is raising the issue of revolution is the Socialist Equality Party. They may be weak on some local issues. But they are raising what is fundamental – the need for revolution and the need for proletarian internationalism. A vote for them is a qualitative step forward in terms of political consciousness.

Whilst we recommend voting for the SEP, we don't recommend joining it. They are seriously tarnished by record as part of the "International Committee" dominated by Gerry Healy. Healy is known for giving political support for the likes of Saddam Hussein of Iraq, Colonel Qaddafi of Libya and Yassar Arafat of Palestine all of which were given full political support. Healy also supported left Labour bureaucrats in Britain such as Ted Knight and Ken Livingstone. They also endorsed the Vietnamese Stalinists. .

The SEP disown the Healy record. This is good though it must be pointed out that their leading members such as Nick Beams and Dave North were leading members and there is no record of any dissent But they claim that during this period, the International committee maintained its authority. An organisation which permits Healy to carry out such betrayals must be grossly degenerated. The SEP have not made a materialist analysis of this degeneration. In fact they have denied any materialist basis for Healyite degeneration.

This election, an alternative to Labor from the Left is urgently needed. The issue is not merely one of policies. As long as we are caught in the prison of capitalism, the only options are attacks on working people, the unemployed and the poor. The working class of New South Wales deserve a revolutionary alternative This is what Communist Left is committed to build

VENEZUELA: Chavez declares socialism.

If this is supposed to be the death of socialism, someone forgot to tell the South Americans. Throughout the six years of this century, there have been many upsurges, from Argentina, to Bolivia, Uruguay and Chile, all of which have raised the spectre of socialism. The Lula government in Brazil proclaims the need for socialism. This does not mean that they have the right programme. The failure of insurrections in both Bolivia and Argentina show otherwise. But the masses hate capitalism have showed the determination to fight it.

In Venezuela there is an attempt to establish socialism from the top down. Chavez was elected on a popularist nationalist "Bolivarian" programme. After achieving a clear electoral majority, he has now declared his commitment to nationalisation of key sectors of the Venezuelan economy. This includes media and oil. He declared his commitment to socialism.

Chavez has a close relationship with Fidel Castro. He has declared his support to the Cuban revolution. He has also claimed his support for the great Russian revolutionary Leon Trotsky.

It is of course progressive that Chavez wants to take certain sectors out of the hands of private enterprise. We will urge proletarians to defend these nationalisations from any right wing attempts to de-nationalise. But we can not endorse the strategy of establishing socialism from the top down, by the government. Socialism can only be achieved by soviets which are workers committees which have won over sections of the middle class, to act as alternative power to the bosses. These must be armed with a revolutionary programme and organised to smash the capitalist state. Chavez has no such perspective.

Chavez also believes that sections of the armed forces are his ally. His strategy amounts to currying favour with the state so he can create socialism by his parliamentary majority. Industries may be nationalised but the bosses are given adequate compensation. Chavez believes in the parliamentary system. We urge workers and peasants to have no faith in the Venezuelan capitalist state. Many of Chavez's measures may be progressive and must be defended. But workers and peasants should place no faith in his regime. Top down nationalisations are not the way forward. Building a revolutionary party and smashing the Venezuelan state is! A revolutionary party is a matter of urgency!

It is right to rebel in Aurukun!

At Palm Island there was a local insurrection in response to the murder of Murri youth Mulrinji Doomagee. At Aurukun, 300 of the local Murri people rebelled, took over the police station in response to the brutal assault against Warren Bell, a youth who had been charged with assault. They have our full support. Aurukun is on the Western side of Cape York Peninsula, Queensland. It is close to aluminium rich Wiepa. Imperialists extract hundreds of millions of dollars profit from this aluminium ore. The local Murris receive very little, if any, money from this imperialist plunder.. Many have been exploited on low wages.

Like most Murris and indigenous Australians Aurukun people are forced into lives of poverty, They have poor or non-existent infrastructure This includes health, housing and education. They also face police repression.

The Beattie Labor government .wants Black people to be silent and accept the tatus –quo and wait until they receive the benefit of minor reforms they might receive sometime in the indefinite future. Meanwhile they endure lives of poverty and state repression.

We say that it is right for these people to rebel! Of course they do not have the force necessary to create a revolution. It is the job of revolutionaries to create that force. We must start with demonstration in support of those who attacked the police station in opposition to all charges. All black prisoners must be freed! Workers defence must be organised

The Greens want the Beattie Government to re-establish faith between the local community and the police force. This is the last thing revolutionaries want! The state, of which the cops are a key part, is an institution of racist repression. . .

Palm Island: The government says its manslaughter!

The death of Mulrinji Doomagee has received nationwide publicity. So too has the fully justified response from the local Murri community who smashed down the police station. It is now clear to many that the only way that Mulrinji, a healthy man. could have died in this way is if he was murdered. You do not rupture a kidney by accident. The only people with access were the police. The police must have killed him.

Many think that justice is finally being carried out. At last, finally, a police officer is being charged with the death of a black person in custody. Well it is a step forward that a government has finally acknowledged that the police are responsible. Even this took a hell of a lot of action. We believe that had it not been for the Palm Island insurrection, the Beattie government would have done nothing!

The Police Association is crying blue murder. They say that every police officer will now be fearful that they too could be charged. They have threatened industrial action. This type of industrial action is, of course, reactionary. The police want "independence to murder and physically attack Black people with impunity.

The fact that finally a cop has been prosecuted has encouraged many to pose prosecuting cops as the way forward in the fight against racist police attacks. We say it isn't.

The experience of Palm Island shows it is extremely difficult to get the state to act. In general the state is there to protect itself and attack Black people. However, under some circumstances, the state may prune off a bad apple.

However, the point for revolutionaries, is that it is not merely the odd cop who is racist and murderous and must be re-educated or got rid of, The capitalist state is an institution of capitalist and racist oppression. It is not an answer to replace bad cops with good cops (there are none). The answer is fighting the whole racist system, the capitalist state. We want to fight the police force, not to reform it. Scapegoating one particular officer who uses more brutal means than usual will be used to reinforce the police force by reactionaries such as Beatie. We want no capitalist police force and we want working people to form defence guards in defence of Black people.

