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### **Why Howard Won!**

John Howard has not merely won an election. The Labor Party has been shattered. The Labor Party has no leadership and no direction. Going back to Keating-sugared monetarist policies is no answer. The electorate has given its verdict. And there is no way that the tired old right-wing machine will fight for socialism. The “left” is so weak and unprincipled that it didn’t even field a candidate for deputy leadership. Most workers see no discernable difference between them and the right. Working people are well aware that for the past ten years, the parliamentary left has been a part of the monetarist machine. Bankrupt in their own right, their sole role has been to cover for the leadership. They are hardly likely to have any faith in it now. In short, Labor is a party with little hope for the foreseeable future. For the past ten years Hawke and Keating have been peddling all sorts of gimmicks. We’ve had seven Accords and One Australia which was a kick-start programme of minimal public works. Keating raised the question of the republic to show the faithful he was ‘maintaining the faith’. Now it is clear that Keating has simply run out of cards to play. Keating tried to appease the electorate with talk of a big picture. The electorate either didn’t believe him or didn’t like the picture. Some commentators have talked about an “it’s time factor”. In reality it was a case of so much time for so little result. No amount of bluster could cover for the fact that real wages are declining and youth unemployment remains a massive 28%

The campaign kicked off with the Weipa miners fighting CRA to defend their union rights. These workers showed their capacity to fight. They received solidarity from workers throughout Australia. However, this solidarity was not translated into action. Mr. Howard exposed their weakness by politicising the issue. Earlier this year Howard announced his programme. He announced legislation to exclude unions from industrial negotiations. He promised that award wages would be maintained. He didn’t say whether wages would be maintained at their current level when the cost of living rose or whether working conditions would be maintained. Many unionised workers are understandably afraid that they will lose over-award payments. Other workers felt that with the attacks under the Accord they had little to lose with a change of government. Unions, for years, had the role of policing Hawke’s Accord austerity.

Most bosses think that Howard’s concessions are well worth the historic gain — removing unions from the industrial process. Some commentators think he is a bit inflexible and offering too much. They point to New Zealand where unions have been excluded without promising anything. Other

commentators are aware that any concessions are merely temporary. They think these concessions are worth the gain of removing unions from the industrial agenda.

The next policy announced was to privatise part of Telstra. From the money gained, Howard promised an environment package. This has created controversy within the environmental movement. Many were inclined to back Howard's package which appeared better than Labors. Howard made it clear that the Government would still maintain control of Telstra. The privatisation achieved by Hawke and Keating has been massive. They have privatised the Commonwealth Bank, QANTAS, and the Airports. Telstra is one of the few Government owned utilities left. It's a Howard could point out Keating's cynicism. It is believed that Keating has supported Telstra also. He could also point out that Keating "opposed" the privatisation of the Commonwealth Bank — just before he proceeded to do precisely that. So you couldn't trust Keating to oppose privatisation. In any case Telstra operates so much like a business and so little like a public service that few ordinary people would know the difference. It's a reflection of total bankruptcy that this is all that Keating could rally the faithful around.

With the exception of opposing unions and supporting the privatisation of Telstra, Howard claimed a similar agenda to Keating. He supported "politically correct" token gestures on multi-culturalism, Black rights and the ecology. Token gestures are, after all, what Keating offers. Howard showed that he could play that game too. Basically, he played the game on Keating's terms. He aimed to show traditional Labor voters that they had little to fear from changing over.

He was to be a bit embarrassed by the extreme right. Racist comments from Bob Katter National MP for Leichhardt North Queensland and Pauline Hanson Liberal candidate for Oxley (near Brisbane) against Chinese people and Aboriginal and Islanders, respectively, showed that irrespective of whether John Howard "really believes" in the "politically correct" tokenist agenda, sections of the red neck Liberal and National right do not. Howard disowned these remarks. Hanson was disendorsed as candidate for Oxley. But the politically incorrect actually helped the Liberals. They showed racists that they could pressure a future Liberal Government.

Revolutionary communists are not "politically correct". We think that using "non-racist" rhetoric whilst ignoring state repression of Black people and migrants to be sickening hypocrisy. While Keating spouts rhetoric about "multiculturalism", the racist Australian state keeps Kampuchean refugees in prison camps in Villawood. It toughens legislation so it is harder for working class people to migrate to this country. It patronisingly "accepts Black culture", but white-washes Black deaths in custody and Black poverty in general. Of course, they don't accept the right of Black people to national self-determination.

The red neck middle class right-wing is opposed to the "politically correct" agenda. They have no qualms about expressing their blatant hostility to Black people and migrants (especially Asians). These people from the middle class and labour aristocracy include the nucleus of a fascist movement. Many can be described as semi-fascist as they accept many fascist principles such as racism, anti-Semitism, anti-unionism but still remain within the parliamentary framework. They are all malignant reactionaries.

The extreme right were very successful at mobilising for the Liberal Party. They argued that Keating's turn to Asia was linked to monetarism and Asian migration. Asian workers are in no way responsible

for the exploits of capital — Asian or otherwise. Monetarism is the consistent response to capitalism in crisis. In Queensland, Labor suffered from the 'Goss factor'. In Queensland it was Labor's Wayne Goss who hit hard with economic rationalist policies such as closing down country rail services. Also in rural New South Wales, the independent candidate who won the seat of Calare, claimed much of his support was due to a rejection of economic rationalism. Bob Katter National Party, member for Leichhardt, North Queensland boasted a twenty percent swing from working class areas such as Proserpine and Mt. Isa. Workers, he claimed opposed Keating's capitalist internationalism and feared "third world conditions".

Fascists breed from both racism, anti-unionism and rejection of economic rationalism (as they believe in a strong state). On the whole the movements in the country which reflect these sentiments still have faith in Parliament. The clearest expression of semi-fascism is the virulently racist Australians Against Further Immigration. Translated this means that they are Australians for repression against migrants and especially Asian ones. AAFI have an elected M.P. Graeme Campbell who represents Kalgoorlie and was expelled from the Labor Party. Understandably he had been disendorsed for racism and for association with the low key fascists of the League of Rights. He is happy to make an alliance with anti-Aboriginal and Islander M.P. Pauline Hanson who was expelled from the Liberal Party. She has blatantly promised to represent all those in Oxley (which includes Ipswich, Inala, Darra and other working class areas) except Aboriginals and Islanders. Whilst these are the front people, their sentiments were endorsed by many right-wing country people. Whether their fascist logic will be drawn out remains to be seen.

Howard, whilst benefiting electorally from them, supports mainstream Australian capitalism. Australian capitalism is turning to Asia. It is turning there not out of any idealism about Asia but because that is where the money is. British and US are imperialism in decline. The imperialism which is most likely to sponsor Australia is Japanese. The Asian imperialists, of course, will be deterred by any strong mainstream anti-Asian sentiment, especially if it comes from the party of government. Howard is torn between the Asians, who have money, and the semi-fascists who have a mass base among sections of the middle class and labour aristocracy. It remains to be seen how this conflict will be resolved. Even though fascism in this country is unlikely to get ruling class support, it remains a mortal danger, to Blacks, migrants, and eventually the organised working class itself. Communists, in this country, must have a strong unequivocal stand against racist immigration controls and for Black self-determination.

Keating lost support from the working class. Workers could see that their wages were declining and hours of work increasing. They could also see that despite all the "training schemes" and gimmicks, unemployment remained high. The Keating Government had no answers. The Liberal "answer" is to blame the unions. Trade unions have served the system so blatantly through Labor's Accord, that for many workers, they are certainly not missed. In fact activists have informed us that some union bureaucrats are expressing left wing hostility towards the Accord.

To win Labor must win the confidence of the working class, and undermine the chauvinism of the labour aristocracy. This it cannot do. It is only a communist programme which can organise the working class for power. A communist alternative is needed urgently. It is only when the working class act, decisively, for working class power, that small farmers take the working class seriously. The

burnt out hacks of the right, who run Labor today, are unlikely to inspire anyone, especially as their policies have been exposed as failures. Labor seems condemned to opposition for a long time.

Howard was re-elected on a relatively moderate programme by right wing standards, Financial Review regret that he was not a bit more ambitious, They would have preferred a Hewson type programme with more cut backs and taxation based more on expenditure rather than income. They want a goods and services tax. They also are suspicious of Howards guarantee to maintain award wages. The Liberals have learnt that it doesn't pay to be too honest. Hewson promised that he would abolish Medicare. Howard promises to maintain it but with a massive cutback in spending. Hewson promised to abolish the dole Howard promises to maintain it but with a massive attack on unemployed people who fail their toughened version of the oppressive works test.

However recent economic announcements have thrown a spanner in the works. There has been both a share market collapse and a Budget deficit blowout. This means there will be massive pressures on Howard to cut Government spending. Of course Social Security is targeted. Howard has already made clear that he is declaring war on the unemployed 'dole bludgers'. He has reacted strongly to a Channel Nine documentary which reported a family who refused jobs on South Mole Island on the Barrier Reef. He hasn't mentioned anything concrete, as yet, apart from requiring Social Security workers to check with employers on whether unemployed people have actually applied for the jobs they claim to have looked for. This will prove difficult in practice given the shortage of staff. It's also unfair. Many employers do not keep record of job applicants. Anyhow any work test is oppressive when there are simply no jobs. Howard remained silent during the election, but with economic pressure he will continue the war on unemployed people to a new and more oppressive level. It has been Liberal Party policy to abolish unemployment benefits to all those unemployed for a long term. This could become Liberal policy again.

The Labor Party may be dead. But sections of the working class have shown that they are not going to lie down and surrender. Before the election Bill Kelty made noises about "industrial chaos" if the Liberals get in. He was asked by other bureaucrats to "consider his future". He was doing precisely that. His promise of action has given him the fig leaf of credibility. Other bureaucrats have none. Trade unionists are angry. They are angry at the massive losses in wages and conditions suffered under Labor. Now they don't have an "agreement" they feel that they can lash out. Well good on them. The Liberal offensive must be resisted. Unfortunately the anger has no political direction. A revolutionary communist party is urgently needed. Unfortunately there was no revolutionary alternative put forward during the election.

Many supported the radical bourgeois parties, the Democrats and the Greens for left wing reasons. The Democrats appealed to the liberal left vote by pointing to their record of opposition to Indonesian invasion of East Timor, and their consistent support for the ecology movement. Since their election they have cooperated with the Liberals in rescinding Labor's unfair dismissal legislation. Little better are the heterogeneous Greens. Many Greens support Liberal Party package of selling Telstra for a limited programme to help the ecology. Many Greens approve of "ecologically sound" work for the dole schemes. The petty bourgeois Democratic Socialist Party who cooperates with Greens and Democrats are worthy of no support.

The Communist Party is dead. Its degeneration product "Left Connections" put up a few stickers echoing Labor policy of defending Telstra and urged people to put the Liberals last. To their left the

supporters of the US Socialist Workers Party of Jack Barnes, known as Communist League, stood in Grayndler. Theirs was hardly a serious campaign. Very few would have known that Ron Paulson was a communist. To their credit, they raised the war on Bougainville as an election issue. They also called for a shorter working week. However, their call for a government of workers and farmers should not be confused for the Trotskyist call for a revolutionary government, a form of proletarian dictatorship. What Communist League offer is a form of parliamentary government.

To their left, the grossly malignant but centrist Socialist Labour League stood candidates. This grouping is far more serious in posing the need for a break from Labor and working class power. SLL have a sectarian abstentionist attitude to trade unions which could lead to their refusal to defend them against the capitalist state. They also have a record of being Australia's agents for "left wing" pseudoTrotskyist political gangster, Gerry Healy. When Healy sold out Trotskyism for cash, supporting Arab bourgeois regimes, there was no coherent opposition from the Australian SLL. It was only after Healy was expelled that there was any disassociation from the most blatant betrayals. Much of the Healyite treachery, the SLL still endorse.

In short, there was no consistent left alternative to Labor posed at these elections. The workers movement has suffered because of trade union ties to Labor. The failure of unions and unionists to stand up to Labor's Accord has tied unions to an agenda which has meant the sacrificing of wages conditions, jobs and even the right of unions and unionists themselves. When the Bjelke-Petersen Government in Queensland jailed SEQEB power workers and made their pickets illegal Hawke and Keating, with the help of the labour bureaucracy ensured that the workers remained isolated and smashed. The Hawke Government engineered the smashing of the Builders' Labourers Federation. Unions have been dragged down to such an extent that many of their members hardly think that they are worth defending.

Never the less they remain strong in key sections the economy. They are strong enough to launch a campaign of defiance against Howard. Jenny George say that there will be no wages explosion. Fortunately many unions and unionists are not listening. We endorse a campaign of defiance against Howard austerity. However, political lessons must be learnt. Subordination to Labor has meant workers have been forced to pay forth crisis of capitalism. We need to build a political alternative to Labor based on consistent class principle revolutionary proletarian politics. We need to stand up for proletarian power a revolutionary workers and small farmers government. We need a revolutionary communist party which will fight Labor at all levels.

After the elections sections of the left held a sort of post-mortem under the auspices of Chippo Politics which is an ALP public forum. This special meeting was organised by Socialist Alternative. The featured speaker was the new member for Grayndler, Anthony Albanese. also on the platform was Wendy Bacon from No Aircraft Noise, the DSP, ISO, and Socialist Alternative. Anthony Albanese argued that we don't want six years of Howard so we get together to organise to re-elect Labor as (contrary to ISO) the working class do not support socialist revolution. He accused the NAN group of blocking with the Liberals. He was backed up by Socialist Alternative who suggested the left should work with the ALP left to defeat Howard. ISO sounded orthodox. In reality their emphasis on struggles outside parliament avoids the political struggle against Labor or acts as a left cover for Labor. They argue that you shouldn't hit Labor at the ballot box as the struggle outside parliament matters.

The working class has no interest whatsoever in propping up a corpse. Socialist Alternatives are essentially offering to do the legwork for a totally moribund ALP left.

The ALP right offer nothing. Their “economic rationalism with a safety net” has tailed. The Accord is dead. The ALP left is bankrupt and compromised. They dare not put forward the alternative plans for capitalism, which they promoted in the past. These were utopian and reactionary. What the Chippo politics meeting exposed was the inability of the left and far left to put forward a coherent alternative to Labor. The DSP sounded left but their ‘alternatives’ include Greens and Democrats.

It is Labor’s bankruptcy which put Howard in office. It will be failure to put forward an alternative which will keep him there. There is only one alternative. That alternative is a revolutionary communist party with a programme to expropriate the ruling class. This is the only alternative to capitalist austerity and misery. Communist Left is committed to a revolutionary communist party which will bury the Labor Party forever.

### **Bougainville Australia’s hidden election issue**

Australia is at war with the people of Bougainville. You wouldn’t know it. During the election there was hardly a mention. Of course, the main bourgeois parties, Labor and Liberal have every interest in remaining silent. The less attention the war gets, the less the system is exposed. Unfortunately the opponents remained silent. Vicki Bourne, who proclaims her friendship with the Freedom Movement gave the main televised speech on behalf of the Australian Democrats. There was no mention of the war in Bougainville. The Greens didn’t mention Bougainville either. To a limited degree the middle class radical Democratic Socialist Party did. But they hardly made it a major campaigning issue.

Socialist Labour League stood candidates in key working class electorates. There was no mention of Bougainville. This ostensibly revolutionary party purports against Australian imperialist capitalism. Yet they can’t even verbally oppose the war Australia is fighting now —let alone do anything about it. The hardline anti white Australian chauvinist Spartacist League avoided mentioning the war in their election manifesto. Also pathetic were the International Socialist Organisation and their breakaway Socialist Alternative. To its credit the only organisation campaigning for election that made Bougainville a major campaigning issue was Communist League, supporters of the US SWP. Whilst we have no confidence in this outfit fighting for anything in revolutionary way, at least they raised the issue seriously.

Bougainville is not an optional solidarity movement for those inclined to be concerned with oppression overseas. It is a fundamental issue for those who are opposed to the Australian state. Bougainville is not a popular issue for one major reason — a media blackout by the bourgeois media. There is plenty of concern regarding the brutal repression of the East Timorese. So there should be. But in East Timor, Australia is only indirectly responsible. The war on Bougainville is Australia has direct responsibility. The Australian administration of PNG permitted and assisted with mortars, guns and tanks, the brutal expropriation of the Panguna people’s copper mine. The Whitlam Government refused to recognise Bougainville independence even when the people declared it before PNG was established. The company who has profited Conzinc Riotinto, is a British

multinational based in Australia. Australia has backed to the hilt the reactionary elite which rule PNG on behalf of imperialists, including Australian. Australia is in control of the current war effort. Australian helicopters are backing the PNG armed forces. They are using mortars made in St Mary's Sydney.

The Australian ruling class have an interest in fighting the Bougainville people for imperialist domination. We, the class conscious working class, have an interest in defending the right of the Bougainville people to self determination. We must fight Australian imperialism. A workers movement to fight imperialism must be built. There has been such action when the expropriation of the Panguna people took place. There can be similar action again, to its credit the Bougainville Freedom Movement has lobbied unionists with a degree of success. They have lobbied the South Coast Labour Council, the Weipa miners and coalminers fighting CRA near Gunnedah. Workers have committed themselves to both aid and action. They know that to fight CRA in Australia, they must consistently oppose its brutal exploitation in Bougainville. the BFM are inconsistent in their class position. They only see the working class as a component of the struggle. They also have faith in bourgeois politicians such as the Australian Democrats. We must build a movement based on consistent class struggle principles, the revolutionary left must organise for consistent class struggle solidarity. The BFM relates to people as taxpayers, and on the basis of humanity. We must relate on the basis of class interest. The Communist Left considers Bougainville to be a vital question for the establishment of an internationalist class consciousness in Australia.

#### **Koori evictions in Everleigh Street.**

Since the turn of the century, Koori people have lived by the railway line on Everleigh Street Redfern. Twenty three years ago, a Housing Cooperative was formally established. This cooperative included Koori people living in Everleigh, Hugo, Caroline and Union Streets in Redfern. The aim was to build a city commune with all fences torn down and the back yard shared b and under full control of the people living there. At the time Black people had allies — the New South Wales Branch of the Builders Labourers Federation. The leadership of the union was dominated by members of the radical independent Communist Party of Australia and included members of the ALP with similar ideas. The secretary was well known greeny Jack Munday.

The NSW BLF used its industrial muscle to pressure the newly elected Whitlam government to formalise and recognise the cooperative. Along with the Housing Coop, an Aboriginal Legal Service and a Aboriginal Medical Service were established.

The formation of this community was a major but limited gain for the Black community. What has been shown over the past twenty three years is that the prospects of an isolated community to survive within the ravaging sea of capitalism are extremely limited. Whilst the Communist Party deserves credit for backing the Koori community, they did sow the illusion that there could be "self managed communities" that could remain stable under capitalism. Fundamentally they had no programme to link the struggles of the Black proletarians with a perspective to overthrow the system — a revolutionary communist programme.

This community has been at war with the system since it was established. They have been subjected to police harassment and brutality. They have been subjected to government cutbacks and general

poverty which is what the system offers poor people in general. Now the threat to the community comes from their own Black bourgeois leaders.

At meetings members of the community told their story about how that they have been bureaucratically deprived of membership of the Cooperative that they helped establish, They pointed out that the leading shareholder who run the Cooperative had had a deliberate policy of not doing repairs for the past ten years. They are angry. They are angry that their own Black people could act just as ruthlessly as agents of the system as the white capitalist bosses and coppers. They are learning, in action, through their experience, that the fundamental issue is class and not race.

As long as the racist capitalist system exists there can be no real community control and no real self-determination. Their real allies are not the Black bourgeois and bureaucratic lackeys. Their real allies are the class conscious proletariat. This alliance can only be cemented if there is a consistent fight against racism. All working people, Black and white must stand up in defence of the Block. The attack on the community is part of an offensive against working class people in the area. Real estate agents and investors want to put up property values to make profits in real estate. Having poor Black people in Everleigh St discourages yuppies. Therefore it becomes harder to sell houses and put up rents, This is precisely what we want. The lower the property values, the less likely it is that rents will go up.

We need unity between Black and white working class people. But unity means struggle. As long as white workers remain silent and passive whilst massive racist attacks are carried out there cannot be meaningful unity. Yabu Bilyana, a Koori, Socialist Labour League candidate for Kingsford-Smith made an address to a meeting calling for unity. Join the white working class was his message. But he didn't mention that unless there is a tight against racism, such unity is meaningless, or worse, panders to racism. Black people are angry. They are standing up against racist, capitalist attacks. Their politics are flawed but at least they are angry and want to do something. The real problem is the white working class who accept this situation. The Socialist Labour League aren't doing anything to change this, Of course, the SLL blame Black people for being hostile to them when they were offered no way forward by this "revolutionary leadership".

A workers campaign to defend the Block from eviction is necessary. The International Socialist Organisation has been organising. They deserve some credit. They have lobbied local working class people for support. This support is vital for any militant defence against evictions. It is important in confronting racism. They also have been lobbying trade unionists and urged working class and trade union support. This sort of campaigning is vital if the people in the Block are going to win. They must not remain isolated. The ISO have theoretical weaknesses. They confuse trade union militancy with political class consciousness. Whilst they oppose racism they therefore do not draw the link between opposition to racism and the struggle for political class consciousness. Their rank and file strategy that they advocated in the sixties organised only on the basis of trade union demands. Rank and file groups didn't explicitly oppose racism as the basis for their programme. Workers can join rank and file groups and still support reformist politics. ISO did not organise politically on the shop floor.

Communist Left is involved in this struggle because we believe in defending poor people against evictions. We are also involved because we believe that the struggle against racism is vital for the struggle for a class conscious working class. We urge all tendencies within the workers movement to mobilise in defence of the Eveleigh St Koori community against evictions which although are



initiated by Black bureaucrats and aspiring Black bourgeois, serve the interests of finance capital in its attack against all workers.

### **Defend Cuba**

Bill Clinton is beating the war drum. Cuba has shot down two civilian planes. Bill Clinton must act decisively. The Republicans are breathing down his neck. He must show them and his imperialist bosses that in no way is he soft on communism or terrorism'. There is a Presidential election campaign going on. Each candidate is in market competition to show that they can urge the strongest action to "teach Cuba a lesson" etc, etc. Buchanan wants to go the furthest. He wants US to overthrow the Castro regime. Cuba is a convenient rallying point for the imperialists. There is nothing better for an imperialist power in crisis to "rekindle the American patriotic spirit". Once again war, or the threat of war is being used to cover for the crisis in the system.

The aircraft shot down were in no ordinary civilian aircraft. They were organised by cold war provocateurs known as Brothers to the Rescue who bought them from the US Air force. This organisation of Cuban émigrés is committed to restoring capitalism in Cuba. We think the Cuban Government has every right to defend itself from vile counter-revolutionaries. The aircraft was warned not to enter Cuban airspace. This has all the hallmarks of the KAL007 provocation over the Soviet Union.

Provocations against Cuba are nothing new. Ever since the victory of the revolution US has threatened Cuba with military and trade attacks and provocations. The US must see that Cuba fails. Cuba is the living example to the people of Latin America that there is an alternative to the American way of super exploitation. The US does not believe in democracy. It believes in imposing its will through military juntas. Woe betide any government who disobeys their dictates. They are greeted with repression either from an internal military coup, or alternatively from military invasion.

The Cuban revolution broke Cuba from imperialist domination. The alliance of bourgeois nationalists and Stalinists established, not socialism, not dictatorship of the proletariat but a state transitional to the dictatorship of the proletariat — a workers and peasants state. The founding document of the Fourth International, the Transitional Programme written by Leon Trotsky, acknowledges that under certain exceptional circumstances Stalinists and bourgeois nationalists can go further than their stated programme and form a workers and farmers government. We think it is more accurate to call such a society a workers and peasants state. Under no circumstances can nonproletarian forces establish proletarian dictatorship. Castro did however establish nationalised property relationships.

Castro has been held up as a beacon of revolutionary light, not just throughout Latin America but in the West as well. Castro's Cuba is considered to be living proof that Trotsky's theory of permanent revolution was either wrong or alternatively not relevant to all societies. After all, if peasant nationalist forces can establish a healthy, unbureaucratic, revolutionary society, why fight for the political leadership of the proletariat? Many Latin American revolutionists have "followed the Cuban road". Unfortunately they, when victorious did not establish a post capitalist society, let alone proletarian dictatorship. The Sandinistas in Nicaragua established a capitalist society with a constitution which guaranteed capitalists the right to make profits for life. The Sandinistas were defeated not by invasion nor by the internal counterrevolutionary Contras. They were defeated by the national bourgeoisie whom they had refused to expropriate. Grenada did not even go as far as

Cuba. Grenada remained a member of the imperialist Commonwealth of Nations. The Queen's representative, the reactionary Governor General was maintained by this "revolutionary government". When US invaded Grenada, Cuba refused to actively defend Grenada. This gave US a victory and assisted in Cuba's isolation. Cuba broke from imperialism and from capitalism but "following the Cuban road" has led to defeat for the proletariat of Latin America.

Communist Left is in no way an admiration society for Castro. We fully acknowledge the crimes of that regime against the Cuban working class. The jailing of Trotskyists of the Possadas tendency was no accident. The Possadists, with plenty of faults, represented the proletariat. There has been and remains a class antagonism between the reactionary parasitic caste ( that Castro leads) and the proletariat. We also disagree with Castro's apologetics for international Stalinists who were or are, after all his co thinkers. Communist Left stands for the overthrow of the Castrate bureaucracy. But we want it replaced not with capitalism, nor with a bureaucratic alternative, but with proletarian dictatorship. We defend nationalised property relationships in Cuba. We defend Cuba unconditionally from imperialist invasion and economic destabilisation. Castro, with his many faults, is infinitely better than what the US imperialists have in store.

Cuba is vulnerable because of the failure to spread the revolution internationally. Castro has never stood for a revolutionary proletarian international. Castro's Cuba vindicates Trotsky's theory of permanent revolution.

### **World Economic Forum for austerity**

Business Review Weekly (March fourth) reviewed the World Economic forum which was then taking place in Davos Switzerland. This report by Robert Gottliebisen makes very grim reading. This was, in a sense a class conscious forum. These members of the ruling class and their agents were very well aware of ruling class interest. they were very aware of the internationalisation of capital. They were also very aware that the only way to resolve the crisis internationally is a declaration of war against working people. We are not talking about a military war but a war against the welfare state and living standards, including jobs and wages of the working class.

"The welfare state has to go' Gottliebisen reported 'Delegate after delegate explained that the European system of providing a safety net and achieving income distribution through taxation is counterproductive because of the huge unemployment it causes.' in their quest for "economic flexibility' these economists don't offer full employment. For the significant minority whom they consider should remain unemployed (for the sake of the economy), it's bad luck.

In the US it was reported, the banking industry had to be restructured. This would cost from 250,000 jobs to one million jobs (the estimates varied) What was agreed upon was that the job losses would be massive. Unemployment was also on the agenda for other countries. Gottliebisen reported that "French union delegates said that eight million French citizens between 15 and 24 do not believe they will find work and have lost faith and trust in the education system'. The Forum acknowledged the problem of social dislocation of Black communities. One proposed 'solution' was 'compulsory non-military national service training body for all those who had not reached a certain minimum educational standard when they left school'. State repression for the poor is the proposition.

The 'solution' they posed was a wholesale attack on unions. The Conference was reasonably pleased with the "flexible' US labour pattern. They condemned 'inflexible' German labour laws. They want to the unfettered right to sack, attack wages and conditions. 'Lack of competitiveness is causing unemployment' said Helmut Maucher, chairman of Nestles.

The basic conclusion of the Forum was that European countries must declare war on the welfare system "to be competitive'. The European politicians were accused of "not making the hard decisions.'

Higher productivity, lower wages, more rights for the boss to sack workers. Lower or even no spending on social welfare. In other words capital demands the unfettered right to make profit without hindrance. Capital is acting globally. Nation states are virtually powerless. Capital has a gun to their heads. "Competivity" is always implied as the right of capital to circulate globally to seek out the lowest levels of wages and conditions. Those competitive centers, e.g. Taiwan, China, Indonesia, and Malaysia are already experiencing labour revolt, degradation of environment and inadequacy of infrastructure. The multinationals will attempt to bring European countries down to Asian levels. It is to be hoped that workers respond exactly as they did in France last December.

Gottlieb points out that no Australian politician was present. This he regrets. He draws the conclusion that both parties would be forced to retract their election promises in the name of economic efficiency. We have no doubt that that economic pressure will be applied so even the minor reforms like maintaining Medicare will be dumped. He also warns against the wage explosion threatened by Kelty as "threatening jobs"

The response of many to Davos will be some attempt to go back to national capitalism and the "good old days" of state intervention. This is utopian and reactionary. The globalisation of the economy does pave the way for a global struggle against capitalism. The need for internationalism and the need for revolution are posed point blank. They are the only way forward for the working class. The representatives of capital have made blatantly clear what their system offers. Low wages, unbearable conditions, high unemployment and minimal to no welfare. Capitalist internationalism can only be countered by communist internationalism. We must respond by fighting to raise the wages, conditions and defend unionism of the most subjected workers internationally. The worlds workers, unemployed, impoverished and oppressed suffer from lack of an internationalist vanguard to counter this rampant offensive by capital.

### **The threat of war over the Taiwan Straits**

China is playing war games across the Taiwan Strait. The Chinese built up armaments on one side. The Nationalists mobilised on the island of Taiwan. A Nationalist president was elected in their first democratic election. There was talk of war. Bill Clinton made it clear that the US would back Taiwan. China was banking on its market potential ensuring neutrality. Taiwan is portrayed as innocent island, threatened by an aggressive expansionist China.

The cause of the conflict goes back to the Chinese revolution after the Second world War. Communist China, the Peoples Republic of China, was established by the victory of Communists led by Mao Tse Tung over the Nationalists of the Kuo Mm Tang led by Chiang Kai Shek. The current leadership on Taiwan are the defeated remnants of those Nationalists. Since the revolution, those

counter-revolutionary Nationalists have been committed to retake the mainland. For about two decades, until the seventies, the United States and allies backed the Taiwan regime "Nationalist China and recognised this regime as the government of the whole of China. Nationalist China has acted as an imperialist bulwark, as a provocation against the Peoples Republic.

Things changed during the seventies. The US imperialists realised the value of Mao's China. They realised its value in creating a wedge between China and Moscow, dividing the post capitalist states. They realised its value in selling out revolutions throughout the third world" and notably in Vietnam.

Chinese pressure could have been crucial to pressure the National Liberation Front into submission. North Vietnam relied on China for aid. US friendship with China could have pressured China into reducing aid. This would have hampered the NLF war effort.

As well as this United States imperialists realised the economic potential of China. The largest country on Earth in population had the potential to provide a massive market for US capitalists. The penetration of investment, they realised could accelerate the tendency towards counter- revolution.

So began China's alliance with US imperialism. Since Nixon's 1971 visit to Beijing, China has been a cooperative ally in counter-revolution, It has given military aid to reactionaries such as Yayah Khan of Pakistan, General Pinochet of Chile Mrs. Bandaranaike of Sri Lanka (then known as Ceylon). It has armed the counter-revolutionary forces in Afghanistan. Its campaign against so-called Soviet social-imperialism" fuelled the US imperialist cold war drive against the Soviet Union.

The sell-outs began by Mao were continued by Deng with a vengeance. China is now well and truly opened up to imperialist finance capital. However China has not forgotten about Taiwan "Nationalist China" Chinese Taipei. The Nationalist Chinese have opposed the US alliance. But they have been powerless. They have been forced to remain silent about their commitment to reclaim China. The bureaucrats in Beijing have been silent also except to demand that they are really China and not those pretenders off the coast.

Now, the Beijing regime considers, they are in a position of authority internationally, so they are making their claim to be the sole government over all of China, including Taiwan. Irrespective of the treachery of the Beijing bureaucrats, there can be no tears for the bastion of reaction known as "Nationalist China" or "Chinese Taipei'. The Kuo Min Tang regime and successors can only act as a bastion for reaction and imperialism. The Nationalist regime has practiced tyranny against the original Chinese who lived there since the seventeenth century and the native Taiwanese who are not ethnically Chinese.

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