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The aspirational voter defeats Latham

Unlike his previous bureaucratic predecessors, Latham entered the Labor leadership as a man with a mission, Latham, a true blue westie from Green Valley, wants other working class westies to climb what he calls the ladder of opportunity. This means that he wants them to start a small business such as a McDonald's franchise and keep climbing, He believes in giving them government assistance But he doesn't believe in welfare dependence. Under Latham some of the government assistance to oppressed working and unemployed people would actually be cut. Whilst there would be some working class winners. It is tough luck for those who realise that the majority of ladder climbers either get nowhere, or alternatively crash down to the ground. About ninety percent of small businesses fail. Throughout his campaign, Latham presented a sensibly packaged well thought out programme. It was totally minimalist and responsible to capitalism. It concentrated on the aspirational who often inhabit swinging seats and at the same time threw enough juicy morsels to keep other working class supporters happy. Medicare Gold, free health care to elderly people, was the main progressive reform. Once upon a time Labor believed in free health care for everyone. Now its just for the elderly. Free health care, not a second rate insurance scheme (Medicare) should be a right for all.

However it all wasn't good enough. Howard trumped him in a scare campaign on the economy and especially interest rates which made the aspirational voters were running scared. Basically, it is the capitalist bankers, Howard's mates, who are calling the shots. Woe betide if you disobey their dictates. Many aspirational voters have a lot to lose, perhaps their homes.

For many, the "Australian dream" is a nightmare. The allure of home ownership means many years under the control of banks. They are therefore scared of high interest rates Latham is someone who pushes the illusion that home ownership is an escape, part of climbing the ladder of opportunity. This is a pernicious form of false consciousness. In no way will he challenge banker power. He wont even interfere with the let alone expropriate or nationalise. Latham has no answers to the crisis of interest rates,

It has been said tha any Labor would have been vulnerable on this issue. There were high interest rates under Hawke and Keating. All Howard had to do was point this out in the appropriate manner. Crean and Beazley were vulnerable as they were cabinet ministers during the Hawke Keating era. Latham, the new kid of the block was vulnerable as "learner Latham". But he sought an electorate in precisely the class grouping most vulnerable. The people whom he ignored were the working class of this country who realise that there is no way up the ladder for them. He ignored trade unionists. He ignored the unemployed. And because he oriented to the upwardly mobile he pandered to them, ignoring or playing down key issues where the Howard Government was vulnerable. In his Federal Budget speech, Treasurer Costello commended the fact that there were 575,000 officially recognised as unemployed. The figures, of course, lie. But even the official figure is a disgrace. It is apparently acceptable that the number of people forced to struggle for a bare existence is a bit more than the population of greater Newcastle. Latham should have put the boot in but for most of the campaign he said nothing. He made his first recorded statement a few days before polling day. He said that he was committed to reducing the number unemployed by five percent (of the unemployed not of the workforce). He promised to reduce the number unemployed to below half a million within the period of his election term, He showed that he has no answers to unemployment. He also promised action for older unemployed. This included more access to labour market programmes "including work for the dole". Even Howard admits that work for the dole is not a labour market programme which it isn't. Once again Latham panders to the prejudices of the aspirational voter by supporting this slave labour scheme. Work for the dole is a serious attack on unemployed people. It is also an attack on working people as it involves work previously carried out by paid employees such as painting, gardening, bush regeneration nurses and teaches aid work. This is now done by unemployed slave labour, On this Latham is silent if not complicit. Latham refused to campaign on refugees. The Howard government's treatment of these victims of barbaric regimes is itself brutal and horrific. Latham didn't campaign because his own programme is little better. The refugee camps under Latham will stay.

The issue of Black people (Kooris, Murris, Nungas and others) was only raised in these elections courtesy of the Australian Medical Association. The AMA pointed to the fact that Black people were dying of preventable diseases and that their life span was twenty years below that of non indigenous Australians. This disgraceful situation was defended by Howard. Tony Abbot said that Aboriginal health had to wait. Latham pointed out that Labor promised to spend fifty million dollars more which is not enough. All this totally exposes the disgusting racism of the two major parties in this country

Also down played was the war on Iraq and Australia's participation in the "Coalition of the Willing" Latham reaffirmed his opposition to the war and his commitment to bring the troops home. Australia is participating in an imperialist invasion based on a lie - that Iraq had weapons of mass destruction. Latham at least acknowledges that this is wrong. But he hardly stuck the boot in. There appeared to be bipartisan support to play down this divisive issue. Divisive it is. From issues like the imperialist war, people of all classes learn about how barbaric capitalism is as a system and often draw revolutionary conclusions. Of course, middle and upper class people run away from these issues when they realise that their privileges gained within this system may be threatened. It is only the working class which is consistently anti-imperialist. Of course, Latham doesn't want to polarise. He therefore downplays the issue in the interest of national unity. This of course assists Howard. It has to be pointed out that Latham's Iraq reconstruction programme puts Australia objectively on the same side as the imperialists though not as a combatant force.

Latham wants a more regional approach to imperialism. He wants to focus on the south East Asia and the Pacific. He believes totally in the US alliance. He intends to cooperate with the US imperialist offensive "war against terror" only focusing on the local region. He is well and truly in the camp of imperialism. His differences with Howard are tactical. America though, would prefer Howard. Australia disowning the coalition in Iraq, they would find a bit embarrassing. The Americans are indeed happy with a Howard victory. But Latham is still on their side. Latham was very careful to differentiate himself from the union movement and see that union issues were not election issues. When unions are attacked Latham will do nothing or perhaps be party to attacks on them. Throughout the aspirational voter area, Latham Labor was thrashed, losing seats. In Victoria, where they didn't lose seats what were marginal Liberal electorates are now safe Liberal seats. It will be very difficult for Labor to pick up enough support next time to win those seats which it needs to win government.

It has to be pointed out that there were areas where Latham picked up both support and seats. He picked up support (but no seats) on the North Shore of Sydney where there was anger over Howard's lies, the war in Iraq and refugees. John Howard lost two percent support in his own North Shore seat of Bennelong and was almost forced to preferences.

Labor won the middle class seats of Adelaide and Richmond. Adelaide has a strong student population concerned with university funding and with HECS fees. Voters were also concerned with Iraq and refugees. The other areas where Latham picked up was hard core Labor non aspirational areas. He picked up in inner Sydney seats of Sydney and Grayndler. In Newcastle he increased support in Newcastle and Shortland. This election there was more enthusiasm from the Labor Party rank and file. Latham is at least a real westie and not a bureaucrat. Crean nor Beazley hardly inspired anyone. Within the Labor Party, a left alternative even within reformism is not on the agenda. Labor's election campaign concentrated on the family. The family, is after all, close to the heart of the aspirational voter. This however, played into the hands of the reactionary offensive. This election saw a massive realignment in terms of the petty bourgeois vote. There was a polarisation between left and right petty bourgeois parties. The Democrats and One Nation were virtually wiped out, losing more electoral support than Labor. The Greens gained. But the new force in middle class electoral politics is Family First. As one would expect this is a reactionary party especially when it comes to women's and gay rights. There definitely won't be any gay marriages if this formation has influence. Labor has sold out on this issue.

Labor is whining that people don't realise that the "reforms" (attacks) of Keating deserve credit in creating the favourable situation which Howard is cashing in on. (economic restructuring). Hawke and Keating did indeed attack unionisation, cut public spending and privatised.

The problem with this responsible economics is that was Labor against the working class. To cash in, to promote the "virtues" of this record is to remind ordinary people just how awful Keating and Hawke were - to them. Of course Howard reminds people about interest rates and how high they were under Labor.

So which way for Labor? Latham is consulting with the community. He realises he must stay in contact or else. So far all his conclusions are right wing and this is to be expected. Latham has decided he must be more responsible in relation to the economy. He is also aligning himself even closer with franchisees and entrepreneurs.

We, revolutionaries must take advantage of this situation. The more Latham draws right wing lessons, the more traditional labor voters will become disillusioned. We must use this disillusionment to assist them to draw the conclusion that the only real alternative is a programme to challenge and overthrow the system.

Build a revolutionary alternative to Latham Labor!

US elections. Victory to the hard line imperialist

America controls the world. But if the world had a vote, the next president of the United States of America would be John Kerry. Much of the world fears George Bush. They hate his simplistic good/evil diplomacy which preaches that USA is right and righteous. and that God is on its side even when it invades under false pretenses.

George Bush is a man without diplomatic subtlety. The world is simply divided into good and evil and if you are not for us you are against us. The Europeans don't like this. Neither does Kerry. But it is music to the ears of reactionary middle Americans. They don't want to see their country pushed around.

This corresponds to the needs of US imperialism. If America is to maintain its hegemony it needs to show its power. It needs to show that it is not going to be pushed around by what they perceive as "some two bit Arab leader". They need a world safe for their investment. The leader who stands for such a decisive imperialism is, of course, George Bush.

The world of the gung-ho imperialist has no room for the mealy mouthed, liberal such as John Kerry. Kerry stands for imperialism without the decisiveness. He nevertheless is a spokesperson for imperialism and supports the war against terror. For the imperialists now is not the time for diplomacy, now is the time to show strength and consis-

tency. This Kerry can not do.

Kerry is certainly a nicer person. But he is a nicer imperialist. No to all imperialists! The decisive issue is the system. It is an imperialist system which allows US multinationals to super-exploit the proletariat of the world. John Kerry in no way challenges this. He merely wants the imperialists to act in a nicer way.

To be revolutionary, the working class of America must reject all ties to America's international banditry. Workers must be for America's defeat in Iraq. They must totally and unconditionally defend Cuba. They must unconditionally defend the Venezuelan people's right to control and own their oil supply. They must oppose all interference in North Korea. That workers and peasants state, China and Vietnam, must be defended from capitalist restoration. You cannot be an anti imperialist and support Kerry who is a proud supporter of US imperialism on the other side of the class line.

Workers of America need their own party. Communist Left would give critical support for the formation of a Labor Party in that country because such a movement could give impetus in the formation of something better namely a revolutionary communist party.

Free Craig Johnston!

Craig Johnston former Victorian state secretary AMWU is an inmate at Loddon Prison Castlemain Central Victoria. He is in jail for being a militant unionist. He must be freed unconditionally. Steve Bracks has said that he "wont interfere in the judicial system" He can only be freed through the maximum support and action from the trade union movement. Bracks Labor has every interest in keeping him in prison. We have every interest in freeing him. The sooner the better! Action must start now!

The arrest and jailing of Johnston harks back to 1969. In that year another unionist, tramworker leader of the ATMOEA Clarrie O'Shea was jailed for taking a principled stand. He was released by an upsurge of action which not only released O'Shea, it led to the effective smashing of the penal clauses which, though still on the books were almost impossible to implement. When under Whitlam, Minister for Labour Clyde Cameron proposed antiunion measures. Laurie Carmichael who was then National Secretary of the Amalgamated Metal Workers Union pointed out that workers gave their response (to state repression against unions) in 1969. Indeed they did. And Cameron realised that he had to tread carefully before enacting his reactionary measures.

Since then things have changed for the worse. Johnston isn't entirely isolated. A considerable number of unions have moved or supported some resolution in defense of Johnston. These resolutions are mainly weak kneed and mealy mouthed. They are usually not backed by action. Even worse though are unions who actually condone his jailing.

The main culprits are the current leadership of the AMWU led by Doug Cameron. They go to great lengths to disown him. For a start he represents a rival faction. They are sectarian to Socialist Alliance of which Johnston is a member. More serious is that he represents a challenge to everything they stand for.

For the AMWU Cameron leadership and their stalinist backers, the main solutions to the problems facing manufacturing workers are political. They want to pressure Labor into becoming (to quote Doug Cameron) "the vanguard of the nation". They want the government to intervene with tariffs and protection to counter the restructuring which is destroying jobs. For this he is prepared to sell out strikes. For this he is prepared to sell out jobs in the short term with the aim of achieving unity to defend Australian manufacturing in the long term.

This is a dangerous pipe dream. The sellouts are many. Many decent unionists justifiably hate the Cameron leadership But his policies have a degree of rank and file support because sections of the rank and file are patriotic and are attracted to what appears to be a solution. Many thousands though are leaving the union in disgust. Cameron is not too displeased as long as he has enough forces to put on a show an impressive looking protest But appearances can only go so far. Without serious action they will be exposed as impotent. The Cameron leadership's selling out of Johnston is a disgrace. But it is understandable as his militancy stands in the way of the leadership's pursuit of respectability. For this they will sell him out.

All unionists arrested in the context of industrial action should be defended unconditionally This applies irrespective of whether we agree with their actions or otherwise. It is the workers who must judge the merits of any action and not the bosses courts.

Revolutionary communists think that Johnston and supporters were fully justified in taking militant action against Skilled Engineering. These grubby capitalists have made millions using labour hire workers to undermine the conditions of and displace full time workers, Johnston was defending the full time workers of Johnson Tiles replaced by labour hire These workers face a future without any prospects of employment.

Even on civil liberties grounds Johnston should be defended. It is a disgrace that someone should serve nine months prison for affray verbal assault and damage to property. The real reason Johnston gets such a savage

sentence is political Bracks and the ruling class know what Johnston represents - class struggle militant unionism. It is this that they are trying to smash.

The jailing of Craig Johnston is part of a ruling class offensive against unions throughout Australia. State Labor Governments are playing their role in this offensive. Victoria has been the heartland of left wing unionism. A defeat would mean another nail in the coffin. A victory there will give impetus to militant unionism in other states. The legislation passed by the Bracks government has been horrendous. When we defend Johnston we are not merely defending one person, we are defending effective unionism and therefore the wages conditions, safety and jobs of every worker. The stakes are extremely high.

It is clear that the bureaucrats are not prepared to take effective action. Therefore the rank and file must. Committees to defend Johnston must be formed at every work place. The rank and file must also examine and reject their very politics which led Craig not merely to be isolated, but jailed without effective opposition.

CPA a reformist popularist proposal for a peoples' government.

The political party known as the Communist Party of Australia was originally called the Socialist Party of Australia. It was formed in 1970 when the CPA distanced itself from Moscow, made a partial critique of Stalinism and repudiated its previously hostile view of Trotsky. Dissidents within the CPA "defended Marxism Leninism" (meaning Stalinism) and wanted the CPA to maintain its uncritical stance promoting the Soviet Union. They were also critical of the CPA for supporting militant protest movements and promoting militant tactics within the trade union movement (such as workers control). Within the CPA the Aarons led majority were decisively victorious and the pro-Moscow minority solidly trounced.

Today the old Aarons led CPA doesn't exist so the old pro-Moscow faction have taken back the name which they consider rightfully theirs. For years they praised the Soviet Union uncritically and considered to be winning the peaceful competition with capitalism. Despite the wholesale collapse of the Soviet Union, CPA/SPA politics remain fundamentally the same. As far as they are concerned, the USSR may have made minor mistakes but did nothing fundamentally wrong. There has been minor changes on union issues. The more conservative bureaucrats left when the party opposed the Prices and Incomes Accord of the Hawke Government. But as this proposal shows, the fundamental politics are still there. This is the twentieth century version of the popular front strategy promoted by stalinised communist parties since the thirties. As we will show this people's government is contrary to the method of Marxism. It is popularist and opportunist.

It is, of course, to its credit that the CPA opposes the affects of capitalism. It is well aware of "the expanding web of social problems, mass unemployment, poverty, drug addiction, adequate or no education, lack of medical care and environmental damage". Yes indeed! It has also "created a growing gap between rich and poor in every nation and between major industrially developed countries and underdeveloped countries". For revolutionaries all of this is an indictment of capitalism which must be overthrown. The system is maintained by a state apparatus which must be smashed. Unfortunately the CPA draws different conclusions. Instead it believes that "a government of a new type is needed, a government committed to a massive redistribution of wealth in favour of the majority:" The document makes it crystal clear that the "new type of government" is a parliamentary government elected in a situation where capitalist economic relations still predominate.

We agree that parliament is important. But revolutionaries expose it from a revolutionary point of view. We need to build a "pro-soviet opposition" Lenin. In no way do Marx or Lenin suggest that you can legislate socialism through parliament or for that matter "a great redistribution of wealth". For the CPA the government is not an instrument of capitalism which must legislate for bourgeois rule (or else the bourgeoisie will deal with it) it is an instrument which could serve our interests, given the right people in office with the right policies. So much for Lenin's analysis in State and Revolution!

In fact according to the CPA the capitalist state can give us all sorts of wonderful policies like a progressive taxation system, a programme for public housing and a decent health system. It also wants the government to control the economy. It hasn't occurred to the "Communist" Party that governments do not enact the current policies not out of some conspiracy but because the capitalist state will prevent any government from defying capitalist interests.

The CPA believes in a form of bourgeois democratic mobilisation "We believe that a coalition of the left and progressive forces will be strong enough to stand up to the power of the corporations and be capable of changing the direction of politics in Australia, and taking steps to redistribute the countries wealth". This is proposed when the laws of capital rule and the capitalist state rules. No these protests won't be strong enough to stand up to the multinationals. The multinationals are backed by the armed forces and the police. What is needed is a programme to smash the state.

Yes there are demands in this proposal which are supportable. Yes there are some demands that a progressive government under some circumstances might carry out. But they are not fundamental ones. By ignoring the major issue - putting revolution on the agenda - the CPA and potential allies are selling out the basic needs of working

people and tying them to the system. While the CPA tinkers with reforms, the capitalist crisis impoverishes millions.

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The CPA makes a proposal for migration and refugees which is important as they may get an audience from those also attracted to One Nation who are also opponents of economic rationalism. They have to counter the racism of One Nation. They propose the system "gives priority to humanitarian and family reunion considerations" So if family and humanitarian considerations don't apply to you than you are low priority. Shouldn't all oppressed and working people have the right to come here? They go on to talk about human rights for refugees and no children in detention centres. Revolutionary communists believe that refugees should stay here unconditionally and without restrictions, No to detention centres!

The CPA calls for a "democratic alliance" They are vague, deliberately vague about who is welcome in this alliance. What constitutes a progressive party" They haven't mentioned blatant bourgeois forces like the Democrats. They haven't excluded them either. It may be principled to unite with all those who the CPA might assemble for their project. But the point is that the terms of this unity are unprincipled. It is the role of communists to unite workers with sections of the middle class. But this has to be done on working class terms, behind the banner of the proletariat. It is our job to break small farmers from bourgeois parties. It is the task of communists that it is only the proletarian vanguard which can break them from the grip of the banks. We do this by proletarian expropriation of the banks.

Through this Proposal, this reactionary proposal, the CPA continues the Stalinist tradition of fighting for minimal immediate demands now deferring the overthrow of capitalism to the indefinite future. The basic principles of Marxism are thrown out the window.

Revolt on Palm Island

Angry Murriss at Palm Island burned down the police station, the courthouse and the barracks. It has been claimed that they threatened to kill police officers. The local police were understandably scared shitless. More reinforcements had to be flown in from Cairns and Townsville to maintain order. The Murriss actions were both understandable and fully justified.

They were reacting to the death in custody of Cameron Doomadgee. The coroner reported that he died of "an intradominal hemorrhage caused by a ruptured liver and portal vein". He also had broken ribs. They believe this to be murder by the police. So do we. The Australian newspaper reports Roy Branwell who was in the adjacent cell who saw the police kicking and assaulting him, sitting on his chest and punching him and calling out "Have you had enough Doomadgee Have you had enough?"

Doomadgee is another black murdered in custody. He is a victim of a racist system, a racist state and a racist police force. It is time that this was stopped. Communist Left salutes the militancy of the Black proletarians who fought back. The cops got what they deserved. Unfortunately the force was on the other side and the bourgeois state had no problems in maintaining order.

Black proletarians need union solidarity and organised workers defense! The more the racist system realises that their brutal acts will be met with workers action, than the more reticent they will be to act. The point is though to defeat the system totally. Racism is a fundamental question for the revolution in this country. Those who ignore it cannot fight the ruling class agenda when it is attacking working people unemployed or trade unions. Total opposition is required. Workers action is still needed for the dropping of all charges laid against those who fought back who must be defended unconditionally. .Such action must begin now!

Communist Left stands for

- building a revolutionary alternative to Labor
Political power to poor and exploited through a revolutionary workers and small farmers government
Revolutionary expropriation of capitalist industry (as opposed to bourgeois nationalisation)
- Sliding Scale of hours and wages
For women's and gay rights. Free abortion on demand.. Socialise housework and child care.
- opposition to all immigration controls
Self-determination to the Black (Koorie Murrie, Nungah etc) people of Australia and Torres Strait Islanders
- Class unity with workers of Asia, the Pacific and elsewhere. No to tariffs and protection.
Defend jobs everywhere! No to import controls!
- Total opposition to Australian intervention in PNG, Bougainville, Indonesia, Timor, the Pacific, in

the Middle East and else where. Workers' action against Australia's participation in the US imperialist "war against terror".

- A new revolutionary communist international

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