

#88 July 2010

CONTENTS

Page3 Julia Gillard

Ark Tribe fights reactionary ABCC

Page 4 Arizona racism

Page 5 Hugo Chavez and the Fifth International

Britain Tory/ Lib Dem Horror Budget

Gillard replaces Rudd. No choice in the chauvinist elections!

In 2007, Labor led by Kevin Rudd was elected to govern Australia. It was very much a presidential style election. Kevin07! Rudd presented himself as a modernising conservative acceptable to the politically correct. Most of Howard's policies would remain although in a more human way. Howard's nastiness was on the nose.

Howard's policies continued included the Northern Territory Intervention, work for the dole, and economic conservatism. Fair Work Australia replaced Work Choices. And whilst accepting the principle of border protection he promised a more humane approach on the refugee issue.

Kevin Rudd showed that he didn't have the substance to match the rhetoric. He lost popularity amongst the politically correct when he deferred his proposed Emissions Trading Scheme after arguing that it was urgently needed now.

Rudd lost popularity so the factions decided to replace him. The point of changing leaders was not merely one of image but of political direction. Rudd was identified with political correctness. The point of the Gillard leadership is to reconnect with Labor's chauvinist heartland. Gillard is pragmatic as compared to Rudd. Gillard has made it clear she stands for a tough line on asylum seekers.

When arguing for his more humanitarian approach for refugees. Rudd didn't count on was mass Tamil migration from Sri Lanka. He then adopted harsher measures which made him unpopular amongst the politically correct. He was seen as ineffective in the eyes of chauvinists. Boat after boat appeared and Rudd Labor appeared to flounder. Tony Abbott is a man who knows how to put the boot in. There is no equivocation from him. His clear line is "Send them back". This means to possible death or torture. They are not coming here in boatloads for nothing!

Communist Left welcomes all those from whatever country who want to settle here, for whatever reason. The talk of border protection is simply lies. In no way are borders under threat.

Under UN law you are entitled to present yourself to a country if your life is threatened. It is fully acknowledged that the overwhelming majority are "genuine refugees" even if we accept the official

definition. They all should be welcome here. No-one should have to be processed in barbaric detention centres.

Smash all immigration controls!

Julia Gillard has some problems with unequivocal Abbott. She is trying to get South East Asian cooperation. Her half baked East Timor solution seems to have failed. She is considering Papua New Guinea. It is clear that Abbott will win this obscene contest of chauvinism. The victims will be asylum seekers. This could cost them their lives. There are, however, more issues at stake.

Workchoices. The spectre of Workchoices still haunts the Liberal Party. Howard's policies meant a massive attack on workers pay, conditions and right to organise. Abbott recently stated that there will be no changes to Fair work Australia. Many will not believe him. We think that Abbott will delay changes to but make these changes, effectively reintroducing workchoices, when the heat is off. The bourgeoisie are happy with the current legislation and there is no pressure for change. Ideologues of the right would like to go further. So would Tony Abbott. But Abbott is prepared to wait. The current industrial legislation is reactionary and barbaric. Workers must fight Fair Work Australia, especially the reactionary ABCC which jails building workers for refusing to comment on what goes on at a trade union meeting. We must not accept reactionary legislation which strangles effective unionism because the Abbott alternative might be worse.

Economy. According to the economic gurus Australia's economy is flying high. Australia is one of the few countries to avoided recession. The Rudd Government's spending can take some credit. But there is also mining. Rudd was taught a cruel lesson in economic conservatism when he tried to get a bit of money back from the billionaire miners. Gillard worked out a compromise. This, she will claim is better than Abbott' flat opposition to any tax. The miners get away with billions, the people get peanuts!

It must be pointed out that main beneficiaries to this tax are business interests who will save on tax and mining companies who will benefit from infrastructure which these taxes are to be spent on.

It might seem that Labor has an economic high ground. But Tony Abbott has a knack of playing on people's fears about interest rates and debt. Interest rates have been low but every rise hurts. He has suggested that a Liberal government will mean no interest rate rise. This is dishonest. But Tony Abbott is a man who knows to play on fears of middle Australia.

Abbott suggests that Australians will have to pay for Labor's debt and this is true. But if Labor hadn't spent money creating jobs, more would have suffered. There is no painless way out of capitalist recession. The Reserve Bank has pointed out that Australia's debt is lower in terms of proportion of GDP that virtually developed country.

Environment. Gillard is committed to an Emissions Trading Scheme but Labor's credibility is shot to pieces. Having argued the urgency of an ETS in order to save the environment, they then proceeded to defer it. There is a loss in enthusiasm. Meanwhile, the redneck right are sceptical. They want to avoid a tax at all costs. Those who care are likely to switch to the Greens.

National development. Through their national broadband scheme, education and infrastructure, Labor argues that it is developing Australia. The Libs argue that they are wasting money. More development is needed than what Labor offers.

There are plenty of issues which are not on the agenda but should be. These included The Northern Territory Intervention, work for the dole and the war in Afghanistan. Most Australians oppose the war in Afghanistan. Essentially there is bipartisan support so by mutual agreement, the issue is buried.

There are also the personal factors. Gillard has the advantage of being a woman but she has the disadvantage of being imposed by the Labor factions. Rudd still has the sympathy of many, especially Queenslanders! Abbott is seen as a man of action but is disliked as he is hardly a champion of the fair go! He will certainly pick up support amongst chauvinist middle Australia.

Basically, the choice this election is a choice between conservatives. Last election Rudd promoted himself as the nicer conservative. Gillard doesn't even offer this.

There is no reason for workers to vote for any of these major parties. They all are prepared to back the US war effort, force refugees into detention centre, keep cops and troops occupying Black communities in the Northern Territory, believe in work for the dole and will jail workers for industrial action.

Communist Left may give critical support to left candidates depending on their programme.

Julia Gillard

Julia Gillard is a capable woman who has gone a long way since entering politics. She is not just the first female prime minister, she is the first red head. Also she is the first prime minister of the "Left Faction" of the ALP. Even though she is considered on the left, she has the support not only of the Left, but the Right faction and the bourgeoisie! All this shows how little it means to be Left in the ALP these days!

China Daily warns of her left union heritage claiming she will be militant in defending Rudd's mining superprofit's tax. The rest of the world knows better. Elsewhere she is praised for her "pragmatism". In theory and practice pragmatism is the method of the bourgeoisie. This is certainly true in her case. The bourgeoisie know what side of the class line she is on.

Gillard stated off as a supporter of the Fabian Society whose main public figurehead was Jim Cairns. Fabianism is socialism through an elected parliamentary majority. Fabians believe in nationalizing industry at the commanding heights, ie through a parliamentary government. Fabian policies are unconstitutional in Australia as it is unconstitutional and illegal for the Federal Government to interfere with trade between states. We don't know how they plan to deal with this situation. For Julia Gillard, Fabianism is a distant memory. Anyhow, the tendency is almost extinct.

Her next step was to join Socialist Forum. She became its figurehead. Socialist Forum was formed by the Victorian leadership of the Communist Party (led by Aarons) The SF included Victorian leader

Bernie Taft and most of their trade union bureaucrats. They argued that the majority of the CPA were guilty of “ultraleftism”. Socialist Forum split from the CPA, oriented towards the ALP where they acted as a pressure group pushing the Left to the right.

Socialist Forum were strongly pro Prices and Incomes Accord and for legislation to outlaw the BLF led by the Maoist Norm Gallagher. Despite a few left positions by were right on everything that mattered. They declared war on the official, more principled left and on their old CPA comrades. They handed over to the Hawke Government a crushed “Left” on a platter.

Since her SF days Gillard has continued her move to the right and her war against left wing policies and the union movement. She fully supports Rudd’s watered down version of Workchoices which is strongly anti- union She is a full supporter of the ABCC and the jailing of Ark Tribe.

Under Latham and Rudd, she was the pied piper who seduced leftists to support these right wing leaders. Now she leads a conservative “Labor Government” in her own right.

Gillard was Rudd’s loyal lieutenant. She was installed by the factions who feared Rudd may now be unelectable. The problem is that this has exposed Labor’s factions and their power. Rudd has argued that he has a mandate from the people. Yes the campaign was for KevinO7 as opposed to Labor.

There are going to be changes. Apart from the serious concessions on the Miners tax, which support mining interests her government has gone right on the issue of refugees. Her proposed Timor solution has fallen flat. East Timor doesn’t seem to be interested in being a dumping ground. We don’t blame them! Her next proposal appears to be a revamp of Howard’s Pacific solution

Rudd lost contact with the ALP chauvinist heartland. Gillard throws out the olive branch. Being a woman is an advantage in terms of Labor’s politically correct base. Her reactionary refugee policies will give her some audience .However she is playing Abbott’s game. Yes Abbott is better at being ruthless and appealing to base chauvinism. Gillard faces serious opposition.

We respect Gillard as a competent politician. But she has deserted her working class background to become an effective servant of the ruling class, Workers must oppose the racist boss’s Gillard Government. We must fight to overthrow her government and install a government based on working class power.

Ark Tribe. Heroic trade union militant faces jail

In 1969 Clarrie O’Shea Victorian Tramways Unionist and Maoist was jailed under the Penal Clauses. His defiant stand not only released him from prison. He made the reactionary legislation ineffective. He was backed by a near general strike with unionists throughout Australia downing tools and taking to the streets.

It is this type of heroism. It is this type of solidarity which we need today against reactionary legislation enforced by a government which calls itself ‘Labor’. The ABCC was initiated by Howard but it is continued by Labor. It is fully supported by Julia Gillard.

The ABCC legislation is ruthless and oppressive. It is opposed by the International Labour Organisation which considers it unfair to workers, more concerned with prosecution than protection.

This worries neither Liberal nor Labor. It discriminates against building workers making them second class unionists. It jails them for fighting for their rights. This includes issues of safety. Since its introduction there has been an increase in deaths on building sites especially those which are ununionised..

Ark Tribe faces six month's jail for refusing to do in his mates. Under ABCC legislation you have to tell the Commission what goes on at a meeting. You have no right to confidentiality. This is what Ark Tribe is resisting.

Ark has received some solidarity. Other unions such as Electrical Trades have joined building workers in solidarity, marching in solidarity.

This is good. The more solidarity Ark gets the better. But there is a giant gulf between the minimal actions taking place in defence of Ark today and those massive demos and strikes in defence of Clarrie O'Shea. This starkly reflects the degeneration of today's workers movement.

The actions of the bureaucrats will only be token if they take action at all. Rank and file workers must not accept their domination or their agenda. It is urgent that factory committees be built so action can be directed by the rank and file.

The trade union bureaucracy can be bypassed but a revolutionary party cannot. The struggle is not just about Ark it is about the ABCC and the reactionary Gillard Government.

Bring down the Gillard Government!

The alternative to Gillard is not another parliamentary government but a revolutionary workers and farmers government based on working class organization.

Establishing such a government requires a revolutionary communist party. Workers must break from the reactionary anti-union Labor Party!

We salute Ark Tribe as a heroic fighter. We hope the movement to free him and smash the ABCC leads to meaningful change.

Arizona Racism.

The Arizona state government has moved some reactionary legislation. Basically if you look Latino, it is the onus on you to prove you have the right to live in the USA. It is bad luck if you simply have no papers. These days it is uncool to admit that attacks on refugees are racist. It is generally rationalized in terms of "border protection" "defending Australia" Obama has a similar attitude

For Obama, Arizona is an embarrassment. Arizona was once part of Mexico. It was conquered by the USA. So many Latinos and of course indigenous residents have been there for many generations more than those white Americans of Anglo descent. Now they face becoming illegal!

But the state is racist and what the racists want is a white Arizona and that is the intent of these laws.

In Arizona white vigilantes protect the border protecting America against the southern Latino and indigenous invaders, keeping it safe for the white race. The Internationalist Group has reported that vigilantes have opened fire on youths on the Mexican side of the border.

Arizona racism is embarrassing because Arizona has drawn out the racist consequence of all legislation against immigrants. Liberals, including Obama, try to have their immigration controls and pretend that they are not racist.

It is the task of revolutionaries to show workers Australia or elsewhere that they have more in common with workers of Asia, South America or elsewhere than with "their own" ruling classes. We seek international solidarity to fight the bosses! Communist Left opposes all immigration controls outright!

Arizona is the vanguard of reaction. But the state is only taking the logic of all immigration controls supported by all imperialist governments to its logical conclusion. All immigration controls must be opposed, root and branch.

Hugo Chavez and the Fifth International.

In December, last year, Hugo Chavez, President of Venezuela, called for a fifth communist International. This was controversial. The progressive side was that it acknowledged the need for international solidarity. He also realises that the Third International degenerated due to Stalin's national chauvinism called "socialism in one country"

The problem is the type of international which would eventuate from his international diplomacy is not one the proletariat needs. Chavez welcomes Medvedev and Putin from Russia. The malignant Hu leadership from China. Castro from Cuba, Armadinajad from Iran and even Robert Mugabe from Zimbabwe. The only thing this mob have in common is that they are malignant, reactionary but out of favour of the imperialist west, especially the USA. Even this is not consistently true as Obama is making overtures to the malignant Medvedev regime in capitalist Russia. A bloc of these treacherous regimes is thoroughly and utterly treacherous. So too is the bloc of fake Trotskyists and Maoists which Chavez no doubt believes will participate in this international.

What is fundamentally at stake is a class line. Even if we ignore the massive sell-outs to imperialism,

Between Trotskyists and Maoists there is a fundamental class question. Trotskyists fight for the dictatorship of the proletariat, Maoists liquidate the proletariat behind the banner of the peasantry, fighting for nationalist and democratic tasks, in other words a different form of capitalism.

The problem is that many of today's Trotskyists have abandoned this fundamental principle. They too hail peasant struggles. No doubt Chavez is confused. Perhaps there is a case for the revisionist Trotskyists (such as United Secretariat) joining a Maoist international given that the USec has hailed Maoist vanguards? This only exposes revisionists such as the USec. It doesn't make such a bloc principled.

The peasantry have privileges namely land. They have been prepared to fight for these privileges at the expense of the proletariat. This has meant a blood line at the expense of the proletariat and this was shown in Pol Pot's Kampuchea where war was declared on the cities for a peasant revolution. In

his writings on China. Trotsky pointed out that the peasantry were the most chauvinist of all classes. This too has been shown in practice with the nationalist strategies of the Chinese, Vietnamese and Kampuchean Stalinist Maoists. All of these put their nationalist interests before that of the international proletariat.

An effective international would have improved things. But a revolutionary international must be based on the proletariat fighting for proletarian revolution. Castroites and Maoists reject this.

Communist Left supports a new Fifth Communist International. But our Fifth International is one based on class principle. Chavez's variant rejects this. Chavez, in fact hasn't even completed the revolution in his own country. In fact he has opposed class struggle in Venezuela. Some suggest that this new call is a diversion. Maybe! But irrespective of his motivations, we must reject his form of "international" because a revolutionary international it is not.

Britain. Tory Liberal Democrat alliance austerity budget.

Nick Clegg is the most successful Liberal Democrat leader in the history of the amalgamated parties. In the first three way party debates he showed his skills and won popular support.

In the recent elections in Britain the Liberal/Democrats polled almost thirty percent of the vote. Because of an unfair system they won a lot less seats than either the Tories or Labour.

Nevertheless they did get enough to effectively choose the government. Clegg negotiated with both Labour and Tories and chose the latter. Gordon Brown, the Labour leader was seen as backward, a yesterday's man. Personally he was unpopular. Many voted for Clegg and his Lib/Dems because they represented an apparently nicer face of capitalism. They appeared to be an alternative which though different to Labour were more human friendly than the Tories.

So Clegg jumped into bed with the Tories who made some minor concessions. However, there is a price to pay. What has been exposed is that when it comes to the crunch, Lib/Dems support the system and this means austerity.

Britain may be in better economic condition than Greece, Ireland or Spain but the economists are demanding savage cuts for an efficient economy. These the Tories and the Lib Dem allies are prepared to deliver.

The first budget of this new coalition government was savage and vicious. The cutbacks were massive. This has been the most vicious and reactionary since Thatcher. The burden of the crisis has been placed upon the backs of poor and working people. Of course they are angry.

The first major 'reform' has been to increase the VAT (the British GST) to twenty percent! This hits the poor hard as poor people spend most of their money on essentials such as rent, food clothing and basic needs. The price of all this will increase dramatic.

Also under attack is money for the disabled and an allowance for low income housing. It is believed that without this allowance, many will become homeless.

Many public servants will lose their jobs Public servants face a wage freeze, This will be painful given the high rate of inflation. The Budget cuts will mean massive unemployment The role of the Lib

Dems has been to act as the Tories' attorney. They say that the cuts are fair and that the rich also pay. People are not deceived.

They know that the poor are going to be forced to suffer the most. The idea that the Lib Dems are some sort of more humane alternative is losing ground fast. Nick Clegg may have taken the Lib Dems to their highest level. But he also might be making them redundant. Who needs another Tory Party? We of course cry no tears for this reactionary party. Let it rot!

Of course Labour can consider itself lucky. Had they been elected in their own right or had received the blessing of the Liberal Democrats they too would have delivered a horror budget. But now they can stand aside pointing their finger at the Lib Dems as effectively being Tories on the issues that matter. No doubt many Lib Dem voters will go back to Labour

British working people, unemployed, pensioners and the poor understand what this means and are not taking this lying down. They know that they are not responsible for the crisis and should not be forced to pay. Yet they are! There have been some militant protests. This is a good start. But these demos and rallies need an orientation to the working class and a revolutionary political direction.

The issue is the capitalist system. Britain is still suffering from the global recession and the ruling class want the poor to suffer the most. That is the point of this horrific budget. If we don't want the poor to pay we must fight this system. We must overthrow it!

COMMUNIST LEFT

PO Box 260

St Peters 2044 NSW Australia

xred39@hotmail.com