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European Economic

Community faces Collapse!

The EEC seemed like a good idea. It seemed sensible that all the European countries should get together and create an economic superpower which could challenge both Japan and the United States. That was in boom time. The EEC was in the boom time. It now appears that the EEC is unable to withstand the global crisis.

The Global Financial Crisis began in the United States and spread globally. Most countries, Australia excepted, went into recession. This included the countries of Europe. Greece however never got out of recession and is still suffering. Europe has been forced to bail it out.

But it will only bail out on one condition. That condition is that the so-called socialist PASOK Government imposes austerity.

Understandably working class people have rejected that austerity. Workers are in no way responsible. But the burden of the crisis has fallen on their shoulders.

The Germans and French reluctantly bailed out Greece but the disease has spread to Ireland, Portugal, Spain and even Italy. In no way can the French or Germans afford to bail Italy out. So what now for the EEC? This has massive consequences for the capitalist system globally.

The crisis will spread to Britain because a key part of the British economy is exporting to Europe.

The situation in Greece is well known. There have been four general strikes plus mass militancy in the streets. PASOK didn't budge. So now most of the population face austerity.

In Portugal about a third of the population live below the poverty line. Half of the poor have a paid job. There has been massive inflation. On basic items including food have increased in price massively... Working people and the poor have responded with anger and militancy. Of course there is a failure of politics. The only way to victory is through a revolutionary programme. None of the traditional parties have a programme for state power.

Ireland has been bailed out by the EEC also. Of course the price is austerity for ordinary working people and the poor. This brought down the government. The next one has no answers either. In fact it is continuing the offensive.

Spain faces massive unemployment. It is seventeen percent now; it is expected to rise to twenty percent very shortly. There have been mass protests.

Now Italy has to face the music. Berlusconi has promised his right wing government will also be responsible. We believe he will continue his right wing ways.

The leading EU powers France and Germany are expected to bail out the weaker members. The question is to what extent and for how long are they prepared to do it? There is serious internal pressure of Germany and France to think of their own countries first. How Sarkozy and Merkel will respond remains to be seen.

One thing which is clear is that this is an international crisis and the working class must respond internationally. Working people are not responsible for this crisis. Yet we are being forced to pay. Greek working people have shown that have no intention of taking this lying down. This should be the same throughout Europe and throughout the world.

We need international working class action.

We need a revolutionary communist international!

England Riots

It started with the cops killing a totally innocent man in Tottenham, a working class suburb in north London. The family held a small demonstration. It turned into riot. Youths and others, alienated and excluded took out their alienation out against the coppers.

The riots spread throughout London and to other cities in England including Manchester, Birmingham, Liverpool, Wolverhampton and Bristol to name some. Essentially the riots were co-opted by gangs of lumpen thieves. Co-ordinated by telephones, gangs raided shops, stealing fashionable items. The rioters burnt and looted houses, shops and buildings

It was defeated in London when Tory Prime Minister David Cameron mobilised 16,000 coppers to take control. This has worked. Now the law order offensive begins. Ordinary unemployed and poor people will pay.

Overwhelmingly there was a low level of consciousness. In no way was this revolutionary or even a conscious fight against the cops as occurred in Brixton 1981. Everyone is asking "what happened" This includes both the establishment and the left. These were not race riots though in Tottenham there was some racist component. The rioters included both black and white.

For David Cameron, a breakdown in bourgeois morality is the cause. He blames the welfare state, single parents and lack of law and order. He wants more police powers. He wants law and order. He wants zero tolerance and is brining over American "experts" He blames the welfare state as the breeding ground for these gangs. Massive attacks will follow.

It will be interesting to know what is defined as a "gang" Under similar legislation in Australia, groups of friends are harassed simply because they hang around together.

For the Tories the solution to "welfare dependence" and thence riots is tougher mutual obligation and slave labour for the unemployed.

Of course it can be pointed out that many non-welfare states are candidates for lumpen riots. Attacking the welfare state will make people poor but it won't stop lumpen gangs.

This is creating tension with their coalition partners, the Liberal Democrats who have as their name suggests, a more Liberal Democrats. Cameron does have resonance, though, with the British public. This is especially true for those looking for revenge rather than solutions.

People are receiving tough justice. One poor woman who was not a rioter received four months jail for receiving a pair of bloomers from someone who was a rioter. Some have received jail sentences for stealing soft drink bottles. Cameron defends this but the Liberal Democrats are critical.

Cameron has urged local councils who run housing estates to evict any participants. Many have obliged. He is also threatening to cut them off the dole.

After the riots there was mass solidarity of residents. People came from miles away to clean up and show support. Taking part in this was the fascist English Defence League.

We fear that this racist fascist grouping will make gains out of this patriotic fervour. Their agenda as fascists is to declare war on minorities such as gay and black people, the union movement and ultimately bourgeois democracy.

The EDL are now threatening to march in Tower Hamlets East London. Left Reformists are pleading with the state to try and stop them. The state is not the answer to fighting fascism.

On the whole the conflicts have been non-racial. Black, white and Arab have been on both sides. The ruling class have attempted to use the fact that many rioters are many shop keepers are Turkish to divide Arab from West Indians. This has strongly been rejected by Turkish and Kurdish community organisations.

We blame capitalism for the riots. We blame it for the social dislocation out of which these riots emerged. "There is no such thing as society" said Margaret Thatcher. Well this is what happens when society breaks down. Thanks to Thatcherism there is a serious lack of community facilities. There has been a serious lack of community. The left has been unable to fill the vacuum and create the class and community consciousness necessary for a successful and meaningful fight back.

Under these conditions when the oppressed fight back it is through gangland anarchy... We fear that there will be a massive turn to the right within Britain and the victims will be the poor and oppressed. They will suffer more poverty and a law and order police state. It is especially urgent that a revolutionary party swim against the stream and fight these attacks.

Refugees: "Malaysian solution". Gillard's barbaric refugee policy.

During the last election Tony Abbott bombarded the media with propaganda about boats arriving and Labor doing nothing. Gillard has always said that she was not soft on people smugglers and her government was committed to defending Australia's borders. The problem for her government was how to deal with them. She correctly has rejected the "Pacific solution" which means sending refugees to Nauru. She points out that Nauru has not signed the appropriate UN Convention on refugees. But there has been a difficulty finding an alternative.

Refugees are coming to Australia because of the wars in Iraq and Afghanistan, and also the defeat of the Tamils in Sri Lanka. In the case of Iraq and Afghanistan, the Australian government bears responsibility for the situation. Australia sent troops to Iraq. Australia still has troops in Afghanistan. Australia has an obligation to care for the victims of these horrific conflicts. Many refugees are Tamil. They are victims of the barbaric practices of the Sri Lankan government. Sending them back to Sri Lanka will mean death and torture.

The Gillard alternative to the "Pacific solution" is the Malaysian solution. Gillard rejects Nauru as an option as that country has not signed the UN Refugee convention. Neither has Malaysia!

Refugees who arrive in Australia, or Australian territory Christmas Island have been greeted with detention centres. These are barbaric. As a result refugees detained sometimes for years have sown their lips, gone on hunger strikes and even attempted suicide. We oppose mandatory detention. People who come to this country in genuine fear for their lives do not deserve prison camps.

We also oppose the reactionary off-shore schemes of the previous Howard government and the current Gillard Labor government. Sending refugees to Nauru "the Pacific solution" was horrific. So has been the Timor and Papua- New Guinea solutions proposed by Labor. The "Malaysian solution" is barbaric and reactionary also.

There are many horror stories concerning the treatment of refugees in Malaysia. For a start it is illegal to be a Shia Moslem in Malaysia and many Shiites are considered "terrorists". Yes many Moslem refugees are Shias and they should have the right to practice their religion. Refugees are not allowed to work in Malaysia. Some get

beaten and robbed by the cops. Malaysia assures us this won't happen. We don't believe them. There is no health care, education or jobs for them. Malaysia is, in short, a hell hole for refugees.

The current agreement allows unaccompanied children to be sent to Malaysia also. This is dangerous for them. It is also illegal under Australian law as the government has an obligation to protect them. The minister is technically their guardian. The government claims that this must be to deter people smugglers. Well this it might do but what about the victims? Lawyers are taking this to the High court. We wish them best of luck. However the force we suggest take action is the workers movement. For black bans and action in defence of refugees now!

In all this, Gillard has lost any moral high ground. Both the Malaysian and Pacific "solutions" are barbaric and reactionary. So are the detention centres in Australia. We want the right for anyone to come to Australia unconditionally. This applies especially to those who may face death or torture.

Barry O'Farrell attacks. Unions fight back!

It seemed too good to be true. Nice guy Barry O'Farrell promised both an economically viable economy and to fix the state of New South Wales' lack of infrastructure. During the election campaign he was barely challenged for the details. For Labor the election was virtually unwinnable. The expected landslide happened. Labor got totally smashed.

Barry O'Farrell is in office and now he has to put policy into practice. For a start he has to build the North West rail link to the Hills district in north western Sydney. But where is the money coming from?

Being a true blue Liberal his reflex response is to attack workers wages and conditions. This especially applies to state government workers. To get this he has moved special legislation to take control away from Arbitration. Wages and conditions are now under full control of the state government. He argues that as government workers do better than their private sector workers in NSW, they are doing too well. We think private sector workers are doing badly. We also have no faith in the existing arbitration which in the name of justice effectively supports the bosses.

O'Farrell has absolutely no mandate for these changes. In no way was "industrial reform" raised at the last state election. Workers have every right to be angry.

The union bureaucrats are promising a state version of the campaign against work choices. The latter was partly successful. The Gillard government though, also has reactionary legislation. Whilst we have no faith in the bureaucrats it is important that workers mobilise. It is important workers mobilise independent of the bureaucracy through shop committees. It is important workers fight back with class struggle

Against workchoices there were mass mobilisations. But the bureaucrats main mode of struggle was to appeal to respectability. Well Howard was defeated. But the Rudd alternative, Fair work Australia, was anti working class also. Having thrown in their lot with Labor the trade union bureaucracy has been unable to fight Labor and its laws.

No doubt the bureaucrats have in mind another glossy pr campaign which will appeal to respectability. We say don't buy this. It will not fight O'Farrell. Unionist should support a revolutionary alternative which will not only bring down O'Farrell but the capitalist system as well.

The End of Gaddafi.

Unlike the bourgeois revolutions in Tunisia and Egypt, it has taken more than six months for the Libya revolution to be completed. The reason for this is that Gaddafi maintained significant support both within the army and within the population. Gaddafi has had no intention of surrendering. He has promised to fight to the last man. He has kept his word. Now, with the opposition in Tripoli defeat is now definite.

The opposition is dancing in the streets. Their flags are everywhere. They look forward to government. So too does the west. Opposition leaders are thankful for the support of the imperialist west. They acknowledge that they would not have won without western imperialist aerial support. Military sites were bombed and so was Gaddafi's compound.

The west may have assisted the rebels to their victory but they have a material interest in doing this. Libya has 17% of the world's oil supply. Multinationals look forward to taking control of this oil and making billions of euro's in profit.. Libyan proletarians must stop this from happening. Of course the bourgeois reactionary provisional government will welcome the imperialists with open arms. The imperialists hated Gaddafi partly for the oil but also for taking a left stance on many issues such as Palestine. They are pleased that they only had to assist the process rather than invade as they did in Iraq.

The question now is: where is Gaddafi? Some are suggesting that he might be in Venezuela where he is fully endorsed by Hugo Chavez. Chavez thinks that this whole process is a conspiracy by the West to grab Libya's oil. Well there is no denying western intervention. But it is clear that Gaddafi has lost the support of the people without this. For this he must bear responsibility. Libyans despise his rich and decadent lifestyle.

The victorious liberators are a motley bunch containing many tribes and classes. Many fear that after victory these forces may turn on each other. It is one thing to overthrow Gaddafi. It is another to create a stable nation out of the various tribes of Libya. It is clear that the new society will not be socialist. For working people, the revolution must go all the way. This means breaking from all bourgeois forces and overthrowing the system.

Australian Defence League The fascists raise their ugly heads.

Recently, the Australian Defence League held a rally in Martin Place Sydney. Ostensibly it was a rally against Sharia law which is the law as defined by the Koran. This , of course, was crap. No one, not even fundamentalist Moslems is advocating Sharia law for Australia.

The ADL are using sharia law as a pretext. They want to whip up anti Muslim hysteria. They want another Cronulla where Moslems were violently attacked. They want to build an organisation which will attack minorities and smash the union movement.

They are co-thinkers of the fascist English Defence League. Before committing his mass atrocities, the fascist Norwegian visited EDL in solidarity.

The Australian Defence League should be taken seriously. It is the responsibility of the left and workers movement to counter their exploits. They must be nipped in the bud. They must be acquainted with the pavement.

To counter their efforts, the left held a modest demo. Present were Trotskyist Platform, Communist League, Communist Left and other leftists. Only one member of the Socialist Alliance was present.

Had Socialist Alliance and Socialist Alternative mobilised, the fascists would have been outnumbered. This demo was organised at short notice . More organisation is required for next time.

What this demo illustrated was the alliance of fascists with the cops. The cops did their utmost to force the left wing counter demo away from the fascists, so our banners were not visible.

There was also this alliance in Newtown when demonstrators against a mural "ban the burqa" were forced away and systematically arrested at the cop's discession., even though they were no longer near the mural.

Trotskyists in no way support either the burqa nor sharia law. But we oppose this reactionary campaign which is a tool of reaction. We believe in religious freedom.

Unfortunately these demos have shown that left anti fascists have no support from the organised working class. This must change. A workers movement against fascism, to fight fascism, must be built.

Gay people should have the right to marry.

The right to gay marriage is a big issue in Australian politics. Gillard remains opposed to it, but conference after conference of ALP members has given it support. There is though paranoia from some members who live in conservative or strongly Islamic communities. They fear a backlash. Public opinion is swinging in its favour. Most Australians want it. It is a big issue on the Australian left. For Get Up it is just the liberal cause they seek to mobilise respectable public opinion. Respectable gay couples also want to marry.

Communists support the right to gay marriage for two reasons. Firstly, we think that any couple who wants to do so should have the right to marry. Secondly we believe in equality of sexuality. Even though gay relationships may be legal, they are not

equal unless gay people have the same rights as heterosexual couples. All discrimination based on sexuality must be opposed.

Bob Gould. A life on the Labor Left

Bob Gould who died this year, aged seventy five, seemed like a fixture on the left. He was a true character, a man of many opinions. He was a true working class intellectual. In no way though was he a revolutionary. He was a sort of "Trotskyist" variant of reformism.

Bob Gould was born into a family who supported controversial NSW premier JT Lang. Lang was a controversial opponent of economic rationalism and was sacked by the state governor. He was expelled from the Labor Party.. Gould remained thoroughly Labor loyal throughout his life.

He was converted to the Communist Party of Australia but remained in the Labor Party. He was then converted to Trotskyism and joined the Australian Fourth International section led by Nick Orriglass.

Australia was one of the few countries whose Fourth International section supported the controversial Michel Pablo. Pablo supported the principle of "entrism sui generalism" (deep entrism) which meant Trotskyist tendencies joined Labour, social democratic, Stalinist or even radical nationalist tendencies for a long term with limited public presence.. Trotsky supported tactical entrism for a short period,

Gould supported the majority of the world's Trotskyists who constituted the United Secretariat of the Fourth International. Orriglass was a Labor Party deep entrism. So was Gould. So it wasn't an issue in the split. The major issue involved was China with the U.Sec and therefore Gould giving critical support to China.

The main issue which concerned Gould though, was Australian government's participation in the Vietnam War. Gould formed a grouping, the Vietnam Action Committee, to build a movement against this barbaric reactionary war. He recruited two notable leftists John and Jim Percy.

Gould's group put out a publication Socialist Perspectives. They formed a youth group known as Resistance and also the Student Underground. The majority of these groups led by the Percy Brothers believed in tight organisation, They moved closer to the Socialist workers Party of the USA. Gould wanted a looser organisation partly to remain part of Labor without threat of expulsion.

A significant minority supported Gould. But after that, most of the Gould wing split and formed Workers Action which supported Gerry Healy's International Committee. Gould joined the ICFI also. Of course he remained totally within the Labor Party.

Gould desperately yearned to build a Socialist Left in NSW similar to Victoria's Socialist Left. His first attempt united radical leftists but included some unionists and Laborites.

In the second attempt he united with his in-law George Petersen. This SL was mainly his Healyite ALP entrists.

Within the Australian section of ICFI Gould recruited some youth and industrial workers to do both ALP work in young Labor (the Socialist Leadership Group) and do rank and file work in the unions.

He made some interventions in unions including the Vehicle builders (VBU) the Flour Millers. His most significant though was in the Nurses Federation where his candidates, Jenny Haines and Brownyn Ridgeway became NSW state president and secretary. They were the most visible opposition to the notorious Prices and Incomes Accord which they refused to endorse.

Basically Gould's efforts in the unions was as reformist and minimalist as was his interventions in the ALP.

Gould's groupings and fronts dissolved. But Gould remained truly Labor loyal. One of his last significant interventions was to oppose the Democratic Socialist Perspectives P led Socialist Alliance standing for elections against Labor. No doubt he had plans for the Alliance to become NSW Socialist Left mark 111. Bob also had a close relationship with the Greens which include his ex-comrades.

Gould made many political interventions. Some progressive but some reactionary. His most progressive was to take on Keith Windshuttle, a former leftist, who denied that there was systematic extermination of the Aboriginal people. This Gould refuted. He refuted Windshuttle's reactionary positions in a debate held at his bookshop where he debated both Windshuttle and Piers Ackerman.

His reactionary stand was in favour of an Australian intervention into East Timor with the purpose of defending the Timorese. Democratic Socialist Perspectives also supported an invasion. He opposed Democratic socialist Perspectives from the right., wanting a more intense invasion.

Gould's political positions varied. But his positions were always based on an analysis. Gould abused Stalinism but he always understood it. He believed in an analysis of the labour movement and of Australian capitalism. When his group intervened in housing he analysed the housing question in general and in particular Sydney NSW.

Gould was not a revolutionary but his belief in such analysis and to understand the Marxist tradition is indeed one of the positives of his life.

His is most well known for his bookshops. The first being the Third World in Goulburn St Haymarket. Currently Gould's Bookshop is in King St Newtown. This massive bookshop contains heaps of stuff, including books about communism and the labour movement.

To be a communist you must understand. It is no enough to parrot off slogans and a political line as too many supposed Trotskyists and communists do. In Gould's bookshop you will get heaps of understanding.