

Chinese Voice 17 December 1996 issue

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Winstone Peters - the Immigrants' Anti-Christ appointed Deputy Prime Minister and Treasurer

The first impression of the ethnic communities is that their nemesis, their bete noir, their anti-Christ is deputy Prime Minister. While they are somewhat comforted that the National Party remains in power as the senior partner in a coalition, they are greatly discomfited that Winston Peters, the arch enemy of immigrants, the racist brown-arm, the eater of their children, is so close the centre of power - IS the centre of power. With the rest of New Zealand, the ethnic communities will be disturbed by the dishonesty, venality and crassness of the coalition building process and subsequent cabinet-making, and will also be shocked by the ease with which erstwhile enemies become staunch allies and potential coalition partners within 24 hours become implacable foes. MMP far from heralding an era of cooperation has produced, within the first hours of the new Parliament, merciless slugging across the floor worse than anything under the two-party system - if that were possible.

A cooler analysis of the situation however will show that the coalition agreement - the parts which are NOT secret of course - says nothing about limiting immigration; that the sale of assets, including land, to overseas owners will need to be accompanied by benefits to New Zealand - weasel words for no significant change. So Peters has traded his mighty rhetoric and high ideals for access to power. Very human, very understandable - very easily understandable.

For Peters doesn't hate immigrants and he isn't against foreign investment: he is only supporting those policies because there are votes to be garnered from the closet xenophobes and economic flat-earthers. If there were advantage in praising Jim Bolger to the sky, he would: now there is, and he has.

Peters is a clever politician, perhaps the most astute politician in New Zealand at the moment. He has recovered from being thrown out of the National Party to becoming deputy Prime Minister by using irresistible force. He may yet understand that immigration and foreign investment are necessary when the same irresistible force is applied to him as Treasurer, perhaps in the form of hundreds of millions of dollars worth of trade potentially lost to New Zealand.