

Labor Must Ground Unsafe Planes!

Boeing Crashes: Profit Drive Kills



U.S. Government Approved Flying Death Trap

The details that have emerged after two fatal crashes in less than five months of the Boeing 737 Max, an aircraft model that first rolled off the assembly line in 2017, all point to one unmistakable conclusion: capitalist production for profit kills. Locked in fierce competition with the German-French aerospace conglomerate Airbus for control of the world market, the U.S. manufacturing giant early in the decade promised airlines a narrow-body aircraft that would minimize fuel and training costs, to be delivered within a few years. To meet this deadline, Boeing threw safety out the window with the full complicity of the Trump and especially the Obama administrations, while also pushing speedup on its workforce.

Now, 346 people are dead after Lion Air Flight 610 on October 29 and Ethiopian Airlines Flight 302 on March 10 plunged from the sky. Boeing management and its government enablers are criminals, pure and simple, for foisting flying death traps on flight crews and the public. For the bosses, whose primary concern is profit, the deaths of workers and passengers are just part of the overhead of doing business. From the plants to the airports, mobilizing labor's power is the only way to effectively establish and enforce air safety.

The Max was conceived in 2011, after American Airlines had threatened to purchase a large number of aircraft from Airbus, which had made inroads against its U.S. rival by racking up over 1,000 orders in the prior half-year for its



After fatal crashes of two Boeing 737 Max flights killed 346 people, the aircraft was finally grounded by the FAA, which had put its seal of approval on the deadly plane. Top left: Mourners at funeral of Lion Air Flight 610 passenger in Indonesia. Top right: Wreckage of Ethiopian Airlines Flight 302 south of Addis Ababa. Above: Grounded Max aircraft at Boeing Field in Seattle, March 21.

new fuel-efficient A320 (its 737 equivalent). By saving on fuel, a major operating expense in air transport, American sought to get a leg up on its own rivals, especially other U.S. carriers. The airline industry had just spent a decade slashing the "fixed cost" of labor to the bone, through bankruptcies, mergers and other full-throttle attacks on the unions.

Boeing placed fuel-efficient engines on the Max that were bigger and heavier than those on previous 737s and thus had to be mounted higher and further forward to not

scrape the ground while the plane taxied. The changed aerodynamics created a tendency to push the nose up, making the Max prone to stalls. The only safe solution would have been to redesign the airframe to match the engines. However, management opted for a cheap and quick patch, introducing new anti-stall flight-control software, MCAS.

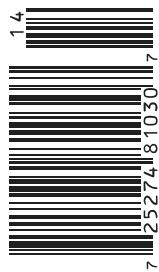
That substitute allowed Boeing to maintain the lie that the Max was not a new aircraft but a modification of the 737 in order to expedite its development, test-

ing and certification. The ruse also gave an additional selling point to the airlines, with Boeing falsely claiming that the most minimal additional pilot training was needed to fly the aircraft. In the U.S., pilots received only one hour of training on an iPad, not on a simulator! The way management implemented MCAS greatly magnified the potential for disaster. Boeing rushed the Max out the door knowing it was a ticking time bomb, while concealing from pilots critical information about MCAS, not least how to respond in the event that it wrongly kicked in.

The Federal Aviation Administration (FAA) signed off on the Max's airworthiness in Boeing's hustle to get it out. FAA managers delegated more and more safety assessments to Boeing, speedily approved the foregone conclusions, and curtailed the review of essential technical documents. The FAA customarily assigns individuals or organizations outside the agency to perform safety certifications under the so-called "designee" program, which was codified by lawmakers in the 1958 FAA Act. Since then, both Republicans and Democrats have further relaxed the rules for qualified designees so that Boeing could simply certify itself. Whatever might now happen to the program, one thing is certain: Boeing and the FAA will continue "working together."

Liberal commentators have sought to obscure the role of the FAA under Obama by talking up the "special relationship" between the Boeing CEO and Trump. Acting defense secretary Patrick Shanahan was a longtime Boeing executive, and acting FAA head Daniel Elwell used to work for Boeing's trade association. But Boeing has

continued on page 2



Boeing...

(continued from page 1)

long had a special relationship with both capitalist parties in Washington, D.C.

In 2011, Barack Obama, having already bailed out Wall Street and U.S. automakers at the expense of the workers and poor, moved to restore Boeing’s flagging competitiveness. The president toured a number of Asian countries to sell the newly conceived Max and other Boeing aircraft and was on hand in Indonesia when Lion Air announced it was ordering over 200 of the Max. The next year, he commented: “Given the number of planes I have sold all over the world, I expect a gold watch after my departure.” Instead, Boeing received the parting gift as Obama showered it with over \$30 billion in defense contracts on his way out of the White House.

Boeing is the largest U.S. exporter and the world’s second-largest supplier of military hardware. The aerospace giant’s striving for hegemony in its branch of industry is emblematic of imperialism, the monopoly stage of capitalism in which the advanced powers vie with one another to redivide the world and control markets, as well as natural resources and cheap sources of labor, by force of arms when necessary. The FAA’s allegiance to Boeing reflects its very purpose: to protect the interests of U.S. monopoly capital in the industry it regulates.

Not surprisingly, following the second crash the FAA kept the Max in the air even after all other countries had halted its operation. Notably, the Chinese authorities, who are not ruled by the profit motive, set things in motion by grounding the Max



Reuters

November 2011: Salesman-in-Chief for the 737 Max, Barack Obama, shakes hands with Boeing executive Ray Conner after brokering deal between U.S. aerospace giant and Lion Air CEO Rusdi Kirana (left), in Bali.

less than 24 hours after the second crash. By all indications, the Chinese bureaucratically deformed workers state has in recent years put a heavy emphasis on safety in its burgeoning airline industry.

The current spectacle of bourgeois politicians huffing and puffing over air safety is pure hypocrisy. With a flurry of investigations and hearings now underway in the nation’s capital, the goal is nothing more than to give the FAA a clean bill of health, whether by providing a veneer of “independence,” or finding a scapegoat, or both. Meanwhile, Boeing has plans to release what it trumpets as a fix to the MCAS software, which cannot possibly compensate for the aircraft’s inherent aerodynamic instability.

The two Max jets downed by the hunger for profits are a graphic illustration that

coordinated union control of safety—in aviation, manufacturing and every other sector of the economy—is a matter of life and death. Union grounding of unsafe planes would get major blowback from the bosses; workers must be ready for class battle. Just over a month ago, Southwest Airlines filed suit against AMFA, the union representing its mechanics, for causing a “state of operational emergency” by writing safety assessments that took a larger number of aircraft out of service than deemed acceptable by management. The carrier, which also owns the world’s largest Max fleet, has sought to bust the union by further outsourcing maintenance work, provoking a now six-year-long contract dispute. Wringing more from workers and cutting corners on safety go hand in hand in the capitalist drive to maximize profits. It is crucial for the unions to organize independently of the government agencies and political parties of the class enemy.

To Hell with “Boeing’s Best Interest”!

Far from waging any kind of fightback, the bureaucrats sitting atop the unions are committed to the capitalist profit system and the program of class collaboration. This treachery to the working class is encapsulated in the lie of a partnership of labor and capital, as well as the embrace of false “friend of labor” Democrats and the peddling of “America first” protectionist poison. It is a searing indictment of various pilots union tops that they expressed “confidence” in the Max even after it was grounded elsewhere, willingly putting their own members, not to mention thousands of other people, in harm’s way. Marking another betrayal, these same bureaucrats had previously agreed to the non-training of pilots before flying the Max.

The Max monstrosity should have been stopped on the drawing board. The current silence of the SPEEA Boeing engineers union leadership is deafening. Over the years, officials of the Boeing IAM Machinists union have justified their own surrender to the bosses by invoking “Boeing’s best interest,” part of viewing themselves as front-line defenders of U.S. “national interests” by producing military and civilian aircraft. In fact, the interests of Boeing and those of its workers cannot be reconciled.

From the outset, Boeing’s plans to ram through Max production hinged on ensuring labor peace, for which the bosses enlisted the services of the union misleaders. Combative Machinists had gone on strike five times since 1977, including in 2008, shortly after the financial meltdown on Wall Street. That eight-week confrontation had ended in a draw, but management was not going to tolerate another go-round.

In 2011, Boeing secretly reopened contract negotiations with the IAM tops one year before the contract expired, stoking fears of having the Max assembled at its non-union South Carolina plant instead of in Washington State, a maneuver that led to the acceptance of the contract extension. The IAM district president enthused over the deal, calling it “precedent setting,” and indeed it was. Two years later, the bosses, in cahoots with the union bureaucrats, again reopened the contract

early under blackmail conditions, sparking a rank-and-file revolt that was defeated with the imposition of massive givebacks, including the gutting of pensions and a no-strike clause active until 2024.

Anti-union attacks and trampling on safety have paid off handsomely for the massive firm. Boeing set company highs for revenue, cash flow and commercial aircraft deliveries in 2017, propelled by its new Max flagship. Last year, it shattered those records all over again. Despite a downtick over the last month, its stock shares have tripled in value since the end of 2016, the best return on the Dow Jones industrial average; its stock is up by more than 1,000 percent compared to a decade ago. Over much of the same period, between 2012 and 2018, Boeing has slashed some 34,000 jobs.

The watershed in the ongoing capitalist offensive against the unions was also a frontal assault on air safety: the Reagan administration’s 1981 mass firing of striking PATCO air traffic controllers, whose main concerns were staffing shortages, antiquated equipment and job pressures that endangered passengers and flight crews. Already, as a result of airline deregulation under Democrat Jimmy Carter three years earlier, cutthroat competition in the industry was wreaking deadly havoc in the skies. Labor could have beaten back Reagan’s union-busters by shutting down the airports. A half-million-strong demonstration in D.C. at the time of the PATCO strike was a powerful display of the sentiment among union members to make a fight of it. But IAM president “Wimpy” Winpisinger, a leading member of the Democratic Socialists of America, and other AFL-CIO honchos did not even try, and instead had Machinists, pilots, flight attendants and Teamsters report to work.

What is posed is a fight for a new leadership of the unions, one committed to a class-struggle program and outlook. Such a leadership would enforce through collective action the right of any worker to shut down hazardous worksites, including by grounding unsafe airplanes, and prepare the vitally necessary battles against the capitalist exploiters, from organizing the unorganized to the fight against black oppression and anti-immigrant bigotry. It would do everything to break down the divisions within the working class—by race, gender, country of origin, location, craft and company—and cement bonds of solidarity, both in the U.S. and internationally. The only way workers have ever won anything of value was by wielding their collective power, usually in defiance of anti-labor laws. In the course of such sharp struggle and through the intervention of Marxist militants, a workers party can be forged, one capable of arming the multiracial proletariat with an understanding of both its social power and its historic interest in sweeping away the capitalist order altogether.

Capitalist Lies, Crime and Cover-Up

Boeing’s initial reaction to the Lion Air crash was typical of bosses everywhere: blame the workers. The manufacturer, oozing racist contempt for Indonesian pilots, claimed they should have known how to disable MCAS on the grounds that it is a so-called “memory item,” that is, a carryover procedure from earlier 737 models. Never mind that the anti-stall system was entirely new to the Max, and Boeing purposely did not notify pilots of its existence, much less inform them on how to deal with it. The Lion Air pilots spent their final seconds desperately searching through a Max manual to no avail; the only reference to MCAS in the main flight handbook is in the glossary.

The MCAS system operates by automatically tilting the plane’s horizontal stabilizer to pitch the nose down when the software detects an impending nose-high stall, based on readings from what is known as an “angle of attack” (AOA) sensor. Black box data retrieved from the wreckage indicates that for both flights a faulty AOA sensor triggered MCAS multiple times, initiating a

continued on page 7



TROTSKY

For a Black-Centered Workers Government in South Africa

In South Africa, the working-class struggle against capital is integrally bound up with the struggle of the overwhelmingly black African oppressed majority against white domination. As Bolshevik leader Leon Trotsky explained in 1935 to his South African comrades, a successful proletarian revolution in that country will be the supreme act of national liberation. This is as true

today under neo-apartheid rule led by the African National Congress as it was in Trotsky’s time under direct white rule.

Three-quarters of the population of South Africa (almost six million of the almost eight million total) is composed of non-Europeans. A victorious revolution is unthinkable without the awakening of the native masses. In its turn, that will give them what they are so lacking today—confidence in their strength, a heightened personal consciousness, a cultural growth.

Under these conditions, the South African republic will emerge first of all as a “black” republic; this does not exclude, of course, either full equality for the whites or brotherly relations between the two races—depending mainly on the conduct of the whites. But it is entirely obvious that the predominant majority of the population, liberated from slavish dependence, will put a certain imprint on the state.

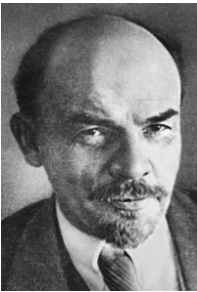
Insofar as a victorious revolution will radically change the relation not only between the classes but also between the races and will assure to the blacks that place in the state that corresponds to their numbers, thus far will the *social* revolution in South Africa also have a *national* character.

We have not the slightest reason to close our eyes to this side of the question or to diminish its significance. On the contrary, the proletarian party should in words and in deeds openly and boldly take the solution of the national (racial) problem in its hands.

Nevertheless, the proletarian party can and must solve the national problem by *its own* methods.

The historical weapon of national liberation can be only the *class struggle*.

—Leon Trotsky, “On the South African Theses” (April 1935)



LENIN

WORKERS VANGUARD



Marxist Working-Class Biweekly of the Spartacist League of the U.S.

DIRECTOR OF PARTY PUBLICATIONS: Liz Gordon

EDITOR: Michael Davisson

CIRCULATION MANAGER: Susan Fuller

EDITORIAL BOARD: Jeanne Mitchell (managing editor), François Donau (production manager), Edie Goldberg (letters editor), Mónica Mora (Spanish-language editor), Bruce André, Ray Bishop, Jon Brule, Paul Cone, Walter Jennings, Michael Joyce, Jane Kerrigan, James Robertson, Alan Wilde, Laura Zamora

The Spartacist League is the U.S. section of the International Communist League (Fourth Internationalist).

Workers Vanguard (ISSN 0276-0746) is published biweekly, except skipping issues in January, June, July, August and December, by the Spartacist Publishing Co., 299 Broadway, Suite 1618, New York, NY 10007. Telephone: (212) 732-7862 (Editorial), (212) 732-7861 (Business). Address all correspondence to: Box 1377 GPO, New York, NY 10116. Email address: vanguard@tlac.net. Domestic subscription: \$10/21 issues. Periodicals postage paid at New York, NY. POSTMASTER: Send address changes to *Workers Vanguard*, Box 1377 GPO, New York, NY 10116.

Opinions expressed in signed articles or letters do not necessarily express the editorial viewpoint.

The closing date for news in this issue is April 2.

No. 1152

5 April 2019

ICL Expels Members of Polish Section

Earlier this month, two members of the Spartakusowska Grupa Polski were expelled from the International Communist League (Fourth Internationalist) for violations of democratic-centralism. One member had raised internal political grievances with a non-member and both members subsequently defended this violation of basic Leninism. These acts were in direct violation of the ICL's Organizational Rules and Guidelines, which specify that "political collaboration with non-members of the ICL must be formally authorized by the party organization having jurisdiction" (*Spartacist* [English-language edition] No. 54, Spring 1998). Our tiny Polish group, which had been a sympathizing section of the ICL, no longer exists.

The letter of expulsion by the ICL's International Secretariat (I.S.) notes that the rejection of Leninist democratic-centralism was the culminating expression of these now ex-comrades' opposition to our Trotskyist program:

"For a long time there have been political differences between the comrades in the SGP and the International leadership: you have consistently bent towards Stalinophobia, you have not defended our program on the woman question and the Jewish question, and more generally you have bent to the pressures of anti-Communist Polish nationalism. For the last few years, the International leadership has carried out a diligent struggle to win you over to the views of the ICL, but your recent acts in violation of democratic-centralism fully bring your political actions in line with your political consciousness."

An I.S. motion expelling the SGPers was subsequently endorsed unanimously by the International Executive Committee (IEC).

Originating in 1990 as a fusion between the Young Left Movement of Poland and the ICL, the SGP was founded on hard opposition to Polish Catholic nationalist reaction spearheaded by counterrevolutionary Solidarność. The SGP was dissolved by the IEC in 2001 and then refounded as a sympathizing section at the ICL's Fifth International Conference in 2007. The refounded SGP proved largely incapable of expressing Trotskyist politics and propaganda on its own. It thus remained a sympathizing section, requiring I.S. approval of its published material. The ICL had hoped that internal education and discussion would turn professed political agreement into real understanding and agreement. But the SGP's differences sharpened qualitatively in the last few years under the social pressure of intensified political reaction in Poland under the overtly chauvinist and clericalist Law and Justice party (PiS), which took office in 2015.

Statement by the International Executive Committee

The document adopted by our Seventh International Conference in 2017, "The Struggle Against the Chauvinist Hydra," described the continuous fights being waged with the SGP against its accommodation to Polish nationalism. It listed several manifestations of this backwardness, including initially refusing to expel an individual when, in resigning from the organization, he announced that he was an anti-immigrant, anti-Muslim racist; the International had to insist that he be expelled. It also recounted a fight against one member who had not seen anything wrong with wearing a Polish flag patch on his shirt.

The conference document cited a 2015 motion passed at an SGP meeting attended by members of the IEC condemning the SGP's trajectory of adaptation to anti-Communism:

"As reflected in several recent incidents, there has been an alarming political degeneration in the SGP in the direction of Stalinophobic Polish nationalism. This is expressed in the recent draft article titled 'Imprint of Stalinism in Poland,' whose lines on the 1940 Katyń massacre and the 1944 Warsaw Uprising run counter to the stated positions of the ICL."

The SGP members were echoing the anti-Communist propaganda of the Polish nationalists against the Soviet Red Army that liberated Poland from the Nazis and their collaborators. It was in the aftermath of the Red Army's victory that capitalism was overturned and a bureaucratically deformed workers state was created in Poland.

The SGPers had also repeatedly argued to drop expressions such as "capitalist class," "great Bolshevik leader Lenin," "deformed/degenerated workers state" and "bloody U.S. imperialism" from translations of ICL articles in their newspaper, *Platforma Spartakusowców*. They became openly hostile when ICL comrades argued against their wanting to drop Marxist terms and cater to anti-Communist sensibilities. They were likewise hostile when criticized for their dismissive attitude toward the October 2016 Black Monday demonstrations for abortion rights, an explosive issue in Catholic Poland.

During 2017 international pre-conference discussion, one of the now-expelled members, Wartecki, said that Hebrew is "the stupidest language ever." After he was castigated for echoing the notorious anti-Jewish bigotry of Polish capitalist society,

he tried to cover up the issue by claiming that this was all a misunderstanding. However, both SGP members went on to launch a barrage of slanders, perversely charging the ICL with anti-Polish bigotry for pointing out the prevalence of anti-Jewish poison in Poland!

Our international conference document concluded about the SGP: "This conduct and the accompanying politics are alien to the ICL. The continued existence of the SGP as a section of the ICL is in question." The SGP delegate to the conference, Jedniak, voted in favor of the document. But this formal agreement did not result in any substantive change, a pattern all too familiar to comrades who had been fighting with the Polish section.

In early 2018, the PiS government enacted a law banning references to Polish complicity in the Holocaust. It was glaringly necessary for the ICL group in Poland—a country at the heart of the Holocaust—to produce a statement condemning the anti-Jewish law and telling the truth about the Polish rulers' complicity with the massacres of Jews and others under Nazi occupation. A few months and three drafts later, the SGP continued to reduce opposition to the law to a defense of "historical debate," cast Polish complicity in classless terms of collective guilt and minimized the role of the Polish nationalists and the bourgeoisie's anti-Communist, anti-Jewish Home Army in aiding the Nazi extermination of the Jews.

Trotskyists worthy of the name proudly hail the Soviet Red Army's liberation of East and Central Europe from the fascist scourge. But the SGP drafts all but buried the role of the Red Army and omitted our Trotskyist program of unconditional military defense of the then-existing Soviet degenerated workers state and the deformed workers states—including the Polish People's Republic!—against imperialist attack and internal counter-revolution. The historic crime of Polish Stalinism was, over time, to drive the historically socialist Polish proletariat

into the arms of Catholic reaction. Trotskyists called for political revolution to oust the parasitic Stalinist bureaucracy. It was indicative of the SGP's Stalinophobia that one draft raised this call as a prelude to falsely implying that the Polish Stalinists were responsible for anti-Jewish pogroms in the immediate post-World War II period—pogroms that were in fact committed by anti-Communist Polish nationalist forces.

We were forced to rely on comrades outside Poland to finally write the article ("Poland: Capitalist Rulers Glorify Anti-Jewish Pogromists," WV No. 1145, 30 November 2018). There we wrote: "The International Communist League is committed to the forging of a revolutionary internationalist party of the Polish proletariat. As a necessary task in this struggle, the SGP seeks to sear into the consciousness of the working class the record of the Polish bourgeoisie's complicity in the Nazi extermination of the Jews." The latter sentence was the one that the SGP most vehemently objected to, *after* the article was published with their agreement.

We had within the ICL an increasingly hardened Stalinophobic opposition that bowed to Polish nationalism and conciliated its corollaries—anti-Communist, anti-Jewish, anti-woman, anti-immigrant bigotry. We were prepared to continue to fight it out over their politics. But the former members rendered moot any continued struggle *inside* the ICL by taking internal political matters *outside* the ICL, and then defending that action.

We have a democratic-centralist international. One of the purposes of democratic-centralism is to protect the party as a whole from the influence of lower-consciousness elements outside of the party. International democratic-centralism also allows comrades outside a section, who are not under the same social pressures, to counter the parochialism of national sections and correct political adaptations. We reject a federated international, in which each section is allowed to capitulate to the pressures of its own society. We have lost a small window into an important country in Central Europe, which is unfortunate. But better than conciliating the anti-Leninist program and practice of those who made up our former Polish section.


—31 March 2019

ICL Declaration of Principles and Some Elements of Program


The Declaration of Principles of the International Communist League (Fourth Internationalist) is a concrete expression of our purpose: to build national sections of a democratic-centralist International which can lead the struggle for worldwide socialist revolution. This important document, which was adopted at the Third International Conference of the ICL in early 1998, was published in the four language editions of *Spartacist* and additionally in eleven other languages.

English.....	\$2		
Chinese	\$1	Korean.....	\$1
French	\$2	Polish.....	\$1
German.....	\$2	Portuguese...	\$1
Greek	\$1	Russian.....	\$1
Indonesian....	\$1	Spanish.....	\$1.50
Italian	\$1	Tagalog	\$1
Japanese	\$2	Turkish	\$1

Make checks payable/mail to:
Spartacist Publishing Company
Box 1377 GPO, New York, NY 10116

Platforma © Komintern Łódź '10 Łódź '1988, Łódź '1988
SPARTAKUSOWCÓW 
Nr 7 (Wydanie specjalne) WIOSNA 1998 1,00 zł

Deklaracja Zasad i Elementy Programu
Międzynarodowej Ligi Komunistycznej (Czwarto-Międzynarodówkowej)

SPARTACIST 
NUMBER 54 ENGLISH EDITION SPRING 1999

For New October Revolutions!
Third International Conference of the ICL
SEE PAGE 2

Declaration of Principles and Some Elements of Program
International Communist League (Fourth Internationalist)
SEE PAGE 9

On the Origins and Development of Leninist Organizational Practices
SEE PAGE 24

Organizational Rules and Guidelines
International Communist League (Fourth Internationalist)
SEE PAGE 31

SPARTACIST LEAGUE/U.S. Local Directory and Public Offices

Website: www.icl-fi.org • Email address: vanguard@tiac.net

National Office: Box 1377 GPO, New York, NY 10116, (212) 732-7860

Chicago.....Box 6441, Main PO, Chicago, IL 60680
chicagospartacist@sbcglobal.net
Public Office: by appointment, call (312) 563-0441

Los AngelesBox 29574, Los Feliz Sta., Los Angeles, CA 90029
slsycla@sbcglobal.net
Public Office: by appointment, call (213) 380-8239

New York.....Box 3381, Church St. Sta., New York, NY 10008
nysl@tiac.net
Public Office: by appointment, call (212) 267-1025

Oakland.....Box 29497, Oakland, CA 94604
slbayarea@fastmail.net
Public Office: by appointment, call (510) 839-0851

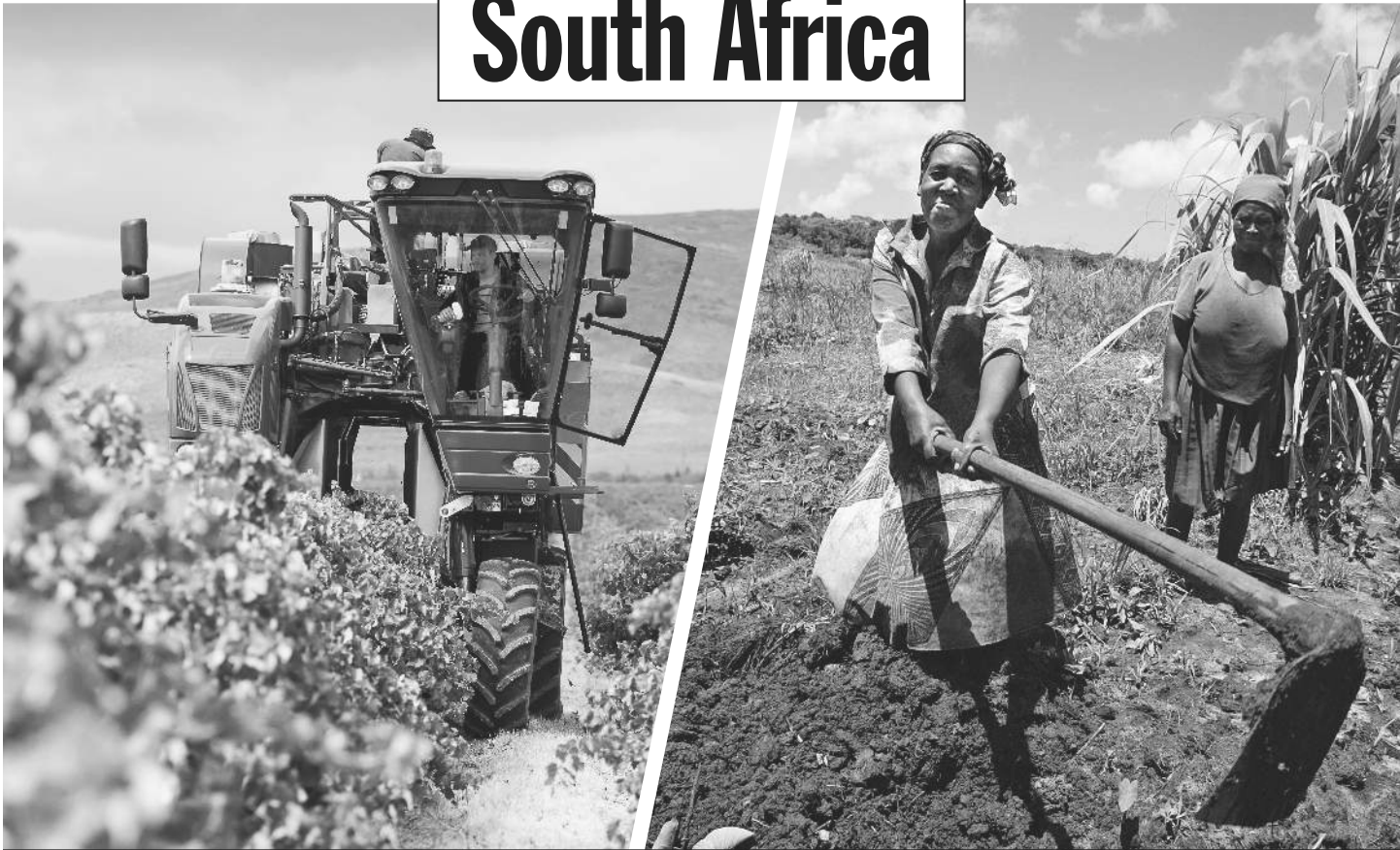
TROTSKYIST LEAGUE IN QUEBEC AND CANADA

Montréal.....CP 83 Succ. Place-d'Armes, Montréal, QC H2Y 3E9, (514) 728-7578
trotskyiste.montreal@gmail.com

Toronto.....Box 7198, Station A, Toronto, ON M5W 1X8, (416) 593-4138
trotskyist.toronto@gmail.com

Vancouver.....Box 2717, Main P.O., Vancouver, BC V6B 3X2, (604) 687-0353
tl.vancouver.bc@gmail.com

South Africa



The Land Question and Permanent Revolution

Gallo (left); AFP

Left: White-owned farms in South Africa operate as mechanized, capital-intensive commercial enterprises, such as this vineyard in Western Cape. Right: Black farmers like these women in St Lucia wetlands are forced to perform backbreaking labor with hand tools to survive.

SPARTACIST SOUTH AFRICA

We reprint below the second part of an article from Spartacist South Africa No. 16 (February 2019), publication of the South African section of the International Communist League (Fourth Internationalist). Part One appeared in WV No. 1151 (22 March).

PART TWO

Julius Malema’s Economic Freedom Fighters [EFF] have, since their inception, styled themselves as the champions of the striking Marikana workers [of 2012]. The EFF is certainly much more adept than the ANC [African National Congress] at using populism to appeal to the discontent of the black masses. However, their aim in doing so is *not* to mobilise them against the neo-apartheid capitalist system, but rather to frighten the mainly white bourgeoisie and convince them that the EFF’s services are needed to preserve this system. They promote themselves as the best candidates for keeping a lid on things—perhaps at the price of some concessions from the Randlords—in order to enrich themselves and their cronies.

Populists throw around phrases about “the people” in order to conceal the fundamental division of society into *hostile classes* with irreconcilably opposed material interests. In South Africa, populism is typically wrapped in the envelope of black nationalism—the false view that *all* black people have a common interest that transcends class divisions. Malema expressed this during an EFF meeting with black professionals in Sandton last year, telling the audience: “Before we deal with the class system, we must deal with the race issue first.... Let’s build our own system and have it in place when we are gradually taking them out” (news24.com, 23 November 2018).

This succinctly captures the *class interests* of the would-be black exploiters that Malema and his ilk represent. Their main gripe with neo-apartheid is that the Randlords have not given them a big enough

role in the superexploitation of their “own” people. Indeed, many black nationalists argue that the black *cops and security guards* in Marikana (and even black Lonmin shareholders like Ramaphosa) are the brothers of the striking workers that were massacred! Against this grotesque lie, we insist that cops, whether black or white, are the armed thugs of the racist bosses.

The nationalist populism of Malema and the EFF has credence among black workers due to the heavy overlap of class exploitation and racial oppression that characterises this society. This unique feature of South African capitalist society underlies our call for a black-centred workers government, which expresses the recognition that national liberation is *impossible* without the overthrow of neo-apartheid capitalism. As Russian revolutionary leader Leon Trotsky put it in a 1935 letter to his supporters in South Africa, a revolutionary party of the proletariat in this country must “openly and boldly take the solution of the national (racial) problem in its hands.” In doing so, we seek to advance the struggle against national oppression as the strategic lever for socialist revolution in this country. As Trotsky emphasised, “The historical weapon of national liberation can be only the *class struggle*” (“Letter to South African Revolutionaries,” reprinted in *The Fight for a*

Revolutionary Vanguard Party: Polemics on the South African Left, International Communist League pamphlet, 1997).

The EFF nationalists, in stark contrast, seek to channel the discontent of the black majority into the dead end of bourgeois reform schemes. A case in point is their land programme. The first “cardinal pillar” in the EFF’s founding manifesto demands that the state, “through its legislative capacity, transfer all land to the state, which will administer and use land for sustainable-development purposes.” Under this arrangement, former land owners would be allowed to apply for “land-use licences” that would be granted for up to 25 years with the possibility of renewal.

This sounds radical compared with what the ANC promises, and has also been met with hysteria from the big bourgeoisie (as well as some small-time black property owners, including tribal chiefs) who decry it as an assault on private property. At the same time, it has been a major source of the EFF’s popularity among the dispossessed black masses, especially unemployed youth. While this is understandable, particularly in light of the abject failure of “land reform” under the ANC, in and of itself such a reform remains completely in the confines of capitalism. It would not guarantee a change in social relations on the farms or the satisfaction of land hunger

amongst the black majority. It’s already the case that mining companies are required to apply for state licences to extract minerals, yet this has changed nothing in the brutal superexploitation of black mineworkers or the wretched living conditions of communities around the mines.

Malema and the EFF cynically promise the black majority that getting back the land is as easy as passing a motion in parliament. In a December press conference, Malema declared, “The land issue is getting resolved in South Africa through a peaceful means within the constitutional framework of the republic.” To call this a pipe dream is a vast understatement. Peter Groenewald, MP [Member of Parliament] for the ultra-right-wing, racist Freedom Front Plus—whose main constituency is white farmers—gave a more accurate picture of things when he threatened, during an August debate in parliament, that the farmers “are not going to leave their land freely.”

While the white farmers are preparing to resist any potential encroachments, so are the banks (in a very different way). Total farm debt amounts to R197 billion [more than \$13.5 billion], about 75 percent of which is collateralised by land. If one goes beyond farm-related debt, the total for property-backed loans is more than R1 trillion. Any serious encroachment on the white minority’s domination of land would immediately pose the question of what happens to that debt. The heads of the big banks, for their part, are threatening that land expropriation will plunge the country into chaos, with the CEO of Nedbank raising the spectre of a “classical banking crisis.”

In the same vein, the right-wing opponents of land expropriation never fail to threaten that it will lead to economic catastrophe like in Zimbabwe. The collapse of Zimbabwe’s economy was in large part the result of economic warfare by the imperialist overlords, who sought to punish the population for the [Robert] Mugabe regime’s defiant seizure of white-owned farms. Of course, the ANC government has its share of responsibility, having acted as point men for the imperialists on the diplomatic front while assisting the Randlords’ exploitation of the situation economically. As Marxist internationalists, we defended the land seizures and opposed the imperialist sanctions. But we never gave any political support to the bourgeois [ruling party] ZANU-PF. We highlighted the *bourgeois* character of Zimbabwe’s “fast track land reform,” pointing out that it was Mugabe’s ZANU-PF cronies who were its main beneficiaries, while the regime pitted farm workers against land-hungry peasants. Many of the poor peasants who received small farms even lacked seeds and basic machinery needed to productively operate them.

To Malema and the EFF, the threats of the farmers, banks and imperialists are immaterial—for the simple reason that the EFF schemes are not intended to resolve the land question. Their agitation around the land question is nothing more than a *pressure tactic* toward the bourgeoisie, whose rule they are committed to maintaining.

Malema, in particular, is a master at this game who cynically changes his tune to suit the political needs of the moment and the audience he’s addressing. He went from promising, in 2008, that he would “kill” for

Spartacist South Africa

Marxist Journal of Spartacist/South Africa, section of the International Communist League (Fourth Internationalist)

Issue No. 16, February 2019
(28 pages) **US\$1 R2**

Subscription (4 issues) **US\$3 R10**

Make checks payable/mail to:
Spartacist Publishing Co.
Box 1377 GPO, New York, NY 10116

In South Africa:
Spartacist, P.O. Box 61574
Marshalltown, Johannesburg 2107
South Africa

SPARTACIST SOUTH AFRICA

The Land Question and Permanent Revolution



“Since I was born I never had a piece of land that I can call home.” Women speaks in support of land expropriation without compensation at public land hearing in Seilburg Town Hall, Vereeniging, July 2018.

Over the last year, the African National Congress (ANC) has done a kind of juggling act with over the question of land. On the one side, the party has given lip service to the anger and frustration of the black majority by making a performance piece with the tongue-in-cheek Economic Freedom Fighters (EFF) to begin the process of amending the constitution to allow for land expropriation without compensation. While trying to do so as a result of its decades-long policy of relying on the “willing buyer, willing seller” method of land redistribution, the ANC has on the other side sought to reassure capitalist investors that nothing is really going to change.

The ANC’s maneuvering is, in its own way, a testament to the potential exploitation of the land question. As political commentator Rupert Taylor put it, the prospect of land expropriation without compensation “has been a major source of the EFF’s popularity among black masses, especially unemployed youth. While this is understandable, particularly in light of the abject failure of “land reform” under the ANC, in and of itself such a reform remains completely in the confines of capitalism. It would not guarantee a change in social relations on the farms or the satisfaction of land hunger

Expropriate the Bourgeoisie! For a Black-Centred Workers Government!

Women & Revolution pages: Lenin Trotsky on Women and the Family 2
Raising the Banner of Leninism: For Quebec Independence and Socialism 3
WASP on the Land Question: “Colour-Blind” Social Democrats 4
Liberation of Dullis: Key to Indian Workers Revolution: A Review of Acts Among Elephants 5
Hands Off China! Down With Imperialist Provocations! 28

Photo: South African Labour at the year 100th of the International Communist League

SPARTACIST SOUTH AFRICA

Xhosa Translation

Original Article: “Victory to South African Platinum Miners!” (WV No. 1046, 16 May 2014)
**MABANQOBE ABASEBENZI
MIGODINI YE PLATINUM EMZANTSI
AFRIKA!**



Abasebenzi abaqinisekile ukusuka kw- R12,500 balingane eWunderkop, iphi 21 iMaifay iphi 2014.

Ugwayimbo Olukrakra Lukwinyanga Yalo Yesine

Xhosa-language supplement
Summer 2015 (8 pages) **\$.50 R1**

Translation of: “Victory to South African Platinum Miners!” (WV No. 1046, 16 May 2014)

Jacob Zuma...to arguing, in 2016, that it's necessary to ally with "white monopoly capital" to get rid of the Zuma-led ANC. (The latter entailed voting the white-racist Democratic Alliance into power in several metros and making trips to London to address and confer with representatives of British imperialism, including one Lord Robin Renwick—former ambassador to apartheid South Africa under Margaret Thatcher!) And while Malema tells his supporters at EFF rallies that the land is rightfully theirs, he concluded his speech to the 2017 South African Property Owners Association convention by beseeching the landlords and real estate moguls: "If you are going to invest in property today, it is also going to be wise to invest in the EFF.... There is no future without the EFF" (*Daily Maverick*, 21 June 2017).

From the standpoint of the working class and the oppressed, landless black majority, however, it is necessary to have a *class-struggle* response to the blackmail of the banks and the intransigence of the white farmers. Overturning the legacy of colonialism and apartheid on the land question demands a broader struggle against the capitalist system as a whole, including fighting for workers revolution in the imperialist powers.

In particular, we are for *expropriating the banks*. As Leon Trotsky explained in the 1938 Transitional Programme, under imperialism finance capital is dominant and the banks have actual command over the economy:

"It is impossible to take a single serious step in the struggle against monopolistic despotism and capitalistic anarchy—which supplement one another in their work of destruction—if the commanding posts of banks are left in the hands of predatory capitalists. In order to create a unified system of investments and credits, along a rational plan corresponding to the interests of the entire people, it is necessary to merge all the banks into a single national institution."

Trotsky explained that a single state bank will be able to create much more favourable conditions for small depositors as well as favourable credit conditions. What is decisive, however, is that "the entire economy—first and foremost large-scale industry and transport—directed by a single financial staff, will serve the vital interests of the workers and all other toilers." This is possible "only if the state power itself passes completely from the hands of the exploiters into the hands of the toilers."

Fighting for this revolutionary programme entails *politically exposing and defeating* nationalist-populist demagogues like Malema and the EFF, who despite their openly bourgeois programme have gained a hearing among significant sections of the black proletariat. This is thanks in no small part to the wretched betrayals of the reformist misleaders of the SACP and COSATU [labor federation] who, as component parts of the bourgeois Tripartite Alliance, have assumed responsibility for governing racist neo-apartheid capitalism. Along with countless betrayals of working-class struggles, this has meant lending support to the ANC's servile "willing seller, willing buyer" policy and helping administer the capitalist state machinery used to demolish "illegal" shacks and houses, persecute land rights activists, etc. This state stands in unbroken continuity with the white-supremacist apartheid state, as attested to by the numerous apartheid-era acts that are still on the books.

One such act—the 1956 Riotous Assemblies Act—was used in 2014 by the virulently white-racist outfit AfriForum to bring a case against Malema following EFF rallies in which Malema allegedly urged his supporters to occupy land. That act, giving the state the legal power to prohibit public demonstrations deemed to engender "feelings of hostility between European and non-European inhabitants of the Union [of South Africa]," was part of a long series of laws enacted in the 1950s to entrench the apartheid system. Irrespective of our political opposition to the EFF, we say it is in the interest of the workers movement that the legal vendetta against Malema and the EFF be defeated. Similarly, it's necessary to defend the count-



Gallo

Julius Malema, leader of bourgeois-populist EFF, holds press conference with traditional leaders, forming alliance that would keep control of land in former bantustans in hands of parasitic tribal chiefs, July 2018.

less land rights activists who have been attacked by the cops and dragged through the courts. This includes defending organisations like the Durban-based Abahlali baseMjondolo, whose leaders and members have for years been subject to violent harassment, including assassinations, at the hands of the capitalist state.

For Permanent Revolution!

Our model is the 1917 Russian October Revolution, led by V.I. Lenin together with Trotsky. That revolution was like a beacon illuminating the path to liberation for the oppressed masses around the world—not least because of its extraordinary impact with respect to the land question. It liberated the Russian peasantry from the yoke of the big landowners who, in alliance with the tsarist autocratic state and the church, had oppressed and bled them dry for centuries.

Following the revolution of February 1917, which overthrew the tsar, the peasants expected big things from the

Soviet government was to carry out the SRs' unfulfilled promises to the peasants.

Like in pre-1917 Russia, the land question in South Africa is a potential motor force for socialist revolution. But the structure of agriculture is vastly different. Whereas Russian agriculture at the time was sustained by some 10 million peasant families, in today's South Africa 35,000 commercial farms (almost all of them white-owned) *completely dominate* food production—with some estimating that just 7,000 of these farms produce 80 per cent of all food.

Agricultural production on these farms requires massive capital investment and employs a level of technology comparable to that of industrial enterprises producing for the world market. To effectively manage such a "factory in the field" takes years of specialised education and training. In addition to the high degree of concentration of farming, agriculture in South Africa is dominated both "upstream" (fertiliser, agro-chemicals) and "downstream"



Bettmann

Russian peasants in countryside after 1917 October Revolution. Bolshevik land decree called for expropriation of church estates and landowners and authorized soviets of peasants' deputies to distribute land to peasantry according to need.

bourgeois Provisional Government that replaced the tsarist regime—especially after representatives of the populist Socialist Revolutionaries (SRs), the traditional champion of peasant interests, entered the government in May 1917. But all of their hopes were frustrated, as the SR ministers in the Provisional Government exhorted them to refrain from seizing the land. Instead, the SRs' programme was to wait for the bourgeois Constituent Assembly to divide up the land.

The attitude of Lenin's Bolsheviks, who stood in principled, uncompromising *opposition* to the bourgeois Provisional Government, was completely different. The Bolsheviks called on the peasants to *take* the land *now*. Lenin repeatedly emphasised to the peasants that their aspirations for land could only be realised in alliance with the proletarian socialist revolution against capitalism, and indeed the October Revolution delivered on this promise by overthrowing the bourgeoisie and putting power in the hands of the soviets of worker and peasant delegates. One of the first acts of the

(food processing, distribution, retail) by a handful of big capitalists—global giants like Bayer Monsanto and DowDuPont, as well as regional monopolies like Tiger Brands, Shoprite and Pick N Pay.

Hundreds of thousands of black and coloured farm workers labour on the commercial farms, making poverty wages and suffering under some of the most oppressive, unsafe working conditions anywhere. These workers fought militantly for improved conditions during a wave of wildcat strikes in the wine vineyards and other farms of the Western Cape in 2012-13. Those strikes were notable in breaking through the divisions between black and coloured workers, and also between immigrants and South African-born workers, which have historically been fomented and exploited by the white bosses.

But the farm workers are a very vulnerable section of the working class, with levels of union organisation much lower than in the industrial working class. This has been exacerbated by increased casualisation through parasitic labour brokers and

other means, using murderous divide-and-rule to shore up these bloodsucking operations. For example, in 2009 the town of De Doorns in the Western Cape—an epicentre of the 2012-13 strike wave—was the site of anti-immigrant pogroms against Zimbabwean workers, reportedly stoked by South African labour brokers who were trying to eliminate their Zimbabwean competitors.

What is urgently needed is to mobilise the social power of the industrial working class in concrete acts of labour solidarity, to aid the unionisation of farm workers and their fight for better conditions. This would be linked to a broader struggle to smash the parasitic labour brokers and other middlemen through *class-struggle means* (see "For a Class-Struggle Fight Against Labour Broker Parasites!" SSA No. 7, Winter 2011). The main obstacle to this is the reformist misleadership of the trade unions—in particular the COSATU bureaucracy, who together with the leaders of the Stalinist-derived SACP have subordinated the interests of their mainly black, proletarian base to the class enemy through the Tripartite Alliance nationalist popular front with the ANC. Their main concern during the 2012-13 strike wave was to demobilise the farm workers, as they worked overtime to shore up the Zuma-led ANC in the wake of the Marikana massacre.

In recent years, some sections of COSATU—most notably the metalworkers union NUMSA—have formally split from the Tripartite Alliance and in 2017 formed the South African Federation of Trade Unions (SAFTU). However, while SAFTU has generally adopted more militant rhetoric than the COSATU tops, this formal split is not based on principled opposition to class collaboration. The SAFTU leadership wants to return to the "good old days" of the ANC, frequently declaring its loyalty to the ANC's bourgeois-populist Freedom Charter. A class-struggle leadership of the unions must be built in opposition to these popular-frontist politics, and doing so is linked to building the revolutionary vanguard party needed to lead the successful overthrow of neo-apartheid capitalism.

A black-centred workers government will expropriate the 35,000 highly mechanised and capital-intensive commercial farms, converting them into state-run farms and collective farms. The agricultural proletariat would play a leading role in this process, forming a critical link to the revolutionary proletariat in the industrial and urban centres. By aligning agricultural production on the state-run farms to the needs of the population and incorporating these farms into a central economic plan, it would be possible to not only ensure the "food security" that the bourgeoisie presently uses as blackmail but to expand food production and for the first time provide the poor with adequate, high-quality nutrition.

Rejecting such a revolutionary outlook, many on the South African left promote small-scale farming as the "solution"—in reality providing a cover for leaving the big, productive farms in the hands of the white capitalists. Former Young Communist League leader Mazibuko Jara argued, in *Amandla!* magazine, for a shift "away from industrialised agriculture" ("Expropriation without compensation: how far can it go?" aidc.org.za, 20 August 2018). According to Jara, "Government must be pushed to subdivide farm holdings and to support changed, low-input land uses and production technologies." This is not only utopian, but *reactionary*—seeking to turn back the clock of economic development and re-establish pre-capitalist farming methods.

In Russia, where the burning problem was one of *modernising* agricultural production, Lenin argued for the exact opposite of what Jara proposes, for example writing in April 1917 in an article directed to the Congress of Peasants' Deputies:

"The question of continuing to run the big farms, wherever at all possible, as large-scale enterprises, directed by agricultural experts and the Soviets of Agricultural Labourers' Deputies and using the best machines, seeds, and most efficient farming methods, must be discussed and practical measures taken without delay.

continued on page 6

South Africa...

(continued from page 5)

“We cannot conceal from the peasants, least of all from the rural proletarians and semi-proletarians, that small-scale farming under commodity economy and capitalism *cannot* rid humanity of mass poverty, that it is necessary to *think* about going over to large-scale farming conducted on public lines and to *tackle this job at once* by teaching the masses, and in turn *learning from the masses*, the practical expedient measures for bringing about such a transition.”

The implementation of this perspective proved not to be feasible in the immediate aftermath of the October Revolution, largely because of the enormous social weight of Russia’s large peasantry. However, South Africa’s agricultural production *already is* dominated by large farms, so the task of a workers state here would be that much easier.

Alongside the commercial farms dominated by the white capitalists, there are currently more than 200,000 small-scale black farmers who struggle to remain viable, many of them selling their produce to street vendors and other informal markets as a main or secondary source of income. In addition, an estimated 2 to 2.5 million people carry on some sub-subsistence farming in the “communal lands” of the former bantustans. The food they produce is not even enough to provide their main nourishment, much less income, with their main sources of income coming from social grants and remittances from relatives working in the mines, factories or on commercial farms.

According to the propaganda of the racist capitalist rulers, this is just the natural order of things. It’s not uncommon to hear this expressed in the most blatantly racist terms, such as those used by Agri SA executive director Omri van Zyl, who told the *Financial Mail* (23 August 2018), “Farming is in one’s blood”! In one arrogant, ignorant phrase, more than a century of violent land dispossession and legal disenfranchisement of black farmers is passed off as a product of “genetics”! Not to mention decades of generous state-subsidised promotion of white commercial farmers, who for decades constituted one of the main social bases of the [apartheid-era] National Party regime.

Another cog in the machinery oppressing the rural black masses was the tribal chieftaincy system. Artificially perpetuated and manipulated since the days of the British colonialists—who eagerly seized upon and reinforced the most retrogressive aspects of tribal and traditional culture as a means of propping up their rule—this system was notoriously “perfected” under apartheid with the introduction of the “homelands” or bantustans. The white-supremacist regime pampered reactionary parasites like Zulu “King” Zwelithini and his uncle Mangosuthu Buthelezi in return for ruling these desolate, poverty-stricken areas with an iron fist and collaborating in terrorising and murdering ANC members and other anti-apartheid activists. One of the last gifts the National Party gave these reactionary tools was to establish the Ingonyama Trust, literally in the dying days of apartheid, as a slush fund for Zwelithini and a means of perpetuating

reactionary tribal-based divisions among the black majority. The Zulu monarch recently showed that he has not forgotten his community of interests, forming an alliance with the AfriForum racists to fight against possible land expropriations!

The tribal chieftaincy system has been perpetuated under neo-apartheid by the ANC, which has copied from the colonial and apartheid rulers’ playbook by promoting reactionary, anti-woman measures like the Traditional Courts Bill (see “Down With the Traditional Courts Bill!” *SSA* No. 9, Winter 2013). The SACP in particular continues to promote the “National Democratic Revolution” (NDR), the South African variant of the Stalinist schema of “two-stage revolution,” in which first the workers help the “progressive” bourgeois forces come to power in the “democratic” stage, while the second “socialist” stage is postponed indefinitely. The bankruptcy of the “NDR” is utterly exposed in the former homelands, where even the most basic democratic rights are denied, willy nilly, to a large part of the black population.

Because of the wholesale denial of black people’s right to own property, and the brutal history of forced removals, the demand for “security of tenure” had a prominent place in the anti-apartheid struggle. But despite the formal guarantee of this right in the constitution, “security of tenure” under neo-apartheid must seem like a cruel joke to the toilers, especially women toilers, in the former bantustans. One NGO, the Rural Women’s Movement, is currently representing more than 400 widows who have been hounded off land administered by Zwelithini’s Ingonyama Trust after their husbands died. In Xolobeni in the Eastern Cape, community members have fought for years against attempts by an Australian mining company, in league with the local chief, to displace them from their land in order to mine the sand dunes for titanium. Stories like this are repeated in rural areas across the country, with dozens of community activists killed every year for fighting such land grabs.

Like the ANC, the EFF embraces the tribal authorities on the basis of black nationalism. Thus Malema spoke alongside Zolani Mkiva, the general secretary of CONTRALESA [Congress of Traditional Leaders], who the EFF formed a bloc with, in July 2018. Mkiva declared his support for the Ingonyama Trust because the land it administers is “in the hands of Africans. It’s not stolen land.” Although this flies in the face of the EFF’s supposedly non-negotiable “first cardinal pillar,” Malema expressed no disagreement.

Divide-and-rule is also a tool that the neo-apartheid regime inherited from their forebears. Just as it’s used in the Western Cape to divide farm workers, it is also rolled out in KwaZulu Natal, where Indians form a significant component of the proletariat, which is in the main black African. Alongside virulently anti-Indian outfits like Mayibuye Afrika Forum, which includes members of the ANC and EFF, Malema helps stoke poisonous anti-Indian prejudices among black Africans by seizing on well-known examples of anti-black racism to paint the Indian population as one reactionary mass.

It is no accident that both the EFF and ANC so crudely mimic the colonial and

Letter

Skewered IG

We received the following letter from a longtime sympathizer on March 14.

Dear Workers Vanguard,

In the Internationalist Group’s article “For Revolutionary Workers Action to Smash U.S. Coup in Venezuela!” (February 2019) they draw attention to the fact that “Democrats who have dared to buck the bipartisan consensus on Venezuela have been few and far between. One was Representative Ilhan Omar of Minnesota...” positively quoting her questions to Elliot Abrams. They then go on to defend her against the unhinged bipartisan witch-hunt that smeared her an anti-Semite for daring to question the U.S.’ “special relationship” with Zionist Israel and criticizing the pro-Zionist lobby.

This depiction of Omar by the IG is especially interesting when one recalls the patently false and demagogic “outrage” when WV observed in September 2001 that Representative Barbara Lee of Oakland (“to her credit”) cast the sole dissenting vote in either the House or the Senate against the resolution authorizing Bush’s “War on Terror.” This simple statement sent the IG into repeated conniptions that we were “capitulating” to the Democrats, denouncing our statement as “uncritical lauding” of Barbara Lee. Not just once, but in several articles they kept returning to our comment about Lee as proof of our supposed capitulation. What does that make their comments on Ilhan Omar then?

Alas for the IG, for whom political consistency (i.e. a principled Marxist program) is merely a hobgoblin of little minds. In November 2000, Hugo Chávez was dismissed as essentially a tool of the U.S. stock exchange with barely a hint of the danger of U.S. machinations against Venezuela. Then in December 2007, the IG pro-

claimed that while Chávez had expressed admiration for Leon Trotsky “his actual policies are far more timid,” calling to “Impose Workers Control on the Road to Socialist Revolution” in Venezuela.

The IG pointedly refuses to defend the Confederation of Mexican Workers (CTM) (which recently carried out a successful strike) on the grounds of “corporatism” and its historic ties to the bourgeois PRI [Institutional Revolutionary Party]. But they evidently felt no such issue with defending the Venezuelan CTV labor federation against the Chávez government, even though it was virtually from inception a corporatist union associated with the pro-U.S., right-wing bourgeois party Democratic Action. For years the CTV’s been a conduit for CIA aid through the AIFLD (now “American Center for International Labor Solidarity”). The CTV leadership was heavily involved in U.S. imperialist-backed coup attempts against Chávez, but the IG could not even call the CTV corporatist in its November 2000 article!

While correctly defending the CTV against the Venezuelan capitalist state, despite the wretchedness of its pro-capitalist, pro-U.S. imperialist leadership, the IG waffled and quailed before a referendum aimed at granting the Chávez regime more power, which they themselves described in December 2007 as “a program for a bonapartist ‘strong state’ regime.” They called to cast blank ballots or abstain, that is, refused to oppose the strengthening of the capitalist state in Venezuela.

Leon Trotsky once referred to centrism as “crystallized confusion.” The misnamed Internationalist Group is an interesting case study for the condition!

Comradely Greetings,
Jonah

apartheid rulers in propping up the chieftaincy and promoting divide-and-rule. With the advent of imperialism, capitalism lost the ability to play *any* progressive historical role, and bourgeois parties like the ANC and the EFF are tied by a thousand threads to imperialism. At the heart of Trotsky’s perspective of permanent revolution is the recognition that, in countries of belated capitalist development, only working-class power can resolve the outstanding democratic tasks like national liberation or freeing women from pre-capitalist slavery. The working class, once in power, cannot stop at resolving the democratic tasks but is inevitably faced with beginning the work of socialist construction while fighting tooth and nail to extend the revolution to the advanced capitalist countries to ensure its ultimate success.

Fighting as a tribune of all the oppressed, a Leninist-Trotskyist vanguard party would mobilise the power of the overwhelmingly black proletariat on behalf of widows, farm dwellers and others who are struggling by whatever means available to hold onto the land they occupy against dispossession at the hands of the chiefs and farm owners. Ensuring that basic democratic demands like security of tenure are met will be a task of a black-centred workers government. Such a government, basing itself on the working people, would be fundamentally different from the current government in terms of the class interests it represents and the aims it pursues. While ruthlessly attacking the capitalists’ private monopoly of the means of production and stripping the chiefs and other capitalist lackeys of their wealth and privileges, it would for the first time provide real guarantees to the poor of their right to occupy and work their small holdings.

To this end, soviets (councils) of rural toilers would have an important role to play in democratically resolving the specific problems of the rural areas—e.g. deciding

on allocation of communal land, collaborating with the workers state to exploit mineral resources, training and supporting small farmers, etc.—and linking the rural areas to the workers soviets in the industrial centres. They would be important instruments for fighting to eradicate anti-woman traditional practices—such as *lobola* [bride price], *ukuthwala* [forced marriage through abduction], widow abuse, virginity testing and female genital mutilation—which are particularly rife in the rural areas.

Soviets of rural toilers would also have an important role to play in ensuring the genuinely democratic resolution of conflicts over land claims, including between different tribal-language and ethnic groups. This is critical, particularly at a time when the betrayals of neo-apartheid have intensified the struggles of different sections of the non-white oppressed groups over the increasingly scant crumbs from the capitalist rulers. This is seen not only in the tribalism whipped up by the likes of Zwelithini, but in the frequent attacks on foreign-owned shops and other anti-immigrant attacks.

Such measures would in themselves represent a huge step forward in comparison to neo-apartheid. At the same time, a black-centred workers government would pursue a plan of industrial development, construction and public works which would among other things provide decent jobs and skills training for all. Such a government would seek, as part of a socialist federation of Southern Africa, to completely transform the entire region and lift its peoples out of poverty. The success of this depends crucially on the victory of workers revolutions in the advanced capitalist countries and the creation of an international socialist planned economy. When the hideous divisions of society along class and race lines are no more than memories, the remarkable beauty and resources of the land can truly be enjoyed by all. ■

WORKERS VANGUARD

Marxist Working-Class Biweekly of the Spartacist League

☐ \$10/21 issues of *Workers Vanguard* (includes English-language *Spartacist* and *Black History and the Class Struggle*)

☐ New

☐ Renewal

☐ International rate: \$25/21 issues

☐ \$2/6 introductory issues of *Workers Vanguard* (includes English-language *Spartacist*)

☐ \$2/4 issues of *Espartaco* (en español) (includes Spanish-language *Spartacist* and, in U.S. and Puerto Rico, *suplementos en español de WV*)

☐ I would like to contribute \$_____ to the production of *Workers Vanguard*.

Name _____

Address _____

_____ Apt. # _____

City _____ State _____ Zip _____

Phone (____) _____ Email _____

1152

Make checks payable/mail to: Spartacist Publishing Co., Box 1377 GPO, New York, NY 10116

Purchase *Workers Vanguard* subscriptions online at: icl-fi.org/subscribe/wv

Boeing...

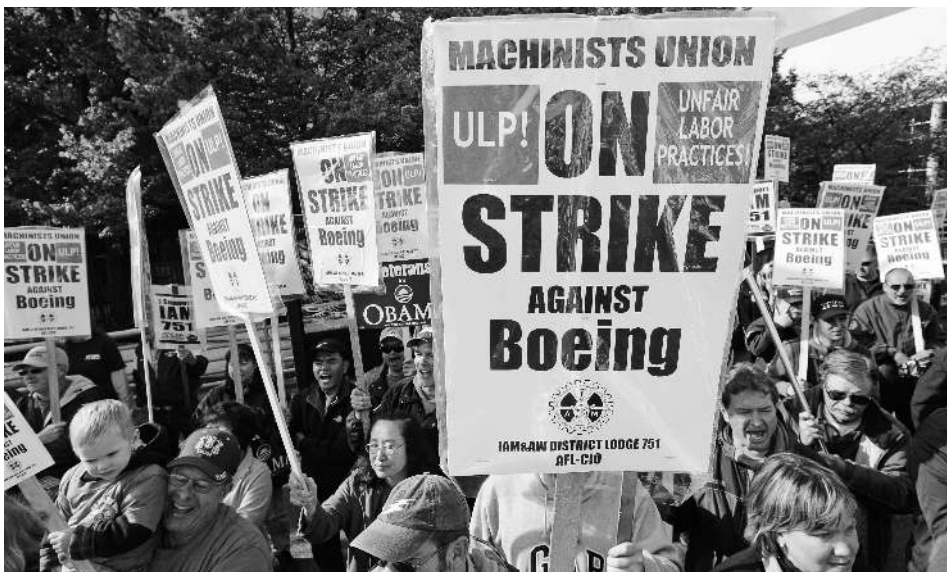
(continued from page 2)

tug of war as the system repeatedly forced the nose of the plane down and the pilots wrestled with the controls to pull it back up—over *20 times* in the case of the Lion Air flight. “Pitch up! Pitch up!” were the last recorded words of one of the Ethiopian Airlines pilots to the other.

For decades, every Boeing aircraft has included two AOA sensors, one on either side of the fuselage. But company brass deliberately had MCAS configured to respond to the input of only one, a violation of the first and most basic principle of safe design: redundancy. AOA sensors have failed plenty over the years. For example, in 2014 an American-operated Boeing 767 had to return to Miami airport after takeoff to replace one.

The Lion Air and Ethiopian Airlines pilots did not have the benefit of an alert to warn of the defective AOA sensor. Since Boeing designated this vital safety feature a luxury, high-priced extra, both these airlines had declined to purchase it. This “nickel and dime” approach to safety is surely familiar to passengers, who are today charged for every supposed perk, including a few inches of leg room, in planes whose coach sections are packed like cattle cars.

In a muckraking article by Dominic Gates in the *Seattle Times* (21 March), Boeing engineers who performed the original MCAS safety analysis on behalf of the FAA blew the whistle to him on Boeing’s cover-up. Among their findings: MCAS was capable of moving the horizontal stabilizer more than four times farther than



October 2008: Boeing Machinists rally during 57-day strike, which was undercut by IAM union tops who caved in to Boeing, opening door to job-slashing and non-union production.

Boeing claimed, making it more difficult to recover from a dive; the system reactivated each time a pilot tried to make a correction; and the consequences of a system failure were severe enough that activation by only one sensor should have been ruled out. None of these issues were fixed and the FAA certified MCAS, just as Boeing expected of its government partners.

For an Internationally Planned Socialist Economy!

The disastrous performance of the MCAS system has cast a pall over aircraft automation for some pilots and industry observers. But automation is integral to modern air travel, having provided sig-

nificant safety advances over the years, from the early, century-old autopilots to today’s fly-by-wire electronic interfaces. Automation done right has proven to be of huge benefit to pilots and passengers.

But software will only prevent crashes anticipated by engineers. Automation is not a substitute for human flight control, especially in emergencies. No machine would have done what Captain “Sully” Sullenberger did with his A320 in the 2009 “Miracle on the Hudson.” Sully also symbolizes the plight of this country’s airline workers: his employer, US Airways, had slashed his pay by 40 percent and dumped his pension. Many new hires at cut-rate outfits barely make

poverty wages. The fight for quality pilot training, as well as for decent pay and benefits, is essential to safe skies.

Automation is only as good as the aircraft’s mechanical components and the maintenance practices of the airlines. This was shown in the crash of an Airbus A330, Air France Flight 447, on 1 June 2009, that killed all 228 people on board when the plane’s pitot tubes (air speed sensors) iced over, turning off some flight automation and making the pilots scramble. Safety is no closer to “first” at Boeing’s European competitor: Airbus knew for over a year of the problems with this model of pitot tube, and Air France had kept its A330s flying even though the faulty parts hadn’t yet been replaced.

The problem is not automation or technology as such, but the economic system. Boeing and Airbus workers make sophisticated machines of great social value, which airline workers then operate and maintain. But as wage slaves, all their blood and sweat goes toward making profit for the tiny class of capitalist exploiters who own the means of production and finance. The airline industry is a concentrated expression of the irrationality of this system, which results in fiery disasters, crumbling infrastructure and widespread misery. The productive wealth of the entire society must be ripped from the grip of its private owners, liberating production from the profit motive. Only after a series of workers revolutions across the globe, paving the way for an international planned socialist economy, will air transport truly serve human need and help transform the disparate nations of the world into a genuine community of equals. ■

New Zealand...

(continued from page 8)

beach and in his maiden speech to parliament spoke of “The final solution to the immigration problem.” In response to his latest outburst, over 1.4 million people have signed a petition calling on the government to “assist in demanding a resignation” from Anning. Both the Liberal/National Coalition government and Labor Party opposition have moved to censure him. In wagging their finger at Anning, they seek to distract from the fact that his views are simply a distillation of the filth they have been spewing as part of their daily maintenance of the capitalist system. Any attempt to clean up the pigsty of bourgeois parliament is a crock.

Bosses Further Shred Democratic Rights

The biggest threat against working people comes directly from the capitalists and their repressive state apparatus—the military, police, prisons and courts. In response to the Christchurch attack, the capitalist rulers have bellowed about the need to crack down on “extremism.” While there may be a brief show of reining in one or two fascists, ultimately such measures will be used to silence and repress opponents of imperialist terror and capitalist oppression, not least those in the left and labour movement. We have long noted that the regulations behind the witchhunting Australian Building and Construction Commission, which targets the CFMMEU construction union for repression, were largely modelled on the early tranche of “anti-terror” laws.

Both the NZ and Australian governments wasted no time seizing on the slaughter to bolster their plans to further censor the Internet. Now anyone in NZ with Tarrant’s manifesto on their computer faces up to ten years in jail! Declaring the Internet “ungoverned space,” the Morrison government has been in the forefront of a global push to force IT companies to better enable secret police to access the population’s private electronic communications. When they talk about censoring “hate,” what the capitalists really aim to do is silence those expressing justified *class hatred* for the bourgeoisie.

Ardern has also seized the opportunity

to introduce extensive gun control laws. Noting the failure of previous attempts to change the laws, she declared, “Now is the time....” The laws recall the widespread disarmament of the Australian population following the 1996 Port Arthur massacre. The slaughter unleashed in Christchurch speaks precisely to the need for the right of armed self-defence. Gun control is about depriving the working class and oppressed of the ability to defend themselves. The bourgeoisie, a tiny class of exploiters, sits atop great wealth and inequality. They seek to ensure the defence of their wealth and profits, extracted from the labour of those they exploit, by maintaining a monopoly on the means of violence in the hands of the capitalist state.

As with Australia, NZ capitalism was founded on the conquering and dispossession of the Indigenous population. It was firearms that, in part, enabled the Maori to better defend themselves against British colonisation and during the New Zealand Wars. Today Maori are almost 15 percent of the population and form a critical component of the NZ proletariat. At the same time they suffer special oppression, including highly disproportionate levels of unemployment, homelessness and poverty and are targeted for racist state abuse and terror. In 2007 Maori activists were arrested on trumped-up charges using “anti-terror” laws. A key to the struggle to overthrow NZ capitalist rule will be the fight for full equality and justice for the Maori people. Maori communist leaders will be in the forefront of future revolutionary struggle.

For Union/Minority Mobilisations to Stop the Fascists!

The decaying capitalist order with its national chauvinism, economic crises, poverty-level wages and mass unemployment creates the conditions in which the fascists thrive. Distinct from right-wing ideologues, fascists are race-hate terrorists who seek to recruit, through racist violence on the streets, to their deadly program of genocide and ultimately the destruction of the left, trade unions and other workers’ organisations. They are held in reserve by the capitalist class to be unleashed as shock troops against the working class in times of crisis. It is in the direct, immediate interests of the labour movement to fight against attacks on minorities and to crush the fascist scum while they are small.



Maori construction workers protest in Sydney, Australia, demanding safety and paying tribute to co-workers killed on the job, 2002.

As elsewhere in the world, fascists in Australia have been gaining confidence and strength, staging larger rallies with no effective organised working-class response. Rather than mobilise their ranks in class struggle, the union leaders have in fact contributed to the fetid anti-immigrant climate by pushing protectionist poison, which inculcates the lie that workers in Australia share a common “national” interest with their bosses. The union tops’ “Aussie jobs for Aussie workers” campaigns blame foreign workers for the bosses’ job cuts. Politically subordinating the organised working class to the capitalist state, particularly through fealty to the ALP, the union tops act as labour lieutenants of the capitalist class within the workers movement and as conduits for bourgeois consciousness into the proletariat.

The ALP (like the NZLP) is a bourgeois workers party, a party based on the trade unions but with a pro-capitalist program and leadership. When in government, the ALP rules on behalf of the bosses. Any serious class-struggle mobilisation of the working class will require a political struggle against the nationalism and reliance on the state that is pushed by the current trade-union leadership. It is through intransigent political opposition within the unions to this Laborism that the proletarian base of the ALP can

be won away from its pro-capitalist misleaders and a revolutionary Marxist party forged.

The crucial task of sweeping the fascists off the streets requires a program for mass united-front mobilisations centred on the organised workers movement and uniting behind them all the fascists’ intended victims: Muslims, immigrants, Indigenous people, leftists, Jews and gays. Only the multiracial working class has the social power, organisation and objective class interest to stop the fascists and sweep away the capitalist system which breeds them. There are concentrations of unionised Muslim workers in the strategic Sydney transport system, while Maori comprise a significant component of the powerful construction union in Australia. United with their class brothers and sisters in struggle, these workers can be part of striking powerful blows against the capitalists’ divisive racism and send the fascists scurrying back down their rat-holes.

To rid the world of fascism, immiseration and imperialist war will require a series of socialist revolutions to abolish the capitalist system. The stakes are socialism or barbarism. The Spartacist League fights to build the multiracial, internationalist, revolutionary workers party that is needed to make socialism a reality. ■

Fascist Massacres Muslims in New Zealand

The following article was written by our comrades of the Spartacist League of Australia.

The horrific 15 March anti-immigrant terrorist attack in Christchurch, New Zealand (NZ), was an atrocity, both depraved and heart-wrenching in the scope of its violence. Australian fascist Brenton Tarrant gunned down Muslim worshippers during Friday prayers at two separate mosques, leaving 50 dead and 50 more wounded. The victims ranged in age from 3 to 77 years old. Tarrant chillingly live-streamed his murderous killing spree. Earlier he published an online manifesto making clear that his aim was to stop non-white immigration and further a war on Islam. Yet as well-known Australian Muslim media personality Waleed Aly said in response to what happened in Christchurch, “the most dishonest thing would be to say that I’m shocked.”

Indeed, it is not surprising at all that such fascist scum emerged from the cesspool of decaying capitalist society. The attack comes in a context of increased immiseration and capitalist austerity internationally. This has been marked by the rise in right-wing populism in Europe fuelled by anti-refugee hysteria, the vile, racist ranting of the U.S. president, Donald Trump, against immigrants, and a string of similar fascist attacks, from the 2011 massacre of social-democratic youth in Norway by Anders Breivik (“inspiring” Tarrant), to the 2017 shooting at a Quebec mosque, to last year’s massacre at a synagogue in Pittsburgh, U.S.

The capitalist rulers around the world have shed crocodile tears over this tragedy, fully aware that not a day goes by without them massacring innocent people somewhere in the world. For the past two decades, in the name of the “war on terror,” over a million have been slaughtered by U.S. imperialism, backed by its Australian and NZ junior partners and other allies, as these forces occupied and/or bombed their way across Afghanistan and parts of the Middle East and North Africa. The U.S.-led imperialists have laid waste to entire countries, including Iraq and Libya. Today they continue to maintain military forces in Afghanistan and Iraq while helping to arm a Saudi-led military onslaught on Yemen that has turned that country into a slaughterhouse.

The ALP [Australian Labor Party], both in and out of power, including when it was propped up in government by the bourgeois Greens, has pursued the “war on terror” in a neck-and-neck race with the Liberal/National Coalition as to who can be more fiercely nationalist and a better handmaiden to U.S. imperialism. While lording it over their respective patches in the southwest Pacific, both Australia and NZ also host U.S. bases which serve to militarily target the perceived enemies of U.S. imperialism. We say: Not one person, not one cent for the Australian imperialist military! Down with the ANZUS alliance [between Australia, NZ and the U.S.!] U.S. bases out! All imperialist troops out of Afghanistan and the Middle East!

As part of whipping up domestic support for these wars, Muslims have been vilified as the “enemy within.” The Australian ruling class has long made a tawdry amalgam between the small Muslim population and terrorism while the bourgeois media has made it a patriotic duty

to cast suspicion and demonise. Muslim communities have been repeatedly raided by heavily armed police, with families terrorised and young men dragged out of their homes and arrested on the flimsiest of pretexts. Dozens have been consigned to Supermax dungeons, often for nothing more than the ideas allegedly in their heads.

This racism and xenophobia sits firmly on the bedrock of the dispossession and genocidal wars against Aboriginal people, Australia’s original “enemy within,” whose oppression continues unabated today. Alongside promoting interventions abroad and seeking to further divide workers along ethnic and religious lines by whipping up chauvinism “at home,” the “war on terror” provides a pretext for increasing surveillance and expanding the repressive powers of the state. While Muslims may be the immediate target, such measures are aimed at shredding the democratic rights of all, and ultimately have the left and workers movement in their sights. Down with racist “war on terror” government repression! Hands off Muslim minorities!

Racist Capitalist Rulers’ Hypocrisy

Declarations by politicians following the Christchurch massacre that they are one with “our Muslim brothers” drip with hypocrisy. Contrary to the myth peddled by the NZ Labour Party (NZLP) prime minister, Jacinda Ardern, that NZ is a place of love, peace and unity, it is in fact a class-divided society, just like any other capitalist country, where the bosses promote racism and anti-immigrant bigotry to maintain their class rule. Ardern came to power in 2017 on a wave of xenophobia, promising to slash immigration almost in half. As for Australia, a mere five days after the massacre, the prime minister, Scott Morrison, announced a 15 percent cut to permanent migration numbers. Then, in the final days of the NSW [New South Wales] state elections,

the state ALP’s then-leader was exposed on video lamenting that Australian youth were leaving Sydney to be “replaced by young people from typically Asia.”

While today Ardern dons a headscarf and proclaims that “New Zealand mourns with you,” her government extended deployment of NZ forces to Iraq and Afghanistan as part of the “war on terror.” Her Coalition partner and deputy prime minister, Winston Peters, from the anti-immigrant NZ First party, is a stone-cold racist. In his infamous “The End of Tolerance” speech in 2005, he protested that in New Zealand “the Muslim community have been quick to show us their more moderate face, but...there is a militant underbelly here as well.” Declaring that both groups “promote fundamentalist Islam,” he railed, “these groups are like the mythical Hydra—a serpent underbelly with multiple heads capable of striking at any time and in any direction.”

Such racist bigotry has fuelled a fascist presence, including in Christchurch. Following the massacre, Muslims told journalists that they have long been tar-

geted by skinheads and right-wing extremists. They have reported this harassment to the police but with no response. There has been increased police scrutiny of the Muslim community in the wake of the Christchurch attack. Make no mistake, when the cops go to the mosques, they do not have the protection of Muslims in mind. We say: Police out of the mosques! As Marxists, we vigorously uphold the right of armed self-defence and say the workers movement must defend the Muslim minorities.

In Australia, the Liberal/National Coalition government has made an art form out of vilifying refugees and non-white immigrants. The Labor “Opposition” is no better. It was the [Kevin] Rudd Labor government that established mandatory offshore detention of refugees in the torture centres on Manus Island and Nauru. In the context of the recent parliamentary vote allowing for the medical evacuation of offshore detainees to Australia, the government railed against the supposed threat that these desperate refugees would pose and how they would displace “Australians” from hospital beds. We say: Close the detention camps! No deportations! Full citizenship rights for all who have made it here, including those on Manus Island and Nauru.

Feeding into this toxic chauvinist climate has been the ongoing racist, anti-communist scare campaign against “undue” Chinese influence in Australia and the region, which has seen the introduction of sweeping new laws against “foreign interference.” Behind the “yellow peril” xenophobia is the desire of the capitalists to overturn the gains of the 1949 Chinese Revolution (see “Australia: Racist Outcry over China’s ‘Influence’,” WV No. 1134, 18 May 2018). The anti-China witchhunt is grist to the mill for numerous racist and fascist forces, including the Hitler-loving Antipodean Resistance who have campaigned to drive Chinese students off campuses.

Much focus in Australia in the wake of the NZ atrocity has fallen on fascist, former One Nation member, Senator Fraser Anning, who disgustingly put the blame for the attack on Muslim immigration. This is only the latest outrage from Anning, who in January attended a fascist rally at Melbourne’s St Kilda

continued on page 7



Christchurch, New Zealand: Hundreds of mourners gathered on March 20 for a funeral days after a white-supremacist slaughtered 50 Muslim worshippers at two mosques.

AFP



Newscom

November 2017: Asylum-seekers at Australia’s offshore refugee detention center on Manus Island, Papua New Guinea, protest Australian government’s racist refusal to allow them entry into the country.