

The Christchurch Massacre

Melbourne Anarchist Communist Group

2 April 2019

The murder of fifty people and the wounding of many more by a heavily armed Fascist gunman in New Zealand on 15 March is a warning to the world. Though quarrelling and disorganised, Fascists are growing in number and in the danger they present. They are a clear and present danger to the working class and all oppressed groups in society.

This particular murderer considers himself an “eco-fascist”, someone who advocates a Fascist form of government for supposed ecological reasons. These people often favour genocide as a means of reducing the Earth’s human population to what they consider a sustainable level. Of course, they often hold very familiar racist ideas about which ethnic groups most need culling.

The precise doctrines of Fascists are not particularly relevant. They will advocate environmentalism or anti-environmentalism, Islamophobia or anti-Semitism, ethnic nationalism or civic nationalism, primarily on the basis of what they think will allow them to build support. The real content of Fascist politics is violence. A Fascist group is a conspiracy to murder and a Fascist State is a machine for genocide.

The growth of Fascism cannot be divorced either from developments in the world economy or from trends in mainstream politics. Global capitalism is at an impasse. Economic growth is slowing to a stall in many countries and the gap between rich and poor is growing to levels not seen since the 19th Century. Globalisation is undermining the ability of the nation State to regulate economic life. Around the world, it is upending the social compromises between classes that have been the result of past struggles.

In this environment, some sections of the population who cannot engage in working class struggle become desperate and turn to Fascism. When these groups become large enough, they come to the attention of capitalists who see their potential for use against working class organisations. Meanwhile, the undermining of the nation State by globalisation leads the capitalists to double down in its defence. The State apparatus is strengthened against enemies without and within, while the State wages ever more strident ideological campaigns for national unity, for loyalty to national myths and for the scapegoating of despised minorities.

Here in Australia, evidence of this is abundant. The bipartisan obsession with border protection is a reaction to globalisation, which makes people more mobile and translates into shocking levels of racist cruelty to refugees. It also manifests as a complex set of restrictive visas for migrant workers in Australia, giving employers the power to prevent them claiming their legal rights. In turn, super-exploitation of migrant workers is used to generate racist resentment

against the workers themselves. Too often, union officials adopt short sighted slogans about “Aussie jobs” that encourage racism and divide the working class.

On a more specific level, a range of Australian politicians have created an atmosphere of Islamophobia out of which Australia’s Fascists have precipitated. Just amongst currently serving Federal MPs, we can cite Scott Morrison, Tony Abbott, Peter Dutton, George Christensen, Cory Bernardi, Pauline Hanson, Brian Burston and the now-infamous Fraser Anning as examples. Outside Parliament, Islamophobia is propagated on a more-or-less full time basis by the Murdoch press, commercial breakfast television, Sydney talk radio and the Sky-after-dark TV line-up. Together, these politicians and media outlets have a massive impact on public opinion. Coalition and often Labor governments, along with almost the entire media, have engaged in ideological campaigns not only promoting Islamophobia, but also about Invasion Day, Anzac Day, so-called “African gangs”, the Safe Schools program and much more.

These reactionary campaigns show that there is little difference between the hard Right of Parliamentary politics and the Fascists when it comes to opinions about day-to-day political issues. The difference between them is sometimes their diagnosis of fundamental causes and, crucially, the solutions they propose. The Fascists blame global cabals (often of Jews) and are much more forthright about the need for a violent, authoritarian State and for a violent path to get there. On Facebook and the discussion boards of 4chan and 8chan Fascists make converts from ordinary reactionaries, articulate their ideology, argue over strategy and egg each other on to violence.

Terrorism is the strategy of the use or the credible threat of violence to create a climate of fear for personal safety in the civilian population, or a definable subset thereof, for a political end. It is more often adopted by the State than by groups or individuals, but the Christchurch massacre fits this definition exactly. The killer was attempting to strike fear into the hearts of Muslims in New Zealand, in pursuit of a racial war to create his eco-Fascist ethnostate. As intended, the world has reacted in shock. The vast majority in Australia and New Zealand have recoiled both from the Fascism that he espouses and from the broader Right wing politicians and media who have created the environment for it to flourish. As the saying goes, if you create the swamp, you don’t get to disown what crawls out of it.

In the wake of the massacre, many well-intentioned people are asking “Why wasn’t this guy picked up before he could do it? Why wasn’t anyone watching him?” While these questions might lead to a sacking of a police commissioner or a spy chief, the people asking them are (sometimes unintentionally) building justifications for an expansion of the size and powers of the State’s security apparatus. This is entirely the wrong approach to fighting Fascism. The police, the military and the security services are breeding grounds for Fascists and are structurally incapable of acting effectively against them. Anything positive they do will be spasmodic and half-hearted.

Worse, the powers and resources of a strengthened security State will inevitably be turned against all of its traditional targets – oppressed groups and progressive social movements. Under no circumstances, therefore, should we be criticising police and security services for “falling down on the job”. Their job is to uphold an unjust social order and Fascism is no threat to that.

Likewise, we shouldn’t look to gun control as a solution to Fascist violence. No legislation would disarm the police or the military – and, since these bodies both attract and produce Fascists, they’ll be able to arm themselves whatever the laws are.

There is only one way to fight Fascism effectively, because the only force that can beat Fascism is the organised working class. We need a united front where all the Fascists' targets come together in struggle. This united front necessarily has room for different political perspectives and a diversity of tactics, but as long as we can agree on the need to act together against the common enemy, it can be effective. In the course of the struggle, the validity of Anarchist Communist principles and organisational approaches will be proven to increasing numbers of workers.

It is in the pursuit of this perspective that the Melbourne Anarchist Communist Group participates in PUSH! Organising and Educating to Build a United Front Against Fascism. We appeal to Anarchists around the world also to take up the struggle to build united fronts. It is a strategy to avoid the twin errors of sectarian isolation, which divides anti-Fascists, and political capitulation, which would lead us to disaster. March separately, strike together.

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