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Islamaphobia

Christchurch: Mourn for the dead and fight like hell for the living

- IV Online magazine - 2019 - IV530 - March 2019 -

Publication date: Thursday 21 March 2019

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Politicians have expressed “horror” and “shock” at the attack in New Zealand and now are scratching their heads, asking, “Who could have predicted this?”

As a Muslim woman living in Australia I can tell you that I and any other Muslim could have predicted this. It wasn't a question of whether such an atrocity could occur. It was a question of when.

As politicians denounce this as a freak event or the act of a stupid and deranged individual who just lost his way, it is important to say that it was not.

The attacker is a racist, fascist, white supremacist and deranged individual. But what led to such a massacre was years in the making.

World leaders have lined up to express their “sadness” and – laughably – their “solidarity” with the Muslim community, the same group they have spent years attacking and demonising.

Decades of anti-Muslim racism and the war on terror have led to this. Mainstream political parties repeatedly have made Muslim-bashing a policy platform. Governments have cracked down on civil liberties, some banning Muslim prayer and the burqa. They have spent decades treating Muslims as an enemy and a threat to the “enlightened” West.

So yes, this attack did not come out of nowhere. I lay the blame for it on these politicians.

As Scott Morrison sheds crocodile tears, let's not forget his history of Islamophobia and racism. [1] He was the architect of the “stop the boats” policy. He supported US president Donald Trump's Muslim ban and said in response to it that the world was finally catching up to Australia. His predecessor, Malcolm Turnbull, was one of the first to congratulate Trump on his election victory.

Trump was commended in the killer's manifesto. The language used in the manifesto – such as “the West is under attack” and “Muslims can't assimilate” – has been used by mainstream Australian politicians.

We need to remember this as these hypocrites try to remove the blame from themselves. We also should remember this hypocrisy as the Coalition and Labor move to censure senator Fraser Anning for his comments. They paved the way for people such as Anning and brought him into the mainstream.

To those who say this attack is “unAustralian”, I strongly disagree. Racism is woven into the fabric of this country and is supported by both of the major parties.

Our society has become so racist that fascists feel confident to kill Muslims. This is not a question of gun control. Banning assault rifles will not end racism. Neither is looking to politicians for solutions when they are the ones who laid the foundations for such an attack.

This is also not a question of national security. This terrorist attack is the argument of Fraser Anning put into practice.

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National security has long been the justification used by governments to demonise Muslims, to crack down on dissent and to blame refugees for the problems in society. It is the argument of governments when they want to win elections.

The way to deal with fascists is not to debate them, meet in them in the middle or try to see the world from their perspective. We know what they stand for. They are fascists, white supremacists and Nazis ready to kill. We need to smash fascism and push these people back into the sewers from which they crawled. We should protest them wherever they rear their heads.

But we also need to challenge those softer racists, the ones that say “maybe immigration is too high” or “Muslims are different”.

We need to fight for a world where our governments cannot use Muslims and migrants for political point scoring.

We need to win a world free from racism.

The only way to do that is to get rid of the capitalist system that uses racism to divide us and distract us from who is really to blame for all of society’s problems. The ruling class and politicians like Scott Morrison are the ones to blame, not refugees fleeing Western bombs.

We should mourn the dead and fight like hell for the living.

18 March 2019

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[1] Scott Morrison is the Prime Minister of Australia and leader of the Liberal Party