

Letters from our readers

17 November 2012

On “Where the International Socialist Organization stands on the 2012 election results”

This is a really first-rate article. It helped guide me through all the left-liberal self-contradictory reporting on the election results.

While in this period of overwhelming bourgeois electoralism I have patience with any co-worker who convinced themselves a vote for Obama would help our class, I wish there was a Nuremberg-style inquiry into the *promoters* of a vote for Obama: ISO, The Nation, Carl Davidson and Bill Fletcher, the CPUSA.

Jay R

16 November 2012

On “Israel launches offensive against Gaza”

Thank you for your article. The really die-hard, far right Zionists will deny there is any “occupation” at all, using biblical history as justification for Israel’s various invasions and land grabs—i.e., they believe the land is theirs by right, according to the Bible, regardless of international law. They even deny there is a “humanitarian crisis.” Portraying Zionism as a Jewish “liberation movement” allows them to justify any brutal behavior of the Israeli state and demonize their critics—including other Jews—as anti-Semites.

Lesley J

Ohio, USA

15 November 2012

On “South African farm workers’ strikes inspired by events at Marikana”

Julius Malema is currently tied up with the authorities investigating allegations of impropriety in his financial affairs. He was also dissuaded by police in his last attempt to address striking miners at Marikana. Were

this not the case, he would be personally down in De Doorns, further whipping up emotions and adding farmland to the list of mostly white-owned assets to be “nationalised”, according to his right-wing conception of the word.

In Malema’s absence, we have the spectacle of Tina Joemat-Pettersson, the Agriculture, Forestry and Fisheries Minister, whipping up the emotions instead. According to the *bdlive* site, she said to farm workers on Tuesday that the government would speak to the National Prosecuting Authority to ensure that none of them would face criminal or disciplinary charges for participating in the strike. Rather stretching credulity, she claimed victory for the strikers (for having got the attention of the ANC government). The claim comes despite her own admission that farmers’ bodies Agri SA and Agri Western Cape had made no offer of increased wages. “Agri SA told us there is no crisis and there is no problem,” *bdlive* quoted Joemat-Pettersson as saying.

This is all electioneering. With the ANC elective conference in Mangaung just weeks away, politicians are also jockeying among themselves for favour in President Zuma’s eyes. Joemat-Pettersson is particularly complicit in this. Her department “donated” R800 million in July to Zuma’s controversial Masibambisane rural development initiative, meant to help “emerging” farmers access seeds, maize and tractors. According to a member of Parliament’s portfolio committee on agriculture, forestry and fisheries, there was no plan attached to the donation.

No doubt Joemat-Pettersson felt compelled to hand over these public funds as the Public Protector, Thuli Madonsela, prepared to wrap up her investigations into various allegations of abuse of public funds made against Joemat-Pettersson in her capacity as minister.

After all, Zuma had found it in himself to fire a former colleague of hers, the late Sicelo Shiceka, formerly minister of cooperative governance and traditional affairs, after Madonsela found him to have been dishonest with public money and in contravention of the Cabinet's executive ethics code as well as the Constitution.

Then there is the little matter of the Democratic Alliance (nationally, the Opposition to the ANC), being in control of the Western Cape provincial legislature. The strikes and associated violence play directly into the hands of the ANC's "Project Reclaim". This is the ANC plan to win back the province by making it "ungovernable", after voters delivered the Western Cape to the DA in the last provincial elections, amid the ANC's declining share of the overall vote. In the midst of strikes and other upheavals, voters will supposedly flock back to the ANC once they realize that the DA is not qualified to lead.

This is why Cosatu Western Cape provincial secretary Tony Ehrenreich told De Doorns workers on Tuesday that if Mr Zuma indicated that he would back the "fixing of your problems", they could return to work on Wednesday. However, if in two weeks' time Mr Zuma and the labour minister did not "give you what you need", the strike should resume. In the perfidy of manipulating workers and talking left while walking right, Ehrenreich is the perfect understudy to Cosatu general secretary Zwelinzima Vavi.

Thabo
16 November 2012



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