

May Day 2018

Melbourne Anarchist Communist Group

1 May 2018

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International Workers Day

May Day is International Workers Day. It is a day for workers to come together in struggle worldwide and to celebrate our solidarity. It started as a campaign to free the Haymarket Martyrs, Anarchist union organisers who had been falsely convicted of murder in 1886 after an unidentified person threw a bomb at a workers' demonstration in Chicago in the United States. As the campaign spread around the world, the workers' movement developed a sense that its movement was international as its pioneering thinkers had predicted. Four were executed and one committed suicide, but the survivors were ultimately pardoned. August Spies' last words before his execution came true: "The time will come when our silence will be more powerful than the voices you strangle today."

The Workers' Movement

Over succeeding years, the workers' movement has waxed and waned. It has spread to new countries as capitalism created new battalions of the working class. It has been weakened by war, repression or betrayal. It has been strengthened by fresh waves of struggle. And all along, greater or lesser numbers have maintained the vision of an international movement with a global vision of a better society. We have had great victories – the revolutions which ended World War I, the great strike wave of the late 1960s and early 70s and the strikes that have driven up wages in China, Indonesia and Bangladesh in recent years. We have had bitter defeats, too – counter-revolution in Russia, Fascist dictatorship in the 1930s and the ongoing imposition of neo-liberalism in the last twenty years.

Today

The working class is now the biggest class in the world, larger than either the peasantry or the urban poor. We are still exploited. We still build unions. And we still strike. It is only from a narrow national view that it can be said that the working class has been rendered powerless or irrelevant. Globalisation has changed the game plan for workers. To put an end to the defeats we have suffered at the hands of neo-liberalism, workers must take an international perspective.

The Task Before Us

The contradiction between the global nature of production under capitalism and the nation state framework in which it is rooted is intensifying. A national perspective, whether it is "Aussie jobs for Aussie workers" or expecting a Labor Government to rescue us from the pressures of the global market, is a recipe for defeat. The only winning strategy is for workers to link across borders and use the power of the capitalists' global production chains against them. Our movement can unite the human race. Through taking power in the workplace, we can defeat capitalists and governments in all countries. We can create a world of peace, freedom and equality for all. We can make a revolution and create libertarian communism.

WORKERS OF THE WORLD UNITE!

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