

May Day

Melbourne Anarchist Communist Group

1 May 2011

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Origins

May Day began in the United States in 1886, where Anarchist union organisers called a strike on 1st May to win the 8 hour day. A striker was killed and, at a protest rally a few days later, a bomb was thrown, which killed 8 police and some others. Uproar followed and 8 Anarchist unionists were arrested and charged with murder. They were convicted, even though the prosecution didn't even try to prove they had anything to do with the bomb. Four were executed. The campaign in their defence spread around the world and initiated May Day as International Workers Day.

The Current Crisis

Three years ago, the world was hurtling into the Global Financial Crisis. Speculative real estate dealings and toxic financial products in the United States came unstuck in a big way, bringing down several major banks and endangering the rest in the US and Europe. The banks were bailed out and the financial system rescued, but at ruinous cost to the public purse. Now, the same financial markets governments bailed out are demanding massive cuts to government spending so as to get public debt under control. The result is a series of unprecedented attacks on the working class, both in countries which have had to seek bailouts, like Greece and Ireland, and countries which have not, like Britain. The cutbacks, though, are cutting economic growth and government revenue, so financial markets are baying for still more. Meanwhile, the United States is spiralling into phenomenal debt, so much so that it is in danger of having its credit rating cut – an event which would threaten the world with financial chaos.

Australia and the Global Crisis

The Australian economy has largely avoided the troubles in Europe and the United States, mainly because of the industrialisation of China and, to a lesser extent, India. This sheltered position can only remain, however, for as long as China continues to boom. Even here, though, things are not going well for the working class. The wages share of national income is at record lows and falling, home purchase for young working people is virtually unaffordable, older workers are being told they have to work till they drop and the Government proposes to tackle climate change with a scheme that will make the rich richer and the poor poorer.

Workers of the World, Unite!

Around the world, however, workers are fighting back. Last year, Europe was rocked by a series of general strikes across numerous countries. In July, 100 million workers in India went out, in the largest general strike in world history. And this year, protests throughout the Arab world have sent two dictators packing and shaken a dozen more. The working class has been the most powerful force in the successful revolts in Tunisia and Egypt, pointing the way to victory for other oppressed peoples. It is by uniting internationally that we can defeat global capital. We can end its crises and wars by making a workers' revolution to establish libertarian communism, a stateless society without classes or oppression, where we can live in peace and co-operation.

WORKERS OF THE WORLD, UNITE!

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Retrieved on 12th October 2021 from anarkismo.net
Leaflet of Melbourne Anarchist Communist Group (MACG) distributed at todays May Day rally
and events in Melbourne.

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