

Invasion Day 2019

Melbourne Anarchist Communist Group

26 January 2019

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Invasion Day, 26 January, is now the largest day of Left wing mobilisation in Australia. Attendances are much greater than those at May Day and are only exceeded by set piece events organised by the unions. Increasing numbers of both indigenous and non-indigenous people are turning out on this day and their demands are increasingly radical. These are welcome indicators of the growth of a movement which rejects the racism on which Australia is founded.

The capitalist media in Australia have been campaigning for over thirty years to generate Australian nationalism and focus it on an officially designated “Australia Day”. Indigenous people have never accepted this and have pushed back. In the face of this resistance, it has become increasingly difficult for the capitalist class to maintain their myth of a happy and united society that celebrates its nationhood. Constant reminders from indigenous people about the invasion of this land and the genocide and dispossession which followed have been causing more people to listen. The voices of indigenous people are amplified. A discordant note has been introduced.

“Change the Date”

In response to this problem, some progressive elements inside the capitalist class of Australia have started pushing the argument to “Change the Date” of Australia Day. Recognising the appalling insult to indigenous people of celebrating the start of genocide, dispossession and racism, they have begun arguing that Australia’s national day should be moved to a different date in the year.

This suggestion has run into two problems, besides the predictable opposition from the racist establishment. Firstly, there is the matter of an alternative day. The obvious date, in terms of its appeal to nationalistic sentiment, is Anzac Day. That is controversial, both because of the strict militarists who want to retain Anzac Day as it is, and progressives who are reluctant to boost a celebration of militarism even more. Other, less obvious, dates have failed to gain either recognition or traction. Some are proposing shifting the date at some time in the future when a treaty is negotiated.

The second problem, more substantive, is that a growing number of indigenous people in Australia are opposed to “Australia Day” being celebrated at all. Not only is Australia’s history a shameful litany of crimes against indigenous people – genocide, dispossession, wage theft, discrimination, child removal, police brutality and more – but the crimes continue today. There can be no pride in genocide, no matter what date it is celebrated. Now that the Invasion Day rallies have taken up this call, the “Change the Date” campaign is exposed as not being about justice for indigenous people, but about allowing the settler population to celebrate nationalism without having Australia’s institutional racism rubbed in their faces while they do it.

Abolish Australia Day

The Melbourne Anarchist Communist Group endorses the demands of the Melbourne Invasion Day rally for 2019: Aboriginal Sovereignty, not Constitutional Recognition; Stop Taking Our Kids; Abolish Australia Day; Stop Deaths in Custody; Shut Down Prisons. All strike at the racist foundations of the Australian State. Some, though, are only achievable through a workers’ revolution that abolishes capitalism. It is only libertarian communism, the Workers’ Commonwealth, and not the racist Australian capitalist State, that can negotiate just treaties with the indigenous

peoples and nations that have never ceded their sovereignty. It is only the Workers' Commonwealth that can shut down the prisons. It is only the Workers' Commonwealth that can end deaths in custody by abolishing the police.

So, this year and every year, the MACG joins the call to abolish Australia Day. Our vision is of a stateless communist society, a Workers' Commonwealth worldwide and operating on the basis of consistent federalism. Here, in the land that is currently called Australia, the Workers' Commonwealth will be the vehicle through which non-indigenous people work with, and learn from, indigenous people how to live sustainably in the land, as they did so successfully for over 60,000 years before the First Fleet brought British colonialism to these shores.

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