

May Day 2017

Melbourne Anarchist Communist Group

1 May 2017

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Origins

The first May Day was a workers' strike and demonstration in Chicago in the United States in 1886. They were fighting for the eight hour day. Police killed several workers. At a protest meeting a few days later, someone threw a bomb. Seven police and four workers died from the bomb or the following police gunfire. Eight Anarchist union officials were framed and four were executed. The campaign for the exoneration of the Haymarket Martyrs and the release of the survivors led to May Day now being celebrated around the world as a day of working class solidarity.

The Current Time

Economically, the advanced countries of the world are descending into stagnation. Despite years of record low interest rates, they cannot get out of low, even zero, growth. Meanwhile, the condition of public finances across the advanced countries ranges from poor to ruinous. In the Third World, the situation isn't as bad, but it is still not as good as before the Global Financial Crisis. The political fallout is alarming. Leaving aside the intractable imperialist wars ravaging West Asia, we see the rise of Fascism in most advanced countries. There is even the possibility of a Fascist being elected President of France. And in many of the larger Third World countries (e.g. Egypt, India, the Philippines, Thailand, Turkey) far Right governments are introducing unprecedented reactionary policies or brutally repressing dissent.

The Current Struggle

Not all the news is bad. Workers continue to struggle in China, driving up wages. The election of Donald Trump in the United States has sparked widespread resistance, with varying degrees of militancy. The workers of Brazil have just pulled off a magnificent general strike, the biggest in a generation. And even here in Australia, the movement to defend penalty rates is continuing to grow. What is necessary is for workers' struggle to break out of its narrow national confines, so that the power of transnational companies is met by the international solidarity of workers. We need a global picket line.

The Future

On May Day we commemorate the past, but we also look to the future. There is no reason to be confident in capitalist economic recovery. There are many reasons to struggle against the horrors of oppression, unemployment, environmental devastation and war that capitalism dishes up. Workers can solve these problems for good. We can make a revolution and, as we do, the mass democratic workers' organisations we create will be the basis of the new society, worldwide. In this new society, each will contribute according to their ability and each receive according to their need. We will have no need of a State apparatus to enforce the dictates of a privileged elite. We will live a life of peace, freedom and equality. We have nothing to lose but our chains.

WORKERS OF THE WORLD UNITE!

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