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May Day Yesterday and Today

Melbourne Anarchist Communist Group

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1 May 2006

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On May Day, 1 May, the Melbourne Anarchist Communist Group held a picnic and distributed leaflets to passers-by at the 8 Hour Monument near the Victorian Trades Hall building. The leaflets were well received.

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1 May 2006

Workers of the world, unite!

The hired mouthpieces of capitalism say “communism” is dead, but they are wrong. Communism did not die with the fall of the USSR; all that perished was that gang of thugs who used the name to disguise their bureaucratic tyranny. The open road to communism beckons us on to a society grounded on the principle “from each according to their ability, to each according to their need”, a society where there is no State and no capitalism. Today in Australia, Anarchist workers join in struggle with workers around the world to defend what we still have and to pursue our vision of a world where poverty and oppression are nightmares of the past.

Contents

| | |
|--|---|
| May Day 1886 | 5 |
| May Day 2006 | 5 |
| We are strong, not weak | 5 |
| Workers of the world, unite! | 6 |

May Day 1886

In the US city of Chicago, the union movement is boisterous and militant. Its political leanings are mostly Anarchist. As part of their campaign for an 8 hour working day, the unions call for a strike on 1 May. At a workers' rally soon after, a bomb is thrown at police. Four Anarchist trade union organisers are framed for the crime and hanged; another spends 6 years in prison. In memory of their sacrifice, and to further the struggle for workers' rights and the 8 hour day, May Day becomes an international workers' day.

May Day 2006

In Melbourne, we face an Australian government which is bent on crushing the union movement and putting end to workers' struggles. Weakened by decades of bureaucratic control and opportunist sell-outs, the labour movement is smaller and weaker than it has been for decades. Now the Government thinks it can move in for the kill, but the savage new "Work Choices" legislation has begun to shake the working class out of its paralysis. We may yet show Howard that he has bitten off more than he can chew.

We are strong, not weak

In their arrogance, the capitalists are blind to the fact that they are creating their own gravediggers – the international working class. With the rapid spread of industrialisation across Asia, and particularly China, there are now more wage workers than at any time in history and more members of independent trade unions than ever before. With communications technology integrating the economy of the whole world, production now requires the international co-ordination of labour. The world is in our hands; we only need to grasp it.