



THE ANVIL



MACG

NEWSLETTER OF THE MELBOURNE ANARCHIST COMMUNIST GROUP

Vol 10, No 5

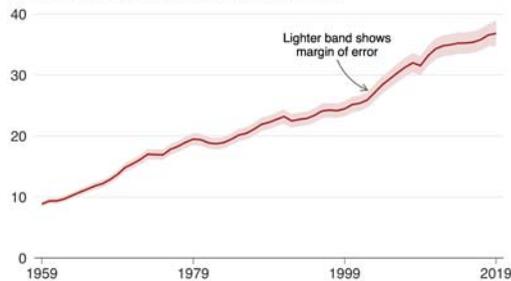
Sept 2021 - Oct 2021

Free

CAPITALISM IS DESTROYING THE CLIMATE

Global CO2 emissions continue to rise

Emissions in gigatonnes of carbon dioxide



Global Carbon Project / CICERO. Credit: BBC

The UN Climate Change Conference of Parties (COP26) is scheduled to run in Glasgow for two weeks from 31 October. It will not stop catastrophic climate change.

If global temperatures rise more than 1.5°C above pre-industrial levels, the world faces the real possibility of an uncontrolled catastrophe that ends industrial civilisation and wipes out at least 80% of the world's population. If they rise more than 2.0°C, uncontrolled catastrophe is practically guaranteed. To avoid this, the world needs to end greenhouse emissions and start removing past emissions from the atmosphere. Because of inaction in previous decades, global emissions need to be cut virtually in a straight line from now to reach close to zero in 2030, not 2050. Capitalism can't do this.

Political effort by governments and all the media publicity about COP26 focuses on achieving net zero emissions by 2050 (NZ2050), but this is flawed in two ways. Firstly, 2050 is too late and secondly the "net" in net zero is hugely misleading.

As explained by the Breakthrough Institute in "Net Zero: A Dangerous Illusion" (<https://tinyurl.com/58nd2xc9>), some climate tipping points have already been crossed at the current 1.2°C of warming, while sulphate-based aerosols from the burning of fossil fuels are masking 0.5°C of warming. There is no carbon budget left for a safe transition. All emissions from now increase the risk of runaway climate change and a hothouse Earth incompatible with the survival of industrial civilisation. We need to decarbonise society at the fastest speed technically possible. To make this politically possible requires a revolution to overthrow capitalism.

Secondly, even if one were to accept the unacceptable risks involved in a deadline of 2050, the "net" in "net zero" is dangerous. The most popular NZ2050 plans in circulation involve fossil fuels comprising up to 50% of primary energy use in 2050. These would supposedly be offset by land-based carbon farming and/or carbon capture and storage (CCS).

The Anvil 2

At the scale contemplated in NZ2050 plans, though, carbon farming would require 25% to 80% of all land currently under cultivation. There goes the food supply! And CCS is a complete rort. Costs are ruinous and there is no working CCS scheme that captures anything like the amount of carbon it promised. Both provide incentives to continue unsustainable emissions and, to the extent they are even possible, use up storage capacity which will be needed for drawing down excess greenhouse gases already in the atmosphere.

Steps Towards a Strategy

Given the dire situation, a strategy for solving it is required. The Melbourne Anarchist Communist Group supports all attempts by elements in the climate movement to disrupt the orderly functioning of capitalist society, provided reasonable care is taken to protect public safety. This includes support for non-violent direct actions planned to have a substantive effect rather than be the occasion for choreographed mass arrests. Much more, though, is needed. Some elements in the climate movement have a strategy of sabotage. We defend these people against State persecution, but it is not a strategy we advocate. It is difficult to devise substantial actions which are both effective and not a hazard to public safety. In addition, this strategy usually draws repression on the movement greatly out of proportion to the outcomes achieved. Overall, it is the action of a minority which despairs at the prospect of convincing the movement as a whole to act effectively.

The best opening for effective action that the MACG can see lies with the School Strike for Climate. Firstly, this is already an international movement with a degree of public profile. Secondly, the public face of the movement, Greta Thunberg, has left it open-ended and capable of development. And thirdly, the support for the School Strike for Climate shown by unions lays the basis for truly effective action.

What is necessary is to create workplace climate groups that link up with the School Strike for Climate. These groups will discuss the way the climate crisis affects their industries, the responsibility of their bosses for aggravating climate change and what possible solutions could be. They would develop the *School Strike for Climate* into a *Workers' Strike for Climate*. In the process, workers would need to become capable of acting independently of the union officials and of defeating them when these officials try to dampen down action.

Only the power of workers in the workplace is capable of stopping climate change. Without it, the capitalists will retain control of the economy and set limits on the ability of governments to take action. It is necessary to rip the economy out of their hands by workers organising to take control of their workplaces and restructuring the economy along sustainable lines. In the course of building this movement, it will become clear that this adds up to a revolution to overthrow capitalism.

Nothing else will work.

DESTROY CAPITALISM INSTEAD

CFMEU VICTORIA FAILS COVID TEST



CFMEU Office Demonstration 21 Sept 2021
Source: styleheavens.com (original source unattributed)

The anti-vaxxer attack on the offices of the CFMEU in Melbourne last month is a stark reminder that class collaboration doesn't come free. What looked like an opportunity to protect union members' interests through co-operation with the bosses and the State instead created even greater dangers than the hard road of class struggle would have done.

When the COVID19 pandemic hit last year, the Federal Government was compelled to introduce wage support payments, known as Jobkeeper, for workers whose workplaces were shut down by public health measures. Thanks to over a century of militant class struggle, wages in the construction industry are amongst the highest in Australia. Jobkeeper approximated to the minimum full-time wage. Shutting down construction would have thrown building workers into massive economic distress. That was a situation to be avoided.

There were two possible responses. One was for the CFMEU to fight the bosses on health and safety at every step and to insist workers mustn't lose income from any health-related closures. The other was to collaborate with the bosses to keep the industry running, despite any risks to

health that this might entail. The CFMEU leadership took the second option.

Collaboration to keep the industry running imposed its price. Members who raised health and safety concerns were silenced. This validated the emerging movement of COVID denial and posed health orders as contrary to the interests of building workers. Last year, COVID19 didn't spread particularly well on building sites. The emergence of the Delta strain, though, changed all this. Outbreaks at building sites were mentioned in passing at the daily government press conferences. Health and safety suddenly became a serious problem for the CFMEU. It either had to come out fighting or, by continuing to run dead, capitulate to the Right wing forces of denial.

The CFMEU leadership's out-of-character collaboration with the bosses has allowed anti-vaxxer and COVID denier forces free play amongst CFMEU members. When the State Government announced a vaccine mandate for construction workers, there was a backlash that the CFMEU officials weren't equipped to deal with.

On 21 September, a demonstration grew outside the CFMEU office to demand action from the officials about the impending vaccine mandate. A large majority were CFMEU members, their work gear identifying them as coming from strong union sites. There were also ring-ins, attempting unsuccessfully to provide political leadership for the crowd. Much has been written of the way the crowd shouted down the CFMEU Secretary and proceeded to attack the building. This was bad enough, but worse was the fact

that several known Fascist identities attempted to lead the demonstration. This is an ominous development. Fascists should be drummed out of the union movement – physically – whenever they dare to show their face.

The demonstration next day was much bigger, but the composition of the crowd was very different. A whole pile of bosses, scabs and workers from other industries jumped on the bandwagon, while every Right wing nut job in Melbourne put on a brand new hi-vis vest and pretended to be a building worker. Any actual CFMEU members present (there were probably a few) were dissolved in a general Right wing rabble.

Because of the September events, the CFMEU Vic Branch has a significant number of members alienated in a Right wing direction, not because of the union being too militant in defending workers' rights, but because it wasn't militant enough.

It should go without saying that Anarchist Communists defend the CFMEU against bosses and the State, even when its officials haven't done the right thing. It's up to the labour movement to clean its own house, so neither the CFMEU's failure over COVID19 nor the personal misbehaviour of the Victorian Secretary justify State intervention against the union. Instead, the Melbourne Anarchist Communist Group calls on construction workers to learn the correct lessons from the COVID19 debacle, clean out the ranks of the officials and bring the union under the direct control of the members. The CFMEU is in danger. Only class struggle will save it.

NO SAFETY, NO WORK
TOUCH ONE TOUCH ALL

MACG

What is Anarchism?

Anarchism is a social philosophy based upon the principles of liberty, equality and solidarity. It is the political dimension of a free society.

What is Communism?

Communism is the principle of "from each according to their ability, to each according to their need". It is the economic dimension of a free society.

What is the Melbourne Anarchist Communist Group?

The MACG is an organisation of class struggle revolutionary anarchists who share political positions, articulated in theory, strategy and tactics. We aim to encourage struggle by the working class for its own interests and, within that struggle, we aim to advance Anarchist ideas as its necessary philosophical basis.

Melbourne Anarchist Communist Group
PO Box 5108, Brunswick North VIC 3056
<http://melbacg.wordpress.com/>
macg1984@yahoo.com.au