

MAY DAY 2022

May Day 1886

On 1 May, 1886, Anarchist-led unions in Chicago in the US struck for the eight hour day. A worker was shot dead by a cop, so a protest was called for 4 May. After an unidentified person threw a bomb, killing a few coppers, the police started shooting. When the dust settled, seven coppers and at least four civilians were dead. Some of the coppers had probably died from friendly fire. A huge anti-Anarchist campaign ensued and eight Anarchists were convicted in a kangaroo court. The State killed four, while one committed suicide. The labour movement started a campaign for the exoneration of the Haymarket Martyrs and eventually succeeded. In the process, May Day became the day of the international workers' movement.

World in Crisis

Today, the world faces multiple crises. The most important is climate change, threatening to destroy industrial civilisation and wipe out at least 80% of the human race. On top of that, the billionaire capitalists continue to enrich themselves at the expense of the working class, authoritarian governments spread and some lurch towards Fascism, a global pandemic continues to kill millions despite the world having the ability to end it, and military powers across the world - in the US, China, Russia, and Europe - are inflaming tensions which could lead to World War III. We have the ability to end world poverty, but the contradictions of capitalism have never been more acute.

The Working Class Movement

In industrialised countries, the established labour movement continues its long decline. This is especially true in Australia. For decades, union leaders have told members to put their hopes in governments and not in the power to strike. Our unions are now hobbled by decades of anti-worker legislation, to which the officials, almost without exception, continue to bow. Without power in our workplaces, the Labor Party (which exists to enable the union officials to negotiate a compromise between labour and capital), has shifted to the right. It's not all bad news, though. There are few signs as yet in Australia, but struggle is picking up in many countries, sometimes within established unions, sometimes in new independent ones and sometimes as wildcat strikes. The current wave of unionisation in the US is particularly significant, because it comes in the face of concerted opposition from ascendant capitalist corporations. Unionising Amazon would be a massive victory.

Revolution

The crisis of capitalism won't resolve itself. No government can save us. Only the working class can end it for the better. We need to make a revolution. We need to overthrow capitalism and build libertarian communism, worldwide. For this, the labour movement needs to be built anew. We need to organise in the workplace and rebuild our unions from the ground up. We need direct democratic control, with delegates held to mandates, and a consistent federalist structure. The practices by which we build our movement will be the ones that form the basis of the new society. And we need to do it now, because time is short.

WORKERS OF THE WORLD UNITE!

Melbourne Anarchist Communist Group