

## The Anvil 4

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We are talking about a revolution in order to save the planet from runaway climate change and prevent the destruction of technically advanced society. Once we have the power to implement the environmental policies that are scientifically necessary, however, we will have the entire political power in our hands. There will be no reason to hand power back to the capitalists after saving the planet and nothing to stop us abolishing capitalism altogether.

The problem of climate change comes down, therefore, to the class struggle. The Labor Government's scheme is arousing the opposition of those sections of capital which have the most invested in the existing unsustainable economy and they have both the motive and the means to stir up the working class to oppose the attack on their living standards that carbon pricing entails. The only way to tackle the challenge of climate change successfully is to build a movement of the one force on Earth which can defeat the capitalists, the working class. And when we do defeat them, we will not build a "sustainable capitalism", but libertarian communism.

### **DEFEND THE FERTILITY CONTROL CLINIC**

The presence of clinic defenders keeps the anti-abortionists away from the clinic, so that staff and clients can enter and leave, and people can walk the street, free from their harassment. Defending the clinic is still an important part of the battle to decriminalise abortion and make it freely accessible, on demand, to all women.

Organised by Campaign for Women's Reproductive Rights. For more information, or to get involved in CWRR, contact Radical Women on 03 9388 0062.

Fourth Saturday every month  
10.00 - 11.30am  
118 Wellington Parade, East Melbourne



### **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.

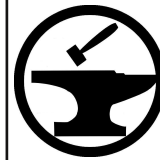
### **What is Communism?**

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.



# THE ANVIL



MACG

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## AN ARAB SPRING

In December last year, a young Tunisian street vendor, driven to despair by corrupt and officious police, committed suicide by self-immolation. He also lit the social tinder that has been accumulating across North Africa and West Asia for over 30 years. Protests against his death escalated into a revolution which put a dictator to flight. After the unrest spread to Egypt and led to the downfall of Hosni Mubarak in February, tyrants from Morocco to Oman took fright as their subjects were emboldened to seek change for themselves as well.

Since the fall of Ben Ali in Tunisia and Mubarak in Egypt, revolts and demonstrations have been widespread but only Muammar Gaddafi has fallen - and that by the murderous hand of Western imperialism rather than the movements that toppled his neighbours. The monarchies have circled the wagons, with Saudi Arabian intervention to crush a popular movement in Bahrain and the Gulf Co-Operation Council deciding to admit Morocco and Jordan. These hereditary tyrants have decided that they're not going anywhere - and especially not into the 21st Century.

The popular uprisings sweeping North Africa and West Asia were sparked by rapidly rising food prices, but the grievances against the sheiks and the presidents-for-life are of long standing. Governments in the Arab world have been marked by corruption, brutality and incompetence for decades, so the people have plenty to revolt against. The revolts, however, have now run up against tyrants who are determined to drown them in blood. Murderous dictators in Libya and Yemen forced the popular movements off course and threaten the same in Syria. Some analysis is therefore required.

The successful revolts in Tunisia and Egypt have much in common with the 1830 and 1848 revolutions in France and the February Revolution in Russia in 1917. Largely spontaneous movements swept from power governments which had long lost all legitimacy, with the entire nation united against them. Their feared apparatus of repression vanished or deserted them.

Behind the joyous unity at the moment of revolution, however, there was an uncomfortable truth. The forces which came together to bring down the tyrant did so for completely opposite reasons.

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### **Workers Solidarity Network**

Grassroots picket line supporters  
[www.workersolidaritymelbourne.org](http://www.workersolidaritymelbourne.org)

*Out of Afghanistan ... continued from front page*

The workers, the peasants and the urban poor who revolted in Tunisia and Egypt did so because they want and need fundamental change in their societies. The bourgeoisies who mobilised against the tyrants and the militaries who deserted them acted in an attempt precisely to prevent such fundamental change. Both Ben Ali and Mubarak had become incitements to popular rage and the oppressed classes in society were beginning to mobilise in ways that threatened the entire capitalist class. The tyrants had become more trouble than they were worth and were sacrificed in order to remove the issue that fuelled the revolutionary movement.

In Yemen, Libya and Syria, the respective dictators acted to ensure that at least some of their military forces remained loyal and that they therefore retained the ability to kill their opponents. In doing so, they foreclosed the possibility of a February 1917 moment in these countries. What is posed is the necessity of exactly what has been revealed in the aftermath of the revolutions in Tunisia and Egypt - the class struggle.

Only the working class has the social power to dislodge the violent dictators of the Arab world without replacing them with one of the imperialists' toadies and only the working class has the organisational potential to pose an alternative to both the dictators and the bourgeoisies for whom they are front men. Working class organisation has been spreading in both Tunisia and Egypt, while the popular revolt in Syria has been marked by major strikes in regional cities. It is the growth and development of the working class movement across the region that provides the hope for real change. The peasants and the urban poor can be pulled in behind the working class if the workers are putting forward a program that can solve all the pressing problems of society - that is, if the workers are more radical, rather than less.

Finally, it is impossible to discuss the Arab Spring without mentioning the role of the US and other Western imperialist countries. Caught on the back foot as dictators they had long supported were overthrown, the Western imperialists have modified their stance somewhat. They now press for reform, though not so consistently that the House of Saud will be disturbed, nor the base for the US Fifth Fleet in Bahrain be threatened. In Libya, NATO used massive air power to install a cabal of quislings and opportunists as a compliant replacement for Colonel Gaddafi. Whether their actions are for or against any given government in North Africa or West Asia, however, their motives are the same - to protect their power and keep the subject populations in line.

As already stated, it is the working class which offers the only road forward. Only the workers can sweep the tyrants, hereditary or not, from power and build a new society. The Western imperialists, on the other hand, are part of the problem rather than part of the solution.

## **DOWN WITH THE TYRANTS**

## **IMPERIALISTS OUT OF NORTH AFRICA AND WEST ASIA**

# **HOW NOT TO TACKLE CLIMATE CHANGE**

The Labor Government's strategy for tackling climate change is just about a textbook example of how not to. In the process, it is delaying meaningful action in Australia and making it harder to isolate a handful of recalcitrant States in the hands of the denial lobby. Given the threat to the planet that runaway climate change embodies, it demonstrates the insanity of capitalism. If a system is not capable of dealing with the environmental crises it generates and guaranteeing the sustainability of society, it does not deserve to endure.

Labor is proposing to institute a carbon tax, at a rate of \$23/tonne, on the production of greenhouse gases. After three years, it will turn into a fixed-cap emissions trading scheme. If an emissions-intensive industry is exposed to exports and imports, companies will receive free permits for up to 94.5% of their emissions. Income tax cuts and pension increases will compensate most households for increased prices. It's mathematically clever, and neo-classical economists love it, but it's gone down like a lead balloon with the public and generated extreme excitement amongst listeners to talk-back radio. So what's going on?

The key to the puzzle is the enthusiasm of the economists. Tackling climate change by putting a price on greenhouse emissions is a neo-liberal approach and protects the existing distribution of income and wealth in society. For the rich, the costs are trivial and outweighed by the vista of a new arena for financial speculation. The working class, on the other hand, is dependent on the adequacy and sustainability of the compensation. And this is where the catch comes in.

If the carbon price achieves what it is designed to and eliminates greenhouse emissions from the Australian economy, government revenue from the sale of emissions permits will cease and thus the funding for the compensation will disappear. If the compensation is eroded, the working class will pay the bill for climate change mitigation. If it is maintained, the Government will increase taxes or cut social spending to bring its budget back into balance. Either way, the workers lose.

What needs to be done? First of all, we need an emergency transition to a 100% renewable stationary energy system, along the lines proposed by the Beyond Zero Emissions group. Second, we need a huge expansion and redevelopment of public transport in Australia, to reduce reliance on truck transport and the private car. Third, we need a major overhaul of urban design so that cities and towns have higher population densities, but with improved amenity rather than worse living conditions.

Can capitalism deliver this? In theory, yes, since it is possible to imagine how a Greens government could, with determination, get it through the Parliament. Unfortunately, this will remain in the realm of the imagination, for the existing parties and the Big Business lobbies are committed to, at best, the Labor Government's model and, at worst, the fraudulent scheme of the Liberals.

To tackle climate change effectively means defeating the existing capitalist class and its political representatives. It will require a mass movement of the working class and the use of the most effective power that the workers have in society, our ability to cut off the flow of profits to the capitalists. We will have to seize the means of production out of the hands of the capitalists in order to abolish their power to block the necessary actions.

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