



# THE ANVIL



**MACG**

NEWSLETTER OF THE MELBOURNE ANARCHIST COMMUNIST GROUP

Vol 8, No 1

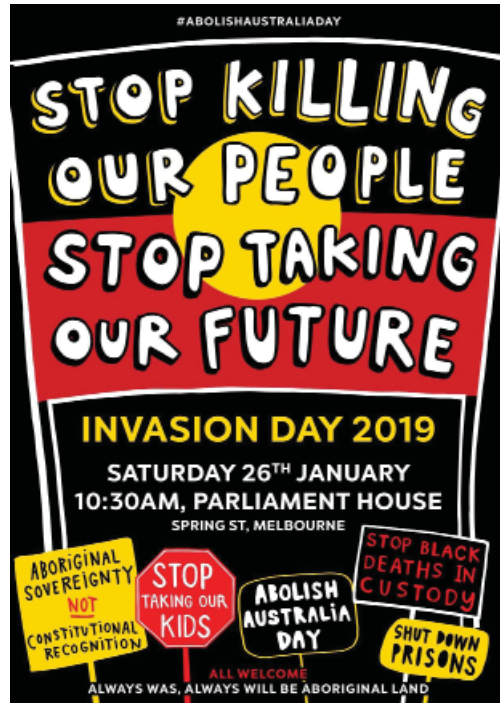
Jan 2019 - Feb 2019

Free

## INVASION DAY 2019

Invasion Day, 26 January, is now the largest day of Left wing mobilisation in Australia. Attendances are much greater than those at May Day and are only exceeded by set piece events organised by the unions. Increasing numbers of both indigenous and non-indigenous people are turning out on this day and their demands are increasingly radical. These are welcome indicators of the growth of a movement which rejects the racism on which Australia is founded.

The capitalist media in Australia have been campaigning for over thirty years to generate Australian nationalism and focus it on an officially designated "Australia Day". Indigenous people have never accepted this and have pushed back. In the face of this resistance, it has become increasingly difficult for the capitalist class to maintain their myth of a happy and united society that celebrates its nationhood. Constant reminders from indigenous people about the invasion of this land and the genocide and dispossession which followed have been causing more people to listen. The voices of indigenous people are amplified. A discordant note has been introduced.



### "Change the Date"

In response to this problem, some progressive elements inside the capitalist class of Australia have started pushing the argument to "Change the Date" of Australia Day. Recognising the appalling insult to indigenous people of celebrating the start of genocide, dispossession and racism, they have begun arguing that Australia's national day should be moved to a different date in the year.

*continued page 2*

### *The Anvil 2*

This suggestion has run into two problems, besides the predictable opposition from the racist establishment. Firstly, there is the matter of an alternative day. The obvious date, in terms of its appeal to nationalistic sentiment, is Anzac Day. That is controversial, both because of the strict militarists who want to retain Anzac Day as it is, and progressives who are reluctant to boost a celebration of militarism even more. Other, less obvious, dates have failed to gain either recognition or traction. Some are proposing shifting the date at some time in the future when a treaty is negotiated.

The second problem, more substantive, is that a growing number of indigenous people in Australia are opposed to "Australia Day" being celebrated at all. Not only is Australia's history a shameful litany of crimes against indigenous people – genocide, dispossession, wage theft, discrimination, child removal, police brutality and more – but the crimes continue today. There can be no pride in genocide, no matter what date it is celebrated. Now that the Invasion Day rallies have taken up this call, the "Change the Date" campaign is exposed as not being about justice for indigenous people, but about allowing the settler population to celebrate nationalism without having Australia's institutional racism rubbed in their faces while they do it.



### **Abolish Australia Day**

The Melbourne Anarchist Communist Group endorses the demands of the Melbourne Invasion Day rally for 2019: Aboriginal Sovereignty, not Constitutional Recognition; Stop Taking Our Kids; Abolish Australia Day; Stop Deaths in Custody; Shut Down Prisons. All strike at the racist foundations of the Australian State. Some, though, are only achievable through a workers' revolution that abolishes capitalism. It is only libertarian communism, the Workers' Commonwealth, and not the racist Australian capitalist State, that can negotiate just treaties with the indigenous peoples and nations that have never ceded their sovereignty. It is only the Workers' Commonwealth that can shut down the prisons. It is only the Workers' Commonwealth that can end deaths in custody by abolishing the police.

So, this year and every year, the MACG joins the call to abolish Australia Day. Our vision is of a stateless communist society, a Workers' Commonwealth worldwide and operating on the basis of consistent federalism. Here, in the land that is currently called Australia, the Workers' Commonwealth will be the vehicle through which non-indigenous people work with, and learn from, indigenous people how to live sustainably in the land, as they did so successfully for over 60,000 years before the First Fleet brought British colonialism to these shores.

ALWAYS WAS, ALWAYS  
WILL BE ABORIGINAL LAND

# LESSONS FROM THE YELLOW VESTS

The Yellow Vests movement in France began on 17 November and, after peaking in early December, has continued to this day. It was triggered by the decision of the French Government to increase taxes on petrol and diesel fuel at the start of 2019 and to justify it on environmental grounds, in particular to mitigate climate change. Opinion polls report that the movement has the support of the vast majority of people in France.

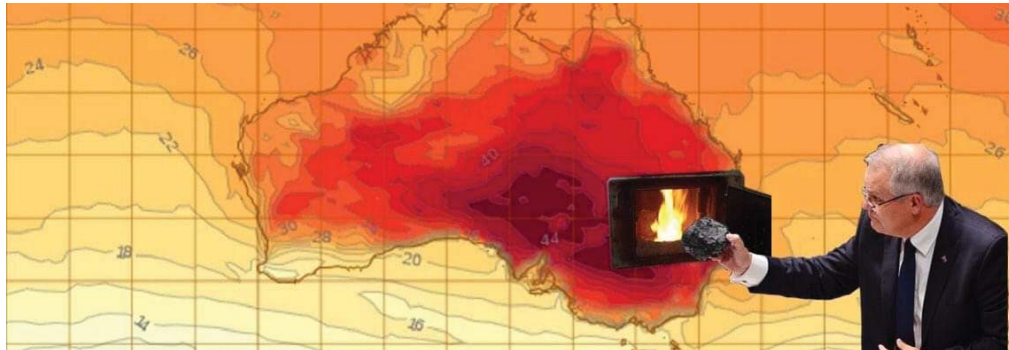
Hundreds of thousands of people have participated in militant actions across France, with many of the demonstrations encountering massive police violence. The movement has been politically heterogeneous from the outset. At the beginning Right wing tendencies were predominant, but after about a month, the Left gained the upper hand. At all times, the movement has resisted the appeal to affiliate itself with any of the mainstream French political parties. The Government abandoned the fuel tax increases, but the movement had already transformed into one protesting against the Government's economic policies generally.

It is unclear what the eventual result of the Yellow Vests movement will be, but one

thing is already clear. The Government's attempt to use price signals in the capitalist market to bring about a transition from fossil fuels has been killed off. The people of France, emphatically and almost unanimously, have rejected the neo-liberal prescription for addressing climate change. The climate movement around the world ignores this lesson at its peril.

The world needs to stop climate change. Left unchecked, global temperatures will rise by between 4° and 7° Celsius. This would result in the destruction of most ecosystems, render large parts of the world uninhabitable due to summer heat and kill billions of people. This is not just about the Great Barrier Reef or the Amazon jungle, important as they are. This is about the survival of industrial civilisation and, in a worst case scenario, the human race itself.

Action to mitigate climate change, however, does not occur in a vacuum. The same capitalist system which brought us unsustainable fossil fuels also created a vastly unequal society, and inequality continues to increase. When a government uses neo-liberal policies like a carbon price to address climate change,



continued page 4

it aggravates the tendency in capitalism to produce inequality. Just as for electricity prices, when fuel prices rise, workers suffer and the capitalists hardly notice.

For us in Australia, the consequences should be clear. The media are dominated by hard Right wing climate denialist voices. They will channel justified working class anger against declining living standards into a deadly weapon against any form of carbon pricing. The Right will promote mass scepticism about the scientific basis for taking action against climate change. This is precisely what occurred to the Labor Government of Julia Gillard in 2010 and the consequences are likely to be the same – or worse – if that strategy is repeated.

The only realistic approach to climate change is one that recognises the inequality in our society. The policies of neo-liberalism, in particular carbon pricing, are a prescription for failure. Workers and communities currently reliant on unsustainable industries deserve a just transition. Working class living standards as a whole must be protected to maintain social support for a transition to a carbon free economy. The price of the transition must be borne by those who built and profited from unsustainable industries – the capitalists. In short, we need to abolish capitalism. It is the only strategy that can work.

**A JUST TRANSITION  
MEANS ABOLISHING  
CAPITALISM**

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



## **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.*