



# THE ANVIL



**MACG**

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Free

## EASTERN AUSTRALIA ON FIRE



Credit: Eureka Street

For the last six weeks, the eastern States of Australia have been suffering an unprecedented wave of bushfires. There have also been a number of bushfires in Western Australia. One of the driest winters on record has been followed by a warm and dry spring. This has led to huge areas of the continent being tinder dry and ready to catch fire far earlier than for a normal fire season. What we are seeing is unprecedented in its breadth, intensity and timing.

Sydney has been shrouded in smoke for over a month. The Gospers Mountain mega-fire has burnt out 450,000 hectares so far. The Commissioner of the NSW Rural Fire Service says they have dealt

with 8,500 fires this season already – and it's only the start of summer. This is climate change in action.

In recent years, firefighting in rural areas in Australia has been put on a much more scientific basis than previously. More thorough and intensive organisation has meant that fewer people die and fewer houses are lost. The firefighting effort in this fire season has been massive, with overwhelming community support for the volunteers and professional firefighters working day and night to protect lives, homes and livelihoods. Nevertheless, even this has been insufficient to prevent deaths in this unnatural disaster.

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The political situation is spinning out of the control of the denialists in the Government and the media. The initial statements pointing out the connection between the unprecedented levels of greenhouse gases in the atmosphere and the unprecedented severity and earliness of the fire season were met by a storm of Right wing propaganda criticising them for “politicising the tragedy of the bushfires”. As the fires have continued, though, this position has become unsustainable. Volunteer firefighters, the United Firefighters Union and the chiefs of emergency services bodies have pointed out the connection. Some people who have lost their homes to bushfire have taken the burnt wreckage of their houses to Canberra and placed it outside Parliament House. The denialists have been reduced to muttering rather than shouting everybody down.

The forces of climate change denial were cocky after the Liberals won “the climate election”, with some even claiming the issue was dead. This was delusional thinking. A single hot summer was always going to pull the rug out from under them and hammer home the fact that climate change is real and happening. Before

summer had even started climate change was back and big. The question of the moment is: what should we be doing?

The Melbourne Anarchist Communist Group believes that the School Strike for Climate movement has great potential and that it should be joined wholeheartedly by the unions. School strikes should be turned into workers' strikes. In Australia, the next global school strike day should be the occasion for mass co-ordinated strikes by workers from as many industries as possible. They should build towards a general strike. The power of capital arises in the workplace and it is only by organising there that workers can wrench power away from the capitalists and wield it themselves.

To achieve this objective, Anarchists need to be active in their unions, pushing for rank and file groups to work with communities in planning for a Just Transition. They should also be forming rank and file groups to press their unions to join the strike movement. These groups also need to be ready to bypass the officials if they won't act. The capitalists won't save us – the workers have to do it themselves.

## SOUTH AMERICA ON FIRE

Across South America, the class struggle is raging at an intensity that Australia has rarely seen. Both Right and Left are on the offensive in different countries and it is the political centre which is falling away.

Bolivia has just experienced a military

coup with clear participation of Fascists and with at least some orchestration from within the United States. The coup regime has issued an arrest warrant for former President Evo Morales, under the pretext of terrorism and sedition, but transparently for the real reason of being Evo Morales.

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In Brazil, the Fascist Jair Bolsonaro was elected by technically democratic means, but he is engaged in murderous repression and is attacking the institutions of capitalist democracy from within. Bolsonaro is not getting it all his own way, though, and there has been sporadic large scale struggle against him.

In Argentina, the Right has just been ejected from office by the Centre-Left, but inflation is high and mass struggles continue. In Colombia, a recent general strike suffered widespread repression which has nevertheless failed to squash the movement. This should surprise no-one, because ever since the peace deal disarming the guerillas of FARC, the oligarchy has been able to engage in murderous repression of the social movement, unconstrained by prospects of reprisal.

The Right is also on the offensive in Venezuela and has been for some years. President Nicolas Maduro, successor to Hugo Chavez, is a bumbling authoritarian who has no idea how to defeat the militant Right, which is financed and in large measure directed by the United States. He narrows the Chavista base by counter-productive measures and an inability to dodge the crippling US sanctions. Opposition to him from the Left is needed, but an opposition which is also aimed clearly against the Right. Meanwhile, in Ecuador, the ironically named Lenin Moreno has switched sides, allied with the United States and largely adopted the policies of the Right. A massive campaign of strikes and demonstrations in October caused him to abandon a set of drastic austerity measures.

It is Chile, however, which is ground zero and where the struggle has advanced the

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furthest. The working class and student movements in Chile have waged frequent immense struggles in recent years, concentrating mainly on immediate issues but with an undercurrent of rejection of the political system. This undercurrent burst out into the open when the entire country rose up from 7 October against an attempt by the Right wing government to increase public transport fares. No sooner had strikes and demonstrations begun than a slogan emerged that took the struggle to a new level: "It's not the thirty pesos, it's the thirty years." The entire framework set up by General Pinochet is being rejected. Though the students have been the most militant, the power of the working class has been the most effective. Support for Right wing President Sebastian Pinera has totally collapsed and not even cutting a deal with the parties of the Left (including the so-called "Communist" Party) for a Constitutional Convention has enabled him to re-stabilise things. Militant demonstrations continue.

What needs to be done to drive the struggle onwards? How can the Right be beaten? The answer is twofold. Firstly, Anarchists in South America should organise themselves in federations of revolutionary Anarchist Communists – a tendency which there goes by the name of Especificismo. This is, to an extent, happening. The Federation Anarchista Santiago is active in Chile and is strongly participating in the struggle there. In addition, Especificismo groups in Argentina, Uruguay and Brazil have recently announced the re-launching of CALA, the Latin American Anarchist Co-ordination. This is an immensely positive development, showing the way for Anarchists to participate in the struggles on that continent in a positive way.

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The Melbourne Anarchist Communist Group calls on Anarchists across South America to flock to their banners or to form similar Especificismo groups so that the effectiveness of Anarchist organisation can grow by the orders of magnitude demanded by the struggle.

The other thing that needs to happen is the formation, in Chile and other countries where the struggle has reached the necessary level, of mass organs of workers' democracy. The old reformist organisations of the working class are simply inadequate to the current crisis. New bodies are needed, transcending bureaucratic divisions, uniting broader layers of workers and establishing direct democracy in place of representation. These bodies will be based in the workplace, in order to establish the possibility of cutting off the power of capital at its source and wielding the vast power of the economy according to the will of the workers themselves.

Finally, it is necessary to recognise there is no conflict between these two tasks. Indeed, the first is a precondition of the second. Anarchists organised on the basis of Especificismo need to be propagandising ceaselessly, in Chile and wherever else it is practical, for workers to form mass organs of workers' democracy. They must turn away from Parliamentary roads that can only lead to defeat and from political parties which seek power only for themselves, not the workers. Only the revolutionary abolition of capitalism can solve South America's pressing crisis and only Anarchist Communism, Especificismo, can light the way to that revolution.

HASTA LA VICTORIA!

The logo for the Melbourne Anarchist Communist Group (MACG) features the letters 'M', 'A', and 'C' in black, followed by 'G' in red. The letters are bold and sans-serif.

### ***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](mailto:macg1984@yahoo.com.au)**