

# Obama : What will change look like?



For around five months now, the world has been holding its breath. When Barack Obama won the US presidency at the end of last year, the potential for change seemed almost unlimited. After George W. Bush, who remains synonymous with war and neoliberalism, people worldwide were hungry for change—for a world with a different vision.

That palpable hope for a different world has not changed, but expectations in Obama are beginning to be toned down somewhat. Just last week he announced a 17000 troop increase to US forces in Afghanistan, signalling that he has no intention of scaling back the war on terror. He is shifting its focus, from the much-hated front in Iraq to the supposedly more noble war in Afghanistan, but he is not pulling out. As Obama announced his troop surge, US Secretary of Defence Robert Gates pressed other NATO member countries to commit more troops at a meeting in Poland. The pressure is on allies like Australia to come to the table.

Obama's relationship to the war on terror is becoming crystal clear. Less clear, although no less true, are the faults of Obama's approach to the economic stimulus. He drove a US\$787 million economic package through Congress in response

to the problem. The package does contain measures for the unemployed, some tax cuts, some infrastructure measures, but they do not go far enough. Obama and the Democrats negotiated with the Republicans, taking several key redistributive tax policies and infrastructure spending measures out of the package. In their place are tax cuts for big business and modest spending on rail infrastructure.

The contradiction between expectations in Obama's presidency and what he is delivering is a powerful one. It provides the potential to push for and create real change—change that Obama never intended to deliver. For more discussion about the realities of an Obama presidency, come along to our meeting:

**"Obama's New Presidency: What will change look like?"**

**Speakers: Professor Verity Burgmann and Shannon Price from Solidarity**

*6pm, Tuesday 3 March*

*@ Gryphon Gallery, 1888 Building, Grattan St., Melb Uni*

## Meetings and Forums

**"The heat is on... to change the world of war and economic crisis"**

Come along to our afternoon of talks and discussions about how capitalism works and the whens, whys and hows of change.

2pm Saturday 4 April

"Obama's new presidency: what will change look like?"

Speakers: Professor Verity Burgmann and Shannon Price

from Solidarity - *6pm, Tuesday 3 March*

*@ Gryphon Gallery, 1888 Building, Grattan St, Melb Uni*

"Climate Change: Can we close down the coal industry?"

Speaker: Graeme - *Tue 24 Feb 6:30pm*

*@ New International Bookshop (Trades Hall)*

The Enviro Collective meets:

*Mondays 1pm @ Joe Nap Room, 2nd Floor Union House.*

## Solidarity - Who are we?

We are a socialist group active in the Climate Emergency Network and the Palestine solidarity campaign. We intervene to raise alternative Marxist ideas to strengthen the struggle for change.

We aspire to be "Tribunes of the People", fighting for the rights of workers around the world. As well as standing up against sexism, racism and homophobia. We believe a better world is possible.

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