

March on May Day 2019!

Annual May Day march for the rights of immigrants and workers sponsored by El Comité and others

Wednesday, May 1, 2019

Gather at Judkins Park, 2150 S. Norman St. (behind St. Mary's Church)

March begins at 1:00 p.m. sharp

May Day, International Workers' Day, is a day workers everywhere celebrate the U.S. 1886 general strike for an 8-hr day as well as commemorate the Chicago Haymarket martyrs who were framed and hanged by the authorities in revenge. It is also a fighting holiday of the world's workers, a day they go on strikes and march in protest of their present conditions, often in defiance of repression. And May Day is a day class conscious workers test the strength of their independent movement as they look forward to building a world without bosses and exploitation, a better world by far.

May Day 2019 comes at a time when right-wing, centrist and pseudo-socialist governments are all squeezing the people through austerity in order to help the rich grow ever richer. It comes at a time when right-wing and fascistic governments are vilely scapegoating immigrants, national minorities and refugees as the cause of the problems created by the capitalist system itself. It comes at a time when millions of people roam the earth as refugees from wars and mass impoverishment and as refugees from climate change, while governments around the world refuse to take serious measures to prevent climate catastrophe.

But all this is being challenged by the working people. During recent months they have risen to bring down tyrannies in Algeria and Sudan, and an especially bloody one in Sudan. Now, despite having little independent organization they struggle against politicians from the old regime assuming power in Algeria, and against a military dictatorship in Sudan. Their actions are something to salute this May Day. Also encouraging has been the continuation of the "yellow vests" movement against austerity in France, the livening of the environmental movement globally, the growing

number of strikes in Mexico and the United States, and the broad popular support for immigrants and refugees in the United States.

The strike movement is beginning to stir

The decline of the strike wave of the late-1960s and early-1970s has led to stagnation and decline of real wages and benefits. As well, in recent years the number of strikes and the number of workers in trade unions has been the lowest since the 1920s. The capitalists have *loved* this, and just Jeff Bezos, Warren Buffett and Bill Gates now control more wealth than half the U.S. population. But the workers' motion to stand up and fight back is beginning to rise. According to the Bureau of Labor Statistics, last year there were 21 major work stoppages (the highest since 2007) that involved 485,000 workers (the highest since 1986). These included strikes by teachers (whom have gone on a real *wave* of strikes), hospital workers, hotel workers, communication workers, farm workers and some others. This motion continues this year with more teachers' strikes, as well as the strike/lockout at Wabtec in Erie, PA, the strike of 31,000 workers at Stop & Shop supermarkets in New England, the strike by 400 Teamsters at the Sysco distribution center in Atlanta.

Moreover, this year opened with a powerful strike movement of many tens of thousands of workers around Matamoros, Mexico, making it the scene of the largest economic battle in North America for many years. Large numbers of these workers have been women, and large numbers of them work in factories supplying auto parts to the U.S. In January they held a march of thousands to the border with Texas in order to call for support from their fellow workers in this country, and they've often been winning their demands for a 20% pay increase and

\$1,500 annual bonus.

It's by waging these absolutely necessary struggles that the working class defends its immediate interests and prepares itself for future struggles, including the struggle for class emancipation. But history shows that to wage them effectively, or wage them at all, the workers must build organization that is independent of the union bureaucracy (where unions even exist) and the Democrats. Under the banner of saving jobs the union leaders have been foisting concessions-filled contracts on U.S. workers for decades, and Obama's bailout of GM and Chrysler insisted the auto workers make still more concessions. But jobs have not been saved, only corporate profits. Moreover, this year the leaders of the teachers' unions have again shown their betraying nature. For example, after doing everything they could to prevent the L.A. teachers from walking out, they ended the strike after a week. They claimed a big victory had been won when the teachers' major demands had not been met. And in order to railroad through a rotten contract before mass opposition developed, they organized a quick vote before teachers had time to read it. Meanwhile, in order to start their powerful strike wave the Mexican workers around Matamoros had to organize independently of the company-union leaders in order to brush them aside—a fine example of what workers can do!

The struggle against racist attacks on immigrants is sharpening

For years Trump has been raging against immigrants and refugees as “rapists,” “animals,” “criminal aliens.” He's said “this is an invasion,” “they're bringing drugs,” “they're taking our jobs,” and that there's a supposed “crisis” at the border. No lie has been too big for him to tell, and he's proposed building his notorious southern border wall to keep “them” out. Trump's aim is to incite the “legal” working people against their class sisters and brothers so as to hide the real cause of their

exploitation and oppression: rule by the U.S. billionaires. It's racist scapegoating, pure and simple. The other side of this is that Trump has been working to instill fear among the undocumented in order to turn them into servile, super-exploited wage slaves. To do this he's been viciously using the deportation machine built up under Deporter-in-Chief Obama, he's confined children to cages (which was also done under Obama) and set up concentration camp style tent cities, he's sent troops to the southern border and more.

But the masses of people have been fighting back against all this. Undocumented people themselves have repeatedly organized hunger strikes in ICE detention centers and struggled for better wages, conditions and social equality on the outside. Everyday people from across the land have gone to the southern border to physically aid refugees and immigrants. The sanctuary movement has exploded. The demand that ICE be abolished is popular. The movement to refute all Trump's big lies against migrants has picked up steam in the workplaces and schools. There's broad sympathy for the working-class slogan “an injury to one is an injury to all,” and support for the demand that all immigrants, documented or undocumented, should be given full rights.

March on May 1!

In memory of the 1886 May Day martyrs, in solidarity with the rising Algerians and Sudanese, in solidarity with the French working people fighting austerity, in solidarity with environmental activists everywhere, in solidarity with the workers who've been striking and beginning to stir, and in solidarity with all immigrants and refugees let us proudly march this May Day. And let us become part of the common fight to transform the world and thereby transform ourselves. We have nothing to lose but our chains. We have a world to win.

Seattle Communist Study Group 4/28/2019

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