



May 2025 | International
Workers Day Bulletin

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Every year on May 1st, May Day is celebrated by workers all around the world. May Day of 2006 saw millions absent from work and show up for “A Day Without Immigrants” rallies across the country, including a 1.5 million strong protest in LA.

The lessons from this show of force can be built on for May Day now. Immigrant workers are key to bringing together struggles of the undocumented with the potential power of the larger US working class, who are also in the sights of this regime.

Trump’s deportation agenda

Since day one Trump gleefully asserted that he would deport all 11 million undocumented immigrants living in this country. Trump’s anti-immigrant agenda is also coalescing with his anti-Palestine agenda. He is using the very real threat of detention and deportation, using bogus claims of antisemitism.

Although courts have ruled many of these detainees were not given due process, Columbia graduate Mahmoud Khalil is still held in a Louisiana detention center, and illegally deported Abrego Garcia still languishes in an El Salvador prison despite orders from federal judges.

Bipartisan agenda

Trump is still not deporting any faster than Biden before him, and Obama still holds the title of deporter-in-chief. Trump’s campaign

of terror is designed to send a clear message that no one is safe.

Life has never been secure for the 11 million people who live here without documents. But now the constant fear of being snatched in the street without leaving a trace has become real. People are afraid to go to work, afraid to send their children to school, afraid to visit health clinics, and having to make provisions for their children if they’re suddenly taken away.

What is different today is that Trump is happy to publicize his arrests to please his base. After years of a bipartisan anti-immigrant agenda, a slight majority of Americans now tell polls there should be less immigration.

The outrageous lies Trump told about immigrants during the campaign were not challenged by his opponent Kamala Harris. In fact, she asserted that she would be better than him at keeping immigrants out, pointing to her successful role as prosecutor in California.

Had Harris presented an alternative to that heinous vision, Trump’s rhetoric might have lost some of its venomous bite. But the Democrats cannot respond to these dangerous attacks because their position on immigration is not vastly different from Trump’s, as much as they may pretend to give it a humane veneer.

Offshore prisons

Trump has started making arrangements with third party countries to take the deportees. Some

countries such as Colombia and Venezuela were strong-armed into doing so

Others such as El Salvador and its notorious president Nayib Bukele — who likes to refer to himself as the world’s “coolest dictator” — welcomed the chance to prove their fealty. Bukele runs one of the most horrific prison systems in the world, with many of the 85,000 Salvadoreans apprehended disappearing without trial.

Dividing the working class

Trump needs to show his base that he’s working hard to fulfill his anti-immigrant pledge to them, especially as tariffs, public sector cuts, and other policies start to be felt by ordinary people.

Secondly, instilling fear in undocumented workers render them less likely to protest low pay, working conditions and other abuses, and that’s certainly a boon for the bosses. Immigrants are a very powerful part of the American working class.

Sowing racist divisions makes it easier for a conman and charlatan like Trump to use immigrants as a scapegoat. Trump’s budget puts an additional \$4 billion directly into the pockets of the richest few. When people start to feel the impacts of these cuts, the stories about immigrants taking jobs and swindling benefits will have a willing audience.

Anti-immigrant rhetoric serves to drive a wedge between local born and non-local born workers.

This “divide and rule” tactic is as old as the ages, pitting those who have everything in common against each other instead of directing their ire at those who exploit them.

Movements can turn the tide

Politicians can turn immigrants into the problem, but strong movements can turn the tide of racism. A Gallup poll shows how quickly public opinion can be turned around: In the four years since Biden was elected, the percentage of those who wanted to see a decrease in immigration practically doubled from 28% to 55%, mirrored by almost halving those who wanted an increase in immigration, dropping from 34% to 16%.

A Pew survey found that 85% of Republicans (and 31% of Democrats) believe immigrants bring more crime. This is in spite of the research proving immigrants make their neighborhoods safer. But when faced with actual families affected, most people are more sympathetic. Bringing families and allies out can counter the effect of the lies.

Immigrants and the economy

Immigrants provide a huge pool of exploited labor, working in industries such as construction, home health care, farming, restaurants, and more. Removing them in large numbers would literally collapse the economy. There are already signs of labor shortages, from Georgia poultry plants to Chicago restaurants, Arizona nursing homes, and the farms of California’s Central Valley.

Immigrants are also an economic engine that hold a lot of power. Their participation in the workforce have contributed millions in new taxes as well as in new businesses on Main Streets that can spur neighborhood growth.

They have also helped to reverse the population decline, a

problem for rich countries which have an ageing population and a low birth rate. Immigrants have also added militancy to the US workforce; acting in solidarity can raise wages for everyone.

Building the movement today

After a slow start, we have seen impressive growth in the movement. The Chicago Teachers’ Union (CTU), which has just negotiated a new contract with the city, provides a shining example for future organizing.

Joining the union strength with defending immigrants, they have been successful keeping ICE at bay. When two agents showed up at one heavily immigrant school, protocols were in place to prevent them from entering, giving teeth to Chicago’s sanctuary city designation. Similarly, United Teachers of Los Angeles members kept Homeland Security agents out of two elementary schools.

Los Angeles also saw an impressive demonstration which took over the freeways and snarled traffic for hours, with further daily protests and student walk-outs following suit.

The huge nationwide demonstrations helped sway opinion. The latest polls taken on Trump’s 100 days in office show 53% disapproval and 46% approval, putting him underwater even on immigration, supposedly his strong suit.

Bernie Sanders and Alexandra Ocasio-Cortez have been traveling the country on their “Fighting Oligarchy” tour and have drawn huge crowds even in some of the reddest towns. The crowds reflect the growing opposition to Trump’s agenda, though their speeches have not focused on building independent activity. Unfortunately, Sanders has reflected Trump’s message about needing a strong border. We must guard against opposition to Trump being guided back into garnering votes for the Democrats in the midterms, or in four years.

What next?

Today we are marching against Trump’s deportation agenda and so much more. It is broad, united coalitions standing against racism and fear that can help stop Trump’s deportation machine. It is organized workers in these broad movements who can beat back Trump altogether.

After May Day: How Do We Fight Together for Real Change?



Join with activists in the next Marx21 national meeting to share May Day reports from around the country and discuss the kind of broad, united movement we need to defeat Trump the whole system that created him.

Sunday, May 4th,

11AM Pacific | 2PM Eastern.

bit.ly/marx21-zoom

MARX21 (Marxism for the 21st century) is a US revolutionary socialist organization. We stand by the following principles:

Anti-capitalist

We believe that workers create all the wealth, but capitalism is a system run by a tiny, wealthy elite who exploit that labor. A new society can only be constructed when we the workers collectively take control of that wealth and plan production and distribution according to human need. Exploitation, competition, crisis, war, and environmental destruction can be fought, but are inherent to capitalism.

Socialism from below

We stand in the tradition of socialism from below: the idea that workers can only emancipate themselves through their own struggles. We do not believe that current social democratic and labor governments around the world represent socialism, nor do we believe states that use the language of socialism (like the former Soviet Union, China, Cuba and elsewhere) offer a model for true liberation. Socialism cannot be handed down to us. We need a fundamentally different system in which we actively participate and democratically control.

Activist

We are activists and organizers. We do not stand aside from movements and activity in the streets, we strive to build them and lead them. We read theory, debate ideas, and learn history in order to understand the world and to argue for and implement strategies and tactics that give us the best chance of winning radical change. One function of our

website/bulletin is to intervene in movements and demonstrate through our activity that the politics of revolutionary socialism is the only path to creating the world we know is possible.

Revolutionary socialist

We believe that only a revolutionary break with the current system can deliver us socialism. We believe in fighting for reforms because they are both an essential part of improving people's lives and preparing our side to run society in our own interests. We believe in the need for a mass, working class, revolutionary party in order to lead a future successful socialist revolution.

Against all forms of oppression

The working class is multi-racial and multi-gendered. It benefits capitalism to oppress and divide us because capitalism's greatest enemy is worker solidarity. We need a world free from racism, sexism, homophobia, transphobia, and every kind of oppression. We fight against all these forms of oppression wherever they arise. The only way we can win true equality is with solidarity.

Non-sectarian

We are an outward-looking, non-sectarian organization that seeks to work together in movements and campaigns, and alongside the wider left. We believe in being honest about our political differences with other groups and having comradely disagreements, but we work with all forces that seek left wing change.

Internationalist

Marx21 is anti-imperialist and internationalist. We recognize that the US is the largest imperialist power in the world, and we have a special duty to combat militarism at home. The US and its allies are not the only imperialists. We support workers' struggles against government oppression wherever they occur.

Marx21 stands in the international socialist tradition and is connected with other like-minded socialist groups around the world in the International Socialist Tendency. We support the IST's politics and we work alongside the organizations associated with the tendency, but we are an independent organization that makes its own decisions.

Democratic

We are a member organization where every voice matters. Any elected leadership bodies are accountable to and instantly recallable by the membership. We make decisions together in our local branches, caucuses, and national meetings. We are accountable to one another as a group.

Read more at marx21us.org:

"Millions Join 'Hands Off' Demos Against Trump"

"The Day Immigrants Won:" an activist looks back at the 2006 May Day strike.

"All Out for Mahmoud Khalil"

"Children's Hospital LA Reverses Ban on Care for Trans Youth"

Articles on Palestine, Syria, and more...



Why We Celebrate May Day

For over 100 years May First has been international workers' day – a day of working-class solidarity and a celebration of internationalism.

May Day began in the US in 1886 – with workers' fighting for the eight hour day. On May First workers across the US responded to the call for strikes.

Three days later a workers' rally was broken up by police. Anarchists were fitted-up (and several later executed) after a bomb was thrown.

However, by the second week in May some 340,000 workers were on strike. Many won shorter hours, though the revolt was put down by a wave of repression.

In 1889 the Second international, an organization of workers across the world, took up the call for an eight-hour day. It called on all workers to stop work on 1 May.

The following year saw workers mark international workers day across the world for the first time.

In Germany hundreds of thousands stopped work and demonstrated. In Italy there were mass strikes and marches. London too saw its first May Day demonstration that year.

Karl Marx's daughter Eleanor played a key role in organizing it.

Marx, who had ended the Communist Manifesto with the call, "workers of the world unite" had died seven years earlier. But his lifelong collaborator and co-author of the manifesto Frederick Engels addressed the 300,000 workers at a rally in Hyde Park that first May Day.

"The demonstration was nothing short of overwhelming, and even the entire bourgeois press had to admit it," he said.

"I can assure you I looked a couple of inches taller when I got down from that old lumbering wagon that served as a platform after having heard again, for the first time since 40 years, the unmistakable voice of the English working class."

The scale of the protests in 1890 meant that most European governments were forced to declare May Day

an official holiday. Since then, May Day has been a rallying point.

In the US, Labor Day was established by the government in 1894 as a bureaucratic alternative to the radicalism of May Day. But communist, anarchist and socialist workers still rallied in the tens of thousands here.

In 1916 in Germany May Day was the focus for all those who opposed the First World War. When the socialist Karl Liebknecht was arrested for his speech, "Down with the government! Down with the war!" 50,000 metal workers struck for his release.

Even faced with the most desperate circumstances workers have marked May Day.

During the Second World War, socialists in the Warsaw Ghetto – where the Nazis had herded over 300,000 Jews before transporting them to death camps – were determined to mark May Day.

Marek Edelman was one of those involved. He later wrote, "The entire world was celebrating May Day, and everywhere forceful, meaningful words were being spoken.

"But never yet had the Internationale been sung in conditions so different, so tragic, in a place where an entire nation had been and was still perishing."

May Day protests have occurred during massive upsurges of workers militancy. In Portugal on 25 April 1974 the 48 year old dictatorship was overthrown.

A week later the capital, Lisbon, saw demonstrations of 100,000 people.

In the US, May Day became celebrated by smaller groups of radicals, but was reclaimed by immigrant workers in a mass unofficial strike in 2006 for immigrant rights. It is time we all reclaim that spirit.

Some union leaders now are talking of a US general strike for May Day 2028. It will take rank-and-file solidarity and organization to turn that rhetoric into meaningful action.

Class struggle does not take place one day a year. We use May Days as inspiration to fight on, and win.

What Do We Do? Stand Up, Fight Back!

Trump and co. want to remake government in a more authoritarian direction. But fascism does not reign, and we can still resist.

There are blatant contradictions in Trump's program and coalition. He ran on stopping inflation on day one, but his tariffs will vastly increase it.

His massive cuts to government functions and federal workers, attacks on civil liberties, and transfers to the rich while going after programs like social security are already seeming like overreach, sparking splits at the top, and more resistance from below.

This administration still presents a dangerous threat, and will continue to rely on racism to distract Trump's middle- and working-class followers from their economic interests. This false populism cannot last forever, and Trump is quickly losing support, not just on the economy, and democracy, but his actions on immigration.

Our job is to support all oppressed people, join and build all resistance, and crucially, to connect this activism with the power of the multi-ethnic, multi-gendered working class.

Out of these struggles we also need to build a socialist force with a clear vision against the capitalist world system that is increasing inequality, destroying our planet, and fueling authoritarianism.

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