

The Socialist



May Day Issue
Issue 2 | May 2018

Introduction

“Socialism is a growing idea; an expanding philosophy. It is spread over the entire face of the earth: It is as vain to resist it as it would be to arrest the sunrise on the morrow. It is coming, coming, coming all along the line. Can you not see it? If not, I advise you to consult an oculist. There is certainly something the matter with your vision. It is the mightiest movement in the history of mankind. What a privilege to serve it!...It has given me my ideas and ideals; my principles and convictions, and I would not exchange one of them for all of Rockefeller’s bloodstained dollars. It has taught me how to serve—a lesson to me of priceless value. It has taught me the ecstasy in the handclasp of comrades. It has enabled me to hold high communion with you, and made it possible for me to take my place side by side with you in the great struggle for the better day; to multiply myself over and over again, to thrill with a fresh-born manhood; to feel life truly worthwhile; to open new avenues of vision; to spread out glorious vistas; to know that I am kin to all that throbs; to be class-conscious, and to realize that, regardless of nationality, race, creed, color or sex, every man, every woman who toils, who renders useful service, every member of the working class without an exception, is my comrade, my brother and sister—and that to serve them and their cause is the highest duty of my life.”

- Eugene V. Debs

1918 Canton, Ohio Speech

In 1901, three parties merged to form the Socialist Party of America with Eugene V. Debs, a railroad worker and organizer, as one of the founding leaders. It is from this party that our current party, Socialist Party USA, split from in 1973. Our party is not only made up of the working class, but our party was founded on the principles of the working class and of workers. In 2018, we carry Debs message to his fellow workers with us: we feel privileged to serve our communities in whatever capacities we can as socialists. And as socialists, we are committed to solidarity this May Day to all workers, to all those in the working class, and to all those who need community support, all over the world.

- Amanda Riggle

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ISSN 0884-6154

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Issue 2 | May 2018

Socialist Party USA
168 Canal St 6th Fl
New York, NY 10013

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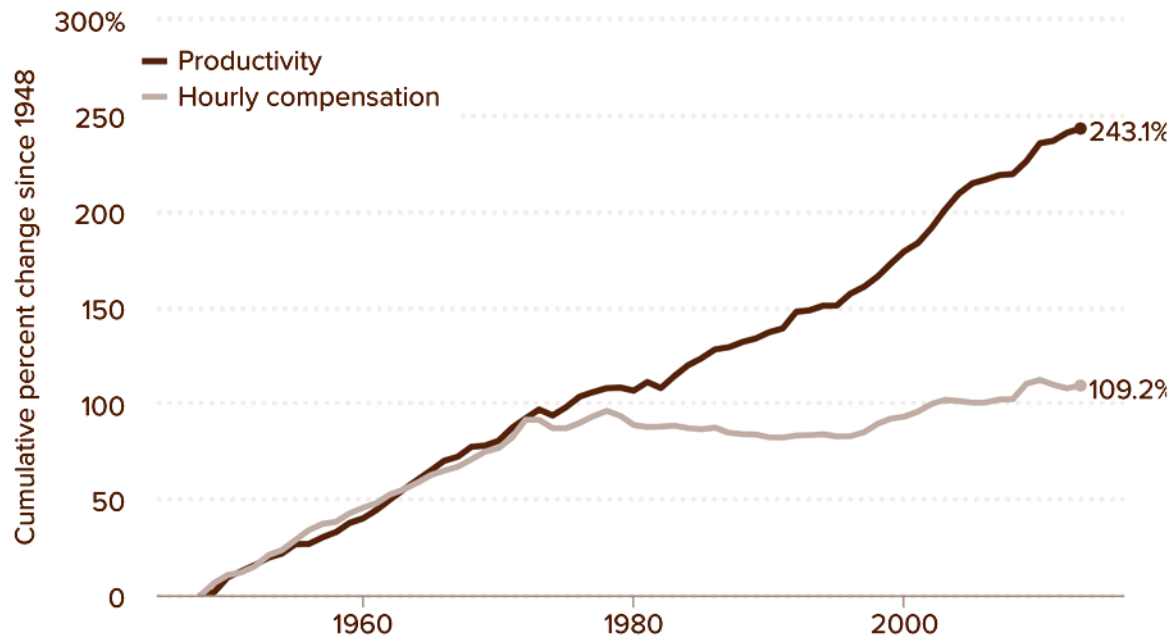
More pay! More Free time! More Control!

You deserve more.

Almost everyone who works for a living earns much, much less than they could. You earn much less than you could. How will you change that?

For more than 40 years, wages have flatlined, while productivity has grown unabated. Yet from the end of the second World War to the 1970s, wages increased at the same rate as productivity. The more productive labor became, the more you earned for your labor. Not anymore.

Disconnect between productivity and typical worker compensation,* 1948–2013

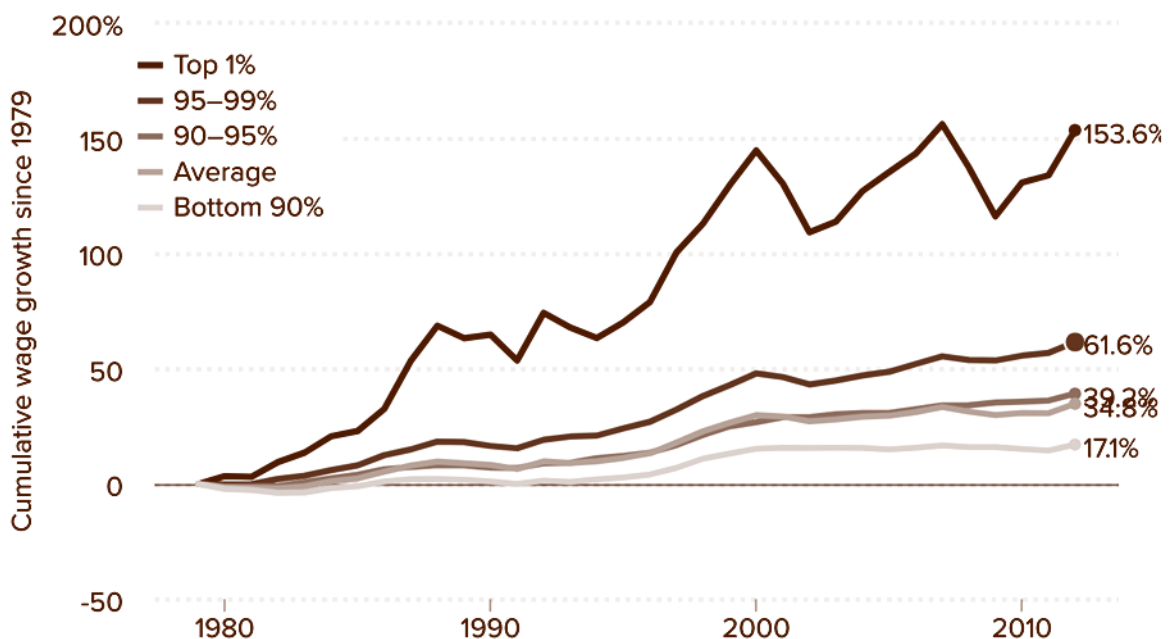


“From 1948 to 1979, productivity rose 108.1 percent, and hourly compensation increased 93.4 percent. From 1979 to 2013, productivity rose 64.9 percent, and hourly compensation rose 8.2 percent... Much of this productivity growth accrued to those with the very highest wages. The top 1 percent of earners saw cumulative gains in annual wages of 153.6

percent between 1979 and 2012—far in excess of economy-wide productivity.”

Labor is more productive now than ever, but workers today earn no more than their parents or grandparents did. For the overwhelming majority, income growth is far below average. For a tiny minority, it is far above average.

Cumulative change in real annual wages, by wage group, 1979–2012



To the extent that incomes grew, it was mostly because people worked longer hours, not because their wages increased.

Labor has become more productive because the production process grows increasingly capital-intensive. Labor is increasingly supplemented by technology. Workers become less and less important to the extent that they are mere laborers, mere cogs in the machine. That means the work of developing new technology and applying advanced technology creatively becomes more important, while repetitive, mechanical, mindless drudgery becomes less important.

This could mean freedom for workers from undesirable toil, and the unleashing of their full creative power. Yet the overwhelming majority of people have to sell their labor to live, and have to take the work they can get. They do not own the companies that employ them, and hence do not enjoy the benefits of new technologies.

Most workers cannot compete in the most highly-valued labor markets, so the competition for the less important, less desirable work becomes more intense, driving down wages in those markets. Because employers can hire such workers on the cheap, they have less of an incentive to employ labor saving technology.

Wage growth is weak whether or not you have a college degree. Even high-earning workers are getting fleeced: the wage gap between them and the top 1%—mostly corporate managers and finance professionals—

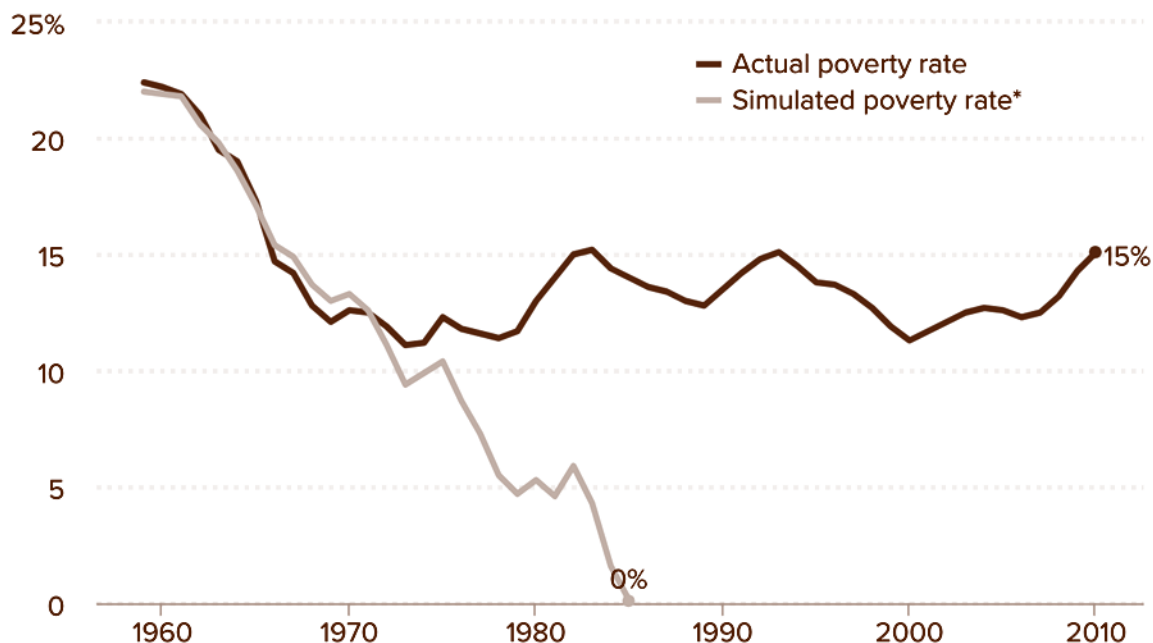
grew faster and more consistently than any other over the same period. The more workers who enter the highly-valued labor markets by obtaining education and credentials, the more competition for those jobs drives down their pay as well. Solidarity among workers within those fields to drive up wages, whether through unions or professional associations, only increases the incentive for employers to invest in labor-saving technology to offset rising labor costs.

Workers across the board earn less pay and work longer hours than technological development could allow. Why should this be the case? Why shouldn't workers benefit from growing productivity?

President Trump has made low wages a live political issue, but will either political party do anything about it? Before the 1970s, wages grew at the same rate under Democratic and Republican administrations. After the 1970s, wages were stagnant under Democratic and Republican administrations.

Had wages continued to grow as they had before 1979, the poverty rate would have been zero by the mid-80s. Instead, the state has had to rely on extensive use of welfare programs to offset stagnant or even falling wages at the bottom, and has had to continuously increase welfare spending simply to prevent the poverty rate from increasing. Poor workers are more educated, more productive, and work longer hours, but the vast majority of them remain poor and grow poorer.

Poverty rate, actual and simulated,* 1959–2012



This was no accident, but the result of inadequate political leadership.

The minimum wage has consistently fallen against inflation, dragging down wages more generally. Legal restrictions have made it more difficult to organize and sustain labor unions, undermining the ability of workers to negotiate the terms of their employment. International trade agreements have been used to weaken the bargaining position of workers in all countries by pitting them against each other. Top marginal tax rates were slashed, motivating the very top earners to compete for a larger share of the wage fund. Financial deregulation has meant greater rewards for finance professionals while the rest of us have shouldered greater risk without any economic benefit, and to our clear detriment. Workers are misclassified as independent contractors, victims of wage theft with little protection or recourse, and are arbitrarily disqualified from receiving overtime pay.

People at the very top have benefited substantially from rising productivity, while the overwhelming majority are doing no better, or worse, than ever. The share of wealth earned as profits has grown at the expense of wages, and among wage earners, the share taken by the very highest earners has grown at the expense of the overwhelming majority.

Why should this be the case? How much could you be earning today, had wages simply continued to grow along with productivity? How much better off would you be if everyone earned more, if everyone were free of poverty, if everyone contributed to and shared in the benefits of technological progress?

There is no shortage of wealth but working people have effectively no control over how it is distributed. All they can do is compete against each other for whatever is available, while those at the top use every means at their disposal to maintain and grow their share.

So long as those at the top seek to maximize profits at the expense of wages, keeping labor cheap, they impede technological and social progress. They only introduce labor saving technology when it is cheaper than the human alternative, and they do all they can to keep labor as cheap and servile as possible.

The demand for higher wages is what drives society forward. If the wage earners themselves were in charge, they would have every reason to fully exploit technological advancements, to even more rapidly increase productivity, minimizing undesirable labor

while maximizing their incomes.

This realization was at the heart of the socialist movement that emerged during the industrial revolution and that reached its peak in the early 20th century.

Workers increasingly realized that they could improve their bargaining position relative to their employers by organizing together to bargain collectively, rather than competing against each other.

Yet more than this, they realized that there was no good reason for workers and employers to be two separate groups of people standing opposed to each other. They realized that the organized workers could cooperatively manage their work, and that way, all would share in the benefits of that cooperation, rather than one group benefiting at the expense of society.

At first, they sought to win the capitalists over to this vision, and to use their democratic rights to advocate for it. Yet the workers, whether organizing merely to bargain for higher wages or for political change, were met with violent repression over and over again, and the conditions of their labor continued to deteriorate. The capitalist class only seemed to care about democracy so long as they remained in control, and the workers remained subordinate.

The working class struggle continued to develop, and with it, the movement for socialism. By the end of the 19th century, they had managed to reduce the working day, which could be as long as 18 or 20 hours, to 10 hours, and fought to further reduce it to 8 hours

On May 1st, 1886, American workers planned a mass strike in favor of the 8 hour day. They were met with violent repression. A few days later a rally was held at the Haymarket Square in Chicago to oppose that repression. Police ordered the crowd to disperse. Then, an unknown person threw a bomb into the path of the police, killing one officer and injuring six others. The police fired on the crowd, killing four and injuring many as they fled.

The police could not discover the source of the bomb, but decided to make an example of eight radical organizers, claiming they incited the crowd to violence with their agitational rhetoric. The eight men were found guilty for exercising their first amendment rights, and seven were sentenced to death. Workers at the time knew why they had to hang: to serve as an example. This is what happens when you step out of

line. Yet this threat did not dissuade them: another mass strike for the 8 hour day was planned for May 1, 1890.

At the same time, the workers' movement in Europe had grown strong and animated, organizing their own political parties for socialism. This culminated in 1889, when these parties united to form an international party. At this Congress, attended by four hundred delegates, it was decided that the 8 hour day must be the first demand. A delegate moved that this demand be expressed in all countries through a general strike. The delegate of the American workers called attention to the decision of his comrades to strike on May 1.

The Congress decided to declare this the date of an international general strike, in which the workers of the world would stand together for the benefit not only of themselves, but all of humanity, and which the international working class would observe every year until the final May Day, when the working people will have won over the immense majority, and begin to lead the world toward socialism.

The socialist movement collapsed before this could occur, and socialism has fallen into disrepute for having failed. Yet the conditions of working people continue to deteriorate. The technological progress we wrestle with today is but the continuation of the industrial revolution, but the working class is no

longer organized around the goal of leading this revolution, and using it to emancipate all of humanity. Instead, working people remain subordinate, depressed, desperate, or at best, satisfied with far less than they could have.

May Day is still celebrated around the world, but the vision of freedom it represented has been largely forgotten. Yet so long as people hope to free themselves through their own work, and so long as they find themselves competing not only against employers, but against each other, for the ability to do so, this vision cannot disappear. Working people can take control of their own lives, but only if they realize the value of cooperation and organize together for their common benefit.

Working people make this world run, but we do not decide how it is run. We do not enjoy the full fruits of our own labor. We can change that, if we decide to do so, and organize.

Working people unite! Join the Socialist Party! Together, we can free the world!

Note: The claims about compensation and productivity trends are derived from the Economic Policy Institute's 2014 paper, "Raising America's Pay: Why It's Our Central Economic Policy Challenge" by Josh Bivens, Elise Gould, Lawrence Mishel, and Heidi Shierholz. Available here: <https://www.epi.org/publication/raising-americas-pay/>



The Return of the Walkout: Collective Action in Academia

by Amanda Riggle



South Korea, Japan, Singapore, Hong Kong, Finland, United Kingdom, Canada, Netherlands, Ireland, and Poland. What do these nations have in common? They're all ranked the top ten schools for education while the U.S. ranks 14th. We rank 24th in the world for literacy, and 17th in fourth grade math performance. The U.S. likes to brag about being number 1 (which we are in things like school shootings and military expenditures) but we've fallen far from the first spot in education and have been falling

for a long time now. Our schools are in dire straits – our students are under threat not just from gun violence but from a lack of funding and a lack of support by the government. What our government has failed to do, and continues to fail to do, has pushed teachers, students, and other members of the public to once again unite in collective action to fight for the things our schools need: more funding for students, more improvements in the classroom, and more unionizing at the

graduate level. Labor has once again found that collective action is the most direct and effective way of getting their demands met.

Before the statewide Arizona Teacher's Strike which has just begun, the first to catch the nation's attention in 2018 were the teacher walkouts in West Virginia. Shortly thereafter, Oklahoma and Kentucky teachers walked out of their jobs to shut down school districts to protest cuts in pay, cuts in benefits, and to demand more funding in their classrooms for their students. With Arizona, the trend of teachers in red states walking out of the classroom and picking up picket signs has continued while also growing. The Arizona walkout has made history as being the first statewide walkout for teachers. News sources from the right slam teachers for being selfish, but across the nation teachers are some of our lowest-paid workers with Arizona teacher's making roughly 45K a year, ranking 47th out of 50 states. But teachers are not on strike for low pay, proposed pension cuts, and benefits packages alone: teachers are striking for their students' welfare as well. With textbooks falling apart, outdated materials, unsafe working conditions like old, broken desks, and no funding for supplies (which teachers end up paying out of pocket), teachers are striking to improve the education of their students. Oklahoma, for example, ranks 50th out of 50 states for school funding. When teachers walkout, they aren't doing so with their own interests in mind but in the interest of their families, their communities, and their students.

Students across the U.S. are following their teachers' examples and have started walking out in protest as well – but this time, in response to gun violence in schools. From students in Parkland, Florida to students in my own backyard from the Inland Empire, California, students are taking to the streets in mass demonstrations and walkouts on the anniversary of Columbine. Gun laws and gun violence are controversial across the U.S. – indeed, they are controversial in our own party (Socialist Party USA). As someone who was in high school during the Columbine shootings, I can heavily empathize with today's students and their fears. At my high school, a month after Columbine, there was a bomb threat on our campus which was deemed a prank. Despite the threat, we all had to attend school that day. We had a bridge connecting our two campuses that was narrow and gated and the only way we were to cross the street that divided our schools. That day, students cried as they were afraid of a bomb being placed on that bridge or someone closing the gates on students while crossing and opening fire. We were fine, but that one day was only a minor dose of fear in comparison to what students face today for violence in schools happens on a much larger and more frequent scale than it did in the days of Columbine. As the Washington Post reports, more than 208,000 students have faced gun violence in school since Columbine on April 20th, 1999. Students today are tired of being afraid – they are tired of threats to their lives – and they are tired of failed measures by the government from police in schools (who perpetuate violence against black and

brown children and can be found hiding in a park during any real violence on campus). Instead of arming teachers in classrooms, students want real solutions and, since the government seems incapable of coming up with anything practical or agreeing on restrictions that might protect students, collective action is once again a tool students are employing to get media attention and to get their message heard: the U.S. needs to take real steps in preventing gun violence in schools.

At the graduate level, graduate students, often overworked and underpaid for their labor, have begun to unionize in the private school sector. Starting with the University of Chicago and going all the way up to the Supreme Court, University of Chicago graduate students were denied the right to unionize for the laws that allow public school students to form unions and to use collective bargaining was ruled not to extend to private universities. While the University of Chicago students have since withdrawn their lawsuit at the federal level (in, what the student representatives said, was a choice to prevent Trump's administration from overturning the lower court's Columbia precedent), graduate students at private universities across the country are now unionizing. Earlier in 2018, University of Pennsylvania students were granted the right to unionize followed by Harvard in April. These students make less than adjuncts for the classes they teach, take on large workloads, and are told they should like it because they are in a graduate program and this is part of their academic training. Unlike adjuncts though, graduate

students often sign contracts stating that they cannot work another job outside of their department and if they are caught working, they can lose any financial support they may have and can be booted out of the program. To fight back against the continuously growing academic administration at colleges and universities that puts profit ahead of teachers, students, and education, graduate student unions can use collective bargaining and collective actions, such as walkouts if their demands aren't met, to create a better work environment across academia.

Academia has once again found power and a voice in collective action and in solidarity. On May 1st, 1886, 300,000 workers in 13,000 workplaces across the U.S. walked out and demanded an 8-hour workday. States are beginning to see the collective action of our teachers and students as a threat and are passing laws to rebuke teachers that would attempt walkouts, which means one thing: collective action is working. It is through our collective action, and through our constitutional right to assemble and protest, that workers have the most power and the most protection. It is the hope of this author that, much like the workers at the *L.A. Times*, this rediscovery of unionizing and solidarity continues to spread across the nation as we see more workers fight for their right to unionize and to use collective bargaining to protect themselves from the capitalist class and an inept government.

This Holiday Brought To You By Socialism

by Adam Powell

Rare indeed are the times when members of the radical left – that disheveled mass of ideological zealots, utopian reformists, militant radicals and everything beyond and between – are afforded the opportunity to simply celebrate their alliance with the revolutionary resistance and the various victories its known throughout the course of its history in this most capitalist of nations. But May Day, also known around the world as International Worker's Day, is just such an occasion – an opportunity to take pride in our upstream breaststroke, to hold hands beneath the red flag and proclaim for one day that our movement persists and the revolutionaries which now carry it upon their shoulders are more fearless and furious than those who came before and more willing than ever to push for radical change wherever it might be fomented. In the face of fascist hordes, we have stood our ground courageously and defended our brothers and sisters in locales from one sea to the next; beneath the gaze of an intrusive, corrupt and misanthropic administration, we have proclaimed with fists raised that we will fight every attempt to further belittle the suffering masses of this nation. Just as the founders of our movement did so many years ago, we live each day



as an act of defiance and beg the opposition to attempt to undermine the humanity and decency of our movement and our ideals.

The history of the socialist labor movement in this nation is no secret to those who currently make up the ranks of its modern apparatus – the eight-hour work day, the weekend, child labor laws, health and safety standards and more were all hard-fought battles

won by those within the radical movements of the early 20th Century – nor are the attempts made by the United States government to undermine our international holiday in an effort to diminish the contributions hundreds bled and died for to provide the American working class with some sort of decency and welfare. Thus, there is little need to traverse these grounds – undoubtedly, other writers will do so. More than the history of the day, or the battles which brought it before the international proletariat, I am focused on the very real opportunity that we have to use this day as a way of uniting our working-class brothers and sisters and establishing a community where before one scarcely existed.

Across the country, May Day will certainly feature some of its trademark activities – radicals shouting through bullhorns beneath red banners on the importance of the worker's movement and the need for solidarity; protests and demonstrations calling for higher pay, safer workplaces, better benefits and other such demands; small contingents crowded behind tables handing out literature and stickers – and, to be sure, none of these should be abandoned or criticized. May Day is very much about educating the public to the continuing struggles of the working class. However, just as the socialist movement and the working class have changed over the course of history, so too must our strategies and tactics.

Here in Alabama, where the sun will inevitably be blistering our skin by May, we use this socialist holiday as an opportunity to bring the community together in a state of fellowship and camaraderie – while this event will be hosted by the Socialist Party of Central Alabama, members of nearby chapters of the Party for Socialism and Liberation (PSL) and the Democratic Socialists of America (DSA) will be in attendance to simply celebrate our comradely efforts in the struggle against oppression; members of local activist groups, focused on women's issues or LGBTQ issues or any number of other issues, will be afforded the opportunity to educate those in attendance on their efforts and find ways that the community and the socialist resistance can support these efforts in the community; families will be in attendance, with

children getting their first taste of activism and radicalism – some will be politically motivated while others will simply be happy to have some place to go with their children on a Friday evening. We'll be raffling off books and albums and art work and museum tickets, we'll be providing barbecue plates and live music, we'll be collecting canned goods and other donations – acts of this nature are as revolutionary as any other, for, at their root, they are designed to create unity and harmony where before there was disorder and dissonance.

Last year's event, hosted in much the same nature, only reinforced our local cadre's support for an action of this nature. People came from all over the state and mingled as brothers and sisters while music played and speakers discussed our movement and its ideals; they learned about organizations making a difference daily in the lives of people with needs of various kinds; they celebrated winning a radical book or a local record and dispersed with full bellies and contented hearts. Though we were made aware ahead of time that the local police were remaining vigilant of our activities, we went into the day with no fear and, when the police did show up, we invited them to stay and listen – they did just that and took along literature after speaking with comrades about our ideas and vision.

While many of our acts as revolutionaries are specifically designed to agitate systems of authority, it is important that we not overlook the very radical notion of unity in the face of divisive climates. Certainly, we want for the population at large to know that we oppose the capitalist system in all of its incarnations, we want our comrades to be recognized as opponents of an oppressive and corrupt system which exploits and demeans those which contribute the most to it, but more than that we want for the people to recognize that they have a home within our ranks and are welcomed despite their level of political education, economic position or any other such inconsequential marker. Further, we want for them to recognize that we are the vehicle by which they will be transported to liberation and that their support is paramount to our success and theirs. For, if we are the vehicle, then the suffering classes are most surely the driver.

Such actions may bore the more militant among our ranks, those who believe agitation to be the

only method for effectively combatting the enemies of the people, but in order for actions of agitation to be successful they must first have the wide support of the people – without that, we are little more than an angry contingent shouting down a deaf opponent. It is by masses of people that our battles will be won, and those masses of people must be won over to our cause before we can purport to serve them or have their interests at heart. Certainly, I can speak to the worries and troubles of the working class as I suffer those worries and troubles, but I cannot speak to the worries and troubles of minority workers, of women workers, of LGBTQ workers – for that, we have to have the voices of those minority workers, those women workers and those LGBTQ workers among our chorus. They will not, nor will anyone else, be won to our side simply by seeing our displays of disdain. We must be competent at offering them something the capitalist political parties cannot – a revolutionary family, within which each is responsible for the other and determined to see the uplifting of all. Obviously, this is a grand way to describe a simple community cook-out, but simultaneously it is precisely what these types of community events are meant to be, and most certainly can be, when held in attentive and careful hands.

One must acknowledge that such a simple and pleasant effort is a far stretch from the May Day rallies of epochs past – in the Latin America of the 1950's, where the blood of campesinos still stained the urban corner or rural farm, May Day demonstrations were an opportunity for workers to show their might and allay any assertion that among their ranks were weak links; around the turn of the century, the May Day rallies in the United States, and countless other locales across the globe, took on much the same timbre. But a stark difference haunts the modern movement, and it is a hurdle which must be jumped if we hope to regain the steam which propelled earlier movements – imperialist and capitalist propaganda, spewing forth across any number of nations today as it has for decades uncounted, has crippled the modern socialist movement. The people are the bricks in our revolutionary fortress – if we hope to see that fortress restored to its former glory, surely we must venture to the brickyard. And if the modern brickyard is non-

conducive to our efforts – a Friday night concert, a Monday morning coffee break, a Wednesday evening book club – then we must create one wherever and however we find the opportunity. Surely, no better opportunity exists than a May Day celebration.

If we want for the people to know of our disdain for the current system, our celebration of May Day is all that is needed – the holiday has been stricken from the United States lexicon specifically because it is a day to celebrate revolution and resistance, so to simply recognize the day is an act of dissent. If we want for the people to know that we stand on the side of the down-trodden, stand for their liberation and uplifting, we need only feed their bellies, their souls and their minds. If we want for

people to learn of our ideals and motivations, surely a conversation with a comrade is more effective than any speech or scrap of literature we could hurl in their direction. My May Day celebration may not be the militant force of agitation which inspires so many, but it is the medicine which is needed for the diseases which continue to incapacitate our movement – we need bodies and voices, ideas and actions. We need the people – let us use this May Day, and as many as it takes hereafter, to prove to them that we are indeed here for them and want nothing more than for them to join us in our effort to improve the lot of every sufferer of this land and those across the whole of the Earth.



Wage theft is a rampant issue that all workers face.

Capitalist policies empower our bosses to steal our wages and those policies are supported by both the Democratic and Republican parties.

We deserve more than the \$7.25 an hour federal minimum wage.

We deserve to have all of our hours at work counted and paid for.

We deserve paid internships, health insurance, and a livable wage.

We at the Socialist Party USA want to make this happen.

May Day Means International Solidarity

by David Keil

May Day was initiated in 1884 by the national convention of the Federation of Organized Trades and Labor Unions. It stated that "eight hours shall constitute a legal day's labor from and after May 1, 1886." This later became the American Federation of Labor.

May Day 1886 saw 300,000 workers celebrate by taking the day off. Forty thousand went on strike in Chicago alone, led by anarchists, mostly immigrants. The main demand was the eight-hour day. On the third day of the strike, police fired on a crowd confronting strikebreakers. A massive rally the next day at Haymarket Square was threatened by an order for the police to disperse the rally. A bomb exploded in the path of police near the rally point, killing a police officer and wounding seven.

Eight labor leaders and activists, six of them immigrants, were accused on flimsy evidence. Four were executed in 1887. These were the Haymarket Martyrs with whom May Day is associated. May Day is

the day when immigrants in the U.S., and people in nearly every country, stand up in solidarity and leadership. Politicians and pro-capitalist labor officials, fearing solidarity, especially international working-class solidarity, have succeeded in nearly suppressing May Day in the U.S.

An exception was the general strike led by Mexican immigrants, centered in Los Angeles, in 2006. That action has echoed since and has prepared some U.S. workers, mostly immigrants, for active opposition to the current campaign of deportations and anti-immigrant hate.

As the main fortress of world imperialism, the U.S. has a prevailing culture of entitlement to dominate and bully the rest of the world. We who work for social justice and workers' rights depend on struggles abroad, often against our own rulers, to sustain our own struggle.

In return we have an obligation to oppose Washington's military moves above all. Our



international solidarity is what keeps our own work alive.

International solidarity in the U.S. against the expansionist aggression of Washington goes back at to the war of 1845-1848 that seized half of Mexico. Writers Mark Twain and Henry David Thoreau condemned it, as did abolitionists such as Frederick Douglass. The convention of the New England Workingmen's Association opposed the war as a support for the extension of slavery to new territories, which it was.

As the U.S. prepared to go to war against Spain to seize Cuba, Puerto Rico, and the Philippines, many labor unions saw through the patriotic hysteria and condemned that war. Authorities stopped a May Day parade in New York in 1898, organized by the Socialist Labor Party

Our socialist internationalist tradition is that of the Industrial Workers of the World, founded in the U.S. in 1905. The IWW was a branch of socialism known as "anarcho-syndicalist" because it called for one big union that would overturn capitalism. The IWW still exists. Many Socialist Party members belong.

International solidarity requires unification of feuding socialist groups. Division is an unhealthy tradition of U.S. socialism. The International Workingmen's Association (the First International) tragically divided around the time of the U.S. Civil War, separating anarchists from socialists. There was no need for that split. Likewise there was no need for socialists to divide over trade-union tactics around the turn of the century, with a group led by Daniel DeLeon feuding with a group led by Eugene V. Debs.

Moreover, the split in U.S. socialism after the Russian Revolution weakened it fatally, socialism having been a mass party before that time. After socialist parties in Europe fragmented by taking opposing sides in the world war, a tragic crumbling of the international socialist movement took place. It has not healed yet.

We also can look back proudly, however, to the antiwar activism of the Socialist Party, founded in 1901. When the U.S. joined predatory European powers to engage in the slaughter of World War I, in 1917, socialists led antiwar protests. They paid the price of going to prison or being deported for it.

Today U.S. imperialism wages war without end, mostly in the region of Iraq, Afghanistan, and Syria, but including Palestine and Yemen via its junior partners Israel and Saudi Arabia. A basic obligation of

socialists is to actively oppose these wars as a top priority, including by making common cause with forces we disagree with against a common adversary, the U.S. ruling class and its military.

An example is the recent missile attack against Syria. It was intended to limit Russian and Iranian engagement in that region and to serve notice on all around that world that bipartisan Washington can get away with firing missiles where it chooses and under any pretext. Relatively small protests answered this missile attack; their small size was an encouragement to Washington, and we can expect to see more such open violations of international law and the U.S. constitution.

International solidarity includes solidarity with all people in the world against whatever ruling classes oppress them, whether allies of the U.S. or not. In Syria, the population rose up in 2011 on the example of Egypt and Tunisia, challenging the dictator Bashar Al-Assad. The Syrian government replied with heavy weapons, killing, imprisoning, murdering, and torturing protesters. Our solidarity is with the democratic aspirations of the Syrian people against both their own regime and our imperialist rulers.

The left in the U.S. is currently bitterly divided over Syria, on top of all the previous divisions and splits. On one side are some who reply to U.S. aggression by defending the regime in Damascus. On the other side, separated, are others who embrace the Syrian popular neighborhood committees but shun antiwar actions. Socialists are faced with a dilemma over how to express international solidarity.

One way is to publish the truth both about U.S. militarism and about the Syrian dictatorship and similar apparatuses of oppression. Another is to join in common action with diverse, even opposed, forces wherever we can agree. We can build solidarity with popular struggles by working with activists from countries like Syria and Iran to publicize those struggles – even in cases where those activists or people they work with in countries like Syria might have illusions about the likely results of U.S. intervention. We can build solidarity against U.S. interventions by working for anti-intervention actions with anyone who is prepared to work with us, including supporters of governments we don't support.

What can tie together our tactics is international socialist and working-class solidarity, a basic obligation we accept on May Day, because that's what May Day means.

Tuesday, May 4th, 1886

In Haymarket Square
In Chicago, Illinois

Up to **3,000** workers marched peacefully

Police attacked the crowd and **12** died

7 of **8** anarchists were sentenced to death

1 was sentenced to **15** years in prison

4 were executed. **1** was found hanged.

The last **3** were pardoned and **all** are
considered heroes by history.

SO WE COULD HAVE THE **8**
HOUR WORK DAY

Information from History.Com and IllinoisLaborHistory.Org

The Socialist Party USA has locals and local organizers in:

ALABAMA	NEW JERSEY
ARIZONA	NEW MEXICO
CALIFORNIA	NEW YORK
COLORADO	NORTH CAROLINA
FLORIDA	OHIO
INDIANA	OREGON
ILLINOIS	PENNSYLVANIA
KENTUCKY	SOUTH CAROLINA
MAINE	SOUTH DAKOTA
MASSACAHUSETTS	TENNESSEE
MICHIGAN	TEXAS
MINESOTA	UTAH
MISSISSIPPI	WASHINGTON
MISSOURI	WASHINGTON D.C.
NEW HAMPSHIRE	WISCONSIN

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