

March on International Workers' Day, May 1

Sunday, May 1--Rally at 1:00 pm, March at 3:00 pm--611 20th Ave. S. (behind St. Mary's Church in Judkins Park)

Sponsored by May 1st Action Coalition and El Comité

Anti-capitalist march, Sunday, May 1 beginning 6:00 pm at Westlake (4th and Pine) No sponsors announced

May Day 2016 comes at a time of stress and crisis for working people everywhere. As the rich grow richer, governments of both the left and right are demanding more austerity from the masses. But they're also faced with growing mass anger, which they try to misdirect toward anyone but themselves and the system they defend. One favorite target of capitalist politicians in the U.S., Europe and elsewhere has become immigrants.

In Europe: the “refugee crisis”

According to the UN there were almost 60 million “forcibly displaced” people worldwide at the end of 2014--the most since World War II, and this number *excludes* the tens of millions of workers migrating in search of jobs. The majority of these people entering Europe are escaping the bombs and starvation sieges of Syrian dictator Assad and his allies who've killed more than 200,000 people. They're also escaping warfare in Iraq and Afghanistan--countries the U.S. and various European imperialists have devastated and where the U.S. still has troops, and from ISIS and the Taliban.

Last year over a million of these refugees entered Europe after journeys in which some 5000 people perished on land and sea. This year an estimated 1132 people have drowned in the Mediterranean, perhaps 400 when one boat capsized this month. Many of these deaths are caused when packed boats are forced to take dangerous routes to avoid naval patrols—now including from NATO--that send them back.

But once in Europe the refugees only find new crises: Requirements for paperwork proving they meet the EU definitions of a refugee. Razor-wire fences, police clubs, rubber bullets and teargas. Islamophobic incitements by right-wing and fascist parties leading to violent attacks and murders. Bearing the brunt of terrorist fears stirred by racist politicians. The harsh Calais refugee camp in France for those seeking

asylum in Britain and, now, concentration camps on Greek islands and deportations to Turkey. They are being treated like outlaws, like thieves.

Why?

Highly industrialized Europe, pop. 508 million, can absorb millions more people, e.g., in the 1990s it absorbed millions from Eastern Europe. Yet the British Prime Minister has talked of a “swarm” of people entering Europe, and the newspapers talk of an “invasion.” In this way they're inflaming a racist and bigoted anti-immigrant hysteria under which refugees are blamed for problems like Europe's longstanding high unemployment as well as to divert attention from the fact that it is the European governments who have for years been shrinking social services as part of their austerity programs.

But the refugees have been resisting their brutal treatment by smashing through barbed wire, organizing protests demanding freedom of movement, housing, the right to work, an end to confiscations, and more. Furthermore, progressive Europeans have rallied to the refugees' side by organizing demonstrations of tens of thousands to welcome them and denounce the reactionary policies of the EU governments. They've also given food and shelter, defended refugees by organizing battles with the nazis and torn down fences erected by the xenophobic authorities to prevent migrants from entering Europe.

In the United States: Demand full rights for all immigrants now!

In this country millions of migrants slave without rights because they're undocumented. They're disproportionately injured or killed on the job. Threat of deportation undermines their ability to organize resistance to super-exploitation by their employers. They pay an estimated \$23.6 billion yearly in federal, state and local taxes but are banned from collecting

social security and medicare benefits.

In order to unite all the working people to stand up in defense of their interests against those of the capitalist blood-suckers, we must fight these injustices. And a review of the past year shows why this must be done outside the two big capitalist parties.

Trump, an obvious enemy of workers and immigrants

The number of undocumented migrants in this country has been declining for several years, with large numbers returning to Mexico. This could change, but due to changes in Mexico's demographics previous levels of migration north are unlikely. But such facts are irrelevant to hysteria-mongers like the ultra-nationalist and racist Donald Trump. He has slandered migrants as bringing in drugs and crime and being rapists, and proclaimed that if he's elected president he'll build a 2000-mile wall along the Mexican border to keep them out, and even force the Mexican government to pay for it. Trump also says he would deport all of the estimated 11 million undocumented immigrants in the country. This is impossible, but it *is* a threat to impose draconian policies. And Trump shouts about immigrants: "*they're taking your jobs and you better be careful.*"

But joblessness is a permanent feature of the capitalist system of production. The drive for profit constantly forces the capitalists to maximize productivity through mechanization, speed-ups, job combinations, and so on, which result in fewer jobs. Additionally, the anarchy of capitalist production gives rise to economic crises--like the 2008 crash--which result in still more unemployment. Thus, the UN predicts there will be over 212 million people out of work globally by 2019, up from 201 million now, a time of economic recovery. Trump also ignores that undocumented workers buy all kinds of consumer goods and services, thereby causing an expansion of jobs in the industries producing, transporting and selling them.

And the "pro-immigrant" Democrats?

Walls too, but less ugly ones. There are already 652 miles of fences and walls at the Mexican border, where they've caused hundreds of deaths yearly as people use dry and mountainous trails to avoid them. They should be torn down. But this year's best Democratic candidate as far as immigrant rights are concerned, Bernie Sanders, says he would *extend* the present walls and fences with a "virtual" fence of all

kinds of high technology gadgetry.

Deportations too, but fewer. Obama has notoriously deported some 2.8 million people—something Hillary Clinton and Sanders now criticize. Still, Sanders wants *more* resources allocated to Border Patrol training and oversight. In other words, he wants to make the Border Patrol a more effective force in--among other things--deporting migrants.

A rotten trade-off for a path to citizenship. The Democrats and many Republicans have long supported a path to citizenship that was a maze of fines, fees, and difficult legal hurdles that would leave applicants living 10, 20 or more years as second-class, super-exploitable people. Moreover, this reform legislation was always linked with all kinds of police-state "border security" measures. Now, Sanders has announced a "road map" to citizenship plan that would take five years, and he proposes various measures that would clearly benefit many undocumented people, as well as promising to extend and expand Obama's executive orders exempting certain undocumented immigrants from deportation. But the good parts of Sanders' plan remain linked with his above-mentioned attacks on migrants.

Conclusion

Immigrant rights and worker activists must therefore build their movement outside electoralism no matter how they vote, if they vote, and even if the Trumpists are defeated. No matter what happens in the elections, we need a movement that will back the immigrants no matter what the various parties say, a movement that isn't subordinated to what's realistic for the parties of the rich. In workplaces, schools and everywhere, let us persist in agitating against racist demagoguery and persist in refuting the lies about migrant workers "stealing jobs." Let us persist in denouncing walls or fences of all kinds, and persist in rallying the people against deportations. And when the presidential candidates come to town let us confront them with our demands!

Seattle Communist Study Group

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(Write us at seattle.com.sg@gmail.com)

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