



# Speak Out Now

April 28, 2025 mail@speakoutsocialists.org speakoutsocialists.org IG:@sonsocialists

## Celebrate International Workers' Day!

May 1 is May Day, or International Workers' Day. On May Day, there are demonstrations, rallies, festivals, and gatherings in the vast majority of countries throughout the world. It is a celebration of the international working class and the need for a better life for workers everywhere.

All over the world today, workers are under attack by those currently in power. Celebrating May Day can remind us of our history and the power that we have to change the world we live in.

In the mid-1800s, as industry expanded in capitalist countries, workers were forced to fight for their basic rights. Workers were paid poverty wages for working 12, 14 and sometimes 16 hours a day, under extremely dangerous conditions. Child labor was the norm. Bosses used nationalism and racism to distract workers from their real enemy - the capitalists. Widespread resistance to this exploitation created the modern-day workers' movements. Struggles to defend their basic rights led to workers organizing unions to defend their day-to-day interests. Opposition to the injustices of capitalism developed into anarchist, socialist, and communist workers' movements with the goal of the working class running society.

As resistance to grinding exploitation grew around the world, the fight for the eight-hour workday became a global demand. In the U.S., strikes and demonstrations increased in cities and towns across the country.

May 1, 1886 was chosen as a national day of strikes, resulting in 340,000 workers closing down 12,000 workplaces across the U.S. In Chicago, a major center of working class activity, tensions were high. An estimated 100,000 workers, in a city of about 600,000, took to the streets and shut down businesses throughout the city. The police didn't dare attack such a massive show of force.

Workers' actions continued in the days that followed. On May 3, hundreds of workers went to support the strike at McCormick Reaper Works. Police fired into the crowd, killing several people, and wounding many more. The next day, at Haymarket Square, workers gathered to protest the police violence. The cops charged the crowd, dynamite was detonated as the police attacked, leading to more police gunfire. At least seven workers were killed and more than 200 wounded. Seven cops were killed by the explosion and gunfire.

Eight anarchists were arrested for the bombing, and despite a lack of evidence, four were hanged by the state.

This led to an outpouring of support from workers around the world, who saw these men and those killed by the police as martyrs who gave their lives for the vision of livable and dignified working conditions.

The movement for the eight-hour day continued and in 1889, the Socialist International declared May 1 an international day of solidarity, a tradition that continues around the world.

The fight for the eight-hour day brought recognition to the reality of workers' lives. We don't live to work. We work to live! But still today, we face many of the same challenges. Most workers have to work more than eight hours a day to live, especially in the poorer countries of the world.

Wages do not keep up with the rising cost of living. So, many of us are forced to work longer hours or multiple jobs. In the U.S., the politicians are repealing many of the protections that workers had won in the past. Child labor laws are being lifted or loosened in some states. The U.S. government is attempting to break federal workers' unions and is stripping government agencies of their power to impose even minimal regulations on corporations. Social Security and Medicaid are under attack, and Medicare may be next. Politicians are targeting immigrant workers claiming they are responsible for crimes and loss of jobs, and are deporting them without due process.

Today, people are beginning to mobilize to confront the increasing attacks on our lives. Workers in different parts of the country have been forced to go on strike or organize actions to defend themselves. But those strikes have been isolated, each group of workers fighting for much of the same thing. We are all facing the same system of exploitation, as those in power destroy our Earth with their limitless greed and wars. When we look to our history, we are reminded that we are much stronger when we stand together as a class.

This May Day there will be massive demonstrations around the world. It is time for us to join together here in the U.S. There are May Day rallies, marches, and gatherings being organized in some cities and towns. And where there aren't any yet, we can organize our own. We can gather together to share our histories and our common struggles. We need to celebrate. We must see our possibilities and the necessity to organize to fight for a society we need and deserve.

This May Day we say, "Workers of the World, Unite!"

## ***Bay Area, California:***

### **Few Voters Elect Oakland's New Mayor**

On April 15, Oakland held a special election for mayor. Barbara Lee, longtime Alameda County Congresswoman, won the race. Only 36% of eligible voters bothered to vote. That is far fewer voters than in past Oakland mayoral elections. Barbara Lee claims she can help Oakland through its budget crisis. It is hard to believe that she will do anything but the same old politics, or that her opponent would be any better.

Most Oakland residents are not fooled into voting as a solution to their everyday problems. People don't see the government improving their daily lives. They are weighed down by the rising cost of living, whether rents or at the grocery store, not to mention increased pressures on the job, cuts in government benefits, and deterioration of services. Most people aren't totally deceived by the politicians' lies. What if we all got organized?

## ***The Triangle, North Carolina:***

### **Crackdown on Students**

#### **Protesting Unsafe Housing**

Students at North Carolina Central University (a historically Black public university) organized a speak out and protest against housing conditions on April 16.

Despite intimidation from university administration, students gathered to voice their frustration and share their experiences of mold, pests, and non-functional hot water and AC. Police brutally tackled protesters to the ground and arrested five. The students have been charged with failure to disperse and resisting arrest.

This response is completely outrageous and racist! It is part of the nationwide crackdowns on college campuses against protests and activists. There is money to fix the housing issues, but all the university wants to do is bully students into shutting up and feeling powerless. Students are right to speak out and to organize! To support: [chuffed.org/project/support-the-durham-5](http://chuffed.org/project/support-the-durham-5)

We live in the wealthiest country in the world, and it is our labor that has created all of this wealth. We aren't the ones who benefit from this. The super rich — the bosses of the big corporations and banks — keep the wealth and make all the decisions. Working people do the work that makes society run, and we can organize to unite our forces. When we do, we have enormous power to change things and make a better world.

## ***Newark, New Jersey:***

### **The State is Late!**

#### **We Need to Stand Up for Ourselves!**

Sixteen contractors building a high rise in Jersey City between 2018 and 2022 failed to pay workers overtime and sick leave, make contributions to a state unemployment and disability fund, or even report wages. After investigating since 2021, the state is finally suing six contractors involved for back payments and damages! Why did it take so long?

We shouldn't have to wait years to get what we deserve! If our bosses don't treat us right, we can organize on the job and in our communities to take direct actions against them. We can withhold our labor until our grievances are addressed. If we wait for some higher power, justice delayed becomes justice denied.

## ***Baltimore, Maryland:***

### **10 years after the Freddie Gray Uprising**

On April 12, 2015, Freddie Gray, a 25-year-old Black man was arrested in West Baltimore. The police physically abused Gray after arresting him, breaking his neck and killing him.

The tragic murder of Freddie Gray sparked a massive protest with people fed up with racist police brutality, segregation, and poverty. In what became known as the Baltimore Uprising, people took to the streets demanding justice. The protests led the State's Attorney to prosecute the officers but ultimately none of them were convicted.

Ten years later, we can look to the Uprising as a lesson that people can be moved to take to the streets to demand the changes we deserve. We cannot have our movements for justice be stolen by politicians—it must be up to regular people to lead the fight.

**MAY  
DAY  
WORKERS  
of the  
WORLD  
UNITE!**

