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REVOLUTION

voice of the
revolutionary
communist
party, usa

the newspaper
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Revolutionary Worker



High school students walk out for immigrant rights, San Fernando Valley, CA, March 2006

AP Photo/LA Daily News, John McCoy

From the Revolutionary Communist Party, USA

On the Occasion of the May 1st Demonstrations for Immigrant Rights

We Are Human Beings, We Demand a Better World, We Will Not Accept Slavery in Any Form

Today, on May 1, all over the world people are celebrating International Workers Day in struggle against the oppression and degradation this capitalist/imperialist system brings down on the people of the world. Here in the U.S., people are stepping out into the streets. They are going up in the face of vicious attacks on immigrants in this country, and refusing to be treated as modern-day slaves.

On this day we raise the call:

**We are human beings,
we demand a better world,
we will not accept slavery
in any form.**

The world cries out for revolution. From the unjust war launched by the U.S. in Iraq, to the children slaving in sweatshops in Pakistan. From the sex trade in Thailand, to the gunning down of Black youth by the police in the streets of U.S. cities. There is the destruction of the environment and there is the destruction of the human spirit, with poverty and hopelessness and humiliation. They are dragging women back into the dark ages, depriving them of any right to determine if and when to have children...and at the same time they are condemning children to a life where they are doomed before they are even born. Countries and continents are left to rot, whole peoples are oppressed in a very lopsided world, where a very few control and use the wealth and resources of the planet while the vast majority have no control over their very lives or the direction of society.

All these things, and thousands more, are beyond unacceptable. All these things, and thousands more, can be laid at the doorstep of the capitalist system, and the political structures and institutions that exist to enforce that system. And the simple truth is that revolution is needed to end all this—revolutions made by the millions of us all over the world who decide that we have just had enough and are going to change the world. Nothing short of revolution will bring an end to all this. That is the true beating heart of May 1, ever since it began 121 years ago.

The Just Struggle for Immigrants' Rights

Last year seemingly out of nowhere a movement for immigrants' rights was born. Millions of immigrants and their allies took to the streets in historic and massive protests. From mid-western meatpacking towns to all the

major U.S. cities to southern farming communities, a sea of immigrants who are daily forced to live in the shadows, avoiding any contact with the authorities, boldly marched to demand a better life. They were joined by people that were born here, from different nationalities, that refuse to go along with criminalizing immigrants.

Major cities were shut down in a show of the huge potential power of the people that was felt across the land. This was part of a wave of protests that put a halt to the hated Sensenbrenner bill (HR 4437) in Congress which would have *criminalized millions of undocumented people and those who help them in any way*. The mushrooming of this movement rattled this whole oppressive system and had reverberations not only throughout this country, but beyond—in Mexico and other countries. May 1st, last year, gave great hope to all those suffering from the weight of exploitation and oppression as well as many who do not directly suffer from this but who hate it nonetheless, that right here in the belly of the most powerful oppressor in the world, modern-day slaves were raising their heads in struggle, and showing that what we do can make a difference.

Today, all the things that brought people into the streets last year have intensified. Day after day, a knock is heard at the door and the Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) police rush in, terrorizing small children and humiliating adults. Or they sweep the streets, grabbing first this one then that one, handcuffing fathers, mothers, and children, arresting 18,000 over the last year, and tearing families apart. At the border, the U.S. sends more troops, more migra, and more high-tech equipment, driving hungry and desperate people to try and cross through the rivers, mountains, and deserts, as the death toll steadily climbs through the thousands.

On college campuses, students acting like storm troopers in Young Republican clubs launch vicious "games" to "hunt the illegal immigrant." Meanwhile, armed Minuteman vigilantes hunt immigrants at the border for real. City governments pass laws prohibiting the renting of houses and apartments to "illegal immigrants." And the "guest worker" programs that are being proposed as the solution by both Bush and the Democrats are nothing more than a new form of slave labor. Plus all these plans include provisions that would fine immigrants thousands and thousands of dollars for coming into the country illegally. None of these plans are any good for the people.

This intolerable situation requires broad and determined opposition and resistance.

What Is the Problem? Capitalism

Meanwhile, the politicians and media have dehumanized a whole section of people, branding them as criminals and thieves and "terrorists." They whip up hysteria about "criminal illegal aliens" sneaking across the border into the country to do harm to "Americans," stealing jobs from other working people, and supposedly causing government budgets to collapse.

But all that talk is just lies. Let's look at the real facts.

The 12 to 20 million undocumented workers estimated to be in the U.S. have been driven into this country by the heartless workings of capitalism and imperialism. The economies in countries like Mexico or Pakistan or Nigeria have been twisted and ruined by the dictates of the U.S. capitalist/imperialist system. At the same time, the capitalist economies of countries like the U.S. are driven to force the wages of workers lower and lower—and to find ever more desperate people who are compelled to slave.

To take just one example, U.S. capital transformed Mexican agriculture to serve the needs of the world market—and in so doing it has driven 1 1/2 million farmers off the land since the 1994 NAFTA (so-called free trade) agreement went into effect and *raised* the price of Mexico's staple food, tortillas. Millions are desperate, and every year hundreds of people die crossing the U.S.-Mexico border, where the wall currently being built by the U.S. now stands as yet another hated symbol of the ugly domination of the U.S. over Mexico. (And remember that this supposedly "sacred" border we hear so much about was created in the first place by an unjust war the U.S. waged against Mexico to extend the slave system and expand U.S. capitalism!) Now those who are in the U.S. form the backbone of the most dangerous and highly exploitative industries, like meatpacking and construction.

You can find a similar story in almost every industry and in almost every country of Asia, Africa, and Latin America. Imperialism drives people from their lands, persecutes and even murders them as they cross the border, and then super-exploits and demonizes them once they are in the imperialist countries. Millions of immigrants are driven to the U.S. from their home countries to be horribly exploited in restaurants, sweatshops, landscaping, and construction. They provide what is almost slave labor for the U.S. economy, an economy that has become so dependent on the super-exploitation of immi-

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grants that it cannot function without it. And the ways in which the fears of millions of native-born people are being manipulated; the divisions that are fanned and enforced between nationalities, even among the oppressed nationalities—all of these are products of capitalism.

This is going on all over the world—over 200 million people have been driven out of the countryside and forced to seek work in places like the U.S., Europe, and Japan. They, along with the 12 to 20 million undocumented workers estimated to be in the U.S., have been driven from their homes by the heartless workings of capitalism and imperialism. Now every capitalist would explain to you that they are not being greedy or malicious, but that they have no choice—and, in a perverted sense, they would be right. Each is driven by the fear of being wiped out by some other capitalist who is working people at still lower wages for still higher profit.

From the point of view of the people on the bottom, there is not an immigration problem, there is a capitalism problem.

Bamboozled

But the rulers of this country, aided by reactionary media blasting their message on TV and radio, have worked very hard to create a situation where the ignorance of people about the real deal will get them to side with them against the immigrants. Many people in the middle class feel under attack in their living standards and quality of life, and they are being misled by the mouthpieces for the very people who are responsible for the bad shape things are in. These people, like Lou Dobbs or the fascist congressman Tancredo, use the immigrants as scapegoats for all the insecurities and problems and fears of the future that *their system* has forced on the majority of people in this country.

One of their most vicious strategies is to set Black people and immigrants against each other. Here are two sections of the people who should be part of the strong core of the revolutionary movement to end this horror. But the Black people are told, “The immigrants are stealing your jobs and taking over your neighborhoods.” And immigrants are told that “Black people are lazy and criminals ready to rob you.” People, often living right next to each other, don’t know the history of how people came to be here and how the system has forced people into the situations they’re in—this is intentionally hidden from people to keep them divided.

But think about it! After all, this is the same system that was born based on a brutal system of slavery. It kidnapped people from Africa, it stole all the land that it now calls its own, and it expanded its global reach through monstrous wars. And this is the system that has been fed ever since by the back-breaking labor of first outright slaves, and then wage slaves—here and all over the world. And now for those people here who cannot be used profitably by the empire, there is a new form of slavery—Black people have been systematically targeted for incarceration, and put again on chain gangs. While those from other countries, whose economies have been dominated and distorted by the same empire, are driven here to work for extremely

low wages with no rights whatsoever—again, a new, if different, form of slavery.

Given all this, what sense does it make for people who share a common problem to be fighting each other for crumbs? What sense does it make for immigrants to take pride in being “good slaves” and join their oppressors in criticizing Black people for not wanting to do that? What sense does it make, especially for Black people, to unite with those who have kept them down for so long against people who come here to the land of broken promises to try to live a little better life? What do you want to do—scramble and squabble for favor with your rulers, or be part of fighting to emancipate all of humanity?

But it doesn’t have to—and we can’t let it—go down like that. When people understand what the actual conditions are that drive people to come here and understand the real history of oppression of the U.S....then they can also see the need to struggle against that whole system.

Resistance...and Revolution

And important positive things *are* going on. Unity is beginning to be built. When ICE agents converged on immigrant workers’ homes in Stillmore, Georgia, with guns and bulletproof vests, arresting 120 Mexican immigrants in raids, the Stillmore mayor spoke out to say, “This reminds me of what I read about Nazi Germany, the Gestapo coming in and yanking people up.” On college campuses, students have confronted and protested the Minutemen when they came to spread their anti-immigrant poison, and they have gone up against the College Republicans when they organized their reactionary “Find the Illegal Immigrant” game. In cities in California people have protested raids and several city governments have declared that they will in no way cooperate with these ICE raids in their communities. People have begun to speak out on the spot when these raids are taking place. And in quieter, but very important, ways people from different nationalities are coming together to do things like viewing Bob Avakian’s *Revolution* video, and to talk about what has caused all this and how to forge the unity we need to fight it.

This kind of thing, and much more of it, is exactly what is needed to change the polarization into one where the initiative is on the side of the people who stand with the immigrants. If we combine all the strengths of those on the bottom—all the understanding of how this system oppresses the people and the creative energies people have in finding ways to resist that oppression, there is great potential to turn this whole thing around.

The people have the potential to come together from all different nationalities and not only beat back all the ways they horribly exploit and oppress immigrants but come together as part of a revolutionary struggle for a better world. Yes, the enemy is very powerful. And one lesson we should learn from last year is that there is no good resolution, in the interests of the people, that is going to come from the system’s politicians. But last year also saw the power of the people. And people learned some things. Everyone can learn from the spirit from those protests, the display of defiance and resistance, and join and bring their strengths to bear in a united struggle against a system that is the source of our common misery and suffering.

The imperialist rulers of the U.S. are rampaging through the world, invading and occupying whole countries in the pursuit of empire, torturing and detaining people in secret prisons, and jailing people indefinitely without charges. Within the U.S. itself they are backing a movement that aims to impose a fanatical Christian fascist government in the U.S., they are eliminating a woman’s right to choose, they are stepping up the oppression and discrimination against minorities, and all the rest. There is absolutely no prospect for a better world for immigrants or anyone else in the world as long as this system stays in power. Think about it. It is just not going to happen. Their attacks on immigrants are part of a whole program, a whole package, that has to be resisted and defeated.

But even more importantly, things don’t have to be this way. The world can be changed and all this can be overcome by revolution—a socialist revolution.

Such a revolution must be led by the proletariat—the class of people who own only their ability to work and have nothing to lose but their chains—and it must unite millions and millions more who are not from the proletariat, but yearn for a better, more just world. Such a revolution must be the conscious act of millions. It must result in a whole new state power that builds on the achievements of past proletarian revolutions, and goes further in unleashing a vibrant and lively socialist society. This state power in turn must and will serve new social and economic relations aimed at getting rid of exploitation and all the oppressive institutions and ideas that exist now, between people and between countries. It must be very firm in dealing with those who would destroy it, both from without and the overthrown and new exploiters from within...while “going to the brink of being drawn and quartered” in order to ensure the fullest possible flourishing of critical thinking and democracy among the people. A whole different—and far, far better—world is possible. And not only is a better world possible but we have a leader, Bob Avakian, Chairman of the Revolutionary Communist Party, who has developed a revolutionary plan and vision for getting to that better world, one that builds on the achievements of the past while critically summing up the shortcomings, and on that basis envisioning a new “model” of socialist society and the transition to a truly communist world.

Which brings us back to where we started—the world cries out for revolution. We have great tasks and great struggles before us. At this very moment, one of the most important tasks is to bring all kinds of people together in revolutionary unity and mount a huge struggle to beat back all of these attempts to criminalize, demonize, and dehumanize immigrants. Think of what possibilities would open up—how we could hasten the day when we can make revolution—if people of all different nationalities were out in the streets together, if the attempts of the rulers to create modern-day slaves were rejected, if the immigrant catchers were driven back, if millions found common revolutionary cause against a common enemy and were to declare, in one voice, diverse in language and accent, but fully united in its sentiment:

“We are human beings, we demand a better world, we will not accept slavery in any form.”

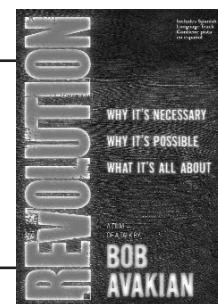
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