



May Day



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Every year the approach of May Day becomes the signal for police officers to report mysterious arrests and for newspapers to print lurid stories purporting to tell all about the "Great Bomb Plot." Although the "great bomb plot" invariably fails to flair up in flame and destruction on May 1, as announced, the tradition of it serves a certain capitalist purpose, and that purpose is to minimize the significance of the International Workers' Day, to give to it a conspiratorial character, to make it appear like something that concerns only a handful of secret plotters, most of them foreigners at that.

The dedication of May Day received its first impetus in this country—it was one of America's few contributions to the tradition of the world labor movement; yet we are repeatedly told that it is "something foreign." The motive back of this is to prevent any notion of widespread participation or even interest of the workers in the May Day observances.

Within the bonafide labor movement itself, the bonafide friends of capital, such as Samuel Gompers and his lieutenants, have officially frowned on May Day. Not only have they refused to enter into the spirit of the occasion, but they have done their best to discourage the rank and file of the trade union membership from doing so.

Nevertheless, the workers have a peculiar regard for May 1. In spite of everything, they feel that it is their day. It is true that great numbers of them are not always drawn into the May Day demonstration, but in times of stress and excitement they show their deep-rooted sympathy. Year by year the May Day meetings become more important. This year various unions and other labor organizations have united with the Workers' Party in a big United Front May Day celebration. A move is now on foot to establish a permanent joint May Day committee, larger than the present committee if possible, which would attempt to secure the support of all labor unions and political parties of labor, so that May Day may be adequately observed in the future. May Day belongs to the working class as a whole and it should be observed by a united front of all labor.

The appeal of May Day reaches to all corners of the globe. Japanese workers regard it as a symbol of international working class solidarity. In Mexico City the workers forget to

report at the factory and give themselves over to a day of parades and demonstrations. In England, Spain, Italy, Czechoslovakia, meetings are being held. Workers of France and Germany greet each other above the tumult of the Ruhr invasion. May Day in Soviet Russia is a great nationwide holiday, in which the entire proletarian population takes part.

In the United States May Day is not supposed to exist. It was officially supplanted a good many years ago when "Labor Day" was made a legal holiday in its place. "Labor Day" has the approval of the Chicago Tribune, John D. Rockefeller, Harry Daugherty and Samuel Gompers. The final and complete significance of "Labor Day" is simply that on the first Monday in September those who turn the wheels of industry are actually granted a day of rest. The workers are by no means averse to a day's rest. God knows, they need it. But the traditions of International Workers' Day cannot be swept into oblivion through the mere granting of a legal holiday on the first of September, as was no doubt the intention. Our so-called "Labor Day," pale and uninspiring—"passed by the national board of censorship"—will never take the place of May Day in the minds of the workers. May Day is ours, and ours alone. It belongs to the workers. No bourgeois government can sanctify it. It stands for the abolition of all bourgeois governments; it expresses the spirit which goes forward to the establishment of the International Workers' Republic.

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