Friday, April 29, 2011

May Day 2011
OMNI NEWSLETTER #1 FOR MAY DAY/INTERNATIONAL WORKERS DAY 2011, Compiled by Dick Bennett, April 29, 2011 for a CULTURE OF PEACE, WE, THE PEOPLE

This DAY deserves attention in this Blog on militarism, empire, and wars because May Day appeals to global human solidarity in contrast to nationalistic wars that pit worker against worker.

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MAY 1
And now, our annual history lesson for Americans who got the white-washed history lessons in school.

On May 1st, 1886, labor parties went on strike in Chicago for an eight-hour workday (down from the standard 10 to 16). Chicago companies (especially the Chicago Tribune) and the local government found the eight-hour workday idea to be ridiculous, and dangerous for the economy. They conspired to break the strike.

On May 3rd, during a union rally outside the McCormick Harvester plant, the police fired into the protesters to disperse them. With two dirty, little agitators killed, and the rest dispersed, the police called the day a success. The protesters saw it differently.

The labor leaders organized another meeting on the 4th to protest the severe actions of the police at Randolph Street and DesPlaines Avenue. The police moved in again against the 80,000 workers, but then from the sidelines, a bomb was thrown. The blast killed one cop instantly and seven others died later.

The eight speakers and union leaders who organized the meetings were rounded up and put on trial for inspiring violence. Seven were sentenced to death and the eighth (because he wasn't present) was given fifteen years. On November 11, 1887, Albert Parsons, August Spies, Adolph Fischer, and George Engel were hanged. Louis Lingg killed himself in his cell earlier in the morning by biting down on a dynamite blasting cap. Saumel Fielden and Michael Schwab had been commuted to life in prison the previous day.
The five dead were buried together, and a monument was erected at the German Waldheim Cemetery (now Forest Home Cemetery) to them on June 25, 1893, in a ceremony attended by most of the visitors to the World's Columbian Exposition. The next day, facing great international criticism, Governor Altgeld commuted the sentences of the two lifers and the remaining years of Oscar Neebe's fifteen.

Many (in death) have joined them under the monument, including anarchist Emma Goldman, and singer/unionist Joe Hill.

The eight-hour workday was finally enacted in 1935.

Around the world, except here in America, this incident is taught as one of the watershed events in modern history. Nearly all countries has official observances of this incident on May 1st, the day the struggle began. They call it Labor Day.

Here in America, especially Chicago, we officially observe nothing the first week of May except getting plastered on Cinco de Mayo (this year on a Saturday!). Later, we celebrate the Labor movement in September by sitting on our butts.

Travis J. Cartwright, Rev.
Email: traviscartwright@bigfoot.com

BRAGG’S “THE INTERNATIONALE”
. This is the updated version of the classic workers' anthem "The Internationale", rewritten in 1990 by Billy Bragg.
Stand up, all victims of oppression
For the tyrants fear your might
Don't cling so hard to your possessions
For you have nothing, if you have no rights
Let racist ignorance be ended
For respect makes the empires fall
Freedom is merely privilege extended
Unless enjoyed by one and all.

CHORUS: So come brothers and sisters
For the struggle carries on
The Internationale
Unites the world in song
So comrades come rally
For this is the time and place
The international ideal
Unites the human race

Let no one build walls to divide us
Walls of hatred nor walls of stone
Come greet the dawn and stand beside us
We'll live together or we'll die alone
In our world poisoned by exploitation
Those who have taken, now they must give
And end the vanity of nations
We've but one Earth on which to live

And so begins the final drama
In the streets and in the fields
We stand unbowed before their armor
We defy their guns and shields
When we fight, provoked by their aggression
Let us be inspired by life and love
For though they offer us concessions
Change will not come from above.

ANALYSIS OF CAPITALISM: ECOSOCIALISM
Every day, FSTV provides its cutting edge challenges, pushing us to think. For example, reaching back in time a little, 6-25-2007, "Ecosocialism or Barbarism" by Joel Kovel, a Marxist analysis of capitalism: Accumulation, competition, creation of surplus value, increasing worker productivity, commodifying everything, overproduction, perpetual expansion of consumption by advertising = inherently unsustainable system. OMNI: for a Culture of Peace through critical thinking. http://www.areallyinconvenienttruth.com/

SOME MAY DAY 2011 EVENTS

May Day 2011
Public Event

Time    Today at 8:00pm - Sunday at 10:00pm

Location 1310 Mission Street
@ 9th
San Francisco, CA

More Info May Day Festival
CounterPULSE's 6th Anniversary
Fri.-Sun., April 29 - May 1, 8pm

Discount (Artist/Low-income/Student/Senior)*
$40- General Admission
$75- Hot Shot = Free drink and $20 auction credit
$150- VIP = Table for two, free drinks, and $20 auction credit (call 415.626.2060 to reserve)

CounterPULSE celebrates its 6th birthday with their lively May Day festival fundraiser -- three nights of performance designed to echo the different aspects of this eclectic arts space. In one weekend, May Day offers three completely unique evenings of performance, packed with the Bay Area's most exciting dance companies, performance artists, comedians, drag queens, circus artists, and more.

Friday's Dance Extravaganza presents dance fans with a jaw-dropping line up of the Bay Area's hottest dance superstars. Performers include: AXIS Dance Company, Charlotte Moraga, Chris Black, Lizz Roman Dance, Robert Moses Kin, Scott Wells & Dancers, and Zaccho Dance Theater.

Saturday's Cabaret welcomes the Bay Area's phenomenal circus artists, risqué and risqué burlesque, and masterful drag. Performers include: The Devil-Ettes, Fou Fou Ha, Honey Mahogany, La Chica Boom, Marina Luna, Natasha Kaluza, Tommy Shephard, Seth Eisen, ViviAnn Foremore MORE and Mona G. Hawd.

The festival, scheduled to coincide with the people's holiday for justice and celebration, is a lovely reason to come out and champion Bay Area arts and artists by supporting CounterPULSE, a hub for cutting-edge and community-based
performance. The event, which is a benefit for the local non-profit, also includes a fabulous silent auction featuring the best of San Francisco's local businesses.

Stacy Poulos
I put your event on Girlpages Network, rock on!
http://www.girlpagesnetwork.com/Girl_Nightlife.html

Hey all, we're in major prep mode for **May Day 2011** and the start of our 2011 home season - **Goin' Gaga and Other Dances** the first weekend of June! Join us!
Tuesday at 12:10pm

[AND MUCH MORE; THIS IS A BIG DAY IN SAN FRANCISCO. D]

[AND IN NYC]
Join the Demonstration!
Sunday, May 1, 2011 at 1:00 PM

Foley Square
(Between Centre and Lafayette Streets), NYC
May Day is a celebration of international solidarity with roots in the United States. The international workers’ holiday commemorates the day in 1886, when laborers, immigrants, artisans and merchants in Chicago waged a general strike to win the eight-hour work day. It’s a day that recalls both our own immigrant histories and the ongoing struggle for the rights of working people everywhere.

Last year, for the first time in a generation, the New York City labor movement united with immigrants’ rights organizations to organize a demonstration on May Day. This year, a broad coalition of groups is continuing the fight.
Our demand today—for the rights of workers in the face of a rising tide of austerity and anti-immigrant rhetoric—is as urgent and transformative as our predecessors’ demand for the eight-hour day.

The general anti-austerity theme of May Day complements the more specific call of the PSC contract/budget rally on Thursday, May 5th for an end to economic austerity for CUNY, and a restoration of CUNY's public funding. Join us for both rallies.
Contact Jim Perlstein, chair of PSC’s Solidarity Committee, to let us know you’re coming.

The History of May Day
May Day, the international workers’ holiday, began in the U.S.A. Its roots go back to Chicago, in 1886.

After the Civil War, the nation’s factories and mines were growing fast. They employed hundreds of thousands of new immigrants - German, Irish, Mexican, Chinese, and eastern Europeans - and tens of thousands of African Americans who had just won their freedom. Workers toiled 12, 14, and even 16 hours a day, for miserable wages and in dangerous conditions. During frighteningly long depressions, thousands of working-class families couldn’t find work and often starved.

But business owners and the mainstream press blamed this widespread poverty on individual failure - and on the growing number of immigrant and black workers, who they claimed didn’t share traditional “American values.” Unions had to fight this tide of prejudice, racism and mindless worship of “free markets” as they organized workers.

The emerging labor movement united around a demand to shorten the working day to eight hours. One national labor organization called for a nationwide general strike on May 1st, 1886, if Congress did not act to establish an eight-hour day.

1886 was a year of strikes and militant labor action across the country. People called it “the Great Upheaval” - and Chicago was a center of protest. The city was home to a powerful anarchist
movement that included Texas-born Albert Parsons, Lucy Parsons (who historians think had both African American and Mexican ancestors) and August Spies (a German immigrant). With thousands of other workers, they prepared to strike for the eight-hour day. When May 1st dawned, 60,000 Chicago workers went out on strike. Two days later, with the strike gaining momentum, the Chicago police shot two strikers and wounded dozens more at the giant McCormick Reaper Works.

The anarchists organized a demonstration to protest the shootings, on May 4th in Chicago’s In the chaos and hysteria that followed, the authorities smashed Chicago’s labor movement. The Chicago police arrested anarchist leaders Albert Parsons and August Spies and six others and charged them with murder - even though there was no real evidence against them. They were convicted anyway, and four of them, including Parsons, were hanged in Nov. 1887.

After 1886, workers and labor radicals around the world began celebrating May 1st as a day of international working-class solidarity to demand the eight-hour day. In 1890, huge May Day demonstrations in the U.S., across Europe, and even in Australia and Cuba demanded eight hours. The international labor movement denounced the frame-up of “the Haymarket martyrs” and demanded that those still in prison be freed. (They were pardoned by a pro-labor governor in 1893.) American business leaders and the mainstream press wanted to distance the U.S. from May Day, because of its radical roots. With business support, in 1894 President Cleveland officially declared the first Monday in September as Labor Day.

Around the world, workers continued to celebrate May Day as International Workers Day. In the United States, especially after the Russian Revolution, this made-in-U.S.A. holiday was denounced as “un-American.” Regular celebrations of May Day continued anyway, notably in New York’s Today May Day is coming back to the country where it began. Millions of immigrant workers from Latin America, Asia and Africa have come to the United States, bringing their own experience in union struggles. They have always known that May Day is the workers’ day.

As more immigrants join the U.S. working class and organize for their rights, immigration laws have increasingly been used to fire union members and break up union drives. In response, the labor movement started speaking out in support of immigrants’ rights. In 1999 the AFL-CIO called for repealing the anti-immigrant law that makes work a crime. Instead, it called for legal status for the undocumented, reuniting immigrant families, and protecting organizing rights for everyone. On May 1st, 2006, millions of immigrant workers poured into the streets in the Great American Boycott, walking off the job and marching against anti-immigrant legislation then being considered by Congress. Many unions supported this May Day protest, and others in the years that followed. Today May Day belongs to us all. We march to demand equal labor rights and jobs for all. We march to carry forward the May Day tradition that began in 1886, and renew it for our new century.

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END OF NEWSLETTER #1 2011 ON MAY DAY

Posted by Dick Bennett at 1:35 PM
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Visit Peace Garden Project

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Peace, Justice, Ecology
Featuring the work of Dr. James Richard Bennett, founder of the OMNI Center for Peace, Justice and Ecology in Fayetteville, Arkansas
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Contact Your Congressional Representatives

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• **Senator Mark Pryor**: Little Rock office: (501) 324-6336