

Coalition For Prisoners' Rights Newsletter

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May 2010

MAYDAY IN THE U.S. -- 2010

On May 1st, International Workers Day, hundreds of millions of workers around the world will take to the streets to celebrate. Sadly, although the observance of May Day began in the U.S. with the fight for the 8 hour day, most U.S. workers have lost their heritage and don't participate. But one group of U.S. workers will mobilize: immigrant workers. Immigrants are revitalizing the U.S. labor movement.

Although somewhat less likely to be in a union than native workers, immigrant workers are now an astounding one-eighth of all union members in the U.S. Many of the sectors in which immigrants work (agriculture, service and hospitality) are among the few economic sectors that are growing, outside of prisons. And immigrants want to join unions.

In recent years, many unions want to organize immigrants. During the Great Depression and the New Deal response of the 1930s and 1940s, continuing through the Second World War, unions grew strong, in large part from organizing immigrant workers who were not employed in a particular craft, but rather worked in industries. Workers fought for their unions. Then in the 1950s and 1960s, when the U.S. economy was doing well, unions tended to sit back, cooperating with both companies and government management.

Wages and benefits continued to rise, until in the 1970s, during a recession, the big shift began: from an industrial to a service economy. Outsourcing started, and manufacturing jobs left the country for places with cheap labor. Corporations and the government again became viciously anti-union. By the late 1970s, unions began to realize that they had to fight back, and that they had to organize new groups of workers, or they would lose their power. By the mid-1990s, unions were fighting back.

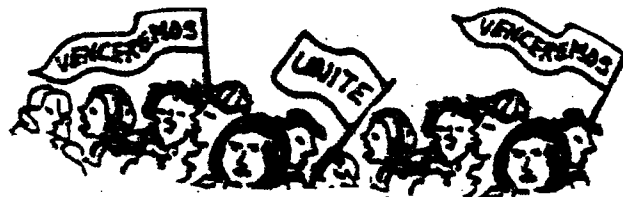
For years, union strategy was to protect members' jobs by trying to keep immigrant workers out of the U.S. and to

sanction employers who hired them. Eventually, most unions realized that immigration couldn't be controlled by policing. More and more unions believe that "Buy America" campaigns won't save U.S. manufacturing jobs, nor does union cooperation with the corporations save jobs.

The U.S. economy has changed permanently--to a global economy, with a globalized manufacturing sector and globalized workers. When unions improve wages for immigrant workers, all workers' wages rise. Cities with thriving immigrant populations--with both high-earning and lower-wage workers--tend to be those that prosper the most.

For the first time in U.S. history, a majority of union members work for government, not the private sector. At the end of 2009, public worker union membership had grown to 7.9 million, 37.4% of the public workforce. There are 771,000 fewer union jobs in 2010, in part due to the bad recession. Manufacturing and construction workers who are more highly unionized than workers as a whole, suffered huge job losses: 900,000 jobs lost in construction and 1.3 million jobs lost in factories. Overall, the recession has cost workers 8.4 million jobs, 2.2 million of them in manufacturing. These are jobs that will not come back when the economy improves. Men are 82% of newly unemployed workers.

Unions are growing in sectors of the economy in which industries are not highly unionized and large numbers of immigrants work. Today, the U.S. labor movement is united in its support for immigration reform which includes legalizing undocumented workers.



Es delito ser indocumentado

Grupos defensores de los derechos de los inmigrantes en Estados Unidos rechazaron el 23 de abril, la aprobación de la ley estatal 1070 en Arizona, la primera en convertir en delito la presencia de indocumentados en el país.

Con su firma la Gob. Jan Brewer de Arizona no sólo autorizó la violación de los derechos de millones de personas viviendo y trabajando aquí, sino también le dio a cada agencia policíaca en Arizona la orden de acosar cualquier persona que parezca o suene como extranjero.

La ley SB1070 contempla penalizaciones a quienes transporten o den trabajo a un indocumentado y otorga el derecho a cualquier persona de demandar a los departamentos de policía, agencias estatales o ciudades que no apliquen las nuevas regulaciones.

Pero las leyes inmigrantes son federales, no estatales; la comunidad debe boicotear a Arizona. Que las compañías y las universidades no tengan sus conferencias en Arizona, que las familias no vayan a pasar sus días libres en Arizona, que le duele económicamente.

La ley es verdaderamente perjudicial para los inmigrantes que están aquí indocumentados e igual para los documentados. Para sus partidarios de esta ley, no obstante, esto hará más posible controlar la inmigración ilegal en un estado donde has más de 460,000

This 2 page paper version of the CPR monthly newsletter will be included in all correspondence we send out. Others who would like to receive it must send us a stamped, self-addressed envelope (up to 12 at one time) for every issue they would like to receive.

Please continue to send us address change updates and renewal requests in order to stay on our mailing list and to receive the year-end holiday card/new calendar.

Many thanks to the Real Cost of Prisons Project for making the newsletter available on-line at: <http://www.realcostofprisons.org/coalition.html> Download it and mail it to comrades and loved ones inside!

Please remember: the ONLY address to use to be sure to reach us continues to be: PO Box 1911, Santa Fe NM 87504.

Many thanks to a generous New Mexico family; WE ARE NOW DEBT FREE! Any amount raised above current operating expenses will go toward increasing the number of bulk-mailed newsletters in the future.

ciudadanos indocumentados, en su mayoría mexicanos.

Dijo la canciller mexicana, "La ley afecta la relación entre Arizona y México y obliga al Gobierno mexicano a plantearse la viabilidad y la utilidad de los esquemas de cooperación que se han desarrollado con Arizona. Los legisladores que aprobaron la ley no hayan tenido en cuenta la valiosa e inmenas contribución de los inmigrantes mexicanos a la economía, sociedad y cultura de Arizona y de Estados Unidos.

En la declaración oficial se asegura que México utilizará todos los recursos a su alcance para defender los derechos y dignidad de los mexicanos afectados y se adelanta que la embajada de México y los cinco consulados que tiene en ese estado redoblarán sus acciones de asistencia, protección consular y asesoría jurídica.

El presidente Obama dijo: "El Gobierno Federal ha estado ausente en el tratamiento de la inmigración y eso ha llevado a tomar iniciativas mal encaminadas que contradicen las nociones básicas de justicia y equidad de nuestra nación."

"If Arizona wanted to reaffirm its flirtation with racism, xenophobia and Fortress Americanism, it certainly did that through its Legislature and its governor, who enacted what might be the most offensive law since the fading of Jim Crow measures and attitudes down South."
--Santa Fe New Mexican, April 27, 2010

"¡No Somos Uno, No Somos Cien
Somos Milliones, Cuentenos Bien!"
-la Marcha del 1 de mayo, en Santa Fe NM

Voices in Solidarity EVIDENTIARY HEARING FOR TROY DAVIS

The Savannah-based federal district court for southern Georgia evidentiary hearing for Troy Davis, who three times has come within hours of being executed, has been set for June 30. The Troy Davis Global Day of Solidarity will be held on June 29. Seven of the 9 witnesses who provided the only evidence against him have recanted their testimony.

VOICES FROM INSIDE

West Liberty KY January 10, 2010

Florida succeeded in ousting Aramark, and now KY State Rep. Brent Yonts (D), whose son is serving time in state prison, is attempting to do the same. A lawsuit is being filed on behalf of KY state prisoners which alleges, among other things, that human feces, worms, and bugs have been found in Western Kentucky Correctional Facility food.