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A Global May Day

Anarcho-Syndicalist Review

2019

The following call to action is part of a common framework that aims to help connect May Day activities and support communication on the global level.

Every year people take to the streets and go on strike on May 1st to commemorate International Workers' Day. With the following call, which was initiated by several syndicates of the grassroots unions Free Workers' Union (FAU) and Industrial Workers of the World (IWW), we want to encourage groups on the grassroots level, labor unions and initiatives worldwide to link their May Day activities and by doing so provide visibility to the transnational dimension of the struggle.

We, workers and students, will stand together in solidarity, because we are all involved in the same struggle against profit-driven interests regardless of our place of residence. Budget cuts in social services, outsourcing, depressing wages, privatization, increasing costs of living as well as tuition fees are just a few of the symptoms directly related to the global economic system. A system that is based on exploitation and competition leads to commercialization of all aspects of our lives.

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The constantly increasing pressure to perform is sickening, be it at the workplace, university, school, and increasingly even during childhood and youth. The logic of the market economy and the corresponding nation-state structures require that adaptation to the dictate of competitiveness and the value-added production take priority over the development of emancipatory capabilities.

We do not intend to simply disrupt; we seek to overcome.

Given the transnational nature of the capitalist system, it is necessary for workers to connect on the global level. By networking across borders, the global interconnections that shape our local conditions can be made visible. Furthermore it opens up new potentialities and scopes of action within the struggle against exploitation as well precarious working and living conditions. The bargaining power of workers would increase tremendously, if we were to unite within the same value-added chain. Let us imagine what differences it would have made, if the striking miners in Marikana (South Africa) and workers of the BASF chemical plants located in Germany were connected and had united in their struggle given that BASF is the primary purchaser of the resources produced by the miners. Such linkages could have significantly altered or perhaps even prevented the 2012 massacre.

Another example are garment workers in Sri Lanka (producing textiles for the retailing company H&M) who fought for wages enabling them a proper living on November 27, 2018. On the same day groups across Europe and the USA organized activities in solidarity in front of outlets of H&M. This shows that pressure can be generated through a network of actors within the value-added chain, from the producing workers to those working in the retail stores and those purchasing the product.

The same applies to strike actions taking place at Amazon: For example the labor union ver.di called for strikes in 2016 at logistical centers across Germany. Since logistical centers in Poland were used as evasive locations, the labor union IP organized solidarity ac-

tions. By now action groups are forming at Amazon centers around the world, which are also increasingly shaping a network.

Last but not least IT workers are resisting precarious working conditions and get organized across borders. As an example we want to point out the initiative Game Workers Unite! and mention the walkout by workers at Google, which was joined by tens of thousands of people in 50 cities worldwide last November.

With a transnationally coordinated May Day 2019 we strive to realize a collective goal of a better life by networking and building solidarity on a global scale. Especially in times of increasing nationalist and racist tendencies, we emphasize the common struggle and resist being played off against each other.

For a better life for all – across all borders!

Initial supporters: Bangladesh Anarcho-Syndicalist Federation, Free Workers' Union (FAU) Hamburg, Inter-Factory Workers' Federation (FBLP) Jakarta, Forum for IT Employees (FITE) India, Garment Workers' Trade Union Center (GWTUC) Bangladesh, Industrial Workers of the World (IWW) Gainesville, Industrial Workers of the World (IWW) Hamburg

Each syndicate/group/union will organize its activities autonomously with their own focus. More details available on this blog: globalmayday.wordpress.com