



Written by [Warren Mass](#) on May 1, 2017

Annual May Day Marches Take on Anti-Trump Theme in the U.S. This Year

Hundreds of thousands of demonstrators are participating in marches across the United States on May 1, with many abandoning the traditional “International Worker’s Day” themes in favor of protests for “immigrant rights” and “LGBT rights.”

A report from NPR observed that although marches in support of “worker rights” and labor unions would be taking place around the world on May Day, “Here in the U.S., they’re expected to draw larger than usual crowds due to President Trump’s efforts to crack down on immigration.”



That report failed to detect a certain irony in “immigrants rights” groups using a day traditionally embraced by labor unions to demonstrate support for their cause to protest the policies of a president who carried most of the “rust belt” states long dominated by union workers in last year’s presidential election. One reason that Trump fared unexpectedly well in states such as Pennsylvania, Michigan, and Wisconsin, is because he advocated the elimination of trade agreements and government regulations that sent U.S. jobs overseas — and also because he promised to crack down on the large numbers of illegal immigrants (and legal immigrants who work in the United States through the H-1B visa program) who have been coming to this country and taking jobs away from American workers.

By campaigning (and winning) on such a pro-U.S. worker platform, Trump proved himself to be the candidate of the American worker, especially the union workers who have long celebrated May Day. By using this day to protest against the Trump agenda, the “immigrants rights’ and LGBT rights” activists have effectively co-opted the spirit of the day for their own radicalized agendas.

“If the Trump administration has done something very well, it has united lots of communities who otherwise would not be marching together,” NPR quoted Jorge-Mario Cabrera, spokesperson for the Coalition for Humane Immigrant Rights.

An article about the May Day protest marches in *USA Today* quoted a statement from Fernanda Durand, communications manager of the Maryland-based CASA in Action “immigrants’ rights” group. “There’s a real galvanization of all the groups this year,” said Durand. Her group will lead a march of about 10,000 people for immigrants’ rights through downtown Washington. “Our presence in this country is being questioned by Donald Trump.

Durand’s protest is part of the Rise Up umbrella movement that promises 259 events in more than 200 cities in 41 states focusing on immigrants’ rights, she told *USA Today*.

The choice of May Day as a time to march for “workers’ rights” has its origins back in the 19th century, when a number of socialist organizations sprang up in this country, many of which became dominated by anarchists. An article entitled “The Brief Origins of May Day” is posted on the website of the



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Industrial Workers of the World (IWW) — which calls itself, “A union for all workers.”

The IWW was founded in Chicago in June 1905 at a convention of 200 socialists, anarchists, Marxists (primarily members of the Socialist Party of America and Socialist Labor Party), and radical trade unionists from all over the United States. With this leftist background, the IWW’s admissions about the connection between socialist anarchists in the United States and the annual May Day workers’ celebration is significant.

The IWW article notes that at its national convention in Chicago in 1884, the Federation of Organized Trades and Labor Unions (which later became the American Federation of Labor) proclaimed that “eight hours shall constitute a legal day’s labor from and after May 1, 1886.”

Though most radicals and anarchists in the labor movement regarded the demand for an eight-hour workweek as inadequate because it failed to strike “at the root of the evil” (capitalism), they still joined a huge rally in Chicago on May 1, 1886. IWW quoted an excerpt from an unnamed publication printed just before the labor rally that appealed to “working people” with this plea:

- Workingmen to Arms!
- War to the Palace, Peace to the Cottage, and Death to LUXURIOUS IDLENESS.
- The wage system is the only cause of the World’s misery. It is supported by the rich classes, and to destroy it, they must be either made to work or DIE.
- One pound of DYNAMITE is better than a bushel of BALLOTS!
- MAKE YOUR DEMAND FOR EIGHT HOURS with weapons in your hands to meet the capitalistic bloodhounds, police, and militia in proper manner.

Though the IWW writer did not make note of it, the language of the above call to arms is very similar to that used by Karl Marx in the *Communist Manifesto*. The article did observe:

Not surprisingly the entire city was prepared for mass bloodshed, reminiscent of the railroad strike a decade earlier when police and soldiers gunned down hundreds of striking workers. On May 1, 1886, more than 300,000 workers in 13,000 businesses across the United States walked off their jobs in the first May Day celebration in history. In Chicago, the epicenter for the 8-hour day agitators, 40,000 went out on strike with the anarchists in the forefront of the public’s eye. With their fiery speeches and revolutionary ideology of direct action, anarchists and anarchism became respected and embraced by the working people and despised by the capitalists.

The New American’s senior editor, William F. Jasper wrote in his “[History of May Day](#)” in the May 29, 2006 issue of this magazine:

“The decision to make May 1st a day of annual demonstrations,” says *The Great Soviet Encyclopedia*, “was made in July 1889 by the Paris Congress of the Second International, to commemorate an action by the workers of Chicago, who organized a strike for May 1, 1886, demanding an eight-hour workday, and held a demonstration that ended in a bloody confrontation with the police”

Jasper continues by observing:

The communist encyclopedia’s account of May Day’s origins cited above is deceptive and deficient on several important points. The Chicago strikes and demonstrations of 1886-1888 culminated in the violent Haymarket Square riots, which included the murder of Chicago police officers, when



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anarchists hurled a dynamite bomb into police ranks. In the aftermath of the terrorist event, Captain Michael J. Shaack of the Chicago Police Department launched an in-depth investigation that resulted in a monumental 700-page book exposing a vast network of communists and anarchists working in concert across the nation, with direct ties to confederates in Europe. Captain Shaack's expose, *Anarchy and Anarchists*, demonstrated that what appeared on the surface to many people to be spontaneous, desultory incidents were actually very meticulously planned revolutionary events.

As mostly peaceful May Day protest marches were organized across the United States, the U.K.'s *Mirror* newspaper reported that riots broke out on the streets of Paris as a May Day workers' march protesting against presidential candidate Marine Le Pen got out of control

The *Mirror* reported that Fighting broke out in central Paris during a rally held close to the Place de la Bastille, where protestors shouted "Fascists out!"

The rioters were furious that Le Pen finished second in the first round of voting, with 21.30 percent of the vote, meaning she will face Emmanuel Macron of France's liberal En Marche! party in the second round on May 7, 2017. Le Pen is considered to be a populist candidate and November 8, 2016 she posted a tweet congratulating Trump on his presidential victory. She is the former president of France's National Front (FN) party, which has been described as right-wing, populist, and nationalist in its positions. Its major policies include opposition to the French membership of the European Union, the Schengen Area, and the Eurozone; economic protectionism; a zero tolerance approach to law and order issues; and opposition to open migration.

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