

55,000 Los Angeles County workers strike: Build a movement in the working class against inequality, fascism and dictatorship!

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Attend the ICFI's International Online May Day rally, this Saturday at noon PDT! Register for the event at wsws.org/mayday.

A total of 55,000 LA County public workers with the Service Employees International Union (SEIU) Local 721 are set to strike this Monday, April 28 after 99 percent of membership voted in approval of strike action.

A line in the sand must be drawn. You are not just fighting for better pay, you are fighting in defense of the right to live, to work with dignity, and to exist as a free person in a society that is spiraling toward dictatorship and war.

The strike is the latest sign of resistance in the working class against inequality, oligarchy and dictatorship. It follows April's mass protests against Trump in which millions of people took part. Trump is spearheading massive cuts to government programs, attacking immigrants, lowering workers' living standards through tariffs and preparing for new catastrophic wars. The basic aim of the fascist-minded president is to establish a dictatorship in America.

The strike is part of this wider conflict with the whole political system. It must be a call to action for the entire working class to fight the lurch towards fascism with a fight against the capitalist profit system which is incompatible with democracy. Workers must not only fight against this government, but seek to expropriate the trillions created by workers but hoarded by the oligarchy whom Trump serves.

This requires building rank-and-file action committees to prepare coordinated actions, not waiting for permission from above by Democrats and union officials who are acting as Trump's enablers.

With May Day approaching, the holiday of international working class unity, workers in the United States must strive for unity with their brothers and sisters across the world, especially immigrant workers, rejecting the "America First" poison being pushed by Trump.

As part of this world movement, an appeal must be made to Los Angeles teachers, whose contract expires this year, thousands of dockworkers in the ports of Los Angeles and Long Beach and other key sections of the working class throughout the region.

At the federal level, Trump, through his billionaire backer Elon Musk and the Department of Government Efficiency, are destroying whole departments and preparing massive attacks on Social Security, Medicare, food stamps and other programs upon which millions rely.

It has launched a regime of police terror against immigrants, millions of whom live in Southern California. While it attempts to blame immigrants for poverty and joblessness, the reality is this: the American capitalists who control this government are the ones really responsible.

Through the attacks on students protesting the genocide in Gaza, including the abduction and deportation of international students like Mahmoud Khalil, they are attempting to criminalize dissent.

Trump's trade war will not bring back "American" jobs but lead to a global recession, especially affecting Los Angeles and other west coast cities which trade heavily with China. They are part of the preparation for a third world war which threatens the planet with nuclear annihilation.

If the Democrats are rolling over for Trump, it is

because they serve the same oligarchs as Trump. In Los Angeles, in California as a whole and other areas under their control, they preside over massive inequality and impossible conditions for the majority. This was underscored when Los Angeles Mayor Karen Bass announced 1,600 layoffs for city workers, on top of pre-existing cuts to homeless shelters, wildfire prevention, school teachers and faculty, and healthcare systems.

In Chicago, Democratic Mayor Brandon Johnson is gutting infrastructure, including a 40 percent cut to the city's transit system and continuing school closures.

While the drivers for many of these local cuts are cuts at the federal level (including not only by Trump but by Biden, who last year triggered a “fiscal cliff” in the nation's school districts by allowing pandemic education funding to expire), the Democrats defend the interests of the billionaires in these cities whose fortunes could pay for the cuts many times over.

Los Angeles County is spending hundreds of millions on office towers, maintaining a \$7.7 billion contract scheme with private firms, and preparing to eliminate 310 vacant positions. There is money—but *it's not for you*.

As for democratic rights, the Democrats are working together with genuine Hitler lovers in the Republican Party to crack down on student protests and slander them as “antisemitic.” And they are full partners in the federal deportation machine, with ICE deporting more people in Biden's last year in office than in any of the last 10 years.

Meanwhile, figures like Gavin Newsom, the millionaire governor of California, are making explicit overtures to Trump and the extreme right. And they support and have launched wars, with their only difference with Trump being over whether to refocus away from Russia.

This shows a genuine movement against Trump can only come from the working class, which has no interest in dictatorship, war or inequality.

Mobilizing workers against Trump requires political independence not only from the Democratic Party, but the union bureaucracy. They are joined at the hip with management and the corporate parties and are more afraid of a movement from below.

This is why SEIU Local 721 has limited this strike to only 48 hours and even gave the county 10 days' notice in order to limit the impact.

This is only the latest in a pattern:

- In 2022, SEIU canceled a planned strike by 7,000 nurses and pushed through a contract with raises far below inflation.

- That same year, it imposed a “historic” agreement with a 5.5 percent raise in Year One—while LA inflation ran at 8.5 percent.

In 2023, when 11,000 city workers prepared to strike, SEIU staged a one-day walkout and declared “victory”—with nothing to show for it.

The next stage of the fight by LA County workers must be the construction of a rank-and-file committee, affiliated with others like it throughout the world through the International Workers Alliance of Rank-and-File Committees.

The union officials, resting on six-figure salaries paid from workers' dues money, endorse the very politicians gutting jobs and preach “labor peace” while workers suffer wage theft, burnout, and eviction threats. Rank-and-file committees fight to transfer power and initiative back to workers themselves, giving them the ability to impose their own strategy through coordinated and independent action.

For more information and for assistance establishing a committee, contact the *World Socialist Web Site* at wsws.org/workers, or email LACountyRFC@gmail.com.

We also urge workers to attend this Saturday's online May Day rally being sponsored by the International Committee of the Fourth International. The rise of Trump underscores the urgent need for a unified international movement of the working class, which is increasingly mobilizing against war, inequality, and repression. This year's May Day rally will present a socialist program to unify workers internationally in the struggle against capitalism. It will outline a revolutionary perspective to end imperialist violence and build a society based on equality and human need.

Register for May Day by visiting wsws.org/mayday.



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