

May Day Actions in Quebec

Workers Reaffirm Their Defence of the Dignity of Labour and the Rights of All!



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- **Quebeckers' Hearts Go Out to the People of Fort McMurray**

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On the occasion of May Day, Day of International Working Class Unity and Struggle, Quebec workers, standing shoulder to shoulder with their counterparts in Canada as well as worldwide, organized numerous actions across Quebec.

Beginning April 29, marches and demonstrations called by the Coalition main rouge (Red Hand Coalition) were held in Quebec City, Baie-Comeau, Sept-Îles, Sherbrooke, Rouyn-Noranda, Alma and other cities to demand major reinvestments in public services and social programs.

The main theme was the fight against the Couillard Liberal government's anti-social offensive. In Quebec City, some 50 community organizations went on strike for the day of action. More than 300 people marched through the streets of the city and highlighted the devastating impact of the austerity agenda on society and especially its most vulnerable members. They also denounced the criminal tax evasion schemes of the monopolies and the protection provided to them by governments, in particular with regard to the Panama Papers scandal. Demonstrators affirmed that such scandals are a further indication that the anti-social austerity invoked by the government time and again is a fraud and illegitimate.



Top two photos: Actions in Rouyn-Noranda and Alma. Bottom two photos: Montreal

Two thousand people marched through the streets of Montreal on May 1, including workers in the private and public sectors and many members of community organizations.

The main contingents were Montreal blue collar workers defending their right to negotiate their working conditions and opposing the criminalization of their struggles; workers from Ciment Lafarge in Saint-Constant, part of the Holcim building materials' international monopoly, who have been on strike since February against the dismantling of their pension fund through the imposition of a two-tier system; workers from Delastek in Shawinigan, a manufacturer of parts

for the aerospace industry, on strike for over a year against the subcontracting of their jobs; and workers from the Brault & Martineau furniture store in Laval who were locked out more than a month ago, just a few months after they formed a union.

Participants included public sector healthcare workers, civil service workers from the social services and education sectors as well as members of community organizations defending society's most vulnerable, especially those on welfare who are being brutally attacked by the Quebec government, in particular through Bill 70.

At the end of the march, speakers included representatives of workers on strike or locked out. As well, a union representative for Quebec compensation board staff spoke out against the dismantling of the health and safety regime which now blames the workers for their injuries and puts the onus for safety on the workers themselves, and denies their claims. One speaker in particular illustrated the spirit driving Quebec's workers, that their present battles will ensure the well-being of the coming generations. By going against the monopoly dictate which plunders natural resources and pension funds with impunity, workers are protecting the future of the natural and social environment. The dignity of labour was militantly defended by all and attacks against workers' rights were soundly denounced.

A contingent of the Marxist-Leninist Party participated in the march, distributed the Party's May Day statement and had numerous exchanges with workers about the situation they are facing. "The most crucial issue for workers today is to ensure that the people exercise control over the decisions that affect their lives. Submission to private, foreign and supranational interests will solve nothing for the working class and the nation. The reality is that the state and its agencies are the main instrument for empire building and nation-wrecking at the expense of nation-building," said Pierre Chénier, the leader of the Marxist-Leninist Party of Quebec. "Quebec workers, just like those in the rest of Canada, are highly skilled, educated and experts in their respective work sector. They are able to meet the challenge of providing society with



an aim, which is to build an economy that meets the needs of the people in all sectors, whether we speak of manufactured goods, healthcare, education or social programs. Quebec is rich in natural resources and assisted by modern science placed in the service of human beings, we are capable of determining what needs to be developed and transformed within the country, while taking care of the social and natural environment. The issue that we are taking up is control over the decision making process so that our pro-social projects become the reality."

Later on in the day, the demonstration of the Anti-Capitalist Convergence was brutally attacked by the police with tear gas, sound bombs and arrests as it marched through the streets of downtown Montreal. The PMLQ denounces this state repression of the demonstration.

Other marches took place in Quebec City, Sherbrooke and elsewhere against the destruction of public and childcare services and 2,000 people marched in the streets of Saint-Félicien, in the Saguenay region, to defend the future of the forestry sector.



Top: Chicoutimi. Bottom: Saint-Félicien



Quebec City







Montreal



Quebeckers' Hearts Go Out to the People of Fort McMurray

The population of the city of Fort McMurray, Alberta is facing a devastating forest fire and has been evacuated. Thousands of families have left the city, seeking refuge in surrounding towns and villages, in Edmonton, and even British Columbia. The conditions are extremely difficult as there is only one highway out of the city.

Fort McMurray is the closest city to the Athabasca Oil Sands fields in northeastern Alberta and the majority of its workers are working in the oil and gas sector and in sectors that depend on it. Thousands of Quebec workers have been welcomed there in recent years and have found work in the oil facilities in Fort McMurray, while the population of Fort McMurray has more than doubled, from 38,660 in 2000, to 80,000 in 2016.



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