

Have you ever heard of May Day, the global workers' day of celebration? A tradition born in Chicago, mummified in Russia and China, and more recently neglected in the U.S. It's no surprise if May Day means nothing to you, because in the U.S. it has been recuperated by the government through the creation of the more passive Labor Day.

May Day celebrations target the post-industrial economy and the different forms of precarious labor (both paid and unpaid) it reproduces. More recently May Day has become a rally point for immigrant struggles across the country. Temp workers, students, unemployed, migrant workers with & without papers, sex workers, and domestic workers have come together from Phoenix to Chicago, Los Angeles to NYC.

We want this May Day to be a starting point and locus for a new tradition of conflict here in Tacoma - a day to rebel against the exploitation of work, social control, deportation, and the different ways our everyday lives are ruled by the market. A day where we can experiment in creating new, shared practices - beyond the control of our bosses, borders, and the myths of democratic dialog - from which we can take the freedom to shape our lives.

Brief history of May Day:

In 1887 four Chicago anarchists were executed. A fifth cheated the hangman by killing himself in prison. Three more were to spend 6 years in prison until pardoned by Governor Altgeld who said the trial that convicted them was characterized by "hysteria, packed juries and a biased judge." The state had, in the words of the prosecution put "Anarchy ... on trial" and hoped their deaths would also be the death of the anarchist idea. The anarchists were trade union organizers and May Day became an international workers day to remember their struggle. They were framed on false charges of throwing a bomb at police breaking up a demonstration in Chicago. This was part of a strike demanding an 8 hour day involving 400,000 workers in Chicago that started May 1st 1886. The anarchist idea did not die in Chicago in 1887. Today it still inspires the struggle against global capitalism.