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DC ACTIVISTS PLAN MAY DAY CELEBRATION

Washington, DC

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Activists from a broad spectrum of political backgrounds are uniting for a May Day festival on May 1st at Malcolm X Park at 3:30 pm.

Members of the Occupy DC Labor Committee, Anarchist Alliance DC Network, Industrial Workers of the World, Washington Peace Center, the Metropolitan Washington Council of the AFL-CIO, and the Amalgamated Transit Union local 689 as well as other groups will be hosting an afternoon of carnival games, live music, theater, workshops and picnicking followed by a bike tour, rally, and march.

Answering a nationwide call by the Occupy Movement for a May 1st general strike or a "vacation for the 99%," the festivities will celebrate the many meanings of May Day from its pagan roots as a day welcoming summertime to its more recent association with immigrant rights. Above all, it will highlight the long history of the struggle for workers' rights in America and around the world.

Through performances and teach-ins the day will showcase significant events related to May Day and the labor movement such as the Haymarket Massacre of 1886 – the bombing of a peaceful demonstration for an eight-hour day that resulted in the wrongful execution of four anarchists – which is considered to be the origin of May 1st as an international day in recognition of workers. Festival-goers will also have the opportunity to learn more about current labor and community-organizing efforts.

Along with bringing attention to struggles for economic and social justice, the day is intended to provide DC-area residents with a celebratory way to get to know one another and forge ties. The festivities will end with a rally and march to Lafayette Park. A radical history bike tour will happen concurrently and convene with the marchers at Lafayette Park for the rally.

The broad coalition sees their differing backgrounds as a strength. The "celebration of the diversity of cultures of resistance" will, in the words of Occupy DC Labor Committee coordinator Mike Golash, show "solidarity in the fight against capitalism." Nancy Munoz, an organizer from the Anarchist Alliance DC Network, said: "We believe through our participation in the May Day actions we will raise the level of awareness by educating people and showing solidarity with other organizations." She added: "[we will] empower society and help them understand that they can organize themselves in the fight against the establishment."

May Day marches and labor rallies have been held in the nation's capitol many times since the Haymarket Massacre. The organizers hope workers and residents from all backgrounds will join them on May 1st for this long tradition of celebrating struggle and to build greater working class and community solidarity.

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