

US educators and school workers call for the building of the ICFI's May Day Rally

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An international online May Day Rally is being held by the International Committee of the Fourth International (ICFI) on Saturday, May 1. We encourage all to attend this important event by registering [here](#).

As the total death toll from COVID-19 has surpassed three million lives, and global powers led by the United States push the world to the brink of global war, never has the call for the working class to build its own independent organs of struggle been so urgent.

The ICFI recently published a statement calling for the formation of the International Workers Alliance of Rank-and-File Committees (IWA-RFC) in order to build a counteroffensive by the global working class to the homicidal policies of the ruling elite.

Educators and school employees across the US spoke with the WSWS about their decision to attend the upcoming May Day Rally, and their thoughts on the importance of building independent rank-and-file committees.

A teacher in Alabama said, "I read the May Day statement and want to say that seeing the numbers of hard-working people who did the right thing, went to work, took care of their families and tried to be upstanding citizens just got a swift kick to the face last year from their countries and their employers, I have never felt so uncared for in my life. To see all that I have done mean nothing to the people I work for [...] is just disgusting. It hurts to know how little my life is worth to them."

"But I refuse to let them treat my life like pennies on the dollar. People deserve the right to fight for their lives and the protections of their families. The moral corruption of this world wasn't started by COVID but it was further exposed and since the media isn't sharing our side of the story, May Day is needed to rally all those who want and deserve to live."

"I'm teaching face to face and virtually at the same time. Thankfully, less than one-third of students returned to my school. Also, the head of logistics leased HEPA air purifiers for every teacher's classroom, which I find interesting because the entire time we protested earlier this year for

better safety in our schools, they said our buildings were fine. That's a mighty large investment for a problem that 'doesn't exist.' We got a little more [personal protective equipment] when we returned Feb 5th but I just ran out. So any other PPE I need I will have to request and wait or pay for out of pocket. School is out in one month and one week."

A public school bus driver near Philadelphia, Pennsylvania, said, "I support the program for all the schools and nonessential workplaces to be shut down until we get this under control. Until everybody can get their shots and the spread of the virus is brought down to zero transmission, there should be a lockdown. No in-person school and no nonessential businesses."

"The politicians, Democrats and Republicans, work for the ruling elite. They want to make capital which is their main concern over saving human lives. The Democrats may seem a little better. The Republicans may seem a little more heartless. But they have the same agenda, only they do it a little differently. The Democrats want to come across as the working man's friend but they have the same policy. They do what the ruling elite want and may give a little handout here and there to keep us from rioting."

"Instead of the wealth going to the upper echelons, for whatever they use it for, it should be used socially to help people. Instead, they keep cutting the social programs so that they can make more money and hurt the poor. The Republicans in all these states that are passing all these voter laws are becoming like a fascist regime taking over. And the Democrats are letting it happen."

"There is no social distancing [in my work environment]. I try to keep my distance, but our bus compound is very small. They are also not social distancing with the kids. There are too many kids on each bus and the buses aren't big enough. I've tried it and it doesn't work. I've given up. There is no way you can do it. They are short of drivers so they can't do it for that reason."

"Before we got our shots there were quite a few people who got sick, maybe half a dozen... Apparently, a few of the special needs students tested positive for COVID and now 8

of them can't go in. Nearby, some of the bus drivers caught COVID and died."

Responding to the recent statement calling for the formation of the IWA-RFC, she noted, "I would like to see what happens on May Day. I think it is interesting to see the work to coordinate the committees and get the word out to everyone, and that it is spread out throughout the work force globally. I think that it is good that people see it and if it is growing, people will see they have something to turn to. If workers only have the union, it will fail them every time."

A teacher in Florida spoke in support of building independent rank-and-file committees across the US and internationally saying, "The virus hasn't gone away. It's mutating and getting worse. People are dying at a higher rate because of the neglect of governments, so I support this program. There's only two choices under this system: between working and running the risk of infection or refusing to work and starving. So people 'have' to pick the lesser evil, but it's not true. There is a real alternative and I think this program addresses that—that you don't have to starve or die from COVID."

A teacher in Oregon expressed support for the building of rank-and-file committees noting, "We have to find a place we can be more active, to make a movement for the working class. Teachers are the working class. Some are paid \$15 an hour even with a Master's degree!"

"History has these cycles where big movements need to happen. We are in that now. The Democratic Party is not going to be the ones to help us. Biden and the Democratic Party are just Republican-lite and people need to understand that. The rank-and-file committee allows for workers to come together, outside of the organized unions that are present now, to mobilize, and to make sure that our communities are getting what they need so we can stay home and can fight COVID!"

A Southern California student in a social science teacher credentialing program said, "As a credential student in the United States, I got into teaching because I saw it as a way to better the world around me. It is one thing to teach, but another to recognize the larger systems of oppression at the root of their problems. It is another thing to become an advocate for the working class and face the beast itself. I have been striving to find my place in the struggle against capitalism where I can be active and purposeful. Through these rank-and-file safety committees made up of teachers, I believe I have found that place."

"The barbarity and despotism of the international globalized capitalist class has never been so obvious and depraved as now. In the midst of this global pandemic, the way forward for working class liberation and an end to capitalism is to create working class consciousness and

organize outside of unions into rank-and-file committees composed of and guided by the democratic decisions of workers in every country. I am energized to take up this fight to create a socialist society with you and end capitalism and the pandemic for the security of future humanity!"

Ric, a fifth grade teacher in LAUSD, said, "The teachers unions are useless appendages of the Democratic Party which is the lackey of the ruling class. In LA, the union, UTLA, completely sold out the teachers and never even pretended to resist the reopening of schools during the pandemic. At no time were the teachers asked if they thought it a good idea to reopen schools just weeks before the end of the school year. In fact, the absurd vote to by close to 90 percent of teachers, if that number wasn't fudged, was greeted as celebratory.

"Students' instructional time has been cut from at least four hours of instruction to a scant two for those who returned to the classroom and over half the students stayed online exposing the union's lie that they were merely responding to pressure from parents demanding a reopening. In my case, only seven out of 27 students returned to the classroom.

"I could go on and on about the absurdity returning to a class with a non-functioning AC/fan which took days to repair in spite of the superintendent bragging about how well-prepared to reopen they were, students not social distancing because asking kids to socially distance is akin to asking them to not be kids, and classrooms not being swept the entire week in spite of the superintendent's brag that classrooms would be cleaned floor to ceiling daily.

"It's abundantly clear that the unions are absolutely useless and the only way to organize resistance is outside their sellout organizations. That's why I joined a rank-and-file committee organized by the *World Socialist Web Site* which is the only organization I know of that is committed to the safety of workers and students because it is well-established that schools are breeding grounds for the spread of COVID. Join a rank-and-file committee and join the fight to resist the premature reopening of schools and businesses for the express purpose of the lining the pockets of the ruling class at the expense of workers."



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