

May Day 2025

Unite Latin American and US workers against Trump's imperialist drive

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This speech was given by Tomas Castanheira, a leading member of the Socialist Equality Group in Brazil, at the International May Day 2025 Online Rally, held Saturday, May 3.

May Day is the day we celebrate the international unity of the working class. Never have workers been so internationally integrated, operating together the great workshop of globalized production. And at the same time, never has the political affirmation of this international unity been so urgent.

Trump's return to the White House marks a realignment of US imperialism's foreign policy toward domination of the Western Hemisphere, seen as a necessary step in its offensive against China.

Speaking to the US Congress in February, SOUTHCOM commander Admiral Alvin Holsey explained:

The [Latin America and the Caribbean] region is on the front lines of a decisive and urgent contest to define the future of our world. China is assailing US interests from all directions, in all domains. ... Failure to adequately compete here and now will leave the region under the influence of America's chief authoritarian rivals which directly threatens the US shift to the Indo-Pacific.

Washington "must meet presence with presence," Holsey concluded. This open doctrine of intimidation by force has been demonstrated most clearly in recent moves against the Panama Canal.

Acting like a gangster at the head of the world's most powerful army, Trump threatened to invade the sovereign country to force Panama to break agreements with China and extract significant military concessions.

In the outraged eyes of millions of workers in the region, this blatant neocolonial policy adds to the humiliating treatment of Latin American immigrants in the United States.

Workers and their families, who crossed the border in search of a better life, being hunted down and deported in handcuffs on planes, without food or water, under the abuse of guards who owe much to the Gestapo: this has become the "American experience" in the collective consciousness of Latin America.

The assault on immigrants is the spearhead of the American capitalist oligarchy's efforts to build up a dictatorship in the United States. In this and other respects, the fate of the working class in Latin America and the United States is completely intertwined.

The agreements between Trump and his fascist ally, Nayib Bukele, to massively expand El Salvador's prison complex and send thousands of prisoners, born in the US and other countries, evoke sinister images of the future and of the past.

The construction of a transnational complex of repression, imprisonment and torture draws directly on the experience of Operation Condor, established exactly 50 years ago, in 1975.

Condor was the culmination of the murderous collaboration between US imperialism and the fascist military dictatorships that consolidated themselves in Latin America, backed by the CIA.

This network of counterrevolutionary terror turned the continent into a "labyrinth of horror," in the words

of Argentinian author Stella Calloni. “A political exile could be kidnapped, taken hostage and taken across the border, tortured and disappeared, without any judicial authorization.”

The attempt by the American oligarchy in crisis to revive the Monroe Doctrine in the 21st century using brute force alone can well be characterized as insane. But the insanity of these plans has real roots in the insoluble crisis of the imperialist system.

This crisis leaves no room for a new equilibrium in which another power will supplant Washington and the US dollar. Nor does it leave room for a peaceful multipolar order. The eruption of imperialist war is its most genuine manifestation.

Nothing would be more fatal for the Latin American working class than to be taken in by the nationalist agitation being promoted by the ruling classes in their own countries.

The eruption of imperialist aggression does not unify, from outside, the social classes within Latin American countries. On the contrary, it exacerbates their deep social antagonisms.

In Brazil, the Lula government responded to Trump’s tariffs by promoting the slogan “Brazil for Brazilians.” This campaign aims to use the unpopularity of Washington’s attacks to subordinate workers to the bankrupt national bourgeoisie and make them swallow the growing attacks on their living standards.

In recent years, Latin America has been in a continuous state of social and political unrest. Mass strikes and protests demanding social equality once and for all have shaken every country in the region.

The ruling class has responded with a universal turn to the right: with the rehabilitation of the heirs of the military dictatorships of the 1970s; with Javier Milei in Argentina, Jair Bolsonaro in Brazil, Daniel Noboa in Ecuador—the fascist stars of CPAC, who inspire and are inspired by the government of the world’s greatest capitalist power.

And what do the governments and parties of the Pink Tide, the great hope of the world’s pseudo-left, have to offer? Capitulation after capitulation to the fascists. In the name of restoring lost national unity and the tattered bourgeois political system, they impose capitalist austerity, policies of repression and mass incarceration, and the strengthening of the military.

The working class and youth are ready to fight, both

to resist capitalist shock measures and to settle accounts once and for all with the persistent legacy of the military dictatorships and imperialism.

But a decisive political turn is urgent.

The International Committee of the Fourth International (ICFI) and the Socialist Equality Group (SEG) call on workers in Brazil and throughout Latin America to break with the rotten national political establishments dominated by the bourgeoisie and to unite with their class brothers and sisters in the United States and internationally to fight capitalism, war and fascism.

Forward to building the International Workers Alliance of Rank-and-File Committees (IWA-RFC), the bodies of 21st-century workers’ democracy!



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