

United Front in U.S. Labor Struggle

How the Exploitation of Illegal Immigrants and Lower Class People Affects All Workers



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To understand the truth about illegal immigrants, you need to understand slavery. What made slavery profitable was the legal

status of slaves. Slaves had no rights. Therefore, they could be exploited to the maximum possible extent.

Many trade unions in the North recruited regiments to fight in the Civil War. They knew that the legal status of slavery had to be abolished to keep the price of their own labor from being lowered. They knew something that has been hidden from us: cheap labor anywhere is a threat to labor everywhere.

Last year, young people in France went on strike. They were protesting a law establishing a lesser legal status for workers under the age of 26. Employers would be able to pay them less and fire them more easily. They could be exploited more severely than older workers could.

Many older French workers joined these protests. Why should a boss pay them a higher wage if he could get younger workers to do the same work cheaper and fire them before they got more seniority? Cheap labor anywhere is a threat to labor everywhere.

So-called “illegal aliens” are workers who have almost no legal rights. Therefore, they are super-exploited by employers. They do very hard work for very low wages. They pay taxes – employers have to deduct them – but they get few benefits.

They exploit no one. They are super-

exploited. They are like slaves, they are like other workers, except for one thing: their legal status.

You and I are hurt too. The existence of a large group of workers who can do the same work, but can be super-exploited and treated like dirt pulls down the wage level for all other workers. Always, everywhere, cheap labor anywhere is a threat to labor everywhere.

Who is promoting the attack on undocumented workers? Both the Republican and Democratic parties. Employers bought them off long ago. Democrats and Republicans are “two wings of the Business Party.” Google this phrase. Neither stands for us.

The Republican/Democratic strategy is two-fold: (1) Allow enough Mexican immigrants into the country to take the low paid, back-breaking jobs and (2) maintain their illegal status so that these workers can't complain about conditions and certainly never go on strike.

Both parts are necessary – a somewhat porous border to have enough superexploited labor and the illegal status that prevents organizing a struggle over the surplus value these workers are creating.

And then there's a bonus: the politicians can blame immigrants for every conceivable problem that capitalism creates: unemployment, budget crises, crime, poor services, etc. And they even point to the industriousness of Latin immigrants and tell blacks, “Look at how hard these people work. Why can't you work as hard?”

The 1863 New York “Draft Riots” saw lynchings of black workers by white workers. Much easier to “blame the victim” – a rela-

tively powerless worker, like yourself – rather than the powerful exploiter-employer.

In the post-Civil War “Jim Crow” South, white workers were told: Help keep the black workers “in their place” without rights because “Whatever they get we will take away from you.”

True, the super-exploitation of slaves and black workers kept wages and living standards lower for all workers. Who benefited? The employers, of course. Exploiters love it when we, the exploited, fight one another instead of uniting to fight them.

Not all “white” workers fell for “blaming the victim” and cutting their own throats. The Communist Party and the CIO actively fought racism against non-white workers, supporting equal rights for all.

When you think about it, it is obvious. All workers should have the same legal rights and as many rights as we can get. That is the only way one group of workers can be not super-exploited with their cheaper labor dragging down wage rates for all workers. There is no other way.

Today, the United Bosses of America are doing all they can to encourage “legal” workers to think that “illegal” workers are our enemies. Build walls, patrol the borders, or call “La migra” (Immigration)!

Get the workers fighting each other, but make sure they do not recognize the truth.

Here's the truth: We have got to do away with the category of “illegal” workers. “Illegal” workers have almost no rights. That's why they can be super-exploited. That's why their cheap labor pulls down wage rates for all other workers.

And that's why employers love “illegal”

workers – because they work cheap, cannot organize a union and cannot strike for better pay and conditions. They are as close to slaves as a boss can get, in these “enlightened” times.

So we need a workers' campaign. Full rights for everybody on American soil! If your feet hit dry ground, you have the same rights as everybody else.

In the 1860s, many trade union members went to war to get rid of slavery – the “legal status” that deprived other workers, like themselves, of legal rights.

Today, we workers, unionized or not, blue- or white-collar, need to get together and struggle to get rid of the category of “illegals,” the “legal status” that makes some of us vulnerable to super-exploitation, police raids and blackmail of all kinds, and drags down wages and working conditions for everyone.

No more “legal status” of slavery – no more “legal status” of “illegal aliens.”

You won't hear the President, Senators, Congressmen, Rush Limbaugh, John McLaughlin, John Stossel, ABC News, CNN, *The Star-Ledger*, or *The New York Times* say this. They are all large-scale exploiters of labor, or paid flunkies of such.

You won't hear The Minutemen or other “patriots” say it. These forces are no better than the Ku Klux Klan or Nazi Party. Any organization that pits one group of workers against another is basically fascist and should be treated like all fascists

Full legal rights for all: good for “us” workers. Bad for those employers, and those exploiters. Pass it on.

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