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Ethiopian People's Revolutionary Party (EPRP)

MAY DAY 2013
THE WORSENING PLIGHT OF WORKERS IN ETHIOPIA

Ethiopian workers are confronted with one of the worst period of their struggle and history.

The long struggle of workers in Ethiopia has been fraught with immense difficulties. They had to endure years of repression to assure their unions rights. The Confederation of Ethiopia Labor unions that they formed was hijacked by government appointed leaders and foreign labour organizations. May Day was not observed then and when the February 1974 Revolution erupted CELU and the working people were in the middle of it and they got their rights through a general strike and they were able to stage massive May Day demos.

Alas, that did not last long. The totalitarian military regime, supported and backed by the Soviet bloc, killed CELU president Markos Hagos and many union leaders, dissolved CELU and set up its own satellite "labor union" Soviet style. And on May Day 1977, in the city of Addis Abeba alone, the military junta unleashed its armed guards, police and soldiers killing more than 1500 workers, students, members and supporters of the EPRP. A blood bath. May Day was not to be observed all through the 17 years of reign of the bloody colonel Mengistu. He made strikes illegal, killed or chased many union leaders. The condition of workers has worsened as the ethnic chauvinist rulers again dissolved the labour unions, set up their own satellite body, divided workers on ethnic basis by a scanty hidden decree, adopted a very repressive labor law, killed, jailed or forced into exile numerous leaders of the workers' movement and opened wide the country to foreign firms that have little or no respect for the rights of workers. Those working for the Chinese for example have been denied the right to get organized in unions and the regime has given the racist Chinese employers the right to beat up Ethiopian workers they chauvinistically accuse of "being lazy".

The plight of Ethiopian workers is at its worst because the regime is one of the worst rights violator that Ethiopians have to endure. The statistics and praises of its foreign masters and local acolytes aside the regime in Addis Abeba is dictatorial and exploitative, it is anti worker and has aggravated the poverty and suffering of the majority of the working people. No decent and honest worker in Ethiopia will stage a genuinely joyful May Day 2013 demonstration. The EPRP continues the struggle of the basic rights of Ethiopia's working people.

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