

Los Angeles rallies in solidarity with South Korean workers

written by Struggle-La Lucha Los Angeles bureau
November 10, 2023



Los Angeles, Nov. 4. Photo: KALSA

“Down with Yoon Suk Yeol — Workers united will never be defeated,” was one of the many chants resounding through this busy intersection in Koreatown, Los Angeles,

on Nov 4. The spirited rally was organized by the Korean American Labor Solidarity Association (KALSA) in coordination with protests in South Korea sponsored by the militant Korean Confederation of Trade Unions (KCTU).

David Yun of KALSA said: “Workers struggle anywhere in the world is a global struggle for all peoples living under capitalism. Right now, while American workers struggle for fair wages and access to health care, Congress is sending billions and billions of dollars to fund a genocide in Palestine. And for the past 78 years, South Korean workers have been living under U.S. military occupation.

“The workers’ revolution that took place in the Democratic People’s Republic of Korea [North Korea] resulted in Korean workers getting 8-hour work days, a standardized wage scale, two-week annual vacations, and the right to collective bargaining. This was in 1946! These are rights that workers in South Korea and America are still fighting for to this day.

“The situation for workers in South Korea is dire,” Yun explained. “To feed their families, workers have to work multiple jobs and work over a hundred hours a week. In the past year, over 2,000 Korean workers died on the job due to unsafe working conditions and over exhaustion. That’s six workers a day!

“The current Yoon Suk Yeol administration in South Korea fervently opposes workers interests and is offering Korea as an imperialist playground for the U.S. Empire. For this, we the people demand he step down!”

Tsukuru Fors of the Asian Pacific Nuclear-Free Peace Alliance said: “I consider it to be of paramount importance for me to express my solidarity with my Korean brothers and sisters. Japan’s decision to dump radioactive water during the month of August, the A-bomb memorial month, was a grave insult and betrayal to the people of Hiroshima and Nagasaki. As a child of Hiroshima, I found that to be absolutely horrendous and sickening.

“I want to acknowledge that under the colonization of Korea by Japan, so many Korean people suffered, and many resistance fighters were imprisoned. I also want to acknowledge that 5 million Koreans were killed in the Korean War, which no one wants to talk about in this country.

“In the light of what’s happening in Palestine right now, I thank all of you for standing up for Palestinians. As a descendent of the colonizer Japan, it is my duty to stand with the Palestinian people and all who are victims of Imperialism and colonialism.”

Members of the ANSWER coalition and the Harriet Tubman Center for Social Justice also gave solidarity remarks. Maggie Vascassenno of HTC closed the afternoon picket with these words: “It is especially important now, when global capitalism is unleashing terror and repression against workers and against the global south, that the world’s progressive and working-class forces stand together in support of all those around the world that are fighting back - from Palestine to South Korea, from Venezuela to Syria.

“Down with Yoon Suk Yeol, down with the Chaebols and their U.S. banking partners! Down with U.S. and Japanese imperialism! Long live the Korean people’s militant struggle.”

