

RED FLAG

MOBILIZE THE MASSES FOR COMMUNISM



THE INTERNATIONAL COMMUNIST WORKERS' PARTY * WWW.ICWPREDFLAG.ORG

**Take Up Red Flag
Against Capitalism
Fighting for
Communism**

**May Day
El Salvador**



COMMUNIST MAY DAY IN EL SALVADOR

SAN SALVADOR—"Capitalists tremble: the communists are advancing!"

"I just saw some workers with *Red Flag* in their hands, reading it. I want to help distribute the paper."

"Give me another newspaper for my friend who couldn't come today."

These comments of maquila workers, farmworkers, and youth marching in the streets this May Day demonstrate clearly that the masses are thirsty for communist ideas, and that our ideas must be there, with the masses.

And they were there. Since the day before the march, under torrential rain that refreshed the spirits, comrades of the International Communist Workers' Party mobilized to go to the capital to fulfill their assigned tasks of bringing our communist literature, *Red Flag* and *Mobilize the Masses for Communism* (MMC), to the working class. Spirits were high since this was the first time, in this country, that the newspaper *Red Flag* was designed and produced like the original. "You like the way it turned out, right?" smiled enthusiastically the friend of ICWP who had printed it.

Starting early on May Day, young and not-so-young from the fields and the city including comrade workers from the maquilas, carried out the tasks that had already been planned. Our communist banner was hung on one of the main streets of the city, and another was carried by the comrade workers.

Then each group found its assigned places and, with high spirits, we went to the gathering of thousands of fists, voices, flags, and the struggle of thousands of men and women workers.

An example of the discontent, anger and hatred that
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MIGRANT WAGE SLAVES IN QATAR STUDY RED FLAG

One year ago somebody sent *Red Flag* to me. It had a story about the garment factory in Bangladesh where many people died. I was very sad and angry to see that so many people lost their lives. Your newspaper made a lot of sense. My English is not so good but I can read. Many people in Bangladesh have no job, so we go very far to look for work. I and many other people have come to Qatar (in the Persian Gulf) to find work. The life is very difficult.

I came to Qatar because I paid an agent \$2500. I didn't have the money to pay him so he said, "You pay half now and the other half when you get a job in Qatar."

I borrowed money from somebody in my village to pay the agent. He kept my passport. I came to Qatar and I work every day more than 16 hours, sometime more. I live in a very dirty room; it is very hot and I share this room with 15 other people. I haven't made enough money to pay the agent or the person who gave me money in Bangladesh. Every day they charge interest and now I have to give them more than \$6000.

When I came, I thought I could support my family but now all the money I make goes to pay the loan. The agent kept my passport so I cannot look for another job or go back to my home. I feel like a slave.

We don't have too much time for fun. There are many people like me. But one

Friday I had no work. I met many people like me and we were sitting. I always get your newspaper on my cell phone. When I am sitting in front of my small computer I see *Red Flag* and my friends say what you reading. I tell my friends I read the newspaper because they say truth about why people died in the Bangladesh factory.

My friends come to me and they say they want to read also because in their countries many people die also. So in my room people from Syria, India, Nepal, Philippines, Bangladesh and Sri Lanka are trying to read the paper. They all have very difficult lives and escaped war to come here to work, but we need to change it because many people die in Qatar also and life is no good.

I try talking to my friend who sent me your paper. I talk to him regularly. He speaks a little Bengali and explains to me that it is capitalism that causes this war, and accidents and no jobs for many. I tell him that he is right. I like very much talking to him. He listens to me always and explains many things about communism to me. I am learning about communism. I hope you understand my writing because I am very poor and didn't go to school so I can't speak English well. I enjoyed *Red Flag* with my friends from many countries on May Day.

—Comrade in Qatar

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Obama's Free Trade Agreement Failure:

HASTENS U.S.-CHINA-RUSSIA WAR PLANS

"Obama Suffers Setbacks in Japan and the Mideast," screamed a front-page headline in the *New York Times*, April 24, 2014. The article was referring to Obama's most recent foreign policy failures: no signed trade agreement (TPP) with Japan and the collapse of his Secretary of State's Middle East negotiations.

"Add to this the collapse of not one but two Geneva conferences on Syria, American helplessness in the face of Russian aggression against Ukraine and the Saudi king's humiliating dismissal of Obama within two hours of talks — no dinner — after Obama made a special 2,300-mile diversion from Europe to see him, and you have an impressive litany of serial embarrassments," chimes in the *Washington Post*.

Actually, you have much more than just that. You have a graphic picture of the inexorable and rather precipitous decline of US imperialism, more and more unable to influence events in the world, much less command them.

These mouthpieces of US imperialist's dominant wing lament Obama's failures because they endanger their vaunted "pivot or rebalancing to Asia." The Middle East negotiations are crucial for the US bosses ability to extricate themselves militarily from that region to then be able to concentrate more of their diplomatic, economic and military resources to Asia-Pacific.

Also vital to their Asia-Pacific strategy is the Trans-Pacific Partnership (TPP), which is a free-trade agreement being negotiated with twelve countries bordering the Pacific. It would open Asia's huge markets to US farmers and manufac-

urers and strengthen US influence in the region.

Both "influence" and "trade agreements" have serious military aspects which would bolster US imperialism's main reason for pivoting to Asia: to build up its military forces and alliances in the region to constrain China and eventually confront it militarily.

In this respect, the main outcome of Obama's trip was strengthened military ties. He signed a new ten-year defense pact with the Philippines that will station thousands of US troops there temporarily for the first time since the 1990's.

In Japan he stated unequivocally that the Senkaku islands would be covered by the US-Japan bilateral security treaty. This was the first time a sitting president explicitly made the commitment that "America would indeed come to Japan's aid in the event of a serious Chinese incursion." (*The Economist* 5/3/2014)

In Seoul, Obama said that the US stood "shoulder-to-shoulder" with South Korea in case of a North Korean provocation. He also left standing current arrangements where, in case of war, South Korean armed forces come under direct US command.

Thus the main aspect of TPP is military. It is to exclude China and counter China's economic hegemony in East Asia. Its goal is to restrict China's alarming economic growth, which has fueled double-digit increases to its military budget, propelling its rapid military modernization and build up.

This is allowing the growth--much feared by US imperialism--of a Chinese blue-water navy

capable of challenging US dominion of the seas. According to Reuters, "Chinese shipyards are turning out new nuclear and conventional submarines, destroyers, missile-armed patrol boats and surface ships at a higher rate than any other country." (Oct. 5, 2013)

"Influence" is also important in this scheme. It means US bosses cajoling the region's rulers--especially those threatened by China--to open up their markets, natural resources, strategic military locations and cheap labor to satisfy their needs. It also means building a military alliance with regional powers and getting them to shoulder more of the cost of "protecting" themselves and contributing to the containment of China.

All this would give the US bosses more time to prepare to fight what is shaping up to be a China-Russia axis. Additionally, it could provide the economic resources for the military build-up they need without further impoverishing the US working class, especially the so-called middle class. "The threat to the United States is the persistent decline in the middle class' standard of living... and that, if it continues, poses a threat to American power." (Stratfor, December 31, 2013)

All this, dubious to start with, seems even more improbable now. Preparations for wider wars, with the further impoverishing of the US working class, are becoming an inescapable reality. The US bosses are once again being forced to put masses of workers, students and soldiers in motion. Like the masses worldwide, as our May Day activities show, the masses are open to and thirsty for our revolutionary communist ideas.

TEACHER READS AND SHARES RED FLAG IN MEXICO

Due to the situation that Mexican teachers have lived through, especially in the state of Oaxaca, I thought that everyone believed in some electoral political party, because in the teachers' demonstrations, you can always see an inclination toward a certain electoral political current. This has made me stop believing in unionism, as well as in the political parties, that only pursue their personal interests.

During the teachers' mobilizations in Mexico City, I realized that there are still people whose ideology has not been destroyed by capitalism, people who even recognize that they belong to the working class, who understand the abuses that the working class has suffered and show hope in a different future, communism.

Some months ago I met some members of ICWP. The first time that I received the newspaper *Red Flag*, I gave it little importance. However when I had the opportunity to be invited to talk with some members of ICWP, my idea changed. I realized that there are people who analyze reality from another point of view, who call for a totally different change than the

deceptive ideas of the electoral political parties.

It was important to participate in their meeting because I heard ideas that I had never heard from other people. They explained the reality of capitalism to me, like the bosses who exploit us and how the international society is suffering in this system. Therefore they invited me to read and distribute *Red Flag*.

From these conversations with the members of ICWP, I became interested in reading the newspaper and commenting on it with some co-workers. Currently I have been receiving some editions of *Red Flag* that I have read and shared with a friend. She has also shared the newspaper with some of her relatives, who have analyzed the communist ideas.

The second time that I gave *Red Flag* to my friend, I thought that she would not be interested in reading it again. However, when she received it, she said, "This weekend I will take *Red Flag* to my uncles, who like to read it. My sisters will also read it."

Some days later, she told me that her sisters



had read the paper, analyzed it and thought that *Red Flag* must be shared with the youth, since it is they who will have to change their ideology, eliminating from their minds the idea of "getting ahead" for economic survival. It is the youth who will fight to make these communist ideas a reality.

—Mexican Teacher

Join the ICWP Summer Project!

Bring *Red Flag* to factories & transit divisions and to soldiers from LA to Seattle.

Participate in communist study and practice.

Read, write for, discuss and design *Red Flag*. Build communist collectives.



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May Day:

COMRADES IN MEXICO DISCUSS COMMUNISM WITH WORKERS

This May Day, comrades from the International Communist Workers' Party came to spread communist ideas in the main streets of Mexico City, where thousands of workers, students and teachers marched to commemorate International Workers' Day. From very early in the day, before the march started, each comrade began to distribute and sell *Red Flag*.

This year we emphasized that each comrade should discuss communist ideas with the workers to whom we gave *Red Flag*.

One comrade brought together a group of over 30 workers from different organizations and, after giving them *Red Flag*, she offered them inspirational communist speeches.

Another comrade talked with a large group of workers, who at first were suspicious when offered *Red Flag*. But then she explained to them that ICWP fights to destroy the capitalist system and to build communism, as a social system without money, without social classes (exploiter and exploited), in which each will work according to their capacities for the benefit of humanity and receive according to their needs.

The leader of the group told the comrade, "Give me all the newspapers that you have for my co-workers. We are also fighters." The comrade gave him her last ten *Red Flags* and he shouted, "Friends, take the communist newspaper!"

A comrade spoke extensively with men and women workers. An older worker commented that there currently exists an inter-imperialist rivalry: on the one hand the US imperialist empire is in decline and on the other hand the Chinese imperialists' em-



pire is growing. History shows, he said, citing the Roman, Egyptian, and English empires, that this bosses' rivalry will inevitably lead to World War III, in which many workers' children will die.

The worker said that the bosses need more money for war and that's why in Mexico they have carried out reforms of energy, finance, labor and education. The worker agreed with the comrade that the only solution for the working class is to organize to fight to destroy the capitalist system and build a new communist system.

In an exchange of ideas, two women workers said they disagree with the capitalist system because it doesn't work for the working class, and is based on exploitation. But one of them, skeptical, said, "Communism has not been a solution either," pointing to the old communist movement of Russia and China.

The comrade clarified that the Russian and Chinese revolutions were an advance for the international communist movement but they adopted socialism, instead of fighting directly for commu-

nism, which is why capitalism returned. The other worker said that socialism is just a version of capitalism. The comrade explained that socialism is state capitalism, because money does not disappear as the material basis that creates class differences. In socialism, the state controls the means of production and the exploitation of the working class, and that is why ICWP, through *Red Flag*, is fighting for the destruction of capitalism and to directly install communism.

In this brief discussion, the workers said that they understood that to abolish class differences, money must disappear and they agreed that we must fight directly for communism. Finally, they asked for more copies of *Red Flag* for their friends.

Another comrade reported hearing expressions of discouragement from some workers. The comrade told these workers that the hope for a different world lies in the same working class, and that is why ICWP is fighting so that, as on this occasion, many people organize and go into the streets, not to fight for reformism, but instead to fight to destroy capitalism and build a system without borders, money or exploitation: this is communism.

This activity was a great experience for all the ICWP comrades, and each one reaffirmed their revolutionary practice. We realized that, unlike other years, all the comrades showed greater confidence and experience during the distribution of *Red Flag*. In the collective we reflected that this is due to the experience that we have gotten from frequent sales of *Red Flag* and the weekly study groups that give us leadership.

FIGHT MTA'S REIGN OF TERROR WITH COMMUNIST COLLECTIVITY

Last week MTA suspended, for 10 days without pay, a veteran mechanic with 24 years of service. His "crime?" Forgetting to check off items on the paperwork submitted by mechanics after inspecting a bus. He also openly disagrees with his supervisor, who doesn't like him, singles him out, and hounds him constantly, determined to fire him.

The mechanic, although rebellious, is individualistic. This also sometimes puts him at odds with his co-workers. He doesn't always take their advice to lay low, and to think about responding to MTA's attack in a more collective and organized way. Sometimes irritated by his co-workers' criticisms and advice, he doesn't always respond in the most friendly manner.

MTA attacks this worker for following its bus inspection rules

When becoming inspectors, mechanics are sent to classes where they are instructed about how to inspect buses and fill out the paperwork that must be submitted daily to a supervisor.

They make two kinds of inspections: a minor one which is not too thorough and a major one that is very thorough. When doing the first one, mechanics are responsible for two buses a day. When doing the second one, it is only one bus per day. In either case, if the inspection procedures taught by MTA in those classes were followed, mechanics would be unable to finish one bus in an 8-hour shift.

Yet, this mechanic has been suspended and is being set up to be fired for following MTA's inspection regulations. Being safety-conscious, he

meticulously inspects the buses and repairs even minor things. In the past he would stay late to complete his paperwork. This never used to be a problem--since he never got overtime pay--until MTA gave a specific time to turn in the paperwork.

Why is his being meticulous a problem? Because, more buses in the shop and fewer on the road means more expenditure and less revenues for MTA. Also, MTA requires this paperwork to avoid any liability in case of an accident, and to blame mechanics or drivers for any accident that happens.

Would this mechanic's work ethic be a problem in communism?

Of course not! Safety of drivers and passengers will be our main concern. Mass transportation will be the only means of transportation for everyone -- except for persons with very special physical needs.

Since safety will be paramount, there will be not just one mechanic but a team of mechanics inspecting the buses or trains for safety, reducing tremendously the possibility of mistakes. Furthermore, repairs will be done on the spot. We'll only have paper work that helps get this job done, not useless paper work that goes to useless racist management, whose job it is to get the buses out as cheaply and quickly as possible.

This means cutting corners: just write down and repair the most obvious things, and let minor things go, and do it as quickly as possible. MTA rules governing the required paperwork contradict what they teach in their mechanic safety in-

spection classes. However, to disobey these rules is to be written up, suspended and eventually fired.

Capitalist disciplining of workers: death sentence by other means

This is the discipline of capitalism's wage slavery. The wage is the whip: no job, no wage; no wage, no life for us and our families. What could be more inhuman than denying workers and their family their basic needs?

In the last four years, at least four MTA drivers that we know of have died because of the stress imposed on them by MTA's reign of terror. Its goal is to eliminate higher-paid "tier one" drivers and replace them with lower-paid "tier three" drivers, while forcing all drivers to submit passively to their exploitation.

Has MTA's CEO Leahy or his lackeys like supervisor Barbara Maycott been tried for their participation in these murders and reign of terror? Have they been fired, suspended or even reprimanded? Of course not! And they'll never be! Neither will be the bosses' racist cops or their mass murderers like Clinton, Bush, or Obama.

We need to join and build ICWP

We need to destroy the tyranny of wage slavery. That is the only way to eliminate capitalism's reign of terror. For this we need a communist revolution. This requires building real unity and solidarity among all workers to challenge not only MTA's attacks but the whole capitalist system.

For this we need collectivity, communist collectivity. Individually we are nothing, organized collectively with communist ideas we are invincible.

MAY DAY LESSON: MOBILIZE THE MASSES FOR COMMUNISM, STRIKE AT THE HEART OF CAPITALIST WAGE SYSTEM

SEATTLE, WA, May 1 — “You remember those old movies we saw as kids,” mused an experienced Boeing worker as we analyzed this year’s May Day march. “You cut off a head of a hydra and a new one grows right back. You really can’t make any progress until you go for the heart.”

“The same is true about the \$15 minimum wage, immigration reform—or any reform. Until you end the wage system, the capitalist will just bounce back, making life even worse for us.”

Nearly 1,000 marched three miles to Westlake Center downtown on May Day. About 400 took *Red Flag*, including articles on how “The Tyranny of Wages Will Impoverish Workers” and on the struggle at our local May Day dinner to build a Boeing ICWP collective.

The front page introduced International Communist Workers’ Party (ICWP) May Day activities from South Africa to Spain to Seattle Boeing, from Mexico to Honduras, from El Salvador to Los Angeles. Each paper included an insert promoting “Communist Education for a Classless Society.”

We made contact with a young worker—and his friends—whose older relatives were killed in the war in El Salvador. He came to the march with fmln flags, but left with extra copies of *Red Flag*, a desire to mobilize for communism and a commitment to come to ICWP events. Farmworkers and student supporters from north of the city also exchanged phone numbers, as did others.

If You Lie Down With Dogs, You’ll Wake Up With Fleas

On the same day, Seattle mayor Ed Murray announced his \$15 minimum wage proposal to national publicity. There were so many exceptions and conditions that it won’t take effect for all workers until 2021. Most believe the bosses will eventually sabotage it.

That’s what they did when a state initiative passed many years ago mandating smaller class sizes. The state just cries it doesn’t have the budget, while class size increases!

The Saturday before May Day, City Council member Sawant and her fake-left group hosted a 15now conference to launch a “cleaner” \$15 minimum wage ballot initiative. Local media characterized it as stronger. That, too, is up for debate.

ICWP distributed *Red Flag* and other communist literature at this conference. We met many, including visitors from other parts of the country, who were suspicious of the electoral strategy and the opportunist alliances made to support it.

Their suspicion was warranted. In order to preserve what they call a “labor” alliance, the conference leadership railroaded an amendment through allowing unions to opt out of the \$15 minimum. Under the amended initiative, union leaders can make their members take a wage lower than \$15 in exchange for something else negotiators want (like more members). Who needs bosses when you have friends like these?

That was too much for some, causing a minor revolt. In the end, the opt-out amendment passed 186 to 72.

Despite this craven capitulation, the unions double-crossed the 15now leadership five days later. Service Employees International Union Local 775 president David Rolf and co-chair of the mayor’s advisory committee stood by Mayor Murray at the May Day press conference. He assured the bosses that unions would not back any ballot initiative after all.

The Devil Don’t Change, He Changes You

A lot of May Day marchers agreed we had to get rid of the capitalist wage system to elimi-



nate racism, sexism, and deportations. This was made even clearer by the disgusting capitalist politicking around the \$15 minimum. Many others were open to the idea.

The reformists and socialists have to deal with this revolutionary potential. They confuse the issue, saying we should mobilize for some kind of social revolution at a later date. Today, unite around a \$15 minimum wage or a cutback in deportations, as this is the only way to change minds.

The sad truth is that concentrating on reform demands does not create revolutionaries. Instead, it bogs down potential communists in a swamp of capitalist thinking and alliances. Eventually it turns the enthusiasm of youth into cynicism or worse.

The great lesson of May Day is that mobilizing the masses for communism is our duty today and in the future: even more so when the masses are on the move.

We are looking forward to a spring and summer of consolidating the new friends we made this May Day. We’re aiming for the heart of the capitalist monster.

Mass May Day Celebration in Honduras

THE WORKING CLASS IS WILLING TO FIGHT THE CAPITALIST SYSTEM

HONDURAS, May 1—Mass demonstrations of workers, mass organizations, farmworkers, teachers, and community aid groups were held in all the main cities of Honduras, concentrating tens of thousands of workers in the cities of Tegucigalpa and San Pedro Sula.

As in previous years, ICWP comrades participated, distributing *Red Flag* and the pamphlet *Mobilize the Masses for Communism*. We made contact with many workers with whom we discussed the precarious situation of the working class and the need to go beyond reformism and take the qualitative step of fighting to destroy capitalism and organize a true communist revolution.

In Honduras, poverty attacks the working class more every day, with poverty wages getting worse. Those who have jobs are subject to ever greater exploitation. More than forty percent of the population able to work is unemployed. Many migrate to the US in search of work. Society in

general is subject to living in an environment of unimaginable insecurity because we have the highest crime rate in the world (83 deaths per 100,000 inhabitants).

The labor movement is immersed in reform struggle, mainly fighting for higher wages which means nothing more than maintaining ourselves as wage slaves. Workers know that whatever increases they might win will be taken away and then some, with the increases in the price of consumer goods. This means that the working class can be won to the struggle for a revolution of the masses, which puts an end once and for all to money, wages and markets. It means that workers can be won to communist ideas.

Honduran workers also celebrated the 60th anniversary of the biggest strike that occurred here. The strike was against the banana companies, including the United Fruit Company and the Tela Railroad Company that paralyzed the main eco-

nom activity in the country in 1954. This mass strike achieved temporary gains for the working class, and it was the most militant movement of the working class and the longest lasting at that time.

The desperation of the working class is every day more dramatic. In general, workers don’t see this neoliberal capitalist system as a solution to their grave problems, not even for subsistence. In this dead-end street, working-class consciousness is now forming to make clear the antagonism between labor and capital. Workers see how the national and international bourgeoisie are increasing their profits at the cost of workers’ labor, and those who work for wages no longer receive enough to even meet the basic needs that a human being requires.

The workers’ response to our communist ideas inspires us to continue with our goal and gives us the strength to build communist revolution worldwide led by ICWP.

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workers express against the capitalist system was the slogan “fmln=capitalist bosses” painted on a wall. On the other hand the workers showed massively their joy in receiving, reading, and sharing our communist literature.

In the different marches we distributed over 1000 *Red Flags* and 300 copies of *MMC*. Time after time, our newspaper increasingly attracted attention.

“Give me one more!” “You didn’t give me one!” “Hey, here they are!” “Ask them for another!”

These were expressions we heard as we finished our task. People surrounded us to ask for newspapers. *Red Flag* was read carefully by many men and women workers. Our signs and banners were discussed and photographed by dozens of workers who see in our slogans the reflection of their struggle.

We ended the march satisfied with the work carried out, discussing and commenting on how we can make our party grow more. This May Day we witnessed that we are under a bright sun, that the working class is prepared to fight for communism.

Students shouting communist slogans know that the night is only dark for those who don’t have their eyes open.

May Day, International Workers’ Day, motivates us to continue in a life of struggle for the working class. We are advancing toward a world for which millions have died fighting, for which millions of us live fighting and which millions will enjoy. There is no other road. There is no option other than revolution, a true communist revolution. We are and we will be a party of the masses. ICWP carries the *Red Flag* that leads the way to Communism.

May Day Report:

BUILDING ICWP IN SOUTH AFRICA

SOUTH AFRICA, May 1 — Red greetings, comrades. There is no better cause than building ICWP!

There are shenanigans going on here within the pro-capitalist tripartite alliance. This is the alliance between the ANC governing party, the South African Communist Party and Cosatu, the South African trade union federation. Numsa (National Union of Miners of South Africa) leadership was sidelined in the May Day celebrations around the country's nine provinces. Not a single Numsa speaker was featured. This clearly shows the divisions and paralysis within the alliance and Cosatu in particular.

May Day is the workers' day around the globe. Here in South Africa it's been hijacked by the alliance for its own selfish, narrow interests, and unfortunately others are buying into these vicious schemes. It has now become obvious that Numsa will be expelled from the trade union federation; it's a matter of time, possibly after the 7 May general elections.

Recently I was visited by ANC volunteers doing their door-to-door election campaign; I was able to convert them. They agreed with me that what they were doing is defeatist.

I visited my contacts to check up on their reading and to encourage them. It was very exciting to note that they are all reading the *Red Flag*. One comrade shared the *Red Flag* with his co-workers. I promised to give him another stack of Red Flags to distribute among his co-workers so

as to keep the good news going. He remarked that they found the *Red Flag* impressive and genuine.

In the neo-apartheid, neo-colonial South Africa, the more things change, the more they remain the same. In the Brits area, which covers Marikana, Mothong township (where many striking platinum miners live) there have been clashes with the police around service delivery protests against the lack of running water. At least four protesters lost their lives.

But President Zuma of South Africa visited the area not to convey his condolences with the families that lost their loved ones but to canvass for votes. Water delivery was restored in the area and things were "stabilizing," at the expense of dear lives. The poor had to make supreme sacrifices.

There was a big May Day celebration here. It was held at Dan Qeqe stadium in Zwede, which was filled to capacity. The gathering was addressed by the deputy president, Kgalema Motlanthe, and the General Secretary of Cosatu, Zwelinzima Vavi. We members of ICWP were there wearing our Red ICWP T-shirts. As usual I bumped into a number of comrades. All the copies of *Red Flag* that we had were soon grabbed.

Unfortunately the rally was used as an electioneering ploy by these misleaders. Since it is a few days before the national polls, everything is about elections. Workers' issues were relegated to the sidelines. Nothing was said about workers currently on strike for almost two weeks at Con-

tinental Tire. Workers at Coega IDZ have been on strike for weeks on end, as well as mineworkers from the platinum mines (see article, below) who have been on strike since January. These are the matters that should have received attention; instead, very little or nothing was said about them.

We had a fruitful and exciting meeting following May Day. We were joined by four new comrades, who displayed enthusiasm and willingness to join our party, ICWP. We now have regular meetings every Sunday. Our new comrades promised to become part of these developments. One of our comrades is receiving the *Red Flag* pamphlet directly. He has distributed it to his co-workers.

So, things here are promising. It's a matter of time before you receive articles from our other comrades. Comrades are coming up with suggestions on how best we can overcome this shortcoming of not writing.

One suggestion to encourage reading is to assign one comrade to read for us an article of one's choice in *Red Flag* and we all reflect; next meeting another comrade does the same, so the circle goes until everyone is empowered, confident and able to defend and propagate our line of communist revolution as opposed to the reformist revisionist line of pressuring capital. We spent a great deal of time discussing the Marikana massacre. We will wrap up the discussion next Sunday.

Viva ICWP Viva! Amandla!

South Africa, Brazil, Turkey, Bangladesh, China:

COMMUNIST SOLIDARITY FOREVER!

70,000 striking miners in the South African platinum belt have rejected the revised offer by employers and are continuing with their strike action of nearly 4 months undauntedly. The miners are demanding a wage increase to 12,500 Rand a month (about \$1,195). South Africa accounts for about 80% of the world's platinum production. The strike has cut this output by 40%.

The unscrupulous employers of one of these mines are bypassing the union leadership and talking directly to the mine workers to persuade them to accept the offer of 12,500 rand in 2017. This is a ridiculous and dangerous ploy by the bosses to lure and divide the workers to weaken the strike. Fortunately workers are steadfast, holding on and sticking to their demands. What is worrying is that there is very little if any support in the form of secondary strike by other workers to pledge solidarity with the miners. Instead the reformist misleaders are looking at their own sectarian interests, busy going around canvassing votes in the election circus going on in this country.

As ICWP we raise our *Red Flag* high in support of the striking workers in the platinum belt. As workers fight the largest platinum companies

and the South African ANC government, we call on the miners to turn their strike into a political strike against capitalism and for communism. This would inspire workers throughout South Africa and the world who are fed up with capitalism and open to communist ideas. Our support should be to spread *Red Flag* among striking miners and their families and to urge them to join the fight to abolish wage slavery with communist revolution. Wages chain us to the capitalists and their system of exploitation. Only communism will guarantee that workers determine our own destiny, and produce not for profit but only to meet workers' needs.

Workers around the world, also on the move against the bosses, need communist ideas:

In Rio de Janeiro, on this April 11, 5000 squatters in a favela organized themselves to fight the police for many hours, refusing to be evicted from buildings that they had taken over, which had been abandoned by the biggest phone company in Brazil.

In Turkey, thousands of May Day marchers organized to fight the police for hours to enter Taksim Square in Istanbul, which the police blocked, using water cannons and tear gas against the marchers. Taksim Square was the scene of mass protests a year ago. Workers and youth fought back throwing objects and using

slung shots against the police.

Thousands of workers marched on May Day in Bangladesh demanding death for the owner of the building where over 1100 garment workers were killed when it collapsed on April 24, 2013 (see letter, page 1).

In China, 40,000 workers organized themselves to strike for two weeks against the owners of Yue Yuen Industrial Holdings, the world's largest manufacturer of brand-name athletic shoes, like Nike, New Balance, and Adidas. The company has underpaid workers' social security benefits for years, robbing them of their retirement. As many returned to work on April 26, one striker said, "Capitalists will always be capitalists."

Capitalism is exposed as a murderous system that only serves the bosses. These workers worldwide on the move against the bosses are open to mobilizing for communism. That's how we will collectively build the world that meets our needs. Fighting for reforms will not change our situation: workers need *Red Flag*. Join ICWP and help spread *Red Flag* where you are and worldwide. Away with the profit motive of the bosses Away! Communist Solidarity Forever!





LOS ANGELES, May 1 – “Capitalism Always Fails, Communism Will Prevail!” “Fight For Communism, Power to the Workers!”

Workers in the garment district eagerly grabbed copies of *Red Flag* as young workers led the International Communist Workers’ Party May Day contingent in enthusiastic chants. Students and workers distributed 1,900 papers (including copies of the *Communist Education* pamphlet) at the morning march led by unions and other pro-Democratic Party forces and at the afternoon march led by a coalition of nationalists. We had many sharp conversations with Wal-Mart and health care workers about why we need to abolish the wage system instead of organizing for a \$15 minimum wage. “We were the only group there that massively distributed a communist paper,” said a fast-food worker who helped get those papers out.



LOS ANGELES MAY DAY

COLLEGE STUDENTS SAY: “COMMUNISM CAN WORK”

LOS ANGELES, MAY 1 — “It was great to see that there are so many comrades who think the way we do,” said a student attending his first May Day march. He and a fellow student enthusiastically distributed over 100 copies of *Red Flag* at the morning march, and marched with the International Communist Workers’ Party in the afternoon. Two other students from their college also joined the second march.

“I liked the afternoon march better because there were so many workers on the sidewalks,” a student commented. “I wanted to chant ‘Workers United Will Never Be Defeated’ so they could hear it and understand.”

She had started reading our manifesto *Mobilize the Masses for Communism* on a lunch break between the two marches. “I don’t see why everyone wouldn’t agree with this,” she said after reading the first page.

“You should both read it all carefully and let’s discuss it together,” an older comrade replied. “If you agree with it, you should join the Party.”

And one has joined.

Communism: What Humans Are Supposed to Do

A week earlier, all four students, with several others, had taken part in a discussion about “social justice.” (Note: Names have been changed.)

“Mostly there’s injustice,” said Gloria. “There’s camouflaged racism. Prison is a way of slavery. Minorities are part of the working class. The ones who get on top become oppressors.”

“We call them sellouts,” agreed Danielle.

“It’s been going on forever,” said Carlos. “The Roman empire, the Greeks...”

“And communism doesn’t work,” Mike put in. “Everywhere you look, capitalism is on the rise.”

“But look at capitalism,” Gloria responded. “It isn’t working. We are worrying about money all the time. It isn’t living.”

“Money, that’s the problem.”

John had been trying to get this into the conversation. “We have to get rid of money before anything else.”

Danielle answered Carlos: “Over hundreds of years, human society has changed. As humans we have certain values. Humans are supposed to be empathetic, instead of the competition, control and judgment we see today, where laws and regulations are thrown at us.”

“Like I said, we have to get rid of money,” John repeated.

“I totally agree,” said Danielle.

“Then capitalism must be abolished,” said Gloria. “Capitalism is about individualism. Communism is actually good. It’s what humans are supposed to do. Instead, people treat animals better than they treat other people.”

“Look at the people on Skid Row,” said Carmen. “There are drugs, prostitution, gambling... a lot of things are behind homelessness. Some of them want to be disconnected. Government programs aren’t working.”

“There’s so much corruption in government

programs,” answered Danielle. “I have seen it personally. There is a motive in the madness.”

“In the capitalist system, money corrupts everything,” interjected Marcia. “Without money you wouldn’t see the drugs or prostitution or gambling either. Everyone would have a home. Right now there are ten times as many empty homes in the US as there are homeless people.”

“Communism can work,” Gloria declared.

“There is already a communist town in Spain.”

Gloria was referring to the village of Marinaleda, which runs itself as a socialist agricultural cooperative on land seized in Andalusia, a region hard-hit by the crisis of capitalism. The workers in Marinaleda all earn the same wages, and reinvest surpluses into expanding production. But money has not been abolished and private enterprises remain. It may be a communist town in spirit, but not in actuality.

What Marinaleda shows is the potential to mobilize the masses for communism – real communism. We saw that same potential in the Los Angeles garment district on May Day, in the workers who eagerly reached for *Red Flag*.

“It’s not going to be peaceful or gradual,” John warned. “There has to be revolution.”

Time was running short, so those who were going to march on May Day traded contact information and made plans. Next week there will be lots more to discuss as everyone shares their impressions and questions from May Day.

LETTERS

LETTERS

LETTERS

CRITICISM AND SUGGESTIONS

THIS IS THE PAPER OF THE WORKING CLASS. WE GET NO FUNDING FROM THE CAPITALISTS, THEIR FOUNDATIONS OR NGOs. PLEASE GIVE GENEROUSLY TO HELP PAY FOR THE COSTS OF PRODUCTION AND DISTRIBUTION.

“I’ve got bills to pay!”

That one statement lays bare the whole system of wage slavery, and the way that the wage system ties us to a way of thinking that puts our individual household ahead of the working class as a whole.

We’ve got bills to pay, and the bosses know it. Those bills—and the fact that the necessities of life have price tags—keep us tied to our jobs. They make us afraid to put our jobs on the line, to speak up, to defend a fellow worker, even to fight for a few more dollars in pay or benefits. What if I lose my job? What if I can’t find another one? We may not be slaves to any particular boss, but we sure are slaves to the wage system.

The pay check—the wage system—means that we always have to think about the survival of our individual households. And it made the failure of socialism in the Soviet Union in-

evitable. Although the Russian communists were committed to the fight for a collective way of life and a new world, socialism kept the wage system. Every Soviet worker collected a pay check and had to pay bills. Every Soviet worker had to think about her/his individual family, knowing that it was up to her/him to keep her job and pay the bills.

We have learned from history that to win the fight for collectivity once and for all we have to put an end to the wage system. In a communist society, the survival of each individual will be the responsibility of the entire collective. When we say “to each according to needs” we mean that it will be the responsibility of the whole society to make sure that everyone has healthy food, appropriate clothes, state-of-the-art medical care, secure housing, communist learning and collective, meaningful work. No more will anyone say, “I’ve got to look out for my family,

because nobody else will.” Never again will anyone say, “I’ve got bills to pay.”

—Red Reader



“Without revolutionary theory there can be no revolutionary movement.” Lenin, *What Is To Be Done*

LENIN’S FIGHT FOR OBJECTIVE TRUTH

After the failure of the 1905 revolution in Russia, many communists were killed or sent to Siberia, or went abroad. Activist workers were black-listed by factory owners. Demoralized, some communists argued that the party should be abolished. Some Bolshevik intellectuals advocated a philosophy that rejected materialism, promoted a new religion, and attacked dialectics. Plekhanov and other reformists correctly criticized these Bolshevik philosophers.

Lenin recognized that the philosophy these guys advocated would do serious harm to the communist movement. By March 1908 he was hard at work on a book attacking it: *Materialism and Empirio-Criticism*. This book was a fundamental text for the later development of communist philosophy. In this column we describe the idealist views that Lenin was attacking. In our next two columns we will describe the arguments of Lenin’s book and discuss some of its shortcomings.

Subjective Idealism

The wrong position that these Bolshevik philosophers were defending is usually called subjective idealism, which says that the only things that exist are minds and the sensations or ideas in those minds. Subjective idealism says there is no world outside of individual minds, and what we call rocks, people, classes or mountains are just “complexes of sensations.” Crazy as it is,

this has been a popular variety of capitalist philosophy during several periods in the last 300 years. The version of subjective idealism that these Bolshevik philosophers advocated was called “neutral monism,” developed in Germany, England and the U. S.

“Neutral Monism”

The distinctive feature of neutral monism is that rather than saying that everything is made up of sensations and ideas, it says that everything is composed of “elements.” An element was supposed to be something that is neither mental nor physical, but neutral between the two. The neutral monists claimed that they were neither idealists nor materialists, but had overcome the contradiction between these two positions.

The obvious question is “What is an element?” A little digging shows that for the neutralists, “element” is just another name for sensation. As leading neutralist Ernst Mach put it, “colors, sounds, pressures, spaces, times (what we usually call sensations) are the real elements of the world” and physical things are just “symbols” for relatively stable “complexes of sensations.”

Materialism vs. Neutral Monism

The neutral monists rejected the materialist idea of a real world beyond our sensations and tried to come up with a way to explain how objective knowledge is possible. Bolshevik neutralist Alexander Bogdanov, who was the main target

of Lenin’s book, denied that there is any reality underlying our experience. Objectivity, he claimed, does not mean that our thinking corresponds to reality, as materialism says. It just means that people’s experiences are “socially organized” and “harmonize” with each other. He saw truth as just a matter of consistency and agreement.

It is probably impossible to find anything that everyone agrees on, but it is easy to find completely false beliefs that have been accepted by nearly everyone at some time or other. It has never been true that the earth is flat, that God exists or women are inferior to men, but there has been “socially organized” agreement on these. Since not everyone reads *Red Flag* yet, there are also lots of really important truths that are not yet believed by most people.

Objective Truth and Communism

It is easy to see why Lenin took time out from working on the party newspaper to refute this trash. Truths aren’t necessarily “socially harmonized” beliefs. Contradictions in beliefs are always present, and drive people to revise their thinking. We can’t win the fight for communism if we don’t understand that there are objective truths with profound consequences but that aren’t accepted by most people—yet.

Next article: *Lenin refutes neutral monism*

Movie Review: César Chávez from page 8

hundreds are injured.

Meanwhile, the bosses need to win farmworkers and their sons and daughters to defend US imperialism in their wars—perhaps aboard the US Navy cargo ship Cesar Chavez. That’s why they have

promoted Chávez and his Mexican-American nationalism and pacifism in this movie, in the schools, and on postage stamps.

It’s up to us to answer these lies by reading and distributing *Red Flag*, to win farmworkers and all workers to the struggle for a communist world.

SUBSCRIBE TO *RED FLAG* - \$20/YEAR

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CÉSAR CHÁVEZ: CAPITALIST SYSTEM'S HERO WORKING CLASS TRAITOR

MOVIE REVIEW: Chávez

The movie *César Chávez* is ruling class propaganda. Some big lies are tied together with enough truth to make them convincing. By promoting Chávez as a Mexican-American civil rights hero, it aims to win Latino/a workers and youth to nationalism, pacifism, anti-communism and the Democratic Party.

Chávez is shown as a one-man organization. The movie has him picking grapes in the fields (a lie). They show him organizing the grape boycott in Europe single-handedly (another lie). In fact, an army of student and farmworker volunteer boycott organizers went from Delano to Los Angeles, Toronto, London and beyond.

Other leaders of the United Farm Workers (UFW) are shown as "yes men" or left out entirely. Larry Itliong, the Filipino strike leader, has a series of quick appearances. Epifanio Camacho, whose militant leadership was the main obstacle to Chávez's pacifist sell-out, is slandered.

The movie pushes nationalism by leaving out the multi-racial volunteers and reducing the crucial role of Filipino workers. More importantly, it omits Chávez's racist attacks on undocumented immigrants—just like most of the books written about the UFW.

The UFW paper *El Malcriado* routinely referred to migrant workers as "wetbacks" as did Chávez in a TV interview on KQED.

Racist words led to racist actions. The UFW turned over undocumented strikebreakers to the Migra in May, 1968. In the early 1970s, César's notoriously corrupt cousin Manuel Chávez organized the "Campaign Against Illegals," known officially as the "UFW Border Patrol" and unofficially as the "wet line," to physically attack migrants coming across the border. Some nonviolent saint!

The climax of the movie is Chávez's 1968 fast for nonviolence (see letter this page). During the strike, the growers' cops and thugs physically attacked workers and volunteers on the picket lines, hitting them with baseball bats, spraying them with pesticides, and at least once, driving a truck into a picket line. Strikers fought back militantly!

When Chávez began to ally with the Democratic Party, he needed to isolate the leaders who were dedicated to winning the fight in the fields without being bound by pacifism. Chávez used the fast to force pacifism down the throats of union members.

Epifanio Camacho, one of the most class-conscious and militant leaders of the union and the picket captain in 1968, is identified in the film as the cause of all the violence. His character is shown as nationalist, arrogant and isolated—another big lie. His leadership in the first UFW strike, among rose workers, is left out. So is his militant leadership on the picket line.

The filmmakers finally slander Camacho by inventing a "pledge of nonviolence," which the Camacho character signs at the end of the fast. This is a total lie—there was no pledge, and Camacho would never have signed it if there had been one.

The United Farm Workers started out as a union engaged in militant reform struggle, but for the bosses, and their mouthpieces in the movie industry, even militant reform struggle must be portrayed unfavorably. Epifanio Camacho said in his 2002 *Autobiography*:

"I learned that strikes are the best weapon in the economic struggle of the workers, but that for our total liberation, a strike is insufficient. To achieve liberation, it is necessary to adopt a more powerful weapon, the weapon of revolutionary struggle against the entire social-political regime."

Farmworkers in California today live in conditions that are at least as bad as the 1960s. The UFW is a collection of social service rackets making money for Chávez's relatives. It has only 5,000 workers under contract. Farm workers' wages are right at the federal poverty line, between \$10,000 and \$12,000 per year. On average, one farmworker dies every day on the job in the US, and

See MOVIE REVIEW page 7

What prompted Chávez's hunger strike? The uncensored story...

Some workers are commenting about the movie *Cesar Chávez*. They expected something better, more action, but what you see is that the victory of the struggle in the 70's was due to capitalist politics, religion and pacifism. Personally I remember many things, not exactly pacifist.

One event was at the beginning of 1968. I was in charge of the only picket line there was. The strike was about to be lost, because there were only 15 of us strikers participating, mostly very old, and for this reason the strike was weak. Due to this, Chávez decided that we should go for a weekend in the mountains to discuss whether we would continue the strike or end it, since it seemed not to have any potential.

That weekend, about 25 of us participated in the meeting, but the majority were very discouraged. Yet we decided to continue the strike, only so we wouldn't have to admit defeat. However, there were some who, without saying much, in truth were not willing to surrender.

But soon, in February of that same year, came news on the radio that a large number of strikers had savagely attacked the scabs in the fields of the Guimarra Company; this caused the scabs not to return.

This happened on a Friday and at about nine o'clock that morning Chávez came to the picket line very happy, as was his custom when something like this happened. He told me, "There are no scabs anywhere; go home and take the day off." **However, our joy turned into fear** when on Monday morning the police served Chávez and me with a subpoena to appear in court to answer for the violation of certain injunctions issued by the judge.

That caused Chávez such panic. That same day he called an emergency meeting to give us the news that he was declaring a hunger strike to protest

the violence by strikers against the scabs on the picket line and that he would not eat until the strikers, who weren't many, pledged not to commit any more violent acts. **This was Chávez's reason to start his famous 25-day hunger strike.**

The attack against the scabs served to make sure they would not attempt to break our strike again. It also provided a second wind for the strikers and volunteers. They carried out the struggle with more strength, despite the fact that the strike had nearly been lost. They recuperated and launched a strong relentless attack against the ranchers, despite their strong resistance.

This culminated in 33 companies signing labor contracts with the farmworkers. However, these contracts were won doing what we needed to do to win the fight, rather than due to the prayers or pacifism of César Chávez, because prayers and pacifism are useless.

But the bosses never surrender, even if sometimes they appear to. They may lose one battle, but they don't lose the war, especially if we fight them with religion, pacifism, and their politics, since they can count on their government, their courts, their politicians, and their money.

Despite what was won, only memories remain. This is most true in the area of Delano, California. After all, it was only a reform struggle for the workers. The only way to know that the bosses have lost is to destroy them and their rotten capitalist system with workers' revolution for communism.

I would like to write about other incidents that were not exactly pacifist, that I'm sure have not been mentioned in the Chávez movie.

--Comrade Farmworker, veteran of the struggle

Funny thing history...it only exists in the retelling. This can be distorted more & more with the passing of time until the version most widely accepted as truth is far removed from the truth. How does the capitalist system ensure the version they tell is the one most widely accepted? They put it in movies & school textbooks for our children "to learn."

W*TBKS
MUST BE
DEPORTED!**

