

# RED FLAG

NEWSPAPER OF THE INTERNATIONAL COMMUNIST WORKERS' PARTY \* [WWW.ICWPREDFLAG.ORG](http://WWW.ICWPREDFLAG.ORG)



Athens, Greece, June 5, 2011. Eighty thousand workers and students protest austerity programs imposed by Euro Zone-IMF. See page 2.



## MASSES MUST SMASH THE DICTATORSHIP OF CAPITAL

### Yemen:

#### **MILITANT REBELS MUST FIGHT FOR COMMUNISM**

June 7 – Mass uprisings appear to have toppled Ali Abdullah Saleh, the dictator who ran Yemen with an iron fist for nearly thirty-three years.

“People are learning a lot,” said a friend in Yemen, “how to work together and overcome differences, how to be resourceful (poverty teaches this to many Yemenis) and rediscovering many talents that Saleh’s regime suppressed.”

The same friend added that “Western media warn of the dangers of the many Yemeni factions– tribes, Houthi’s, southern secessionists, etc. – while the on-the-ground reality is that they have laid aside their differences and united in one goal – Down with the regime!”

But capitalism itself is the real dictatorship over the Yemeni masses. Regime change will do little or nothing to improve their daily lives. Only a communist revolution – not a democratic revolution – can accomplish that.

#### **Militant Masses Defy Police, Military**

The mass protests in Tunisia and Egypt quickly reached Yemen in February of this year, with an encampment in “Change Square” in front of Sana’a University.

Saleh’s police and military massively attacked the protestors during the dawn prayers on March

12, using water cannons, live gunfire, rubber bullets, tear gas, and even nerve gas. Some gas canisters were labeled “Made in USA.”

The protestors grabbed whatever they could to throw back at them. Two were killed, over a thousand injured, and the protests escalated.

A week later Saleh’s forces attacked again, killing scores more, many with sniper fire.

When the gunfire started, throngs of unarmed demonstrators started running towards the gunfire, not away. Many were young tribesmen who had recently come to protect the demonstrators. They stormed buildings occupied by snipers, overpowering them, disarming them, and throwing their belongings out the windows.

#### **World’s Bosses Abandon Their Pal**

The Saudi rulers have long supported Saleh (except when he backed Saddam Hussein in 1990-91) as a force for stability on their border. By April they feared that Yemen’s rebellions would spread to Saudi Arabia.

On April 3rd, the Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) – led by the Saudi bosses – called for Saleh to transfer power to his vice president. This would have satisfied the official opposition “Joint

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#### **BOEING WORKERS NEED POLITICAL STRIKE, NOT NLRB NONSENSE**

SEATTLE, WA — Barring a last minute deal, the National Labor Relations Board (NLRB) complaint against Boeing will reach the federal courthouse here on June 14.

The complaint says the company illegally moved new 787-jet work to Charleston, South Carolina to get away from union workers who have struck three of the last four contracts.

No matter what the outcome, there will be no practical difference. Boeing continues to build plants in low-wage, non-union areas, while shipping work off to even lower-wage subcontractors.

Everyone agrees that the courts have no intention of reversing or even slowing this trend. Sen. Blumenthal (D-Conn) assured a Boeing lawyer at a recent Senate hearing that even a finding against the company four years from now would not close the Charleston plant.

This hasn’t stopped the International Association of Machinists (IAM), the main union at Boeing, from devoting three major articles to these developments in their latest paper.

“The union is pushing this legal maneuver in-

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## IMF Boss Assaults Hotel Worker--Capitalism Assaults All Workers

### **COMMUNISM MEANS WORKERS, NOT BANKERS, WILL SHAPE THE WORLD'S FUTURE**

The dramatic arrest of the French politician Dominique Strauss-Kahn isn't about his sick sex life. It's about the sharpening conflict between US and European bosses over financial control of world capitalism. Workers have no stake in this fight. Our task is to destroy the money system with communist revolution.

Strauss-Kahn is a French politician who helped launch the Euro in 1999. This was a direct challenge to the US dollar, which had dominated world trade as the universal reserve currency since the end of World War II.

In 2007 Strauss-Kahn became the director of the International Monetary Fund (IMF), an agency historically dominated by US imperialism [see box]. The weakened US bosses didn't like that, but they hadn't much choice. The US financial system was on the verge of collapse.

In 1999, China was emerging as a formidable financial power. As the US was rapidly sinking into debt, the Chinese government and banks started offering loans and building infrastructure in Africa, Latin America and Asia. Ten years later, Chinese loans to other countries exceeded those of the IMF and the World Bank.

Strauss-Kahn saw this as an opportunity to further weaken US control over the IMF. In 2009, he appointed a senior economist of China's Central Bank as a special advisor to IMF.

US reaction was swift and hostile. Economics professor and former IMF advisor Simon Johnson said that people from emerging markets could get top international jobs, "but not China at the IMF while the Chinese are manipulating their currency."

Strauss-Kahn's IMF recently forecast that China's Gross Domestic Production in 2016 will be \$18.2 trillion, slightly ahead of the US. China will then be "number one in the world," 24 years earlier than previously predicted.

According to the Chinese state-owned Huanqui newspaper, "this statement created global alarm bell on the US dollars and severely threatened the US financial system. ... The reversal of

US and China would restrict and then threaten US dollar as a reserve currency of the world." The article referred to the US as "the most rogue country" because it "borrows money without a thought of repaying it."

Strauss-Kahn and the IMF used this analysis to justify creating a "basket of currencies" to reduce the dollar's role. This would end the US Federal Reserve's freedom to print dollars. It would be catastrophic for US world financial domination.

#### **US imperialism urgently needed IMF regime change**

The US bosses attacked Strauss-Kahn by arresting him for sexually assaulting a hotel worker from Equatorial Guinea (in Africa). He was nabbed while heading to a high-level meeting of European leaders, finance ministers and bankers. They were to cut a deal to resolve debt crises in Greece and eventually Spain, Portugal, and Ireland. Undoubtedly, Strauss-Kahn planned to minimize the role of US banks by accepting China as a major player.

The viciously racist and sexist policies of the IMF, whether under US or French leadership, have assaulted the workers of Guinea and around the world, and they still do. The US bosses don't care for a single second about this immigrant hotel worker.

#### **Imperialist Competition Leads to World War**

The European debt crisis is becoming a battleground for imperialism. In 1997, the US shot down a proposal of the Japanese bosses to create an "Asian Monetary Fund." Now the German ruling class wants to create a "European Monetary Fund" to supplant the IMF.

However, there are serious disagreements within the French ruling class. One capitalist faction openly cheers Strauss-Kahn's fall. This and French-German rivalry have threatened the very existence of the Euro. Strauss-Kahn's departure could trigger a flight from the Euro.

The Chinese bosses are taking full advantage of this situation. In Greece, they have taken con-

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#### **IMF: Seventy Years of Assaulting the Working Class**

Throughout the nineteenth century and half of the twentieth, French and British imperialism ruthlessly dominated the globe. Millions upon millions on every continent were subjugated by capitalist wage slavery. Inter-imperialist conflict led to two bloody world wars.

Toward the end of World War II, the US Treasury Department proposed a new post-war trade system. US capitalists were to capture and dominate markets formerly controlled by other imperialists. They intended to rebuild war-torn Europe to meet their own needs.

The International Monetary Fund (IMF) and the World Bank (WB) were part of this plan. British imperialists understandably opposed it. They prevented its adoption at the 1944 Bretton Woods Conference.

But in 1945, the US rulers dropped two atom bombs on Japan, killing hundreds of thousands of Japanese workers. This murderous racist display per-

suaded British and other capitalists not to challenge US bosses' supremacy. They unanimously accepted IMF, WB, and other post war US proposals.

Since then, IMF/WB policies have sacrificed the lives and health of hundreds of millions of workers mainly to benefit US banks and corporations. IMF policies in the poorest countries (Bangladesh, Tanzania, Peru, Egypt, Nepal, Pakistan) cut workers' food supplies by 28%.

IMF forced governments to abolish food subsidies and cut health care and education. It pushed their indebtedness to over \$500 billion, then imposed free-market policies to repay this debt. Over one billion people ended up in abject poverty, living on less than a dollar a day.

These rapacious policies engulfed still more workers during the 1980's and 1990's, from Thailand to Indonesia to South Korea and elsewhere.

Capitalism inevitably creates crises, and a big one hit Asia in 1997. IMF forced the sale of Asian banks, factories and natural resources at fire-sale prices to

US banks and corporations. When Thailand was unable to service its debt, IMF pushed sex tourism there, forcing millions of women and young men into prostitution and drugs.

Japanese banks challenged IMF/WB by proposing an Asian Monetary Fund. The US Treasury Secretary vetoed it, but unresolved US-Japanese rivalry torpedoed IMF's Asian bailout strategy.

The Asian crisis spread to Eastern Europe, Latin American and Africa. In 1998, an IMF-organized bailout pushed Russian capitalism into bankruptcy. The resulting run on Russian currency and the failure of US hedge funds threatened the US banking system and the world financial system.

Brazil was next, but the weakened IMF was unable to contain the crisis now spreading to other Latin American countries. By 1999, a weakened US imperialism faced new challenges from the introduction of the Euro and the rise of Chinese capitalism. These developments set the stage for the conflict unfolding today.



**JOIN THE  
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## ICWP In Spain Says: “COMMUNISM NOW!”

“Real Democracy Now!”, “Revolution Now,” “Indignant!” and other slogans were heard in the plazas throughout Spain. Workers and students from many nations supported these protests. The working class feels oppressed, enslaved and is awakening all over. In these types of movements, the fact that people go out and protest is a very important sign for our struggles as the International Communist Workers’ Party. Besides showing them how the capitalist system functions with its laws and police violence, we’re trying to connect with the greatest number of people possible and talk to them about how these struggles are simply for reforms, that the real struggle that the workers have to carry out is a revolution and to direct our thinking towards Communism.

We talked to a lot of people. I want to explain that it was a concentration in which the “leaders” didn’t want to see the name or line of political movements, or of some line promoting something. That’s why we took the necessary steps to talk to people and discuss with them about communism. In the future we’ll have to break more boldly the obstacles imposed by these reformist “leaders” and take communist ideas to the masses in a more massive form, with leaflets, *Red Flag*, or even little cards with the ICWP website on them.

We explained that the idea of not voting is very good but it needs to go along with other, more important aspects like eliminating wages (wage slavery). Only by destroying social classes and by the proletariat taking power and destroying the capitalist empire, installing a communist society, will we be able to make real changes that truly satisfy the needs of all workers. That’s the way to destroy racism in all its facets and to have the production of resources be based on meeting workers’ needs. These are the only weapons that we have which can meet our objective.

In general terms the answer of the people is that they’re fed up with the politicians, the banks, and the capitalist system. Our opportunities to be able to form a real red army can end the agony of this obsolete system by building our party, teaching dialectical materialism, and reading *Red Flag*, which will enable us to have a real struggle soon against capitalism.

## MEXICAN STUDENTS SEE THAT UNIONS AREN’T THE ANSWER

“No, teacher, look how Martin Esparza (president of the electrical workers’ union) lives, with a luxurious gym, and taking vacations while the electrical workers continue protesting. Or the engineer Augustin Rodriguez, taking advantage of leading the union of university workers for decades to become a senator.”

No. The unions now aren’t organizations that defend workers but a business for the leaders, who help the bosses keep us oppressed.

“Look Ary, do the workers see the trickery to which they’re subjected?”

“Of course, teacher, everyone knows it and the majority accommodate to the bribes and covering up of mistakes, being clients of the union business, becoming shop stewards or union officials.”

Those who dare to challenge this situation are repressed and are even fired. That’s how capitalism is. It corrupts a large part of the working class. And education itself is sabotaged since the schools aren’t exempt from this and there’s a lax attitude in everything (including the teachers’ activity).

Even though student protests in the past supported the workers’ strikes, “the union” doesn’t support the students. We need to organize ourselves into a Communist Party, not a union.

Ary attends a lab that students use for their physics and chemistry classes. We’ve asked him to read *Red Flag* over the last few months but he still hasn’t made the ideas of ICWP his own.

The electricians haven’t gotten working-class leadership. Once the government dissolved the Light and Power Company, the leaders misled the workers. They pushed them to defend the “public enterprise” against privatization, to defend the



2009-African workers in Spain demand equality and an end to racist police murder.

year? You’ll never see the cops arresting Boeing CEO McNerney because he refused to take back cuts in our pensions and medical benefits!

### Should We Rely On Labor Law Or Workers Mobilized In Our Interests?

Not so long ago, a veteran farmworker wrote in the pages of *Red Flag* how he and his fellow workers won a grievance at the point of production rather than waiting for the legalities of the union contract to run their course. They even got the boss to clean up the bathroom!

“A labor contract only negotiates the temporary terms of our wage slavery,” he reminded us. “That’s why we have to engage in revolutionary communist struggle, and in the future get rid of the game of union contracts along with exploitation.”

He said we have to destroy the wage system itself. He’s right, but how can we be assured that communism will succeed over the long run?

The answer lies, in part, in eliminating all the institutions the capitalists have set up to hide their power: Money hides exploitation. Union contracts hide wage slavery. Labor boards sabotage struggle. The law hides the bosses’ power over our class.

When our Party mobilizes the workers, everyone must know they are defending the power of

union (SME) instead of organizing themselves into the Party to take power from the capitalists.

This sabotaged the struggle to constitute ourselves as a CLASS, which means as a Party, as the Communist Manifesto of 1848 says.

The attack on the electricians is an attack on all workers worldwide. Instead of pushing illusions in legalism and the ruling class institutions, the most decisive action is to begin building the ICWP. It’s not the “constitutional controversy,” nor depending on injunctions as a means of struggle, nor hunger strikes that only show impotence.

The union leaders have made the workers depend on the politicians and their bosses’ parties. The most “radical” have called on consumers to stop paying the high prices for service, seeking the protection of the Office of Consumers and having the workers occupy work locations.

Even their calls for a “national strike” (a political strike supported by other union sellouts) have nothing to do with the elimination of wage slavery, but instead aim to maintain capitalism.

The same Esparza dared to call for doing the same thing as in Tunisia. He understands well that it will only change one oppressor for another who would support him. He has added the electrical workers to Lopez Obrador’s “defense of the popular economy” and the rest of the campaigns of the electoral “left.” They have paid them by signing them up for unemployment and promising to start an electric company in Mexico City that will supposedly give them jobs. All of this diverts the class struggle. None of this will stop the attacks on the workers or the deepening crisis.

Public or private, companies exist to make profits at the expense of workers’ jobs and lives. No reform will end this. We need to build the fight for communist revolution.

In a communist world, all production and services will be in the hands of the working class, not private capitalists or the capitalists’ state. They won’t exist.

The workers’ state through its Party, ICWP, will guarantee distribution according to need. All workers will do needed work and lead in building a communist society. To build communist class consciousness, join ICWP!

the working class, not just some abstract law. Our success requires that masses understand our true interests, learned through a lifetime of struggle.

Communism rests on certain principles, such as “everyone works for our collective well-being.” Decisions on how to implement such principles will require consensus and collective struggle.

Victory requires that our future not be undermined by illusions. During the 2011 summer project we will be fighting for a communist program for the upcoming contract battle. We must prepare now for a political strike that takes aim at the nonsensical notion that labor law is classless.



Students bring communist ideas to Long Beach Boeing strikers, 2010. Summer Project volunteers will be back this summer with *Red Flag* for Boeing workers in Long Beach and Seattle!

## BOEING from page 1

stead of fighting,” observed a CNC machine operator.

### Can Executives Work With Employees?

“Boeing’s greatest successes have always come when executives worked with their employees, instead of attacking them,” asserted IAM district president Wroblewski.

His second-in-command backed him up at a recent union meeting. “The NLRB is for the company as well as labor,” he said. He gave an example of when the NLRB sided with a company against a union.

“You can’t be for the company and the workers,” said a Shop Steward, showing basic class-consciousness.

Wroblewski tried to drown the opposition to this class collaboration with a list of supposed advantages of partnership.

“We worked as partners to secure the [Air Force Tanker] deal that will provide jobs for Machinists—and profits for Boeing,” he bragged. We should be producing tankers to defend the working class, not for some boss’s imperialist adventure.

Wroblewski then went on about how the Everett police will get more money from the increased taxes Boeing workers pay. Just exactly whom will the cops protect should we strike next



## WEAPONS OR WALKERS?

“America can either be a super power or a welfare state, but not both.” That, according to the *Wall Street Journal* (May 28, 2011), was the theme of Robert Gates’ farewell speeches as Secretary of Defense. Super power or welfare state? What a choice.

Yet it will never be put to the vote because democracy doesn’t work like that. While it advertises itself as a system of majority rule, it is in fact a system of class domination. The decision has already been made – a decision in favor of Super power status!

The *Wall Street Journal* (WSJ), a paper aimed at the owners and manager of the economy, is already channeling the debate. In another article the same week it reported on the Petersen Foundation’s Fiscal Summit in Washington, DC. “(Bill) Clinton spoke of ‘permanent structural deficits’ and warned ‘arithmetic still matters.’ We must focus on entitlement spending, he said ‘for the same reason Willie Sutton robbed banks: That’s where the money is.’” Arithmetic still matters! Really, how about this arithmetic: 1/3 of US workers are jobless!

### Guns or Butter

The WSJ article went on to argue it isn’t ‘imperial overreach’ (US armed forces all over the world) but ‘entitlement overreach’ (primarily Social Security, Medicare, Medicaid, food stamps, and unemployment insurance) that is

bankrupting the US. That, on the face of it is nonsense.

The US spends more on its military (imperial overreach) than its 13 nearest rivals put together, while it spends less on social safety nets than any of the other industrial powers. But the pros and cons of the argument aren’t the issue here. The purpose of the WSJ articles is to steer the debate within narrow channels and to condition us to accept their austerity program.

Attacking entitlements to pay for imperialist war was first raised in *Foreign Affairs* a couple of years ago in an article called “Running on Empty.” It now appears in elite newspapers to be repeated shortly in the more popular media.

*Foreign Affairs* is the magazine of the most powerful US think-tank, the DuPont-Rockefeller’s Committee on Foreign Relations (CFR). The CFR mobilizes US presidents, politicians, media moguls, editors, union chiefs, and university professors. It prepares arguments and justifications for policies that meet the needs of the dominant capitalists. “Weapons, not walkers (for the elderly)” was how they summarized their position in one *Foreign Affairs* article.

### Red Flag versus Foreign Affairs

Obviously such plans won’t be embraced by the masses, so it has proven useful to air decisions like this in the press, on TV talk shows, and in Congress. True, sometimes rival groups

of capitalists, organized into their think tanks (like the Cato Institute or the Heritage Foundation) oppose the dominant wing and change the policy. Nonetheless, the process is useful because it helps the masses resign themselves to the harsh “realities” they are being offered.

Only those issues that are generated by or filtered through the capitalist think tanks are given consideration. These think-tanks, together with some ruling class foundations, monopolize all political debate that is treated seriously. In reality democracy is a class dictatorship.

It is into this political arena that *Red Flag* enters. Without TV stations, media outlets, university departments, it enters into a David and Goliath battle. It argues a revolutionary alternative.

Nothing is written in stone that says the working class must accept a future of “weapons, not walkers.” *Red Flag* argues that starting today we can join and build a communist party – the ICWP – that builds a society that puts the health and welfare of the masses – our own families – at the front and center of political life.

*Red Flag* unleashes the debate, not narrows it. It trains and conditions our class to understand revolution is possible. Counter their think tanks by selling *Red Flag* – it’s a revolutionary awakening for our class! Our future lies in our own hands.

## IMF from page 2

trol of strategic ports and the world’s largest shipping company. In Spain they are buying interests in avionics, telecommunications and other strategic defense industries.

The capitalist world is entering into an era of unprecedented instability and unpredictable alliances as various capitalist bosses fight deadly wars for profit. The decline of US imperialism and the rise of Chinese imperialism will certainly lead to world war.

### The choice for the international working class is clear.

Communism is the only alternative to the bloodthirsty capitalist profit system with its culture of individualism, selfishness, sexism, racism and perpetual wage slavery.

No longer will a handful of arrogant bankers

shape the world’s future. The working masses will determine policy and allocate resources through our international communist party. All workers are welcome to join our ranks, taking part in making and carrying out decisions based on what’s best for the working people collectively.

There will be no money, no banks, no debt, no wealth, and no nations. The end of commodity production and wages will allow us to create a society and culture where we all see each other as comrades rather than objects to be used.

This is long and difficult but the future is in our hands. We must intensify the struggle to make the International Communist Workers’ Party a mass party of the working class, using *Red Flag* as our critical tool.

As the communist poet Langston Hughes wrote in his poem “The Same”:

**Better that my blood makes one with the blood**

**Of all the struggling workers in the world  
Till every land is free of**

**Dollar robbers**

**Pound robbers**

**Franc robbers**

**Peseta robbers**

**Lire robbers**

**Life robbers**

**Until the red army of the International Proletariat**

**Their faces, black, white, olive, yellow, brown,**

**Unite to raise the blood-red flag that**

**Never will come down!**

## YEMEN from page 1

Meeting Parties” (JMP) and many protesters in the “Peaceful Youth and People’s Revolution,” but Saleh refused.

The GCC – backed by the US, Germany, and Russia - then promised Saleh immunity from prosecution. The masses, JMP (initially), and even Amnesty International rejected this. So did Saleh.

After that, the struggle sharpened. Workers in Sana’a stayed home several days a week, and shopkeepers closed their stores. Students boycotted school or staged sit-ins.

By late April, huge crowds – sometimes hundreds of thousands– were marching daily in a dozen or more Yemeni cities. There have been women’s marches (especially after Saleh accused women protesters of immodesty), workers’ union marches, and spontaneous marches protesting attacks against demonstrators in other cities. Government forces have not been able to stop them, even with live gunfire, tear gas, and water cannons.

Oil workers went on strike briefly in mid-May.

Led by Germany, the world powers renewed efforts to get Saleh to leave the country. They seized the opportunity when a June 3rd rocket attack on his palace seriously injured Saleh, who

was obviously no longer in control. Saleh was taken to Saudi Arabia “for treatment” and probably (as we go to press) won’t be able or be allowed to return to power.

### Yemeni Masses Need Communism

Yemen is not the poorest among Arab countries, but its large population lives precariously. Oil reserves are rapidly depleting, and diversification into natural gas is not making up the difference. More critically, water resources are increasingly inadequate.

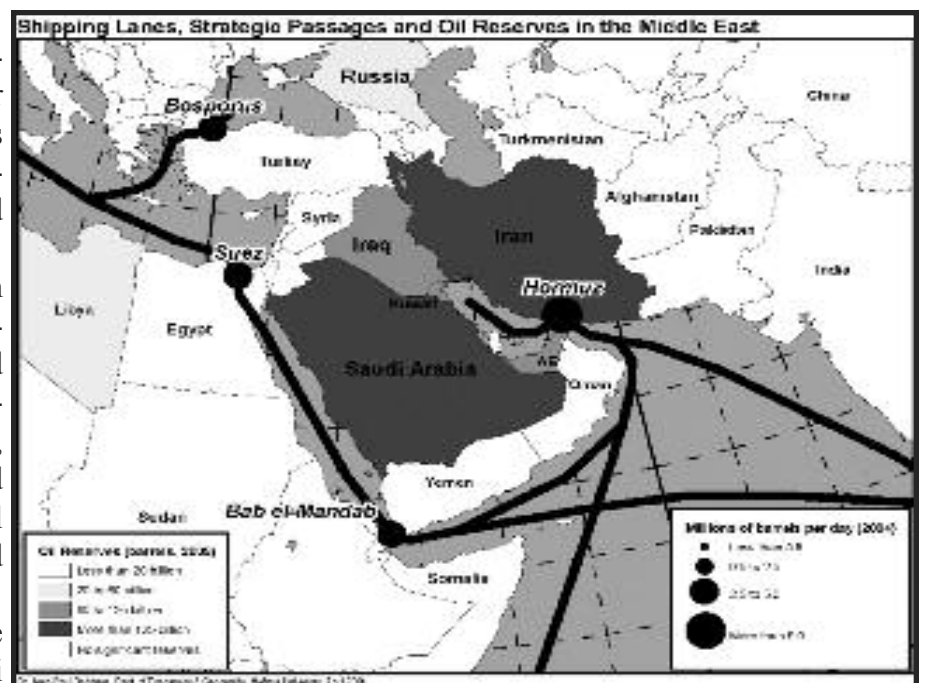
Over a third of the population is unemployed. Over 70% of those with jobs work in the informal economy as street vendors and day laborers.

Most of the seven million people in Yemen’s workforce are farmers and herders. Fewer than one-fourth work in services, construction, industry, and commerce. The industrial south depends for its food on the agricultural north.

Capitalism can’t meet the needs of the Yemeni

masses, no matter who is in power. Their interests will be subordinated to local and global capital until they take power into their own hands and use it to smash every remnant of exploitation including the money system.

The masses have shown courage, solidarity, and commitment. Industrial workers and rank-and-file soldiers must lead them to communism. We must redouble our efforts to get *Red Flag* into their hands.



## WHICH CLASS DO YOUR CLASSES SERVE?

The last *Red Flag* talked about California AB 515, a bill that would allow community colleges to charge “market rate” for credit courses through Extension programs.

Students on at least four campuses have welcomed a ICWP leaflet titled:

*Capitalism: Community Colleges for Sale*

*Communism: Nothing for Sale, Everything for Workers' Needs*

The base of the Party is expanding around this small campaign. Many are outraged at the capitalist ethic expressed by AB 515 supporters: “when times are tough, those with the most should get more.” They embrace the communist ethic that rejects privilege and fights for the collective good of the masses.

But sharp struggle continues among our new and old friends.

First, the main issue isn't “privatization of education” (as many say) but the capitalist character of the schools and colleges. Whether classes and programs are funded by Northrup

Grumman, CVS, the Obama administration or the State of California is not the main point. The government is an arm of the capitalist class.

Second, the issue isn't “liberal arts versus vocational education,” either. Capitalist schooling uses the “liberal arts” to win students to the bosses' ideology. Its claim to teach “critical thinking” rarely extends to criticizing capitalism.

Communist education means learning to develop and use dialectical materialist philosophy, history, science, and all other knowledge to transform the world. Unlike “liberal arts” today, this study is not a means to segment the working class into “mental” and “manual” laborers.

The question isn't whether colleges should serve the workforce needs of the larger society. It's what class they, and the society itself, serve.

New Career-Technical Education (CTE) programs serve employers (hospitality, aerospace, etc) who used to provide on-the-job training for

newly hired workers. Now the students themselves pay for training before they even have a promise of a job.

In communist society, education will be much more closely tied to work. We will work as we learn, and learn as we work. But we will work for the collective good of the working masses, not for the bosses' profits.

AB 515 didn't get enough votes to pass, but it will be “reconsidered.” Meanwhile, some colleges are already advertising for-pay classes as if it were already law.

One student hoped to earn a certificate that could get her a job in the health field. She was appalled to learn that she'd have to pay \$5000 up front for a 20-unit program.

“Borrow it from your parents and pay them back when your financial aid comes through,” she was told. Like many others, she has no relatives who can help her like that.

Communism, not the bosses' college system, is our best and only hope of a better life for all!

## TEACHERS, STUDENTS, FIGHT AGAINST CAPITALIST MISEDUCATION

As teachers in Oaxaca continue on strike, the Mexican government and the National Union of Education Workers (SNTE) have just signed an agreement to establish a new teacher evaluation system, 40% of which will be based on the scores of their students on a new national achievement test. Many teachers already reject this exam, which, far from measuring what students know or whether they can critically analyze the society in which they live, measures a student's ability to accept and adapt to capitalism. While teachers are being promised bonuses and even houses if their students excel on these tests, teachers in some parts of Mexico have refused to administer them.

This is happening in the US, as well. In fact, tests and teacher evaluation systems based on them are increasingly being used in capitalist education around the world as the international capitalist crisis intensifies. The rulers have less

money to spend on education, and they are insisting that they get more bang for their buck, an educational system that prepares students for exactly what the bosses need both technically and ideologically.

At the same time, wherever this is happening, teachers and students have resisted, refusing to administer or to take the tests. Parents have refused to subject their students to them. Teachers in some places have also fought within the union framework to resist having their evaluations and paychecks reflect the scores on these tests.

While teachers, parents, and students can learn a lot about the nature of the system through this resistance, as well as building stronger bonds of solidarity, we should have no illusions about capitalist education as such. Capitalist education without these tests and teacher evaluation systems is still designed to meet the needs of capi-

talism for a compliant workforce, in which workers are trained to follow orders and managers are trained to supervise them. These tests are just designed to make sure that the schools do what the bosses need more efficiently. For an educational system that meets the needs of the students and parents, we need a society based on meeting the needs of the working class, a communist society.



## FARMWORKERS LEARNED THAT PACIFISM IS ANTI-WORKER

In sharp workers' struggles, even when they're only to reform the system, pacifism is deadly for workers. It's even deadly for the pacifists themselves, when reality hits them in the face.

Generally, pacifists are religious. They detest violence in labor conflicts because they follow religious beliefs. According to them, it isn't men and women who should decide about our lives, it's a divine being.

So that way, they stay in good graces with God and with the bosses but not with their co-workers in struggle. They think that by humiliating themselves and suffering, even with hunger strikes, the wicked bosses will become conscious that they are exploiting workers and never do it again.

Cesar Chavez, who was president of the UFW, built fame for himself with liberal politicians and the church, with his hunger strikes and inducing the others to do the same during the California farmworkers' strikes between 1965 and 1970. The strike was at the point of losing because of his pacifist philosophy.

With his pacifism, Chavez didn't only put the brakes on the struggle's progress. He weakened it, taking away all the militancy that would have brought it to victory in much less time. But thanks to the militancy of many strikers who didn't think like him, it became possible to avoid losing the strike.

To be pacifist in the struggle means respecting all the laws, no matter how anti-worker they are.

But not being a pacifist doesn't mean that each person uses violence in his or her own way without any order. Violence has to be organized so that the working masses participate, even if they have to violate the bosses' laws that are made to defeat the workers' movements.

The pacifists are enemies of the working class. Due to their fear of God and the bosses, they think that it's better to be pacifists or neutral in the struggle. But there is no neutrality in the class struggle. If you're not on the workers' side, then you're on the bosses' side.

But when pacifists really participate in workers' struggles and the truth hits them in the face, many change their attitude and end up joining the non-pacifists. This happened in the San Joaquin Valley in 1973. The ranch owners refused to renew the labor contracts with the farmworkers' union. So the union needed to organize another strike which, by the way, wasn't in any way passive.

Those who had opted for pacifism, including pastors, nuns, and priests in the middle of the struggle who had been spies for Chavez, joined with non-pacifist workers as though they had never been pacifists.

One priest took the megaphone on the picket line and very humbly, in the name of God, started talking to the scabs (strike breakers) who were working. He had just started to talk when a scab yelled, “Shut up, you old bastard! You shouldn't even be a priest.”

The surprised priest was silent for a moment, and then angrily, with all his strength, yelled, “You bastards!” and didn't speak any more. This priest and other religious people from then on were very militant and violent.

The ideological struggle with the workers in the class struggle is very important. The workers need communist philosophy to know who are their friends and who are their enemies, and to avoid falling into anti-worker traps set by the politicians, bosses and even the same leaders who trust in the “justice” of the corrupt capitalist system.

Pacifism is a millstone around the workers' necks. It holds back their struggle against the bosses. And it slows down their development in preparing for workers' revolution that we urgently need to overthrow the system of capitalist exploitation.

Even when these strikes were victorious, the victories were only temporary. This can be seen today in the San Joaquin Valley (California) where all the gains won in past strikes have been taken away by the bosses.

The only way to end these attacks is to use the lessons of workers' struggles to fight for communist revolution that will get rid of exploitation once and for all.

Read your revolutionary communist newspaper *Red Flag*!

—Veteran of the farmworkers' struggles in California





## RACIST KILLER COP WALKS; VERDICT SPARKS COMMUNIST TALKS

Oakland transit cop Johannes Mehserle shot and killed Oscar Grant, an unarmed 22-year-old black worker, in the Fruitvale, California BART station on New Year's Day 2009.

In spite of video evidence that Mehserle shot Grant in cold blood, Mehserle was convicted only of "involuntary manslaughter" without even the "gun enhancement" that would have mandated a heavy sentence. In November 2010 he received a two-year sentence. Now, seven months later, Mehserle is eligible for parole.

"Those kinds of things don't surprise me, given the society we live in," said a student who was active in the "Justice for Oscar Grant" campaign. "I was more surprised that Mehserle was convicted."

Although the campaign didn't succeed, she doesn't feel that she wasted her time. "It was raising awareness," she said. "We were moving people into action, and hopefully they'll be active again."

The conversation turned to whether there would be police in communist society. "You have to have some system of governance," she said. "There have to be consequences for people's actions like rape and murder."

We agreed that anarchy wasn't an option. And we agreed that the "consequences" shouldn't come from vengeance or retaliation.

The masses need to protect themselves from people who might rape or murder again. Those who commit such crimes need to be confined, but in the least restrictive possible way – not in cages like today's prisons. They need to be struggled with to engage in productive work, to be self-critical, and to change their behavior.

Can the masses deal directly with problems like this, or will they need specialized police? In communist society, nobody will do only one kind of work all the time.

It's particularly important that nobody should spend all their time trying to prevent crime. That would build cynicism and distrust of other workers in anyone.

It's not surprising that racist cops literally get away with murder all around the world. But it should still make us all mad enough to mobilize the masses to fight back, inspired by a vision of the communist world we must win.

### LETTERS

#### Why I Joined ICWP

In the few years I have spent on this planet, I have seen many fall for the illusions of capitalism. The capitalist illusion of happiness is a wad of money. Cash for goods is the motto of this sick system.

What we workers truly crave, to earn our standing in the world, is to know that wherever we go our class brothers and sisters will think, "There goes a truly honorable comrade. Nothing has been given to him or her. He or she has earned the right to stand upright. He or she has served the people." That's what I saw this May Day with the International Communist Workers' Party.

Capitalism spawns the need for instant material gratification, the "OK I did it, now pay me" attitude. This attitude breeds laziness. Communist devotion is the opposite. That's why I joined our party.

--A new member

#### Don't Fight for Jobs, Fight to End Wage Slavery

The article about Spain, where tens of thousands of youth and workers defied a ban on demonstrations and took the street, shows the potential for revolution and the possibility of spreading the communist ideas of ICWP to the masses of workers. Only communism will get rid of capitalism, which is the source of the misery of workers all over the world. Only communism will put an end to wage slavery, which is the basis of the main contradiction between workers and capitalists: social production and private appropriation.

Under communism we won't take the street to demand the right to sell ourselves into wage slavery, because there will be no class of exploiters to whom we must sell our labor power. There will be no unemployment, because the social relations and the relations of production will be changed. As Engels said, "The economic conditions are the bases of political institutions." We will own the means of production. Everybody will work. We will produce socially and appropriate socially what we produce and share it according to the need.

--Internationalist Reader

#### Comrades Bring Working Class Politics to "Working Washington"

Today, Working Washington sponsored a rally of about 300 people at the local Chase Bank branch. They were demanding that Chase forgo \$1.4 billion in tax deductions that Working WA wanted to use for jobs and social welfare programs. They led chants like "Shame on Chase" and "This is What Democracy Looks Like."

This coalition of various unions, churches, and other reform groups canvassed our neighborhood in the last few days. Our zip code area is the most ethnically integrated one in the entire country, consisting of mostly modest working class families. They also bused in people from working class suburbs. Most of the organizers were college students or trade union-sponsored interns.

To tell the truth, I almost forgot about the de-

### CRITICISM AND SUGGESTIONS

monstration, so I had run up to the rally a little late. Even so, I got into a conversation with one of these interns, a young black worker who was forced to drop out of college to support himself in a low-paying job.

"We really made an impact today," he said by way of introduction.

"No we didn't," I answered. "This is Chase, the Rockefeller bank, right up there in the ruling class."

This led to a serious discussion on how the bosses rule using democracy as a cover for their class dictatorship. We expanded the discussion to the present-day capitalist crisis of overproduction and the potential for wider and world war.

"So how can we change things?" he asked.

"Not with elections," I answered. "We'll have to build for a revolution."

He asked me if I was a socialist and I told him no because socialism retains the wage system.

"Past revolutionaries thought socialism would lead to communism, but in reality it's just another form of capitalism," I said.

I told him we'd have to build a movement to mobilize the masses for communism from the get-go.

By this time we had broke off from the rally, heading for my house.

Most of our discussion ended up being about how communism could work. We discussed how a society without money could provide for our class's needs.

In my house, he met my wife. The three of us continued discussing how communism would deal with people who wanted to "live life to the fullest."

"Living life to the fullest should not mean acquiring more material things or a 'basement full of broken gadgets,' as my friend likes to say," I offered. "We'll have a life full of close relations with many workers, providing for our collective social and material needs. We might very well take state power after capitalism has devastated the world, so we'll share what little we have. When we produce more it will be for our class, not some boss's profit and power."

"Good answer!"

My wife answered his next question about what we'll do about people who want to be "lazy," while I got him copies of the last two *Red Flag* newspapers and our draft document "Mobilize the Masses for Communism."

"You guys must have an organization."

"Of course!" You can guess the rest as we made plans for meetings and social activities.

Comrades, as the boss's crisis continues (in my neighborhood, it's intensifying) these reform activities will be "coming to your neighborhood." Time permitting, there's no reason for us to not bring our communist politics to these groups.

Many are already suspect about the prospects for reform, but are "grasping for the hole in the bagel." The prospect of Mobilizing the Masses for Communism can be like a breath of fresh air.

--Busy Worker

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### Friends Get Cooking with Communist Ideas

During a social get-together among transport workers in Los Angeles, California, there were a lot of comments about how hard life is for workers all over the world.

"They say that in Costa Mesa, California, they are laying off half of the people who work for the city," said one guy. Others talked about how expensive groceries, rent and gas are these days—the only thing that isn't going up is wages. Some of these workers are *Red Flag* readers and distributors.

"There's no money for us, but there is for war... look what happened in Libya. The US spent more than \$100 million on the first day alone," said one male worker. "Sure, each missile costs a million," said a woman.

"I think that if they brought back all the jobs that they sent overseas, things would be better," said another worker.

"I don't think so, because this crisis is the product of the lack of markets, that's why the bosses are fighting all over the world, and will finally end up getting us into world war. But the workers aren't going to put up with it forever. When they start feeling hungry, I'm sure that they'll start to fight back," said a *Red Flag* reader.

Others talked about racism and police murders. "Look how many youth and adults they've killed and they always have an excuse. Do you remember when they shot more than a hundred and fifty times at somebody," said another woman.

"What happens is that when they're stressed, it's like a psychosis and everybody shoots, because they're afraid for their lives," said another guy.

"If they're scared, they shouldn't be cops," said a woman.

"That's a big lie. What happens is these bastard cops are hired murderers. I've been in combat in Iraq, and you're aware if you want to shoot or not," said a veteran.

Conversations like this, at work and in social activities, have given us the opportunity to create a *Red Flag* distribution network of more than 60 papers hand-to-hand and to pass out hundreds of copies outside our workplaces. These conversations let us see and analyze the political strengths and weaknesses of our fellow workers and develop a long-term struggle with them so that they can help us to mobilize the rest of the workers for communism.

--Transit Reds

### Want to End Racism? Fight for Communism!

Michelle Alexander, the author of *The New Jim Crow*, spoke to an overflow crowd of about eight hundred black, brown and white people at St. Paul's African Methodist Episcopal Church in Berkeley, California on May 27. If you have read the February 16 *Red Flag* article "Racism and the US Prison System," then you already know about *The New Jim Crow*. Also, check the *Red Flag* archives for the April 27 article on racism and capitalism.

*The New Jim Crow* chronicles the creation of the system of mass incarceration of African-American men in the United States beginning with the "war on drugs" in the early 1980's. In the book Alexander shows how the current practice of mass incarceration goes back to the attempt of the white southern bosses after slavery to control African-Americans through a system of segregation and racial terrorism called Jim Crow.

Alexander began her talk with a story about a young man she met while working as an attorney for the ACLU (American Civil Liberties Union) on a

project to bring attention to racial profiling. The ACLU had set up a hotline for people who felt that they had been the victims of racial profiling and she was following up with interviews. One day she met with a young man who had brought along a thick stack of papers that contained detailed notes of his encounters with police over a nine month period. Alexander was excited to have stumbled upon this young man, because in addition to his detailed notes, he was handsome and well spoken. The perfect person, she thought, to be the face of the anti-racist profiling campaign of the ACLU. There was only one problem; Alexander discovered that he was a felon.

Alexander said that she got angry with the youth and asked, "Why are you here, didn't you check the box? There's no way we can represent you in court, you have no credibility." The young man tore his notes into pieces. Alexander said that this was the beginning of her awakening to her own prejudice against "felons" and the constellation of racist laws and practices that work together to marginalize and dehumanize them.

Alexander mentioned that if the population of African-American prisoners was included in the count, the African-American unemployment rate would be much higher than the 16% often quoted. She also said that the system of mass incarceration of African-American men was part of the Democratic Party's "southern strategy" to win back white southerners who switched to the Republican Party during the Reagan era. Moreover, she read a document that left no question that the ruling class intended to create a system of racial control that would appear to be colorblind.

Alexander told the crowded church that the system of mass incarceration will not go away without a dramatic shift in public consciousness. And while there was a whole slew of reformist groups at the church hawking legislation and voter registration, Alexander didn't mention either during her speech. Instead, she called for a mass social movement to end mass incarceration. Excited, the audience roared "that's right," and "tell it" and gave Alexander a standing ovation at the end of her speech.

After she spoke, I wondered about her "mass social movement." Would that end wage slavery and capitalism? Unfortunately, by the time I reached the front of the line during the question and answer period that followed her talk, time was up. I stayed in line and said, "Michelle, one more question please?" She said OK. I asked, "Michelle, according to your own research, every few generations a system of racial control emerges. If you end mass incarceration without getting rid of capitalism, won't racism re-emerge, reinventing itself in future generations?" There were still several hundred people in the audience, and they clapped loudly at my question. Alexander paused, and finally replied that the system of "hyper capitalism" needs racism to divide and conquer people, and that we need to unify all poor people including, poor whites, to struggle for "economic justice."

She didn't mention revolution, and her reference to "hyper capitalism" implies that there is some kind of "non-hyper" capitalism that doesn't need racism to survive. We know that the only way racism will end is not through a mass social movement to end mass incarceration but through a mass movement of workers fighting for communism. We should read *The New Jim Crow* to better understand the historical development of racism in the United States, but only hand-in-hand with our un-



Uprising in Yemen. See front page article.

derstanding of the need for communist revolution. The response to my question shows that there were a lot of people open to our ideas. Next time we go to an event like this we'll bring *Red Flag*; people who are angry about the racist prison system need communist ideas.

--Bay Area Comrade

### First Anniversary of ICWP in Mexico

Although ICWP's first anniversary is in February, in Mexico it took us a few months of discussion to decide to join the new party. A year later we decided to celebrate our anniversary with friends and members in a communist dinner.

The entrance to the house where we met was decorated with a sign made by our host family. It said, "Welcome to the First Anniversary of ICWP."

The comrade with the longest time in the party started out with a brief discussion of the history of the international communist movement and the formation of ICWP. He invited young people and new members to talk about their experiences and express their opinions.

Songs alternated with speeches. A comrade talked about the contradiction that exists on his job. He is in charge of several workers who offend him sometimes by calling him "boss." This comrade distributes *Red Flag* with electrical workers and to his family.

A young comrade said that with the new party he feels much better, that there's congruence and he's happy to go to meetings. Nevertheless, he opened a big discussion when he said that he still had certain doubt about whether or not the party will be able to organize the whole society, especially when people are not clear about what communism is. Others stated their point of view and one thing that came out is the importance of accelerating the pace to achieve it.

Another comrade talked about being a communist couple, stressing the importance of the alliance, solidarity, loyalty and consideration within the relationship and the common struggle around everything from the daily life to the long-term struggle for communism. This motivated several couples who were there. After a few more songs, the dinner ended and we organized ourselves for the activities of the next day, May Day.

The next day we got up early to go to the May Day march. There we passed out 2,000 leaflets with the international ICWP May Day speech and we sold 300 *Red Flags*. We saw that the people who went to the May Day march get a lot of leaflets, but they pay more attention to the paper, and also that most of them gave money for it.

On the way back we talked about our experiences and we agreed that the sale of the paper is very important, and that we'll do it better next year. One of our goals for this year is to convert and the members and friends of PCOI into sellers and expert distributors of *Red Flag*.

--Comrades from Mexico



## Appearance and Essence:

# “THE TITANIC WAS ALL RIGHT WHEN IT LEFT HERE”

Last week, the city of Belfast in Northern Ireland celebrated the 100-year anniversary of the launch of the *Titanic*, which was built there. One spokesman said that the ship, which went down on its first voyage, was “all right when it left here.” It’s easy to see why some people thought this was so at the time: the ship was brand new and advertised as “unsinkable.” But this idea was — and still is — superficial and wrong. Although it was not obvious, the *Titanic*, like many other ships, had a serious flaw: if enough compartments were damaged, it would sink.

This example brings out a fundamental distinction between two different aspects of things. The *appearance* of something is its superficial side, the part that we can see or easily find out about. The *essence* of a thing is its real, inner or underlying character, which may or may not be what it appears to be.

Appearances are not necessarily subjective, but may be recognized by many people. A lightning strike, for example, may be photographed and measured, and seen by hundreds of people. What they don’t see, however, is the essence of lightning, electrical discharge that produces the flash and the bang. The appearance of chicken pox is obvious, but the essence of the disease, a viral infection, isn’t visible.

### Finding the Essence

The essence of a thing or process explains what causes it, and figuring out that cause can be

difficult since it is usually different from appearances. Marx wrote that scientific study would be unnecessary “if the manifest form and the essence of things directly coincided.”

Finding the essence usually means constructing a correct theory and testing it in practice. One of the designers of the *Titanic*, who was on the ship when it struck the iceberg, immediately used theories of physics to calculate that the ship was going down, once he knew the extent of the damage. Marx was able to develop theories that explained important features of capitalism. Prices of things, for example, are appearances, but the essence that underlies them and explains the average price is the human labor necessary to produce those things.

### Essences Develop

Some people make the mistake of thinking that an essence is permanent and prevents changes. This idea would rule out the dialectical development of things. Marx pointed out that the human essence is not “inherent in each single individual.” Instead, it is contained in people’s social relationships, so the essence changes as society changes. The inner nature of the US economy has also changed over the last five or six decades. It has moved from primarily producing goods into finance and speculation that led to the current crisis (in 2010, US corporate profits from finance were 50% larger than those from manufacturing).

### Essence and Illusion

Distinguishing essence from appearance is critical for understanding how capitalism works and overcoming illusions about it. One fundamental illusion about the system is that workers are paid for their work. The truth is that the value of the products that workers can buy with their wages is substantially less than the value they create when they work. Surplus labor, the labor workers are not paid for, is the source of the capitalists’ profits.

Some appearances are illusions that are deliberately created. Capitalists claim that elections allow everyone to have a role in deciding laws and policies. In essence, however, elections are a scam that tries to make capitalist rule seem legitimate. They are just as phony as professional wrestling. All the candidates are loyal to the bosses, and what they actually do often bears no relation to what they claim to support.

### Essence and the Fight for Communism

Getting to the essence of things reveals possibilities that aren’t always obvious. This includes that capability of the working class to revolt and fight courageously against capitalist oppression. We see this all over the Arab world today, but it was invisible a year ago. The essence of capitalism includes intensifying contradictions, which increase its weaknesses every day, weaknesses that help create the conditions for communist revolution and make our victory possible.

## WAS SOVIET “WAR COMMUNISM” REALLY COMMUNISM?

*This is the first part of a series on the political economy of the new Soviet Union during the first years after the 1917 Bolshevik revolution.*

### Part I:

#### State Capitalism and Socialism

Communists took power in Russia amidst wartime economic chaos. They knew they could build socialism only (in Lenin’s words) “by drawing on the masses, only by the independent activity of the masses.”

But they had won the masses to “Peace, Land and Bread.” The first Land decree gave most land to peasants to farm privately. This clearly strengthened small-capitalist thinking, but was thought necessary to maintain the worker-peasant alliance at the heart of Soviet power.

The harsh Brest-Litovsk Treaty brought temporary Peace with imperialist Germany.

The immediate crisis for the workers’ government was Bread.

The most advanced communist theory of the time put full confidence in the workers’ ability to take power but not in their ability to organize and run production. Their line was to fight for the dictatorship of the working class (on the political front) but to build an alliance with small producers and even capitalist owners (on the economic front).

### “Comrades, working people!”

Lenin declared in November, 1917, “You yourselves are at the helm of state. No one will help you if you yourselves do not unite and take into your hands all affairs of the state.... Get on with the job yourselves; begin

right at the bottom, do not wait for anyone.

“Establish the strictest revolutionary law and order,” he continued, “mercilessly suppress any attempts to create anarchy ... Ensure the strictest control over production and accounting of products. Arrest and hand over to the revolutionary courts all who dare to injure the people’s cause.”

But “control over production” meant only that factory committees were to “supervise management,” not “to take possession of the enterprise or direct it.” It didn’t mean the abolition of markets, wages, or money.

When groups of workers visited Lenin to ask his support for nationalizing their factories, he gently struggled to convince them that they didn’t have the technical skills to manage a large enterprise. But the main problem wasn’t technical. It was political: The Bolsheviks hadn’t tried to win the masses to communism.

Continuing the pre-revolutionary mass direct-action movement, many committees defied policy and took over factories anyway. But many were won to syndicalism, not communism. They wanted to run factories for the benefit of those working in them, not for the whole working class.

A leader of the Metal Workers’ Union described these committees as “another proprietor... who was equally an individualist and anti-social as the former one.”

### “Transitional State Capitalism”

The Workers’ State took over a war-ravaged, barely

functioning economy. It quickly monopolized critical trade sectors, including foreign trade. It took over grain elevators and warehouses, controlling distribution of scarce foodstuffs. Basic industries (aerospace, munitions) were nationalized as capitalists shut down factories and fled.

In April 1918 Party leaders introduced capitalist methods of industrial “scientific management,” including “pay for performance. A sharp struggle ensued, as some Party leaders denounced these measures as “relics of capitalist exploitation.” They objected to “state capitalism” but had no proposals to mobilize the masses for communism or anything else.

Lenin responded that “state capitalism would be a step forward as compared with the present state of affairs.” The main contradiction, he said, was not between State Capitalism and Socialism. It was with the private capitalists who opposed any large-scale, centrally-controlled economy.

Lenin was right that State Capitalism and Socialism weren’t in contradiction. He was wrong to think that either could lead to Communism.

The crisis continued to worsen, intensified over the summer by counter-revolution and imperialist invasions. The Soviets lost control of nearly all their coal, over ¾ of their iron, half their grain, and 90% of sugar. Trains were stopped in their tracks. Famine struck large cities. Shortages of materials (including fuel), semi-starvation, and lack of transportation paralyzed industry.

“War Communism” developed as a response to this crisis. In June 1918, all large-scale enterprises were nationalized. Smaller ones soon followed. All agricultural surpluses (beyond the peasants’ need for food and seed) were requisitioned, to be allocated between industry and the army. *But was this really communism? No! The next articles in this series will explain why.*

