

# RED FLAG

**MOBILIZE THE MASSES FOR COMMUNISM**



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

## MOBILIZING FOR A COMMUNIST WORLD WITHOUT BORDERS!

See page 3



### SOUTH AFRICA YOUTH COLLECTIVE: WE ARE ALL ONE WORKING CLASS

SOUTH AFRICA—We have just arrived from a school where we mobilized the masses for communism. The day went well. We discussed whether the problem was “white monopoly” or capitalism. We also discussed whether immigrants made life in South Africa harder or whether it was racist capitalism. And we discussed whether we should see ourselves as black people confronting oppression or as part of the working class of the world who need to unite against racist capitalism to build a communist world.

It was a positive response from other students that we engaged. We talked about the International Communist Workers’ Party and we also invited them to come to join us on May Day, international workers’ day. It was a good day, especially when people are able to listen to you and have a debate about ICWP.

Comrades raised the point that the problem is racist capitalism. We managed to pull some of the students to come and join us to be part of May Day. Also, some people gave us their numbers to be in contact with them. Hopefully we will hear from them; we will call them soon.

We were able to sit down with the students, to engage with them, to find where they stand. We talked with them for about an hour. They expressed a lot of nationalism, this hatred of white people, this distorted version of history that has been used by the African National Congress and other political parties including the Economic Freedom Fighters. When they talk about “white monopoly,” this is really capitalism. It’s just disguised, because they talk as if capitalism is only wrong when it’s done by white people, but its right when it’s done by black people.

So our mission today was to try to drive home the point that

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### LOS ANGELES TRANSIT WORKERS: BREAK THE CHAINS OF WAGE SLAVERY!

LOS ANGELES, USA—“What is happening with the contract?” asked an MTA bus operator at Division 8.

“I don’t know,” said the *Red Flag* distributor, “they are keeping it a secret.”

The union and MTA bosses held their first negotiating session last February 15. The next day, the union posted this on its website:

“During the duration of the negotiations, no specific agendas, proposals or tentative agreements will be shared publicly, by either side, until an agreement is ready for ratification by the members. This policy is not in place to unnecessarily keep information from the members but is designed to protect the negotiations process.”

An MTA bus operator from Division 18 commented, “The union and MTA both know what is happening in the negotiations. So, whom are they protecting them from? From us, the members; neither the union nor MTA want us to know what’s happening. They are afraid we would organize to reject the contract if we didn’t like it, and go out on a real strike.”

Recently, at a small gathering, both

MTA mechanics and bus operators were discussing the question of union contracts. They commented that the last contract, and others before that, were bad. Some thought the union should fight for better contracts.

Others said that there is no such thing as a good contract. “The union contract justifies and legalizes our slavery; unions are a key part of imposing it. Wages are the chains that bind us to the capitalists. The union leaders, even those who want to do good, only negotiate the terms of our wage slavery. A wage increase only lengthens temporarily the chains a little bit; it doesn’t break them.”

We all had a good laugh when someone said that a union contract for us wage slaves would be similar to chattel slaves bargaining with their slave masters to be whipped 15 times instead of 25, when what they needed was to destroy slavery.

From this, we concluded that our historical task as wage slaves is to destroy capitalism, its wage slavery, and money. In communism, there will be no unions, no contracts, and no wages. No longer will we bargain the conditions of our labor because we will no longer sell our

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May Day 1917:

## COMMUNISTS MOBILIZE FOR WORKERS' REVOLUTION AMIDST WORLD WAR

The USA declared war on Germany in April 1917. French and British imperialists launched a bloody “spring offensive.” Wilfred Owen described its horrors in a poem by that name. Soldiers, he wrote, “rushed in the body to enter hell. /And there out-fiending all its fiends and flames/With superhuman inhumanities.”

The Russian masses were desperate for bread and peace. They had just overthrown the hated Czar. But Russia’s Provisional Government continued the war. More soldiers fell and more peasants starved.

“The peoples of Europe can bear it no longer, and are already rising up against the bellicose bourgeoisie,” wrote the young communist Stalin on May Day 1917.

“The Russian revolution is the first to be forcing a breach in the wall that divides the workers from one another. The Russian workers, at this time of universal ‘patriotic’ frenzy, are the first to proclaim the forgotten slogan: ‘Workers of all countries, unite!’”

A century later, deadly wars and patriotic frenzy are again spreading worldwide. As we mobilize for May Day 2017, in South Africa, El Salvador, India, Spain, the USA and elsewhere, we proudly proclaim: “Workers of all countries, unite – for Communism!”

### A More Dangerous World – More Opportunities to Mobilize Masses for Communism

The capitalist pundit Robert Farley recently listed in *Foreign Policy* the “5 Places World War III Could Start in 2017.” He included Syria, Korea, India-Pakistan and “cyberspace.” Perhaps the greatest chance of danger,” Farley argued, “lies in the Baltic region.”

“Could” is not “will.” But imperialist competition for the world’s labor, market and resources makes world war inevitable. In a time like the present, when there is a general crisis of global capitalism, that means “sooner” rather than “later.”

In the last year alone, over fifty thousand peo-



ple have died directly as a result of combat in Syria, over twenty thousand each in Afghanistan, Iraq and the African continent, and over twelve thousand in Mexico.

Many, many more workers and their families die each year from hunger, disease, and refugee crises caused by these wars. Only world communist revolution can end this hell. Only communist revolution can end the deadlier wars to come.

### And Only Communist Revolution Can Build the World We Long For.

The Russian masses proved in 1917 that the working class can rise and take power. We’ll do it again! But our communist world will be very different from the socialism of the Soviet Union. Communist workers’ power will immediately end the core element of capitalism: a money-based economy.

Nobody will work for wages to get money to buy what they need. Instead our International Communist Workers’ Party will lead masses to work based on their commitment to each other. Workers already produce everything but capital-

ism’s laws allow a tiny ruling class to steal most of the fruits of our labor in the form of profits. In communism, the producers ourselves will decide what’s needed, organize the work, and distribute the fruits according to need. No markets, no money, no barter, no exchange – just sharing! Humanity will be able to live as the one huge family we really are.

Communism will have no “government” separate from the mass communist party that will welcome everyone into its ranks. The masses,

organized as interlocked party collectives, will participate directly in making all decisions.

This mass communist party will weld the working people of the world into one powerful force. No longer will bosses be able to use nationalism, religion, or a reign of terror to force us to fight each other for their own profits.

On the basis of communist production and distribution, we’ll be able to win the fight against racism, sexism, ageism, ableism and other divisions that now weaken our class.

The last issue of *Red Flag* described the possibility and the urgent need to organize for communism inside the bosses’ armies as well as their factories and schools. Soldiers and sailors gave key leadership to Russia’s November 1917 revolution.

If you are in the military, we need you to join the ICWP now! If not, how can you help get *Red Flag* and communist ideas to military personnel around the world?

### March for Communism with ICWP on May Day 2017

“And this holiday we are celebrating today, this May Day, is it not a sign that in the welter of blood new ties of fraternity among the peoples are being forged?” Stalin asked a century ago.

“The soil is burning underneath the feet of the capitalist robbers,” he declared, “for the *Red Flag* of the International is again waving over Europe.”

May Day this year will see the *Red Flag* of ICWP waving over Africa, Asia, the Americas – and Europe too.

Communism will smash all borders and tear down all walls that divide us. It will forge new ties by uniting masses everywhere in one International Communist Workers’ Party.

Communism will end wage slavery. Everyone will share meaningful constructive work and its products, to each according to need.

Communism will liberate masses everywhere to live collectively up to our full human potential.

**Long live communism! Mobilize for a communist May Day 2017!**



Poster celebrating the Bolshevik Revolution



**JOIN THE INTERNATIONAL COMMUNIST WORKERS' PARTY (ICWP)**  
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**Put our future in the hands of the communist working class, not in the bosses' law**

## **FOR A COMMUNIST WORLD WITHOUT BORDERS**

LOS ANGELES (USA)—In a recent meeting of immigrant workers, comrades and friends of ICWP, we discussed the need to fight for communism to be able to destroy borders and stop deportations. The main questions were: How do we present our vision of communism to the masses in times of fascist attacks like the present? How do we organize communist class struggle in the face of these attacks?

Obama deported over 2.5 million people with little publicity. In contrast, the US capitalists are using Trump to unleash a reign of terror among the immigrant community with aggressive publicity about deportations, invasions of homes, and jailing. This reign of terror is designed to present immigrants as victims of Trump's fascism and to drive them and their supporters into the arms of the liberal bosses for protection.

That's why liberal politicians have passed laws declaring many cities to be "sanctuary cities." And church and community organizations are telling immigrants that the law will help us, that everything is a question of taking a couple of steps, like not opening the doors, not giving any information when being arrested, and having the phone numbers of lawyers at all times. This is a dangerous illusion. We must not allow it to take us passively to deportation.

The federal government is carrying out raids, arrests, imprisonment and deportations using laws that have been passed by all previous administrations, Democratic and Republican.

The community organizations, no matter how honest they are, work within the framework of the law. They seek a more benevolent capitalism. The bosses use their State power to create this terror: their courts, immigration police (Migra or ICE), other police and laws. At the same time

they try to disarm the working class politically.

Deportations are part of the attack on the working class created by the capitalist crisis and increasing exploitation worldwide. The entire working class urgently needs to end deportations, destroy the borders and Migra terror. To do this we must build the ICWP to lead a communist revolution. We must destroy the capitalists' state and build a communist society where workers collectively take charge.

We must not be afraid. We must confront the Migra and its racist laws with the plan of mobilizing for a communist society without borders.

We men and women workers must have our own plan of struggle. We must spread our communist ideas through this newspaper Red Flag. We must build ICWP in the factories, schools and neighborhoods, turning them into centers of communist struggle. We must encourage many workers and students to become communist leaders. We must build multi-racial unity to mobilize the masses for a communist society while confronting the bosses' racist attacks.

We can create communist consciousness among the youth. When there is a raid in a factory, the students should leave school and go to that factory or shop proposing a communist world without borders, without exploitation. Many of these youths are our own children.

During the 1970s and 1980s there were many confrontations against the Migra in the factories and streets in Los Angeles. These inspired masses of workers to stand up to racist attacks. The bosses retreated from their factory raids. But their deportations continued and increased.

Today a militant, communist, working class re-



sponse will give confidence to the workers. It will be a step to massive support among black, white, asian, latino/a, immigrant and citizen workers to fight for a communist world without borders and exploitation.

Getting involved in these struggles, and helping organize them, will help us sharpen mass understanding of the need to fight for and end to capitalism's racist divisions, borders and nations. In actions, meetings and discussions, we must present our communist vision of what a world without borders or nations will be like.

In a communist society without borders all workers will contribute according to their commitment and receive according to their need. No one will have to leave their family to look for a job for survival, much less live with the uncertainty of being deported. Everyone will be welcome everywhere to help produce and distribute everything we workers need

For this we need to build a mass Party of millions. There is no short cut. In street fights and factory struggles, the working class will become steeled. These will be the dress rehearsals and preparations for communist revolution.

This May Day we must go out and demonstrate massively together with the ICWP contingent and raise high the red flags of communism.



**Pasadena, CA, USA, black students stand in support of undocumented fellow students**



**Protest against xenophobia in South Africa**

### **SOUTH AFRICA YOUTH from page 1**

whether it's capitalism as practiced by a black person or a white person, its still capitalism because it exploits the working class. It creates divisions within the workers themselves. It also exploits workers from other parts of Africa. That's what most of today's discussion was based on.

We also talked to some people about the issue of immigration. Their view is that if you come from another place outside of South Africa, they see you as some one who has come here to use South Africa's resources, or to perpetuate crime and all that. They made some valid examples but it doesn't stick up as all of it. Some think that their lives started to be worse when people started coming from other places.

So that's where we were able to struggle, to explain to them that these problems that they see today are not something that came up out of the

blue. These are things that have been institutionalized by capitalism and its institutions as racist and sexist exploitation. As long as capitalism is in power, it will exploit the working class.

People were able to ask questions. We were able to create a discussion among the students. Some of them agreed with us; some disagreed. The challenge was to break down the nationalistic view point. Some people tend to think there can be no help for South Africa coming from any other place but South Africa.

Another thing was that when we were discussing with them, some people actually say there is no future in capitalism. But they feel so hopeless that they don't want to engage in discussions that may provide solutions. They have more of an individualistic viewpoint.

We asked them what was primary—to do these things as black people being oppressed or to see

it as the working class being oppressed. We explained that we have to fight as a united working class all around the world because capitalism is all around the world. We have to fight it alongside workers from all other countries to defeat capitalism

We need to build communism everywhere. We need to show that communism is our only alternative to racist capitalism. Communism will eliminate exploitation. The masses will plan, produce and distribute everything to meet our own needs.

The capitalists divide immigrants and native-born to exploit all workers and keep themselves in power. In communism, no worker will be forced to immigrate to look for a job. But all workers will be welcome everywhere to contribute their ideas and labor power to produce what workers need.

## Janitors Fed up With Union Betrayal

### LET'S MARCH THIS MAY DAY FOR COMMUNISM

“The janitors are very resentful and angry at the leadership of our union, SEIU Local 1877,” said a janitor to *Red Flag*.

“The union is useless. The top leadership, the local leadership and union reps are not doing their job of representing and defending the membership,” said another janitor.

“We organized the union to fight for our needs. We thought it was going to be our salvation. But, that was not the case,” interjected another janitor.

“No, only communism can meet the needs of the working class,” said our comrade.

“Yes, trade unionism is not a revolutionary theory,” added another janitor.

“It’s not enough to blame the union for all the evils of capitalism” said the comrade. “Trade unionism does not seek to end capitalism’s wage slavery, the cause of our exploitation and oppression. That’s why, no matter who leads the unions, in the long run they end up betraying the workers and doing what the capitalists want. That is why we need a communist revolution. In communism there will be no money to corrupt anyone.

“Your efforts and sacrifices in organizing the union energized the US and Canada labor movement. Your treacherous union leaders cynically used this movement to unionize more than 200,000 janitors in the US and Canada. They take in a huge amount of money in monthly union dues.”

“Those dues are wrenched out of our sweat.

Full timers pay \$57 monthly. Temporary workers are supposed to pay their dues on a daily basis. The union, however, takes the dues out of their first day of work even if that’s all they work in the month. We work all night so they can drive luxurious cars. They live well without doing anything.”

“Rather,” corrected another janitor, “they work --but not for us-- for the companies that exploit us. Our problems are many and every day they get worse, for example:

\* The companies often steal our money, paying us for fewer hours than we worked, or for fewer days of our vacations. The union only files our complaints without doing anything about it. A temporary worker did not receive her wage increase for a whole year.

\* The companies have increased the floors that we clean from two to three floors and some places even more, or from 50 thousand square feet to 100 thousand and more square feet for one shift. Many people have accidents or are quitting because of overwork.

\* We have so much work that we can’t finish it in the 8-hour shift. Many janitors only take 15 minutes to eat instead of the stipulated 30 minutes.”

**Trade Unionism: A Dead End Street.**

**Communism: Only Solution For Workers.**

Creative work is a human need. It should be a source of life and advancement for everyone. But wage slavery—the only jobs that we can get

under capitalism—is humiliating, exploitative and murderous. It destroys our lives in exchange for a miserable wage

that barely gives us enough to live. Our retirement is not, nor will be, very different.

That’s why after more than 26 years of fighting, although at first things improved some for the janitors, things are now going from bad to worse. Capitalism’s logic is to increase our super-exploitation in order to squeeze more profits from our labor.

In times of economic crisis like today, they need to super-exploit us even more. They force us to pay for their imperialist wars so that they may super-exploit the workers and plunder the natural resources of other countries. That is why Trump is increasing the military budget while cutting programs that benefit workers.

His racist and fascist campaign against Muslims and undocumented workers is to divide our class to exploit us all even more. His motto “America First” is to blind us with patriotism so that we willingly fight, kill and die for the profits and empire of the US capitalists.

Our answer should be to organize a communist revolution. We want and need a world without borders or nations, without racism, sexism or xenophobia. A world where no one is the boss or servant of others. A world where everyone, especially leaders, does manual work, such as cleaning and farming, and also intellectual work like that done by agronomists, doctors and scientists. A world where our main concern will be to improve and advance the well-being of humanity and the planet.

If this is the world you want for yourself, your family and friends, join ICWP, help distribute *Red Flag* and recruit others to do the same. March with our contingent in this year’s May Day March. We will be marching under the red flags of communist revolution.



LOS ANGELES, USA – Trade unions and other groups tied to the Democratic Party are calling for a massive May Day march. They hope to surpass the “Day Without an Immigrant” march that shut down much of the city in 2006. May Day 2017 could become, in effect, a political strike against anti-immigrant policies and legislation.

Such a reformist political strike would try to channel mass anger into elections. The working class actually needs communist political strikes to build toward insurrections. But when hundreds of thousands are in the streets, we can’t act as though it’s “business as usual.”

More of us must find ways to take May Day off from work or school so we can mobilize for communism at the march. More must organize groups of friends and co-workers who will bring communism into the streets as well as the shops, barracks and classrooms. More must seize the future by joining the International Communist Workers’ Party!

## LOS ANGELES MTA from page 1

labor power. Instead, we will use it collectively to produce everything that workers need.

We will decide collectively what we need to produce, how to produce it and how to distribute it according to need.

Talking about organizing a revolution for communism, one worker mentioned that the ATU Local 1277, the MTA service attendant and mechanics union, will endorse May Day this year.

“The unions are afraid that Trump will destroy them like Ronald Reagan did with the air controllers union,” he added. “There are a lot of organizations calling for people to march on May Day, but they are calling to march for reforms and to support the Democratic Party, not for communist revolution.”

The International Communist Workers’ Party will be marching for communism. May Day was born in Chicago in 1886 when US workers, led by immigrant workers, organized a general strike on May first of that year to fight for the 8-hour workday.

The Second Communist International, in honor of the workers and leaders shot and hung by the Chicago cops and the US capitalists, respectively, declared May Day the International Workers’ Day in 1889.

Ever since then, workers worldwide have marched on May Day, many under the red banners of revolution. But, also since then, May Day has been a struggle between marching for reform and patriotism under the flags of different capi-

talist-imperialist nations, or marching for revolution and communism under the red flags of the international working class.

If the MTA transit union hacks endorsed May Day, we should have no illusion that they will organize to mobilize many MTA workers to march, or, more obviously, that they will organize them to march for communism.

We call on ICWP members and *Red Flag* readers at MTA to organize MTA workers to come to the May Day march to march in the ICWP contingent for communism. We call on all workers, students and soldiers to march with us to put an end to capitalism’s wage slavery. This will inspire more workers to spread *Red Flag* and to join ICWP to mobilize for communism. A world where we produce and transport everything and everyone to meet the needs of our one international working class.

## HOW TO INSPIRE SOLDIERS TO TURN THE GUNS ON THE CAPITALISTS

A Los Angeles military collective, made up of veterans, high school students, and others recently met. In this collective, there are two high school students who are interested in joining the military to bring communist ideas and organize soldiers. Preparations in this critical task are essential for the success of any comrade.

Working class history teaches us that it is imperative to organize and win soldiers to have a successful communist revolution. The International Communist Workers' Party (ICWP) has learned and continues to learn from the experiences of past and present comrades. These experiences will help the younger comrades to build on the overall work.

A veteran comrade reported about the work he did when he was in the US Army. He said that there would be plenty of opportunities that await young communists to not only bringing communist ideas to organize soldiers but also winning them to a communist vision. He affirmed that it is possible to reject the capitalists' patriotic ideas and fight for communism.

From the outside, it seems intimidating to or-

ganize. But most soldiers are more like any other recently graduated working-class high school students. They have more similarities than differences. Most soldiers are forced into the military by the capitalist system because of lack of jobs or not having possibilities of going to the university. Once inside, they are put through excruciating circumstances and are forced to defend the capitalist system and its profits.

The Soviet Union, China, and Vietnam, among other places, have shown us that when soldiers are shown the truth of where they belong (with the international working class) combined with communist ideas they can be won to fight alongside industrial workers and peasants to destroy capitalism and build a new society.

The young comrades wanted to know more about how to do this type of work. We don't have a step-by-step manual. But building good relations and strong friendships with soldiers are essential in taking the first steps. Getting to know how people think will help to determine how to approach each person or situation when presenting communist ideas. The opportunities to talk about politics

and communism will abound given the current situation of the capitalist global crisis.

The military collective will continue meeting to further study, plan and develop the military work. We agreed that we should read about the current world situation, to understand and explain how the capitalist system works, its relation with the world crisis and how it's affecting workers. We call on workers, students and soldiers all over the globe to build this critical work of the ICWP and encourage young people to join the military to prepare the ground work for communist revolution.

After the meeting, one of the high school students said, "As a comrade joining the armed services, I hope to create life long lasting bonds and meet trustworthy people. I know a communist world isn't easy to build and won't be a walk in the park. I, being enlisted, know there will be some patriots who will be willing to give their lives to defend the capitalists. I have to inspire people to turn the guns around on the capitalists and take back a world that always has been ours, a 'workers world,' one that belongs to the working class."

### Communist Soldiers and Sailors:

#### KEY TO BOLSHEVIK REVOLUTION, STILL KEY TODAY

During WWI, workers and soldiers organized the Russian Revolution. One of the most important victories for workers around the world, it was the first time workers led by communists took power in a country. The Bolshevik (Communist) Party, which organized and led the revolution, was founded in the early 20th century. The Bolshevik leader Lenin saw the need to consolidate masses of workers, soldiers and their peasant allies into one revolutionary force that would concentrate its power and ideology in the fight to overthrow the tsar and capitalism. This would not be possible without winning the masses of industrial workers, soldiers and sailors to revolution. So how did they do it?

The Bolsheviks began their work in the armed forces in 1903 with limited distribution of communist literature to soldiers and sailors. With the transition from feudalism to capitalism and the resulting unemployment, starvation and chaos, discontent was increasing among angry workers and soldiers.

A mass rebellion by sailors on the battleship Potemkin in 1905, during the Russo-Japanese war, showed the tremendous revolutionary potential of masses of workers, peasants and sailors. Workers at the port of Odessa demonstrated in support of the sailor mutineers who

took over the battleship.

When the tsar sent his Cossacks to quell the demonstration by killing many workers, the sailors pointed their gun turrets in defense of the workers.

As inspiring as this event is, sailors rebelled against the brass without sufficient Bolshevik leadership. The Bolsheviks realized that soldiers and sailors could and must be won as soon as possible to revolutionary ideas and the Bolshevik party. They created the Bolshevik Military Organization (BMO) in 1905 for this reason. This collective organized leafleting and distribution of newspapers. It agitated and organized, and politicized soldiers for revolution. Communist soldiers led discussions and struggles in the barracks and trenches leading up to and during World War I.

Without this bold decision to organize massively in the military, the upcoming revolution of 1917 would not have been successful.

By 1917, a Russian general estimated that there were 2 million deserters. Soldiers left the German front in WWI to join with workers and peasants to collectively make the 1917 Bolshevik Revolution a success, responding massively to the call to turn the imperialist war into a revolution for workers' rule. Within a year, the Red Army was created with the most class conscious and organized elements of the toiling class.

The Bolsheviks believed in the dictatorship of the working class, with a communist party



The Battleship Potemkin

mobilizing workers to build a socialist society where production benefited the whole working class, not the bosses' profits. The Bolsheviks demonstrated that the masses of workers, soldiers and sailors can be won to revolutionary ideas, to making a revolution and taking power for the working class.

Their fatal error was their lack of confidence that workers and soldiers could understand the need to fight directly for communism, instead of socialism.

Today we know that soldiers, sailors and workers are capable of understanding communist ideas and fighting directly for communism. We are building an international party, to unite soldiers and workers of the world in one mass communist party.

This is an excerpt from our pamphlet, *Soldiers, Sailors, Marines: Crucial to a Communist Workers' Revolution*

available at : [icwpredflag.org/MIL/mpe.html](http://icwpredflag.org/MIL/mpe.html)



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# LET'S NOT ELECT OUR EXECUTIONERS: LET'S BUILD OUR COMMUNIST WORLD

EL SALVADOR —The electoral machinery of the traditional parties bombards the population through the media and visits to workers' communities with promises of change. Those who will continue leading capitalism will be elected.

What we workers need is a communist society that puts an end to the electoral processes that only deepen capitalism's roots. In communist society, the leaders will be chosen collectively based on their involvement in the contradictions that are generated every day and on how they resolve them.

Each member of society must be a potential communist leader. The commitment of these workers will promote a better life for the collective. Whereas capitalism elects based on economic interests, in communism we will choose leaders based on the well-being of humanity.

A society divided between exploiters and exploited is what generates all the problems that we are living through today. In every electoral process the issues are the same: delinquency, poverty, education as a commodity, poor health care, etc. In the next electoral campaign, the problems will be the same and the same reformist "solutions" will be presented.

Since the country adopted a democratic sys-

tem with its reform in 1992, no electoral process has changed the situation of misery and poverty of the working class. Therefore, why should we men and women workers go to the polls?

Instead, millions of workers around the world must fight for a communist society free of sexism, racism and wage slavery.

In this election we can see very broad discontent by the masses due to the corruption which they have seen. Presidents, deputies, and mayors from both major parties (ARENA and the FMLN) are involved.

The masses also feel the insecurity generated by an average of 12 deaths per day. These are the situations where the ICWP clubs must seize the opportunity to carry the message of a permanent political struggle against the powers of the bourgeoisie.

The bosses are the ones who finance the main political electoral parties that are called the Nationalist Republican Alliance (ARENA) and those who call themselves allies of the working class, that is, the "left" as the Farabundo Marti National Liberation Front (FMLN).

These parties have commitments to and make deals with the main businessmen of the country.

In an election, the different groups of the bourgeoisie struggle to take control of the state and implement economic policies to get more profits. As a young person told us, "The ultimate goal of a business is to make a profit." The voracious bosses need electoral circuses. We the working class need communist revolution.

We can hear some of our friends, family members and co-workers complain about the main electoral political parties and say that they voted for one or the other, because they didn't have another choice. Let's use every opportunity we have to share Red Flag with our friends and invite them to read our revolutionary newspaper. We need to create a consciousness of struggle and strengthening solidarity among our comrades.

It is from the organization and consistency of the communist clubs of ICWP throughout the length and breadth of the country that we can open spaces to struggle for communism. In communism where the productive forces of the state, the masses, will make the crucial decisions about the course of production, about the destiny that they want for their lives and those of their descendants.

ALL OUT TO MARCH THIS MAY DAY!

## LETTERS

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## CRITICISM AND SUGGESTIONS

### COMMUNIST HISTORY LIVES IN RED FLAG

The article "Coal, Communists and the Arch-Betrayer John L. Lewis" in the last issue of *Red Flag* created a minor stir among Boeing workers and others building for May Day.

The accompanying picture of the Phoenix, AZ (USA) May Day march in 1930 caught the attention of one organizer. "JOIN THE COMMUNIST PARTY?" he said, reading the marchers' banner. "Wow, even back then!"

Then he read the article. "I learned something here," he continued. "I always thought John L. Lewis was a great labor leader." His father had told him that when he was a young man growing up in Detroit.

"We've been brainwashed!" he concluded, after reading how Lewis sabotaged communist efforts in the coal fields. He agreed there was an opportunity (even back then) to mobilize for communism among these miners led by black, Latino/a and immigrant workers.

"Young people aren't even taught history today, especially labor history," was another reaction. "They don't even know who John L. Lewis is." This idea is especially pushed by progressive union leaders.

If that is true, it spells trouble for the bosses and an opportunity for ICWP. We can go directly to communist history, bypassing the brainwashing.

Today, our paper and discussions can make the case for communism by analyzing communist history in the class struggle. We will organize "on-the-job" groups of party members and friends to find out which history would help overcome the political obstacles we face today.

For example, this May Day it will be useful to know how Muslims—in particular, Muslim women—became communists by the hundreds of thousands around the world.

When we take state power, the party can organize millions to learn and teach our true history. It will light a path for a successful communist society.

The organizer was not satisfied with purging himself of his previous brainwashing. He went immediately after work to arrange a meeting with a group of students (nine young women and one guy).

He wants to invite some other comrades to discuss our experience organizing for May Day over the years as well as the global history of these marches. He thinks a group might come to this year's march. We'll do our best to rise to the task!

—An industrial worker who's learning from co-workers how useful communist history can be

**RED FLAG comments:** In the early Soviet Union, the question of Islam was closely tied to Party policy on "national minorities." The Bolsheviks thought that "progressive nationalism" was the way to fight racism and bigotry. They didn't see Tsarist repression of Muslims, Jews and other minorities as a class question.

Islam was not suppressed in the six majority-Muslim Soviet Republics because the Party considered it part of national culture. "Islamic socialists" were given leading positions there.

Muslim women and men got priority in opportunities for political education. Most returned to their villages, where they became communist leaders. These new communists clashed with traditional (often religious) tribal leaders, often around sexism. The contradictions in the Party line on the "national question" sharpened.

Within ten years, the Soviet government had become less tolerant of Islam. By then, many Muslims were communists.

Today we see that there is no "progressive nationalism." We mobilize directly for communism among the masses of all places and religions. We agree with the comrade industrial worker. We need to learn more about the strengths and weaknesses of the communist movement around this issue.



### Rebellion in French Guiana

On March 27 more than a week of marches, demonstrations, and partial strikes led to an indefinite general strike that has completely closed down French Guiana, a department (province) of France. Workers (plus a lot of middle class Guianans) are protesting high crime rates and racist unemployment (20%+ for adults).

Situations like this will be revolutionary opportunities once the ICWP has a branch in the province that has built a base for communism. *Red Flag* collectives of members and friends would bring the paper and communist solutions to the fighting masses over a number of years, building a mass party and setting the stage. Then, we could seize power and finally end unemployment, as well as the thievery by the capitalists and the individualist petty crime that characterizes the bosses' system.

## LETTERS

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## CRITICISM AND SUGGESTIONS

## WOMEN GARMENT WORKERS: COMMUNIST LEADERS OF ICWP

A communist greeting to all the women of the international working class. On March 8, when international working women's day is commemorated, the members of the industrial club of ICWP in the maquillas took advantage of the day to meet at lunchtime.

We shared with a group of comrades from the factory, talking about the importance of the participation of women in our Party. We explained how these women workers began organizing the work of bringing communist ideas to more women and men workers in the factories about 5 years ago. This initiated building the party inside the factory.

Today we are women and men workers convinced to carry on this struggle to fight for our emancipation from the bosses' system and to build a society free of sexism, discrimination

and from wage slavery.

One of the objectives of this gathering was to keep ourselves motivated in this effort and also in preparing for May Day. We emphasized to each one of them that they should invite more workers to come on this great day.

We also savored some delicious pupusas and drinks, and we raffled a couple of gifts among the workers who attended.

LONG LIVE THE WORKING CLASS! LONG LIVE MAY DAY!

—Comrades of the Maquillas

### Marikana



### Never Forget!

It is a holiday today, 21st March, We commemorate the Sharpsville massacre, where apartheid government police opened fire and killed 69 unarmed defenseless people in 1960, in Sharpsville.

We thought that this horrible dastardly act of cowardice would never happen again.

But no, it happened again in Uitenhage on March 21, 1985: the Uitenhage massacre. The police opened fire on a funeral procession, killing at least 20 people.

The commissions were set up and found that the police acted in "self defense."

Again in 2012 under the African National Congress government, the police opened fire in Marikana and killed 34 striking mineworkers.

We will never forget these incidents. Nothing short of communist revolution will avenge the

death and senseless killing of the workers and poor.

—A Comrade in South Africa

### Transit Workers Are Important for Communist Revolution

"Why do you come here?" asked a regular *Red Flag* reader at a Los Angeles transit division. "Do you go to all of the divisions?"

"We go to quite a few," a comrade responded. "And we hand out the paper at garment factories, hospitals, and schools too."

"But why us?" he asked.

"Industrial workers, including transportation, are key to revolution," she explained. "MTA has one of the most diverse groups of industrial workers in the city.

"Think about it: There are calls for a general strike on May Day. Imagine if all the bus operators stopped their buses, even for just a few minutes."

"The city would shut down," the worker said. His face brightened. "I would like to go on strike."

"If there is a strike, we think it should be for a whole different society, a communist society, instead of for reforms," said the comrade.

"That's something to think about," said the worker, tapping his copy of *Red Flag* as he headed in to work.

The comrade should have said something about how industrial workers will be key to helping to build a communist society. We see these workers every few weeks. Maybe next time.

—LA comrade

### My New Friends Are My Collective

A month ago I moved to another area. I now affirm that the conditions of our working class here and in the rest of the world are more similar than different.

There is poverty, insecurity, degradation of the environment, abuse of power, smuggling of people who travel to other countries in search of the "American dream," etc. Capitalism destroys the life of our planet and human dignity in

order to generate profits.

I mention that in the context of International Women's Day. At work a case was presented of five women who were imprisoned (prostitution, poverty, drugs, abortion, etc.). The people in attendance were outraged and this situation scared them. In a personal talk, I commented to them that I didn't feel anything, and its not that I was not outraged; it's that even worse things are happening around the world. I told them that what caused me to be terrified is the historical debt that we must leave to the future generations if we don't contribute to change. I did not say that I am a communist, but I mentioned that change requires other types of actions and it is not a local change, but an international one.

In my work place, there are revisionist ideas and progressive ideas, with which we struggle within the system to assert the knowledge of "indigenous" peoples and to rescue the environment. They are "good people." However, good "sentiments" are not enough. We need another way of organizing ourselves, of struggling. We need communism, but not the communism of the past. We need to learn from the past, to learn from history. Listening to people is not enough; we need to sharpen contradictions.

I have had discussions of this type with the people closest to me. I don't want to distance them from me. I need to form a collective that will help me here. The ideological struggle is very sharp. The co-workers, friends, even though they are not communists, in an indirect way they are my collective.

Several ask me if I don't miss my house. I answer that my house is where my working class is and I do not have to feel alone. They are my collective, which, with political discussions, we will advance to favor class consciousness and in the future openly talk about our communist political line.

I still keep up the discussions with the soldier friend. We have sharpened the discussions and are looking for a better way to communicate. He sends fraternal greetings.

—Young Comrade in Mexico



LOS ANGELES, March 23—Over 1000 people, mostly health care workers, marched today against the repeal of the ACA. About 300 workers gladly took copies of *Red Flag*. Many agreed that capitalism's profits and money stand in the way of the health care that the masses need. When we talked about a communist world without money or profits, where masses mobilize to guarantee everyone's health, many were interested. Some agreed that Obamacare does not solve the problem.

Our sign calling for communism to meet workers needs instead of profits or money resonated with the marchers and in a banner saying that healthcare should not be "4 sale." Healthcare is a need for all, that only communism can meet.

"Mass action works," said a church member later that week, applauding the defeat of Trump's healthcare plan. These mass actions in the long run change little or nothing because capitalism remains intact. The mass action we need is to fight for a communist world where the masses produce everything we need, especially health care, without profit or money.

## INDIA: FROM THE MARUTI 13 TO JIANAGLA COMMUNIST REVOLUTION WILL DEFEAT FASCISM!

Just days after the Hindu nationalist BJP Party won the elections in the Indian state of Uttar Pradesh, fascist posters in the small village of Jianagla made national news. “What Trump is doing in America,” the posters said, “we will do in this village because the BJP is now in power.” The posters gave the Muslims until the end of the year to leave and were signed by “Hindus of the village.” Jianagla’s population reflects that of India as a whole: about 80% Hindu and some 14% Muslim.

Communal strife (as the organized massacres or pogroms of Hindus and Muslims are called) was initiated by the British imperialists. British capitalist exploitation required them to take secondary differences and make them primary. This division has underpinned the development of the independent capitalist economies of both Pakistan and India. The threatening posters in Jianagla village once again raise the question: is the mass brutality spurred on by religious intolerance or capitalist tensions?

Of course, they are intertwined. The history of all religions is an ideological battle between the masses and the elites. While religion is often the opiate of the masses, it is also a community of survival for the oppressed. Ruling elites have taken our desire for connection and a higher purpose and produced the so-called “great religions” as official or semi-official arms of government. They have used religion and religious prejudices in the same way that ruling elites use racism and nationalism—to divide the working class.

Communist society will eliminate the ruling elites, their oppression and their governments. Winning and building a communist society will require a principled struggle against all the ideas that keep us fighting each other, including religious prejudice such as Islamophobia. Commu-



One of many workers’ mobilizations supporting the Maruti-Suzuki strikers

nism meets the real human needs for connection, meaning, and community that many people seek in religion.

### Why the attacks on Muslim workers in India now?

Threatened by the rise of China, Indian capitalists have turned to the BJP with its “Make in India” slogan to attract and promote capitalist production. Desperate to attract a bigger share of a shrinking market, it has turned to two things. One is the attack on industrial workers, most recently the Maruti- Suzuki 13. The second is targeting the Muslim minority.

The Maruti-Suzuki 13 are automobile workers sentenced on March 10th to life imprisonment as the result of a violent 2012 strike that ended with the death of a manager. The strike, prompted by a slur against a Dalit (considered lower-caste) worker, resulted in the arrests of 148 workers who have spent years in jail. While 117 of these workers were finally acquitted, 31 of the most active mass leaders have been sentenced to various terms in prison—an attack on the entire working class.

rael/Palestine. Ilan Pappé’s *The Ethnic Cleansing of Palestine* makes it clear that the carefully planned expulsion of Palestinians by Israelis released acres of farmland to Jewish farmers. This is primitive accumulation for the small business men.

And so are the violent attacks on Muslims in India. The 2002 Gujarat violence (in which Modi himself is implicated) saw police and government officials directing rioters and giving them lists of Muslim-owned properties. It makes you wonder which small business in Jianagla will benefit from the threat to its Muslim villagers.

Workers’ deep mass anger at poverty and exploitation has too long been channeled by the rulers into attacks on our fellow workers in the name of religion. We must fight in our own class interest—to get rid of the source of pogroms—capitalist production relations—and build a communist society where we can work together to meet the needs—material and social—of us all.

*Red Flag* invites ICWP members and other readers of our paper to contribute letters and articles about how religion serves the ruling class.

## MOBILIZE THE MASSES FOR COMMUNISM

# March on May Day

## THE INTERNATIONAL COMMUNIST WORKERS’ PARTY

INVITES YOU TO MARCH WITH US ON MAY  
FIRST UNDER THE FLAG OF COMMUNISM

THIS INTERNATIONAL WORKERS’ DAY

WORKERS FROM THE U.S.

(SEATTLE, LOS ANGELES, OAKLAND),

MEXICO, INDIA, EL SALVADOR,

SOUTH AFRICA, SPAIN, HONDURAS

## JOIN US!

