



RED FLAG

MOBILIZE THE MASSES FOR COMMUNISM

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

RAISING THE RED FLAG ON MAY DAY SEE PAGES 2, 3, 4



May Day Celebration in South Africa Strengthens ICWP Worldwide:

NEED TO GO MORE TO THE MASSES ABOUT OUR COMMUNIST FUTURE

SOUTH AFRICA, May 2 – “The May Day mass meeting we organized was a great experience,” declared Lindelwa. “It inspired us as a youth collective and me personally.

“The night before, we were here to prepare the food. We were all saying, ‘this is the day!’ We had planned this and had gone around the area distributing the pamphlets. When we began to decorate the hall, we were nervous. But when it was all red with our banners and flags, it really gave me confidence. I could see that it really sparked something for the people who came. It was quite good that over 200 people were inside the hall listening.”

“I was interested in the speeches my comrades made,” said Anathi. “I liked the history of May Day. There was a line that workers fought for the rights and dignities that we enjoy today. But what encouraged me was knowing that there is a lot more to fight for than our rights and dignities.”

“The comrades explained what ICWP (International Communist Workers’ Party) and communism is all about. And some people were really keen and agreeing with things that we were saying,” added Qaqamba. “The masses here are really disgruntled. We were saying to them that it’s not just here in South Africa that the working class is being exploited and living in horrible, unbearable conditions. People were agreeing with that and trying to understand that we have to be united as one class to fight the capitalists and their capitalist system.”

“I was not more part of things because I spent most of my time in the kitchen,” said Buhle. “But I listened to the comrades talk directly to the masses to explain our line and the response was really good.

“There was a comrade who was part of our collective last year. He came to our meeting to tell us he was no longer a communist, that he was resigning. He said that we wouldn’t succeed, that we wouldn’t even last a year.

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El Salvador May Day

INDUSTRIAL WORKERS, WOMEN AND MEN, GIVE COMMUNIST LEADERSHIP

EL SALVADOR, May 1st—“Workers and students, united and moving forward,” “Forward: Communism is coming and no one can stop it,” chanted the ICWP contingent of over 40 people. Workers from other contingents responded to the chants. A group of university students applauded enthusiastically the group of men and women workers from the maquilas. This took place during the march to commemorate International Workers’ Day.

Thousands of people filled the streets of the capital. The International Communist Workers’ Party (ICWP) was there with the message: **For a Communist, Working Class, Militant, and International May Day.**

The punctuality and order, the logistics with which we organized our presence at the site of the march, were positive. This shows our commitment to the Party and the revolutionary process. It allowed us to distribute 1,100 *Red Flags* and 3,000 leaflets. All of our communist literature was quickly distributed due to the large number of workers who participated in the different marches.

A new comrade was in charge for the first time of distributing *Red Flag* in the buses that brought workers from the west of El Salvador.

A worker from El Salvador’s electricity company commented to a co-worker as he read *Red Flag*, “Look, it says here that the working class must continue fighting.”

“I wanted to come now because I don’t want to miss the march,” said a war veteran who had come from the mountain to sleep in the city. He continues to think that a world led by the working class is possible, “without lying electoral reformist politicians,” he concluded.

Our comrades from the different communist clubs—textile workers, teachers, students, farmworkers—were present under the flags of ICWP. With banners, shirts, chanting communist and anti-capitalist slogans, we

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MAY DAY BATTLE IN SEATTLE: COMMUNISM VS. SOCIALISM

SEATTLE, USA, May 1—Thousands of May Day marchers braved the 45° (F) weather and cold rainy downpour today. Our party came with our paper and signs to “Mobilize the Masses for Communism.”

This line stood in stark contrast to the smorgasbord of socialist electoral candidates, progressive unionists, and leaders of identity reform groups that made up the speakers’ platform. Among the hundreds who got our paper, a number commented on the difference. Some even approached our table to proudly state they were communists.

A group of young people whose parents were born in Mexico were particularly interested in our vision of a society that didn’t rest on the exchange of money.

Socialist candidates for mayor and city council presented elaborate platforms that rested on getting more money for reforms. *The Seattle Times* complained that all the mayoral candidates were trying to “out-progressive each other” to play to the May Day crowd.

None of them got at the root of the problem. None of them was prepared to tear up capitalist exploitation by the roots with communist revolution and communist solutions.

For instance, some socialist groups called for a shorter work week without loss in pay and others an even shorter workweek. Along with that they issued vague calls to increase the taxes on the rich.

Ending exploitation will remain a pipe-dream if production is organized for profits and workers are wage slaves. In communism, work will be for our collective good and everyone will get what they need. Taxes and wages will disappear, replaced by distribution according to need.

Socialists, like every other reformer of capitalism, called for more money for jobs and education, not war. Good luck with that!

Once again, production for profit guarantees the imperialists will fight each other to secure raw materials, markets

and cheap labor. In communism, the only wars we fight will be against the capitalists. Eventually we will defeat them. Mass armed conflict will end as we mobilize millions to provide for the worlds’ workers.

We will eliminate exploitive jobs, replacing them with collective work for the good of our class. Capitalist education will end. Communist education will be collective. Divisive tests and degrees will be replaced by collective evaluation involving real work. We’ll be motivated by the needs of the working class instead of the prospect of high-paying careers.

The battle between communist educational content and capitalist content was evident at the rally. The reform history of May Day was recounted by the *Seattle Times* and every socialist paper circulated. In addition, every one of these papers and a socialist mayoral candidate portrayed the 1919 Seattle general strike as a great militant reform battle (see box).

It was left up to the International Communist Workers’ Party (ICWP) to reveal the revolutionary communist inspiration of May Day and the general strike. Many of its leaders, including Anna Louise Strong, would later join the newly-formed communist party.

We could have made the distinction even clearer with a leaflet that spelled out the contradiction between our communist vision and the plans of the socialists. Next year we will be ready!

In fact, why wait for next year! We will be discussing this issue in a new **Red Flag** collective of Boeing workers, HS students, past and current school workers. One of our goals is to write an article for every issue of the paper that illustrates our communist vision in articles that relate to youth, the future of our party. See you in *Red Flag*!



Seattle, 1919

COMMUNIST-LED REVOLUTION INSPIRED SEATTLE GENERAL STRIKE

At the Seattle May Day rally, the socialist candidate for mayor gave a poetic speech that portrayed today’s progressive movement (and presumably her election campaign) as the rightful heir to the 1919 Seattle general strike. Although these strikers did not get the wages they asked for, it showed the power of the masses. What she failed to mention was how it was all inspired by the communist-led revolution in Russia, not by the wage demands.

Anna Louise Strong was another a poetic writer and communist whose political activism began with the 1919 general strike. She explained how the “signals from Moscow” changed the world and Seattle along with it.

Strong wrote for two papers, the *Seattle Daily Call* and the *Union Record*, in the months leading up to the strike. Reactionary union leaders complained that these publications spent more time on “those Bolsheviks” than on the “legitimate problems” of carpenters and painters.

Thousands of copies of Lenin’s pamphlet on “the problems faced by a working-class government on coming to power” were published. “For some time, these little pamphlets were seen by hundreds on Seattle’s street cars and ferries, by men of the shipyards on their way to work.”

Those men of the shipyards refused to load guns being shipped to reactionary forces in Russia, sparking strikes up and down the West Coast in support of the new revolution. The Longshoremen had just got their first contract. They broke it to support the Bolsheviks. It was many years until they got a new contract, but they thought it was worth it.

Then they started the five-day general strike.

While the bosses screamed about communist influence among the strikers, Strong had no illusion about the strike’s weakness. “We had shown strength and then failed to use it. The general strike put in our hands the organized life of the city—all except the guns.”

Since then, we have learned from the Russian revolution and the Chinese revolution that followed that even a revolution that establishes socialism cannot succeed. Nothing less that communism will do.

All this was ignored by the socialist candidate in favor of reform. Capitalist evils, like racism, sexism and xenophobia, were decried, but communist solutions were nowhere to be found. Reducing people to their cash worth was denounced, but never was the possibility of a communist society without money promoted. Elections of socialists was pushed as the way forward, not the communist revolution we need.

Quotations from *I Change Worlds* by Anna Louise Strong



May Day, Seattle, 2017



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WORKERS’ PARTY (ICWP)**
WWW.ICWPREDFLAG.ORG — (310) 913-9704
E-MAIL: ICWP@ANONYMOUSSPEECH.COM
WRITE TO: P.M.B. 362
3006 S. VERMONT AVE., LOS ANGELES, CA
90007, USA

Los Angeles May Day Dinner

DEVELOPING NEW LEADERS FOR COMMUNIST CLASS STRUGGLE

LOS ANGELES, April 22—Our ICWP dinner, in which about one hundred people participated, was a very successful, inspiring event. New comrades gave leadership. Everyone participated, singing our communist songs and practicing our slogans. Many participated bringing food and everything needed for the dinner.

However, we made some mistakes. We could have prepared our young leaders better. The speeches could have been better prepared. With more effort we could have brought more people. We have to strive to correct these errors, especially when more and more people are open to our communist ideas.

A young comrade spoke of the attacks internationally and the need for more youth to join our Party and for them to go into the army to organize men and women soldiers for communism. An MTA transit worker comrade spoke of how they carry out communist work inside workplaces and how proud they feel to be members of ICWP.

Another veteran spoke of her own life experiences. The following is her speech:

When they asked me to give this speech, I thought that I couldn't give a communist political speech because I wouldn't know what to say.

But after analyzing the situation, I thought, "Aren't we the working class? The ones who produce everything and who deserve everything? Aren't we the ones who suffer all the abuses and attacks of this capitalist system?"

Haven't I seen relatives and friends fall, shot by the murderous bullets of the bourgeoisie for the simple fact of wanting to improve their living conditions? These dreams and aspirations of millions of people around the world for a better life have been cut short. For them, I decided I had to raise my voice and give this speech.

I grew up in a very humble community with no electricity. The water that we drank was from wells, rivers, lakes, wherever we could get it. We didn't have access to medical care. Many children, youth, adults, and older people died and

their families never even knew what they died from. The wages were miserable and whole families didn't have enough to eat.

That is my own experience, but there are tens of thousands of families around the world who live in horrible conditions, worse than those that I just mentioned.

I ask myself if we lived in a communist system, isn't it true that we would not have had to suffer all these atrocities?

I came to this country exhausted from the civil war in El Salvador, thinking I would live the American dream. Soon I realized that for most of us it was a nightmare. Exploitation, deportation, discrimination, wage slavery, homelessness, many who are killed by the police, etc, etc.

I could spend all night talking about all the evils of capitalism. And I think that each one of you have your own experience with this racist system.

That's why today more than anything I want to talk to you about our fight for a new communist society, a new society where people like you and like me decide the future of our lives.

The International Communist Workers' Party isn't only those of us here. In many other countries, people read *Red Flag* and in some of those countries there are now also members of ICWP. Among them are South Africa, India, Spain, Mexico and El Salvador, Honduras and others.

Our political line of fighting directly for communism is spreading because the international working class is now tired and is willing to fight for a society where money does not exist, where there are no borders, or wage slavery, a communist society where racism, sexism, and other capitalist evils are abolished forever.

A society where food, housing, clothing, medical services, education, and fun are guaranteed, because production will be for the collective well-

being and not to fatten the bank accounts of the capitalist thieves.

But to be able to achieve this society, we all have to contribute according to our commitment, especially today when we find ourselves under a constant threat of a Third World War. The danger also brings opportunities: many more workers are open to communist ideas.

Recently I had a very good experience. I was asked to be in charge of going with a group of comrades to a pro-immigrant march to distribute our newspaper *Red Flag*. Most of us who went were women. When we got there I could see how willing people were to get our communist newspaper.

Some of them came up to us to ask for the paper. We had some discussions about communism. We distributed 400 newspapers, plus another 200 that a group of youth distributed.

We could see that the people are more open to communist ideas because they are tired of the capitalist system. That's why I invite those who are not yet members of ICWP to become members and those who are already members to redouble their efforts to continue organizing. Because only by organizing the International Communist Workers' Party can we put an end to all the suffering of the working class and win the communist world that we so deserve and yearn for.



May Day Los Angeles



Mexico City
ICWP comrades distributed hundreds of *Red Flags* to May Day marchers. More next issue.

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commemorated with high spirits the struggle of the martyrs of Chicago.

Our message was clear "**Fight directly for communism**" to end the bloodshed of thousands of workers in the current regional wars and future global wars between capitalist powers, and to avoid the trap of reformism.

We are excited to see that new members



May Day in El Salvador

of the Party—among them men and women, industrial workers and farmworkers—made the decision to go into the streets without fear and show they are fighting for communism. This included young students, and comrades who fought in the guerilla forces during the civil war from 1980 to 1992, and friends who decided to march together with their children.

It is important to transmit our communist message to the new generations and keep mobilizing no matter how long it takes so that the revolutionary effort is not lost and, on the contrary, is strengthened and gains greater political maturity.

As is becoming a custom, after the march ended, a group of men and women workers went to a tourist center to enjoy pupusas and sodas. A worker who marched for the first time with ICWP said he was very happy to have participated and that now he considers himself a new member. He said he would continue participating in the Party's meetings. "You all speak very clearly about political things," he said.

This was the first time since the armed conflict that a march here ended with workers and students singing the Communist International and waving the red flags in a plaza taken over by the working class.

ONE CLASS, ONE COMMUNIST WORLD

SPAIN—Despite the difficulties of being able to meet and organize this May Day, we were able to arrive and distribute more than 500 leaflets and 200 *Red Flags*. The working class already identifies us as “*Red Flag*” and gladly received the newspaper.

A retired worker observed us and asked for a copy of *Red Flag*. “It is interesting to know that there are still young people who read and share this kind of literature,” she said.

We invited her to stay in contact so we could give her the paper and discuss it. We also gave her our email. “Keep up your good work so we can destroy capitalism,” were her farewell words.

During the march in Barcelona, we also encountered members of the Platform Party for Catalonia, who demand that government aid, subsidies, and many other things like health care should first be reflected in benefits to the Spaniards (and not foreigners). They carried a racist banner that read: “First the ones from home.”

One of the workers who was observing the march asked us for a copy of *Red Flag* and told us: “Racism is so impregnated in some minds that the result are these political parties. Be careful with them. Sometimes they are violent.”

We answered that racism is the perfect tool to divide the working class and that our objective is not to confront those of our same class but to unite our

class. We told him that we believe that an international party can be built and that in fact that party is called the International Communist Workers’ Party. We explained that we don’t depend on any NGO and/or other aid from the system, that we are normal workers who only want a better future for the new generations. That future is communism.

Thousands of workers came out to march like every year shouting slogans against capitalism. We fulfilled our goal of again taking *Red Flag* to the streets and we feel more optimistic about moving forward in building the International Communist Workers’ Party. We will continue spreading communist ideas for building Communism all over the world.

Long Live May Day! Long Live Communism! Long Live ICWP!



MAY DAY IS INTERNATIONAL WORKERS’ DAY

OAKLAND, USA—They came in a steady stream to march on May Day. They came to the plaza outside Fruitvale BART Station in Oakland—the very station where years earlier the cops had cold-bloodedly murdered a young Black worker, Oscar Grant. They came to march for immigrant rights but they came also to march against a racist capitalism that has taken an even more racist turn. Many came in organized groups like unions or “sanctioned” school walk-outs, but they all came with a confidence and excitement that a mass movement is building.

And here and there knots of people engaged *Red Flag* distributors. “Communism? Will it be authoritarian or democratic?”

“Revolutions are authoritarian. They are when one class imposes its power over another! It will take a powerful mass movement to bring the walls down and smash all borders. But the authority of the masses is different from the authority of the exploiters.”

“You talk about bringing the walls down,” another marcher chimed in, “but why don’t you talk about bringing the other walls down—the prison walls? My brother is in jail. He’s innocent. He didn’t do anything. Even when he gets out it’s like he’s illegal anyway.”

“You make a good point. It’s a connection we don’t make enough. Please write us a letter. *Red Flag* is a paper of the masses. Communism is not just what you think; it’s what you do as well.”

And then another discussion with

some students raised another point. “My dad’s an aircraft mechanic. What would it mean to him to work without pay?”

I struggled with that for a minute. “Like the paper says,” I said, pointing to the editorial, “communism means you have to rethink everything.”

“But my dad’s a skilled worker and he kind of takes pride in that”

“Your dad might start looking at himself differently. He’d still use his skills but maybe start doing some engineering as well. Perhaps he’d take part in transferring his skills to a group of youngsters who would be getting some schooling at his workplace.”

Another good discussion later on revolved around the question of “How do you make the revolution?”

“Well, at the moment, the masses are in motion. They are revolting, resisting against this or that aspect of capitalism. Our job is to join them and raise the main task—organizing to overthrow capitalism and replace it with a society organized on communist ideas and principles.”

“To this end we try to reach industrial workers, soldiers, and students—key forces in the maintenance and future of capitalism or communism.”

By the end of the march we had spread *Red Flag* far and wide. We were all but out of papers. Broadening the discussion brings us face to face with the next: organizing and recruiting so the ideas of communist revolution become a material force for revolution.

MAY DAY SOUTH AFRICA from page 1

But he came to May Day. He was in the hall wearing our T-shirt. He told me that he is a communist. He is eager to come back and learn about communism. We invited him and he participated. It was positive for me to see someone who renounced us come back and participate.”

“Our party has grown much bigger from where it was a couple of years ago,” commented Zimkhitha. “As I was listening to the crowd, people were asking, ‘what’s this?’ They wanted to learn more about communism and ICWP. We look forward to the upcoming school.”

“We planned this May Day for about a year,” reflected Bongani. “It was a good experience. People came in numbers. Others gave us contact information. They want to learn about ICWP. So, we are going to have a communist school. I think we should engage more and tell more people about ICWP.”

“It was my second conference,” Bongani continued. “From the past conference, we learned a few things. We were able to handle the issues that came up. I hope that next year it will be an even better experience, on a larger scale, that people will come in greater numbers.”

“Yesterday was good,” emphasized Nceba. “It was a good turnout according to our plans. The response was good. Nevertheless, there are challenges. I realized that people were on point about

May Day because it symbolizes workers’ day for all people. People should put that day aside. All people should understand that May Day is important for all workers. I think we should mobilize more people in order to get even more.”

Buhle agreed: “We had some good experiences and some bad ones that we need to keep struggling through. Nonetheless, these things will allow us to draw lessons and allow us as individuals and as a collective to be better communists.”

“An older person said that he’s really inspired by the struggle that us young people are waging,” reported Qaqamba. “It is inspiring that the work we do really inspires a lot of other people. They

see that we can no longer live in such conditions, that we have to fight. It shows that when we mobilize and talk to the masses, the results will be great.

“We need to go more to the masses,” Qaqamba continued. “I think we need to talk more about what a communist future will be like.

May Day because it symbolizes workers’ day for all people.

“As much the intensifying fight and competition between the capitalists is showing the nature of the system and providing us with opportunities, to that extent we have to be sharp in explaining to the masses and the working class what our communist society will actually be like. How we are going to live in a collective way to eliminate all manifestations of capitalism: racism, sexism and xenophobia. To explain that we are one race, the human race, and we need to be united in fighting our enemy.”

“May Day gave us great confidence and we are looking forward to the school to help us build our party here and all around the world.”



South Africa comrades organizing for the May Day activities

Religion and Communism in Practice:

UNITY CREATES BASIS FOR STRUGGLE

LOS ANGELES (USA) — Several Party comrades attend a liberal church. We are not the only open atheists there. Being communist revolutionaries (not liberal pacifist reformers) is actually a bigger contradiction – especially around elections. Some church friends are interested in our ideas. Others aren't, but remain friends.

The church has a program to “build bridges” with Muslim neighbors. We've visited mosques. We've helped to organize well-attended formal and informal presentations on Islam. We've had public rallies, for example supporting Syrian refugees.

We've enjoyed many social events at the church, a mosque, and in homes. Usually people talk about their lives and their families. There hasn't been much talk about religion or politics, except about how to oppose anti-immigrant and anti-Muslim policies and hate crimes.

After the election, several Muslim friends wanted to talk about Trump and what to do. Ten of us had dinner at a comrade's home. They and some of their friends are readier now to get involved in things outside their families, professions and mosques.

The comrade gave everyone *Red Flag*. None of the non-Party friends (from the church or the mosque) seem very interested. But our friendships have become closer and more open.

Can we recruit religious people to the Party?

Some of the church members are nurses, teachers, computer techs. Others are self-employed professionals. The same is true for most of our Muslim friends.

They are part of the broad masses we hope to lead to build communist society. But they are not amongst the industrial workers, soldiers or youth on whom we mainly rely to mobilize masses for communism. Still, one comrade has joined the Party through the church work. We are patient. Others will come.

Muslims we meet through “interfaith” activities are often very active in their mosques. They want us to understand their religion. They often correctly see communism as contradictory to their religion. The same is true for others we meet in “interfaith” work.

We can talk with them about how aspects of communism mesh with aspects of their religion. But it's not reasonable or respectful to insist that our party fights for a mass understanding of dialectical materialism and then to tell religious people that they can join anyway. Sure, we want them to join. Of course, we agree on some social issues. But let's understand that someone's religion can be central to their world view. It's not something they can lightly put aside. Religion is an obstacle to mobilizing for communism.

Muslim people we meet in secular situations (work, neighborhood, rallies) may be more open to communist ideas. Muslim organizations are allying with immigrant workers and others against capitalism's racism and fascism. We need a long-term perspective. We must build friendships capable of sustaining political struggle.

Communists Struggle against Idealism and Dogmatism

Recently an atheist friend arrived at an event as the Muslim speaker explained why she believed the Koran rather than the Bible. “She was talking about God and I wondered what I was doing here,” said the friend. But she stayed and came back the next time. “Now I understand where she is coming from,” she admitted.

Part of the problem is idealism (belief in non-material entities like God, angels, and jinni). Another is the dogmatic belief that eternal truth comes out of some book.

The communist view is that knowledge comes from collective social practice. Much important and hard-won knowledge is recorded in books, but no book contains “the whole truth.”



Unfortunately, communists sometimes become dogmatic. Someone says: “Marx (or Lenin or Stalin or Mao) said it, so it must be true.” Sometimes we get stuck on a particular way of saying something and keep repeating it instead of developing the idea further.

Sometimes, too, communists fall into idealist ways of thinking. For example, we want something to happen but we don't know what to do. Instead of studying the concrete conditions scientifically, we might say that it will happen “somehow.”

A big difference between scientific communism and religion is that communists criticize and try to avoid such mistakes.

Our knowledge of how communism will work must grow out of the masses' historical experiences and from practice. We use dialectical materialist philosophy to analyze this practice scientifically. We form hypotheses and test them with collective political work and analyze the results together.

The bigger and stronger the collective, the more we learn. That's why we need a mass party – with you in it!

ADVANCING COMMUNIST STRUGGLE AMONG MTA WORKERS

LOS ANGELES, USA—Mechanics at MTA (the public transportation system) know our newspaper *Red Flag*, and they usually refer to members of ICWP as members of *Red Flag*.

This May Day, together with the leadership of the Party, our club decided that we would march with the mechanics' union group. We hoped that many workers we knew from other divisions would come so we could talk to them. Actually, not that many came. However, our club gave out the newspaper and made two new contacts.

One of them works on the trains and is very



political. He understands a lot about what is happening worldwide, and realizes the need to organize beyond the union struggle.

He told us that three groups come to his workplace to distribute their respective newspapers. Among them, he mentioned *Red Flag*. Taking advantage of the opportunity, we identified ourselves as members of *Red Flag* and we told him that in our division we have a communist club and that we are trying to organize other clubs on the different shifts. We told him that we have networks of workers who help to distribute the newspaper inside MTA, as well as workers, students and teachers who help us distribute the paper outside, sometimes reaching up to 800 papers per issue at different MTA divisions.

Our goal is to organize in the different divisions, because we understand that the working class is crucial for a communist revolution. I gave our new contact the copy of *Red Flag* which had a front page article from our club.

This fellow worker got interested. He asked us if we would like to keep in contact with him. We replied that we would be delighted, and we exchanged information. He told us that he gets *Red Flag* from another worker who takes two and gives him one of them.

We wanted to find out more about the other worker, but he said that this co-worker wasn't that political. He also warned us that we shouldn't think that if he attended meetings, he was already a member of ICWP, because he said he had some disagreements with our political line. We assured him that ICWP is open to all workers, that disagreements and doubts are welcome, and that we were sure that we would resolve his disagreements and doubts.

The other contact, also a worker, showed interest in our communist line. We are already planning to invite both of them to an informal club meeting to talk with them and advance the political struggle with them.

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COMMUNISM IS THE BEST HEALTHCARE PLAN

USA, May 4 — The Republicans passed an Obamacare repeal bill in the House of Representatives. Trump and his cronies are celebrating. Obamacare was never that great, but with its repeal millions will lose even the limited benefits it provided.

This would ultimately kill tens of thousands of sick and injured people who will get basically no treatment. The repeal, and the slashing of Medicare, would free up nearly a trillion dollars over the next decade. This trillion dollars will go into the pockets of the wealthy in the form of tax cuts.

The capitalists are truly a vampire class. They are almost literally drinking the workers' blood!

Liberals are using this defeat to channel the opposition into the Democratic Party. MoveOn.org is urging people to contact their Senators to make sure they stop this bill in the Senate—which is likely. The Democrats hope to use this issue to get out the vote in 2018 when the whole House of Representatives is up for re-election.

Others are promoting some version of "Medicare for all." In California, the legislature will consider SB562, modeled after the Canadian health care system. This would establish a publicly-run healthcare plan that would cover everyone living in California, including those without legal immigration status.

But none of these plans deal with the basic reason that so many people are sick and injured in the first place. (In the US, there are about a million people in the hospital on a typical day.) The answer, of course, is capitalism. Capitalism's relentless push for profits sickens and injures huge numbers of us.

We're fighting for communism. This will take an armed revolutionary struggle, but when we win, we'll immediately eliminate money, wage slavery, and production for profit. We'll organize society based on providing for human

need—which will have important health benefits. The Party will mobilize masses to provide:

Clean water. Globally, nearly a billion people today lack access to clean water. Several million die each year from diseases caused by contaminated water. Clean water will be a priority under communism, and in most parts of the world this is just a matter of laying pipes. We'll mobilize as many people as necessary to get the job done.

Clean air. Nearly 80% of the residents of big cities today are exposed to pollution that exceeds World Health Organization limits. Workers from Paris to Beijing are literally choking in smog. Communism, by eliminating profits, will allow us to organize production in ways that protect the environment—installing filters on smokestacks, for example. We'll also organize collective public transportation and drastically reduce the number of individual automobiles (currently a billion).

Sanitation. Today, two and a half billion people lack proper sanitation—real toilets. Many live in slums with sewage running in the street or pooling on the ground. Enough! The masses will make toilets and lay pipes.

Good food. Nearly a billion people in the world are undernourished (hungry). Tens of millions in Africa alone are threatened with outright starvation. At the same time, billions get enough calories, but are forced to consume profitable junk stuffed with sugar, salt, and dangerous fats. In some countries 10% of the population has diabetes! And 40% of food is destroyed today to keep prices up. When we produce for need, not for profits, we'll produce healthy food and distribute it according to need—not destroy it!

Safe workplaces. Capitalists, in their frantic and never-ending race to beat their competitors, make workplaces very dangerous. More than two million workers a year are killed on the job, and several hundred million are injured. Under communism with competition and the profit motive

abolished, we will be able to work at a reasonable pace and workers will insure that workplaces are safe.

Companionship. Loneliness can kill you. Communism will transform social relations so that no one is abandoned to survive on their own.

There's also **safe streets, safe transportation, sports (participation), music, singing, dancing, taking time off** when you need it, **challenging work** to keep you sharp, **lower stress** (no bills or bosses to worry about). And don't forget **safe healthcare**: caregivers will have time to make sure you get the right medicine and don't get some nasty infection.

It may sound too good to be true, but it's realistic — provided we abolish capitalism and its insane competition. We can't eliminate illness and injury but no longer will there be capitalists around to harm or kill the billions that are currently stricken every year.



May Day 2017 in Los Angeles
Sign says "Health care and everything else, for everyone, for human need, not for profits--THAT'S COMMUNISM."

LETTERS

LETTERS

LETTERS

CRITICISM AND SUGGESTIONS

Racist Capitalism Poisons and Chains Us – Workers Need Communism

The city of Flint, MI (USA) just issued 8,002 foreclosure notices to residences that couldn't or refused to pay past water bills. The water is poisoned with lead and can't be used anyway. I told my friend at work that this was going to happen two months ago.

Similar things happened in Pittsburgh, Philadelphia and my home town of Detroit. Working-class people have been forced out of their homes to pave the way for fancy condominiums for the rich.

In Flint, the government made a big deal about their plan to replace the lead pipes by 2020. Under capitalism, this won't benefit the workers who live there. It's so developers can make huge profits.

I used to visit Flint to roller-skate as I was growing up. But black kids like us could only go to certain areas and had to leave before dark. The racism was that intense.

I lived in the Detroit Jeffries Projects. They were named after one of the most racist mayors in the city's history. Black workers, many in auto, were forced into these projects. This industrial city of the 60s and 70s was one of the most segregated.

After sucking billions in profits from the working class and super-exploiting black, Hispanic and foreign-born workers, the auto industry abandoned the city. Now the government is going to tear down the projects for fancy apartments for the "knowledge class."

It didn't have to end this way. Flint plumbers called for union members throughout the state to work for free to get rid of the poisonous old lead-leaching pipes. Dozens responded.

Imagine what a communist society could do. Even more would be mobilized, making short work of the repairs.

In fact, it is unlikely we would face a tragedy like this. Clean water, not profits and budgets, would be our priority.

There would be no developers as homes would be provided based on need, not what you can afford. We will produce what we need, not throw millions of people into the streets if the industries couldn't make a profit.

I know it's hard for workers to understand, but our lives don't have to be chained to the next paycheck. Communism would base everything on the needs of our class.

—Boeing worker raised in Mid-West

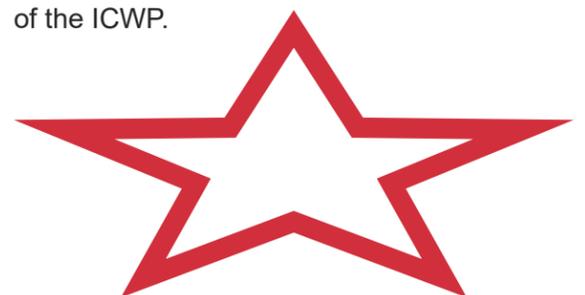
Los Angeles High School Students & First-Time May Day Marchers Join ICWP

*The May Day March with ICWP was definitely a good experience. The people there opened my eyes. I met people who immediately accepted me as family. I look forward to doing this next year. Even though I am not a communist I do believe that communism is a good life because I like the idea of everyone, no matter what, working together for what they need. I would like to join the ICWP not as a strong believer, because I am still learning, but more as a supporter. I will help spread the word

and be down for another march.

*As a young communist I attended my first march on May Day. We were all standing up for our communist ideals holding up banners and red flags and chanting. There were many people watching, but the real experience is in participating, so I encouraged everyone to join the march. I will make sure to attend next year and bring everyone I can. I want to be a member of the ICWP because I believe that we can all make the world a much better place without money, without borders and without jails.

*On May 1st, I participated in the celebration of the international working class for the first time. May Day was a success because many people showed up. I met new people and learned about the communist world. Most important, I learned that we're working together, fighting to have a world with no money, no sexism, no racism, no war and no borders. This was an unforgettable experience. I felt very empowered and confident. I would like to experience this again, and to be the change that I want to see. I consider myself a new member of the ICWP.



U.S. POLITICAL CRISIS—FASCIST VS. FASCIST

Red Flag goes to press amidst a furor over US President Trump's firing of FBI director James Comey. Comey's comments about ongoing investigations of Hillary Clinton's email last fall may have thrown the election to Trump. But a few days ago, he made it clear that he was stepping up the investigation of ties between Trump's campaign and the Russian government. Obviously, Trump fired Comey to obstruct this investigation.

Some are comparing this to Nixon's "Saturday

Night Massacre" in 1973, which did not prevent his forced resignation a year later. Incredibly, some anti-Trump activists are rallying to fascist Comey's defense. They are showing us just how low the lesser-evil" argument can go. Perhaps a better comparison is to the 1934 "Night of the Long Knives" in Germany when the Nazi SS wiped out the Nazi SA.

US democracy is no exception to the worldwide descent of capitalism into fascism and fla-

grant corruption. As the global crisis of capitalism intensifies, rivalries among imperialists sharpen. National politics reflect these sharpening contradictions from India to South Africa to Brazil to the USA.

When bosses fight, it's always a mistake for workers to take sides. Our fight must be for communist workers' power to wipe out all the fascist bosses. We should take advantage of the bosses' weakness and disarray.

I'm a dreamer and I believe in peaceful revolution

Today I had the great opportunity of participating in the May Day march in Barcelona, Spain. First of all, thank you for allowing me to participate in the distribution of the thinking of those who believe in an equitable world. We will continue believing and continue talking.

From the utmost ignorance, without knowing exactly certain dates or names, I can only say that my father has rights, my brother has rights, my daughter has rights and I have rights. And this right is very basic. We have the right to live and to live well.

I do not ask nor offer anything that is not possible, much less an illusion. I only ask that we be recognized as human beings. We are not an economic cog in the wheel, much less a disposable part from some factory. We are all equals.

I am not a supporter of violent revolutions. I am a dreamer. I believe in peaceful revolution and for this we need people who are informed. An uninformed person is a finger on a trigger. There exist roads and ways, the peaceful path. I don't want the blood of my son, or any son, in the streets or the tears of some mother or father. Information is the word of consequence, action is the form. Thank you for allowing me to

express an idea.

—Reader and distributor of *Red Flag* in Spain

Red Flag Responds

Dear distributor, it fills us with inspiration to hear that in spite of some difficulties you were able to carry out productive work to expand communist ideas.

In our struggle for communism and against the bosses and their capitalist system, we not only have to confront and destroy the bosses' ideological weapons like racism, sexism, nationalism and many other tricks that they use to divide the working class, but we also have to fight and destroy those who defend and profit from those ideas.

The small concessions and benefits that the workers have today mostly in industrialized countries, have not been because the capitalist bosses or their politicians have decided to share some crumbs with the workers. These small gains have been won through mass violent struggles, like the one that gave life to May



May Day 2017 in the Philippines

Day.

History teaches us that the only way to achieve a real change for the working class is through a violent communist revolution. Capitalism will never meet the needs of the working class since for them we are only instruments to produce their wealth. Everything that the bosses have gotten has been through violence against our class, and in the same way the working class will build a new world.



Bangladesh



Cambodia



GARMENT WORKERS IN BANGLADESH & CAMBODIA MARCH ON MAY DAY

Thousands of garment workers marched on May Day in Bangladesh, where about four million toil in miserable garment sweatshops. Our comrades there distributed *Red Flag*.

Many demanded the execution of Sohel Rana, the boss of the Rana Plaza factory complex that collapsed four years ago. That capitalist-created disaster killed 1,138 workers and injured thousands more. Rana and 40 others are supposedly facing murder charges.

Said the mother of one victim: "If four years are not enough to punish the culprits, bring them to us: we will find justice for ourselves." There is no "justice" for workers in capitalism. Nothing will bring back the workers murdered in Rana Plaza.

Instead of fighting for "justice" we must fight for communist workers' power. We ourselves must put to death the whole capitalist profit system. In communism, without bosses or money, we workers will organize production based on the

needs of the masses. We'll work in the safest and most comfortable environment we ourselves can imagine and create.

In Cambodia on May Day, over a thousand garment workers defied a government ban and confronted riot police to march on the National Assembly. Their demands included an increase in the minimum wage to \$208 per month. These brave workers, and their class sisters and brothers everywhere, need to fight to end wage slavery.

France: Election Pits Bigot versus Banker

MAY DAY MARCHERS SAY “NEITHER FATHERLAND NOR BOSS”

FRANCE, May 6—Former banker Emmanuel Macron won the French presidential election runoff, beating the Trump-like neo-fascist Marine Le Pen.

May Day marchers called it a choice between “the plague and cholera.” Voters chose cholera, mainly to stop the plague.

Although Macron won with 62% of the votes, probably half of his voters see him as the lesser evil but still hate him. For example, Macron led the fight to revise the French labor code and rip up what few protections workers have.

The whole labor code is now optional: if the boss and the workers consent, then they can sign an “agreement” that violates it. For example, they can “agree” to drop overtime or work a 50-hour week. Why would workers agree? Because the boss threatens to close the factory.

On May Day tens of thousands of workers marched in Paris and all over France. The conservative unions tried to turn out support for voting Macron but thousands of marchers, echoing an anarchist banner, chanted:

Ni Le Pen! Ni Macron! Ni Patrie! Ni Patron! (Neither Le Pen nor Macron; neither fatherland nor boss).

Few marchers called for communism rather than anarchism or socialism. There is a “Communist” party in France but it has been revisionist (capitalist in essence) for many decades. Its leader called for a vote for Macron without saying so directly.

Not even the popular “leftist” Mélançon (the French Bernie Sanders) calls for communism and he’s even cagey about whether he’s for any kind of socialism.

Most French workers are not anti-communist.



It is quite common for people to sing the Internationale at meetings and demonstrations. This even happened at Mélançon rallies, though Mélançon himself looked uncomfortable. But you don’t see slogans like “down with money” or “abolish the wage system.”

Instead workers are offered a buffet of political choices, all of them just capitalism with different flavors: “alt-right,” “right,” “centrist,” “socialist,” “left” etc. Any of them will give you some kind of food poisoning. They are all firmly committed to money, markets, the wage system and economic competition.

All are nationalistic. Mélançon and Le Pen are (or were; they’re waffling) for leaving the European Union and going back to the French Franc! In fact, xenophobia aside, the programs of Mélançon and Le Pen have a lot in common.

Workers, however, are fed up with high unemployment, racism and sexism and xenophobia, lousy minimum-wage jobs, and “precarité” (economic insecurity). They’re looking, ever more desperately, for a way out.

Communism is the only way out. No capitalist politician (including socialists) has anything to offer our international working class. As the need and possibility of communist revolution grows, our task remains clear. Join us to help build the International Communist Workers’ Party (ICWP) among French speakers from Europe to Africa to North America—and, for that matter, among all workers.

One international party, one fight to mobilize the masses for communism!

Thirty-Five Million in Brazil General Strike

SHOW NEED AND POTENTIAL FOR COMMUNIST REVOLUTION

The largest general strike in a generation shut down Brazil on Friday, April 28. Thirty-five million strong, Brazilian workers and youth shut down roads, highways, airports, schools and more.

This was a political strike against massive cutbacks to retirement benefits and restrictions on union activity. These policies are part of the Temer government’s “austerity” plan. They align with demands of the International Monetary Fund (IMF) that Brazil rein in spending.

Brazil, a regional power, was long beholden to the pro-US IMF and World Bank. Brazil is also part of the China-based BRICS. The BRICS bank was billed as an alternative to World Bank and IMF domination. But it’s turning out to be more of the same. Workers have no friends among imperialists or national capitalists!

The April 28th strike took place amidst mass disgust with the brazen corruption of politicians of practically every electoral party. That includes those tasked with rooting out corruption, who were themselves on the take. Capitalist politicians everywhere serve the capitalist ruling class, but in Brazil they more openly help themselves along the way.

The general strike showed the need and the potential for the mighty working class to go on the offensive against the capitalist system itself. We call on *Red Flag* readers in Brazil and everywhere to organize for communist political strikes and, when we can, for communist revolution.

The general strike grew out of a series of demonstrations in March that revealed the pro-

found anger of the masses. On April 28, protests rocked 240 cities, including virtually all of Brazil’s largest urban centers. Unlike the two-day general strike in March 1989, neither the Workers’ Party nor the largest trade union federation (CUT) was in control.

Leadership emerged mainly from transport workers (road, subway, rail and port). Workers from the metal and chemical industries (including oil workers) also turned out in strength. They were joined by teachers, bank and postal workers and youth.

The objects of the workers’ wrath — corruption, attacks on pensions, workers’ declining standard of living — all stem from capitalism. Communism is the only solution.

In communism, there will be no money or privilege. Everyone will get what they need and there will be no excuse for anyone to live better than the rest. Everyone, especially leaders, will regularly participate in criticism and self-criticism. Any signs of corruption will be nipped in the bud.

In communism, there will be no hard and fast line between “workers” and “retirees.” Almost everyone will be willing, able and happy to contribute their labor to benefit the masses, in whatever way they can, for most of their lives.

Nobody will suffer the constant drudgery of wage slavery. Nobody will be cast off as “useless” at a certain age. Older workers won’t need



“No to pension reform”

“pensions” because their needs will be met just like everyone else’s.

We expect to win communist workers’ power in a world devastated by capitalism and its wars. It will take time — no one can say how long — to achieve the standard of living we want and need. But masses, mobilized for communism, will quickly end the extremes of wealth and poverty. We will dig up and destroy the roots of racism, sexism, and the global inequality created by capitalist imperialism.

This is what 35 million strikers in Brazil needed to hear. But they didn’t hear it from Brazil’s multitude of “leftist” parties. *Red Flag* readers in Brazil must spread this message. We invite them to join and build the International Communist Workers’ Party! Our party comrades in South Africa are showing the way.