

RED FLAG

MOBILIZE THE MASSES FOR COMMUNISM



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

LOS ANGELES, USA,
September 17—ICWP
comrades bring
communist ideas to
march defending
young immigrants.
(See article page 3)



SOLDIERS, STUDENTS, AND WORKERS: ALLIES FOR COMMUNIST REVOLUTION

EL SALVADOR—On September 19, the government launched a plan to deploy units of the army to “strategic” points to combat crime in San Salvador. The university is one of these and it’s the place that has generated the most tension.

No wonder. Thousands of students have been disappeared, tortured or killed historically by the repressive forces of the State, including the army. At present, the army and the police continue harassing, abusing and criminalizing the youth.

This new scenario has generated a sharper discussion among friends and members of the party about the role of soldiers in the revolutionary movement and the need to organize them.

On September 25, more than 120 university students took to the streets to protest against the militarization, the attempt to privatize the university and against the criminalization of poverty. This protest opened a space in which we could discuss this topic still more.

Those who are against the militarization argue that instead of spending money on the military, the money must be used to improve education and that the presence of the soldiers means harassment and violence against the youth.

Military spending is indispensable for capitalist states. It is necessary for them to defend the interests of the ruling class. If our goal is to eliminate violence with the destruction of capitalism,

we need to mobilize the masses for communism.

In the midst of the protest, I asked a friend, “What do they mean when they say that the army must be eliminated?”

He answered, “It’s not a question that it won’t exist anymore; it’s a question of rebuilding it, to make a new one.”

And he’s right, but how will we achieve it? Precisely by organizing inside the bourgeois armies. The revolutionary movement has succeeded in influencing the actions of an army through direct armed confrontation and by organizing its soldiers.

The examples of the Bolsheviks and the Russian soldiers remain relevant, but we only have to go back a few decades in El Salvador to realize that these lessons are vital for us also. In the General Offensive of 1981, in the barracks in Santa Ana, a group of soldiers and a captain rebelled in support of the guerrilla offensive. The masses, seeing the uprising in the barracks, flung themselves into the street with more determination. That city had the most insurrectional activity in the whole country during this time. Those soldiers are not much different from the soldiers we see today in the street. The possibility of winning them to communist ideas is still there.

As the march entered the university, it was met by a group of soldiers and a humvee. I took the

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South African Comrades Tell Strikers: UNLEASH THE POWER OF COMMUNISM!

SOUTH AFRICA—Sept. 27—“This march cannot be a march of COSATU,” thundered a young lion on a loud hailer. “We need to fight for communism. This system can never provide jobs for all. Only communist revolution will guarantee a society where everyone will be able to contribute according to their ability. A society without money will unleash new forces that will benefit the international working class. Join ICWP now.”

This was the urgent message that the ICWP in South Africa brought to the masses who had walked off their jobs. A contingent of about 12 comrades also distributed about 500 *Red Flags*.

We did this at the strike called for September 27th by COSATU, the Congress of South Africa Trade Unions. Masses of workers struck. COSATU called for workers to go on the street to strike against “corruption and state capture.” Therefore they are calling for the removal of President Zuma and the individuals in his government. They claim that they are corrupted and captured. This is the same union that was behind Zuma in 2007, and the same union that preached the ideology of the ANC (the so-called tripartite alliance) when he was facing criminal charges.

They mobilized the masses to fill up the courts in support of Zuma. Even then they told the lies they are saying now. They are not the

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*International Committee Report:***WE LEARN TO BE COMMUNIST ORGANIZERS “ON THE JOB”**

Millions are in the streets around the world. The working class is furious. They are fed up with racism, sexism, xenophobia, exploitation and war. Communist organizers must focus on the only solution to every horror of capitalism: communism.

Workers and youth are rightly skeptical of reform movements that make big promises and then break them. We have seen many such examples.

Some of us fought among millions in the South African anti-apartheid movement and the national liberation struggle in El Salvador, only to be let down by leaders who become the new exploiters. Communism offers something very different from this endless cycle of hopes betrayed.

Communist revolution will usher in an age without racism, borders or war.

An age where we will produce for our collective needs, no longer exploited for bosses' profits.

An age where we have destroyed the bosses' state power and eliminated the cops who protect their system.

An age where the party will mobilize masses to finally end racism and build the communist world we need.

Working Class Needs More Communist Organizers Now

The potential exists today to recruit many more to join the International Communist Workers' Party (ICWP). But communist organizers won't emerge spontaneously no matter how bad the conditions nor how fierce the struggle. Even the most thoughtful Marxist exposé of capitalism isn't enough. *Red Flag* works to promote a clearer vision of how communism can work. But even that's not enough.

It's good that we continue to increase the distribution of *Red Flag*, particularly at industrial sites and in the military. The communist content

in *Red Flag* must be spread far and wide. But we can't let it stop there.

We train ourselves and others as communist organizers by... fighting for communism. As some of us put it, we learn to do communist work “on the job.”

All of us – Party members, friends, and even first-time readers – can participate in many ways. We should invite friends to help distribute the paper in every class struggle possible. We should engage in communist debate and discussion with those who take our literature, and patiently struggle with our friends to do the same. We should be bolder in asking people we've just met to stay in contact with us or to join us.

A friend at Boeing started by giving *Red Flag* to his neighbor. The neighbor asked how we could provide for our families without money. The friend asked a comrade at work. Then he went back to his neighbor armed with communist ideas.

Next, he brought a few papers to a high school where he volunteered. That turned into regular distribution of dozens of papers. The students began giving papers to friends at other high schools. The worker started writing for the paper. Now he struggles with others to write.

This is an example of how industrial concentration can broaden the struggle.

Modest Progress Shows Potential for Much More

Washington State (USA): An immigrant farmworker was worked to death and died without proper medical care. The farmworkers went on strike.

Party comrades told friends and coworkers about the strike. They collected money and traveled to meet the strikers as ICWP, not hiding behind a union or anti-racist reform group. They brought *Red Flag*, with an article about communist health care. Some strikers read the paper on

the spot. At the urging of a relatively new comrade, they took extra copies for other strikers and supporters.

Asking others to distribute the paper was a step forward. The new comrade is more confident he can struggle with others to become communists. He is learning to be a communist organizer “on-the-job.”

The Seattle comrades should have asked many other friends to come. Now they are making a list of people to invite to accompany more experienced comrades to every struggle they can. This will train future communist organizers.

Los Angeles (USA) – A veteran comrade has worked patiently for years to build a Party club of co-workers in MTA (mass transit). This club is growing.

Recently there was a march for young immigrants threatened with deportation. He and a new comrade helped to lead 20 Party members and friends who brought communism to the march with posters, chants, and over 500 copies of *Red Flag* (see page 3). This was a step forward. The experienced worker is organizing a study group with four youths who participated. But our comrades didn't make a priority of making contacts. This was an opportunity missed.

South Africa —The youth club in South Africa has doubled in less than a year, and continues to grow. One of their greatest strengths is their commitment to building a strong collective. Another is that when they “mobilize for communism” they get contacts and invite new friends to join as well as getting out tons of literature.

We, like the rest of the working class, are angry. But we must keep our “eyes on the prize.” Today, that means mobilizing our base to bring communism to the intensifying class struggle. It means many more joining and building the Party, instead of relying on a few veterans or leaders.

Communist organizers learn by doing.

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solution; they are the problem. They are the enemies of the working class. They told workers that they must rally behind Zuma because he was a working class president. Now they are telling workers that they must rally behind the removal of Zuma because he is corrupt and captured.

Workers don't need Unions.

Workers need to join the fight against capitalism that makes them wage slaves that “need”

unions. Unions justify and prolong the exploitation of the workers by the bosses. They are on the bosses' side. In actual fact, they are a tool used by the bosses in order to further subject us to their exploitation. Workers need to join ICWP and organize for communist revolution. We are wage slaves and we want to end the rule of our capitalist bosses with a violent communist revolution.

The bosses' survival depends on their ability to exploit us and ideologically win the workers to thinking just like the bosses. However, we

have a different plan. We have a scientific philosophy of change: dialectical materialism. We learn that a small thing has the potential to dominate and the dominant force, no matter how powerful, can be smashed.

To achieve our revolution, we need masses of industrial workers on our side. We also need soldiers on our side to lead and defend a successful communist revolution.

More next issue.



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Build Strong ICWP Collectives

INDUSTRIAL WORKERS BRING COMMUNIST IDEAS TO MARCHERS

LOS ANGELES, USA—Recently ICWP participated with a contingent of 20 people, comrades and friends from our base, in a protest against the attacks on the young beneficiaries of an immigration program (DACA).

Our mission was not to go to support the reformist demands, but to bring communist ideas to the demonstrators through our newspaper *Red Flag* and to try to make contacts, as well as giving communist speeches and carrying communist signs, denouncing the current state of crisis as a product of capitalism and calling for communism.

We emphasized, perhaps not enough, the need for communist revolution as the only solution to all the social problems like lack of housing, health care and scarce water and basic services for human beings.

But in order to organize a revolution of the magnitude and characteristics as described in our *Mobilize the Masses for Communism* it is necessary to have a Party that is disciplined, convinced, and committed to carry out the tasks of agitation, organization and politicization.

This is why each member is responsible to be involved in the struggle to participate actively in recruiting new members and always having a broad communist political base in the factory, the neighborhood, and with the family, friends and their friends. We must not isolate ourselves. We must not be a solitary Bolshevik. Everyone, with a little effort and with the conviction that we are doing the right thing, can and should attract more

workers and students to our activities.

For the above mentioned activity, the garment club mobilized five people.

Two comrades who work in MTA (public transportation in LA) participated along with a machinist friend, another industrial worker, and a group of four youth, probably future

workers, were part of our contingent. All of these people are from our base at MTA, who have participated in one or another activity of ICWP and have remained observers. But we have kept them informed through *Red Flag*, and participating in social activities with them and their families, with the goal of recruiting them to the Party.

The four youth returned from the march more motivated politically. They are willing to participate in a study group to learn more about communism and how to spread the ideas. They have already invited two other youth, who also want to join the study group. We plan to involve them in activities to distribute our communist literature, whether in an industrial college, where one of them studies, or to distribute the newspaper at a factory so they become steeled in the struggle for communism in the streets.

The two MTA workers went the next Monday



to meet with another MTA worker who had promised to go to the march but did not participate. When he saw us he was self-critical and said he felt bad for breaking the club's collective decision and not marching together with the party. He promised to be more disciplined in the future. He is a black worker, the other two are white and latino. We thought it would have a positive impact to show that workers of different "races" would march united under the red flag of communism and as members of ICWP.

We have to have confidence in our ideas, especially today when people ask themselves, "What on earth is happening?" If we do not give them answers, surely someone will convince them to follow the wrong paths.

Forward, Comrades, the future is ours, if we are bold and we take it in our hands.

Gangs, Violence, Crime, Drugs

MASSES NEED COMMUNISM, NOT THE BOSSES' COPS

SOUTH AFRICA—In the last few months our community has struggled with a slew of robberies, house break-ins, and armed robberies. One of the comrades in our youth collective was robbed of his cell phone.

The situation has deteriorated further. There are places where we cannot go. We can't go to the ATM's or shops. The only place where black comrades can go is where black people live; coloured comrades can only go where other coloured people live.

There are two groups that mostly live on this side of this community: blacks and coloureds. It's very difficult to live in either side because of all the gangs, violence, crime, and drug abuse.

We comrades have been talking about this. This problem is not only in South Africa. It is in El Salvador, even in the US, it's the same thing all over. The question raised by our comrades was, "Why is this happening?"

A comrade answered that these problems are the symptoms of the system we live in. If we address this issue of crime as an isolated incident, we won't be able to deal with it effectively, until we address the disease, the capitalist system.

Today in South Africa, most of the population is young people; 60% are 25 or younger. 40% of them don't work. It is mostly young people who are using these drugs. When you use them, you get addicted; you can't afford them. The next step is to steal to be able to maintain your addiction. It's a problem.

In the last few days in our community, there have been several break-ins. The community members gathered about 300 to 400 people and went to look for these burglars. Once we found them, the community descended on them.

Then the cops were called. They came in riot gear with tear gas and rubber bullets. They started

to shoot at the residents. In all this chaos, as we were running away, people were asking, "Why are the police shooting at us, when we did nothing? They were supposed to shoot at the people who were harassing us."

Whenever community members take action against the gang members and drug distributors, the police always interfere in favor of the gang members. It is so ironic to people watching that the police are supposed to protect us from these things, but they are intervening on behalf of the gangs.

A comrade mentioned that gone are the days when a person robbed you with a knife. Everybody has a gun, even a 13-year-old boy. Where are they getting these guns? These gangs are sold these guns by the police—the same police who are supposed to protect this community. Now we are living in a situation where the police simply stand outside and let everyone kill each other. Then the police simply swoop in and take the bodies.

As *Red Flag* has said, the police are not here to serve the working class. They serve the needs of the bosses. Whenever a chance arises for them to administer the bosses' cruelty, they seize that opportunity with both hands. If the masses were to rely on the police, all that we worked for would be lost.

In the community, we decided to have a neighborhood watch. Every night from 11 pm to close to midnight, a whistle is blown and everyone goes out to do our patrols, without the assistance of the police. People had been asking for a police escort for three months and nothing happened. So people have taken matters into their own hands.

In this there's an opportunity for us as an organization. This unity that the working class has created in the face of this violence and drugs has

brought the community, our class, together.

It is up to us as ICWP to take advantage of this opportunity to educate the masses to see that even if we are to deal with these problems, the bigger ones still remain. These problems didn't just fall on us out of the blue. They are symptoms of the rotten capitalist system that we are living in.

Until we deal with that, the issue of crime and drugs will always remain. But if we build a society where there is no material basis for these things—no money, influence, privilege, unemployment — that is when we will be able to eradicate these things. There is no other solution except communism. This is the message we are taking into this night patrol and the community meetings. We aim to recruit more comrades to ICWP in this struggle.



Earthquakes and Hurricanes: Capitalist Tragedies **COMMUNISM WILL CREATE A SAFE WORLD**

The following leaflet was distributed to hundreds of garment and other workers in Los Angeles:

The hundreds of thousands, who, as in the 8.0 earthquake that struck Mexico City in 1985, went out immediately, even risking their own lives, to rescue people in the recent earthquakes in Mexico, show that **we can build a communist world based on collectivity and working class solidarity.**

Hurricanes, earthquakes and torrential rains are natural phenomena with which humanity has lived since the beginning of its existence.

The enormous destruction, the massive misery and unnecessary deaths that these phenomena leave in their path are not natural.

Nor is it natural that those who suffer the most always are the working class and the impoverished masses.

All this is a product of capitalism. So also is climate change, the cause of the frequency and intensification of the magnitude and fury of the hurricanes lashing Puerto Rico and the other Caribbean islands, Florida, Texas, India, and West Africa.

The poor cannot buy or build houses that resist the onslaught of these phenomena. The capitalists can because they have an excess of what, under capitalism, is indispensable to get what we need: money.

But it does not have to be like this. It is a lie that there have always been and will always be rich and poor. Humanity lived for more than 80 thousand years in a communist system, called pre-class communism. They lived without money and exploitation.

With the discovery of agriculture and the domestication of animals, humanity was capable of producing consistently more than a person needed to survive daily. This laid the basis for the exploitation of one human being by another.

Society was divided into exploited and exploiters: slaves and slave masters, serfs and nobles, and now workers and capitalists. Just as the slaves and the serfs destroyed their exploiting societies, the working class has to destroy the capitalist system and return to the communist system from which we came, now at a higher level.

This will be scientific communism because we will have science and technology on our side. We will destroy money and capitalist wage slavery. Collectively we will plan what to produce, how and where to produce it, and how to distribute it according to the need of each one. Nothing will be bought or sold.

Only then can we build the best housing for everyone. What do we need for this? Natural resources—like cement and steel—and our labor. All of this exists in abundance, so everyone in the world can have homes, buildings, bridges, and dams capable of resisting any natural phenomenon.

We will collectively decide where and how to build our cities. The slave masters, nobles and capitalists built their cities where it was most beneficial to them, not for the exploited masses. For example, Mexico City was built over a lake bed which intensifies by one hundred times the force of any earthquake that hits it.

Global warming is mainly due to deforestation and emissions of CO₂ (carbon dioxide) gas, from the consumption of coal, oil, and natural gas. In communism, billions of us can be mobilized to reforest the world and prevent the destruction of forests and jungles. We will develop safer energy. Building the best mass transportation, we will eliminate the hundreds of millions of cars that bring profits for the capitalists but destruction for the environment.

Our communist society will value human life above all else. Housing, food, health care and learning will be based on this principle. There will be no privileges for anyone—everyone, including leaders, will do manual and mental work. No one will be the boss of anyone.

This system will not fall from the sky. **We need a communist revolution** to destroy the capitalists and their exploitative system. For this we need to mobilize the masses for communism.

Help make this a reality by reading and spreading *Red Flag* and by joining and building the International Communist Workers' Party (ICWP).

fear of talking with the soldiers has been just one step. Even though the conversation didn't flow as hoped, the willingness of the soldiers to talk shows that there is a way to take communist ideas to them, including in the current conditions in the country.

Soldiers, men and women workers, students, farmworkers, we have more things in common with each other than with the ruling class. The capitalists try to make the soldiers see the youth and students as a threat. To be able to combat these ideas we need to work politically with them and with the party's base. Bringing *Red Flag* and the ICWP military pamphlet to them will be key to this work. The members and friends of the party have to be conscious of the need for this work. The mentality of the soldiers won't change over night, much less when the rulers try to separate them from the rest of the working class. Every party member must strengthen their com-

Report from Comrades in Mexico

September 26—The movement of tectonic plates as a natural process causes earthquakes. In Mexico, on September 7, there was an earthquake which registered 8.2 on the Richter scale, causing more than 40 thousand families in Chiapas and Oaxaca to lose their homes. Another 2.1 million people will be affected. Again on September 19, a 7.1 magnitude earthquake with its epicenter in Axochiapan, Morelos, caused about 300 deaths.

In the face of these events, the capitalists present themselves as “helpers” and “saviors.” Through the state and the armed forces they want to take advantage of the misfortune.

But workers were already organized and resuring their class sisters and brothers. They even stopped trucks with aid that were going to the warehouses of the governor of Morelos and opened up the warehouses of the federal government that were full of food and water, to distribute these supplies to those who needed them.

The real thing is that thousands of workers internationally mobilized to help our class brothers and sisters, because the capitalist governments don't care at all about workers' lives.

A young friend of the party commented on his initiative to collect food. He said that they would ask for support from the municipality so they would give them the credibility they need for the people to support them, as well as the permits to carry out the collections. I told him that they themselves have credibility; they don't need the rulers' authorization to do good deeds. The youth should know that their actions are credible and more if they are done to help our working class.

After this talk, he continued organizing his friends. For my part I made a call to the friends of the Party to ask for their cooperation. Several friends responded well, some others helped in the preparation of this article, providing their criticisms. A soldier friend made a valuable contribution, saying that the first draft was very nationalistic. He told me that you shouldn't do the same thing that you criticize.

The solidarity shown in these events is full of joy, showing that the youth and the working class are ready to take leadership and confront the bosses to support their class brothers and sisters. These events show that communist revolution is possible. However, it is urgent to present the political line of the Party. It is not enough to only support or donate. It's necessary to develop class consciousness with our friends, in our work places, and with the friends of the Party. It is primary to say that we need a society in which each person receives according to their need and gives according to their commitment and ability, a communist society.

We workers can't believe in the “moral authority” of the rulers and the bosses. We have to take history in our hands and in this misfortune become conscious and organize ourselves in a single Party against the capitalists and their governments. Let's mobilize for communism!! Let's join ICWP!!

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opportunity to approach a soldier who was away from the group.

“What do you think about this?” I asked him.

“I don't understand them. We are here to protect them, not to harass them. Why are they doing this? We are only following orders,” he answered me.

I tried to explain to him that I personally didn't understand some of the actions but that the majority of students understand that the problem is with those who give them orders, not them.

“Look, if you leave classes and you meet a gang member in the street, don't you feel safer if we are there?” asked the soldier.

“It's clear that things are messed up, but you all can also ask yourselves why there is so much violence,” I said.

The conversation ended. Breaking with this

mitment to the communist project. Things keep changing and we must be ready to do this work.

Read our pamphlet:

**Soldiers,
Sailors,
Marines:
Crucial to a
Communist
Workers'
Revolution**



Available at:
icwpredflag.org/MIL/mpe.html

How Much More Proof Do You Need?

PROFIT SYSTEM HAS TO GO!

SEATTLE, USA — “My daughter had to flee Florida” because of Hurricane Irma, reported a worker who distributes *Red Flag* at Boeing. “She is really pissed at the Governor. He issued an order saying, ‘Leave or die!’ Soon Trump tweeted, ‘leave, if possible.’”

What kind of plan is that! The government issues orders and you’re on your own. Communism will rely on the masses to make and execute plans for every conceivable scenario of disaster —natural or otherwise.

“But what about the people who just can’t get up and go?” the daughter asked. She had made a list of the poor and the homeless who were left to fend for themselves. Even those with cars and a little money were forced onto highways that immediately became parking lots.

She jokingly asked her father, “What about your people?”

“What do you mean, ‘my people’?” the worker replied.

“You know, seniors!” One in five people in Florida are over 65.

You may know that the Rehabilitation Center of Hollywood Hills (Florida) killed 11 elderly occupants instead of evacuating them to the hospital across the street. Even more would have died if emergency room staff hadn’t run across the street after three patients arrived in critical condition

during a two-hour span. The emergency workers found three already dead in their sweltering rooms. The back-up generator wasn’t connected to the air conditioner. Eight more died in the ensuing days.

Wall Street’s Pot of Gold = Seniors’ Nightmare

What you might not know is that over 70% of these nursing homes are owned by big corporations. Increasing numbers are being snapped up by Wall Street hedge funds and equity funds.

This trend accelerated with the Affordable Care Act (Obamacare). The drive was originally led by Thomas Scully, a member of the Bush Jr. cabinet and general partner of the private equity firm Welsh, Carson, Anderson and Stowe.

Scully used \$50 million from his equity firm to quickly set up NaviHealth to run rehabilitation centers and nursing homes. His rationale? “Somebody is going to do this and make a lot of money.”

Scully preached the profit opportunities to his fellow Wall Street speculators. They listened and older workers died.

As relatives of the elderly became alarmed, the Obama administration enacted the usual toothless regulations. They forbade nursing homes receiving federal funds from requiring arbitration of family complaints. If you had enough money to

go up against Wall Street equity firms, you could sue. Even that so-called right was revoked last March.

Communism Will Mobilize Masses to Care for One and All

Regulations and laws can’t rein in the capitalists. They own the government and the courts and use that power to ensure that profits remain in command. Even the lives of the elderly must be sacrificed on the altar of profits.

“If you want this to change,” concluded the Boeing worker, as the extent of the nursing home scandal became apparent, “you have to go to war.” What kind of war? He was clear: a revolution that leads directly to communism. If you can’t rein in the profit motive, you must eliminate money from every aspect of society.

Communist healthcare, like everything else in communism, must rely on masses mobilized for our collective good. Taking care of elderly or sick people will no longer be the sole responsibility of their families. All of society will take part in learning from and caring for them.

Nobody will be considered a burden. Nobody will be left “on their own,” especially in emergency situations.

Mobilizing for communism: that’s a plan!

HURRICANE “IMPERIALISM” HITS PUERTO RICO

PUERTO RICO— In the wake of Hurricane Maria’s devastating blow to the island, almost the whole population is without power —perhaps for months. Supplies of food, medicine and drinking water are running low. The working class, using all the creativity and collectivity it can muster, is in a desperate situation.

Trump’s racist- capitalist response: “Much of the Island was destroyed, with billions of dollars owed to Wall Street and the banks which, sadly, must be dealt with.”

The Puerto Rican working class owes NOTHING to Wall Street and the banks, which have been exploiting and extorting it for over a century. They are held hostage to US imperialism, which — by law — charges them 20% more than mainland prices for consumer goods.

That’s an extra \$7 billion per year, of which 85% goes to US corporations. Median household income in Puerto Rico is HALF of that in the poorest US state (Mississippi).



Students protest massive budget cuts at the University of Puerto Rico in May 2017, one result of a debt crisis manufactured by US imperialism.

In 2008, Puerto Rico received a total of \$4.6 billion in federal dollars. That same year, it sent \$71.6 billion back to the US economy — mostly profits. Every penny of the bosses’ profits come from exploiting workers’ labor. Some 72,000 industrial workers in Puerto Rico produce almost half its gross domestic product.

How should workers “deal with” Wall Street and the banks? By mobilizing masses for a communist society where our collectivity and creativity will be unchecked by money and markets. Now, in the aftermath of Hurricane Maria, that’s more urgent than ever.

LETTERS

LETTERS

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CRITICISM AND SUGGESTIONS

Hurricane Irma: Capitalist Disaster

The capitalist approach to disaster is illustrated perfectly by the fate of the French West Indies (in French, “Les Antilles”).

Parts of the Antilles were in Irma’s direct path. Most of the buildings were blown away and there was no more power or running water. Half the population already lived in poverty.

But on St Martin, the largest community, some buildings were solid enough (and high enough) to weather the storm. One was the prison, which suffered only damage to one panel in the outer wall. Another was the hillside mansion of Johnny Hallyday, the French Elvis.

So it’s possible to build hurricane-proof buildings. Why weren’t there enough to shelter the whole population? That’s what we’ll do under communism. We won’t measure actions by money. We’ll think in terms of human needs

and human effort.

The number-one consideration will always be protecting the masses from death and suffering. That means ‘hardening’ enough structures to shelter everyone and to protect infrastructure like power, water and sewage.

In the Antilles, the French bosses thought in terms of money. They calculated that it was cheaper to allow substandard construction and accept the risk of having to rebuild. They make the same calculation about floods, earthquakes, fires, landslides and so on.

Rescuing people and restoring services was not the bosses’ priority. Their priority was protecting their private property and assuring ‘order’, i.e. bosses’ rule.

After the hurricane, people rummaged through the ruins of supermarkets searching for something to eat. Officials called them “looters”

and asked for more cops. They were especially alarmed because some “looters” had guns. They probably feared a repeat of the month-long uprising in French Guyana earlier this year.

The French government sent in hundreds of cops and soldiers. There were 3000 cops and military in tiny St Martin (pop 36,000). They set up checkpoints, organized patrols, and even brought in armored personnel carriers.

The supermarkets that remained standing were soon back in business. Armed cops made sure no one got something to eat without coming up with some money. This while volunteers in Guadelupe were collecting food to distribute free in St Martin and St Bartholemy.

The bosses’ state is primarily a machine to repress workers, not to help them.

—Two Angry Comrades

YEMEN: OUR WEAPON IS INTERNATIONAL WORKERS' UNITY

Warmest revolutionary greetings to you comrades from the hell on earth created not by gods, but by bloodthirsty, or should we say oil thirsty, vultures who have descended on one of the poorest countries in the world, Yemen.

We are in the midst of mass hunger, homelessness, and disease in Yemen as the oil interests from Iran and Saudi Arabia, China, Russia, and the US fight to control the most vital commodity to keep the capitalist system going: oil.

We are daily and indiscriminately bombarded with phosphorous bombs in Yemen by the Saudi drones and fighter jets. Hospitals, highways, water purification plants, pharma-

ceutical factories are totally destroyed.

New diseases are created in the midst of this frenzy. New-born children are lucky if they can survive more than six weeks. Contaminated water and the lack of clean water, food and housing is creating havoc and anger.

I received your newspaper *Red Flag* from a comrade in Afghanistan who is no stranger to mass terror and unending wars. While I was reading your newspaper, I must say, it is the only beacon of hope. My English is not very good. But what I mean is that in your newspaper I read stories of common people, their suffering, and then I also found the solution.

We cannot live in this capitalist world, but

the bosses offer many alternatives to fool the workers. They offer religion; they offer democracy. They want the suffering masses to think like them. They want to control our thinking, which is worse than an atom bomb.

But we have the weapon. Our weapon is the unity of the international working class to fight all of them and stop for nothing until they are all decimated. We want to create a society without anyone of them. We have no option. I hope to learn more about your party and communicate with comrades from your organization.

—A Reader in Yemen



Young Comrades Lead

Our youth collective met for the first time this school year. There were two returning young comrades, a young woman who had come to party activities with an older sister in the past, and two newly involved students.

We went through *Red Flag* cover-to-cover reading the headlines and looking at the pictures. Then, the two young comrades talked about what we do in the International Communist Workers' Party (ICWP).

"In last year's May Day March, we carried communist signs and banners throughout the whole march. It was turned up," said the first one.

The other student added, "In the ICWP, we go to meetings, we have study groups, and we go to protests and rallies where we distribute our *Red Flag* newspaper. We also distribute the paper to friends and family. In other words, we learn as much as we can and spread the word about communism."

Then we read and discussed the article in *Red Flag* about the experiences of the young comrades during the Bolshevik Revolution in 1917. We realized that these young comrades were around the same age as the few of us

that got together and organized this meeting. The young people are the future. We have to pass down the fight for communism in the same way that the fight for communism was passed from 1917 to the next generation up until now in 2017. We shall continue to fight and educate as many students as possible now and after us on the importance of communism.

"In this meeting I was introduced to the ICWP. I was told about the marches, the protest and the study groups," wrote a 16-year-old participant. "I read that there were young people that led strikes and were part of the Bolshevik Party. I never knew people my age or around my age would be so concerned about what's going on around us. I think the youth of today as the 'future people' should also fight for what we think is right."

Other students wrote:

"I learned that it doesn't matter the age, we should all be leaders. It shows how strong, brave, and world-beaters the youth can be."

"We should all fight for what is right and what we deserve. All people should be equal, nobody should be left out because of a skin color or the way anybody looks."

"People may think young people, especially

our generation, can't change the world. We can change the world and make it a better place."

We ended with plans to meet every week. Each student took additional *Red Flag* newspapers; the five students took 12 papers. We'll give them to our friends and families and talk to them about the need for a communist world. We know that in these conversations, answering people's questions and disagreements, we'll learn a lot. In the next meeting we'll go deeper into our experiences talking to people about communism.

—Los Angeles high school collective

Our Mistake: Don't Blame Any Worker for Capitalist Unemployment

There is a problem with the picture of a mass protest on p. 1 of the last *Red Flag*. A sign that is partly hidden seems to read, "Roses are red, [illegible] is enjoyable. [Don't] blame Dreamers because you are [une]mployable."

Certainly Dreamers and other immigrants are not responsible for unemployment. But it's an attack on jobless workers to call them "unemployable." Capitalism is responsible for unemployment. The bosses need a large pool of jobless workers to lower wages for those with jobs. They need this threat to try to avoid strikes, rebellions, and especially revolution.

Capitalists usually prefer to hire those who can do the most work the fastest, to maximize profits. And they are no longer willing to provide "on-the-job training." Those of our class sisters and brothers who have physical limitations, transportation problems, demanding family situations, or limited training are considered "unemployable" by the capitalists.

In communism, nobody will be "unemployable." We will organize work so that everyone can contribute. We will solve problems collectively so that all can contribute as much as they are willing and able. Continuing education and training will be part of everyone's workday.

In the meantime we should be more careful about what images we print, especially those featured without comment.

—*Red Flag* Editorial Collective

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Comrade writes from Qatar

NO MONEY AND NO FEAR

I have not sent you any letters, but I need to say that I am thinking about you all. Things in Qatar are horrible but people want the solution that you and *Red Flag* always tell me. We live with 36 people in a very very small room. The owner and boss took our passports. Imagine how 36 people can live in a small room. People are very angry at this system of profit.

I speak with people who are my brothers, who come here and live with me in this very small room. These brothers are from Syria, Iraq, Lebanon, Jordan and Turkey. We don't speak

the same language. But we cook, clean, and talk with our hands and feet. We understand each other; we feel happy and mad about capitalism that brings us here for money.

I and many people here don't need money. We need a place where we help each other, where no bosses tell us we have to work for money.

Thank you for your communication. I and many other people understand that communism is not only good for us, but is the unique solution. We can finish with these very bad bosses.

It is easy. We will do it—you and we will do it. We need no boss. Never.

I work, like many here, for 18 hours, live in a room with many, but I send no money to my family. The boss takes it all. I am with you. We need to finish capitalism. So we must help each other. The Qatar bosses are very bad, the Saudi's also. We don't need any bosses. You always tell me that the working class will build a communist society with no money. I want to fight for this. I have no money and no fear.

What are they afraid of?

It was to be an "open mic" to speak out about Charlottesville. But that morning the government had announced its latest attack on immigrant (DACA) youth. So we talked about that too.

There wasn't much publicity. One teacher emailed a flyer to faculty and staff to "spread the word." The instructional technology guy set up a sound system. A teacher brought butcher paper, markers, cut-out hearts and some oranges. Another teacher brought her class "to see how a protest is organized." A few student government leaders came. About 40 took part in all.

So why did ten sheriff's deputies and cadets stand around for almost an hour, taking pictures and trying to intimidate people? Why did a supervisor bawl out an organizer? Why an angry call from administration claiming that amplified sound was "illegal" in the so-called "free speech" area?

Because working-class people (students and teachers) were organizing against racism. And agents of the capitalist class were not in control.

Because it's not just Trump and some Nazis and KKK. This college itself is part of a system of schooling that tracks young people into their "place" in this system of capitalist exploitation. And that capitalist system is racist to its very roots.

Some students did seem afraid. They hung around the outskirts, listening and trying not to be seen. But ten people took the mic to speak. Some urged "love, not hate." One declared that the material basis of racism is capitalism and that we need to end it by fighting for a world without money or borders. There will be more events, organizers pledged.

All participants and many bystanders took

and read copies of a leaflet that reprinted the *Red Flag* article on Charlottesville.

That's really what school administrators fear. They used Charlottesville to push the lie that "education" is the answer to racism. They would rather see black and latino/a students as "victims" of a racist system than as fighters who will overthrow it.

Do you want to overthrow racist capitalism? Do you like this paper that you are reading? Do you want to learn more about communism? Then tell the person who gave it to you or email us at icwp@anonymousspeech.com to join or form a study-action group.

—Campus Red in Los Angeles (USA)

The Communist Fight Against Sexism

Our club meeting this weekend included a rich discussion of the importance of the communist fight against sexism. A new comrade gave sharp examples of the way that women often bear the brunt of the bosses' racist attacks on the working class. He added that women have also played a key role in the fight against capitalism and imperialism.

Another comrade had written the following statement, which we found very helpful:

When I think of sexism, I think of systematic oppression of women and the denial of their rights by patriarchal, capitalist societies.

When I think of sexism, I think of the lower pay that women receive

in jobs where there is no set pay scale for all workers or where women are steered into the lowest paying occupations.

When I think of sexism, I think of cultural stereotyping of women as sex objects, and the objectification of women in clothes designed by fashion houses or mass marketers.

So, when I think of sexism I think of capitalism and imperialism.

I do not want the capitalist and imperialist system to continue. I want a communist revolution and the eradication of all social relations based on capitalism.

Sexism is one of those structural oppressions of capitalism/imperialism.

We need a strong movement of women and men to fight and win the struggle against sexism.

We committed ourselves to building that movement and writing more about it for *Red Flag*.

—Bay Area Comrades



Denouncing the Marikana massacre in South Africa, 2012

YUAN AND DOLLAR from page 8

was only backed by US military power.

This was not enough. In 1974, US strategic thinkers decided to back the dollar with Middle Eastern oil. They forced the Organization of Oil Producing Countries (OPEC) to sell their oil only in dollars. Now, all oil-importing countries had to keep dollars in reserve to buy oil.

This has given US imperialists a tremendous advantage. Printing dollars cost them nothing; in return they get other capitalists' currency which US imperialists then use to demand goods and services from them. It allows the US to be the biggest debtor in the world.

But China's economy overtook the US in terms of purchasing power in 2014 and is about to overtake it in 2018 in terms of Gross Domestic Product. This will lead inevitably to the Chinese

Yuan replacing the dollar as the world's reserve currency.

To accomplish this, Chinese imperialists launched their One Belt, One Road project. It will connect China by road with Central Asia, Eastern and Western Europe, and by sea to South-East Asia, Africa and Central Asia. With faster and cheaper access to resources and markets, China's more competitive goods will capture greater market share.

But, most crucial, China must replace the US petro dollar with the petro Yuan. Thus, the Chinese imperialists have just introduced petro-Yuan oil futures contracts which can easily be converted to gold. Russia, the world's biggest energy exporter, embraced it. Venezuela began reporting its oil prices in Yuan this month. Iran might be next. This sharpening fight between the imperialists for control of oil and power, not concerns

about "democracy," account for Trump's fury at Venezuela.

However, the big prize is Saudi Arabia, the world's biggest oil producer and main bulwark of the US petrodollar. China has become Saudi Arabia's biggest oil market and its main trading partner. Also, Chinese influence is growing in this oil rich region.

The attack on the dollar via the petro dollar is accelerating faster than that of the US dollar against the British pound, which took two World Wars to complete. The rise of the Yuan will not be peaceful. US imperialism is trying to impede China's rapid advance—they are on a collision course and are accelerating war preparations.

Only communism with its production for need can create a world free of exploitation, racism, sexism and war.

Centennial of the 1917 Bolshevik Revolution:

THE WORKING-CLASS, ITS COMMUNIST PARTY AND THE DICTATORSHIP OF THE PROLETARIAT

Lenin wrote *The State and Revolution* in August-September 1917. Our last article summarized the reasoning behind its conclusion that the working class needed to lead the masses to destroy the capitalist state. It would need its own “special repressive force” (state) to suppress the old exploitative classes. This is sometimes called the “dictatorship of the proletariat.”

Lenin foresaw “a tremendous abundance and variety of political forms” of this proletarian dictatorship. But he thought the moment for revolution had come. He needed to make a plan.

His plan was mainly based on the 1871 Paris Commune. That was the first time the working class anywhere seized and tried to hold power. We should all study it and draw our own conclusions, based on our line of mobilizing masses directly for communism.

From the Commune to Soviet Power

“One thing especially was proved by the Commune,” said Marx and Engels, “that the working class cannot simply lay hold of the ready-made state machinery and wield it for its own purposes.”

The Commune was the form “at last discovered” by the proletarian revolution to smash and replace the bourgeois (capitalist) state machine. It would make possible “the economic emancipation of labor.”

“The Commune was to be a working, not a parliamentary, body.” Its members “have to work, have to execute their own laws, have themselves to test the results achieved in reality, and to account directly to their constituents.”

Its leaders were elected by direct universal suffrage and subject to recall. They would get regular workers’ wages. In Engels’ and Lenin’s view, this “consistent democracy, on the one hand, is transformed into socialism and, on the other, demands socialism.”

Here is perhaps our biggest disagreement with their line on the Commune. We mobilize to end the wage system and everything associated with it. Instead of fighting for socialism and its “consistent democracy” we will organize society on communist principles whenever and wherever we lead masses to take power.

We have concluded this from studying the development of socialism in the Soviet Union and

elsewhere, which reveal it as a form of capitalism. We have also learned huge lessons from the Great Proletarian Cultural Revolution in China (1965-68). One is that the process of building the communist party and strengthening it through criticism and self-criticism will replace “direct suffrage” and “recall.”

The Paris Commune envisioned the formation of a nationwide, centralized network of communes. This goal was cut short by the Commune’s fatal error: It did not suppress the bourgeoisie and crush their resistance with sufficient determination.

Lenin indicated that the Soviets of Workers’, Peasants and Soldiers’ Deputies should model themselves on the Paris Commune. Bolshevik majorities in the Leningrad and Moscow Soviets could lead the way.

The Role of the Communist Party

Marxists saw political parties as representing specific social classes. The Kadets (Constitutional Democrats) represented the bourgeoisie. The Social-Revolutionaries represented the peasantry. The Bolsheviks had won the leadership of the urban working class.

So when Lenin talked about the working class taking political power, he was speaking concretely about the Communist Party (Bolshevik). His readers would have understood that.

He did say this:

“By educating the workers’ party, Marxism educates the vanguard of the proletariat, capable of assuming power and leading the whole people to socialism, of directing and organizing the new

system, of being the teacher, the guide, the leader of all the working and exploited people in organizing their social life without the bourgeoisie and against the bourgeoisie.”

The Party is the vanguard of the proletariat. It can take power and lead masses to socialism. It can “direct and organize” the new system. It can lead the masses to organize themselves as the new society.

Lenin wrote “Can the Bolsheviks Retain State Power?” on October 1, 1917. Responding to skeptics, he said:

“Since the 1905 revolution, Russia has been governed by 130,000 landowners, who have perpetrated endless violence against 150,000,000 people, heaped unconstrained abuse upon them, and condemned the vast majority to inhuman toil and semi-starvation.

“Yet we are told that the 240,000 members of the Bolshevik Party will not be able to govern Russia, govern her in the interests of the poor and against the rich. These 240,000 are already backed by no less than a million votes of the adult population.”

The Bolshevik Party – not the Constituent Assembly, not even the Soviets – should prepare to “govern Russia.” And yet Lenin wrote that “we cannot imagine democracy, even proletarian democracy, without representative institutions.” This was a contradiction that neither he nor his party could resolve. Not in theory, not in practice. Not without the line of mobilizing the masses directly for communism.

LEARN FROM THE BOLSHEVIK REVOLUTION IN RUSSIA!

Los Angeles (US)

Mini-Conference and Dinner

November 18, 2017, 2:30-7:30 pm

Seattle (US)

Pot-Luck and Meeting: Lessons for
today and planning for the year
ahead

November 4, 2017, 7 pm



Not the Petro-Dollar, Not the Petro-Yuan

WORKERS NEED COMMUNIST PRODUCTION FOR NEED

“China is quickly drawing the line that U.S. sanctions on one of their oil partners will no longer be tolerated, and that the proxy war between the Petro-Dollar and the up and coming Petro-Yuan is coming closer to home,” wrote an analyst when on Sept. 21 China sailed a destroyer through the Straits of Hormuz and docked it at an Iranian port not far from the US Fifth Fleet in the United Arab Emirates.

Under capitalism the market and in whose currency goods are traded are a question of life and death for the capitalists-imperialists. It is in the market place where the surplus value the capitalists extract from our labor power is converted into profits. These profits are the sole purpose of capitalist production.

Communism will eliminate the capitalists, money and markets. Nothing will be bought or sold. The products of our labor will have only one value: use value, to satisfy the needs of our class on a worldwide scale.

Some people doubt we can live without money, but humanity lived without it for over 80 thousand years. What is more, the concept of money did not even exist. Nothing was sold or bartered, but shared collectively.

By eliminating money, the market and production for profits, communism will also eliminate imperialist wars which are an inevitable result of capitalist competition for market share. To win this competition, the capitalists strive to control the sources of the cheapest natural resources and labor power.

Crucial to this is the currency in which financial transactions are carried out. The group of capitalists-imperialists whose currency is most used in world trade will dominate the market and the world itself.

This has been the case ever since the Spanish dollar became the dominant world currency in the 17th century. It held this position until the Napoleonic Wars (1792-1815), when British im-

perialism became the dominant power, and the British pound became the reserve currency of the world, backed by England’s gold reserves and naval power.

After World War II, which marked the rise of US imperialism as the world’s dominant imperialist power, the US dollar officially replaced the British pound as the world’s reserve currency. It was also backed by gold reserves and military might.

But, by the late 1960s the dollar’s position began to erode. US imperialist rivals in Asia and Europe, back on their feet, were successfully vying for greater market share. They began to accumulate a great deal of dollars.

Seeing that the US gold reserves were disappearing in the Vietnam War, these imperialists began demanding gold for their dollars. Thus, in 1971, US president Richard Nixon was forced to take the US dollar off the gold standard. Now it

[See YUAN AND DOLLAR, page 7](#)