

RED FLAG

MOBILIZE THE MASSES FOR COMMUNISM



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



Protests in Wukan, China



The banner says, "A democratic demand is unexpectedly an unlawful assembly."

CAPITALIST CRISIS: TURN FIGHT-BACK INTO REVOLUTION

CELEBRATING STRUGGLE: BUILDING ICWP IN EL SALVADOR

EL SALVADOR, December 2011--A young worker asked, "Do you think I will see the change to a communist system? How much time will this take?" A comrade answered, "We don't have an exact time for it, but it depends on us, on how many people we organize around communist ideas. We need to spread them. It depends on how many communist clubs we build, on the work in the factories, in the army and how we distribute our newspaper *Red Flag*."

This was one of many discussions in an end-of-the-year luncheon with comrades in textile factories, one of many social gatherings with comrades from the different regions of the country, sharing food, speeches of comrades about the plans for the May Day March, and the best strategy to organize more workers to join the International Communist Workers' Party.

For the luncheon with textile workers, the comrades prepared a delicious chicken soup. These comrades, who have taken on the responsibility of spreading the communist ideas of ICWP, related the repression that they suffer at the hands of the factory bosses, and how

communist ideas have given them the power to confront these bosses.

A rich discussion followed the young worker's question. A comrade explained that "collective work will become a guide to accelerate the process of change to communism." Another comrade continued answering the question, referring to all the struggles that historically have occurred in the country and worldwide, saying that we must take control of these processes and win those in struggle to communism.

A worker told about how she confronted a small boss in the factory where she works over how they were repressing a fellow worker every day.

The daughter of another worker introduced the discussion about the resistance that happened in past centuries where they live and how we need to know this part of history and how we see it as part of the process of building a communist revolution. We ended the meeting very enthusiastically by analyzing how to better explain ICWP's work and ideas inside the factories.

The next day we went to another

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CHINESE WORKERS REBEL AGAINST CHINESE CAPITALISM

WUKAN, CHINA, December 2011--Thirteen thousand residents of Wukan village in southern China rebelled against the government's sale of the communal land where they live and work to private developers. There were 160,000 mass demonstrations in China in 2011 – an average of over 400 per day! Most opposed government land grabs.

Wukan residents also rebelled against police terror. The villagers took over Wukan and drove out the government officials after one of their leaders was killed while under arrest. They ran Wukan for more than a week outside state control, organizing food, security, and mass rallies collectively. Supported by neighboring areas, they evaded a government blockade of food entering the city, smuggling in rice and other staples.

Foreign journalists entered the village to report on the rebellion. The government backed off and the protests ended (for now) with leaders making a deal with the governing "Communist Party" to "investigate" complaints against "local corrupt officials." The central

government wants to appear neutral in order to divert workers into the trap of reform and to build patriotic loyalty to the bosses. The leaders of the rebellion praised the central government leadership, and called on them to reverse the actions of the local authorities.

Wukan residents also called for "democracy." This is an illusion because capitalism, in China and everywhere, is the dictatorship of the bosses. Workers don't need "democracy" or "democratic rights." We need power and communism. (See "Wiggling Fingers or Clenched Fists?" page 4)

These angry workers and their allies need to shed deadly illusions in the capitalist-imperialist rulers of China. They must reject any local leaders who refuse to condemn these capitalist-imperialists. Any meager reforms they grant are temporary and only meant to get workers to peacefully and patriotically accept more exploitation as the Chinese bosses respond to the capitalist crisis by preparing for war against imperialist rivals, especially the US.

The land grabs by the govern-

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REVOLUTIONARY PERIODS ARE FORGED OUT OF TIMES LIKE THESE

Capitalism is in crisis. The crisis has general and particular aspects. Sometimes it's financial, sometimes economic, political or military. Its focus has shifted to various parts of the world over the last few years: the U.S. financial melt-down and subsequent Occupy movement, the Arab uprisings, the E.U. debt crises and revolts against austerity, etc. It won't end anytime soon.

In times like these, a generation of communist revolutionaries can be recruited and steeled in struggle. They can turn fight-back into revolution.

This crisis has intensified conflict between imperialists: the main contradiction driving events in the world. It has also intensified the secondary contradiction, that between the interests of the masses and the interests of the bosses.

Sharpening inter-imperialist rivalry means that seemingly endless regional wars will develop into more serious and global conflict. Nobody can predict exactly when or where, but this isn't the first time a capitalist crisis of overproduction ended in world war.

We have to shed our illusions about the imperialists' capacity to resolve their contradictions peacefully in a time of economic crisis. Both World War I and World War II came out of worldwide crises. Make no mistake about it, the storm clouds are gathering.

We must make the contradiction between the working class and bosses primary and mobilize the masses for communism in order to put an end to capitalism's crises and wars once and for all.

Bosses Fall Out, Can't Rule In The Old Way

Obama brags that he "ended" the Iraq war. His advisors know the U.S. can no longer impose its will on the world in the old way. The ruling class think tanks seem to come up with a new military strategy every month.

Meanwhile, the military chessboard changes every day. The Russian Navy moves into Syrian ports; Iran downs drones; the ever-morphing Egyptian uprising points to "the end of the American century" according to the Council of Foreign Relations. As the old saying goes, "When the bosses talk peace, you better get your helmet."

Political turmoil in Europe also shows that the bosses cannot rule in the old way. Socialist administrations fall to conservative administrations and vice versa with dizzying speed. The elected Greek and Italian governments were summarily dismissed within a month of each other: replaced by henchmen for the banks. Each new regime promises greater fidelity to the biggest bosses.

The old order is in shambles. The supposed unity of the European bosses has degenerated into a public brawl.

Germany, France and the big European banks have ripped up the old Eurozone agreements. Politicians in Greece, Italy and other lesser Eurozone countries had a hard time overriding popular uprisings against immediate cuts. The big honchos responded with a new treaty stripping these governments of the power to compromise. When England's prime minister objected to provisions that might hurt the London financial center, France's Sarkozy told him, "You missed an opportunity to shut up!"

Even so, it's questionable the regimes on the losing end of this deal will actually live up to the requirements of these new agreements.

Even the bosses' lieutenants in the US labor movement, particularly in the industrial unions, can't rule in the old way. They used to at least pretend to fight for the workers. They are now railroading secret deals that they freely admit support the bosses (see last editorial). Their great fear is that industrial workers, along with soldiers, will join the revolts.

Masses Show Tenacity, Mass Heroism

The working class and a broad swath of non-proletarian masses have responded to this crisis using what political experience they have. Whatever their weaknesses, the masses worldwide have shown tenacity, self-sacrifice and mass heroism in pursuit of what they consider revolutionary.

In Greece and Portugal, mass job-site meetings discuss the political response to austerity attacks. Greek electrical workers have organized community defense committees to make sure nobody gets their electricity cut off. Ten thousand Portuguese soldiers joined the anti-austerity demonstrations.

Protestors face the Egyptian military barehanded after a year of revolts. Masses are learning through their own experience how brutal the capitalist state can be.

The bosses are not happy about what they consider the beginnings of mass anti-capitalist sentiment. *The Economist*, for one, bemoans the rise of worldwide "anti-capitalist demonstrations."

The bosses are working overtime to channel our justifiable anger down dead-end streets. To the extent that we cling to illusions about reforming capitalism, we remain susceptible to ineffectual strategies like voting, pacifism or calls for more equal distribution of wealth under capitalism. Even worse, forces loyal to the bosses hope to divert our anger into patriotic opposition to some other, foreign capitalist.

Sacrifice and heroism deserve real solutions. Nothing less than fighting directly for communism will do!



Forging A Truly Revolutionary Period

You don't just enter into a revolutionary period: you make it. To be sure, preconditions are there. The system is in crisis and the bosses can't rule in the old way while fights flare up among the rulers. Even "the middle class" questions capitalism. Mass heroism has become the order of the day.

To turn this into a revolutionary period, the working class masses need a clear vision of a communist future. Our call to action, *Mobilize the Masses for Communism* is the way to fulfill the promise of the anti-capitalist upheavals while avoiding the bosses' traps.

This manifesto has inspired friends around the world to order subscriptions to our paper *Red Flag*. But we need to get these ideas into the hands of many more. Our International Central Committee has decided to launch a campaign to distribute *Mobilize the Masses for Communism* and *Red Flag* to tens of thousands worldwide by May Day.

This is impossible without the full participation of Party friends. We have to rely on our networks on the job, in the classrooms and in the barracks **See FORGE, page 4** to sell our

These Times Demand Communist Struggle Against Racism, Sexism, Nationalism

Communism can and will end racism, sexism, nationalism, and all the other poisonous ideas that divide and weaken the working class and the oppressed masses. Communism tears down borders and destroys the material basis of racism and sexism.

Everywhere the capitalist crisis reveals the racism and sexism built into the bosses' bloody system. In Europe, northern European racism against southern Europeans reinforces the German bosses' insistence on brutal "austerity" in Greece, Italy and elsewhere, while militant Greek and Italian workers lead heroic fight-backs. Mass rape is a weapon of war in Congo, where rival capitalist-imperialists incite ethnic groups to fight, on their behalf, for control of "blood minerals" like uranium. In Honduras, indigenous and afro-indigenous people, with women in the lead, have fought bravely against the privatization of lands they once held in common.

Mass unemployment, slave labor, budget cuts, police terror and every other attack on the working class come down first and hardest on those already most oppressed and exploited. That includes most women worldwide, black and latin workers in the US, indigenous people in the Americas, Arab workers in Israel, and immigrant workers almost everywhere. Religious divisions work the same way.

By dividing the masses on gender lines and inventing "races" that have no scientific basis, the capitalist rulers try to hide the fact that we are all class brothers and sisters. They try to separate the angriest and most militant from the rest. We must not allow them to succeed!

Bringing the communist vision to the class struggle means building solid ties among women and men of all so-called "races" and "nationalities." It means struggling sharply but patiently against the bosses' racist and sexist ideas amongst the masses. It means a strategic concentration on finding the ways and means to bring *Red Flag* and *Mobilize the Masses for Communism* to workers, soldiers and youth who have the strongest motivation to smash this racist system, and to learn from them. It means overcoming every obstacle, objective and subjective, that stands in the way of recruiting them to be members and leaders of the Party.



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RED HIGH SCHOOL STUDENTS LIGHT A FIRE THAT RAIN CAN'T PUT OUT

LOS ANGELES, December 12— As part of Occupy the Ports and a General Immigrant Rights March, ICWP high school students together with their friends visited schools and passed out flyers calling for a Citywide Student Walkout Against Capitalism that denounced the 1% and declared themselves the 99%. The flyer blamed the crisis of capitalism for the current attacks and called on the masses to mobilize for communism. The youth seized this opportunity to take leadership in the working class and fight back.

Student leaders visited classrooms with the flyer and spoke about the Dec. 12th actions, including the walkout. “We were surprised to see that teachers were actually interested in learning about communism and giving us the chance to speak to their students. Students and teachers listened and asked questions,” said a student leader.

During one visit, a student organizer spoke with one of his teachers. They had not gotten along all year. But on this day they had a conversation about communism and they had common points of view. It started with the Occupy movement. The teacher asked, “Did you know I stayed in Occupy LA for a night?”

The student was shocked. “Why only one



night?” he asked.

“My sister, who owned the tent, was sharing it with her husband; there was barely enough space for me. But tell me, are you against the government?” he asked.

“I’m against the bosses, the government, the cops, the system, anything and anyone that defends the 1%,” he responded. The teacher interrupted, affirming, “Because we ARE the 99%.” Hearing all of this from his teacher, the student leader became more motivated. He is starting to give the teacher *Red Flag* and is asking him to take an extra copy for his sister.

“All of this experience has given the youth courage and strength to put forward and fight for what we believe in, that is, to abolish money and create a world of equality,” declared a youth leader. Overall, students were pleasantly surprised to hear the positive responses of other students and teachers.

Another student turned a picture of the flyer into a Facebook event page, and close to a thousand responded. Lively exchanges took place:

“What’s wrong with the way capitalism runs society?”

“EVERYTHING!”

“But the Occupy LA movement has nothing to do with communism.”

“I know that Occupy LA isn’t about communism but everyone who has been part of it hates the 1%, which makes them our allies.”

“Go tell that to an actual history professor and come back with what they tell you, I get my facts from a college professor. Cuba was in no type of good conditions because of communism.”

“How intelligent can this professor be? Cuba has never been a communist country, it’s been socialist! I get my facts from reading *Red Flag* and life experiences, thanks!”

On the day of the Walkout Against Capitalism,



there was pouring rain. However, ten students met up as planned. They stood outside the school in the pouring rain waiting for others to come, but no one else came. It started to rain harder. The students thought of going as a group to the Immigrant Rights March in downtown L.A. but did not have the bus fare. They went their separate ways before the cops showed up.

Even though the walkout didn’t go as planned, ICWP student leaders and friends did not consider it a failure. They felt they had spread the word about communism so much that many students have become familiar with the word and its real meaning. “Doing all of this I remembered all the positive words of others and thought: capitalism’s brainwashing can’t fool many anymore. We now have a bigger opportunity to bring it down,” a student leader remarked.

Another student leader concluded, “We see it as an opportunity that we took to train ourselves as leaders of society: not government leaders but leaders who are willing to stand up for the working class, willing to fight for a better world, for our comrades, for what we know will be the best and that is communism.”

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area where comrade farm workers, war veterans and university students who have recently joined ICWP came together. When we got to our meeting place in the mountains, we went for a walk. All the comrades were moved by the beauty of the place and by the hospitality of the friend who loaned us the site.

A young leader gave the international report. Seeing the seriousness with which he focused the discussion of inter-imperialist rivalry and how it affects the working class, the participants applauded the young cadre. Right after, several comrades participated in the discussion. One of them recounted how the factions of the FMLN participated in the process of struggle that was carried out. The idea was to show the youth how the ef-

forts were made, related by those who made them, and how those who are now in the leadership of the FMLN have forgotten. It was emphasized that the youth and veterans present are in the position of continuing the struggle. They said they were glad to have joined ICWP.

A comrade gave a report of the International Cadre School in Central America and this generated much joy among the participants. There was a very festive atmosphere and the reports and arrivals of other comrades produced more applause and cheers. “I came to this meeting because here is where my family is. You comrades are my family,” a comrade with much experience stated very emotionally.

All this shows that we’re putting our communist guide, *Mobilize the Masses for Communism* (MMC), into practice. In these meetings we pre-

sented the need to make plans to distribute *Red Flag* massively. We initiated the planning for May Day 2012. This must include how many copies of MMC we plan to distribute nationwide and how we plan to do it.

A comrade leader closed the gathering by emphasizing the importance of motivating more workers every day to question the current situation of the working class and to conclude that this system is not natural and that we have to change it. She stressed that we have to imagine what the communist society that we all need will be like. She spoke about what health care, housing, and entertainment will be like in a communist society and how education will be. The worker won’t be one more brick in the wall but a dynamic communist activist and agent of change.

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ment and private bosses will surely continue, along with the exploitation of Chinese workers, until workers organize a communist revolution to get rid of the bosses and run society in our own interests, as they did temporarily for the week of Dec. 11 – 18 in Wukan.

It’s interesting that Wukan (formerly called Wuhan) was a center of the Great Leap Forward in the 1950s. Then, rural workers built massive communes which eliminated money and production for the market, producing only for need. Also in Wuhan there were violent clashes between the

Left (those who wanted to move directly to communism) and the Right (socialists who implemented capitalism) in the army and in the countryside during the 1960s Great Proletarian Cultural Revolution of the 1960s.

These struggles carry rich lessons for all workers and their allies. They show that we need to build the ICWP to consciously fight directly for communism. That’s the way we can and will drive out the capitalist bosses once and for all, and share the decisions and all the products of our collective labor.



Communist Power, Not Democracy!

WIGGLING FINGERS OR CLENCHED FISTS?

The Occupy movement declares, “We are the 99%.” It’s not just complaining about economic inequality. It’s talking about political power. On one hand: outrage at the “corrosive power of major banks and multinational corporations over the democratic process.” On the other: trying to create “direct and transparent participatory democracy.”

Communists share the mass anger at the capitalist dictatorship (state power) that rules today. We, too, strive for a world where the masses collectively make the decisions that shape our lives. But liberal and anarchist ideas about democracy can’t help us destroy capitalism. For that we need communist ideas – and a revolutionary International Communist Workers’ Party (ICWP).

The Occupy movement calls itself “horizontal, not vertical.” This is appealing because people want to be on the same level, without being bossed around.

Capitalism – like slavery and feudalism – is top-down because a small ruling class maintains itself by exploiting the labor of the masses. There is a small top and a huge bottom, not a “vertical line” where everyone is above someone else. True, corporate and government bureaucracies are top-down chains. But their highest levels are collectives organized to serve the interests of the capitalist class as a whole, trying to manage capitalism’s built-in competition to maximize profits.

The May 15th movement in Spain chanted, “The people united work without parties.” Occupy organizers (especially anarchists) claim that even a communist party is “vertical” and therefore bad. We disagree!

Masses Need ICWP to Serve Interest of the Whole International Working Class

Lenin, early in the 20th century, developed “democratic centralism,” the political form to unify the working class under revolutionary communist leadership. That model, however, was

compromised by the wrong idea that the masses could only be won to something less than communism. Communist parties that built Socialism or New Democracy ended up running essentially capitalist political economies. They became state-capitalist bureaucracies.

The ICWP organizes directly for communism: ending money, wages, markets, corporations, racism, sexism, national borders, and the capitalist state (government). The masses, organized through the Party, will make all decisions: what to produce, how to produce and distribute it, how to educate children, how to handle problems—everything! The mass Party “of a new type” (communist centralism) that we build today must grow hugely to become the core of communist society.

Anarchists and radical democrats want to make all decisions locally: “A General Assembly on every street corner.” Some decisions can be made locally, but we are one interconnected, international working class. Important decisions on how to use our labor and resources must be made by and for the masses, globally. We need one International Communist Workers’ Party to link all local collectives in making, carrying out, and evaluating decisions. Our Party has a center (leadership) not a “top.” The main job of a communist leader at any level is to develop more communist leaders.

Being a Party member is a much stronger commitment than participating in an Occupy-style “General Assembly” (GA). We agree to struggle in a sharp, comradely way over every aspect of the political line and work. That creates deeper unity, and a greater willingness to carry out collective decisions even if one disagrees. It develops workers, soldiers and youth into deep thinkers who enrich the process and develop the line further.

Through criticism and self-criticism we im-

prove our ability to do the hard work of mobilizing the masses for communism. Millions will come to understand that communism is not just a nice idea but a reality within our grasp. Increasing numbers will embrace the commitment to join the Party.

Occupy Isn’t “Leaderless”

Occupy trains new leaders to run GAs that suppress political struggle, focusing narrowly on tactical “proposals.” Wiggling fingers up or down is a poor substitute for explaining your views. Facilitators admit that one purpose of the famous “hand-signals” is to “prevent people from giving speeches.” The liveliest political discussions usually happen outside of meetings.

Little struggle and little agreement is a recipe for little commitment. People routinely “hard-block” proposals, threatening to leave if the proposal is accepted. That may be okay for Occupy, but we can’t make a revolution or run the world that way! We need constant, organized political struggle and widespread commitment to act collectively in the best interest of the masses.

Occupy does, though, enforce a commitment to “non-violence.” This principle trains brave and dedicated activists to submit to the capitalist state. The capitalist-imperialists have proved repeatedly that they’ll stop at nothing in their ultimately vain attempt to prevent the masses from taking power.

We can’t transform the world through elections or by changing our personal lives. We must prepare for insurrection, revolution, and a protracted armed struggle to build and defend communism worldwide. Anything less leaves us subject to the organized violence of the capitalist state. To fight the capitalist class to its death requires the unified fist of a mass International Communist Workers’ Party.

MTA Mechanics:

LET’S FIGHT BACK WITH RED FLAG

LOS ANGELES, Jan. 4—Last week, assistant manager Richard Herpers humiliated a mechanic in MTA’s Division 15. Shouting and using obscene language, this racist rabid dog verbally assaulted this worker “chewing” him out in front of his coworkers for not “finishing” a bus in time.

This very experienced worker has many years of seniority. His assignment was to reline the rear and front brakes of a bus. Being thorough, it is a two-day job. Cutting corners, it is done in one. This worker was being thorough, which infuriated Herpers who just wanted quick production.

Adding insult to injury, Herpers later called this worker into his office. There, in the presence of the shop steward Robert Pacheco, he repeated his racist and obscene verbal attack. Pacheco witnessed this without uttering a “squeak.” Or, should we say without a “whimper” because he is just another kind of dog: an MTA lapdog.

As US capitalism sinks deeper into crises and its wars eat up more of our services and benefits, US bosses will need these two kinds of dogs more and more. “Ferocious” dogs like Herpers are to whip us into line and squeeze the last drop of blood out of us. “Wimpy” dogs like Pacheco are to get us to meekly accept lousy contracts, fascist working conditions, and firings, while channeling our anger into union reformism and electoral politics.

The main job, however, of our treacherous union officials is to keep us from opting for communist revolution. They are, however, fighting a losing battle. Hundreds of MTA workers read,

distribute and donate money for our communist newspaper *Red Flag*. A couple of hundred have read and helped distribute our manifesto *Mobilize the Masses for Communism*.

This is not unique to MTA. Hundreds of Marines, soldiers, industrial workers at Boeing and aerospace factories, garment workers, high school and college students and teachers gladly take our literature when offered to them.

The times are changing and the potential for revolution is growing. As life becomes more unbearable under capitalism, the masses won’t be able to live in the old way. Given the alternative, they will opt for communist revolution. The bosses know this.

When facing a rebellious working class, US bosses won’t be able to rule in the old way. MTA’s reign of terror will be greatly intensified and applied nationwide. Last week, Obama, the US bosses’ biggest “ferocious-lapdog,” signed the National Defense Authorization Act. It deepens the “legal” basis for this fascism.

It allows for US citizens and legal residents suspected of being terrorists to be imprisoned indefinitely without a trial or any other legal recourse. The Patriot Act signed by Bush had authorized that for “enemy combatants.” The bosses will use these laws against anyone opposing their oppressive living conditions and rule.

Fascism, however, has never stopped the working class. A communist led working class fighting for communism will bury the bosses and their fascism forever.



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literature and raise money to print it.

With our friends and co-workers, we can bring this communist vision to the increasing class struggle. As the struggle sharpens and broadens, and we continue to involve ourselves in it, the masses will help us understand better how to build a new communist society.

ICWP must grow if we are to forge a revolutionary period. Our party must develop the discipline necessary to mobilize the masses for communism. We must adopt the tenacity, self-sacrifice and heroism the working class has shown recently. It won’t happen over night. Getting our ideas into the hands of tens of thousands is a good way to start the struggle.

Bosses battle over which currency will rule the world

WORKERS MUST ABOLISH MONEY

The modern world market, where trillions of dollars are exchanged every day, started with the rise of three murderous trades: the arms trade, the slave trade and the drug trade. They grew out of bloody wars of conquest in the Americas and Asia. Today that market also rests on three trades: arms, oil, and currency. They all grew in significance out of World Wars I and II.

Money is not simply a “medium of exchange,” as both revolutionary socialists and apologists for capital have argued. Its main role is as a “medium for domination and exploitation.” Although it does act as “a medium of exchange,” it acts as a “medium of unequal exchange.”

Understanding this role of money is a bitter lesson revolutionary communists are learning from the defeat of the first communist-led revolutions in China and the Soviet Union. It is a lesson that motivated the ICWP to build a revolutionary communist party that aims to abolish both wage slavery and the use of money completely. We are building a revolution that rejects socialism, with its banks and wage system, and instead fights directly for communism, where production will be for social need, not private profit and money.

Ever since money-capital developed the modern world

market, it has functioned most efficiently with one dominant center. That center is determined by brute force. It took two world wars for the US dollar to replace the British pound as the world's reserve currency.

Fight between the Euro and the Dollar

Today, as many of the productive cycles of capitalism have slowed and a general crisis has emerged, other currencies are vying with the US Dollar for world leadership.

The world reserve currency functions as the one used in most world trade – especially oil. This means that all oil-importing countries have to stock up on US dollars. But keeping US dollars in Beijing or Tokyo doesn't earn interest, so those and other governments invest them in US Treasury bonds where they can gain interest until they are used to buy oil. This allows the US to use other capitalists' money to build its enormous military and gain advantages in the world market, lessening the impact of the declining rate of profit and trade deficit. That's one way money functions as “a medium of domination and exploita-

tion.”

The European Union created the Euro in 1999 to promote the interests of the European capitalists, a direct threat to the dominance of the US Dollar. Immediately it threatened to replace the Dollar in oil transactions at least in the Euro zone. Within three months of its launch, the US engineered a war in the Euro zone's backyard, the former Yugoslavia. That war demonstrated that the Euro had no Armed Force to protect its interests other than the US-led NATO alliance.

Dropping in value, it was only worth 82 cents on the Dollar in 2000 when Saddam Hussein decided to trade Iraqi oil only in Euros, not US Dollars. At the time this action looked like financial suicide. Three years later, as the Euro passed the Dollar in value, it looked like a brilliant deal. So brilliant, in fact, it was Saddam Hussein's death warrant. The whole world, especially the oil-pro-

duct but it was also clearly a direct threat to US world dominance.

Was it a suicidal act of defiance? Hardly. The world's largest buyer of Iranian oil was China, and China was a member of a huge economic and military alliance, the Shanghai Cooperation Organization.

Seven months later came the event that would make this murderous defense of the dollar's role even more desperate. Lehman Brothers collapsed signaling the start of the major economic crisis that still grips the world. As the center of the crisis passed from the US to Europe, the international bond traders, centered in London and New York, ratcheted up their demands on the weaker economies in Europe--Portugal, Ireland, Italy, Greece and Spain. ‘The bond vigilantes,’ as they call themselves, have left Europe financially at the mercy of the US, with former Goldman Sachs

economists heading the governments of Greece and Italy and presiding over the European Central Bank.

Yet, just as the Euro is tamed, or maybe demolished, a new threat to the dollar develops. On December 27th, China and Japan agreed to trade in yen and

yuan. Last year alone that trade used 340 billion dollars. China has struck similar

deals with other countries, like Brazil and Nigeria. Developments like these make the potential threat of the Iranian exchange more significant.

For twelve years, US imperialism has doggedly defended its dollar's position as the world's reserve currency, yet the challenges to it keep coming, and growing in stature. For workers, this spells both danger and opportunity. Since this money does not circulate as a neutral “medium of exchange” but as an imperialist-serving “medium of unequal exchange” the actual reserve currency, or currencies, are decided by war

The world's workers face more than wage cuts, unemployment, austerity, and endless regional wars. We face the inevitability that cut-throat imperialist competition will erupt into world war. Capitalism, in short, has nothing to offer us. Nothing, that is, except one thing: it is creating a world pregnant with the possibility of fighting and winning a revolution that abolishes money and organizes instead communism with its share-and-share-alike culture.



During the Occupy protests, workers began burning money. When we take power, we'll destroy all the banks and the money.

ducing countries, could see potential windfall profits. If Saddam Hussein could do it, why couldn't they? That would spell the end of the dollar as the world's dominant currency. The world had to be taught a lesson. The US launched its ‘shock and awe’ invasion of Iraq. Within two months, with Saddam overthrown, Iraq was selling its oil in US dollars, not Euros!

Workers in Yugoslavia were bombed. Millions were killed, maimed or displaced in Iraq. Both countries, splattered with depleted uranium, were left to battle huge cancer epidemics. All this death and destruction was carried out so that the US could successfully demonstrate its power to retain the dollar as the world's reserve currency. But two things undercut its triumph: the weakness of its own economy, and the euro.

As long as there was a euro, imperialist rivals had a rallying point. In 2008 the Iranian bosses announced that they were going to open an exchange that would allow the world to trade oil in the euro, Iranian rials, or in a basket of other non-dollar currencies. It was seen as a long term proj-

EVICT CAPITALISM, NOT WORKERS



LOS ANGELES, Jan 4—Occupy LA organized a press conference and rally to protest home foreclosures at the home of Faith Parker, a 79 year-old black woman. As people gathered at her home, ICWP distributed over a hundred *Red Flags* and copies of *Mobilize the Masses for Communism* to participants and neighbors.

Mrs. Parker stands to lose the home that she and her late husband bought in 1962. Under capitalism, workers spend a lifetime paying on a mortgage, but often must leave it for the children to pay off. Faith worked as a nurse and educator. Her husband was a postal worker and

mechanic. They sacrificed so much for their house, a place to have a family and be secure.

But capitalism in crisis can never offer security for the working class. The working class produces everything, including houses, but we live under the rule of capitalism, where profit reigns at our expense. Communism will eliminate profits and capitalist rule. Workers' collectives through a mass International Communist Workers' Party will organize all of the social production to meet all human needs, such as housing, transportation, agriculture etc. Mobilize the masses for communism!

From a campus study group on political economy:

THE LIMITS OF HARVEY'S LIMITS TO CAPITAL

David Harvey's *Limits to Capital* extends and elaborates Marxist economic theory in the areas of money, value, profit, rent and other basic categories for understanding capitalism.

Our central criticism of Harvey's book regarded his overly skeptical position about Marx's law of the falling rate of profit. In one of his later books (*The Enigma of Capital*), he asserted that the falling rate of profit cannot be adequately supported. In this book, he mentions a number of legitimate problems in attempting to accurately generate the rate of profit. However, some of our own research, as well as the work of others (such as Andrew Kliman), shows that the rate of profit since WWII has consistently fallen. Even though theoretical problems persist, a number of investigations agree that, in general, there is an unmistakable downward trend.

One of Harvey's main points is that ownership and rent in land is related to the labor theory of value. At first sight the connection is unclear: how is land, untouched by workers, valuable, if all value under capitalism comes from labor? The answer is that production in capitalism requires land. So land (including oil and minerals) ac-

quires a value because it has potential to be used for production that exploits labor and reaps surplus value for the bosses. This helps explain such issues as real estate speculation and wars to control oil.

Fictitious capital, like stocks, pension funds, etc., are also like land speculation since, for example, stocks are just certificates or claims on future profits. Harvey also shows how capitalism tries to prevent devaluation of capital by imperial expansion, but this necessarily leads to wars between the bosses. These schemes of rent, interest, fictitious capital, imperialism, etc., only prolong the time until the next crisis and, by doing so, cause the next crisis to hit much harder when it inevitably occurs.

The conclusion is that no matter what is set up to reconcile the contradictions in capitalism, it only manages to intensify those contradictions and to further set the stage for communism. Harvey does not offer a solution with his analysis, but the only viable solution to the problems of capitalism, and its life-draining and bloody consequences for workers, is communist revolution.

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economy. Russia threatens to become the world's dominant energy controller -- a position held by US imperialism since WWII. Both threats point to the demise of US imperialist domination.

The unilateralist strategy:

control Iran's oil and gas now

This would deprive China of its imported energy needs, especially in case of war, paralyzing its economy and military machine. Controlling Iran is crucial because it is the only country, besides Russia, with the resources and pipelines in place to transport energy by land to China. This bypasses the straits and sea lanes of Asia-Pacific currently controlled by the US Navy.

Controlling Iran would also hand US bosses the world's second and third largest oil and gas deposits respectively. It would also mean eventual control of Iraq's oil deposits, the world's third largest.

This would once again position US bosses as the undisputed rulers of the world's energy markets. They could deny China its energy needs or supply it on terms that subjugate China economically and militarily. Russia's dream of world supremacy based on its vast energy resources would be dashed.

This unilateralist section of the US bosses wants to confront Iran singlehandedly, probably believing that since neither China nor Russia can presently match US imperialism's military might, the feared global confrontation would not happen. If it happens, however, they probably speculate the US would come out on top because of its present military superiority.



Iran threatens to close the strategic Strait of Hormuz; the US vows to keep it open.

The multilateralist strategy: build up US forces in the Asia-Pacific region

In this strategy, Iran is also a strategic target for all the above reasons but attacking it now is not the objective. This multilateralist strategy is to buy time.

They need more time to further encircle China and Russia militarily, while tightening their control of sea lanes and straits crucial to China. But, most important, time to win US workers to support this war and to build a formidable military alliance with countries in the region, especially Japan and India, to fight China-Russia-Iran.

The Bosses' Logic or Our Communist Logic

As the capitalist-imperialist butchers' war drums beat louder, we will mobilize masses to rise once more to fight. This time we will not fail. Fighting directly for communism, our logic shall prevail, burying forever the bosses and their murderous logic.

WE ARE THE INTERNATIONAL WORKING CLASS

Recently we went to a cadre school. It was heartening to listen to each comrade and to see that the majority were youth. I would mention other important points about the meeting, but other comrades have already done so. Consequently, I'll relate some events that I lived through with a friend who accompanied me on the trip to the school.

We left on Wednesday, passing through several countries. The goal was to arrive at the school on Saturday. We traveled by bus for 6 days and nights (going and returning). The journey was tiring, but many people from the places we passed through were supportive. Others were indifferent, consumed with their own problems.

We talked with people from different occupations, including drivers who drove the buses for 14 hours straight. We saw roads in bad conditions where accidents are the order of the day, like the gas pipe explosion that delayed our journey for almost four hours. We saw hills that have been gutted to extract natural resources, industrial zones releasing gases into the atmosphere, agricultural zones with a high content of chemical products that can be noted in the air, people walking on the roads in search of food, some of them migrants en route to the US.

It's a wretched world for those of us who make everything and have nothing.

There were farmworkers carrying firewood that they take from small areas of forest, and old houses with faded paint. On the other hand, there were mansions with advanced security systems and so many others with barbed wire, showing where the poor and rich live. On the road, some talk of God, others talk about the lies of the politicians, of the poverty in the fields, of the growth of urban areas. People like us only ate what the money they had permitted. And what makes us different? NOTHING.

Cursed borders that divide us!--and we have to pay taxes to enter another country. In addition, police refused to return our passports unless we gave them extra money. All of this in countries apparently different but in essence under the same capitalist system.

But in spite of this description of reality under capitalism, I'm not pessimistic. I only have temporary subjective analyses of reality. Perhaps there is a right wing in them sometimes, but only sometimes, because even with our weaknesses and sentimentalism, we can find the answers to the internal contradictions.

For me this is to continue to be alive. I saw the gleam in the eyes of the comrades, their smiles, their hugs, their concern for me -- all this makes me sure I will keep on going. I don't have more words. WE ARE THE INTERNATIONAL WORKING CLASS that laughs, worries, and sings -- like this morning the INTERNATIONALE -- because we're fighting day by day for COMMUNISM. Join ICWP, because we are the international working class.

--A Young Comrade from Mexico

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LETTERS

LETTERS

Soldiers Say: “We’d Enjoy Living under Communism”

Capitalism is slowly but surely losing that once-tight grip it had on the working class. The dogs have been at it for so long that they’ve even started biting their own tails. Capitalist countries are suffering from internal decay as the economic crisis worsens. There is no remedy; there’s only one solution, for the masses to take power through communist revolution.

The masses have begun taking the initial steps necessary in order for this to happen, but these need the guidance of ICWP to reach our only solution. Everywhere you look, you see or hear about workers, students and soldiers hitting the streets. A big change is coming and it is our responsibility as communists to make sure that capitalism is abolished once and for all through communist revolution.

I am currently serving in the armed services and have seen firsthand how things are changing, even there. The other day I was enjoying some personal time when I overheard two fellow service members strike up a conversation about communism. Neither of the two is a communist, but both were pointing out how they felt that communism is the best system that people could ever live under except for the “fact” that humans are too greedy and corrupt for communism to ever work. Their conversation was so interesting that seven other service members joined in. Each one of them expressed how they would all enjoy living under communism.

I, of course, joined in on the conversation as well, but for obvious security reasons did not let it be known that I am a communist. I did explain to them, though, that under communism one would not have to worry about greed, because money would be abolished and everything one needed would be provided. So having an over-abundance of something would be foolish and unnecessary. Then I asked each one of them if they thought they were greedy people. Each responded with a “No.” “Just goes to show that not everyone in the world is greedy,” I said, “and the masses can maintain a communist system.” The conversation pretty much ended with a lot of nods.

The fact that such a conversation occurred within the US Armed Services is proof enough that the masses are looking for an alternative to capitalism. Opportunity is presenting itself now more than ever. As the masses look towards the future, they no longer see capitalism as the system they want to live under. The time to mobilize the masses for communism is now. Help ICWP do this by distributing *Red Flag* and getting your fellow students, workers and soldiers to join ICWP.

—Red in Uniform



Rebellious US soldiers in Vietnam

The Working Class—Not the 99%

I think we have been making a mistake by uncritically using the distinction made by the Occupy Movement of the 1% versus the 99%. This way of looking at social class, as if we were all lined up by

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income, and we just cut the line between the top 1% and the rest of us, covers up the reality of class society.

The rulers are happy to have us look at things this way, and it’s easy to find the income numbers. (All of these are from Reuters.) The top 1% of American households had a minimum income of \$516,633 in 2010 — a figure that includes wages, government transfers and investment income.

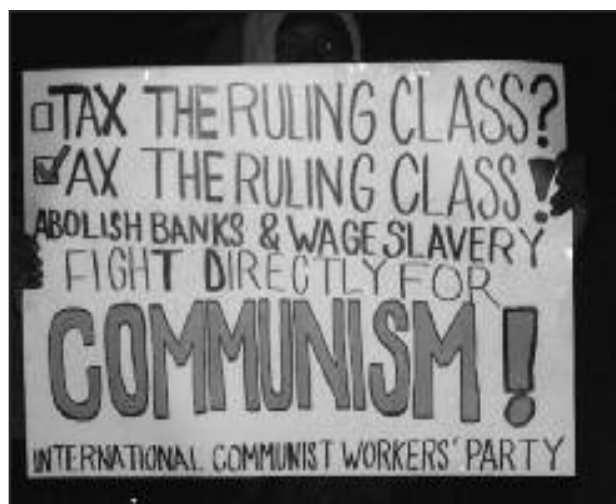
Or we could line everybody up by net worth, or wealth, home equity, stocks and investments. The average wealth of the top 1 percent was almost \$14 million in 2009. The bottom 20 percent of households had an average (negative!) net worth of minus \$27,200 in 2009.

This is more helpful, because net worth, or wealth, is another way of looking at things from a Marxist perspective. Some people own the means of production—the factories and the fields, the shipping lines and trucking companies, the warehouses and the stores. The rest of us may have some equity in our homes or cars, or a little money saved up for a rainy day, but not enough to live on. If we can’t sell our labor power to those who own the means of production, we will be out on the street.

There are basically two groups of people whose circumstances are fundamentally different. That’s what defines a class society—not income inequality. It’s not that they have more than us, they’re greedy and they should be nice and share. It’s that we have to sell our labor power to them, and they live off of our work. In fact, it is our work that has created their wealth, and their control of the state that allows them to steal it from us.

Our interests are fundamentally opposed. What’s good for them—more profits—is bad for us, because it means lower pay, more speed-up, and more dangerous working conditions. What’s good for us—eliminating the whole profit system—is very bad for them, because it means an end to their rule.

—Red Flag reader and writer

**“We Are All Connectors”**

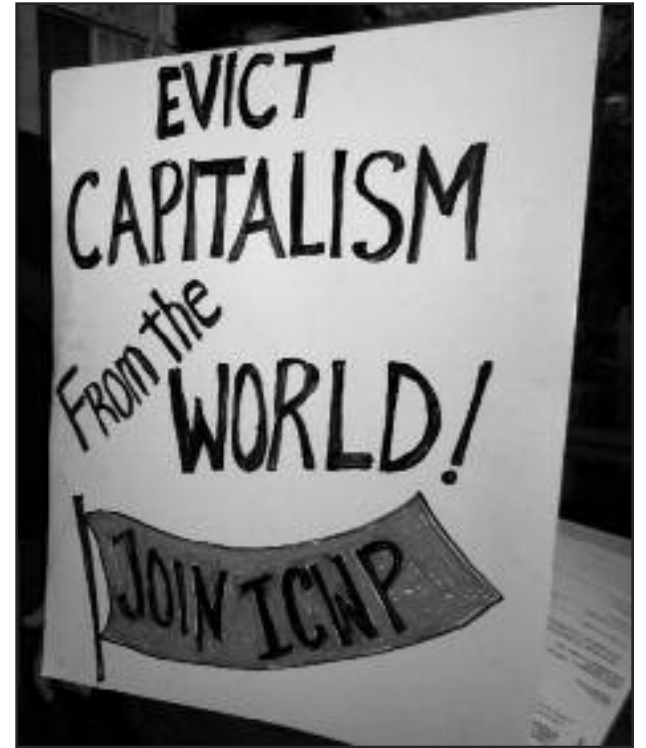
I have been fascinated by the idea that there were only 6 or 7 degrees of separation between me and some other person across the world. Today I was reading a new study released by Facebook that says this number is actually 4.74 degrees. One of the main reasons this is important to me is because I am sometimes overwhelmed by the thought of changing the world.

Organizing for a communist revolution is no easy task—but this stuff about how we are all interconnected gives me hope. We are all “connectors” and if we make it our personal responsibility to get communist ideas out to everyone, our ideas can potentially spread like wildfire.

An important component is that we don’t let the fire die with us—we need to pass the ideas on. The workers, besides being interconnected, also share a common enemy and share a common cause—plus we have no borders! In the current capitalist crisis, the time to ignite the wildfire is NOW!

--Red Mom

CRITICISM AND SUGGESTIONS

**Can There Be Non-Dictatorial Laws?**

This is a comment on an article in the last two *Red Flags*, part of the ongoing discussion about whether there should be laws under communism. It correctly pointed out that what the capitalists call the “rule of law” is really part of a dictatorship by minority ruling classes, past and present. However, the article doesn’t discuss whether there can be or have been laws without a dictatorial “rule of law”

Marx wrote that there was “customary law,” which required little coercion, before class society and states existed. Modern anthropologists have debated whether people like the Cheyenne (of the North American plains) had laws, since they had no way of enforcing them apart from actions of the whole community. The Cheyenne punished murderers by kicking them out of the tribe, and this was the known and agreed punishment. Doesn’t that mean that in their society, murder was against the law?

A clear case that shows that there were explicit laws in pre-class, stateless societies is the Iroquois people’s Great Law of Peace [1], a code of laws created before they had any contact with European colonialism. This code was recorded on wampum (beaded leather), transmitted orally, and followed for hundreds of years.

The article suggests that “European observers” were incorrect when they found there to be rules among the !Kung people of southern Africa, but it doesn’t explain why this is incorrect. !Kung people explained to anthropologists, for example, how a person obtains a “n!ore,” the right to hunt on a particular territory by being born there or being related to someone who was. They also explained how people were dealt with who hunted where they didn’t have a right to, by collecting witnesses and confronting the offender, perhaps more than once [2].

On the question of how “norms” would be enforced under communism, the article said, “There will be near-universal participation in decision-making. Serious problems (‘crime’) will be handled mainly through usual decision making processes.” This idea needs to be made much more concrete. Do millions of people have to deliberate over each specific crime, or shouldn’t they decide on some general policies—rules or laws—that can be applied locally to specific cases? In general, this discussion would probably be more fruitful if it were quite specific about how we expect to deal with harmful behavior under communism.

References: [1]

<http://www.manataka.org/page135.html> ; [2] E. M. Thomas, *The Old Way: A Story of the First People*, pp. 71ff; W. L. Ury, “Conflict Resolution among the Bushmen: Lessons in Dispute Systems Design,” *Negotiation Journal*, October, 1995, pp. 379-389.

—Red Reader

U.S. Bosses Debate Iran Strategy

REAL TARGETS: CHINA AND RUSSIA

As US imperialism extricates itself from its losing wars in Iraq-Afghanistan-Pakistan, Obama crows about fulfilling his campaign promises to end the Iraq carnage. He is also winding down the Afghanistan war. Meanwhile, his masters openly squabble about whether to attack Iran now or to concentrate their resources for their inevitable war with China.

For this eventuality, Obama is increasing the US military presence in Asia-Pacific. Warmonger Hillary Clinton camouflages this by saying it is to serve as “a bulwark against threats or efforts to undermine regional peace and stability.”

We should never be fooled by the bosses’ and their politicians’ peace lullabies. War is an integral part of capitalism. Its built-in competition and relentless pursuit of maximum profits make wars inevitable. Only communist revolution can liberate workers from capitalism’s endless slaughter. Communism will eliminate the capitalists and their exploitation based on wage slavery, money, the market, and profits.

Communism will depend only on the brains and labor power of the international working class to produce for all our needs. It is this power, and only this power, that produces all the value in society. The bosses use money to represent this value. They enslave us through wages and make us believe we can’t live without money.

But it is the bosses who can’t survive without it. It is their lifeblood. That is why Mao Zedong, leader of the Chinese Revolution, wrote that they

will continue to “Make trouble, fail, make trouble again, fail again . . . until their doom.” That is their logic “and they will never go against this logic.”

The logic of the masses, Mao pointed out, is to “Fight, fail, fight again, fail again, fight again . . . until their victory; and they too will never go against this logic.” Our logic propels us to fight for communism, for a world without racism, sexism, borders, and imperialist wars for empire and profits. The bosses’ logic drives them to greater bloodbaths.

US Bosses Squabble over Attacking Iran Now or Later

“Time to Attack Iran,” an article in the latest *Foreign Affairs*, US imperialism’s most influential foreign policy magazine, argues that the US should strike Iran now to eliminate its nuclear facilities or suffer later. It claims the US can do this and avoid or reduce many of the feared consequences of full-fledged war and global economic crisis.

“The Worst Case for War with Iran,” an article written by Stephen M. Walt in *Foreign Policy*, another influential magazine linked to the *Washington Post*, attacks the above article, calling it



“a textbook example of war-mongering disguised as ‘analysis.’” Walt argues against attacking Iran. **US Bosses’ in-fighting over Iran: really about when to confront the China-Russia axis**

Iran’s nuclear pursuit, for peaceful or military purposes, is just an excuse. US bosses’ real targets are China and Russia. These rising imperialist powers are the real threats to US imperialism’s dreams of prolonging its world hegemony well into the 21st century.

China’s threat is economic. It is winning the competition for the world’s markets and is on the verge of replacing the US as the world’s biggest

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FREEDOM IS MASS MOBILIZATION FOR COMMUNISM

Capitalist Freedom

Capitalists love to identify freedom with capitalism. Their idea is that the freest possible person is a capitalist with lots of money and nothing to prevent him or her from investing it to exploit workers. The essence of this idea is that any kind of external interference is a limitation of a person’s freedom. Thus the most perfectly free person would be an individual who wasn’t formed by his/her circumstances, but made himself/herself. Capitalist philosophers call this idea of freedom as creating yourself “autonomy” or “self-determination.”

People Don’t Create Themselves

In reality, no one is his or her own parent, and by the time children are old enough to make their choices, they are already strongly influenced by their circumstances. We are all products of our society, our class, our families, our neighborhoods, the capitalists’ government, schools, religious institutions, the media, etc. People don’t make themselves. What capitalists call a “self-made man” is just someone who stepped on many people to get a pile of loot he didn’t inherit.

Materialist Freedom

In their book *The German Ideology*, Karl Marx and Frederick Engels explained the materialist conception of freedom. They defined freedom as power “over the circumstances and conditions in which an individual lives.” This idea acknowledges the materialist principle that people are products of their circumstances, but rejects self-determination as merely “imaginary freedom.”

The materialist view of freedom explains why workers are not free under capitalism. The bosses, our enemies, have much more power over our circumstances than we do. Many of the world’s workers don’t even have the power to feed themselves adequately, and we all depend on capitalists for our wages. Control of the means of production, of money, of the government and

the media—all give capitalists tremendous power over us, power we don’t have over our own circumstances

Freedom Requires Collective Action

People can get power over their circumstances by acting collectively. Many people working together can have the creativity and strength for tremendous accomplishments, but it’s mighty tough for workers to do this under capitalism. Most mass movements—from trade unions to civil rights to the Arab Spring to Occupy Wall Street—are ignored, lied about, taken over, or smashed by capitalists.

Although capitalists have much more power than workers, capitalism limits collectivity so much that even capitalists have limited power over their own circumstances. The economic crises and imperialist wars that necessarily result from conflicts among capitalists themselves make the system uncontrollable. So even capitalists aren’t all that free under capitalism.

Communism is Real Collectivity

Marx and Engels pointed out that under communism, “the community of revolutionary proletarians . . . takes their conditions of existence and those of all members of society under their control.” Without capitalists, without a repressive government, without money or wages, collective humanity can decide how to use our labor, natural resources and technology to meet our needs, direct our own future and provide lots of choices for individuals.

This kind of freedom wasn’t (and isn’t) possible under socialism, with its wages, inequalities, and life-long trades and professions that limit the kinds of work a person can do. Only the united action of the masses gives us the greatest power over the conditions and circumstances that make us what we are and provides the resources for individual development. Thus “personal freedom becomes possible only within the [communist]

community,” Marx and Engels wrote, because “only within the community has each individual the means of cultivating his gifts in all directions.”

Mass Mobilization for Communism

Achieving communism will take a long, hard fight that can only be won by the mass mobilization of the working class. But mass mobilization isn’t just the way to get to the goal of communism. Mass mobilization for communism gives workers the greatest possible power over our conditions and circumstances, and is thus working-class freedom itself. Join us in the fight for workers’ freedom.



ICWP has published our manifesto *Mobilize the Masses for Communism*. It’s available in English and Spanish. Order your copy or copies. Please send donations for the costs of printing and mailing. We also ask for your suggestions and criticisms.

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