



# RED FLAG

**MOBILIZE THE MASSES FOR COMMUNISM**

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



**GREECE, Sept. 26, General strike against bosses' austerity. Hundreds of thousands take to the street to protest capitalist attacks.**



## 314 Workers Killed in Pakistan Factory Fires

### **COMMUNIST WORKERS WILL END CAPITALIST HELL**

KARACHI, PAKISTAN, Sept. 12—At least 289 garment workers were killed in a factory here when a boiler exploded and fire swept through the factory where over 1000 people worked. The callous bosses had locked three of the four exits.

The owners wouldn't let the workers leave until they had gotten the denim jeans out of the factory first. Many children lost their mothers and fathers forever. But all the bosses cared about was their jeans and profits, and not the workers or their children who will never again see their parents!

Workers tried desperately to escape from the iron-barred windows. Some were burned to death while trying to escape, others died from asphyxiation.

The factory, Ali Enterprises, producing clothes for German and US companies, had reported capital of \$10 to \$50 million made on the backs of Pakistani garment workers.

The same day, a fire in a shoe factory in Lahore killed at least 25 workers. That blaze began when a generator caught fire and ignited

chemicals stored nearby.

#### **No Law will protect workers**

In 2003, the Pakistani government suspended all factory inspections, forbidding checking for faulty wiring or equipment, aiming to develop "a business friendly environment" to attract new investment at workers' expense during this period of intensifying worldwide competition. 38% of Pakistani workers toil in the textile industry under slave labor conditions and wages.

A few weeks before the deadly fire at Ali Enterprises, "Social Accountability International," a Non-profit monitoring group financed by corporations and based in New York, gave the factory high ratings for health and safety. The Workers' Rights Consortium is now calling for monitoring of these factories by groups not tied to corporations.

But this reform, like all reforms, will not change the situation for workers as the worldwide capitalist crisis of overproduction forces more attacks. No "regulatory" commission will end brutal exploitation. Only workers can end it with com-

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## Airport Workers Can't Live on "Living Wage"

### **REVOLUTION, NOT REFORM, WILL END WAGE SLAVERY**

LOS ANGELES, CA, Sept. 17—Workers at Los Angeles Airport (LAX), represented by SEIU-United Service Workers WEST, want Aviation Safeguard expelled from the airport for breaking their union contract. They also demand that the companies Mencias and Swissport provide decent health insurance.

They are pressuring LAWA (the department of the city of LA that oversees the airports) to act against these companies contracted by the City of LA.

This struggle is about implementing the Living Wage Ordinance, passed by the LA City Council. It obliges companies contracted by the City of LA to pay \$15.37/hour without health benefits or \$10.70/ hour with health benefits.

Aviation Safeguard "breaks the law" by not respecting the union contract. Mencias and Swissport circumvent the ordinance by providing the cheapest insurance with prohibitively high co-payments.

The unions and the politicians who "fought" for this ordinance her-

alded it as a big victory for workers. **Los Angeles Living Wage: A Slap in the Face to LA Workers**

The bosses, their politicians and their union leaders have no shame calling this miserable wage a Living Wage. They think workers are sub-humans and deserve, at best, the bare minimum to survive.

According to their logic, however, they deserve everything and their "living cost" should have no limit. The average CEO at some of the largest US companies collects \$12.9 million a year. This comes out to about \$6,500 an hour or \$125 a minute.

The politicians and union officials mimic their masters. Each of those who "proudly" passed this ordinance collects an average of \$178,789 a year or about \$90 an hour. The head of LAWA and Mary Kay Henry, president of SEIU, each collects \$300,000 a year or \$150 an hour.

**Workers don't need a living wage; we need to abolish the wage system.**

The bosses use the wage system

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## U.S. is Losing Control Over Mid-East Oil:

### PLANS FOR WORLD WAR CALL FOR EPIC HISTORICAL CHANGE

*“Our two nations are trying to do something that has never been done in history, which is to write a new answer to the question of what happens when an established power and a rising power meet.”*—US Secretary of State Hillary Clinton, Sept. 5, 2012, Beijing

History has already answered this question: The rise and fall of powers has always been decided by war, and since the turn of the 20th Century, by world war. The rise of Imperial China and the decline of US imperialism will not be an exception.

Clinton understands this, as do the Chinese and US ruling circles. And, in spite of frequent pious and innocent-sounding pronouncements like hers, they are preparing to do battle.

It was Clinton whose article “America’s Pacific Century,” first announced the US “pivot” toward Asia as US imperialism’s strategy to prevent China from dominating this region.

In the 1850s, U.S. rulers understood that to replace Britain as the world’s dominant power, they first had to dominate Asia. Today, they know that keeping control of Asia is necessary to remain the world’s dominant imperialist.

This means war, world war. As the Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff says, “The US military may be obliged to overtly confront China.”

#### US Pivot to Asia-Pacific: Middle East Less Crucial to US Interests

Clinton states that the future will be decided in Asia, not in Iraq or Afghanistan. She calls for “a substantially increased investment — diplomatic, economic, strategic, and otherwise — in the Asia-Pacific region.”

This means shifting away from the Middle East, the cornerstone of US imperialism’s world empire since 1943, when President Roosevelt declared that “the defense of Saudi Arabia is vital to the defense of the United States.”

The Carter Doctrine of 1980 went further, stating that “an attempt by any outside force to gain control of the Persian Gulf region... will be repelled by any means necessary, including military force.”

For decades, control of the Middle East, with over 65% of the world’s oil reserves and the cheapest to extract, gave the US bosses a tremendous advantage over its competitors, especially in Japan and Europe.

In 1975 the OPEC countries agreed to sell oil only in US dollars, making the US dollar the world’s reserve currency, giving US bosses tremendous financial advantages while allowing them to print dollars at will.

The petro-dollar scheme has artificially kept the US economy afloat in spite of the loss of its competitive manufacturing edge, its hollow industrial base, and becoming the world’s biggest debtor.

#### US losing its grip on Middle Eastern Oil

The fall of the Shah of Iran in 1979 heralded the eventual unraveling of the Carter Doctrine. The Islamic regime took the world’s second largest oil and gas deposits out of US control.

Then came the Iraq fiasco, which has practically lost US bosses the world’s third biggest oil reserves. Growing Iranian influence in the post-Saddam regime further imperils US control of the whole oil region.

The Carter Doctrine has not stopped Russia or China from gaining control of Middle Eastern oil. They got the lion’s share of Iraqi oil. China is monopolizing Iran’s.

Complicating things further, the Gulf Cooperation Council (Saudi Arabia, Bahrain, Kuwait, Oman, Qatar, UAE) is moving toward China. Last year, their trade reached \$35 billion, and they are discussing a Free Trade Agreement. Furthermore, as the US strives to be less dependent on im-

ported oil, these countries, especially Saudi Arabia, are signing major energy deals with China.

The US bosses’ petrodollar scheme is doomed. **Rising masses and regional powers driving US from the Middle East**

The rise of the Muslim Brotherhood in Egypt and the anti-US fury of the Arab masses restrict the US bosses’ ability to impose their will in the region.

These developments will also impede an Israel-US-NATO attack on Iran or Syria. The restive Shiite population in the GCC, especially in Bahrain and Saudi Arabia, could be whipped into a movement to overthrow these US-backed monarchs.

Given this instability, the US imperialists seek to avoid another costly and counterproductive Middle Eastern war that could inflame the whole region, stopping its oil flow to northeast Asia and Europe. That could ignite a global confrontation.

Some US bosses still want to intervene militarily in Iran and Syria. Clinton and her Rockefeller gang, however, want to pivot to Asia-Pacific and prepare to face China eventually.

When wider wars erupt, Middle Eastern and other distant oil will be inaccessible to the US bosses. Their strategy is to produce more oil and gas nationally and regionally. The Canadian, Alaskan, Gulf of Mexico and Mexico oil fields are key to their plans. This strategy explains Obama’s big push for alternative energy development.

#### Bosses’ Crisis and War Preparations: Opportunity for Communist Revolution

Raging wars and preparations for world war call for an epic historical change: the transition from genocidal capitalism to life-valuing communism. Only by mobilizing the masses for communist revolution can we achieve this vision. In a communist world we will collectively harness the world’s natural resources to produce the cleanest, safest and best energy and everything the masses need. It’s time to spread **Red Flag** everywhere, and join and build ICWP massively.



## LIVING WAGE from page 1

to enslave and rule over us. As long as they hold state power and own the factories, machinery and raw materials, they will keep us in bondage.

We have only our labor power, which we must sell to them in order to survive. They buy it as cheaply as possible, at subsistence level or barely enough to keep us alive and able to work.

Fighting for higher wages, sometimes we win; most of the time we don’t. But, even when we “win,” the bosses take it back by working us harder and raising prices on everything.

This is the unending vicious cycle that the bosses’ politicians, with their electoral charade, are paid to perpetuate. This is the wage slavery that unions are unwilling and unable to abolish.

Unionism, no matter how militant, strives to reform capitalism. Reformism tightens the bosses’ chains around our necks and blinds us to the only solution that can break those chains: communism.

#### Communism Will Abolish Wage Slavery

Communist revolution will destroy the bosses, their system and their money. Our labor power will no longer be bought or sold. We will use it only to produce use value: what the masses need to survive and flourish.

The capitalist’s curse of “work or die of starvation” will be history because everyone will receive according to need whether they contribute or not. We will, however, relentlessly wage a political struggle for everyone to contribute to the best of their abilities and to constantly deepen

their commitment.

Furthermore, communism will eliminate the division between mental and manual work. No one will do only manual or mental work all their life. There won’t be such a thing as “janitors.” Collectively we will do the cleaning, and also be pilots, air traffic controllers, etc.

#### LAX workers open to communist ideas

Workers internationally, including LAX workers, are in motion and are open to our communist ideas. Today they held a small but lively demonstration at the LAVA building in the airport. Sixty-six took our newspaper **Red Flag**.

We have complete confidence that these workers will see the futility of fighting for reforms and will join us on the road to communist revolution



**JOIN THE INTERNATIONAL COMMUNIST WORKERS’ PARTY (ICWP)**  
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## HIGH SCHOOL STUDENTS SUPPORT SOUTH AFRICAN MINERS

LOS ANGELES--Some high school students have maintained ongoing conversations about the Lonmin miners in Marikana, in South Africa. Also, students circulated a petition-letter that applauded the bravery of the miners, denounced the killings of the miners by the police and made a call to mobilize the masses for communism. In the beginning many more students said they would circulate the petition-letter. However, only half a dozen students actually circulated it. Close to sixty signatures were gathered.

A student wrote, "After the killings at the Lomnin-Marikana mine, I circulated the petition-letter that supported the miners and asked them and all workers to join our movement. The first people that I asked agreed with our communist ideas. All of them signed it; they were happy to help in which ever way they could. But some disagreed. 'Why should I sign that?' I was asked. 'I believe in capitalism,' said another. I asked why would they support an economic system that forces the majority to go hungry while corporate

executives spend thousands of dollars for each meal. Others responded that under communism, individualism together with personal rights are stripped away. These statements are obviously false and show how much capitalist propaganda has influenced the thinking of students and workers."

In a discussion that took place after reading *Red Flag* a student said, "I am surprised at the amount of platinum and gold in South Africa. Now I understand why the big imperialists are fighting to control it." "And where is all that platinum and gold?" asked another student. "In the earth, and the miners who are forced to work in dangerous conditions and live in terrible conditions take it out," answered another student.

The miners were murdered fighting for a pay increase. They valiantly confronted the police, the official union and the government. However, the struggle is to recognize that capitalism is killing us day in and day out. Here and around the world we have to mobilize the masses for

communism. And, "if we must die," as Claude McKay wrote, "let it not be like hogs hunted and penned in an inglorious post...[let us] for their thousand blows deal one death-blow."

In order to mobilize the masses for communism and make communist revolution, a mass organized communist party is required. All need to consider being part of the International Communist Workers' Party (ICWP). Many students are already.

As the students are put in communist motion, more and more are taking notice of the possibilities of a different world. "After the discussion and after circulating the petition-letter I feel more comfortable in explaining and defending communism," a student said. Yes, we will have a different world where the production of all the natural resources will be carried out securely and safely. Everything that is extracted from the earth will be used to satisfy human need and not to satisfy the profits of any capitalists.

## COMMUNIST IDEAS "OCCUPY" THE "OCCUPY" MOVEMENT

The Occupy movement celebrated its one-year anniversary on September 17. Many within Occupy are genuinely interested in eliminating capitalism and creating a new system. Current disagreements include HOW to do this and WHAT the future system will look like. What role has our Party played in this discussion? And how can we advance our work?

ICWP has built important relationships with people in Occupy, centered around communist politics. There are points of unity and points of disagreement, but only by staying involved can we struggle around disagreements and win people to the Party and the fight for communism. Where we have done this, there have been small advances.

"In May I wrote that I had made a few contacts including one who I believed would join ICWP,"

### OBAMA BRAGS "THE U.S. ALLOWS RACIST VIDEOS"

President Obama praised "free speech" before the UN General Assembly, while criticizing the racist message of the anti-Muslim video that was allowed to go viral and which led by mass violent protests. This same anti-Muslim racism is used to justify killing workers in the Middle East, especially to US soldiers. Obama held up allowing the video to be spread as a value all nations should emulate. This speech, promoting US imperialism by praising "free speech," actually shows the bankruptcy and hypocrisy of US imperialism.

The US bosses have used this same vaunted "freedom of speech" to justify allowing the Nazis and Ku Klux Klan to march and spew their vicious racist filth. They had to be stopped by masses of angry workers and youth defying the law. Racism helps the bosses profit and stay in power, and as long as capitalism exists, racism will continue its poison.

However, when the bosses' system is threatened, the rulers try to squash the speech and the speaker. Communist workers and teachers who publicly argue for revolution are fired. Soldiers face jail or worse for such speech.

Demanding that the bosses outlaw racist speech or racism is not the solution. We need to mobilize for communism, where masses will be encouraged to expose, discuss, and stamp out racist acts and ideas.

a comrade said. "I recently scheduled a meeting with her, and her parting words were 'I look forward to joining.' I know this was a carefully considered decision made by a very busy individual. I hope that she will help form a new collective of additional potential recruits."

After May Day *Red Flag* reported that most people in and around Occupy "accept that capitalism cannot be reformed and must be 'changed;' however, there are no clear statements/declarations as to what should be done." Our comrades have helped to shift the discussion from "Capitalism cannot be reformed" to figuring out how to get closer to revolution.

At the Occupy Seattle "Everything for Everyone" festival, a panel discussed the differences between reform vs. revolution. At the OccupyLA 1-year anniversary event scheduled for September 28th to October 1st, there are plans to discuss "After Capitalism: Another World is Possible." Socialist, anarchist, and communist perspectives will be heard. Throughout this process there continue to be opportunities to meet many new people and have good discussions.

Another comrade reports that "Our Occupy group marked the Occupy Wall Street anniversary with a picnic/discussion attended by sixteen people (instead of the usual handful). Half a dozen have read *Red Flag* or attended communist study groups. There was lots of enthusiasm for our work, especially supporting workers' struggles and helping to fight evictions. One person especially liked our leaflets that linked these struggles to 'changing the conversation' to alternatives to capitalism."

#### Revolution, Not Reform

Some mistakenly believe the road to revolution

is paved with reforms. They say that by mobilizing the masses around reformist demands, we can achieve revolutionary ends. They argue that revolutionary ends are actually concealed within some reformist demands. That "we meet the people where they are - and they become radicalized in the struggle."

We disagree. Revolutionary ideas and reformist ideas are contradictory. Promoting reformism gets in the way of revolution; it doesn't advance it. When we join with the masses who are fighting back, our job is to fight the reformism in the movement by bringing communist ideas into it.

We have faith that people—especially workers—can understand revolutionary communist ideas if they are presented with them directly. These ideas are already moving thousands worldwide—let's turn this into millions!

Before and since Marx called for a society "from each according to ability, to each according to need" this vision has inspired hundreds of millions. It has been a driving force in history.

The effort to build a revolutionary movement capable of creating communism while still working under the powerful grip of capitalism is clearly no small or simple task. However, worldwide, communism is closer today than we recognize.

This is in part because of the resounding failure of capitalism, which movements like Occupy and the Indignados are highlighting. More importantly, it's because we now know that we need to mobilize the masses for this new world, not for another reform struggle. We cannot afford to water down our politics or to conceal our message behind reformist demands.



## COMMUNISM: THE EDUCATION CHILDREN DESERVE

CHICAGO –The seven-day teachers’ strike ended with both sides claiming victory.

Teachers take pride in the unity they built, especially with parents and other workers. Many plan to continue fighting privatization, racist school closings and attacks on pensions. But fighting for the interests of the working-class masses demands communist revolution, not reform.

The strike grew from a two-year campaign launched by new union officials who promised an “organizing model of unionism” to “defend public education.” It mobilized tens of thousands, including many young teachers whose enthusiastic commitment to students energized the picket lines.

However, these officials build dangerous illusions, including a program, *The Schools Chicago’s Students Deserve*, which takes as its model the fancy private-school education that ruling class offspring get. Neither they nor their “leftist” supporters explain that schooling in capitalist society is designed to maintain the power of the ruling class to exploit the masses.

Our children deserve a society in which we, collectively, produce for ourselves, where life-long education is linked to productive work and mass participation in decision-making. That requires mobilizing the masses for communist society – without money, wages, markets, or bosses – and communist education.

### Workers Can’t Win Capitalist Game

Some say that strikers “defied the law” because they mobilized around legally non-negotiable issues (smaller classes, recall rights for laid-off teachers). However, union materials denied that the strike was over these issues. Delegates approved the settlement the evening before Mayor Emanuel was to take the union to court. No wonder some strikers worried that union officials would sacrifice class-size demands!

The union claimed a victory because “only” the state-mandated 30% of a teacher’s evaluation will depend on student test scores. It never or-

ganized teachers to defy that law. So-called “merit pay” may be halted temporarily, but the camel’s nose is under the tent.

The District promised teachers a 17% pay increase over four years, and the hiring of hundreds more art and music teachers, nurses, and social workers. But the capitalists are already planning to shift the increased costs onto workers’ backs. Moody’s predicts increased class sizes and cuts to extracurricular programs. The Chicago Civic Federation foresees job cuts and school closings – likely to be announced on December 1st.

### Capitalist Schools Serve the Bosses’ Needs—Workers Need Communism!

The issue isn’t “money for schools, not for war.” Schools exist to maintain and reproduce capitalism, which in crisis requires preparing for war “on the cheap.” Attacks on teachers are mainly intended to force them to prepare students for wage-slavery and patriotic military service.

*The Schools Our Children Deserve* promotes anti-racist reforms like smaller classes, and proposes paying for them mainly by taxing the rich. Union officials complain that “the governing bodies and corporate interests . . . have [created] a two-tier education system based on racial and class status.” But why? Because it’s the nature of education in class society to perpetuate that society! Those “decision-makers” can’t be persuaded to change course. We can’t tax inequality out of existence.

The most dangerous illusion is that we can and should fight for the “best” capitalism has to offer: schools for workers’ children with the same fancy stuff that rich kids get. We need education that is qualitatively different from anything

that exists today under capitalism.

Capitalist education is capitalistic through and through. It’s both driven and limited by the demands of a system based on exploitation and the armed violence of the state to maximize profits and defend empires. Science and technology, history and the so-called “social sciences,” arts and sports, all are distorted by capitalism.

Communist education unites production with learning and discovery. It ends the division of mental from manual labor. It teaches dialectical materialism, the theoretical tool that the masses can and will grasp to analyze and change the world. It develops us into one worldwide collective that fights consciously in the best interests of the masses everywhere.

Our participation in the struggles in the schools must not be limited to defending teachers against the bosses’ attacks or fighting for the illusion that we can (and should) win schools for the working class that replicate the capitalist ideas and practices of ruling-class private schools. We can and must be involved in these struggles, teaching parents, students and teachers that by mobilizing the masses for communism we can give our children what they deserve—a communist education in a communist world.



## PAKISTAN GARMENT WORKERS, from page 1

munist revolution, wiping out the profit system for good.

As the government promised to investigate, the factory’s owners hid. “We need to do more than change the faces—we need to change the policies,” said Farida Bibi, who lost her 26-year-old son in the fire. “Then we need to hang the men who owned this factory.”

### Hang ‘em all!

Workers need to mobilize to hang not only those owners but to wipe out the capitalist system based on daily exploitation and violence against workers for maximum profits. Garment factories from Los Angeles to Mexico City to San Salvador to Karachi are unsafe. Many would be death traps in the event of an earthquake.

What happened in Pakistan could happen anywhere. Our very lives depend on organizing to get rid of the capitalists and their murderous system and building a communist

system without bosses, where collective production will be to meet workers’ needs, in safe conditions.

### Workers Moving Against Capitalist Crisis Need Communism

As workers worldwide are attacked more brutally by the capitalist crisis, they are mobilizing against the bosses. They are more open to communist revolution, and it’s needed more urgently.

In Bangladesh on Sept. 16, over 100,000 women and men garment workers struck de-

manding reduced working hours and higher wages. Workers blocked highways and clashed with the police who fired rubber bullets and tear gas. The workers stormed a police post and set it on fire.

This is part of a series of strikes by hundreds of thousands of Bangladeshi garment workers for shorter hours and higher wages that have been met by police attacks. Bangladesh’s 3.5 million garment workers, mostly women, are the lowest paid in the world. They take home an average of \$37 a month after working 10 to 16 hour days.

These increasingly rebellious, courageous women and men workers can help make history by joining the fight for communism: to eliminate exploitation and production for sale once and for all. Garment workers in the US and El Salvador can do the same. The readers of *Red Flag* need to take it to more garment and all workers so that ICWP grows into a mass party that will wipe out production for profit. Collectively we will build a communist world where we’ll value every worker, and where we’ll produce and distribute, under the healthiest and most secure working conditions, everything that we need.



## Communism is Our Heritage and Future – Part III

### ANCIENT GREECE: FOR “EQUALITY AND COMMUNITY OF POSSESSION”

We’ve seen that Chinese radicals of the 8th to the 3rd century BCE wanted their “king” to work alongside the masses and consult with them. Now we travel five thousand miles from China to Sparta, Greece, still in the 3rd century BCE. There’s no evidence that these societies communicated with each other, but they had many similarities.

Forget the so-called “glorious democracy” of ancient Greece. Its famous city-states ran on slave labor. Plato, Aristotle, and every other Greek writer considered slavery an unalterable fact of nature. Even when they imagined utopias without private property, or with women in power, slaves did the work.

And forget the myth that Greek slaves were “not treated so badly.” Beatings and threats of beatings were common. Slaves in the brothels and the Laureion mines endured a particularly brutal existence.

As in China, no records of slave rebellions survive. But we know that slaves ran away, because Antiphanes wrote a comedy called *The Runaway-catcher*. Twenty thousand slaves, encouraged by Spartan soldiers, escaped Athens in 404 BCE after the Peloponnesian War.

In Sparta, the helots of Messenia (publicly-owned slaves) would in turn be freed when Thebes defeated Sparta in 371. But chattel slavery remained. Wealth was rapidly concentrating into the hands of 100 Spartan families whose huge estates depended on slave labor. By the time twenty-year-old Agis IV became co-King of Sparta in 245 BCE, the “free” masses were drowning in debt.

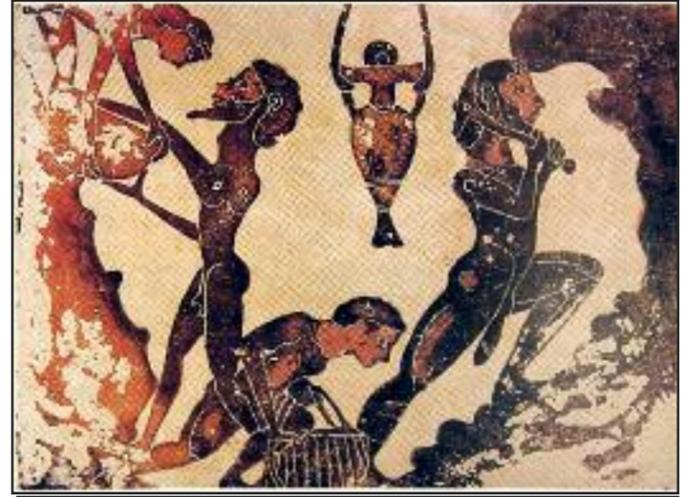
According to the historian Plutarch, Agis “tried to exalt the people and incurred the hatred of the nobles.” He planned to “establish equality and community of possession among the citizens” and the free non-citizens – but not the slaves.

Agis and his allies convened a popular assembly to consider his plan. Agis contributed his own huge estate to “the common stock.” He convinced his mother and grandmother (two of the wealthiest Spartans) and others to do the same.

Most of the Spartan rulers (including Agis’s co-King Leonidas II) organized against him, but the masses were with him. His popularity increased after his forces burned a huge pile of mortgage notes and other papers, wiping out the debts. “And now,” wrote Plutarch, “the multitude demanded also that the land should at once be divided.”

Before this could happen, Agis was sent on a military expedition. People were amazed by the discipline of his poor but now debt-free soldiers as “they marched through the Peloponnesus without doing any injury, without rudeness, and almost without noise.” Agis lived, dressed, and armed himself as the common soldiers did. The rich feared “that they might prove a disturbing force and set a bad example among the common people everywhere,” reported Plutarch.

Agis returned to Sparta amidst “much commotion and a revolution.” In his absence, other rulers had taxed and oppressed the people harder than ever. The land hadn’t been divided as promised. Agis sought sanctuary but was captured and im-



Ancient Greek pottery shows slave miners.

prisoned. Refusing to renounce his policies, he was quickly executed along with his mother and grandmother, shortly before a crowd arrived to attempt a rescue.

Cleomenes III, king of Sparta from 235 to 221 BCE, took up Agis’s cause. He emancipated the helots of Laconia – but still not the chattel slaves. Defeated in battle in 222-221 BCE, Cleomenes fled to Alexandria, Egypt, where he tried to organize a revolt. Failing, he committed suicide.

Like the Chinese Agriculturalists, Agis and Cleomenes tried to turn back the clock to a society based on small farmers. They didn’t see slaves as allies (much less leaders) of those they called the “common people.” They mistakenly thought that political reforms could create a more equal society, even on the backs of the slaves

Next: *Revolution versus Reform in Ancient Rome*

## No Pay Increase is Worth Dying For:

### JOIN ICWP & FIGHT FOR A COMMUNIST WORLD!

“Even though I belong to a union, they under-represent my needs. My concerns are not adequately voiced... Despite my strength, I am powerless.” — South African miner

#### Workers of the World are Rising Up!

In the last couple of years, the workers in Greece have staged 18 general strikes. A textile workers’ strike in Egypt sparked the rebellion in Tahrir Square. In India deadly strikes have swept the auto industry while millions of Chinese workers have staged an unprecedented strike wave. In Chicago last week 26,000 teachers – supported by hundreds of thousands of parents – ended a seven-day strike.

Yet, to date, the sharpest example in this huge upsurge of world wide militancy has been the wildcat strike of thousands of armed platinum miners at Lonmin in Marikana, South Africa. Marginalized and nameless some three months ago, the Marikana miners have become an inspiration to workers the world over. What started as a rank-and-file rebellion against the do-nothing union and a British conglomerate spread to the gold mines and threatened the profits of shareholders from



Marikana miners listening to terms of pay settlement.

Wall St. to London.

#### Capitalist Crisis

Behind this strike wave lies a crisis of overproduction that is stifling world markets. Capitalists have developed so much industry that they can no longer reap enough profits. And, unless there’s a profit to be had, capitalists won’t produce a thing. Right now a record \$32 trillion is being hoarded in offshore banks waiting for a ‘friendly’ rate of profit. Crises like these are a necessary outcome of organizing production for private profits.

One way or another, these crises dictate the labor relations of all workers (private or public sector) the world over. Corporations push for lower taxes in an effort to bolster their after-tax rate of profits. As a result public sector workers feel the crunch of smaller government budgets. Private sector workers feel the attacks directly in lay-offs, wage cuts and speed-ups. All in attempts to restore a satisfactory rate of profit to banks, industry, mines and agribusiness.

This rate of profit won’t be restored until enough rival industries, or industrial countries have been destroyed by world war. Or there will be profits, because we will destroy them with communist revolution.

#### “Despite my strength, I am powerless”

As the ICWP’s Summer Project showed, while industrial workers and soldiers are wide open to examining the ideas of communist revolution, most are not yet convinced. Instead of fighting for communist revolution, they are hitting out at their nearest enemies like President Zuma in South Africa or Mayor Rahm Emanuel in Chicago.

Ask the parents and teachers in Chicago in six months how they feel about a regimen of school closings and teacher evaluations based on test scores. Ask Greek, Spanish or Chinese workers

after their huge strike waves. They are likely to echo the South African worker we quoted at the beginning: “Despite our strength, we are powerless.”

#### With a worldwide ICWP, we will be powerful!

South African miners, the heart of the South African economy, fought militantly against the cops and the bosses. The capitalists murdered dozens of miners to put down the struggle and arrested hundreds. Still, the struggle continued and spread to other mines. Finally, faced with the deployment of a thousand soldiers to the area, and police raids on their homes, with tear gas and rubber bullets, killing one woman and injuring many more, and offered a 22% wage increase, the miners of Marikana have gone back to work. This is the logic of trade union struggles, no matter how militant.

Capitalism, with its built-in crises, its wars for raw materials, trade rights and domination, and disregard for human life, continues. We, the majority, are still cogs in a societal machine that organizes all production solely for the private profits of a few.

Imagine the alternative: the heroism of the miners in South Africa, the teachers in Chicago and the workers from Spain to Greece to China as a conscious step in mobilizing the masses for communist revolution. Building the International Communist Workers’ Party to fight, not just for a pay increase, but to run the whole of society. Fighting for a system where all production will be for use and not private profits and everyone will work to share the common good. Doing so will enable us to rephrase the miner’s quote: “Because we are mobilized in a worldwide party fighting for communist revolution, we are powerful.”

## HONDURAS: THE STRUGGLES OF TEACHERS AND FARMWORKERS GROWS STRONGER

HONDURAS, September 2012—The women and men teachers have decided to keep fighting. Thousands of them have taken to the streets each Thursday and Friday protesting and demanding payment of their wages, and the repeal of laws that attack them, like increasing the age for retirement, and the management of their pension funds, among others. In the last few days there have been two big mobilizations, concentrations of teachers who have marched in all the cities of Honduras. Its no wonder that the government feels incapable of containing the daily battle that the teachers are carrying out.

The farmworkers are not left behind. Thousands of them have mobilized to the capital, Tegucigalpa, in defense of the land that belongs to them, especially the farms located on the north coast of the country, the Valley of El Aguan. The national landowners (especially the Facusé family, the biggest landowners in Honduras), as well as foreign multinational companies dedicated to the cultivation of the sought after African palm and sugar cane, have taken their land from them.



In the militant struggle of the farmworkers to defend their lands as their only source of subsistence, many have been jailed and dozens murdered by the oligarchy and the government. Now it seems that in order to contain the farmworkers' struggle, they have decreed a disarmament in the department of Colón, where the farmworkers have greater strength. This attack only favors the landlords. The biggest confrontation is between the private guards of the landlords and the farmworkers.

Recently thousands of farmworkers took over the main transport route from the capital and sta-

tioned themselves in from of the Supreme Court of (In)Justice, where there was a major confrontation with the police and the army, resulting in dozens of injured and captured. What's happening in Honduras is like what is happening in the majority of countries, developed and underdeveloped, where the majority of the population suffers first hand all the calamities that arise from the capitalist system.

The Honduran working class is not folding its arms. It is in the streets and discussing what alternative to take. The liberals, unionists and fake leftists are taking the angry masses into the arms of capitalism, which has entered a state of exhaustion and decay that makes it more aggressive and exploitive.

On the other hand there is the alternative of organizing and fighting to destroy this capitalist system and build a communist society, where everything there is and that is produced will be to meet the needs of all workers and their families.

*Red Flag* circulates among these masses, with the goal of workers, teachers, farmworkers and students taking communist ideas as their own, joining the International Communist Workers' Party (ICWP) and helping to lead the whole international working class in a communist revolution.

### THE PEDDLER

A political story I lived in my youth:

My father was one of many peddlers and salesmen in the 1920's in Mexico. The peddlers transported products from the countryside to the cities and vice versa, using as transportation beasts of burden, mules and donkeys. My father traveled from the town of Tula to Victoria, Tamaulipas, crossing the Eastern Sierra Madre. The trip took three days.

The peddlers were very knowledgeable about the weather. They knew when it would be favorable for travel, since they transported some delicate products that the rain could damage. They oriented themselves by the phases of the moon, the howls of the coyotes, the song of the Cowboy bird, the swirling wind, the dirt on the road, the stars, and the crowing of cocks which at the same time served them as a clock.

Even though I was a child, sometimes my father took me with him. We ate without stopping because it wasn't possible to have the donkeys standing still loaded with cargo. More than once my father said to me, "We have to cross the river today because tonight it will rain and tomorrow it will be too high." So we sped up to cross the river. Sometimes we crossed it at sunset, other times late at night.

At those times the poor donkeys were so tired that when we removed the cargo, they stood there immobile for a long time, tired, hungry, with huge sores on their backs. They were true super-slaves, putting up with every-

thing without protest. Some donkeys who couldn't resist because their legs were damaged or they were so tired that they couldn't walk more, were abandoned. Their cargo was then distributed to the rest of the mules, now overloaded. If those abandoned donkeys survived being eaten by coyotes, bears, tigers, bats and other predators, and if they were found on the return, they were re-incorporated into the work force.

There was no way to improve the living conditions of the peddlers and their families, much less for the beasts of burden, which constituted their means of production. The Mexican Revolution, recently ended, had left a terrible famine. The people suffered because the soldiers of the Porfirio regime had eaten the farmworkers' work animals. They had also devastated the farmworkers' crops to feed themselves and their horses.

The people suffered but the "revolution" wasn't either for socialism or much less for communism. It was a civil war to reform capitalism. However, the "triumph" of the revolution was a success for some "revolutionary" bosses and the industrial capitalists.

Other capitalists, who had already monopolized the buying of the fiber that the farmworkers took from the plant called Lechuguilla, took advantage of the famine to buy the scarce production of the farmworkers at poverty prices.

Remembering those suffering peddlers and

their donkeys makes me feel sorry but it doesn't surprise me. That's because under capitalism, everything is exploitation. The donkeys, the peddlers, and the farmworkers formed a great labor force in the service of the capitalists.

Capitalist oppression and exploitation will never end if we don't organize a communist revolution. These are the communist ideas that they have taught me and that I teach to the working class, that to change this miserable way of life, there's only one option: the change from capitalism to communism through a workers' revolution.

In communism, for example, the areas of the earth that are or can be very productive will be prepared to plant and cultivate collectively, and without those who live there having to suffer, because they will have everything necessary to live modestly.

For the capitalists, the farmworkers are synonymous with ignorance, that they lend themselves to exploitation. But in communism this way of seeing the farmworkers won't exist any more, because when everyone works collectively, the barrier between intellectual and manual work will disappear. Everyone will learn from each other. Those who only know how to do mental work will learn to do manual work and visa versa, with every one sharing all our experiences and knowledge.

--Veteran Comrade

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**THERE'S ENOUGH FOOD****THE PROBLEM IS CAPITALIST COMMODITY PRODUCTION**

"There's not enough food. That's why there's hunger in the world. We have to increase crop yield per acre."

These are some of the lies that we frequently hear in the universities, in government reports, and even among agricultural workers. But in capitalism food is a commodity and when it doesn't generate profits, it doesn't get into the mouths of the workers.

Today 1.3 billion people suffer from hunger worldwide. At the same time the bosses throw 40% of the food produced in the garbage, a quantity sufficient to feed the whole continent of Africa. In Mexico, 20,000 tons of food are wasted a year while 30 million people go hungry. 80% of the world's malnourished children live in underdeveloped countries where there are surpluses of food, like in South Africa, which exports corn to Mexico.

**Communist Struggle Against Sexism**

This is a comment about the letter, "Fighting Against Sexism and for Communism with Soldiers," from a comrade who is organizing soldiers in Mexico.

Dear Comrade, your letter caught my attention because recently I had a similar experience in a garment factory in Los Angeles, California.

At the end of one of the sales, I was very happy because I was able to make two contacts. When I called one of them to make an appointment to meet and discuss the politics of the Party (ICWP) or an article in *Red Flag*, he invited me to go out, because he wanted to get to know me, to talk, to "hang out." In that moment, I felt so mad and I wanted to tell him off. That would have been the easiest for me, but my political work was more important because I am fighting against sexism, male chauvinism and all the garbage of capitalism. I breathed deeply, trying to think what to do and how to answer without getting mad, and try to keep the contact.

I told him clearly that my interest with him goes further than friendship, because I will share the only alternative for him and all workers, communism. I told him that if he was interested in discussing politics that he should call me on the phone. I suggested that we meet before he went to work, for five minutes, since the next day we were going to distribute *Red Flag* in this same place. He didn't call, but I think that this experience has strengthened me politically and personally as a woman revolutionary.

Talking with other comrades about this topic, I learned that what happened to you and me happens with many comrades, including with men who try to make contacts among women, though maybe to a lesser extent.

This problem of sexism is an obstacle in our political work. One suggestion is that when you make a contact with some one, tell them that you will visit them together with another comrade, and do that. We have to look for ways to overcome this obstacle.

But never stop struggling against this evil created by capitalism and don't stop having confidence in the working class, or limit yourself to only make contacts with women, because this holds back our revolutionary struggle. We must discard the big lie that men are animals by nature, or the lie that no one is your friend. We are capable of building ties of friendship and love among the working class now, during and after the revolution.

---Red Woman Garment Comrade

The current world production of food is enough to feed 10 billion people, the estimated population for the year 2050. The major portion of cereals produced is used to feed cars through bio-combustibles, or to fatten cattle.

**Capitalism is the Cause of Poverty.**

One third of the world's population survives on less than \$2 a day. With the worldwide capitalist crisis, hunger sharpens for the workers while the bosses increase their riches. For example in Mexico, the price of an egg rose 17 pesos to 80 pesos, and the bosses made 15% more compared to other years.

**Communism Will Feed Everyone**

The real solution is to change the material base on which society is organized. Communism will establish the material base to eliminate any and all privilege. We'll produce the food needed to feed each and every worker in the world without

waste, and do so in areas where the ecological potential exists to lower the negative environmental impact.

We'll eliminate money. The divisions in society that exist through borders, ethnicities, and "races," will be wiped off the face of the earth. The wage system will only be a memory. Both mental and manual work will have equal importance. We'll all cooperate to build comfortable shelter from the inclemencies of nature. We'll share the fruits of our collective labor. Together we'll reach solutions to the problems that we confront. Reforming capitalism for the benefit of workers is an illusion. Only organized through a communist party like ICWP will we make worldwide revolution that breaks the chains that keep us oppressed. We invite you to read, write for, distribute, work with and organize for *Red Flag*. Join ICWP. ---Comrade from Mexico

**Divorce & Inter-imperialist Rivalry: The Personal is Political**

In a discussion group at the recent Communist School, a comrade said, "The main aspect of the contradiction between workers and bosses is inter-imperialist rivalry." Then he added, "Everything revolves around inter-imperialist rivalry. So how can we link a divorce to this rivalry?"

Another comrade answered that perhaps her husband worked in a factory that was closed, due to the worldwide overproduction crisis or that the production was sent to China, to make more profit. When he (or she) became unemployed, their economic problems started getting worse, leading to the use of drugs, or alcoholism, and eventually divorce. Often spouses blame each other without seeing that the true guilty party is capitalism.

The theme of divorce caught my attention, because it's something that affects the working class a lot. In the ruling class there is divorce because they can't control their desires. They have everything, gotten from corruption and exploitation of the working class, but they don't have appreciation for their families.

In contrast, many times the divorces in the working class are due to being tired of having to fight through so many problems in daily life. They work eight hours or more every day but the money isn't enough to cover their basic needs. This induces many to look to alcoholism as a form of escape, without knowing that it will only make the situation worse.

That's why I would like to address the comrade who wrote the letter "Is communism an illusion," to say that the capitalist system is to blame for all the problems of the working class, and that communist revolution is the only solution. Because in communism, there won't be exploitation; money will be abolished, and there won't be racism or sexism. We'll all have the same rights, and there won't be so many divorces. We'll all have medical care and everything necessary to live as human beings. Only with communism will we have a better life.

---A woman worker comrade

**Miners of the World Unite Against Capitalist Hell!**

At the beginning of August, seven miners died in a collapse in mine 7 of the company Minerals of the North SA (Minosa), due to terrible working conditions and the insecurity of the mine. These are added to the seven miners who died at the El Progreso mine, which occurred on July 25th with the explosion in the small mine called Deburques in the state of Coahuila.

In appearance, methane gas is the main enemy of the coal miners, but the bosses and their union leaders are even more poisonous. The bosses are bloodsuckers and the unions are treacherous for not telling the workers that we need to put an end to the exploitation of workers.

In recent years, capitalism has killed hundreds of our brothers in the mines in several states of Mexico like Coahuila, Zacatecas, Durango, while other miners have been beaten or jailed due to their struggles against the mine owners.

But this murderous system isn't only in Mexico. We also encounter it in South Africa where 34 striking platinum miners were shot in cold blood by racist cops with metal bullets that come from these same mines. The capitalist profit system is the most murderous system that has arisen since the existence of humanity. Some workers are wiped out violently in class battles and wars; others die slowly with hunger, disease and the stress caused by unemployment.

Today more than ever it's important to build ties of unity between miners and all workers of the world, in the face of the bosses' war on workers and the coming World War III. In South Africa, masses of miners are in motion. If the miners continue rebelling against producing the metal that supplies the war industries as well as the automobiles and other commodities which move the system of exploitation, all the capitalists would unite against them and we would need the organized violence of millions of workers. But this situation can only change the world when communism is on the minds of the masses of miners and all workers as the only solution to this capitalist inferno. Death to capitalism! Long live communism!

---A Comrade in L.A.

## Make the Bosses Sweat

# COMMUNISM WILL SMASH THEIR SEX- AND WAGE-SLAVERY

The bosses have some nerve. Their system has turned sex slavery into a huge global industry. Nicholas Kristof and Sheryl WuDunn, in their book *Half the Sky: Turning Oppression into Opportunity for Women Worldwide* (an upcoming PBS series), push sweatshops as the answer. Sex slavery or wage slavery: that's what these slick apologists for U.S. imperialism have to offer women!

Capitalism's horrors don't stop there. *Half the Sky* takes aim at Africa, Bangladesh and Pakistan. Not coincidentally, the Obama administration's new war strategy places emphasis on building armed forces loyal to the US in these areas to combat Chinese economic penetration (see below). Add brutal slaughter to the list.

Kristof and WuDunn are building a movement and NGO (non-governmental organization) based on this charade. Secretary of State Hillary Clinton, featured prominently in the PBS series, hopes to ride the coattails of this movement to a 2016 presidential bid.

Even Kristof and WuDunn admit, "In the last few decades sex slavery has worsened. One reason for that is the collapse of Communism (sic) in Eastern Europe and Indochina. The immediate result was economic distress. Capitalism created new markets for rice and potatoes, but also for female flesh." (p.11)

They can't admit the obvious: Capitalism must go! Communist revolution will finally end sex slavery, sexist super-exploitation and the endless inter-imperialist rivalry leading to war, world war and the wholesale slaughter of women and men alike.

### Bosses Cry All The Way To The Bank

*Half the Sky* is jam-packed with truly horrendous stories of the systematic rape and torture of large numbers of women in Africa and south Asia (Bangladesh, Pakistan). The reader is stunned by the depth and breadth of these attacks. Our hearts go out to these women. But the solutions offered are those that will benefit big capital under the guise of "humanitarianism."

Part of the solution which Kristof and WuDunn propose for women in developing countries is entrepreneurship, using micro loans from NGOs to begin their own businesses. "Micro" refers to the amount of the loan, not the annual interest rates, often 20% to 30%. A bonanza for Goldman Sachs!

Micro-financing is an expanding market. According to the Microcredit Summit Campaign, there are presently 150 million borrowers, more than two-thirds of them women. According to the *Wall Street Journal*, in one year, investors poured more than \$1 billion into the largest company-managed microfinance funds.

However, most borrowers can't repay these loans, ending up deeper in debt than ever. "In Grameen, after 8 years of borrowing, 55% of households cannot buy basic nutritional needs – so they are forced to use the loans to buy food rather than invest in business, and cannot possibly pay back what they have borrowed." (Gina Neff, quoted in *Nation* 10/15/2006)

### It's A Set-Up!

Now Kristof and WuDunn come in for the kill. What's the best solution to the plight of women in the developing world? "Sweatshops have given women a boost. The factories prefer young women, perhaps because they're more docile... instead of denouncing sweatshops, we in the West should be encouraging manufacturing in

poor countries, particularly in Africa and the Muslim world." (p. 210)

It's not likely the families of the 314 workers who died in Pakistani sweatshop fires last week agreed. Or more than 300,000 Bangladesh garment workers who laid down their tools and picked up bricks to fight the armed might of the state.

### Not Half the Sky, But the Whole of What We Produce

The *Half the Sky* movement is a deadly charade. If we want to beat sexism we need to mobilize the masses for communism.

Capitalism is a commodity system. Everything is for sale and nothing has any value if it can't be sold.

Under capitalism, workers are subject to the most demeaning forms of exploitation. The bosses talk about individuality and freedom, but they don't really give a damn about the workers' lives, especially in poor countries.

Sex slavery is crucial to the capitalist, like maintaining a reserve army of the unemployed. Women fleeing sex slavery can provide a steady labor supply for the bosses' super-exploitive factories.

Communism, on the other hand, thrives on cooperation. Every worker must contribute according to his or her ability and commitment. What we receive will not come at the expense of others,

but will be based on our collective needs. Exploitation will be eliminated not only from the workplace, but also in all human relations.

This is no idealist dream. The material basis for ending sexism includes the abolition of money, profit and exploitation.

With this vision, past revolutions made the greatest strides against sexism, even though these were eventually undermined by the incorrect strategy of socialism. This time we'll go directly to communism, bringing none of the vestiges of capitalism with us.

**This time we will win!**



Bangladeshi Sweat Shop Workers, August 2012

## HALF THE SKY MARCHES TO IMPERIALISM'S WAR BEAT

Coverage of the Obama administration's strategic military "pivot" to Asia has focused on the creation of more bases and new naval deployments. Lost was the emphasis on the six-point program for light-footprint warfare relying on special operations forces, drones, spies, civilian "partners" and most importantly, proxy (puppet) fighters.

"The importance of these missions to the security of the United States is often little appreciated," complained State Department official, Andrew Shapiro earlier this year.

Alarmed by China's increasing economic penetration, Africa is presently the prime location for the development of American-style proxy warfare. Under Obama, operations have accelerated far beyond the limited interventions of the Bush years, says *Los Angeles Times* contributor Nick Turse:

"These include last year's war in Libya: the expansion of a growing network of supply depots, small camps; a regional drone campaign with missions run out of Djibouti, Ethiopia and the Indian Ocean archipelago nation of Seychelles; ... a flotilla of 30 ships in that ocean supporting regional operation and a special ops expeditionary force bolstered by State Department agents."

The *Half the Sky* movement provides domestic political cover for this imperialist strategy and also aims to find "confidential sources," in WuDunn's words, to do US imperialism's dirty work. China can set up new factories in days, and the infrastructure to support them (roads, electricity, etc.) within months. The US can't match this, but according to Kristof and WuDunn the US bosses create sweatshops for "humanitarian" reasons, not super-profits.

Beyond Africa, US and Bangladesh forces took part in joint exercises earlier this year. Clinton's State Department took the lead on this mission, supported by the Pentagon's Orwellian-named Global Peace Operations Initiative (GPOI). Under GPOI, the US has also partnered with Pakistan. GPOI has burned through over half a billion dollars to train and equip proxy fighters in the last eight years.

And where else do Kristof and WuDunn bestow their attention? Why, in Bangladesh and Pakistan, of course!

The US, for now, hopes to keep its empire intact through proxy fighters. Their track record is not very encouraging: just look at Afghanistan and Iraq. Eventually, capitalism will lead us to world war. You can count on *Half the Sky* to march right in step.