

RED FLAG

MOBILIZE THE MASSES FOR COMMUNISM

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

SOUTH AFRICAN WILDCATS POINT TO THE FIRE NEXT TIME

“Why haven’t we heard about the class war raging in South African industry,” our friends have asked us.

Eighty thousand miners are currently striking in a wave of wildcats. Twenty thousand truckers have joined them. Maybe the bosses don’t want us to get ideas.

Each week the fight has gotten bigger since the police murder of 34 wildcat strikers at the Lonmin platinum mine back in August. No sooner does one mine settle than the wildcat wave spreads to other mines and industries: from Lonmin to the world’s biggest platinum mine, Anglo American; from platinum mines to coal and chrome and gold mines; from miners to truckers.

Last week the Anglo American bosses fired 12,000 striking miners. The workers laughed. The workers took on the bosses’ cops at the company’s Rustenburg mine with little more than sticks. Another miner was killed, but the workers kept fighting.

These industrial workers know they are in an intense battle with the South African government: its ruling party, the African National Congress (ANC), and the union movement, in particular, the National Union of Miners (NUM).

In form, these are still strikes over the conditions of wage labor. In reality, they challenge the ideology of the post-Apartheid government that converted black trade union leaders into black capitalists, which linked “black empowerment” to capital investment. The industrial working class has rejected that idea in spectacular fashion these last few months.

The bosses can’t stop the working class. They can’t kill us; they

can’t scare us; they can’t fire us into submission. Even the union’s class collaboration can’t stop us. These kinds of massive social struggles cry out for a communist response.

The tactic of political strikes against capitalism reverberates in this kind of climate. Victory could be ours if this widespread heroism turned toward mobilizing the masses for communism.

2012: The Year the Dam Burst

In March of this year hundreds of thousands of South African workers in manufacturing, mining and service industries took to the streets in a general strike protesting the growing use of casual labor, labor brokers and starvation wages. Organized by General Confederation of Unions (COSATU), the rallies were platforms for fiery speeches and tame actions.

At the end of the day a capitalist investor might have been cautiously reassured that the South African working class was still prepared to stake its future on the ups and downs of the wage system. No doubt had our pamphlet *Mobilize the Masses for Communism* been there, it would have been well received but not urgently discussed.

COSATU was forced into this demonstration because earlier in the year a wildcat strike broke out at the world’s second largest platinum producer, Impala Platinum. It was a bitter dispute with the company sacking thousands of strikers but then forced to re-hire them. The official union, the NUM, played no part in the strike, the negotiations or the settlement.

Capitalist investors wanted to know was this an isolated incident or part of a coming trend? How



COLLEGE STUDENTS QUESTION ELECTIONS PROPAGANDA

College students in ICWP, like everybody else in the US, have been bombarded with “Rock the Vote” propaganda, and have seen our friends and ourselves influenced by it. We knew we had to write up something to clarify our own ideas and help with the discussions with our friends. We began the leaflet talking about why everybody we know hates Romney.

“Anybody who saw the videos on the Mother Jones website of Romney talking to his rich supporters about the 47% of us who just suck off the government had to be angry and disgusted. Who does he think he is? The ones who really suck off the rest of us are the rich, who make their money every day off the sweat and blood of working people. Then they have their fancy lawyers figuring out how to give them tax breaks. We know who the parasites are—the rich, the capi-

talists, the ruling class.”

Obama’s Policies: The Hype vs. The Reality

When we were passing out our leaflet at a community college, an older comrade was talking to a young student about it. The young man was telling how Obama did better than Bush.

“Read the leaflet,” he responded.

“That doesn’t mean we want you to vote for Obama...Even though Obama is posing as the defender of immigrants, he has deported more people than Bush ever did. Even though Obama is posing as the president who got us out of Iraq, the veterans of the wars in Iraq and Afghanistan are unemployed, neglected and suicidal. Even though Obama is posing as the hope for change for African Americans, in South Central Los Angeles, a place devastated by police brutality and

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LA Bus Drivers Demand: Re-Open the Contract

LA TRANSIT WORKERS NEED POLITICAL STRIKE AGAINST CAPITALISM

“They told us that the contract stipulated that broken mirrors wouldn’t count as accidents, but then they changed it in a side agreement. Recently, a driver with 26 years of seniority was forced to resign or be fired because of a broken mirror. They lied to us!” a driver at Division 18 told us angrily.

The simmering anger of thousands of LA MTA transit workers against MTA’s and capitalism’s reign of terror is turning into action. Over 1,400 drivers have signed a petition urging “our leaders to act now to cancel and/or void the 2012 MTA contract agreement.” Renegotiating the contract might require a strike or even a wildcat like those of the 80,000 miners in South Africa (see page 1).

We applaud and support the fighting spirit of those signing the petition. Like millions of striking workers in South Africa, Greece, Spain, Honduras, China, and Bangladesh, MTA workers are rising against the ravages of capitalism. These are mass rebellions against a system unable to meet the needs of the international working class.

In particular, we can learn a great deal from the wildcatting South African miners. They have rejected the union contracts and taken matters into their own hands. They have advanced the struggle against racism by rejecting black capitalism. But to win in South Africa or here we must advance the struggle with a conscious political strike against this racist system.

We, therefore, urge MTA workers to organize a political strike against capitalism. Such a strike could build for communist revolution as the only way to smash racism, sexism, and all borders and to unify our class worldwide. Such a strike would put the elimination of wage slavery, money, production for profits, and the market on the front burner. And most importantly, such a strike points to the need to organize social production and dis-

tribution “from each according to their abilities and commitment, to each according to need.”

Workers Must Blaze New Trails

Such a strike would take the class struggle to a higher level than ever. As with all new endeavors, we don’t claim to know all the answers. We are confident that the working class will help us find them.

What we do know, however, is that trade unionism and the fight for socialism don’t work. Lacking confidence that workers could be won to fight directly for communism, the old communist movement either called for socialism or buried itself in trade unionism. Our guiding principle should be to mobilize the masses for communism.

Socialism turned out to be state capitalism. Russia, China, Vietnam, North Korea, Cuba and Eastern Europe are grim reminders of this failed strategy. The communist leaders in these countries became the capitalist oppressors of the masses.

Trade unionism destroyed the Communist Party USA which once had hundreds of thousands of members. This party buried revolution and concentrated instead on improving US workers’ lives by building “powerful” industrial unions and lobbying for laws.

Today, with only a handful of members, the CPUSA and the labor movement it built are an appendage of the Democratic Party, while all the “gains” that workers fought and died for are being dismantled, and the union officials and politicians stick treacherous daggers in our backs.

We are Living in Historical Moments

MTA workers, like others nationally and internationally, are on the move. The burning question of the day is what ideology will lead this growing working class movement: trade unionism or communism?

Historically, the communist movement taught that more and more militant trade unionism would somehow lead to revolution.

We disagree. Trade unionism’s goal is not to destroy capitalism but to reform it. A union contract – no matter how “good” – justifies and legalizes the bosses’ wage slavery.

Communism is not some far-off dream, but the only way to understand and respond to both the attack on the working class this crisis has wrought and the mass rebellions around the world. We need communist thinking and action now.

Whither the International Working Class?

Capitalist misery, fascism and war or a Communist world without money, wage slavery, exploitation, war and other capitalist evils? That is the question! We are confident that workers will choose the communist path, if presented to them.

Over 700 MTA workers who regularly read each edition of *Red Flag* can play a decisive role in answering this question in favor of the working class. A political strike by MTA workers that shuts down the second largest US city could capture the imagination of millions. It could advance the process of building a revolutionary communist movement.

The petition being circulated has the MTA bosses and their lackeys - James Williams and his cabal—quivering. MTA bosses’ fear for their wallets and Williams and his gang for their cozy union positions. We need to organize a strike that will have them fearing for the life of their racist murderous system.

The many MTA workers who read *Red Flag* can help do this by joining the International Communist Workers Party and building *Red Flag* action groups in every division. This would be a tremendous boost in building an ICWP capable of mobilizing the masses for communism globally.

THE FIRE LAST TIME

Thirty years ago, South Africa was gripped by a massive, militant strike wave that took the form of a fight over the conditions of wage slavery. But it was more: a struggle against the most violently racist system that existed in the world at that time, called Apartheid. Apartheid fell, but to defeat racism would have required – and still requires – a fight against capitalism itself.

The South African industrial struggles were eventually contained, as trade-union struggles

always are. But the anti-racist content of that struggle survived in a different form. It broke out again in a Soweto high school as a fight over education.

In 1984, more than half a million students in over 60 townships boycotted racist schools. Some raised the slogan, “Liberation before education” to counter the lie that schooling was a pathway out of the racist system.

The South African government was so desperate that it even arrested seven-year-olds! Defying fascist repression, the massive rebellion developed the “stay-away” tactic. Some students even blocked their own parents from commuting to work.

Barclay’s of London, a major imperialist bank that owned title to much of Africa, saw the handwriting on the wall. Privately, in the corridors of capitalist power, they looked for a way to stabilize South Africa by ending Apartheid while keeping capitalism intact. And they found it in Nelson Mandela’s African National Congress (ANC) in coalition with the National Union of Miners (NUM) and the general confederation of unions



Soweto Rebellion



1974 Strike, Durban South Africa

(COSATU).

The South African “Communist” Party, with the full support of Cuba and the Soviet Union, played a leading role in ANC, NUM, and COSATU and their betrayal of the mass anti-racist struggle. They were unwilling to mobilize the masses for communism, the only way to create the material basis for ending racism. Instead, they raised the slogan of “Black Empowerment” and became the key forces to contain the aspirations of workers and students for liberation.

It’s worth remembering this history as we prepare for the fire next time.



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El Salvador

COMMUNISTS FROM FACTORIES & FIELDS SHARE EXPERIENCES

El Salvador—Ten workers organized in the International Communist Workers' Party visited the mountains of this country for the first time. They met with farmworker comrades, who, in the period of the civil war in El Salvador, participated as organizers of guerilla groups beginning in the 1970's. Today, these farmworkers have become communist organizers in ICWP.

"We got wet, but it was a very beneficial trip," stated a smiling and satisfied worker and reader of *Red Flag*, who for the first time met with a group of workers organized in the factories of this country. "It's good to listen to the history of this country from those who lived it and made it," stated another worker. They made these comments under a torrential rain that felt uplifting in this hot weather.

It was a trip that lasted several hours but this did not discourage these enthusiastic comrades, women and men workers. We came to a town where recently a statue was put on display with

plaques with the names of hundreds of farmworkers, workers and students as well as internationalists who died in combat in the fight that occurred here in the 1980's.

Then there was a delicious communist lunch prepared in part by a farmworker family who were waiting with tortillas hot off the griddle and rice with vegetables from the area. The comrades from the city brought chicken to complement this. In the middle of lunch, there was a presentation by a comrade farmworker and leader of ICWP about why they were organizing in these areas and how they should continue to organize ICWP in the factories as well.

There were many questions about some false leaders who have built the reformist parties and who have pushed their image as great revolutionaries. We talked about the reality that these false leaders have only made personal profit from the struggles of workers and farmworkers.

Having eaten and enjoyed more revolutionary

communist culture, we continued traveling up the mountains. We went to a museum of weapons and of the social movements that have occurred for centuries in this country, which showed the enormous contribution that has been made through international solidarity. In this part of the trip, despite the intensified rain, we had the opportunity to greet many readers and members of the Party who live in these areas. The farmworkers of the Party welcomed the workers with tremendous camaraderie. For those who went to this part of the country for the first time, it was an unforgettable experience.

"Our friends who couldn't come are going to be surprised when we tell them about this great experience," said a leading worker and member of the Party. Between torrential rain and smiles, they said emphatically, "We want to go to another similar activity wherever it can be scheduled."

ELECTIONS from page 1 *murder, unemployment is 50%, as if things weren't bad enough. Even though Obama is posing as the rescuer of the working class who saved General Motors, US capitalism is on a decline that no politician can stop.*

"True," said the young man, "but the Republicans set the stage for Obama."

"There is no difference between Republicans and Democrats," responded the comrade. "They all serve the interest of the rich rulers. And Obama is better to screw up all workers, because he's better at fooling us."

"You're right," he responded. "Thank you." And then he shook the comrade's hand.

Thinking Outside the Ballot Box

When we went to a state college with the leaflet, we saw great responses. "Hey, what have you got there?" said one student.

"Communist literature talking about the elections," responded the comrade, his classmate. "Check out the paper and let me know what you think of it."

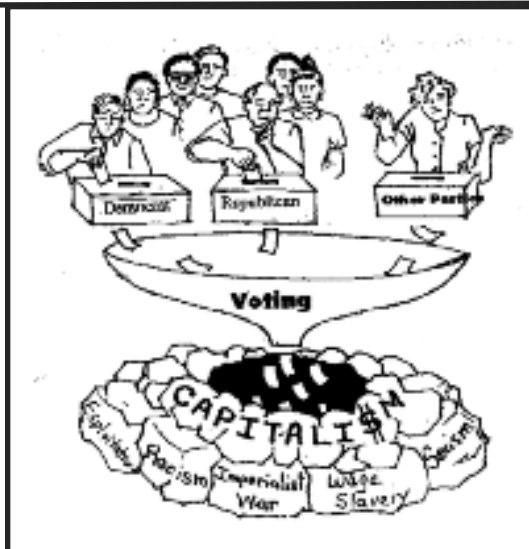
When we saw each other again the student greeted the comrade very warmly. His friend

talked about how racism plays a part in politics and why he was going to vote for Obama because he is a little better than Mitt Romney.

Our comrade then explained that although Obama is black, that makes him even worse than Romney because we are convinced that we have more in common with him. "Black, white, Republican, or Democrat there is no such thing as a good politician because they all are fighting for the capitalist system which makes them an enemy of the working class," said the comrade as his classmate listened very attentively.

"I always thought about this stuff, but I never knew that there was something we could do," he said.

Our comrade said, "We don't have to vote if we don't want to. There are real ways to work for change. Voting is how politicians convince us that we are in control of the outcome when in reality



it's the complete opposite."

A Better World is Possible

As we said in the leaflet, "People vote for a 'lesser evil' because they see no alternative to voting. There is an alternative, mobilizing the masses for a communist revolution. In a communist society, we will run the world collectively. There will be no bosses, no money, no banks, and no borders. We will run everything by the workers,

for the benefit of the workers and not in the interests of any hidden agenda, personal interest, or private profit. This isn't just a dream. This is what we are building for in the International Communist Workers' Party. The uprisings and strikes around the world show that the potential for communist revolution is real."

After our discussion, the student said, "Thank you. After reading the leaflet, I'm not going to vote anymore. Give me a couple more Red Flags. I'm going to share them with my dad and my neighbor."

COMMUNISM COMES ALIVE AT OCCUPY-LA ANNIVERSARY

At the first anniversary of Occupy LA over 300 people participated in a weekend of teach-ins, discussions, and panels. ICWP participated in a panel discussion on what will succeed capitalism with communist, socialist, and anarchist perspectives. This panel was the most widely attended meeting of the weekend. We also participated in a discussion about dialectics, socialism, and communism—why socialism has not and will not lead to communism.

At the first presentation many people were able to hear the similarities and differences between communist, socialist, and anarchist perspectives. It was interesting to hear that the another "communist" on the panel (not from ICWP) was planning to vote in the upcoming elections. This was a clear difference from ICWP position and from others on the panel. We made the point that every vote in this election is a vote for capitalism, regardless of who someone votes for. ICWP also pointed out that voting is totally passive while under communism the masses, mobilized for



communism, will be actively debating, discussing and making decisions throughout our society, rather than spending a few minutes once a year or every four years to pick a candidate supported by and loyal to the bosses. Instead, we need participation from the masses to keep us mobilized for communism. The job of our party will be to make sure this happens.

Another important debate was how to create unity while acknowledging our differences through debate and discussion. Some people thought that we should only focus on unity based on broad "principles" and/or joint reform struggles. However, others said that creating a false unity around watered down politics and/or reforms would not bring about the real unity we need to overthrow capitalism and replace it with communism. Furthermore, comradely struggle with each other that includes criticism and self-criticism is necessary to our struggle and should be welcomed.

ICWP also helped lead a

discussion on dialectics, socialism, and communism. We discussed why socialism has not and will not lead to communism. Although this meeting was not as well attended, the conversation was an excellent follow-up to the panel discussion mentioned above. We argued that socialism maintained inequality, wages, and commodity production, which are pillars of capitalism. History has shown us that socialism does not negate capitalism and does not lead to communism. One individual said that communism was very far off and another initially believed that money was not necessarily problematic. This led to a very good discussion.

Some one said that we shouldn't "impose" our political line on people. We explained that communism will meet peoples' aspirations and will motivate masses of people to actively participate in building a society that meets their needs.

We distributed *Red Flag* and our manifesto, Mobilize the Masses for Communism, and some gave their names to stay in touch. They seem very interested in ICWP. We plan to continue to participate in this mass movement and look forward to following up with contacts to create new communist organizers.

Imperialists Battle to Control Honduras

WORKING CLASS NEEDS TO FIGHT FOR COMMUNIST REVOLUTION

US imperialism fears that Honduras can escape from its control, because the working class has been fighting daily in the streets ever since the coup of June 28, 2009. The coup was prepared by the CIA, the US State Department, and a section of the local bourgeoisie.

These struggles are led by liberals, unionists, and socialists who support Hugo Chavez of Venezuela. He is an ally of the Russian and Chinese imperialists. Some of these leaders seek to reform capitalism through elections and reform struggle. Others, including sectors of the Honduran bourgeoisie, seek to integrate Honduras into the anti-US block led by Hugo Chavez.

But, we Honduran workers don't need a "reformed" capitalism, nor to change one imperialist master for another. What we need is to destroy capitalism-imperialism with a communist revolution.

Due to the economic and political crisis of worldwide capitalism, governments like that of Honduras more openly project their greed and violence against the working class. The workers, on their part, are looking for alternatives to remove this yoke of poverty, repression, death and brutal exploitation.

This worries the US Empire, which is already trying to prevent the Honduran process from falling into the hands of its imperialist rivals or of workers looking to the revolutionary communist struggle. In this situation, conscious of these possibilities, the government and the bosses allied with the US are already taking "appropriate" measures, giving priority to those scenarios in which the use of violence prevails.

Imperialists and Honduran Bosses Plot to Prevent Workers' Struggles

The current US ambassador, Lisa Kubiske, pulls all the strings of the Honduran

state apparatus, maintaining unlimited influence in all spheres of government. The pro-US oligarchy and the US bosses coexist in great harmony, and we now see how the empire has selected as its pawns people who specialize in protecting their political interests.

Ambassador Kubiske is nothing more than a CIA operative who previously spied in China and then Brazil. Mathias Mitman, her second-in-command, previously headed the economic section of the US embassy in Moscow, and then was senior advisor to the US embassies in Athens and Baghdad.

Both have the job of preventing the loss of an unconditional ally. They aim to keep ex-President Manuel Zelaya's recently-founded party LIBRE of the ideological reformist "left" from coming to power and joining Honduras with the interests of Chavez and the Russian and Chinese imperialists.

Against this backdrop, the US is making its bloody plans to eliminate the resistance by the

Honduran working class and to strengthen its interests. That's why the US is increasing its military presence here. They now talk about establishing thirteen new military bases in addition to the three they already maintain. Four will be built this year.

The local pro-US political oligarchy has increased the number of military and police personnel, and is preparing the formation of an elite force called the "Tigers," specializing in police and military repression. The population rejects this, since it is similar to the 3-16 battalion that operated during the 1980's, killed many popular leaders, and was responsible for the disappearance of 182 people.

We Workers Need to Reject Reformism and Fight for Communism

Capitalism came into the world "dripping from head to toe, from every pore, with blood and dirt," as Karl Marx said. There are no such things as failed states. In capitalism, from "developed" to "underdeveloped" countries, all governments and bosses survive from the exploitation and repression of the working class. Our struggle must be to build a new communist society where everything produced will be to benefit all workers.

We see how the pieces of the pro-US oligarchy and of US imperialism move around, not allowing the advance of the workers' struggles, while other Honduran bosses and imperialists seek to use these struggles to try to build new alliances.

The workers will continue mobilizing. In these mobilizations, in the factories, schools, and the fields, we will be developing our ideological struggle so that these workers take real communist ideas as their own and don't look to reform capitalism, but to destroy it once and for all through a communist revolution.



Honduran teachers are protesting weekly.

SOUTH AFRICA from page 1



Striking gold miners

much control did the union movement have over the masses?

The whole world found out on August 16th. The news broke of the police massacre of 34 wildcatting Lonmin miners and the arrest and torture of over 270. Not led by the NUM or COSATU and in complete defiance of the ANC, some 3,000 miners walked out and stayed out despite murders and provocations. Although this particular wildcat was settled with a 22% wage increase, it is clear that this strike wave has become more than just a wage dispute.

Political Strikes, Revolution and the International Communist Workers Party

South Africa produces 75% of the world platinum and is the #.4 chrome producer and the fifth-largest gold producer. The wildcat wave now encompasses a fifth of this mining industry, threatening to spread to other industries as well.

Political strikes against capitalism, which pre-

pare large numbers of workers to lead the struggle to mobilize the masses for communism, become a real possibility in this kind of climate. Imagine what the reaction to our manifesto "*Mobilize the Masses for Communism*" would be now!

The Russian communist leader Lenin famously stated that a successful revolution needed the coming together of four situations. First, the working class could no longer tolerate the old way. It was ready to fight, displaying tenacity, self-sacrifice and heroism. In particular, he asked if the unsanctioned strikes of the working class were spreading beyond individual plants, and if they were lasting longer and if they developed a political character.

The world capitalist crisis has entered a new stage. In the early stages workers faced evictions, mass layoffs or speed-ups: they were the victims of the crisis. Nowadays, more and more workers are beginning to enter the crisis as protagonists with demands of their own.

Second, the ruling class

could not rule in the old way. Third, the masses could be won. Fourth, there was a revolutionary party large enough and capable of leading the aspirations of the working class.

One by one in different parts of the world the first three conditions are maturing. Communism isn't some far-off El Dorado. It's a way to understand and respond to the massive social struggles that engulf us now. We need communism now. We need to build the ICWP.



South African truck drivers on strike



Lonmin platinum miners barricade streets.

Communism is Our Heritage and Future – Part IV

REVOLUTION VERSUS REFORM IN ANCIENT ROME

Like ancient Greece, Rome depended on slave labor. About one third of the people were slaves who worked the land, fought in the famous legions, built the viaducts, and served the wealthy. For most, it was a harsh existence. The life expectancy of a slave was about 20 years.

Land conquered by the Roman army was assigned to poor and indigent citizens. Laws prohibited the rich from accumulating too much, but rich landowners evaded these laws. They evicted citizens (plebeians) who worked the land and replaced them with slaves who were mostly captured in conquest. These slave plantations increasingly dominated the Roman political economy. In 135 BCE the First Servile War (centered in Sicily) erupted in a massive challenge to the slave system.

Two years later, the young tribune Tiberius Gracchus drew up his “Agrarian Law.” Roman tribunes were elected by the plebeians. Tiberius came from an aristocratic family, but he sided with the masses.

According to the historian Plutarch, who compared Gracchus to King Agis IV of Greece (see last article) Gracchus was motivated mainly “by the people themselves, who posted writings on porticoes, house-walls, and monuments, calling upon him to recover for the poor the public land.”

This was only a reform: landowners were to be compensated, and slavery itself was not questioned. However, wealthy citizens accused Tiberius of “stirring up a general revo-

lution.” Very sharp conflict – including armed struggle – ensued.

Plutarch’s account of the Agrarian Law conflict makes it clear that Tiberius was indeed trying to mobilize the masses against the rich and powerful land- and slave-owners who dominated the Roman Senate. He orated that wild beasts have caves or dens, “but the men who fight and die for Italy enjoy the common air and light, indeed, but nothing else; houseless and homeless they wander about with their wives and children.”

Tiberius exposed the lies told to get soldiers to fight, declaring that “they fight and die to support others in wealth and luxury, and ... have not a single clod of earth that is their own.” Knowing that the Senate would oppose him, Tiberius took his cause to the Popular Assembly.

Tiberius was killed in 132 BCE (the same year

that the slave rebellion was squashed). His brother Gaius Gracchus took up the cause. However, his strategy was not to mobilize the masses but to empower the rising business class (equestrians) against the landowning nobility. He gave them the right to collect taxes in Asia, and spent huge amounts of money on roads and harbors, to benefit trade.

Gaius tried to extend full Roman citizenship (including voting rights) to free people outside of Rome itself. This brought him into conflict with former supporters, and Gaius was later forced into suicide. Some consider the deaths of the Gracchi to be the beginning of the end of the Roman Empire.

“Gracchus” Babeuf, one of the first modern communists, took this name in honor of Tiberius Gracchus, the Roman champion of land reform.

But Tiberius Gracchus, like Agis and the Agriculturalists in China, looked backward and fought for a society based on small farmers. His brother Gaius looked forward but only as far as a society based on merchants. Neither saw slaves as allies (much less leaders) of the citizens they called the “common people.”

There was a Second Servile War (also in Sicily), and a Third (led by Spartacus) that shook Rome itself. The written records left to us are but a pale reflection of the power of egalitarian ideas in the ancient worlds.

Next article: *Egalitarianism in Judaism, early Christianity, and Hinduism*



Tiberius and Gaius Gracchus

RACIST ANTI-MUSLIM VIDEO SPARKS DISCUSSION OF “FREE SPEECH”

“I wish we’d organized a protest against that disgusting racist video,” remarked a comrade attending a meeting at her church. The idea wasn’t very popular.

One guy complained that too many people in the US only know the “Christian stories.” He wanted us to make “Muslim stories” more widely known.

A Muslim woman was more distressed at the impact of US media coverage of the mass protests. She wanted to know what more she could do to change the image people in the US have of Muslims.

This group does some good work in trying to fight the racist stereotypes that divide Muslim and non-Muslim people. However, there’s still little understanding of the relationships between racism, capitalism, and imperialist war.

The next morning, another interfaith group set aside its agenda to discuss the video. One of the leaders talked at length, citing legal precedents, about why it was protected by “free speech.” Many weren’t convinced. They said that the video was “hate speech” and “incitement” and therefore not



“protected” by law.

A comrade said that we shouldn’t rely on “the law” as a guide or on the legal system to “do the right thing” because it only exists to protect the power and the profits of the few. She remembered that John Stuart Mill, known for his defense of free speech, clearly illustrated this with his illustration about the right to say that private property is theft.

The actual quote reads: “An opinion that corn dealers are starvers of the poor, or that private property is robbery, ought to be unmolested when simply circulated through the press, but may justly incur punishment when delivered orally to an excited mob assembled before the house of a corn dealer, or when handed about among the same mob in the form of a placard.” (Mill, *On Liberty*, p. 55).

Then another person correctly said that “we have to distinguish morality from the law, what’s right from what’s legal.”

This group does recognize that the mass protests in Egypt, Libya, Pakistan and elsewhere reflect justi-

fiable anger, not only at the video but at US imperialism’s murderous policies in Iraq, Afghanistan, and with drone warfare in Somalia, Yemen, Pakistan and elsewhere. Unfortunately its liberalism and pacifism leave it without any meaningful way to act on this issue.

That night, our Party club discussed the video from the point of view of how we would handle such a situation in communist society. Not everyone had heard about it, or about the mass responses internationally.

“We’d shut it down right away,” said one comrade. Several others weren’t sure that an isolated video could be dangerous enough to warrant that. We talked about scenarios in which defeated capitalists could use racist propaganda to sabotage our revolution or keep it from spreading.

Another comrade said that Party leaders would have to mobilize the masses to decide how to deal with such a situation, and then to carry out a plan. We concluded that we would encourage mass discussion of people’s ideas, even wrong ideas, but that not everything should get the wide exposure of “airtime” or the Internet.

How can we mobilize the masses now for communism around this issue? Some wanted to organize protests at the racist video-maker’s home in Cerritos, CA.

“Seems it’s too late for that,” said a comrade. “He’s already in hiding.”

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RED FLAG, NOT THE DEMOCRATIC PARTY, IS THE WORKERS' VOICE

As US imperialism's economic crisis deepens and its need for global war becomes more pressing, the US bosses are counting on their politicians and corrupt treacherous union officials to get us to patriotically sacrifice "blood and treasure" for their profits and empire.

This is the role that our "fearless leaders" of ATU (mechanics), UTU (operators) and CTU (clerks) have proudly assumed and this is the reason the bosses are investing over \$1 billion in "Change You Can Believe In," Obama's campaign, and why the unions are investing millions in the campaign against Prop 32.

The bosses, their politicians and union officials want us to look for the solutions to our problems in the voting booths, not in building a revolutionary communist movement that will bury their racist murderous system forever.

That's why these traitors, led by Neil Silver and James Williams, are running around like Chicken Little – warning us of an impending

tragedy if we don't contribute money, time and our vote to defeat Proposition 32, which will prevent unions from giving money to the Democrats.

These bosses' lap dogs claim that "we will lose our political and bargaining clout... Working families will be back in the dark ages when big business ruled supreme and the voice of working men and women was completely stifled."

But the politicians they helped elect, like "Let's Dream" Villaraigosa, are doing more than stifling our voice. His dream is the reign of terror he and the rest of the MTA board are imposing on us. Their slave drivers – like Ralph Gray, Barbara Mascot, Lillian Ford, etc. – are implementing it with arbitrary suspensions and firings.

Ours is not the voice of the Democratic Party or any politician!

All politicians are the voices of the US bosses, and in this historic period these bosses' voices thunder death and destruction. Thus, Obama's voice has become the deafening roar of missiles raining on civilians from drones. Over 884 civilians – men, women and children, only 2% of them "suspected terrorists" – were obliterated in Pakistan, Afghanistan, Somalia and Yemen.

Obama's voice is clearly behind his fascist ICE cops barking racist orders as they deport more immigrant workers than Bush, 400,000 last year alone. "Mr. Family Man" Obama separated over 46,000 families with US-born children in the first six months of 2011 by deporting one or both of their parents. Over 22,000 more were ordered deported

during that same period.

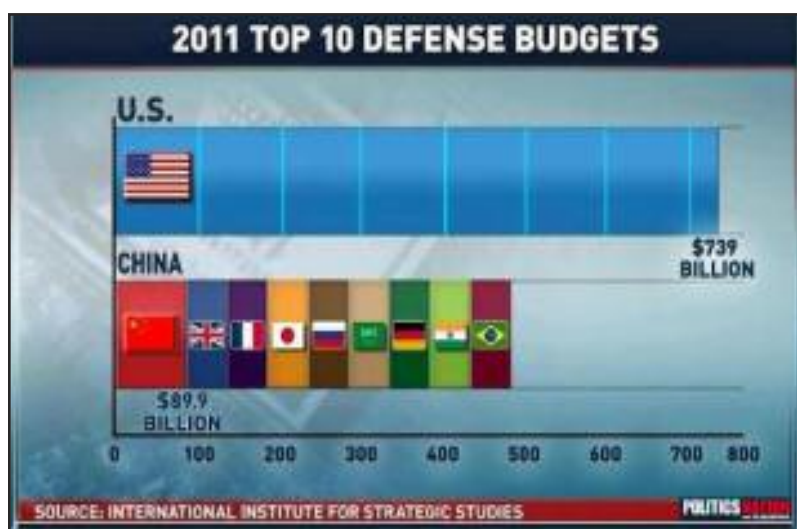
Obama brags that he saved GM and is bringing jobs back to the US. He gave away billions of workers' tax dollars to GM so that they could hire young workers for \$15 an hour, less than half what older workers got. His "bring US jobs back" means slave-labor conditions for immigrant, black and other workers to make their industries more competitive and for their weapons factories for coming wars to save his masters' empire.

The working class voice is that of communist revolution

Our voices are those of the fighting miners in South Africa. Our voices are those of the grieving families crying for revenge for their relatives murdered by drones. Our voices are those of the children and parents raging against the immigration cops and borders that have torn them apart. Our voices are those of workers everywhere who were fired, maimed or killed by the bosses' lackeys in industrial accidents or wars. Our voices will not be stifled.

Red Flag is our voice, our weapon to denounce the capitalist system and point out to the world's workers the way to a communist future. ICWP is the Party of the International Working Class. Join us to silence forever the bosses' voices, and that of their henchmen.

Capitalism has to go. Communism will have useful collective work, not wage slavery jobs, for all. Workers from everywhere will be valued, welcomed and needed to fight, produce, and distribute for the common good. Masses of workers are in motion worldwide against capitalism. *Red Flag* must and will help mobilize them for communism. The future for communism is bright and not far away!



The US bosses' military budget is growing in preparation for wider wars and world war.

LETTERS

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LETTERS

CRITICISM AND SUGGESTIONS

Not "Empowerment" But Communist Workers' Power

I still meet a few "progressives" who twist into intellectual knots to justify voting for Democrats, usually swayed by campaign messages that Republicans are evil incarnate.

My strategy is to present them with an ever-growing list of major Democratic Party positions with which they fundamentally disagree. I mention that their disagreements with the Democratic Party leadership, including Obama and Biden, are much greater than those leaders' disagreements with Republicans:

1. Wars in Iraq, Afghanistan, Pakistan, Yemen, Somalia, and hostilities with Iran, following two World Wars, Korea, the Cold War, Indonesia, Bay of Pigs, Dominican Republic, Vietnam, anti-Soviet Afghanistan War, and the Gulf War.

2. Substituting supporting the troops or military families for direct support of these wars.

3. Extensive diplomatic and spying assistance for repressive regimes, past and present, including Saudi Arabia and Israel.

4. Massive arms sales abroad, in particular to these same repressive regimes

5. Failure to prosecute any Wall Street banksters or Bush-era torturers.

6. Assassinations (including US citizens) often with drones, based on a presidentially-approved hit list.

7. Slashing the social safety net, including Medicaid, Social Security, Medicare, and public-sector pensions.

8. Massive domestic spying in the US, including archiving all phone calls and emails, as well as undercover agents.

9. Crushing Occupy movements in city after Democratic Party-controlled city, like Oakland, Chicago and Los Angeles.

10. Massive deportations of undocumented immigrants, plus border patrols and high tech walls.

11. Reducing government expenditures in education, public services, and infrastructure.

12. Layoffs and furloughs of public employees.

13. Using high-stakes testing to control school curriculum and evaluate teachers.

14. Deregulation of private investment, including the stock market and real estate.

Negative campaigns and their lesser-evil arguments never challenge the counterfeit nature of US elections. The real purpose of these elections is to mislead people into believing that their votes affect political decisions. This straight-out lie is called "empowerment." It aims to create a subjective feeling of participation without any actual decision-making power.

Democrats and Republicans spend huge amounts on years-long electoral campaigns in order to promote the charade of choosing between two parties whose leaders agree on nearly everything, such as endless imperialist wars. Luckily, it doesn't work so well for them. Voting rates remain low because many workers and youth rightly see the US political system as corrupt and illegitimate.

Unfortunately, many ex- and disgruntled voters become cynical. Our task is to help them understand the real alternatives to voting. The liberals need to follow in the footsteps of many before them, present writer included, who realized that the Democratic Party could never deliver on the issues important to them. They

should support the efforts of the ICWP to build a society based on communist principles in which the masses will have real decision-making power.

And we need to explain to the growing group of cynics who have given up on bogus electoral activity that there are many ways to become politically active, none of which are connected to bourgeois election campaigns.

—Red ex-liberal



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.

**Write to : PMB 362
3175 S. Hoover St.,
Los Angeles, CA 90007**

LETTERS

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CRITICISM AND SUGGESTIONS

The Only Party the Workers Need is PCOI

We workers need to organize in a Party, in the International Communist Workers' Party. We need to put an end to this system of wage labor and to take our lives into our own hands, producing collectively what our class needs. We'll produce without harming the environment, and not to buy and sell. In so doing we'll have a society without money, without borders, without racism or the degradation of women!

The working class needs to change its way of thinking, as we advocate in *Red Flag*.

Elections are a farce. In Mexico, the ruling capitalist bureaucracy spent millions of pesos on them. The money went into the pockets of the politicians of the bourgeois parties and of the owners of the press, the radio and the television, to try to convince those who still vote that "the real change is coming," and that now, yes, the poverty, unemployment and the other ills that affect the workers will be resolved.

Six years ago the politicians of the "left" blamed their loss in the election on those of us who called for not voting but fighting instead. They said that if we didn't vote for the "opposition" we would be strengthening the right. Now they blame their defeat on the "buying of votes," as if they didn't know the huge economic power of their adversaries, who won't give up power without a fight to the death.

They want to make us believe that we elect our rulers. "You voted, be assured that we will enforce the law," the Mexican Electoral Tribunal of the Judiciary repeats on the radio and television.

We workers need to realize that no matter whether the rulers are from the PRI, the PAN, or the PRD and its allies, the exploitation and use of our labor power will continue enriching the capitalists. The politicians cynically pass from one party to the other: Gabino Cué in Oaxaca, Aguirre Rivero in Guerrero, and Arturo Nuñez in Tabasco are members of the PRI nominated by the PRD, as are Camacho Solís, Manuel Bartlet, etc.

In capitalist countries, whether the rulers are right-wingers, left-wingers, socialists, unionists, or democrats, they serve a minority of millionaires who dominate the world. Their continued self-enrichment leads to a relative overproduction that creates one crisis after another, impoverishing more and more people.

The fight for control of the drug trade has allowed them to establish greater control over the working class, which is exposed to gunfire, military checkpoints and curfews. To change this we don't need another pro-capitalist electoral party like MoReNa, Movement for National Regeneration, the new Party of Manuel López

Obrador. Instead we need ICWP. Join our study action groups!

--comrades in Mexico

Love and Capital

"You should read Mary Gabriel's book *Love and Capital*," a MTA bus operator told a comrade outside his transit division. "It's a biography of the Marx family. Open it anywhere and you'll be fascinated. It's almost cinematic. You've heard of these people before, but it really makes them come alive."

Gabriel uses family letters and other documents to tell the story of the "Marx Party" (Karl, his amazing wife Jenny, and their three surviving daughters, along with Engels, the sons-in-law, and a few close friends). Grinding poverty, personal tragedy, and the many attacks launched by their enemies slowed but could not stop their drive to develop scientific communism and bring it to the masses.

This book won't give you a solid understanding of communist history, especially the struggles over the political line. And Gabriel's writing can be over the top. But the story makes you laugh, cry, and resolve to carry on the work.

"I was talking to another driver about your paper," our friend continued. "He's really having a hard time with the word [communism] because he's heard so many bad things about Stalin and Mao." He understood that the boss-controlled schools and media push anti-communism to keep capitalism in power. But he seemed to wish (like some other readers) that we could keep the ideas but change the name.

"We probably need to do a better job of explaining our analysis of the history of communism," the comrade responded. "But if we tried to hide our ideas behind another word, everyone would see through it and we'd just come across as sneaky."

The driver referred back to *Love and Capital*, "page 140." Even in Marx's time, when scientific communism was barely in its infancy, the ruling elites tried to make "communism" a dirty word.

The "Marx party" wavered between boldly explaining communism to the masses and pushing for "democracy." They thought it a tactical question: where workers had some political rights, perhaps they could take power through elections, but where they lived under political repression, revolution would be needed.

Now we understand, based on over 150 years of workers' hard-won experiences, that it is a political question, not a tactical one. The only way to win communism is to mobilize the masses to make it happen. Gabriel's book can help us popularize communist history, but it's up to us – as it was to the Marx Party – to make communist theory a mass issue in the thick of the class struggle.

—Red Historian

Greedier Bosses?

"The bosses have gotten greedier and greedier," said a friend at our latest Pizza and Politics discussion. Everyone agreed that the world's masses were fighting back more than usual over the last few years. We were trying to figure out why.

"People can see workers fighting around the world today because of the Internet which encourages more rebellion," our friend continued.



We had just reported on the South African miners' wildcats. Fifty thousand wildcatted, demonstrated and engaged in pitched battles with vicious cops while dozens died, exposing both the National Union of Miners and the South African government. No way could you say this was business as usual!

After a school worker related this unrest to the recent Chicago teachers' strike, we got fully into the discussion of the present period and what it means for the Party's political work.

A comrade in his thirties, who is trying to get an industrial job, thought the millions without work and the intensified oppression had reached a "kind of tipping point."

Someone else asked if people thought today's bosses were greedier than the original "robber barons." Nobody did.

A comrade described how capitalism, a commodity system, must have these global crises of overproduction, like the one we've experienced over the last few years.

That analysis is different than saying the bosses are greedier. If the bosses are greedier, then you can pass more stringent laws to keep them in check. But these crises are baked into the system no matter what the law.

We then considered the history of working class rebellion. The bosses always dominated the main media and the Internet is no different. Nevertheless, workers always found ways to spread the news about rebellion.

Actually, even our Internet savvy friends hadn't heard much about the miners until they read *Red Flag*.

The key here is not less greedy bosses, or even spreading the word about militant reform struggles. The key is the potential to mobilize the masses for communism.

In this period of potential we have to change the way we live. To realize that communist potential, we have to revolve our lives around the masses and win others to dedicate their lives to building a base for this movement.

"I'm not up on all the politics, but I understand what you mean when you explain it," said our friend. "Your explanation [about the crises of overproduction] just wasn't the first thought that came to mind."

Communist revolution might not be the first thought that comes to the minds of rebellious masses. Yet when masses take up the cause of mobilizing for communism they will have the last word.

--Eating Pizza, Discussing Politics



No more business as usual as strikes sweep South Africa

“Without revolutionary theory there can be no revolutionary movement.” Lenin, *What Is To Be Done*

COMPETITION FOR PROFIT MAKES WORLD WAR AND COMMUNIST REVOLUTION INEVITABLE

The last column explained that the only way capitalists can create profit is by investing in the process of production. This is called a circuit of capital: capitalists invest money (M) in factories, raw materials, and workers' wages and exploit labor to produce commodities (C). When these commodities are sold in the market, the boss makes more money (M¹). However, competition among capitalists using more machines and fewer workers forces the rate of profit to fall.

Competition for profits causes a massive production of commodities that cannot be sold and capital that is unable to produce value in the circuit of capital. The capitalists respond by intensifying the exploitation of labor by speed-up, wage cuts, and looking for cheap sources of raw materials, like oil and minerals to restore the rate of profit, as well as competing for markets to sell their commodities.

Today, major imperialists like the US, China, Europeans and emerging imperialists like Brazil, India, and South Africa are locked in a worldwide battle to control natural resources. The recent oil wars in Iraq and coming wars with Iran and possibly Venezuela show that the imperialist bosses must forcibly occupy areas with natural resources for their own use and to prevent their rivals' access to them.

Wherever there are mines, oil, or coal, workers from South Africa to China to Mexico and the US are ruthlessly attacked as the bosses try to reduce the cost of these natural resources. Wage cuts reduce workers' ability to buy the things we need to survive.

To make a profit while the value of commodities is falling, capitalists must expand their markets. This intensifies rivalry among imperialists

who compete for the same shrinking markets and resources, including materials and the exploitation of workers' labor power.

As capital cannot be absorbed in the circuit of capital and commodities cannot be sold, destruction and devaluation of capital begins. Mountains of commodities that workers need, such as food and houses, are physically destroyed, thrown out or sold for lower prices. Factories lie empty. The imperialists fight over who will bear the brunt of devaluation. Within a country, the conflict among capitalists, and between finance and industrial capitalists, intensifies. Some capitalists survive at the expense of many. The capitalists who survive impose their increased exploitation on workers.

The declining rate of profit leads to riskier investments and attempts to conceal the risk, leading to a financial crisis and speculation.

Some imperialist countries, in order to save their own capitalists, create barriers to markets and capital while at the same time trying to limit their rivals' markets.

Both financial crises and crises of overproduction are built into capitalism. All attempts to overcome them only create conditions for their intensification.

Major imperialist wars become the imperialist bosses' solution to their competition, shrinking markets and crises. We are in the shadow of looming wider imperialist wars and world war in which the US, Chinese, European and other imperialists will violently destroy their rivals and try to capture world markets for profit. World War II gave rise to US world domination, and the domination of dollar. Today, the US position is severely weakened. China has replaced the US's

market domination in many areas. However, militarily the US still remains a dominant force. It still has bases in Germany, Japan and over 1000 more worldwide. Chinese bosses won't allow the US to control the oil, other resources and sea lanes they need to power their rising empire. This has put the US and Chinese bosses on a collision course for re-division of the world markets. Both groups of bloodthirsty imperialist exploiters will intensify exploitation, racism, nationalism and fascist movements to prepare armies to fight the bosses' wars for profit. The US electoral circus is part of this drive.

However, during WWI, the Russian working class, led by their Communist Party, made a revolution against capitalism. After WWII, the Chinese did the same, although fighting for socialism made their reversal inevitable. Today the working class is rising up, as we see in heroic struggles in South Africa, Latin America, Europe, the Middle East and China against slave-labor working conditions. Now we communists can mobilize masses of workers, preparing our class ideologically for communist revolution that will put an end to capitalist production and wars for profit for good. We'll build a communist society where there will be no production for exchange, no money. The working class will produce for need. Karl Marx wrote in the *Communist Manifesto*, “What the bourgeoisie therefore produces, above all, are its own grave-diggers. Its fall and the victory of the workers are equally inevitable.”

Next: The function of money under capitalism and how a society without money will be organized.

SAILORS WANT TO BURY CAPITALISM

“I'm joining to be a hero. I'm protecting our freedom. I love my country. I'm proud to be an American.”

These are the reasons US Navy sailors use for getting promotions and pay raises—the pretend reasons.

But in reality sailors' reasons have nothing to do with these empty, abstract slogans. Their actual reasons express the same struggles shared by the entire international working class.

All the reasons working class sailors join the Navy are rooted in problems that arise from the capitalist system.

“I joined the Navy because every job I've ever had always lacked a sense of worth,” said a US Navy sailor.

“Not a lot of pats on the back at Walgreens,” said one sailor, a former manager for two years at Walgreens.

In capitalism, workers do not come together to manage the economy. Instead, the bosses' profits blindly decide which products are produced and who suffers from this as a consequence of producing them as cheaply as possible.

“I needed to find stability in the face of a shitty economy,” said a sailor, a college graduate in his late twenties.

Graduating from college leaves most workers with a punishing amount of debt and disenchanted with the myth that college leads to success. “A big reason I joined was to pay off my school loans,” said another sailor.

“The government loaned me money for a

meaningless piece of paper and now it's a wash,” he said about his business degree.

Most sailors know that traveling is the privileged business of the capitalists and their friends. Joining the navy is a workers' only real option to see some of the world.

“We're always saving up from our jobs and not getting anywhere,” said a sailor. “I thought this was the only way to see the world.”

Seeing the world only causes sailors to further challenge the bosses' ideas. Most sailors don't buy into the empty slogans of patriotism and nationalism. They see through ideas that confuse freedom with maintaining capitalist power.

“The Navy is only giving me some financial empowerment,” said another sailor, who is familiar with workers' struggles in South America. “It's a career that is fair in comparison to the average private company, where you have to kiss ass and bend over backwards, just so any day they can lay you off to maximize profits. That being said, it has not given me freedom. I am actually sacrificing part of my freedoms in order to build a future.”

The problems that actually determine most sailors' decision to join the Navy are all rooted in



miserable capitalism. The only real solution to the problems that cause sailors to join the Navy is to blast capitalism to bits with communist revolution. Sailors must join the fight to build communism, a world for all workers where we will collectively confront our problems and produce for the needs of the working class, not the bosses' profits. Collectively we'll defend communist workers' rule.

Future reports will show the deepening understanding of these sailors.