



RED FLAG

MOBILIZE THE MASSES FOR COMMUNISM

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



KENYA

**BRING
COMMUNIST
IDEAS TO
TEACHERS IN
STRUGGLE**



GREECE



MEXICO



See
page 3

SEATTLE

MTA Mechanics Discuss Syria:

SOLDIERS, SAILORS SHOULD USE WEAPONS FOR REVOLUTION

LOS ANGELES, CA — In an informal get-together at work, a group of mechanics was talking about the invasion or attack on Syria by the USA. A member of ICWP gave a brief history of US imperialism, which has been built on the basis of pillage, murder, and invasions of different countries.

He said that the history of empire is one of massacres and theft of natural resources of other countries. Wars, wars, and more wars—this is the essence of the imperial system, which is why we shouldn't let ourselves be fooled when the bosses talk about humanitarianism. Capitalism, ascending or in decline, has to go to war for its interests and for no other reason.

Commenting on the subject, other workers gave their opinions, and here's what they said:

J said, "Look, I don't think they should get involved in other countries. They should let them resolve their own problems. It would be better if they worried about what happens here."

Another worker said, "What I think is that they're going to spend millions and millions of dollars on missiles and bombs, and who's going to pay for it? Us! Losing our pensions, paying more for gasoline, paying more for

medical insurance, for food, losing our houses, and finally they'll tell us that it's for our freedom. What freedom? Freedom to live in the street! Freedom to go hungry!"

Another said, "My son wants to enlist in the Navy. I told him he was crazy. No son of mine is going to give his life for the rich."

Another worker told him, "Look, it's important that our sons and daughters go to the army, so they can learn to use weapons, but not to defend the rich. Instead they should organize other soldiers and sailors to turn the weapons against the bosses and join with ICWP to make the revolution."

"What you're saying makes sense!" he answered.

Someone who had said at the beginning that it didn't matter to him what happened, after listening to what others had said, commented, "I've been disconnected, but in the future I'm going to read *Red Flag* to be aware of what's happening."

The majority of workers understand what wars are about, and several of them are starting to take two or three papers to distribute to other workers. This shows that little by little revolutionary communist consciousness is advancing in the minds of many workers.

Workers' Red Line:

IMPERIALISM CANNOT BE TOLERATED

SEATTLE, WA — The U.S. administration's argument for "humanitarian" military strikes against Syria fell flat in the Boeing factory. One African-American *Red Flag* reader was particularly incensed. "Obama hasn't a leg to stand on after what the U.S. did in the Iraq-Iran war," he said.

"The U.S. knew Hussein was launching some of the worst chemical attacks in history — and still gave him a hand," Colonel Walter Long told the *New York Times* at the time. "The use of gas on the battlefield by the Iraqis was not a matter of deep strategic concern."

The U.S. gave the Iraqi military more than "a hand." They provided the chemicals and set up the nerve gas production facilities. The U.S. gave them aerial reconnaissance photos to direct the chemical gas artillery bombardment.

Robert Fisk, a British Mid-East journalist for almost three decades, tried to count the Iranian deaths in one such attack. "Zoran and I thought we had seen 4,700 bodies [before they had to retreat to a hospital for treatment from the lingering effects of Sarin]."

Nearly one hundred attacks were recorded during the war years 1980-1988. These attacks often wiped out whole Iraqi villages and towns that were suspected of being sympathetic to the Iranians.

See RED LINE, page 3

**IN MEMORY
OF COMRADE
NORMA
PAGE 2, 7**

**FOR A WORLD
WITHOUT
BORDERS!
PAGE 4**

**HOW MUCH
INEQUALITY
IS FAIR?
PAGE 5**

**SYRIA SCHEME
WON'T BRING
PEACE
PAGE 6**

In Memory of Comrade Norma

THE MASSES ARE THE ARCHITECTS OF HISTORY

Sometimes we write history when millions of us are in motion. At other times we leave our footprints in the actions of a small collective, always part of the enormous masses and always the product of the masses.

Sometimes we communists, perhaps not wanting to be arrogant, are the first to underestimate or ignore this historic role. The saying goes that a journey of a thousand miles begins with a single step. But it's easy to forget that we got where we are because of that first step. Today we remember the steps that Norma took as part of a revolutionary communist collective.

In her thirty-seven years as a communist, Norma helped achieve four historic milestones that continue to mark the communist road that our class will take to its final liberation.

Rooting the Party in the Working Class

Norma joined the Party in Los Angeles in 1976, when almost all its members were students and professionals, mostly white. A communist party like that cannot survive for long. Many undocumented immigrants with a lot of revolutionary fervor joined and played a key role in transforming the Party into one in which most members were men and women industrial workers.

Norma helped a lot in this. When we met her, she had already spent seven of her twenty-one years as an industrial worker in maquilas in El Salvador. She gave important leadership to Party clubs in the LA garment industry. Comrade garment workers struggled almost daily against some of the most exploitative and racist bosses in the US, leading strikes and work stoppages and demonstrations, leafleting, organizing study groups, and recruiting more workers to the Party.

Thanks to this collective effort, we took a step that was seemingly small, but was really a giant step. Communist parties that are incapable of making this transition, and those that lose their working-class composition, tend to disappear. This happened to some of our party organizations in the US and our fraternal parties in Canada and Puerto Rico. Thanks to Norma and her collective, our Party in Los Angeles remained firm, continues firm, and is advancing.

Fighting Those Who Betray Revolutionary Ideals

Also during the 1970s and 1980s, Norma played another important role: again, as part of a communist collective and again, something that

seemed of little importance. However, we must now appreciate its true historic impact.

In that period, our Party was in a life-and-death political struggle against the old international communist movement. Even though it had betrayed its revolutionary ideals, that organization still had much influence among the oppressed masses, leading millions in reform struggles, electoral struggles for socialism and armed struggles for national liberation.

While combatting the bosses' huge anti-communist campaign, we had to struggle against the ideology in the mass movements led by these traitors in Vietnam, Chile, Cuba, El Salvador, Nicaragua, South Africa, and elsewhere. The former communists claimed to be the solution but only led our class to be slaughtered while trading one capitalist-imperialist yoke for another.

Against all odds, men and women workers like Norma helped keep the red flag of proletarian revolution flying high. Our enemies branded us utopian, ultra-leftists, even as CIA agents. But history has proven that we were correct. None of those countries—including Russia and China—today inspires the masses in motion. The leaders of the armed movements in Central America are today part of the bourgeoisie or their henchmen attacking the working class.

Our Party survived and has grown internationally in Mexico, El Salvador, Honduras and Spain, thanks to the efforts of Norma and other comrades in Southern California who stood firm against the onslaught of our enemies, recruiting more workers and renewing our commitment and confidence in the working class.

Fighting Directly for Communism

Another historic milestone was our decision to change our political line from fighting for socialism to fighting directly for communism. Some abandoned the Party because this was contrary to the teachings of Marx. Norma, as part of the collective, defended fighting directly for commu-



nism and we continue to defend this position.

The science of the working class—not limited by what Marx wrote—is nurtured and advanced by the experience of the struggle of the masses. It is called “dialectical and historic materialism” and it irrefutably proves us correct. Norma attended workshops on dialectical materialism in Delano, California, and led dialectics discussions in Party garment workers' clubs in Los Angeles.

Mobilizing the Masses for Communism

We have reached the decade of the 2010's. All these advances steeled us for the fourth giant, historic step of organizing a communist party of a new type: the International Communist Workers' Party.

Norma was one of those who saw clearly that the old party had become reformist. When the decisive moment came, she boldly supported the split necessary to form the new Party.

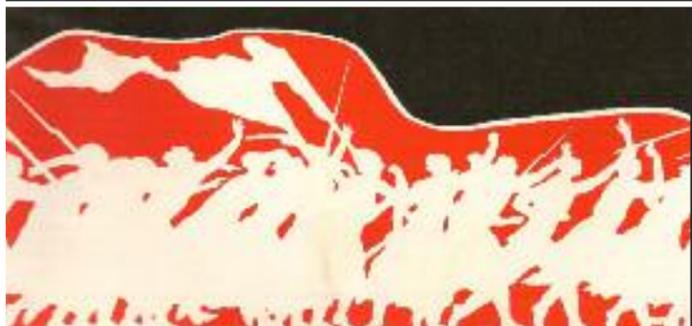
“Traveler, there is no road. You make the road by walking,” quoted a friend at Norma's memorial. “Our victory will be glorious when one day we break the chains and all the diseases and capitalist evils will be smashed forever.”

Norma's life inspires us to continue and deepen the heroic struggle to mobilize the masses for communism, the cause to which she and others dedicated their lives. Her example lights up the path she helped to build, the path to victory for the workers of the world.

For Norma!

And well here you are now...in the place where it is always day,
Where the ugly are always beautiful and eternally young!
The place where we are all one and we are many more than two.
The place where the powerful do not abuse the weak.
And it will not be in a cemetery because your memory is in another place
It is multiplied in the memory of so many people whom you touched and all the workers whom you organized.
Norma, daughter of a strong and courageous woman!
Norma, mother of dreams of struggle and of change!
Norma, wife of ideals struggled for shoulder to shoulder!
Norma, friend of those nourished by your love for the working class!

But more than anything Norma, LEADER: of workers who believed in your creed
And thus through the revolution and change they followed you!
And now in the middle of the inner changes, your skull full of a new life instead of thoughts
Will give flowers!
There end the earthly ties, and the wise and the idiot join in the region of equals!
But there! Where the spirit becomes exhausted and the machine appears right there.
The being that dies is another being that springs forth!
THAT AT THE END OF THIS TRANSITORY EXISTENCE
TO WHICH IN OUR ZEAL WE TRY TO CLING
MATTER, IMMORTAL LIKE ETERNITY
CHANGES FORM BUT NEVER DIES!



JOIN THE INTERNATIONAL COMMUNIST WORKERS' PARTY (ICWP)
WWW.ICWPREDFLAG.ORG — (310) 487-7674
E-MAIL: ICWP@ANONYMOUSSPEECH.COM
WRITE TO: P.M.B. 362
3175 S. HOOVER ST., LOS ANGELES, CA 90007, USA

No Contract is a Good Contract

VICTORY MEANS TEACHERS DEBATING COMMUNIST EDUCATION

SEATTLE, WA, Sept. 3 — Approximately 1,800 Seattle teachers, paraprofessionals, and office staff recently voted on a new union contract. This could be the most important contract vote we've cast in 20 years.

Seattle, like many districts, sits smack dab in the middle of a capitalist hurricane called "educational reform." The bosses are in crisis. Their economy is in turmoil. War is a constant. The infrastructure is failing. And the old rules don't work anymore.

So, they must rewrite the rule book to keep the working class under control. Public education is a very important tool, used to train each generation of children to serve the interests of the ruling class. Most will become workers, some professionals, some soldiers, technicians, etc. Some will never be fully employed.

Teachers, and other educators, are expected to teach the basics, plus juggle many other subjects; evaluate, test, inspire, nurture, etc. often in overcrowded classrooms with few supplies, broken down, outdated technology all with little help. Add to this tons of paperwork, and increasing

pressure to take more classes and not only be proficient but innovative in order to keep our jobs.

Despite many promises and lies, this contract did very little to change this situation. The initial proposal was so obviously unacceptable that the negotiating committee recommended we reject it, and we did. This gave them the long Labor Day weekend to return to the bargaining table, only this time with a mediator.

A few things were changed around, some shifted to take place in the second year, a few dollars were thrown in to sweeten the deal. But basically it was the same sellout accompanied by a hearty recommendation to accept.

The meeting to vote was on the evening before the first day of school, downtown, during rush hour. People had been in 2 or 3 days of meetings, training sessions, and setting up, or moving their classrooms. They were pissed off and tired. However, many of the folks coming in gladly took our *Red Flags* and our leaflets. They must have been inspired by the militant teachers' strike in Mexico. The questions and debate from the floor was more intense and at a higher level than usual.

Many people in the meeting were avidly reading *Red Flag* and even showing it to their friends.

But, of course, the union president and his staff systematically cut off people who asked questions he didn't want to answer. They ignored people they knew to be activists, and called on their loyal kiss-ups. They cut off debate and moved to a voice vote when they felt the crowd was about to start yelling at them. No secret ballots. It passed, but the vote was close. It wasn't a big victory for them.

We felt that it was a victory for us. Not only did we get out a lot of literature, but it was not just the usual "trade unionist" or "vote for the socialist candidate" stuff that people were used to getting. People are interested in our discussion on what education will look like under communism. We made some new friends, and re-established relations with some old ones. We hope to have these people at our next "Pizza and Politics." This is what we have to do. The times are ripe for open discussions on communism, because many people agree that we cannot live in the old way.

Hey, didn't Lenin say something like that?



Mexico Teachers:

FIGHT TO END THE WAGE SYSTEM!

On Friday, September 13, the teachers of the Education Workers' Coordinating Committee, (CNTE) union were evicted from the main Zócalo Square in Mexico City. Even though it was reported that the leaders had accepted withdrawing from the encampment to the Monument to the Revolution, a large contingent refused to do so and faced the federal police.

The rulers are determined to end the teachers' resistance. However, the discontent throughout the country is increasing. Today's newspapers report that in at least 12 states, there were protests last weekend, and a National Popular Teachers' Congress was announced.

On Sunday, Sept. 15, we visited the teachers' encampment at the Monument to the Revolution. We brought some clothes that a fellow teacher donated to us and took some copies of *Red Flag*. The teachers greeted us enthusiastically as they do with hundreds of people who have shown solidarity with them.

On Friday, Sept. 13, the day of the eviction, the students from the National School of Anthropology and History, blocked the freeway that passes in front of their school and circles the city. They were attacked with tear gas dropped from a helicopter. The Xochimilco and Azcapozalco sections of the Autonomous Metropolitan University also blocked the surrounding streets in support of the teachers. Insurgentes Avenue was closed in front of the University City, also by students— from the National University. A nation-wide student coordinating body is now being structured to join with the National Popular Teachers' Congress.

The idea of ending the wage system has not yet reached the consciousness of the masses. However, it is the only solution to capitalism, not the nationalist state capitalism that only leads to substitute one exploiter for another.

We invite the teachers to read, distribute and write for *Red Flag*. It is vital to organize with the view of ending capitalism. Join ICWP!

RED LINE

from page 1

Dodging the Bullet Is Not Good Enough

Nobody publicly defended attacking Syria. Unfortunately, the arguments against an attack too often let imperialism off the hook.

"They've been fighting with each other for centuries," said one worker, referring to religious warfare in the Middle East. "We can't change that."

Actually, inter-imperialist rivalry to control oil has been the primary cause of war in the Middle East for over a hundred years. First, the British and the Russian empires fought over this essential war and industrial resource. After WWII, the U.S. came to dominate. Now, China, Russia, the U.S. and, to a lesser extent, England and France are driving the carnage.

"We're in terrible shape here at home," said another reader. "We should take care of our own first before spending lives and money on foreign wars."

But we have to see that "our own" must include the whole international working class, and not any boss in the US or anywhere else.

This argument also greatly mischaracterizes imperialism. Imperialism is not just foreign policy and war — although imperialism means destruction on a scale the likes of which humankind has never seen before. It is the highest and last stage of capitalism. Imperialism is the only form of capitalism possible in our time.

There is no "taking care of our own" under imperialism. The bosses require greater and greater rates of exploitation to fund their empires. Increasing inequality is not just "greedy politics." It is a necessary part of imperialism.

There is only one answer to imperialism; there is only one effective strategy. Mobilizing the masses for communism is the only way to bury imperialism. Anything else is just wishful thinking.

SUBSCRIBE TO *RED FLAG* - \$20/YEAR

Name _____ I want _____ copies per issue

Address _____

Send to P.M.B 362, 3175 S. Hoover, Los Angeles, CA 90007



THE CAPITALIST BEAST DESTROYS MORE WORKERS' LIVES

With dozens of immigrant workers killed in the derailment of a freight train in Mexico known as the “beast,” the numbers of the victims of capitalism have increased. According to a spokesperson for civil protection in Huimanguillo, Mexico, about three hundred undocumented migrants were traveling on the “beast” on the way to the northern border with the aim of reaching the United States.

On the “beast,” tragic events happen every day that the news does not publish. They are only known by those who witness such events. Some workers comment that the operators of the “beast” make sudden movements to scare the immigrant travelers. Others who have also lived through the experience say that criminal groups board the train to assault the travelers and rob them of the little that they have. Those who have nothing run the risk of being beaten, raped, or thrown from the train.

This is a reflection of the dog-eat-dog ethic of capitalism. But there is another ethic of workers' international solidarity. In several towns along the route of the “beast” there are groups of Mexican workers who bring food, clothes and water to throw to the mainly Central American immigrants on the train. The most famous is the town of La Patrona in the state of Veracruz, where a group of mainly women has been bringing food and solidarity to the people on the train since 1975.

Most workers who travel on this train (grabbing onto the top or sides) come from capitalism's extreme poverty, which forces them to risk their lives. Exhaustion and weakness

caused by hunger makes them fall when they go to sleep. Others fall as they try to board the “beast” as it is moving and, if they are lucky, they survive the fall. Those who have families in the US have to pay a lot of money to the smugglers (coyotes) for the trip. All expose their lives to the drug cartels since they are the ones who now control human smuggling. Sometimes they are kidnapped and killed if the families in the US don't pay the ransom.

The real beast is capitalism which has created borders worldwide, and also created these criminal groups. These criminals, like the bosses, only seek to obtain maximum profit off the workers.

Recently, the son of a friend came from a country in Central America and the experience that he lived through wasn't anything easy. It took him eight months to achieve his objective. He had no money, which is why the trip took so long.



The Beast

He said, “The most difficult thing I experienced was when they left us in the desert waiting for some one to pick us up, but no one wanted to take the risk. Only three of us had saved ourselves from being taken by the Migra.

“When we were still a group of fifteen, we were traveling in a vehicle, and suddenly the police signaled for us to stop, which the driver ignored. She accelerated and took the advantage, and at the right time, every one started to jump from the vehicle even though it was going more than thirty miles an hour. ‘If the guide jumped, me too, me too,’ I thought. The driver was a very brave woman, which made us brave also.”

All these stories that our brothers and sisters recount make us conscious of the need to abolish the borders and to build a communist society: a world without borders, a society in which only one class is working for all our common good. In a communist society, we will move if the collective needs it and we will travel with our families without crossing borders and without having to board a “beast” that puts us at risk because we will have put an end to the capitalist beast.



Woman in La Patrona, Veracruz, bringing food to migrants

US Immigration Reform: Patriotism and Cheap Labor

WORLD'S WORKERS NEED ONE INTERNATIONAL COMMUNIST PARTY

*We died in your hills, we died in your deserts,
We died in your valleys and died on your plains.*

We died 'neath your trees and we died in your bushes,

Both sides of the river, we died just the same.

These words from “Plane Wreck at Los Gatos” could refer to the migrants who died in the derailment of the “Beast.” But the song is about Mexican workers who died in a plane crash in 1948 as they were being deported from the US. The newspapers published the names of the dead pilots, flight attendant and immigration guard, but just called the 28 dead workers “deportees.”

This month a monument listing their names was dedicated in the California cemetery where they are buried. Ironically, *The New York Times* took this opportunity to criticize the Obama administration for deporting nearly two million “day laborers, carwash employees, farm workers and others... who want to work legally and aspire to become full Americans.” Its editorial urged Congress to pass the Comprehensive Immigration Reform Bill and to keep the Obama policy of deferred deportation for “Dreamers,” who arrived as children.

Workers' Struggles Have No Borders

Past communists fought for national liberation against imperialism, with slogans like “Free Fatherland or Death.” They linked communism to the politics of nationalism, but the ICWP rejects all forms of patriotism. The 20th century Communist Internationals organized separate national communist parties. But we have one party, with members in various countries and eventually

we'll extend it all over the world. Communist revolution will abolish national boundaries. The working class will rule wherever we can take power. We won't respect the bosses' borders that separate one group of workers from another.

Capitalist immigration laws serve to regulate the racist division of the international working class. Workers from the global South are forced to move north to get a job. Laws that make immigrants “illegal” help the bosses to super-exploit them and separate them from their families. Many immigrants to the US hope a new law will give them a chance to achieve a more stable life. They also hope they'll be able to visit their families on the other side of the border.

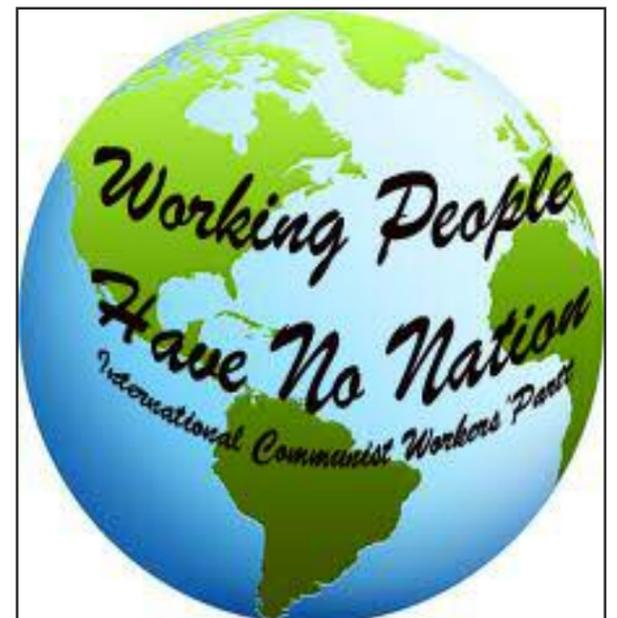
Punitive Immigration Bill Hopes to Win Immigrants to Patriotism

But the promised “path to citizenship” will require thirteen years of continuous employment. Workers won't be able to quit their jobs—no matter how they're treated—and will have to put up with anything to keep from being fired. This will mean lower wages, benefits and working conditions for all workers in the US. At the same time, the law will provide a shorter path for “Dreamers,” most of whom, because they can't afford to stay in college, will end up in the military.

The bosses need immigration reform to provide cheap labor for their war industries. But the main thing they want to do is win immigrants and their children to patriotism. The US ruling class has probably avoided an immediate war in the Middle East, but sooner or later it will go to war with China to try to save its position as number-one imperialist. The Dream Act, always a part of

any immigration reform, is crucial to recruiting young immigrants to defend US imperialism. Even more importantly, the bosses hope that a new law will win immigrants to singing “God Bless America” as they send their children off to war.

But immigrant workers are not so easy to fool. Thirteen years on a job you can't quit will pop the bubble of hope that many immigrants have now. And the youth who face racist attacks in the schools and the neighborhoods will be even more open to communist ideas when the bosses send them off to die for imperialism. If we mobilize those soldiers and sailors, as well as immigrant and citizen workers, around *Red Flag's* communist vision, we can build a new world with no bosses, no nations, no borders and no deportees.



AFL-CIO Convention: Pro-Capitalist Circus

WORKERS NEED MASS COMMUNIST PARTY, NOT UNIONS

LOS ANGELES—“The union never kept any of their promises to us,” said a woman janitor who reads *Red Flag*.

Another worker, also a *Red Flag* reader, said, “The owners are laying off workers and increasing the work load of the rest of us. Where I work, when we face these attacks, we workers act together, but in other building they don’t. The union leaders don’t organize the workers.”

In the past, the “Justice for Janitors” union campaign was used to bring immigrant workers and their supporters to energize the Democratic Party. Today, workers’ centers are also being used as a model to organize low-paid workers. The centers reach out to low-paid workers, especially immigrants, who are not union members, to join and promote the fight to make capitalism “fairer.”

At their recent convention, AFL-CIO leaders, facing a decline to 11% of the US workforce, called for reaching out to all workers, in unions and not in unions. They plan to fight for higher minimum wage laws, immigration reform, and “fixing” Obamacare under the leadership of the Democratic Party. Richard Trumka, head of the AFL-CIO, recognized workers from Walmart and McDonalds for their struggles. He also pushed for jobs rebuilding the US infrastructure, a plan supported by the Council on Foreign Relations as part of the US bosses’ preparations for wider war on the cheap.

While the union leaders talk about “shared prosperity” and inclusiveness, workers’ wages are being cut, along with pensions, health care and other benefits. As the US Empire declines, the war budget keeps growing.

The AFL-CIO is trying to win angry workers to patriotically work for low wages and fight for the US bosses, seeing reform and voting for the capitalist Democratic Party as the way forward. Their campaign includes organizing fast food, Walmart, and other workers who are furious that

they can’t live on their wages.

After the convention, the California legislature passed a law raising the minimum wage to \$9 in 2014 and \$10 in 2016, not adjusted to inflation. This “victory” means continued wage slavery, as millions see their wages pushed down to the minimum.

The AFL-CIO and the US bosses behind it fear the rising anger of the working class—in the US and worldwide. They want every US worker to join their patriotic reformism.

Those who become involved in the AFL-CIO campaign will be sorely disappointed and disillusioned as many janitors are. The unions, the Democratic Party and the US bosses cannot and will not deliver on their promises to improve workers’ lives. The capitalist system is set up to make profits by exploiting workers. Unions do not seek to end that, but only to negotiate the terms of our exploitation and divert us from communist revolution.

The capitalist-imperialist bosses in crisis are preparing for wider wars and world war over control of those profits—at the expense of our health and lives. No union aims to or can end their rule. Masses of angry workers will find no relief with the AFL-CIO’s new plan.

However, they will be open to liberation through *Red Flag* and the fight for communism. Spreading *Red Flag* to the workers whom the AFL-CIO is targeting with their

campaign to reform capitalism can energize and mobilize masses of workers for communism! They can see that a system based on grinding workers down for profit can’t be reformed to meet our needs, that only a communist system of collectively producing without bosses or money can meet those needs.

We don’t need unions; we need a mass international communist party, ICWP, that mobilizes workers, soldiers and students to destroy the profit system. Masses of workers will lead society to meet our class’ needs, with no bosses, competition, profit or profit wars. Only mobilizing directly for communist revolution can meet workers’ needs.

In communism, the mass party of millions, mobilizing tens of millions more, will lead society. We won’t have unions because we won’t sell our labor power or negotiate the terms of our exploitation—there won’t be any. Workers will build growing collectives to develop communists producing only what our class needs.



Janitors welcoming *Red Flag* and communist leaflets

HOW MUCH ECONOMIC INEQUALITY IS FAIR?

“None,” a student quickly replied when this question arose in a campus college club meeting.

Another member reported on a meeting she’d attended about “economic justice.” The head of a big liberal group had droned on about how workers can’t live on minimum wage, how the “social safety net is torn,” the growing gap between the rich and everyone else, and other well-known facts.

“He kept saying there was too much inequality,” she said. “I started wondering how much economic inequality he thinks is fair. They want everyone to make \$15/hour but you can’t live on that, especially if you can’t get more than 20 or 30 hours a week.”

“To be fair, money would have to be worth nothing,” said the first student, who read *Red Flag* last semester. “Why can’t we just live like that? It’s not that crazy.”

“That would be a nice system,” said an older student. “People could work at things they are talented at.”

Then he said, “You can’t have a fair economy if you allow unfettered profit. Businesses should serve the community. The first rule is that your bottom line can’t be to make profit.”

A teacher explained that the first rule of capitalism is that the bottom line is exactly to make profit—the maximum profit possible. Otherwise a business can’t attract the capital it needs to grow and compete in the marketplace.

Where does profit come from?

The students thought it came from customers.

The teacher explained briefly that this is only the appearance. In essence, profit comes from the difference between what workers are paid for their time (wages) and the amount of value they produce in that time.

“So profit comes from exploitation,” the younger student concluded.

A lively discussion continued about how communism would be different. Then it moved to how to get more students to come to talk about these things.

The students were frustrated because they’d handed out several hundred invitations to classmates and on campus, and nobody had turned up. But they agreed to go back and tell people what they’d missed. They will also make personal contact with others who’d signed up for the club.

US Capitalist Rulers Say: “Inequality Slows Economic Growth”

The capitalist rulers have opened a public discussion about economic inequality for their own reasons. Last year the *New York Times* business section (10/16/12) described a “compelling narrative” developed by the International Monetary Fund and the Brookings Institute.

“The concentration of income in the hands of the rich,” they warned, “might mean less stable economic expansions and sluggish growth.”

Right now the US rulers are struggling to rebuild their industrial base and their global competitiveness. Yet a very basic contradiction at the heart of their system—the tendency toward increasing economic inequality—stands in their

way.

The less workers make, the less they can buy and the less they pay in taxes. So capitalists sell less, and profits fall. The government can’t bail them out without causing more problems (debt, deficit, devaluing currency, etc.) that further weaken international competitiveness.

That’s why reform organizations from the AFL-CIO to the American Civil Liberties Union are promoting “economic justice” through campaigns like \$15/hour for fast-food workers.

Don’t be fooled! The ruling class might put some “fettters” (chains) on McDonald’s profits by increasing the minimum wage. But it’s also driving down wages and benefits for transit workers, teachers, unionized aerospace workers and others in a “race to the bottom.”

The capitalist profit system never could meet the needs of the masses. In this time of global crisis, it is less able than ever. We can’t live like that.

Bosses’ “Economic Justice” Campaign: Opportunity to Mobilize for Communism.

This student group plans to invite a member’s friend who works on the \$15 campaign to speak on campus. Many students work (and eat) in fast-food restaurants. We hope to get them into conversations about capitalism and communism and spread this discussion to their workplaces.

“Any amount of economic inequality is economic injustice,” the students concluded.

“Get rid of money- it’s the only way,” one added.

We can live like that!

In Memory of Comrade Norma (See also editorial, page 2)

Thank you, Norma for your contribution to the emancipation of the international working class.

LOS ANGELES, CA—On September 6th, our beloved comrade Norma died after a long struggle against one of the deadliest diseases of capitalism, cancer.

Norma's life, like that of many workers, was very difficult. Since childhood, she had to help maintain her home. While her mother sewed clothes, she went to other cities to sell them.

Norma's life was greatly influenced by her parents. From her father she learned her strength and courage, not to fear the unknown. From her mother she learned the basis of her whole life: her love and respect for work and therefore for the workers.

As the eldest child in the family, from a very young age she helped take care of her sisters and brother. They always said that she was like their second mother.

Then, without having yet reached adulthood, she started working in a textile factory, where she toiled 16 hours a day. In addition to fatigue, the workers there had problems created by a nearby Monsanto plant, which stored pesticides and poisonous chemicals. Every time they cleaned the vats, Norma and her co-workers suffered from vomiting and headaches.

Norma emigrated to the US when she was 21 years old, in search of "better opportunities." She began a life as a garment worker that lasted 37 years. She soon became a communist leader, organizing in the garment shops and factories.

"In the factory many men and women workers sought out her advice, whether in struggles at work or problems at home," remembered a friend at her memorial.

"She was a warrior—an example of what a woman should be, a great woman," said another.

After her death, workers from the factory where she worked for the last 27 years took up a collection. They came in groups, many with tears in their eyes, to bid her farewell.

Norma was involved in many struggles inside the factories, as well as in campaigns against deportations, against racist groups, imperialist war, police terror, and more. But most important was her commitment to build a base for communist ideas.

Early on, she was arrested during a clash with the fascist Los Angeles cops. But that did not stop her. On the contrary, it reaffirmed her commitment to end this capitalist system, which is the cause of poverty and the destruc-



tion of workers' lives.

Norma liked to distribute our communist newspaper during mass marches. The revolutionary dinners and May Day marches were part of her main activity. For many years, she was responsible for the food, feeling that this was also at the forefront of the battle. Even in her last days, when her health had greatly declined, she helped with our newspaper *Red Flag*.

For thirty-seven years, Norma's life was an adventure of love and revolutionary struggle. The basis of her marriage was communist ideas and practices. Her love for the international working class and for nature was part of her daily practice.

That love was returned in the moral support, greetings, and condolences that have come from Costa Rica, Honduras, El Salvador, Mexico, and Canada, and from Utah, Texas, Seattle, San Francisco, as well as southern California.

Norma's death, like that of thousands and millions of workers who die around the world, whether from hunger, poverty, wars or cursed diseases like cancer, was caused by capitalism, as she knew very well.

That is why today, our respect and love for her is even greater. Our commitment to struggle for communist revolution has found yet another reason. Her communist ideals for a world without borders and exploitation will continue to inspire millions around the world.

The words of the revolutionary song *Bella Ciao* reflect her deepest feelings: "**And if I die in the struggle, take my rifle in your hands. I am a communist for my whole life and as a communist I will die.**"

—Comrades in Los Angeles

Norma, your life

*Brought us all
Moments of love
And moments of hope*

*Many of us relied on you
Many of us learned from you
That life is worth fighting for
To the last breath...*

*You were born like a sparkling
Star and you shone like
Nobody had ever shined*

*Your blood has not stopped
Flowing because within
Our veins
That same blood keeps flowing*

*Here we are with deep tears
And hearts held high
Shouting to life that
We will keep fighting
Until our last breath...*

*And like you said
Never betraying the working class
Thank you Norma.
Thank you.*

—Teacher Comrade in Los Angeles

Norma,

I will remember you because you were like a mother and friend to me. You gave me shelter and food without knowing me. You made me feel like I had a family no matter where I was from and without a penny in my pockets. Together with your partner you accompanied me in my marriage. You taught me to see that my family is not only my wife and children, but that we have a huge family which is the working class.

You taught me to see that it is more important to be a worker than a student. That's because without the workers we wouldn't have houses, cars or clothes, and without workers who plant and harvest the grains, fruits and vegetables, we wouldn't have food. That doesn't mean that a student doesn't matter, but for society to exist, workers are more important.

Your struggle with me was hard—to make me feel part of the working class and of the party and not feel superior or oblivious to the problems of others. It was your words that little by little made me feel proud of being one more of the workers and not keep trying to escape our reality by trying to be an intellectual who benefits the wealthy ruling class.

You will never die as long as someone remembers your commitment to defend the dispossessed. Farewell.

—Comrade Industrial Worker

LETTERS

LETTERS

LETTERS

CRITICISM AND SUGGESTIONS

THIS IS THE PAPER OF THE WORKING CLASS. WE GET NO FUNDING FROM THE CAPITALISTS, THEIR FOUNDATIONS OR NGOs. PLEASE GIVE GENEROUSLY TO HELP PAY FOR THE COSTS OF PRODUCTION AND DISTRIBUTION.

Dear Sailor,

Your observation about the existence of inequality in the US Armed Forces is remarkable. I remember experiencing racism and sexism in the Army when I was enlisted. Specifically, I remember how black soldiers were more likely to be disciplined and demoted. Sometimes the same infractions would be committed by both white and black soldiers, but it was always the black soldier who got disciplined. For example, I remember a soldier that was demoted for drinking too much on his off-duty time. Yet there were countless NCOs and officers who would

do the same thing, but these white or Latino soldiers would never be reprimanded. This caused much anger among soldiers. As soldiers and sailors, we need to realize that racism is ingrained in every part of our lives while we are still living in capitalism. We aren't enemies of each other. We need to join forces to concentrate our anger on the real enemies, which are the capitalists and their racism.

We also need to realize that equality will never exist in a capitalist society, especially in the Armed Forces. Even if more minorities become officers, those officers are selected to

perpetuate this racist and sexist system. Our goal as communists is to expose these higher-ranking positions as tools for the capitalists to maintain their own power. The bosses need officers to control their soldiers and sailors. We must put an end to this objective of the bosses. We must learn to lead ourselves as communists in order to lead the working class to a successful communist revolution. You are doing a fantastic job organizing for the working class. Keep up the good work.

—Red Vet

WHAT WILL IT BE LIKE TO LIVE UNDER COMMUNISM...HOW DO WE KNOW IT WILL WORK?

To join study groups that will be discussing this topic contact us

www.icwpredflag.org



The movie was based on the life of Eugene Allen, a White House butler from 1952 to 1986; however, this was only the idea for the movie. Screenwriter, Danny Strong, had a bigger purpose and message to convey. The movie was a quick look at history, simply recreating highlights as taught in American schools. The main character Cecil (Forest Whitaker) was a butler living through historic times without paying much attention to things outside of his own personal life. Cecil, who made it a point not to question or challenge the status quo, is provided with a son, Louis (David Oyelowo) who is active in the civil rights movement. Cecil's life is told in parallel to his son's more interesting life of struggle. However, the story line is almost comical as both father and son seem to be in the middle of every civil rights landmark event making the "based on a true story" unbelievable.

Even worse was that the movie had racist and sexist stereotypes throughout. It portrayed a black middle class family riddled with alcoholism, infidelity, and poor communication skills. The older son, Louis, was portrayed as the "bad" son early on in the movie, giving his younger brother pornographic magazines, being ashamed of his father, and costing his family worry and money for his activism. Cecil eventually says that every gray hair he has been caused by his son Louis.

Louis is involved in the Freedom Riders Movement, is jailed with MLK, Jr., joins the Black Panthers, is a candidate for some government position, and then is leading anti-apartheid protests. This is in contrast to his father Cecil who took pride in working at the White House. Various scenes illustrate how different presidents ask Cecil a pointed civil rights-related question and then seem inspired by Cecil's uninspiring answers to follow through with a reform. The scenes make it seem like change is coming from a President's individual and personal decisions, and not from outside pressures such as the masses fighting back against a racist system or international pressures that force the ruling class to decrease overt racism, especially after WWII.

The worse part about the movie is that it suggests that conditions for blacks have improved through the period included in the movie. However, black people are worse off today than they were in the 1960's but it is harder to see. Racism continues, but is now covert. It would take another full article to give the statistics to support this argument, but it's worth mentioning one: 1 in every 3 black men are in the confines of the criminal justice system.



The movie also misleads us to believe that the options available to changing race relations are reform movements such as those that Louis breezes through (pacifism, violent militant reform struggle, electoral politics, or protests) or through exemplar submissiveness that somehow eliminates racist stereotypes. However, we have a third alternative that was not presented. The masses can organize not only against racism or for dead end reforms that ultimately don't change a thing, but against capitalism, the root of the problem.

To do this, the masses need a vision of a world without borders, without the need for money, without production for exchange. **The masses need the vision of a communist society.** No law will ever eliminate capitalism and capitalist exploitation—THE ONLY SOLUTION IS COMMUNIST REVOLUTION.

Elevate the political understanding of the masses

In the September 5th, 2013 edition of *Red Flag* the article "We can't eat money" appeared. Without a doubt this article shows the brilliant talent that the writer has. I should make clear, the article had very good content, for certain mentalities, but not for the masses in general.

The article requires certain understanding that the majority of workers lack. It is not accessible, inasmuch that it mentions psychological theories, symbiotic relationships and homeostasis. I do not deny that the article details briefly its content in a praiseworthy fashion but nevertheless it is incomprehensible to many.

We need to elevate the political understanding of the masses and here is where I suggest that we need to make every effort possible to put articles in the simplest fashion, so they can be easier to understand and assimilate.

To this I should add, workers cannot be convinced with theory. Practice is urgent.

Marxist theoreticians criticized mechanical learning and the simple repetition of formulas. We should not forget that everyone tries to understand the world as he or she can, with whatever means are at their disposal. Often times fear and ignorance pay homage to falsehoods. Here for example, religion and pseudo revolutionaries need to be mentioned.

Revolutionary theory needs to be a guide for action--to fight for the liberation of the working class, to struggle against pacifism and utilize the written means of agitation and propaganda, written in more popular language and tied to workers' struggles.

—a *Red Flag* reader

Communist Entertainment Has Substance and Relevance

We all know that capitalism's trillion-dollar entertainment industry is designed to sell, in one way or another. Among the items for sale are some products we "just can't live without," a patriotic vision, or the ruling class's racist and sexist ideas of the "other" among our class brothers and sisters. "Others," in this case, would be workers of genders, ethnicities, etc., that are different from our own. The bosses use this approach to attack our class unity by convincing us that we are more different than similar. This is against our class interest because it blocks us from understanding that we have a common enemy and that we are one class. Certainly, capitalist entertainment creates a fantasy world some enter in hopes of escaping capitalism's painful reality. Just as certain, it is a fantasy world the bosses create to confuse us and discourage a clear understanding of what they're really doing.

How Is Communist Entertainment Different?

Will there be a place for entertainment as we know it under communism? Yes...and no. Just as capitalist entertainment advances the rulers' interests, so shall we use communist entertainment to advance ours. We will still have movies, music, literature, etc., but we will also organize more collective activities – like hiking, camping, dancing, poetry readings, concerts, communist schools. Doesn't that sound more enjoyable and constructive than sitting around a TV or staring at a large screen in a dark room with a sticky floor?

We may still choose to have television programming, but, as with all other entertainment outlets, it will no longer push racism, sexism, and patriotism. Nor will it glorify lawyers, cops, drug dealers, murderers, and wealth. Instead, we will use these media to engage and inspire society. We will inspire people to commit to a communist vision, or deepen theirs, with information and inspiring examples from our class's rich history of struggle. Everyone will be expected to engage in a discourse – a collective on-going discussion and analysis – of how to strengthen and improve society, spread our revolutionary ideas and be better communists, and how to develop to our fullest potential as human beings; entertainment sources will function to these ends.

**Create communist culture:
Write for
Red Flag!**