

RED FLAG



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

OAKLAND, NOVEMBER 2: A DAY OF CONTRADICTIONS

They came in waves of thousands, all day and into the evening. It was a day that demonstrated a shift in working class activism and an openness to inquire about, debate or, in some cases, embrace revolutionary communist politics. Our sign calling for communism drew many. Many hundreds of *Red Flags* and communist leaflets were distributed.

Yet it was a day of dramatic contradictions. A huge banner stretched high across 14th Street at Broadway, the center of Oakland. "Death to Capitalism," it read. Yet the day could not have passed so smoothly without careful planning and complete complicity between the political powers that run the city and the Occupy organizers.

Although it was called a general strike, the plan was for the demonstrators to march and shut down the port, rather than the long shore workers shutting down the port and then marching to join the demonstration in the center of Oakland.

Marchers and convergences accommodated thousands but dissipated their energy spreading them thin and denying a full sense of our power. At 4 pm, thousands set off to shut down the port—to huge cheers. It was very exciting, yet the authorities had already shut the port down.

Lesson of Oakland General Strike:

REVOLUTION NOT REFORM

OAKLAND, CA, November 1 -- Tear gas attacks couldn't defeat it. A fractured skull couldn't intimidate it. Occupy Oakland, or the Oakland Commune, has won respect for its steadfast resistance to police attacks on it. It has responded by advancing the most pro-working class line in the Occupy movement in the US: a call for a General Strike in Oakland.

On the other hand, its far-ranging demands against racism, school closures, gang injunctions, brutal mass incarceration, gentrification, economic exploitation and even imperialist war are still reformist. There is a real danger here, lying unspoken amid all the militant action. The commitment, heroism and (perhaps most significantly) the organization of mass political debate every evening could end up energizing a 'left contingent' to operate in the US electoral system. And that system is effective for only one thing: protecting capitalism. What a waste of the Commune's energy that would be! Suddenly the danger is clear. Unless you organize for revolution, you end up struggling for reform and helping a heartless capitalist system stay in power.

Perhaps the heart of the danger lies in the way most of the occupiers and their supporters see the

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OCCUPY MOVEMENT: OPPORTUNITY, BUT DANGERS, TOO

Transit Workers to Longshore Strikers

MOBILIZE FOR COMMUNISM

LOS ANGELES, CA, More than 25 transit workers signed a letter of support for the longshore workers in Longview, Washington. Part of the letter said:

"The labor movement needs to follow your example, reject the dead end of legal maneuvers and take direct control of our struggles, since reform is not the solution. Neither is just any revolution, instead a communist revolution is the only solution.

We also invite you to join the struggle for the liberation of the international working class, reading and distributing *Red Flag* and joining ICWP."

All those who signed the letter are readers of *Red Flag*, part of our base and members of ICWP. This is a multi-racial group of men and women. This is a very important step in the ideological preparation of the working class for communist revolution because the letter clearly specifies that to triumph, it's necessary that thousands of workers join the Party (ICWP) to organ-

ize a communist revolution. Reading, writing for, and distributing *Red Flag* are important steps to achieve this goal.

The majority of these workers are in the process of internal struggle between capitalist ideas and communist ideas. However their courageous actions like signing an openly communist letter show which side is winning.

But how do we achieve these results? With luck? No! Its the fruit of the constant work of presenting revolutionary ideas in a consistent way and of involving ourselves in actions and discussions of different topics. Its also the result of political struggle with our fellow workers and sharing our lives and social activities—in good times and bad—of integrating our lives with our friends without ever forgetting our main task.

Some comments of the workers who we asked to sign the letter of support were:

"It's good that we sign this letter, but we

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Gambler Loses Stolen Money; Demands Victims Reimburse Him

COMMUNISM: NO BANKS, NO BORDERS, NO MONEY

The hardest thing to understand is certainly the holy awe with which they [the Paris Commune revolutionaries] remained standing respectfully outside the gates of the Bank of France.

-- Frederick Engels, *Introduction to The Civil War In France, 1891*

One hundred and forty years after the Paris Commune this "holy awe" of money and banks still haunts us. This central question remains: can we build a society without banks and money? In short, is communism possible?

The European sovereign debt bailout highlights the urgency of answering this question with a YES!

Imagine the following heartbreaking scenario. An alcoholic gambler takes the rent money from his hard-working wife. He blows it in a sidewalk crap game.

He returns home to demand more. "You, me, the kids will all be on the street if you don't fork over another grand so I can get back in the game," he warns.

Surely, this is a tragedy. The latest European bailout is this personal tragedy multiplied a billion fold.

Essentially, the bosses' biggest banks and financial institutions are demanding that Greek workers take as much as a 50% pay cut to bail out the Greek government and banks.

In 2008, the working class gave the capitalists trillions. That wasn't enough to shore up their collapsing system. All the surplus value--stolen from our labor--went down a rabbit hole.

Now, the finance capitalists are demanding at least \$1.4 trillion more to bail them out.

Greek Prime Minister Papandreou is caught between a rock and hard place. The Greek masses want his head for agreeing to the bail-out austerity measures. The bankers want his head for putting the bail-out to a vote.

Capitalism would be a farce if it weren't such a massive worldwide tragedy. Why do we need these bloodsucking bosses anyway?

Capitalist Thievery Knows No Borders

Once upon a time, European envoys to China came aboard gunboats, extracting concessions they sought--such as the Island

of Hong Kong--by force. Today they come begging with cap in hand.

Klaus Regling--the head of the European Financial Stability Facility (EFSF), whose very existence testifies to the shifting balance of power in the world--was in China as a supplicant, rather than a superpower. He was clearly willing to bend to China's wishes if he gets the world's most cash-rich government to back the new euro zone bailout plan. (Canada's *Globe and Mail*, 10/29)

The Chinese bosses got this huge cash stockpile from the surplus value stolen from hundreds of millions of workers. China has the world's largest manufacturing base.

China passed the U.S. this summer to become Europe's biggest trading partner. Regling refuses to divulge how much the Chinese bosses will invest in this latest EFSF. He would only say that China accounted for the 40% of the last bailout.

Regling left the door open to using Yuan-denominated EFSF financial instruments. Hundreds of billions of Yuan-denominated bonds challenge the dollar's role as the world's reserve currency. World wars were fought over less.

An even bigger question is: how will these shifting sands affect global political alliances? Rising power China is butting up against U.S. imperialism everywhere (see "Uganda," last issue). It's not likely that the U.S. bosses will tolerate pieces of Europe abandoning their traditional trans-Atlantic pacts to side with their Chinese competitor without a fight.

The shifting sands of imperialist rivalry mean more regional wars and world war. Capitalism is not only gambling with our livelihoods, but also with our very lives.

A World Without Banks And Money

International finance is an enormous industry. Until recently, finance was the biggest profit-center of the U.S. economy. What a waste of human resources!

Capitalism is a commodity system, where everything is for sale. Even we are for sale, selling our labor power to the capitalists. They pay us only enough to survive and produce a new generation of workers.

The difference between the value of what we make and our wages and benefits is the source of the bosses' profits. Money helps hide this exploitation, but Marx exposed it 150 years ago.

Banks are not only a source of obscene profits, but are also a necessity in a commodity system. If you produce for our collective needs, the necessity of banks and money goes away.

For example, we won't need a bank loan if we don't have to buy an airplane, ship or truck to transport food to the needy. The power of a mobilized working class will be embodied in that jet, cargo ship or truck we produce for the needs of our class. We'll send those means of transportation where they will do the most good, not make the most profits.

Past socialist revolutions maintained banks and money. They couldn't see past hundreds of years of political conditioning.

These revolutions failed. The failure was not communism, but allowing key capitalist institutions to survive--not the least of which were money and banks.

Rather than once again saving these capitalist institutions, we have to mobilize to shut down the capitalist's crap game once and for all.



Greek workers surround Parliament to prevent elected representatives from voting to support the Euro-zone bail-out. Only communism can solve this crisis.

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should also collect money to support these fellow workers."

"Why hasn't the press given much publicity to this news of the longshore workers actions?"

"Because the bosses don't want the workers to know about these militant struggles," answered another worker.

"From here on out, the struggles can't be peaceful. Let's look at the examples of the longshore workers and the repression against the occupiers in New York and Oakland," another commented.

Little-by-little the environment is becoming more political, and the informal meetings usually end in analyses or discussions about the national or international situation.

For example, recently several workers discussed how "our friend," Governor Jerry Brown, is pushing cuts for public workers. During his election for governor, the union leaders gave economic and political support to Brown, saying he was our friend. These discussions give us the opportunity to expose the whole capitalist system and put communist ideas front and center.

Another example of our communist action was that before starting to pass around the letter of support, four of us workers met to plan its content and the collection of signatures.

This action of signing the letter gave us the opportunity of struggling with those same signers to join ICWP and to help massively distribute our newspaper *Red Flag* and the document *Mobilize the Masses for Communism* (MMC).



Longview, Washington, longshore strikers face off against cops



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MAQUILA WORKERS DISCUSS COMMUNISM

EL SALVADOR—"For me, Communism is where we all work for the common good," expressed a worker from the maquilas in a meeting of the ICWP (International Communist Workers' Party) with about 12 factory workers, who were interested in knowing about communist ideas.

It was a lively meeting, with stories, tales, and interesting ideas about the repressive conditions imposed by the bosses. Each of the workers had an experience about how they are exploited. We put forward the idea to them that only a communist revolution can put an end to the capitalist exploitation that billions of workers suffer day-by-day all over the world.

Several workers who came to the meeting got **Red Flag** for the first time. Each one of them asked for an extra copy for other co-workers in the factory.

These workers, tired of the farce of elections and of the unions loyal to the system, saw in ICWP and in communist ideas the alternative for the working class. They shared their experiences of struggle inside the factories and how we workers can stop production and make the boss tremble.

"The bosses don't care about the workers," said a young woman factory worker in her description of how they organized a struggle inside the factory. They asked to work extra hours so they wouldn't have to work Saturday, for a reduction of the production goal, and that they be paid for the extra hours they worked. The boss, allied with the union and the person in charge of human rights, answered with arrogance, rejecting the demands. The boss said that it was impossible to negotiate with them. But the group of workers worked the extra hours and stayed at their machines. They decided that if the boss would refuse to pay them the extra hours, they would take more drastic actions. These workers acted without caring about which unions their co-workers were in or the threats of firing. They kept firm until they achieved their objective.

It was a great experience. However the workers must understand that reform struggles don't help the working class and that voting for an electoral party only serves to camouflage the capitalist beast. The workers need to fight directly for communism with the line of the ICWP and **Red Flag**.

We noticed that communist ideas are welcomed among the workers, and how ICWP cadre put in practice leadership in the factories to bring ICWP's ideas through **Red Flag** to other workers who, like them and all workers, are exploited by the capitalist system.

The industrial workers together with the soldiers are key on the road to communist revolution. It's our task to organize them into ICWP. Distributing and increasing the networks of **Red Flag** is an important step in the organization of the working class for communist ideas. We, the workers, day-by-day in our own flesh endure the cruelty of the capitalist system. We are the ones who must destroy it with a communist revolution.



El Salvador, May Day, 2011

Occupy Seattle:

OLD AND NEW FRIENDS

This past Saturday, my local teachers' union had a rally to support the Occupy Seattle activities. I have been going to the encampment every weekend, and have met some young people who are interested in the ideas of revolution and communism. So this weekend I went with two other comrades and a friend.

The rally itself was small, and the numbers in the encampment were way down from past weekends. However, it was well worth the trip...because we ran into two families of people who have been active with us for many years, but who had drifted away recently.

They were just as happy to see us as we were to see them. We caught up on family news, had a few political discussions and agreed upon future plans to get together socially and to start up another "pizza and politics" group. We have a group of young people around now who have grown up being close to our party. And, we have the people we are meeting from the Occupy movement. I guess that goes to show that we should never give up on old friends, and that we should not hesitate to make new ones.

--Seattle Occupier

DISTRIBUTING RED FLAG TO STUDENTS IN MEXICO

This past October 2nd we commemorated the students massacred by the Mexican government in 1968.

Close to 10,000 youths came, mainly students from about fourteen Rural Normal Schools, grouped in the Federation of Socialist Farm Worker Students of Mexico.

They led the march. We offered them **Red Flag**. However, none of them wanted it. Like many workers, they aren't accustomed to reading revolutionary communist literature. Immediately we talked to them and asked them to take the paper even if they couldn't give a donation. The majority of them are the children of poor farm workers and that's why they study in a boarding school system away from their families.

Once we explained that our goal was the abolition of wage slavery and about the efforts that workers in several countries are making to publish **Red Flag**, they took the paper. When we asked them to help circulate it among their friends, they accepted.

We distributed 60 copies with others in the march. A teacher said, "You're working hard to distribute this. Give me one." Two other people got excited and asked for **Red Flag**, giving a small contribution. Another person asked, "Why don't you display it in the bookstore where I work?" And he gave his information and phone number.

We hoped for more but what we achieved encouraged us to go forward.

---Greetings, Comrades!

POVERTY, ITS ORIGINS AND CONSEQUENCES

In Honduras, located in Central America, the poverty rates, a product of the capitalist system, are bloodcurdling. More than seventy percent (70%) of the population, estimated at 8 million, are poor. This means that the great majority don't have a job, nor do they benefit from adequate health or education services, nor adequate housing. But even more worrisome is the 60% who live below the poverty line, which means that they subsist on less than \$2 a day, and live in dire poverty. That's the reason that tens of thousands are forced to massively migrate to other countries.

Throughout history, poverty is nothing more than the result of exploitation by the ruling class, which controls the political power and the means of production. In their drive to increase their capital, they force the great majority of the exploited to live in conditions of subsistence, paying them poverty wages, without the right to health care or housing, taking advantage of the governments which are submissive to their interests. As a re-

sult all these masses of industrial workers, farm workers, and other strata of the society are hopelessly dragged into poverty.

Poverty world wide is hair-raising. More than two billion inhabitants of the earth live in poverty and the majority live on the continents of America, Asia and Africa. Poverty, like almost all social problems, has its origin from the same moment that social classes appeared, with the birth of private property.

Currently the ruling class wants to justify poverty by claiming it is the will of God, who must not be contradicted; that the oppressed will suffer in life and that in the hereafter, they will enjoy a better life. Another justification is that poverty is the result of bad luck and of destiny.

In the face of these events, the capitalist system won't renounce living with huge belts of dire misery which is nothing more than another form of poverty. Because to maintain itself, this system requires the existence of two classes, the exploiters and the exploited. In the face of this sit-

uation, we only have the choice of organizing ourselves. Not to win reforms, but instead to wage the revolutionary struggle led by communists under the leadership of our own party, ICWP.

I see the need to face this struggle with decision and courage. We should use **Red Flag** everywhere, like the centers of work, in the fields, in the cities, with the participation of workers, unionists, teachers, unemployed, intellectuals, and all the revolutionaries who are willing to organize. We should warmly welcome communist ideas imbued with the internationalism of the working class for the establishment of a just system for the majority, a communist system that will put an end once and for all to this oppressive and exploitative capitalist system and thus rescue humanity from all the forces that enslave it, deny it or abolish its condition as the most valuable thing in the world.

--A Comrade in Honduras

From Oakland to Atlanta:

TAKING COMMUNIST IDEAS TO THE “OCCUPIERS”

OAKLAND, CA--At Occupy Oakland I had an interesting conversation with a young veteran of the Iraq war. Offering *Red Flag*, I explained that capitalism attacks the working class internationally. The US Iraq-Afghanistan wars are examples of that.

He answered, “I hate the war in Iraq.”

I said, “You guys were killing and dying for Exxon-Mobil, so that the US bosses can control the oil for profits and use it as a weapon against rivals like China and Russia.”

Looking at the front page article, he asked, “Is Obama really sending troops to Uganda?”

“Yes,” I said, “because the Chinese imperialists are investing in Africa to rip off its natural resources, especially oil. The US and China are vying for control of the continent. Finally, when they go to war, imagine how many working class people will perish. We workers produce their wealth, fight their wars and kill and die for their profits. Soldiers are the sons and daughters of the working class. We can turn the guns around against them to get rid of capitalism.”

He said, “I joined the army just to have a job.”

I said, “We are here to mobilize the masses of workers, soldiers, and students to violently destroy capitalism and build a communist society. Communism will free us from wage slavery and enable us to realize a true freedom, human value and dignity. We will work collectively and share what we produce according to our needs. We won’t anymore sell our labor power to the capitalists and be treated capitalists like commodities by them.”

Carefully folding *Red Flag* and the leaflet into his backpack, he shook my hand and said, “Thank you for the communist ideas you shared with me. I’ll read the paper and share the ideas with my friends.”

Unfortunately, I was not able to get his number, but I told him how to contact us. Afterwards, I realized that communist ideas can be the most powerful weapon in the hands of the working class to destroy capitalism.

--A comrade

OAKLAND, CA--“This is great! Thank you,” an older white woman said, as she took *Red Flag* and handed me a dollar while boarding her bus. I got on the bus and spoke to her about need to destroy capitalism to eradicate racism, sexism, borders, wage slavery, and imperialist war. The driver, a black woman, heard our conversation and said, “Hold on, I’ve got something for you, too.” Handing me \$3, she said, “Don’t be too disappointed if people don’t take your paper... what you’re doing is good.” They both took more literature for their neighbors and co-workers. Although I asked them to contact us and write to *Red Flag*, I did not ask them for their contact information.

I corrected this error when I spoke with a young black mother, who spoke very openly and confidently about the need for revolution. “We need it now! I’m going to read this paper because things are really bad and we need to do something!” She gave me her contact info and said she looked forward to meeting with us.

These conversations took place away from Occupy Oakland, showing the anger that motivates the “occupiers” is widespread in the working class. Living paycheck to paycheck, many workers are looking for answers to this brutal system. They are attracted to our politics and the vision of the communist world we are fighting for. Like us, they yearn for a world where we don’t toil our lives away and have nothing to show for it. Under communism, we will not work for wages, which chain us to our work. Instead, workers will own the means of production--factories, machines, etc.--and we will work collectively and under safe conditions to produce for the needs of our class.

Selling *Red Flag* at the Fruitvale BART Station (Oakland, Ca.) proved fruitful indeed!

--Red Sub

**Read, Write,
Distribute, Contribute
to *RED FLAG***

ATLANTA, GA--“Frank wants you to call as soon as possible,” said my son as I landed in Atlanta. “He wants to take you to Occupy Atlanta.”

Frank, a *Red Flag* reader, briskly answered the phone at 11 pm. “I’ll pick you up at 9 am to take you to Occupy Atlanta. I want you to write something about it.”

The next day we went to Occupy Atlanta. There were about 200 people present. I spoke to people, offering them old *Red Flags* which my son and Frank had. He even gave me the one he had just gotten a few days before.

I met some interesting people and had serious political discussions with them. I will concentrate here on the most important one: a young soldier.

I told him *Red Flag* was a communist newspaper and that we were organizing a revolution to destroy capitalism with all its evils, especially money. Since pacifist ideas were prevalent among the occupiers, I stressed that our goal was to organize an armed revolution in which soldiers would play a crucial role. I emphasized that without the rank-and-file in the military we would never make the revolution we want and need.

“The system uses many soldiers like you to fight and die for its imperialist needs, to later come home to unemployment and cutbacks. Would you like a copy?” I asked.

“Sure,” he answered, “I hear what you say, not long ago I was almost homeless.”

“Would you like to meet next week for dinner to discuss our ideas further?” I asked.

“Sure,” he accepted.

A couple of days later, we met for dinner. We spoke for over an hour. He had many questions about communism. I’m sure I did not answer them all. We did manage, however, to make a small but important plan about keeping in touch. He took two extra papers for his friends.

As the masses get into motion, spontaneously or influenced by the rulers, ICWP communists and *Red Flag* readers need to be there. Worldwide the masses are questioning capitalism and looking for alternatives. As this experience shows, many are open to our revolutionary communist ideas. Dare to struggle, dare to win! We have nothing to lose but our chains!

OAKLAND, from page 1

economic crisis. Their anger is focused on the wealth and income disparities between the richest 1% and the rest of us. They are angry, for example, at the \$2 trillion corporations are sitting on, or hoarding, rather than creating jobs with. They characterize it as disgusting, anti-social greed.

Anti-social it is, but greed isn’t its driving force. Capitalists hoard money because at present they have no sound place to invest it. In the end it is only the real economy – manufacturing, transportation, mining and agriculture – that creates value. It’s this economy capitalists want to invest in, but at the moment there isn’t sufficient profit in it.

Twenty or thirty years ago the world boasted only two major industrial centers: North America, with Japan a close ally, and Western Europe. The productive capacity of these two regions battled each other to emerge dominant. Even then real economy investments struggled to sustain a sufficient rate of profit. Now with the arrival of China, Brazil, and India on the industrial scene, the productive capacity of capitalism has exploded. Where there were two, there are now at least three major productive regions and still only one world to absorb all the manufactured goods.

It is this crisis of overproduction that we’re living through. It won’t be solved until the industrial

capacity of at least one of the major centers – Asia, North America or Western Europe- has been destroyed. This crisis is rife with far more anti-social capitalist behavior than hoarding. It is rife with the full scale of its destructive power through an inter-imperialist war.

It is here in this movement that communist revolution can make more and more sense. It is here that new communist forces can come to the fore. Within minutes of coming to the Oakland encampment for the first time, a new comrade took *Red Flag* and proceeded to the mike to introduce the paper and call for a general strike against capitalism. It received some applause but immediately after there was a resolution calling for a march to shut down the Oakland docks during the General Strike.

Later our comrade reflected on how strange that the left would fear to call a General Strike against Capitalism, yet embrace the dangers of trying to shut down the Port of Oakland. This incident highlighted the vital role of the ICWP in combating the political opportunism of so much of the “left” who train themselves to bury their communist aspirations for fear that the masses could not be won to them.

In fact, our small group has repeatedly run out of *Red Flags*, met a variety of new people and discovered that the new found political awareness

has spread far beyond the Occupy encampment to our jobs and communities.



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“OCCUPY THE SCHOOL DISTRICT” SPARKS DISCUSSION OF COMMUNIST EDUCATION

The teachers and their allies who have mobilized to “Occupy the Los Angeles Unified School District” are right to be angry. The thousands of layoffs, deep budget cuts, and overcrowded classrooms are infuriating! However, their reformist demands do not go to the heart of the problem. Their main demands are that the banks and the richest 1% pay more taxes so that schools can operate; that the schools not be converted to charter schools; and that the schools be democratically reformed and community-based.

The heart of the problem is that schools in capitalist society, even if well-funded, whether public or charter or democratically reformed or community based, will never meet the needs of the working class youth to understand the world critically so as to transform it.

The teachers’ reformist demands do not take into account several important facts. First, the

capitalist system is in worldwide crisis. To get out of this crisis the capitalist classes of the world are preparing for World War III. Second, to carry out this worldwide conflagration and mass human destruction, the rulers have increase war production tremendously. To pay for that they are cutting money from education, jobs, health care, and pensions. Most important, the schools themselves, public or charter, are institutions that belong to and are controlled by capitalist governments.

We have had many conversations about this situation with teachers who read *Red Flag*. We showed them a draft of an article that said, “The schools have been established by the capitalists to create and recreate human relations with the purpose of maintaining the capitalism system. Also, the ideology that schools teach is an ideology of patriotism and nationalism, of democratic

teach conformity.”

Other teachers, however, questioned our analysis of the crisis of the system and the necessity of World War III. “I’m not convinced that such a thing will happen,” one said. We’ll keep talking to this teacher, who hates the system, but, like many, has a hard time imagining the brutal reality of another world war.

Because of their own experiences, it’s easier for some of these teachers to understand what’s wrong with capitalist education. Some really agreed when we said that capitalist education can never liberate us from profit production, nor exploitation, nor racism, nor poverty, nor war. One young teacher added, “Yeah, this education is not set up to liberate us. I agree with everything you are saying.”

Only a communist education can serve the masses. Communist education will not separate understanding from actual work. Communist education will not replicate inequality, exploitation, racism, competition, and privilege. Instead it will expand relationships of equality and cooperation. To establish communist education we have to mobilize the masses of workers and students for communist revolution.

We say: Down with reformism! Down with capitalist education! Learn and teach for communist revolution in the Occupy movement! Read, distribute, support and write for *Red Flag*! Join the International Communist Workers’ Party!

“That’s a good call to action,” a teacher told us. He and many more must grasp that they must play a crucial part in creating a world where we can thrive in human dignity for the benefit of all.



values and capitalist values, nothing of complete equality values, nothing of communist values.”

A teacher agreed: “Yes, the whole educational structure from elementary, to high schools to colleges and universities is a big propaganda machine,” and then added, “They

ONLY COMMUNISM CAN MEET STUDENTS’ NEEDS

An article on the job fair at Cal State University Dominguez Hills that was published in the *LA Times* depicted students at CSUDH as uninformed blinded fools. Hector Tobar, writer of the article, spoke with students who intended on finding work at the event. Many spoke of their financial woes while trying to balance school and family life. What Tobar failed to understand is that under a capitalist system that people are so deeply rooted in “you have to work to survive” and that’s just the way it is until the working class changes that with a revolution, not with voting. Tobar lamented that more students from this school weren’t in the Occupy movement. He should have explained more about the capitalist system and less about people who are protesting or occupying.

As a Cal State student and a job seeker, I expected more but many of the jobs were either low pay or required certain qualifications. Like many people in the article said, I felt discouraged. Tobar explained that many of us are still under the illusion of the American dream. I don’t believe that because we all know that’s what it is: a dream. I believe that what should have been touched on more in the article is how under capitalism if you don’t work you don’t eat because there is no

money coming in. Also our generation was described as the “occupy generation” instead of that he should have said “revolutionary generation.” As much as I admire the occupy Wall Street movement that has gone worldwide I understand that many across the world aren’t able to sit at a designated location because they have to think about their families and work in this system because this is all they know and saying that they haven’t gotten the message that the system is broken is a slap in the face. Maybe they don’t see how occupying will lead to the real change we need.

Capitalism is a harsh and brutal system that gives many like me and the people interviewed in the article for the *LA Times* no other choice but to look for work to scratch and survive. ICWP offers alternates by organizing in this

system to bring it down. We need to mobilize for a communist society that gives us a chance to more than just live check to check. Communism offers a chance to live in a society that doesn’t require us as a people to be selfish but look out for everyone. Both in our schools, and workplaces, and in the occupy movement, communist revolution is the change we have to fight for.



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Clinton Organizes for War With China

WORKERS' & SOLDIERS' HISTORIC FIGHT: COMMUNIST REVOLUTION

The future of politics will be decided in Asia, not Afghanistan or Iraq, and the United States will be right at the center of the action – Hillary Clinton, *Foreign Policy* magazine, November, 2011.

“America’s Pacific Century,” the title of her article, reflects her wishful thinking and that of her capitalist masters, that the decline of the US as the world’s dominant imperial power can be stemmed and its hegemony prolonged for another century.

Her statement above is just as deceitful. It’s which imperialist will rule the world, not some abstract “politics,” that will be decided in Asia, It will be decided by World War Three, not by some abstract “action.”

Historic times demand historic actions

We live in historic times, fraught with dangers and opportunities. The opportunities for our class far outweigh the dangers. We can and must make the 21st century the defining century in human history by eliminating class society, and building a communist world.

With humility, the International Communist Workers’ Party (ICWP) has undertaken the re-

sponsibility and honor to organize our class to accomplish this monumental historic task. We call on all **Red Flag** readers to join our Party and help us organize this struggle.

Our class will again make historical changes. This time for good!

Led by its communist parties, our class made tremendous historical changes during the 20th century. They were not permanent, however, because of our predecessors’ mistakes. Learning from the victories and failures of the Russian and Chinese Revolutions, we can see further and better. We fight for communism, not socialism, which is state capitalism.

Today, the ICWP holds high the red flag of communist revolution with the most advanced political line yet: **Mobilize the Masses for Communism**. Only communism can unleash the power, creativity, and commitment of the masses to eradicate capitalism from every corner of the world and build a communist world that meets our needs, no matter how long it takes.

Capitalism’s death and destruction or Communism putting workers’ lives first

Capitalism now is only capable of havoc and destruction on a worldwide scale. Its need for maximum profits ravages the environment and 99.9% of humanity. It forces the capitalists -imperialists to fiercely compete for the world’s natural resources, markets and labor.

This competition inevitably causes the rate of profit to fall, forcing the capitalists - like dogs chasing their own tails – to pursue ever more elusive “maximum profits.” For workers, however, this is a deadly pursuit. Replaced by ever more expensive machines, millions are thrown into the streets, while those remaining are worked to the bone for lower wages and benefits.

As poverty, homelessness and destitution loom larger for billions of workers, the world’s markets overflow with unsold goods. Billions go jobless, hungry and homeless, while factories lie idle, homes are shuttered, and food is left to rot. This is the absurd of the absurd: scarcity in the midst of abundance. It is a crisis of overproduction caused by the anarchy of capitalism’s production – more goods are produced than can be profitably sold on the market. They are destroyed despite peoples’ needs.

These crises lead inexorably to wars and world war. Capitalists must massively destroy each others’ means of production – factories and the masses of workers who are a potential revolutionary powder keg – in order to rise from the ashes and reinstate a “healthy” rate of profit, while instituting a new imperialist pecking order.

Capitalism is reaching that point again

The US is retreating from Iraq-Afghanistan to confront China in the Asia-Pacific region. China’s rise requires excluding or restricting US imperialism from “harnessing Asia’s growth and dynamism,” which Hillary claims “is central to American economic and strategic interests.”

US bosses know that this rivalry, sooner rather than later, will lead to war. They are therefore increasing their forces in the area, while forging deeper military alliances - from Japan to Australia to India – with countries that have disputes with China or see a rising China as a threat.

As the Asia-Pacific region, however, becomes less dependent on external markets, US influence will dwindle and China’s will grow exponentially. New trade alliances can make old military alliances obsolete. Hillary’s claim that “America has the capacity to secure and sustain our global leadership in this century as we did in the last” will be tested on the battlefields of WWII. Our task is to win workers and soldiers to turn the imperialist war into a class war for communism.



Angry Veterans of US wars from Vietnam to Iraq protesting at Occupy Wall Street. Soldiers and sailors are key to communist revolution; see articles on page 4

COMMUNISM: LAWS OR NO LAWS?

A series of articles and letters in **Red Flag** have argued the question: “Will communism have laws and law enforcement institutions? Or will we build communist society without them, relying instead on principles?” This is part of a bigger conversation about how the masses will make, enforce, and evaluate decisions in communist society. We hope many more readers will join it.

The articles have focused on disagreements. However, readers should know that we agree on a lot, including (among other things):

*Revolution will destroy completely (not “take over”) the State institutions through which the capitalist class exercises its dictatorship over the masses.

*It was a mistake for 20th century communists to set up “workers’ states” separate from the communist party. Instead, the International Communist Workers’ Party (ICWP) will welcome into its ranks all who want to help build communist society. The working class will rule through this one mass Party in all areas of the world under our control

*The key to workers’ rule is mobilizing the masses for communism. This means making communist ideas mass ideas and unleashing the creative energy of the masses to put them into practice.

*It will take a protracted period of armed struggle for the communist masses to defeat the world’s capitalists and their hangers-on. We prepare for armed struggle, as well as ideological struggle, to sharpen after the revolutionary

seizure of power.

But significant disagreements have emerged.

Some involve what we mean by “laws.” For example, during a huge strike, masses of strikers decided to shut down the bars, and then did it. This was originally brought forward to show how workers can rule by the direct mobilization of the masses around communist principles. However, one writer cited it as an example of a “law” enacted by workers’ power.

Societies are organized around a wide variety of principles, laws (written and unwritten), rules, regulations, taboos, customs, and mores, in various combinations of some or all of these. Do all of these count as “laws” as some suggest when arguing that communism will need “laws”? If not, how do we distinguish among them?

Deepen the analysis to sharpen the struggle

Both the “Laws” and the “No Laws” positions need fuller development regarding the bigger question of “how the masses will make, enforce, and evaluate decisions in communist society.”

Comrades supporting “Laws” need to explain how communist legal institutions (laws, cops, courts, jails, etc) would differ from their capitalist counterparts. For example, would there still be lawyers? Judges? How would we keep people who “specialize” in law enforcement from developing the nasty attitude regarding themselves as superior and everyone else as a suspect?

These comrades should also explain how communist legal institutions would differ from 20th century socialist legal institutions (mainly in Rus-

sia and China). In particular, they need to answer the criticism that formal systems of law undermine the political struggle to mobilize the masses for communism.

Comrades arguing for “No Laws” have the opposite problem. What examples (in history or in the practice of our Party) help to show how communism will work? What aspects would we keep, and what would change, for example, from the Paris Commune or the Chinese Cultural Revolution? They should answer the question of what, if any, other “principles” (besides “mobilize the masses for communism”) we will fight to carry out. They need to talk about who will decide, and through what processes, how to apply those principles in particular circumstances.

Whichever position is true, the Party has a huge responsibility. It must lead the way in mobilizing the masses to organize every aspect of communist society. This means the development of communist social relationships globally in everything from production and distribution of goods to mass culture and education. The “laws or no laws” discussion needs more attention to how we build and function as a “mass communist Party of a new type,” now and in the future.

A great strength of our discussion has been the many conversations it’s sparked among comrades, **Red Flag** readers, and others. This is an example of how ICWP is mobilizing the masses (though still on a small scale) to figure out how to build communist society. Let’s keep it going and take it further!

LETTERS

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CRITICISM AND SUGGESTIONS

Youth Responds to the Struggle

In the latest issue of *Red Flag*, an anonymous writer wrote a response to a letter I had written for *Red Flag* from the previous issue. This person advised me to join the military or go into the industrial sector. Every young comrade, every young reader or writer of *Red Flag* should take that advice into serious consideration. If workers want to take down this government, we need to take it down from the inside and make sure it stays down. What the youth need to do is use the government's weakness and use that as our strength. This is our time and we need to take advantage of it.

A young comrade

Red Flag Mistakes Quantitative for Qualitative Change:

The front page article in Vol. 2, No. 19 of *Red Flag* made a mistake when it said that Obama sending US troops to the African country of Uganda is a "qualitative" change in US policy. It's a change, all right, but not a qualitative change. One of the laws of dialectics is that quantitative changes lead to qualitative changes. An example of that is boiling water. The contradiction in the tea kettle is between the forces that keep water molecules loosely bound together in a liquid state and the motion that splits them apart. The quantitative changes are when the water gets hotter, degree by degree. The qualitative change is when it boils and turns to steam. Heating the water increases the motion, and when it reaches a tipping point, you have steam. It's something else—not water, but steam. That's why we call it a qualitative change.

In the case of inter-imperialist rivalry between the US and China in Africa, there have been lots of relatively small moves by both the US and China to intensify the contradiction between them—they both want and need to be the dominant imperialist. You can see that, for example, in Libya, where the US and NATO took out Gaddafi, who had been making oil deals with China. Uganda has just discovered oil in their border regions and Chinese companies are moving into the Eastern Congo to buy coltan for cell phones. In response, the US is sending "military advisors" into the region.

While it is a change that the US is sending ground troops to Africa for the first time in almost twenty years, it's not the tipping, or nodal, point that transforms small scale conflicts, largely between proxies, into world war. That will be the qualitative change. We don't know if that will happen in Africa, or somewhere else. We do know that world war is inevitable, and that communists around the world must prepare for this future by mobilizing the masses for a communist revolution, to put an end to imperialism and its wars and build a world of collectivity and cooperation among the toiling masses.

--Red Flag Editorial Collective

Talking to a Bus Driver

Recently, I had a text conversation with an LA MTA operator. It went like this:

UNIVERSALS from page 16

Social class universals, like worker and capitalist, refer to essential factors that have strong effects, and are more important than other social universals that refer to race, gender or nationality, which reactionary "identity politics" treats as primary.

A big part of scientific investigation is finding the right universals, universals that name the common factors that mainly determine what happens in particular situations and leaves out factors that matter less. Using universals that are too abstract and leave out too much can be especially misleading. It would be a mistake, for example,

"Hi! How are u? This is Tom from *Red Flag*. Sorry I haven't been in touch. Was out of town visiting family. How r things @ work?"

"Things r good. My phone was off 4 a week but Im back on line hope all is good."

"Good! Im glad. Have u been receiving the paper?"

"Yep got it last week at the job even passed some around the Div."

"Great!"

"We have UTU elections coming up so I wanna see how this turns out? Trying to get sum new people in there 4 what is worth."

"Sorry to tell you not to hold your breath. No matter whom U elect things won't change much. The system is in a deepening crisis and can't give major concessions. On the contrary, it is demanding more sacrifice from us."

Unfortunately, the text conversation ended here. However, I had begun to tell him that the main crime of union officials was not that they did not negotiate a better contract. Given the crisis, even if you or we were elected, we couldn't do much better. The main crime of the union officials is that they believe in capitalism, are anti-communists and tell us we can reform capitalism to meet our needs. That's why they sell out for a handful of dollars.

Also, the November UTU elections are for presidents, secretaries, etc. of the five union locals. These are administrative positions. They have nothing to do with representing workers or negotiating contracts. James Williams and his gang do that and they were elected for a four year period last November.

--Red Flag Distributor

**How to mobilize the masses in the rural environment for communism?**

This question is something that has made my head spin. I work for a Civil Association (C.A.) that tries to bring development to the rural environment, for the overcoming of poverty, using the natural resources in a sustainable manner. But I became aware that the same capitalist evils that we attack so much in editions of *Red Flag* are the order of the day in these areas.

We can't achieve anything sustainable with the conservation programs that aim to help to achieve a better way of managing natural resources in a capitalist system.

Life in rural areas in the last 20 or 30 years, from

to try to understand the prospects of life under capitalism by focusing on human nature. That's why Marx wrote that his economic studies did not "proceed from man but from a given economic period."

It would also be a mistake to discuss the fight for communism by talking about revolution in general. The French Revolution replaced the feudal aristocracy with the capitalists, but kept exploitation and class rule. Revolution to destroy capitalism will be different, since destroying class society altogether requires relying on mass understanding of, commitment to, and mobilization for communism.

what I've been able to see in my experience—without counting the time that the state and private property have existed—has sharpened the bad things; people seem disinterested in changing the bad things from which they suffer.

The government, with its paternalistic programs, has made the people submissive; much more than before, they aren't moved to act as much in grave situations of poverty. The society of consumption and globalization has fomented in the rural environment forms of life like industrialized cities. The youth have left and have returned to their communities with an aggressive attitude, with vices like alcoholism, drug addiction, and prostitution. I've observed in my community young children of 12 or 13 years lost in alcohol and drug addiction. This wasn't seen ten years ago. Childhood isn't enjoyed. The parents aren't even attentive to what's happening around them.

Its hard to open eyes in a world so lost, and we must act urgently. How should we discuss *Mobilize the Masses for Communism* in the rural environment so that the people aren't so alienated from what's happening? I'm perplexed and I analyze all the time why (I already know) the work that I do for C.A. is going backwards. The people don't show interest in conserving and making good use of the natural resources when the priority is to resolve the social part, the real problems that rural societies live day by day.

I have a lot of doubts, that the mobilization for communism now is being done with working people from the cities, in the factories, teachers, work centers, etc. and I'd like to know if today we have work in rural areas, as we need to have here. I'm not referring to that only a few do this work, or in what phase we find ourselves. I've become very disconnected and I'd like to know what experiences there have been in the rural environment. Let's see if you can publish this idea or send some information about this.

--Comrade in rural zone in Mexico

Red Flag responds:

Thank you for your questions and for giving us the opportunity to discuss your observations. First, we know that the reformist and revisionist movements have done much damage to the working class (in the cities and the fields) and have submerged it in a desperation and lack of interest in struggling and resistance to seeing a real alternative for victory for our class. Defeating capitalist ideas that have been in the atmosphere for centuries is a constant struggle and not easy. We think that we must use dialectics to understand the process of building a consistent base with communist ideas and actions.

Articles in *Red Flag* have come out with examples of work in the fields and factories. For example, in the San Joaquin Valley, California there are many farm workers who gladly receive *Red Flag*. Some distribute it. Many of them come from rural areas of Mexico. We also ask the comrades from rural areas to write their comments about your letter.

The right universals, put into the right theories, are vital guides in the fight for communism, but the particular or individual still has more content than universals do. Even a good theory doesn't fully describe all particular cases, but knowing about those cases can be the basis for improving it. Thus the party needs to learn from many individual workers' experiences and struggles, and combine them into better knowledge of universals and better theories based on them. The ICWP will play this central role in developing the science of revolution, and use it to lead the working class to communism.

Libya: “Responsibility to Protect” leaves a trail of death and destruction IN THE MIDST OF TURMOIL, WORKERS SAY WE DON’T NEED BOSSES

“Most of the people that produce the oil are here. We can do without...the managers. We can start from tomorrow if we have enough transport, equipment, tools and materials,” said an oil engineer who has worked for Libyan Waha Oil for 36 years.

Oil workers got rid of the old Kaddafi managers. They were furious to find out that the new managers were just like the old ones. They and all Libyan workers will be as furious when they find out that they traded one set of capitalist exploiters for another.

Just as some oil workers concluded that they don’t need any managers, they can be won to conclude that we don’t need any capitalists and must fight for communism. Under communism, workers the world over can and will organize production and distribution for the needs of our class without managers or bosses. This will require revolution to destroy capitalism.

As the world’s imperialists, especially English,

French, Italian and US, scramble for control of Libyan oil, Libyan workers pay a huge cost for the imperialists’ bloodbath carried out in the name of “protecting” them.

In Sirte, Kaddafi’s stronghold, 80,000 civilians and a few thousand soldiers were bombed for weeks. Only 20,000 civilians escaped. The rest were forced to survive without food, water, or electricity. As in Fallujah, Iraq, NATO bombed and destroyed Sirte in order to “save” it—for the capitalist-imperialists.

Don’t Trust Any Capitalist

Kaddafi took power in 1969. He was seen as a leftist and a champion of Arab nationalism. He nationalized oil companies and, temporarily, made health care and education more accessible to Libyan workers. However, his reforms were meant to pacify Libyan workers, not to put them in power. In 1995, this supposed champion of Palestinian workers expelled 30,000 Palestinian refugees from Libya to “punish” Arafat for making

a peace deal with Israel.

In 2003, after the fall of Saddam Hussein, he made deals with Western imperialism, giving up his weapons program and opening up oil and other companies to private investment. Since then, the reforms he instituted were cut drastically. Libyan workers’ standard of living fell. At the same time Kaddafi and his

family reaped huge profits off their oil deals with the imperialists and lived in luxury.

Many believe that Kaddafi was a friend of the workers because the false revolutionaries and communists who led the movements for national liberation in the 1960’s and 1970’s praised him for his economic support and for denouncing US imperialism. He was an old friend of Fidel Castro, and Hugo Chavez bestowed on him the highest honor of the Venezuelan government in 2009.

However, neither he nor any capitalist is our friend, no matter what temporary crumbs they allow workers. They all live off the exploitation of the working class. In a capitalist crisis, they turn on the workers with a vengeance, as Kaddafi did.

Some try to take us into the trap of thinking that “the enemy of my enemy is my friend.” No boss, whether from Libya, NATO, China or Russia, can be an ally of the working class.

Trust the Workers—Take them Communist Ideas

As the competing imperialists vie for control of Libya’s oil, it’s too soon to say who will be the winner. But it’s clear that the struggle for control will continue among the imperialists and inside Libya.

Libyan workers paid dearly to get rid of Kaddafi and will not happily be put under the stranglehold of NATO or their local henchmen in the National Transitional Council. As rebellious oil workers see, workers can run things better without any bosses. In the bloodbath created by the imperialists, workers can see that capitalism has to be destroyed with a communist revolution—when these ideas are presented to them. To make this a reality, *Red Flag* and ICWP need to reach workers in Libya and around the world to grow into the mass voice and organization of communist revolution.



Final Part

UNIVERSAL, PARTICULAR AND INDIVIDUAL

Roughly speaking, a “universal” is what different individual things or particular situations have in common. Human beings, planets, revolutions, etc. have groups of specific properties that make them humans, planets, etc. A useful term for these groups of core properties is “essences.”

As an example, let’s consider the essence of humanity. We are not looking for a definition of “human” or a way to tell if some animal is human. Definitions, like “man is the tool-making animal,” (which doesn’t actually apply just to humans) wouldn’t tell you what makes something human, anymore than wearing a mechanic’s uniform would determine what makes someone an auto mechanic, even if every mechanic wore one.

The Marxist viewpoint is that what makes something human is both biological and social. At any given period in history, social relationships make up part of our nature, and that nature will change when social relations change. In particular, someone’s social class, which is part of his or her social relationships, has powerful and wide-ranging effects. Both the biological and social sides of the human essence are material, however, not something immaterial or merely ideal, as Platonists would say (Platonism was explained in the last issue).

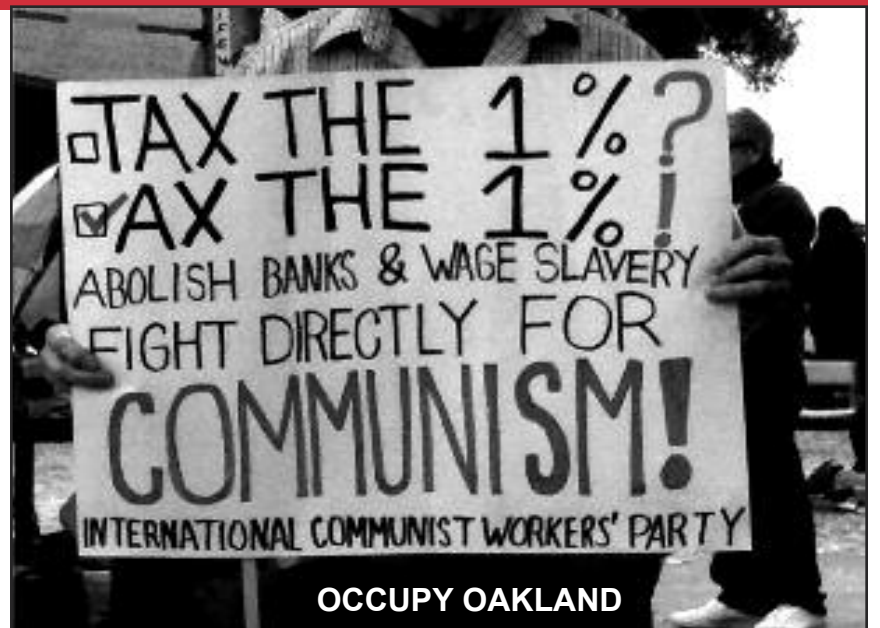
The humanity example shows that the essence of a universal can change over time—it’s a moving target. In the future, when people have grown

up under communist social relationships, everyone will be less competitive and individualistic, and better at cooperation.

Universal and Individual: A Dialectical Relation

Universals depend on individuals and can’t exist without them, since they are the common characteristics in these individuals. Lenin wrote that “Every universal is (a fragment, or an aspect, or the essence of) an individual.” A universal can’t exist unless something has it or at least could have it. If humans had never evolved, there would be no such universal as humanity, but the universal “mammal” would still exist if there were mammals.

Individuals also depend on universals, since universals are the characteristics of individuals and define their relations to other individuals. Earth is a planet with a solid surface, liquid water, and an atmosphere. Each of these properties is a universal, and partly defines which individual thing Earth is. But there is more in an individual than any short list of universals can describe. As Lenin put it, “Every universal only approximately embraces all the individual objects” that have it. Astronomers are now discovering more Earth-



OCCUPY OAKLAND

like planets, and each is different from Earth in some way.

Understanding the universals in individual things is important because the essence of a universal can have big effects. All revolutions have some features in common, like mass mobilization, hatred of the government, etc., that partly determine the course of the revolution. Universals point to necessary connections, like imperialist rivalry causing wars, and they are key parts of theoretical principles and generalizations.

The Right Universals Matter

Some universals do a much better job than others in indicating the capabilities of individuals.

See UNIVERSALS, page 15