



# RED FLAG

**MOBILIZE THE MASSES FOR COMMUNISM**

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



November 12—Thousands of students at dozens of US universities marched, rallied, and held sit-ins to support their brothers and sisters at the University of Missouri and to protest racism on their own campuses. Some have won demands for the resignation of college officials. But to end racism forever they need to ally with workers and soldiers to mobilize for communism. More next issue.

## END RACISM WITH COMMUNIST REVOLUTION!



### **SOUTH AFRICA: BUILDING A NEW COMMUNIST MOVEMENT**

SOUTH AFRICA—"I want to join the Party," said a student at a meeting after a day of distributing *Red Flag* at a University. He had a long discussion the night before about the difference between black consciousness and communism with a group of comrades, including his neighbor. He agrees now that he needs to help mobilize his friends for communism. Three of his friends came and had a lot of good questions about communism and education. They planned an International Communist Workers' Party study group at their comrade neighbor's house and agreed to come to the Communist conference.

"I am a communist. I was a member of the South African Communist Party (SACP) but I renounced my membership because they aren't really communists," a campus worker told a *Red Flag* comrade. After receiving *Red Flag*, he eagerly agreed to come to our Communist Conference and made a plan to meet beforehand with a comrade who lives near him.

Masses of students in South Africa have gone on strike for free education and against outsourcing of campus jobs. At the school, we quickly distributed over 100 papers, all we had. Many students and workers were interested in the fight for real communism and ICWP. Eighteen people, women and men, gave their names to be in touch with ICWP.

A student who got a copy of *Red Flag* said, "Oh, you're a Communist Party? I want to go on strike right now." Another excitedly asked how to get in touch with the Party. It's good to mobilize on this campus because students come from different provinces of the country. Many are future workers. Campus workers were also excited about the paper and our communist ideas.

We met a young student leader who is a member of the African National Congress (ANC). Frustrated with the ANC and the government, he said it's impossible to change the ANC from within.

We had a good talk. He was in the struggle for free education. We said

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### **Garment Worker's Story: RED FLAG LIGHTS UP SWEATSHOP HELL**

LOS ANGELES — My name may not be so important. Today I just want to say how *Red Flag* became a part of my story.

Where I come from is also perhaps not necessary to mention, because what I have to relate ultimately affects people in different places all over the world.

I came to the US because of the need to improve our life for me and my children. Workers under capitalism are always forced to move in search of better pay, in search of a better price for our labor power. At the same time, the bosses are always looking for an easier way to cheapen our labor power, always paying us the lowest wages possible so as to maximize their profits.

I am a garment worker, and ever since I started working it has been my lot to suffer insults, humiliations, and discrimination by the employers.

Knowing our need, they take advantage of us, enslave us and force us work as if we were machines or robots without any rights or bene-

fits.

Working for Jean Mart has been an experience to remember. I am not going to mention how grateful I am with the owner for the opportunity to work for him for so many years. That's what they try to tell us—to be grateful that at least we have a job. On the contrary, he should be thanking me for offering him a source of so much wealth.

The people that he has under his command, like the supervisors, have been unjust, inhuman and even despicable in the way they treat us. It is so humiliating!

One of these supervisors always mentions that we should put up with the bad treatment we receive because of our need to pay the rent, buy food for the family, pay all the bills, etc. That's wage slavery.

There is an area in Jean Mart where people are treated even worse. We call that place "small village, big hell." What people go through there is really extreme exploitation.

The people who manage it are

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## “WHEN WE TAKE POWER, THE WORLD WILL BE COMMUNIST”

So sang ninety comrades attending the two-day International Communist Workers' Party (ICWP) conference in South Africa. Eight comrades from outside the country came to help, living and working side-by-side with local organizers. Local comrades worked tirelessly to build the conference. Dozens joined the party: women and men, industrial workers and students, unemployed from the townships, all young and old lions.

Capitalism worldwide is making life impossible for the masses. All around the world, including here in South Africa, millions are seeking new strategies for communist change. Mobilizing for democracy, national liberation or socialism has failed the masses.

Today we mobilize directly for communism. This historic conference helped prepare our Party for this pivotal moment in history.

An 82-year old comrade joined along with many in his family. “I dreamed last night that I was among a sea of workers — and they were all ICWP communists from around the world. In all the years I was in the African National Congress (ANC) which led the fight against apartheid, I never had a dream like that.”

A nurse came after working the night shift. “I really like the [party] literature,” she told another veteran comrade when we dropped her off at work the next night. “Yes, I want to join.”

A group of industrial workers and long-time activists from the South African Communist Party (SACP) were excited to hear about the different ideology that we presented.

The SACP abandoned the mobilization for communism to join a coalition with the ANC. Communist parties throughout the world have re-



treated from the fight for communism by focusing on socialism, national liberation or some other concession to capitalism. Millions are questioning this strategy. After all, it hasn't worked despite mass bravery and sacrifice for over 150 years.

The ICWP won't delay the fight for communism one more minute.

We will pull up capitalism by its roots by destroying the wage system and production for profit, and with them borders, racism, sexism and imperialist war.

Our strategy demands that we know even more about what we fight for than about what we fight against. That's why so much of the conference was dedicated to answering the question, “What is communism?”

### Workshops Discuss Communist Future

“How would you feel if the guy who sweeps the floor gets paid as much as you do?” a young woman asked a veteran comrade machinist.

“That floor sweeper would be me,” answered the comrade. “We'd all sweep floors in a communist factory and we'd all know how to run machines and much more.”

In communism, we'll eliminate paychecks and money altogether. The party will organize the masses to cooperatively produce and distribute what we need.

In another workshop, someone asked if there would be laws and rules. “We don't need laws, we'll run society on principles,” answered a young man who had joined the party three days earlier.

“How would we supply the world?” asked another. “Who would decide what was fair for this person or that person?”

A second new young recruit pointed to a bottle of water. “We're not all going to go after that bottle. We would collect all these bottles on the table and the collective will decide how to distribute the water.”

How would a communist health care system work? A communist education system? A communist Army? ...And a dozen other practical

questions were debated. The wisdom and enthusiasm of the masses, organized in an international communist party, showed how communism will succeed.

### Hard Work; Pivotal Moment of History

What to do with all this potential? Within a day comrades from here and abroad planned how to keep the momentum from the conference going: “We need study groups that discuss our manifesto *Mobilize the Masses for Communism* in every township, school, factory, and barracks.”

Whole new areas of work have been opened up this weekend. Leading comrades paired with new comrades to figure out how to organize them. This will materialize based on their growing confidence in collectively building the party.

All around the world in every concentration we must plan dinners and meetings to use this conference to mobilize for a communist May Day.

Comrades from South Africa concluded they could increase the circulation of *Red Flag* eight-fold after asking members, friends and collectives how many papers each could distribute.

We must all do likewise. The conference listened raptly as comrades from Mexico, El Salvador and the United States described how they mass-distribute the paper and raise money for it. We must redouble our efforts.

Harder work lies ahead. All indications are that millions are seeking a communist answer. We live in a pivotal moment of history. Workers worldwide must seize the opportunity to build the International Communist Workers' Party. Let the lions roar!



**SIGN IN XHOSA SAYS:  
WORKERS OF THE WORLD  
UNITE FOR COMMUNIST  
REVOLUTION**



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## Mexican Teachers in Class Struggle

### NEED TO BECOME COMMUNIST ORGANIZERS

MEXICO, November 15—Once again tens of thousands of teachers took to the streets to protest Education Reform and its teacher evaluations. The government threatens to fire teachers who don't submit to evaluation. It uses this threat as a whip to get them in line. There were confrontations between teachers and the police in various states.

For many years, teachers have represented the class struggle that exists in Mexico. The bosses have been able to control mass movements of miners, farmworkers, railroad workers, electricians, students and other workers opposed to the government and their respective bosses by getting the unions to serve these same bosses. They have achieved this because the workers haven't been able to see themselves as one class and organize themselves in one communist party, the International Communist Workers' Party (ICWP).

Education in Mexico is not a national question,

but a world question. The main aspect of capitalist education is to hide the fact that we live in class society, based on exploitation, and governments make sure that the schools do this job. Capitalism has developed two opposing social classes in almost every corner where humans find themselves. The boss class controls private property in the means of production (factories, land, machinery, etc.). The working class only survives by working for a boss.

The bosses at every level live in constant competition. They are constantly writing new commercial treaties between Mexico and the United States to be able to compete with other bosses in Europe and Asia. Their educational programs must meet their new needs.

The bosses need the schools to prepare workers for the branches of production that they most urgently need to develop, especially energy and auto. Both branches represent the bases for preparing for the third world war. The auto plants

can be converted to mass production of arms, tanks and airplanes. At the same time they need the energy infrastructure to keep these factories running.

The bosses need teachers to guarantee the success of capitalism, and the continued flow of profits to the capitalists.

The Secretary of Public Education (SEP) is the executive branch of the government that is responsible to make this system function.

It starts in elementary school, where students are taught to read, to fill our heads with dreams of national identity and lies that are far from the reality of the reasons for poverty. Secondary education follows with the memorization of formulas and concepts that you won't use in your daily life, and if you are lucky enough to reach college or university, you end up accepting that the existing social order is part of human nature.

In a communist society, the education of the whole society will guarantee that there will be no pyramid of power, no banks, no multi-millionaire families, no SEP, no exploitation. This communist education will be based on producing what the working class needs to live. We'll end the bosses' profits!

Teachers mustn't limit themselves to fight to keep capitalism working. They have to be part of the guardians of humanity. Be a communist teacher, promoting a world without capitalist education.

The main task of teachers should be to spread communist ideas—the ideas of a society without social classes. Their job should be to help organize workers, teachers and students for a communist revolution, in which we take up arms to destroy capitalism and to seize power. Join our International Communist Workers' Party!



## SOUTH AFRICA from page 1

even if it's free, it's capitalist education. He said they were fighting to "de-colonize" education. We explained that we need a communist revolution to build education around meeting workers needs in a society dedicated to that.

He complained that too many students support the right-wing Democratic Alliance. He listened seriously as comrades explained that the working class needs a communist revolution, not elections. We shouldn't try to reform capitalism,

which can't be made to meet workers' needs.

He wondered if the ANC would be willing or able to relinquish power without a civil war. A comrade explained that there are many civil wars and that capitalism itself will never relinquish power to the working class. Workers, soldiers and students have to mobilize the masses for communism to take power.

Then in the shared jitney taxi on the way back from the school, we were talking about the Brazilian anti-slavery movie "Quilombo." This

movie showed how runaway slaves built a society based on sharing everything. That's how we met two students from Angola who speak Portuguese. We started talking and they got out of the taxi with us to keep talking. They agreed to come to the conference.

The potential to mobilize the masses for communism is huge. The comrades are tireless. The communist future belongs to the working class.



STUDENT PROTESTS IN SOUTH AFRICA IN OCTOBER

## GARMENT from page 1

ruthless. They count the times you go to the restroom and they demand extreme quantities of forced work. And don't even think of missing work.

When *Red Flag* appeared outside the factory it was like a light of hope among me and my co-workers. We have looked for it so it can help us express our feelings and speak the truth. Now the people who run the place have changed a bit. However, I recognize that exploitation continues and we need to eliminate it by mobilizing the masses for communism.

Perhaps *Red Flag* isn't a place where I can solve my legal problems or the problems of my labor rights. Under capitalism this can never be resolved. In fact, *Red Flag* does help make clear the problem of wage slavery.

Also, it helps a lot so that we can learn about how or what the working class is living through around the world.

I have shared *Red Flag* with coworkers, my daughters, friends and neighbors. I recognize that *Red Flag* needs to get to a lot of workers and in this way it can help to win the world we desire.





## Paris Attacks Reveal Capitalist Hypocrisy

### COMMUNIST VERSUS CAPITALIST VALUES

November 18—As the news broke last Friday of the horrific attacks on civilians in Paris, French President Hollande said they were attacks “against France, against the values that we defend everywhere in the world.” US President Obama called them an attack on the “universal values that we share.”

#### What Values?

Capitalism values profit over human life. It is based on exploitation. It grinds the masses into poverty while a few live in luxury. Capitalist competition teaches selfishness and individualism. It requires racism for maximum profit and to maintain the rule of the few over the many. Its insatiable thirst for profits leads to a crisis of overproduction—trade wars leading to shooting wars, death and destruction.

The history of French colonialism and imperialism, from Vietnam to Haiti, from Syria to Algeria, from Rwanda to Senegal, from the docks of Marseille to the banlieus of Paris, shows us that racist exploitation is the key value that the French ruling class has defended. US capitalism, based on the genocide of Native Americans and the holocaust of African slavery, was built on the same values of racism and exploitation.

ISIS calls Paris the capital of vice, claiming to represent different values. And while stoning adulterers and other medieval punishments imply rigid moral judgments, ISIS shares a key value with French and US capitalists: the murder of innocent civilians in the pursuit of conquest.

ISIS justified its attacks by referring the dead—including immigrants from Turkey and a young Mexican-American woman from California—as “crusaders.” (The Crusades were racist military campaigns pushed by the popes between 1095 and 1291 to conquer the “Holy Land” from Muslim rulers).

The US refers to the thousands of civilians killed in its drone strikes against Al Qaeda as “collateral damage.” Neither values human life.

The capitalist media echo this racist disregard for the masses. Both France 24 and CNN referred to the November 13 attacks as the worst

violence in France since World War II. This lie ignores the racist murder by the French police of more than 200 Algerians in Paris in 1961, during a massive street protest for Algerian independence.

#### War & Racism vs. Militant Solidarity

Like the US rulers after 9/11, the French rulers are using the attacks to build racism, war, and a police state. Soccer games and vigils include the French national anthem, which ends with a racist call to war: “Let their impure blood run in our furrows.” Hollande has ordered the bombing of the ISIS capital Raqqa, Syria, and called for a permanent state of emergency in France. Ten thousand soldiers have occupied Paris.

The US CIA Director has called for increased surveillance of texts and emails. Thirty out of 50 state governors have announced that they will not accept Syrian refugees. Presidential hopefuls Ted Cruz and Jeb Bush have called for limiting immigration to Christians only.

The Obama White House, while tweeting #RefugeesWelcome, has its own refugee crisis. Central Americans fleeing the violence that US imperialism has created are turned back in Mexico or locked up in detention centers in the US.

Many have questioned the racist disregard for other victims of terrorism and the scapegoating of Syrians and Muslims: “Where was the Facebook overlay for Kenya when 147 students were killed by Al-Shabab in Garrisa in April?” “What about the Beirut bombings where 41 people died on November 12?” “Never forget the US refusal to admit Jewish refugees fleeing Nazi Germany in 1939!”

#### Communist values

Communism values human life—not profit, power, or property. It is based on cooperation, and working together to produce what we need. Cooperation requires and acting together for the



whole human family once the bosses have been defeated. It means fighting against anything that divides us, including sexism, racism, borders, religious and ethnic prejudice.

When anti-Muslim fascists invaded a vigil in Lille, north of Paris, with a banner calling for the expulsion of Muslims, mourners sent them running. The police had to intervene to prevent these National Front fascists from getting their due.

The mourners in Lille and the masses in Europe who welcomed migrants this fall demonstrate a key communist value—working class solidarity.

This militant solidarity shows the potential for a communist world. But it won’t happen automatically. We must take our communist vision to the masses, increase the distribution of this newspaper, and build Party clubs and cells that can lead the struggle for a world organized by communist values.

This will guarantee that the call to battle for the world’s workers won’t be any racist bosses’ national hymn but that of the international working class: *The International*.

It is a gift from the French working class. It was born out of the struggle that established the Paris Commune, the first time in history that the working class took state power.

In this tradition, and mobilizing the masses for communism, we will build a communist world where, as our hymn says: “The international working class shall be the human race!”

### Greek Workers Strike against Syriza’s Austerity



November 12—Tens of thousands of workers march in Greece, many with red flags, in a 24-hour nationwide general strike against the so-called “leftist” Syriza government. Students and retirees joined the protest against austerity cutbacks. General strikes are common in Greece but this was the first since socialist Alexis Tsipras was elected on an anti-austerity platform. While Syriza is putting cutbacks into effect, it also called for support of the general strike. “Are we marching with Alexis to topple Tsipras, or with Tsipras to topple Alexis?” asked a striker sarcastically. This is a pivotal moment (see p. 2). Masses are losing faith in misleaders who promise workers the moon but do the capitalists’ bidding. They are seeking a real solution. That solution is communism. Let’s redouble our efforts to get **Red Flag** into their hands.



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## Spats over the Spratlys:

# SOLDIERS, WORKERS MUST TURN US-CHINA WAR PLANS INTO COMMUNIST REVOLUTION

The Spratly Islands are a South China Sea archipelago more than 600 miles from China's coast. An ongoing dispute over their ownership has been escalating to levels that could turn from a war of words to a war of guns.

The fight is between China and the Southeast Asian nations of Brunei, the Philippines, Malaysia, Indonesia, Vietnam, South Korea and Japan, which also claim part or whole ownership of the Spratly Islands.

But the bigger fight is between Chinese and US imperialists. "China will remain the most significant competitor to the United States for decades to come," concludes a recent US Council on Foreign Relations report. It calls for "placing less emphasis on support and cooperation and more on pressure and competition."

The Chinese bosses and their allies are preparing for an inevitable confrontation with the US that will likely lead to World War III. This scenario will affect the world's working class everywhere.

Soldiers around the world will be critical. Will the working class die to perpetuate the power of our masters? Or will we fight for communism to liberate ourselves finally from the chains of the imperialist bosses?

### **Spratly Islands: Militarily and Economically Strategic**

Most of these islands are submerged at high tide. China has begun a land reclamation project, building seven artificial islands. It has built ports and airfields that can accommodate large aircraft. China says this is for search-and-rescue and environmental purposes. But the real purpose is military.

The US has carried out a series of "freedom of navigation operations" to challenge China's claims. On October 27, the US guided-missile destroyer USS Lassen, with other ships and aircraft, sailed into the 12-mile zone of a disputed island and was warned by Chinese military. The US still maintains military superiority, but no

longer can its mighty navy sail unquestioned into China's front yard.

Five trillion dollars of global trade passes the Spratlys annually. This area is believed to hold huge amounts of underwater oil and gas, resources that China needs. China must gain control of the area's resources and shipping routes in order to escape US-imposed restrictions.

Like any rising imperialist power, China must expand its military influence. Chinese leader Xi Jinping says he loves peace but he invests billions to modernize the armed forces. A military parade on September 3rd celebrated the 70th anniversary of the end of WW II and unveiled new weapons, like short and long range missiles, to build nationalist pride among Chinese workers.

### **Workers and Soldiers Have Nothing to Gain in Imperialist Wars**

Armies train youth, mainly from the working class, to follow orders to repress their own class. We must teach and organize these soldiers to mobilize the masses for communism.

Soldiers can and must understand that they are part of the working class. Their loyalty should be to their class brothers and sisters and not to the bosses that use them as mere expendable items. They must not blindly obey the bosses' orders. Instead they must build communist consciousness and unite with their working-class brothers and sisters to destroy imperialism.

The capitalist crisis around the world has plunged the world's working class into a deep misery that cannot be reversed. The only solution is to destroy imperialism with a communist revolution.

### **Soldiers: Unite with Workers to Turn the Guns on the Bosses!**

Capitalist competition demand that profit-hungry bosses will send soldiers to fight their wars in the Middle East or anywhere else to attack rival imperialists and kill workers to defend their



power. These wars will grow into World War III.

However, history teaches us that soldiers can turn their weapons against the bosses, turning world war into communist revolution. In Russia in 1917, during World War I, soldiers were won to unite with the workers to kill the capitalist bosses and build a socialist society. They fought alongside the workers, making the victory of the Russian Revolution possible.

Today a massive red army of working class soldiers will become an unstoppable force. But we will fight, not for socialism but for a real communist society that will abolish money and the exploitation of the wage system.

In Communism, the priority will be the well-being and security of the whole working class. Each person will have the duty to help take care of our class brothers and sisters. Criticism and self-criticism will replace orders. Social relations will be closer.

Today the International Communist Workers' Party struggles to build communist consciousness among workers, students, soldiers and their families worldwide. Soldiers and workers of the world, let's unite for a Communist Revolution!

## LETTERS

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## CRITICISM AND SUGGESTIONS

### **What Does It Mean to be a Party Member?**

**Red Flag** keeps urging readers to "join the Party." Some are doing just that! But others want to know what it means to be a Party member. Some of them distribute the paper, attend meetings and other events, and give money.

"You are doing everything a Party member does already so why not join?" we sometimes ask.

Maybe some wonder, "If I'm already doing everything, why does it matter if I join?"

The recent article on the Russian Revolution (v. 6 #19) addresses this question, among other important ideas. But it seems self-contradictory. We need to understand this contradiction.

The article accurately describes a 1903 fight between Mensheviks and Bolsheviks. Mensheviks said anyone could be a Party member, even without doing Party work. Bolsheviks said that Party members had to commit to carrying out decisions made collectively ("democratic centralism") even when they disagreed.

Sometimes this disagreement is characterized as a "mass" versus a "cadre" party.

The article states that ICWP is a "cadre" party: all members must carry out decisions. But then it says that "building a communist

world requires a mass party with...different levels of commitment and understanding." It stresses that members must be "open to struggle."

It advocates "communist centralism." This is explained by saying that "masses will fight for communism to the extent they believe in it."

This is surely true and important. But to what "extent" must someone "believe in it" before becoming a Party member? And what does that "belief" mean in action?

I don't think "real commitment" is an all-or-nothing deal that "cadres" have and others don't. That idea leads some to think they can't be members because "I can't do everything you do," as they say.

It's also wrong to describe commitment just quantitatively (greater or lesser extent). That suggests that there's no reason to "take the plunge" and join.

The article talks about "millions of communist leaders who have different levels of commitment." This comes closer to capturing the reality that "quantitative change can lead to qualitative change." It matters when we decide to rise to a new level of commitment, whether or not we're members.

Party growth (like everything) contains contradictory aspects that are united in struggle.

The Bolshevik analysis saw unity in action as primary while secondarily recognizing the need for "much collective discussion" (internal political struggle).

I think it's the other way around. The main thing the Party needs from its members is political struggle both internally and among the masses. That means accepting some responsibility for the Party's line and work. Unity in action flows from that commitment.

So being "open to struggle" is the main thing we ask of Party members. As a member, you should belong to a collective that carries out Party decisions. That helps you to develop greater understanding of communism, meaning deeper commitment to do what is needed, as best you can.

It also means struggling to help the Party make the best possible decisions to develop the line in practice.

Masses of people can do this. That's why I think that the "mass versus cadre" party debate from Lenin's time is outdated. Today we are figuring out, bit by bit, how to build a party that is "mass" AND "cadre." That's what communism will look like: masses mobilized to make and carry out all decisions for society, organized as one International Communist Workers' Party.

—LA comrade

## South Africa Meeting Envisions Communism, Recruits New Members

I am writing this article because a new comrade told me, "You have to live up to your responsibilities." You see, those who just join the party can give leadership!

Seventeen of us met in Noxolo township to prepare for our international ICWP conference this coming weekend. Young and older, men and women, black, Latin and white, from three continents mapped out our plans.

We started by reading sections of our party's manifesto "Mobilize the Masses for Communism." A friend soon concluded that the key task was to "explain communism to everyday people."

There was no shortage of anger at capitalism. For example, our new comrade told us how the ANC had lied about building decent housing to get elected. (Later, she related her struggle against xenophobia in the township. She thought the poverty of her neighbors was the fault of the capitalist system, not poor migrants from other African countries.)

The discussion soon shifted to how we would solve the housing crisis under communism. Our party would mobilize masses to build the houses we need. No more bank loans or corrupt construction companies. In fact, no more companies at all.

Similarly, a shop steward at a major pharmaceutical factory initiated a discussion on how work would be different when we have communism.

No more exploitive jobs, but collective work. No wage slavery, but commitment to the working class. Production for the needs of our

class, not for profit or sale.

No crisis of overproduction which threatens hundreds of thousand of jobs in South Africa and around the world. Our production decisions will be dictated by the needs of the masses, not by how much the bosses can sell.

Everyone threw in their two cents, especially when three students demanded answers to how communist education will work.

"Are we going to have colleges and universities?" asked one. Well, not the elitist, isolated institutions capitalism promotes. Education will be tied to work.

A teacher from Mexico said students from rural areas are pushed into agriculture. She thought we should move people around so they will learn how to work in many different industries.

One of her students spoke up a lot in class. The student said she did this to get a good grade. She thought she could make more money if she got good grades. Under communism we won't even have individual grades. We will evaluate progress by completing collective projects.

The teacher told her student she should learn not to advance individually, but to help our class. Under communism, this will be the standard.

Hearing this, another South African student joined ICWP.

The meeting went on like this. Answering each of these failures of capitalism with a plan for communism helped

us gather the tools to "explain communism to everyday people."

A visitor from Los Angeles told the meeting leader that he thought there was a great potential to recruit in South Africa,

"Too much potential!" answered our comrade.

Ironic, but a real obstacle we have to deal with. Certainly, raising more money for this effort will help. We must finance the printing of **Red Flag** in South Africa to accommodate the increased circulation.

The meeting shows us the way forward. We learned more about explaining the nuts-and-bolts of communism. The more we do this, the more "everyday people" will join.



Organizing for May Day in South Africa, 2015

### A Proud New Comrade in South Africa Writes

I want to thank you for welcoming me into your organization.

I would love to be a member of ICWP because it is the kind of organization that is needed world wide. I believe it is every human being's dream to be free and lead a healthy and normal life.

As a new member of the organisation I promise I will talk about communism to anyone who is willing to listen. If need be, I will walk, drive, or fly anywhere to proclaim the ideas of ICWP.

To my fellow comrades, let us continue the struggle together as one. Let us work as a team to make sure that we achieve our goal: let us fight to build our communist society.

—Comrade XYZ

### US Comrade Inspired by South African Masses

I'm a worker at MTA (Los Angeles Metropolitan Transit Authority) and I came to South Africa to attend an international conference.

When we arrived in Port Elizabeth I saw the area where the white bourgeoisie and upper middle class live. I liked the beauty of their houses, with lovely gardens and clean streets and parks. That same afternoon with some friends we went to the area where the black working class lives, to the township, heritage of Apartheid.

The contrast was impressive, incredible and insulting. The majority of the houses were half-destroyed, including those that were built after Mandela's famous triumph. I asked several families if they were satisfied with them. The majority said no, because they were built with cheap materials that after a year start to fall

apart.

These are some of the few families who received this "benefit," because there are many waiting for the promised houses, a promise which for now has been forgotten. That's why thousands and thousands of families live in shacks made of tin and cardboard, scraps of wood which must have been used for other things in the past. It's hard to believe that humans can live in the shacks where the poorest families survive.

In one of these townships, where I stayed with Party comrades, I saw no cops anywhere. Nevertheless the neighborhood could compete with the safest places in the world. People were friendly and respectful—children, young and older people. The neighbors take care of each other and their few belongings. You can walk around at any hour of the day without being troubled.

The majority of the young people, as well as the women and the neighbors in general, are very political. Some students joined the Party as did some women. This sector of the working class seems to easily grasp the main ideas of the International Communist Workers' Party (ICWP).

Also, in the different distributions of our newspaper and leaflets, I was able to observe workers in the factories accepting the paper with enthusiasm. The same thing happened in the university—an impressive response to ICWP's ideas. We made many contacts and I'm sure that many of them will go to the international conference.

The potential for the party to grow is immense. We hope that this will inspire other workers to follow the example of the comrades of South Africa.

—Red Industrial Worker

### Veteran Fighter—New Comrade

At the age of 14 years I was very active in politics and at that age I could just not sit back and observe what was happening in South Africa politically. Politics were in my blood. Every day and night I was eating and sleeping politics. But by the age of 19 I had noticed that politics were so dirty! I saw that the mission of politicians is to fill their pockets and feed the nation with lies. At that age I had become so sick and tired of politics and the politicians because of their empty promises, not only nationally but internationally as well.

But when Mandela was released from prison, I thought that things were going to be better, and that's when I voted for the African National Congress (ANC) hoping for the better life for all as they had promised. Since the 1994 elections I have observed the movements of the ANC. But through my observations I haven't noticed any changes in the country, but I have seen them enriching themselves and not fulfilling the needs and wants of the poor. That's when I started to lose faith in politics once again and I never voted again. You might ask why? I could not stand seeing all my fellow brothers and sisters going to bed with an empty stomach while others are homeless.

As I was now a non-political person, I was introduced to ICWP (International Communist Workers' Party) and after being introduced to this party, I have felt an interest in ICWP. I have requested the **Red Flag** and during my spare time I have gone through the **Red Flag** and it has explained further about ICWP. I have now joined the ICWP. I haven't joined for my personal benefit but to serve the interest of the needy people. I salute ICWP.

—A New Comrade



## From the Ranks of the Bourgeois Army to the Communist Ranks of ICWP

I grew up in a family dedicated to agriculture in a town in El Salvador. When I was young I presented myself at the military barracks to enlist but I didn't qualify. When I was 22 years old, I was recruited and taken to the Recruits' Training Center located in the western part of the country.

I did 16 months of military service: four months in the Recruits' Training Center, eleven in San Miguel and one in Monteca, a border area between El Salvador and Honduras.

When I volunteered to join the army it was because I wanted to be a soldier. It was not because I understood the situation of the war and why we had to fight. I knew that being a soldier I would have to fight, as when I was in Monteca, hearing rumors of conflict between El Salvador and Honduras.

I also remember one time when we were in formation, the captain said that if anybody was a guerrilla fighter they should step forward because, he explained, the guerrilla fighters were our enemies.

In 1977 I was discharged, returning to my family but keeping in mind that in case of war I had to report to the army. Two years after leaving the barracks I carried out paramilitary activities such as protecting the local commander.

### How I Joined the Guerrillas

I had friends and relatives in the ranks of the guerrillas who came to my house and politicized me about the guerrilla struggle. They

knew that I had served in the military and could be very useful. In 1980 the war intensified and I joined the guerrillas because I saw a lot of government injustice and repression against the working class.

That decision meant that the armed forces were looking for me to kill me. That's how I became part of a camp where we carried out logistics activities and the gathering of supplies and food. In the guerrilla army I understood the motive of struggle. I well remember today that they told us that there were two opposing classes, the proletariat and the bourgeoisie.

### How I See Things Today

The situation hasn't changed very much. The two classes still confront each other, and many years have passed since 1992 when they signed the Peace Accords. At that time, I felt satisfied when I saw that they were going to integrate us into civilian life. I continued to be on the left and stayed in the FMLN party, but I think that this party was absorbed by capitalism. Many ex-guerrilleros have this idea.

The principles of solidarity and humanism that we had in the war have disappeared and now they only see us as instruments for Election Day. I no longer participate in that farce, which only serves to replace one capitalist boss with another.



### How I Joined ICWP

Considering that the FMLN no longer responded to revolutionary principles, I met comrades in PLP. Our comrades now in ICWP were also in PLP then. I read the PLP newspaper and participated in meetings. Then I found out about the split. I knew and appreciated some of the motives for the formation of ICWP. It had to do with the political line that we would carry out in building a communist system, since we've had enough of reforms and that's not what we need.

I stayed with ICWP, the party in which I understand that I am carrying out a true struggle. In my house we meet as comrades and I have distributed *Red Flag* on May Day.

In the community where I live we are working to consolidate a party cell that will lead the working class to communism.

--Comrade in El Salvador

## Building Houses, Building Communism

Recently I visited Tijuana, Mexico with a group from my church to help families build very basic houses for themselves. We work with a cooperative community organization there.

When we introduced ourselves in the opening "circle" one of my church friends said he was "trying to save the environment through capitalism." He meant organizing for a progressive version of a carbon tax. So when my turn came I said I was trying to help save the world through communism.

That evening we were relaxing after a day of very hard work. This friend was trying to explain to others how "the market" could tip the balance away from carbon emissions and global warming without hurting lower-income workers. I responded with my reasons why that wouldn't happen. Rich people wouldn't reduce luxuries (like private jets) because they'd still be able to afford them. Governments wouldn't redirect tax money to the masses because they're controlled by the wealthiest capitalists.

As we rode to the work site the next morning, another friend mentioned that she and others had enjoyed listening to this conversation. She

said she didn't often hear intelligent, friendly debate over real issues between people who had big disagreements but respected each other.

Just then I spotted and pointed out another example of what's wrong with capitalism's market economy. We were passing acres and acres of empty, newly-built houses. There was a housing glut because too many developers are competing for the same upscale market.

Meanwhile workers like our new friends are living in tiny shacks and breaking their backs to build two-room houses out of cement and rebar. Some of them are construction workers who can't afford to buy or even rent the houses they build for the developers.

The work we do with our Tijuana friends is for use, not for profit. It is "low-tech" and doesn't demand a lot of expertise. All of us are happy to build friendships across borders while we shovel sand and gravel and pass along buckets



of cement. We do the work we can: people like me pass the empties. People from our church group always express gratitude for the chance to help.

The experience of working together like that is one more reason I believe that we can save the world through communism.

--California reader

## "ON CONTRADICTION" from page 8

tion was that you must give highest priority to resolving the main contradiction. This meant more effort to fight Japan than to fight class enemies. Mao said that the communists should actually ally themselves with their class enemies (capitalists and landlords) to fight Japan. He attacked communists who rejected allying with the capitalists who had killed tens of thousands of communists in the previous decade. Mao claimed that Japan was the "main target" and if you don't

shoot all your bullets at the main target, they will be wasted. Mao tried to use dialectics to defend this reactionary policy, which meant abandoning revolutionary political work until Japan was defeated.

### Resolve the Fundamental Contradiction!

Mao was dead wrong about the significance of the principal contradiction. Communists don't have to fight directly to resolve that contradiction. Doing that in 2015 would probably mean supporting one group of imperialists against others. Instead, communists should fight to mobilize

the masses so that the main contradiction changes, so that the fundamental contradiction, capitalists vs. workers, becomes the main contradiction. Communists should work to resolve that contradiction as their primary task, dealing with other contradictions when necessary to advance the fight for communism. In particular we should use the weaknesses that the contradictions between imperialists produce—especially imperialist war—to resolve the fundamental contradiction with communist revolution.



# 20TH-CENTURY COMMUNISTS FOUGHT RACISM – 21ST-CENTURY COMMUNISTS WILL END IT

“If the proletariat is to achieve victory, all the workers, irrespective of nationality, must be united,” wrote Stalin in 1904.

The Bolshevik party fought racism on a class basis. It developed members of “national minorities” as leaders. It fought hard against racist police terror. It pushed white communists in the US and elsewhere to fight harder against racism. Black workers and intellectuals from the US happily visited the Soviet Union in the 1930s and some settled there.

But it mistakenly framed racism as a “proletarian national question.” This sabotaged working-class internationalism. It led to reformism, demanding political and cultural rights instead of exposing the material basis of racism in capitalism. Communist leaders could not see that the socialist society they built couldn’t end the racism they hated.

## Workers’ Internationalism versus “Proletarian Nationalism”

Bolsheviks argued against “Federalists” who wanted to build separate “national” parties within the Russian empire. Stalin correctly predicted that, if adopted, “friends will be taken for enemies, enemies for friends—confusion will ensue, and the class consciousness of the proletariat of all Russia will wane.”

But they made just this mistake after taking power. Their Comintern was just such a federation. Their foreign policy led them to support nationalist rulers in countries like Iran even when those rulers were slaughtering communists.

In contrast, the International Communist Workers’ Party was founded as an international party.

Stalin saw that capitalists in his native Georgia used nationalism to get Georgian workers to support them against the Russian rulers. Once in power, however, the Bolsheviks acted on their line that “only the nationalities themselves have the right to abolish or develop this or that aspect of their national culture.”

Semi-feudal regions like Tajikistan had few industrial workers and fewer communists. The “nationalities themselves” allowed feudal rulers to exercise power. “National culture” meant con-

tinuing the extreme oppression of women and other practices that undermined efforts to build socialism, let alone communism.

## Communist Revolution versus Civil Rights

Bolsheviks fought for “civil equality of the nationalities in Russia,” for “freedom of language” and against the suppression of non-Russian cultures. They opposed the Russian rulers’ land-grabs on the borders of their empire. But they practically ignored racist super-exploitation of workers.

Bolsheviks understood that Russian capitalists needed racism to divide the working class, but they didn’t generalize this to all of capitalism. Capitalist competition forces bosses to find or create some section of the working class to super-exploit, driving wages down for all workers. Racist terror enforces this super-exploitation and creates a material basis for “divide-and-conquer” politics.

The focus on “civil equality” was reformist. Socialism carried out anti-racist reforms, but it did not attack racism at its root.

Chinese communists followed the Soviets, treating racism as a “national question.” They struggled to reduce inequities between super-exploited ethnic minority workers and majority Han workers. But their strategy was to organize non-Han workers into 55 officially-recognized minority “nationalities” within “autonomous” areas that were actually multi-ethnic.

## Communism Will End Racism

Communism will erase national borders. The communist fight against racism must become the jackhammer that smashes the walls of segregation the rulers have erected to divide us.

Communism fights for workers to recognize our common needs and interests. We will organize all of society around production for need, not for a market. This will make it possible finally to defeat capitalism-imperialism’s racist ideol-



Soviet Union, 1928

ogy.

Socialism in both China and the Soviet Union was essentially a capitalist wage-based money economy. The socialist principle “equal pay for equal work” did not mean a “common standard of living.” Even “equal wages for all” would have left worse off those historically disadvantaged by racism.

The wage system (even in socialism) fosters individualism, contradicting workers’ need for class solidarity and opening the door to racism.

In communism there will be no profits and no competition for markets, and therefore no material basis for racist super-exploitation. In a society without money, life itself will reinforce the communist anti-racist consciousness we fight for.

The ideological struggle against racism will escalate as we fight to build communism. Masses of workers, soldiers and youth will mobilize against class enemies who try to use racism against us.

By mobilizing the masses for communism today we begin to smash racist divisions. We seek and build leadership from amongst the super-exploited and super-oppressed. We must win all workers to respect this leadership.

The victory of communism will create the material basis for ending racism forever.

## HISTORY OF DIALECTICS: MAO ZEDONG’S “ON CONTRADICTION” PART II

In our last issue we began to work through this very influential essay. This time we will discuss serious errors in Mao’s article.

### The Particularity of Contradiction

Contradictions in the different forms of motion of matter are qualitatively different. The contradictions in a moving car, in the circulation of money in a capitalist economy or in the growth of knowledge are all different, and each has its own essential features. Understanding these different contradictions requires finding their specific concrete features.

Mao wrote that different contradictions must be resolved in different ways. His examples included resolving the worker-capitalist contradiction by revolution and contradictions inside the party by criticism and self-criticism.

Mao was right that contradictions are resolved in different ways, but he does not explain what various kinds of resolution have in common. The most important common characteristic they have is that contradictions are resolved by becoming more intense, by the two sides of the contradiction interfering with each other more and more.

A contradiction does not die out gradually. The capitalists do not give up and become workers; they fight harder the stronger the communist movement gets. Contradictions inside the party don’t just disappear; they are only resolved by intense discussions that win over most people to one view.

Mao did not explain that resolution needs intensification because he did not believe this. He thought that resolution required struggle, but that in certain contradictions, called “non-antagonistic,” struggle does not have to become more intense to produce resolution. We have discussed this wrong view before (see *Red Flag*, 12/4/2014) and will have more to say about it in Part III.

### Fundamental Contradictions and Principal Contradictions

Mao adopted from Soviet sources the important distinction between a fundamental contradiction and a principal contradiction, but his views about principal contradictions are seriously wrong.

The fundamental contradiction in a process in-

fluences that process from beginning to end, like the contradiction between capitalists and workers under capitalism, but it isn’t always the strongest contradiction. A principal or main contradiction is the one that has the greatest influence on a process or system at any one time. The main contradiction can shift from one contradiction to another, but the fundamental contradiction remains the same (*Red Flag*, 9/19/2013).

In 2015 the main contradiction in the world is between imperialist powers, especially between the US and China. Working-class activism and capitalist repression express the fundamental worker-boss contradiction, but right now that conflict has less effect than the intensifying contradictions among imperialists.

Mao wrote that the main contradiction in China in the late ‘30s was the contradiction between the Chinese nation and Japanese imperialism. He claimed that class struggle within China, the fundamental contradiction, was only a secondary contradiction at that time.

For Mao the importance of the main contradic-

**See “ON CONTRADICTION” page 7**