

# the storm in the world economy

an 'uncaptive minds' forum hosted by the commune

The last winter has seen the biggest breakdown in the world financial system since the Great Depression, and the opening-up of what promises to be a deep and prolonged recession.

Banks have collapsed. Household names from Woolworths to Wedgwood have gone to the wall. The ideological dominance of the free-marketers and neo-liberals has been swept away.

And yet few are challenging the real cause of the crisis - capitalism itself. The broadsheets write acres about Karl Marx, but in most Western countries the workers' movement is not even fit to take a punch at the ruling class.

We will be discussing what the crisis means for the evolution of capitalism, what it means for the working class and what we can do to respond.

**guest speaker: Kim Moody**

**(leading figure in the American rank-and-file trade union publication *Labor Notes*.)**

**7pm, Monday 16th February**

**Lucas Arms, nr. King's Cross, London**

# thecommmune.co.uk

# reading group

Our reading group on 'communism from below' spans the first half of 2009. There are meetings on Mondays every three weeks - see [www.thecommmune.wordpress.com/events](http://www.thecommmune.wordpress.com/events) for more details.

We aim to have open and undogmatic discussions: the discussions are not training in some "party line". At the meeting comrades will lead off on each text followed by a general discussion.

At the next reading group we will be answering the questions:

- ★ Is Parliament a neutral arbiter between classes? Does the state bureaucracy have autonomous interests of its own?
- ★ Is state intervention in the economy in Britain today at odds with the interests of private capitalists, and is it of benefit to workers?
- ★ To what extent is it worthwhile for the labour movement to have a parliamentary wing?

The first text is **The new forms of appearance of state-capitalism** by Andrew Kliman. It argues that the crisis shows that state intervention is not in contradiction to free-market ideology: pro-privatisation dogma means the state squeezes social services and yet uses huge amounts of public cash and regulation to more safely structure capitalist exploitation.

Section 18.4 of Istvan Meszaros' **Beyond Capital** argues that because capital's dominance over the working class extends throughout society, we cannot consider that capital and labour have a "level playing field" in Parliament. Rather, the state apparatus serves to balance the interests of competing capitalists.

Both texts are available online at the address given above.

**The meeting takes place from 6:30pm on Monday 9th February. Email [uncaptiveminds@gmail.com](mailto:uncaptiveminds@gmail.com) to register your interest and find out the location of the central London venue.**