

# RED FLAG

**MOBILIZE THE MASSES FOR COMMUNISM**



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



**“FLAGS ARE CHAINS  
NATIONS ARE PRISONS  
DOWN WITH THE PRISON &  
DETENTION CENTER WALLS”**

**MALAGA, SPAIN, Jan. 5:  
Protestors denounce the  
death of an Algerian prisoner  
in immigration detention and  
try to block deportation  
buses. They reject the official  
explanation that his death  
was a suicide and call for an  
end to all deportations.  
Communist revolution will  
abolish nations and borders.**

## Ramaphosa is no Hero of the Working Class!

### **WORKERS NEED TO BUILD THE ICWP**

SOUTH AFRICA, Jan. 7—The African National Congress (ANC) just elected Cyril Ramaphosa as their president. He prevailed over Nkosazana Dlamini Zuma. This means he is presumed to also become the next President of South Africa.

Many people inside and outside the ANC are celebrating the triumph of Ramaphosa as someone who is for the people, since President Zuma has been exposed as completely corrupt. The so-called representatives of the masses ( i.e., Unions) are saying this is a victory for the working class. It is not a victory for the working class but a victory for the faction he represents within in the ANC and also a victory for Western imperialism.

Ramaphosa is a capitalist and a stooge for capitalism itself. He facilitated the mass murder in Marikana where mine workers were killed for wanting better wages. He is a billionaire who was on the Board of the Lonmin Mine Company when mineworkers went on strike at Marikana.

He is not a guy the masses should celebrate. Instead they should be aiming their power to fight him and to destroy the capitalist system that he represents.

The masses have been disgruntled with the ANC. Most of the media has been attacking Zuma and the ANC for corruption. Most of the media here in South Africa is controlled by the imperialists or the capitalists aligned with the west, with the US and Britain.

This provides us with an opportunity because people here have lost confidence in the ANC. It is crucial to see that this lack of confidence by the masses towards the ANC is not just a lack of confidence in the ANC but is the result of the capitalist system being unable to provide for the masses. Capitalism will never be able to provide for the masses.

The working class here does not need Ramaphosa or the ANC. He is the enemy. Nothing he says or does will benefit the masses because

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## Trump Ends “Temporary Protected Status” for Immigrants

### **IN COMMUNISM, THE MASSES WILL PROTECT THEMSELVES**

USA, Jan. 10—Trump’s decision to end Temporary Protected Status (TPS) will uproot 200,000 Salvadoran immigrants in the US. Over 1000 Sudanese, 59,000 Haitians and more than 2,500 Nicaraguans immigrants are already dealing with the destructive effects of Trump ending their TPS late last year. Some 55,000 Honduran immigrants will be next on Trump’s chopping block.

Trump’s decision will also create chaos and great suffering among untold number of US citizens. Just the Salvadoran immigrants alone targeted by Trump’s decision have over 200,000 US born children. If to this we had the 800,000 youth and over 11 million undocumented workers – with more than 4.5 million US born children—pending in limbo over the DACA program and an elusive Comprehensive Immigration Reform – we can see the enormity of capitalism’s inhumanity. Tens of millions more workers in the US and internationally will be impacted negatively by these racist immigration policies.

Why should the lives of so many workers depend on the whims of politicians like Trump or other law makers and judges of the US capitalist-imperialist rulers? Why is the world divided by borders and ruled by racist immigration laws that are so destructive to workers lives?

Once the world had no borders and no bosses. People lived and worked collectively and shared the products of their labor according to need.

This early communism ended with the rise of private property and class society. That’s what got us to today’s unspeakably inhumane capitalist-imperialist society. And that’s why we need communist revolution to create a new classless society and a world without borders.

Communism will destroy the main thing that enslaves us to the capitalists: the need to find a job in order to survive. This – along with fascist terror – forces millions of us to migrate. Then we become subject to the capitalists’ racist super-exploitation, enforced by their fascist immigration

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## IRANIAN MASSES NEED COMMUNIST REVOLUTION!

The masses in Iran are rising up against capitalist exploitation, like the masses in Chile, Peru, Honduras, El Salvador, South Africa, Spain, India, and worldwide.

Protests in Iran began in Mashhad, the second most populous city, on Dec 28th. They spread to dozens of cities, involving youth, workers, women's groups, unemployed and professionals. In Esfahan, the masses burned down the police station and a bank that was stealing workers' money from their accounts. Some demonstrators denounce President Rouhani and others the entire Islamic theocracy (rule by clerics). Some Revolutionary Guard bases burned.

The government's response: jailing over 1000 (official figures) and killing at least 21 people.

Mass anger erupted when the budget revealed more money for rich religious institutions and a 20% increase for the military. Meanwhile it eliminated subsidies for workers, increased fuel prices and privatized public schools. This came on top of open corruption, theft of workers' retirement funds, and rising inflation. One "non-profit" clerical organization steals workers' homes to sell for profits.

Many groups push for reforming the system. Some call for reducing the military budget, promoting the illusion that the imperialist aims of Iran's rulers can be curbed.

**The Iranian masses** need a communist society, organized to meet their needs. No profits, no money, no exploitation, no racism or sexism or nations. All will contribute according to their commitment and abilities and will receive according to their needs. No one will be unemployed or hungry. Everyone's contribution to collective production will be valued.

Capitalism can't meet even the basic needs of Iran's growing and youthful population, estimated at 82 million. Unemployment for young people—half the population—is 40%.

The masses are fighting for survival, a decent future. They are not going to get it under capitalism. What they need is not reform but communism. And Iranian workers have a proud history of communist struggle (see article page 5).

**The Iranian rulers** are fighting to fulfill their imperialist ambitions to dominate the Middle East, in alliance with Russia and China, in preparation for World War III. For this they need to intensify their exploitation of the workers and

expand their vast military and security apparatus, now totaling 523,000.

One hundred thousand youths are conscripted every year for 21 months of military service. Millions are in the Basji, a paramilitary force. Communists need to organize in the military to win these and other soldiers to turn their guns against the bosses and fight for workers' power.

The protests also reveal a power struggle among the Iranian rulers. Different factions are trying to exploit the mass movement to gain control of the surplus value produced by Iran's workers. Mashhad, where the protests started, is the home base of Ebrahim Raisi, a conservative cleric who opposed Rouhani in the last election. But the religious fascists have already lost control of the mass protests.

**Imperialist powers** have their own goals.

Chinese rulers depend on Iran's oil. They see Iran as central to their "One Belt One Road" strategic land route to bring oil and other goods to China, by-passing shipping lanes controlled by the US. For Russia, Iran is a key ally in the fight to dominate the Middle East.

Trump and the US media praised the protests and hope they will lead to a pro-US regime change. But the Iranian masses hate US imperialism for making their lives harder through sanctions and by colluding with Saudi Arabia to lower the price of oil. They remember US support for the former ruler, the Shah, who killed and tortured over 100,000 people.

Russia has warned the US to stay out of Iran's "internal affairs," while China has just concluded a deal to build a military base in Pakistan near Iran's port of Chabahar.

None of these capitalists and imperialists care about the needs of the masses. They are all fighting for empire and control of oil and the labor power of the Iranian workers. Imperialism is not a choice, but a necessity built into capitalism. The



Student protestor at the University of Tehran

only way to end it, whether in Iran, Russia, China, or the US, is with communist revolution.

### Angry masses in Iran need to fight for communism

In communism there won't be one leader, or clique of leaders. Instead, millions of communist worker-leaders will actively mobilize millions more in communist collectives. Everyone—including leaders—will do both mental and manual work.

Nothing, including oil, will be bought or sold. Everything will be produced and used to meet human needs. There will be no inflation and no corruption. The masses will mobilize to deal with anyone who tries to take special privileges or oppress anyone else.

Eliminating money will end the material basis of organized religion. The masses will be free to pray with whatever religion they choose. But there won't be a privileged class of despotic clerics making money off them or trying to use religious centers to organize counter-revolution. Communists will continue to struggle among the masses for a dialectical materialist understanding of the world. Dialectical materialism shows that the world is knowable and ever-changing and that the masses can control our own destiny.

We invite the angry masses in Iran and everywhere to join and build the International Communist Workers' Party (ICWP) in the factories, the military and among the youth. Join us not only to overthrow the Islamic regime but to get rid of capitalism itself and mobilize for communism.

As the world's imperialist bosses compete for power and control, the working class is fighting back. Masses must reject reformism and nationalism in all their forms by mobilizing collectively and internationally to spread *Red Flag* newspaper and build a mass ICWP. That's the way to get rid of all imperialists and other capitalists with armed revolution and build the communist world that we need and deserve.

Tehran, January 2018



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## El Salvador

### COMRADES IN INDUSTRY DEVELOP AS COMMUNIST LEADERS

EL SALVADOR, January 2018- The leadership of the ICWP industrial club in the maquilas (sweatshops) met with other comrades to plan new activities for this year and to analyze last year's work.

These comrades from the maquilas reported on meetings and constant discussions that have taken place with a good number of men and women workers and their family members throughout the year. They also evaluated last year's May Day March and made suggestions for

this year's march.

They also reported on the activity they carried out at the end of last year, in which they distributed food and basic products among the members and friends of the party cell. They took advantage of this occasion to include people who had never participated in any party activity. **Red Flag** was distributed, and they talked about the challenges of the new year.

This get-together also allowed people to express doubts, concerns and questions about the Party and our communist vision.

"Many people had never heard the word Communism until this Party arrived. And in this way many people have advanced and raised the consciousness of many of their class brothers and sisters, including them in the discussion of the new communist society," said one worker.

"Sometimes I feel bad, because they ask me what it is about, and I am not very clear about the Party," said a worker who has attended meetings of the industrial cell.

There are people who participate in our activities and carry out what the Party considers to be communist work, but they're not clear about the role of the Party, even though they feel part of it. The ideological and political development of the industrial cell will allow us to understand the importance of this for the Party. This process will strengthen

the cell and its ability to analyze and criticize the line and the practice of the party, which is vital for Communist revolution.

The newly created local Central Committee will organize a program of communist political training with the maquila workers. This process will involve students and other workers, including farmworkers interacting with the factory workers in studying the communist political line that ICWP has developed. We have put processes in place that will make it easier to meet and have discussions with more factory workers.

In the latest meeting, the comrades who were in a regional meeting reported to the collective. They talked about the need to help strengthen the Party's work in other countries, to strengthen the Party cells in El Salvador and to write for the **Red Flag**, and, at the same time, to criticize and discuss it more sharply.

We've made progress, but there is still a lot to be improved. The ICWP clubs in El Salvador must go one step further: strengthening the clubs with ideological training based on the communist ideas embodied in the literature that the Party has produced, which will allow the members to analyze and criticize the theory and practice of the Party. Another urgent task is to broaden the distribution of **Red Flag** among the thousands of workers in the maquilas.

This will be possible with the involvement of everyone, taking the **Red Flag** as our tool and with the firm conviction that only communism can end this capitalist horror without end.



May Day, El Salvador, 2017

### GERMANY: FIGHT AGAINST DEPORTATIONS SHOWS NEED TO MOBILIZE FOR COMMUNISM ON THE JOB

German pilots saved 222 asylum-seekers from deportation between January and September, 2017 by refusing to take off with them on board. Most of the flights were to Afghanistan, which is still a war zone even though the German and UK rulers, bowing to xenophobia, call it "safe."

In England, after anti-deportation protesters talked to other passengers boarding a flight, a pilot did the same. He refused to take Samin Bigzad, an Afghan refugee, to the city where the Taliban had threatened to behead him.

"You're not going to take him; I'm not flying," the pilot said. "Someone's life is at risk."

The German pilots didn't cite moral reasons, which could have left them open to disciplinary action. Instead they cited safety concerns: If a potential deportee says "no" when asked if they wanted to take the flight, and is forced to stay on board, they might freak out and endanger

other passengers.

These pilots, nonetheless, have demonstrated the power of workers organized at the point of production. The #WelcomeUnited campaign regularly protests deportations at German airports. The pilots could actually stop them.

Without transportation workers, nothing and nobody moves. Without industrial workers, nothing is manufactured. Without farmworkers there is no food.

In a communist world without bosses, everything that workers like these produce will be shared among the masses and used to meet our needs. There will be no borders and no deportations because workers everywhere have common interests.

To fight for and win this communist world, we need to intensify efforts to build collectives of the International Communist Workers' Party in concentrations like industry and transportation. The power of workers organized at the point of production must be directed toward mobilizing masses for communism.



### NO BORDERS from page 1

laws and policies.

But the massive migration of workers around the globe also forms the material basis for cross-border unity of the international working class. All workers suffer the despotic rule of the capitalists' wage slavery, native-born or immigrant, with or without legal papers.

We all need a society dedicated only to meeting the needs of the masses. Where all will contribute what they can and receive what they need. Where all will be comrades and all welcome everywhere—no one will be an immigrant or a citizen or a stranger. In short, we all need communism.

We all need to build one International Communist Workers' Party (ICWP). You can help by joining or building a collective based on the communist ideas in **Red Flag**, by reading and writing for the paper and by sharing it with friends and family wherever they live.

**Immigrants and Citizens: Take the Offensive by Mobilizing for Communism.**

Not all the US capitalist rulers agree with Trump's immigration policies. Their disagreement is not about *whether* to super-exploit immigrants but *how* best to super-exploit them and their children. Whether only to use mass deportation to terrorize them, or also to try win their loyalty to serving in a low-paid workforce and the US imperialist army.

We must not be fooled by liberal politicians and community organizers who want to misdirect our anger into voting for Democrats or begging Congress to pass "Comprehensive Immigration Reform."

Instead we must go on the offensive against all racist attacks and the system behind them by bringing the fight for communism to mass marches and our workplaces and schools, barracks and neighborhoods. We must fight back, defend each other, unite our class and prepare for mass armed struggle to win communism worldwide.

Without communism there can be no security for workers.

## Corrupt Union Officials: Product of Capitalism's Wage Slavery

### END IT WITH COMMUNIST REVOLUTION

LOS ANGELES (USA)— “It is time to raid the castle. There need to be repercussions and consequences to his actions.”

This was an MTA bus operator's reaction to the scandal about Andy Carter, the President-Treasurer of a SMART local, who was caught embezzling union funds. The operator and others want to replace corrupt union officials with honest ones. Others would like to decertify the union and vote in a different one – or not. None of this is any solution.

Corruption is a product of capitalism's wage slavery. The wage system itself is the biggest thievery in human history. Capitalists keep most of the value workers produce, leaving them with only a wage, barely enough to survive. This is also the material basis for racism, sexism, borders and wars.

Communism will eliminate wage slavery and with it all these evils by destroying money, banks and the market. Nothing will be bought and sold, especially our labor power. With no special privileges for anyone, we will all do mental and physical work.

#### Union Bureaucrats: More Thieves

Communists and other radicals built the US labor movement in the 19th and early 20th centuries. They were dedicated and militant reformers and many had communism as a long-term goal. But they followed the mistaken line of leading millions not to fight for communism but for higher wages and benefits.

After World War II, the US rulers took advantage of this weakness to kick them out of the unions and replace them with anti-communist bureaucrats. A few communists and radicals were allowed to stay because they didn't preach revo-

lution and channeled workers into the dead-end of capitalism's electoral charade.

Union bureaucrats all help perpetuate our wage slavery by restricting our struggle to the fight for the always elusive “best contract” while keeping us away from revolutionary communism. Their reward is lavish life styles at the members' expense. In 2016 the average US union leader made over \$250,000 plus perks. Many made over \$700,000. This is big-time embezzlement and, like capitalist thievery, it is all legal.

#### Why the fuss about Carter?

In part, it reflects infighting among greedy bureaucrats and wannabes.

More important, it is to save their cozy jobs, salaries and benefits from an upcoming Supreme Court decision that threatens the existence of the union. This decision will allow workers in unionized workplaces to refuse to pay dues or “fair share” contributions to the union.

The bureaucrats know that most workers view them with contempt. They are afraid that workers will leave the union in droves when given the opportunity. Some want to sue Carter for embezzlement, pretending to clean house in an attempt to regain some respectability in workers' eyes.

#### MTA workers don't have any dog in this fight.

We don't need union leaders, corrupt or honest. Trade union ideology is capitalist ideology. Instead of striving to end wage slavery, it bargains the terms of our exploitation.

As long as the capitalists hold state power, we have no protection. Unions limit our struggles to the capitalists' courts, laws and judges. There everything is rigged against us. The capitalists make the laws to benefit them, not us.

We need to meet every capitalist attack by organizing communist class struggle. Let's put forward the vision of communism and prioritize recruiting masses to ICWP for the communist revolution that will end capitalism.

Only then will we be able to create a different world. In a communist world we won't have corruption or unions because we won't have wage slavery.

#### We Need Communist Ideology

A comrade took *Red Flag* and a leaflet with this analysis to a union meeting. About a third of the workers took our literature. Later one operator reported:

“The meeting was full of it. Basically, Carter was given a pass. He can keep the money he stole and the raise he gave himself. He went from being a full-time union employee to a part time one but he is making more money now.

“Some workers were very vocal, speaking out against this farce, but the vice president has blind, loyal supporters who have been working there for decades.”

Some union bureaucrats have so much contempt for MTA workers that they think workers will put up with anything because they need the union. Instead of trying to reform the union, MTA workers should organize around our communist line.

Our best protection is to join ICWP to build for a communist revolution that will forever put an end to capitalism-imperialism and all its evils. Join ICWP, read *Red Flag* and distribute it to friends and coworkers. And recruit them to do the same, to accelerate the birth of a communist world!

## SOUTH AFRICA from page 1

nothing he does is aimed at destroying capitalism. He is planning on maintaining it and keeping it intact.

The ANC is on the decline. The victory of Ramaphosa is an opportunity to expose the system, to build the ICWP that fights against and aims to destroy the system that oppresses us through wage slavery, and build communism.

Only when we destroy capitalism with a communist revolution, only then will we build a system that will be able to meet our needs. A communist system will have no rich capitalists making money off workers' labor. There won't be any exploitation or money. We will all help collectively produce to meet our needs.

What does this mean in terms of the inter-imperialist rivalry between the west and China? The outgoing leadership was moving towards the east, towards Russia and China, and this new leadership, led by Ramaphosa is more pro-west, pro-US and the EU. It remains to be seen how this will affect the relationship of South Africa with China and to see which side the new leadership of the ANC will ultimately lean towards.

None of this helps the working class; it is a blow to the working class. It will only determine



September 2012: Workers in Marikana confront cops a month after South African Police opened fire on strikers at the Lonmin mine, killing 34 and wounding 78.

who leads South African capitalism. This development is not in the masses' interests, but only in the interests of the capitalists.

Most people see the ANC for what it really is. What they are electing is another capitalist. So we can provide this leadership to the masses in order to better serve the working class in the fight for communism.

The inter-imperialist rivalry is sharpening in

South Africa. The imperialists and capitalists on both sides are forced to bring the working class into the political arena. This gives communists the opportunity to win them to mobilize to end our exploitation with communism.

We invite all the working class and masses here in South Africa to join the revolutionary struggle to destroy this evil system and all that comes with it and to reject these hypocrites.



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## International ICWP Meeting in Mexico

### “THE STRUGGLE FOR COMMUNISM IS DAILY AND COLLECTIVE”

MEXICO, January 2018—Recently we had an international meeting with workers from El Salvador, the US, and Mexico. We discussed the political line of ICWP and the work that we are developing in the different areas.

The meeting began with a report of the international situation by a comrade. This was enriched by other participants who focused on the fact that we must primarily develop communism among the masses rather than describe the evils of capitalism. The workers from different parts of the world are marching; the ideological struggle among the masses is sharpening. There are armed racists in the streets and at the same time, workers demonstrating against them.

We discussed how production and distribution of food would be carried out in a communist society. We said that instead of capitalist schools, centers of production would be places of teaching and learning. We also said that drugs like coffee that are used by the capitalists to increase the hours of work will not be necessary in communism.

Communism is part of human nature and it existed for thousands of years in society without

classes. Also, in the period in which society has been organized into classes, there have been very strong attempts by the oppressed to emancipate themselves.

An older comrade made an analysis of the Russian revolution of October, 1917. He argued that to make communism a reality an armed revolution is needed, led by workers, soldiers, farmworkers, teachers and the unemployed. It is in the achievements (both advances and errors) of the Russian and Chinese revolutions, that we base our aspirations. The approach of fighting directly for communism is the reflection of the analysis of the errors of the old communist movement, with its approach of the transition through socialism.

The struggle for communism is daily and collective. During the meeting a comrade made the criticism that the collective in Mexico is involved with a lot of people but that too few of them know about the ideas of communism. Also the collective in Mexico was asked to write more about the activities that they carry out because they are not reflected in the *Red Flag* newspaper.

It was requested that all the collectives from the different parts of the world develop and write more about the ideas of communist centralism, the organization of a communist society instead of the dictatorship of the proletariat, traditions, indigenous rights, and self-determination and sustainability.

Also here in Mexico we will write about the new law of Internal Security, which will take the army with its guns to the streets with the intent to smash demonstrations.

The workers are looking for answers. The message that we give our class is that the system must change; we must unite to build a new communist society.

Everyone agreed that the letters that comrades write from other parts of the world have been motivating for all. They inspire other workers and they motivate us and show us that the struggle for communism is not only in this place. Instead it is a struggle that is taking place in different parts of the world. It was a very inspiring meeting and it showed us the potential that we have as ICWP to build communist revolution.

## Lessons of 20th Century Communist Movement in Iran:

### MOBILIZE THE MASSES FOR COMMUNISM

The working class in Iran has a long history of communist struggle which goes back to the early 20th century. Workers from Russia, Iran, and throughout the Caucasus organized a cross-border, multi-ethnic, revolutionary communist workers movement, concentrated in the oil fields of Baku, in Azerbaijan.

During the Civil War that followed the Bolshevik Revolution of 1917, the Iranian Communist Party made its own revolution. They united with a peasant nationalist movement and declared the Soviet Socialist Republic of Iran. The Soviet Red Army supported them during the Civil War. But at the end of the Civil War, the leaders of the Soviet Union decided they needed “correct diplomatic relations” with the Iranian king (the Shah). They pulled the rug out from under the Iranian revolutionaries and their Soviet Socialist Republic was defeated.

Nevertheless, the Iranian Communists continued organizing, but not for communist revolution. They adopted a reformist program of working for bourgeois democracy, uniting the country against British imperialism, and creating trade unions.

They organized secret party cells and unions in the oil refinery and oilfields of the Anglo-Persian Oil Company. In 1929, nine thousand oil workers suddenly struck in Abadan. This led to a general strike, violently suppressed with the help of British Marines. The Communist Party was forced underground, but it continued organizing illegal unions and strikes. These were always followed by mass arrests and the continual

rebuilding of underground organizations in the 1970s.

During World War II, Iran was jointly occupied by Britain and the Soviet Union. Political prisoners were released, and a broad coalition of Marxists organized the Tudeh Party (Party of the Masses) in 1941. After World War II it became a mass party with a membership of 20,000 and supporters in mass organizations of at least 80,000. They led strikes of 65,000 workers in the oil fields. They organized a May Day March in 1946 of almost half a million people.

But Tudeh had the suicidally wrong idea of an anti-imperialist united front with bourgeois nationalists. In 1952-53, Tudeh supported Prime Minister Mosaddeq who wanted to nationalize the oil industry in his confrontation with the US-backed Shah. When Tudeh organized a nationwide general strike and mass rallies in all the main towns to support him, Mosaddeq told the army to clear the streets of Tudeh crowds. Tudeh went home. When the CIA organized a military coup to kick Mosaddeq out and restore the Shah to power, the Iranian security forces hunted down the underground Tudeh organization, arresting thousands and killing dozens of its top leaders.

Tudeh, which had been the largest and best organized opposition party, was wiped out in 1953 without putting up much resistance. The younger generation of Marxists tried to learn from their mistakes in the late 1960s and

However, in 1978-79, when a mass movement was organized against the Shah, even the most revolutionary organizations, organized with Maoist or pro-Cuban politics and a program of guerrilla struggle, were totally isolated from the masses of workers. The Ayatollah Khomeini was the only leader with a mass base. When the country was convulsed by a general strike and a military coup, he was able to take power. Tudeh backed Khomeini, hoping that overthrowing the Shah would allow room for Marxists to organize. Other more revolutionary organizations, such as Peykar, never endorsed Khomeini, but hoped to take advantage of the upheaval to be able to organize. By 1981, all of these organizations had been wiped out and their members were dead, in prison, or in exile.

The Iranian working masses have suffered through nearly 40 years of a theocratic dictatorship. Communists in Iran have relied on help from a socialist neighbor, organized militant trade union struggle and guerrilla war, backed bourgeois nationalists and even the ayatollah, and been wiped out every time. This time, learning valuable lessons from our collective experience, communists in Iran and all over the world must mobilize the working-class masses for communism.



Tehran, 1978



Tehran, 1979

## THEATER FOR THE MASSES: COMRADES DISCUSS THEIR EXPERIENCES

USA – In the 1960s and 1970s, some of us participated in a street theater group called the Radical Arts Troop (RAT). It wasn't communist theater, but it was a wonderful, political educational experience. Talking about it with comrades and friends has helped us think about how film and theater could help mobilize masses for communism.

Our plays lasted only 10-15 minutes. We repeated them several times a day, to fresh audiences. They were funny and had music, but were also serious. They made important political points (like exposing the universities' role in the Vietnam war).

There was no all-powerful producer. There was a party leader, not a boss. We made decisions by consensus.

We didn't have stars. There were always heroes and villains, but we took turns. We made sure that no one actor had too much stage time.

We didn't have auditions. Anybody who liked our politics could join. Everyone would contribute in whatever way they could, or were willing to do. No one was turned away.

We ditched casting by race and gender. Women could play men's roles and vice versa. We didn't even have men's and women's roles. Except maybe for public figures like Nixon, who could still be played by a woman.

We don't remember any harassment, although you never know what happens in private. What I

am sure of is that RAT did not give anyone the power to coerce anyone else by promising or denying starring roles. There were no starring roles in the first place.

We learned a lot, both individually and collectively, over the course of a couple of years. Our first play took weeks to produce. Writers produced a detailed script and then the actors rehearsed it many times over.

After long experience, we dropped having "writers" and "scripts." When we needed a new play a self-selected subgroup would work out the basic ideas and jokes. Then we would encourage ad-libbing during rehearsals (and even, with restraint, during performances). Eventually, we could create a play in the evening and perform it the next day if necessary.

We learned to downplay dialogue and rely on big colorful props, loud music, sound effects, and exaggerated gestures. There was no place for subtly raised eyebrows or symbolically ambiguous language.

Sometimes other activists in our campus group didn't take us seriously. They thought that long, wordy leaflets full of penetrating analysis were more effective than our 'silly' plays. They were wrong. Many told us they didn't really understand some issue until they saw our play.

The biggest strength of our street theater was that it was a great way to get people involved. It's one thing to read an analysis and agree with it. It

can be even more effective to literally act it out in the struggle to win others.

### Communist Theater: Now and In the Future

But was RAT communist theater? In aspects of the way it was organized, yes. It was a collective in which everyone contributed according to their ability and commitment.

But in terms of content, no. As its name implies, it was "radical" not communist. We never showed capitalism being overthrown or communism being established. The theories of the time said that RAT had to be radical, not communist. We thought that we needed front groups; that militant, radical struggle will spontaneously produce communists.

Today, we can do much better. Our plays can advocate communism and explain in visual form how our future society will work.

And we don't have to wait until after the revolution. For instance, we can organize communist skits for our May Day dinners this year that include actors of all ages.

*What will theater and film, music and other arts be like in communist society? How will we mobilize masses to participate, not just to be "entertained"? How can communist arts help eliminate sexism and racism and to build mass communist consciousness? Tell us what you think!*



The Russian and Chinese revolutions gave birth to a rich history of mass communist entertainment. Hundreds of thousands from the working class participated. Future articles will draw lessons for today from their efforts.

## MOBILIZE FOR COMMUNISM TO END RACIST POLICE TERROR

PASADENA (US), Jan. 8 – An angry multi-racial crowd of close to 100 packed a meeting of the Pasadena (California) City Council to protest the Nov. 9 police assault on Chris Ballew. Pasadena cops Esparza and Lujan accosted Chris, a 21-year-old black man, in an Altadena gas station because his car had tinted windows.

Video evidence shows clearly that these cops immediately escalated what should have been a simple "fix-it ticket" encounter. Within two min-

utes they beat him, pointed a gun at him at close range, broke his leg and smashed his face into the pavement. They are apparently members of a "Black Gang Task Force." (!)

Fortunately, Chris came out of it alive, unlike Kendrec McDade (2012), Reginald Thomas (2016) and too many others. But Esparza, Lujan and others like them are still on the loose. No disciplinary action has been taken against these racist thugs—or the murderers of RT and

Kendrec. The police union even mobilized a dozen or so cops to defend Esparza and Lujan before City Council.

Near the end of a protest planning meeting on Thursday, Jan. 4, a comrade noted that two strategies had been proposed. One, she said, was to pressure elected officials to reform the police. But police forces in the US grew out of slave patrols and Pinkerton strikebreakers. They still protect racist capitalism. The other strategy is to rely on the masses and promote wide discussion about an alternative to the racist system itself.

That alternative is communism. With no ruling class of exploiters there will be no reason to have a police force to intimidate and repress the masses. Instead, Party collectives will mobilize workers to handle problems in their own neighborhoods. About 20 of our friends at these meetings, and others we've just met, took copies of *Red Flag*. We invite them and others to meet with the Pasadena party collective to discuss why and how we can better mobilize for communism to end racist police terror.



## Letter from Los Angeles Transit Club Discusses How to Build the Party in a Union Shop

In the last meeting of our club we discussed the article "Building the ICWP Among Mechanics", from the *Red Flag* edition (Vol 8 # 16). We went over the activities that we have developed within the union to get in touch with other workers. We talked about what we have achieved and also about the long-term plans of the club.

There were no political disagreements with the above-mentioned article, but there were tactical disagreements. Some comrades thought that the article had too much unnecessary information that was not relevant to the case and that could rather be harmful to the advance of the Party in our workplace .

Right now we want to avoid a direct confrontation with the union, to have the opportunity to participate in its activities and spread our communist ideas. We are sure that communist and reformist ideas will eventually collide, but by then we will have a broader base and more ICWP clubs.

One comrade asked, "What would be our position if the union is attacked and there is a

strike?" "Are we going to be against the strike, are we neutral or are we going to support it?"

Another comrade answered, "Our Party will be together with the members of the base, taking advantage of the opportunity to sharpen the contradictions between the struggle for reforms and the struggle to take power. We'll be promoting the idea of converting the reformist strike into a political strike. "

A third comrade said that he liked the article because it reflected the line of ICWP. But that personally he would have liked the article to have been more tactical in relation to the union, attacking the ideas that the union represents and not as an attack to destroy the workers' organization. That's because some workers have the distorted idea that our Party wants to destroy unions. And that stops them from joining the Party. Understanding that it is a political struggle and he suggested that we write or talk more about the irreconcilable struggle between reform and revolution, so that the people in our base will understand more easily the difference between these two

opposing ideological currents.

A fourth comrade suggested that due to the disagreement on the article that we should not distribute it publicly, but not only with the workers of the base of the club on our jobsite.

Then he proposed to discuss it with the Leading Committee in the City, which was done, and as we expected, there was a lot of discussion. And although the workers in the club distributed it only to our base, other comrades distributed it publicly.

There are several things that can be highlighted from this meeting, but we will mention the most important. 1.- The next time we write an article of this nature we discuss it in the club before publishing it. 2.- That there is an industrial club that is taking seriously building ICWP among the working class. 3.- We hope that more comrades and friends participate in this discussion and help us to have more clarity on how to develop the struggle for communism within the union.

—LA transit club

### Tradition and Culture

I wanted to reflect on the letter from the Mexican-American comrade responding to the letter sent by a comrade from South Africa about traditions and culture. I think it was a really great letter in terms of bringing out the experiences that she has had with her father and the sexist tradition that we practice in capitalism.

She made a really good point that tradition and culture are not things that are automatic or spontaneous to civilization.

I want to reflect my particular experience, the reason I live in this area. I am a Bhaca by ethnicity. South Africa has so many groups, with different cultural traditions. Our tradition is that we always sacrifice a sheep to our ancestors for the bravery and kindness that they provide us. Of course, that is idealist. I am a communist and a materialist and I don't accept that. But anyway, they slaughter the sheep, as opposed to the goat, which most other groups slaughter when they do their sacrificing.

What happened is that the Bhaca are people who went into exile from the rule of the Zulu. The infighting in the Shaka family between groups led to the establishment of our exile.

That's why I say that Communism will create its own culture, its own tradition, as opposed to capitalist culture.

For example, in capitalist society the intimate relationship between individuals is shaped by capitalist thinking. When someone marries here in South Africa, they have to pay lobolo. That is sexist within itself. When someone is having an intimate relationship with someone else, why do they have to pay money? Why is it not a decision from both of them?

Our culture perpetuates the scourge of sexism: that the groom has to pay a certain price for the bride. That is wrong. It gives the impression that the man actually owns the woman. Therefore now he can literally do anything he wants to her because he bought her. So I think that these are things we need to address in our culture. How will our communist society deal with this? We need to talk about these issues more.

Tradition and culture is not automatic or spontaneous. It is set in tribal civilization and continues in capitalist civilization. In a commu-

nist society we will have our own traditions, not in the sense that it is used now. We will have principles guided by communist ideas whereby communal living, the collectivity of individuals living in a collective, is in the forefront of everything that we do. Everything we do will be for the benefit of the workers and the collective.

The culture that we practice is influenced by the system that we live in. Communist society will produce its own culture. We know that destroying capitalism and building communism will pave the way for this new system and new culture.

—A comrade in South Africa

### Translators

In the recent discussion about racism and Marxism a letter writer suggested that, when we meet a promising person, we should not only bring up communism as soon as possible, we should also involve them right away in communist work.

I tried this idea and it worked! (Not for the first time, actually.)

My wife has a friend, Erik, who was a former colleague. I like Erik a lot but (as it turned out) didn't know him that well. Recently I had a chance to hang out with him for a few days and it was a revelation.

We were talking about politics in general and he started coming up with surprising opinions. He really bowled me over when he said that everyone should have the same salary, whether a secretary, a custodian, a technician or a professor. Of course, I agreed, saying this was a communist suggestion. Or rather that the communist position is no salary at all. I pointed out that this would mean no more bosses with the power to demote or fire people. With the power to demand sexual favors ...

At this point I had to make a choice. One possibility would be to look for further areas of agreement. Another was to look for a point of disagreement and start debating.

Instead, I seized the opportunity to

move to a higher level – action. Erik has a side gig as a professional translator and ICWP can always use translations. So, I asked him to help translate the editorial on sexism to German. I said it deals with many of the topics we just discussed.

And during the translating we got into the communist approach to these issues. One interesting point was how to translate "communist leadership", which is ambiguous in English.

End result: a high-quality translation of an important article and a promising individual moved closer to communism. How this will play out in the end, I don't know, but I don't make any negative assumptions.

—A comrade



## It's Not Just Trump – It's Capitalism!

# **WE NEED COMMUNISM TO END SEXISM, RACISM AND ALL EXPLOITATION**

USA – Millions of women and men marched a year ago when Trump became US President. They were furious about his crude sexism, his anti-Muslim and anti-immigrant racism and all the other threats he made against the working class.

This year, masses of women and men are marching again. The threats have become reality. And because of the sexism and racism built into capitalism, working-class women (especially black and immigrant women workers) have borne the brunt of them. No wonder so many are taking to the streets! They're mad as hell.

March organizers are doing their best to divert this anger into electoral politics. They say: "First we march, then we vote!"

**We say: "First we march for communism, then we win it with armed revolution!"**

Communism will end bosses and borders, cops and wage slavery. We'll build a world where we work together for the good of all, rather than the profits of a few.

Communism will allow us to win the fight against the racist and sexist lies and practices that the bosses have used to divide and oppress us. It will eliminate the profit system, and its inevitable wars for profit. These imperialist wars daily murder hundreds of our class sisters and brothers around the world. They have created the biggest refugee crisis since World War II.

Capitalism's global crisis of overproduction sharpens inter-imperialist rivalry and intensifies attacks on the working class everywhere. Both Democrats and the Republicans are committed to capitalism and therefore to squeezing maximum profits from the workers. They have different strategies about how to carry out these attacks, but neither party – nor any other electoral party – will end them. Only communist revolution can put the working class in power and meet the masses' needs.

**Racist police terror and health care for profit impose a special burden on black mothers.** They are almost four times as likely



Women's March, Los Angeles, 2017

to die after childbirth than white women in the US. Erica Garner, a 27-year-old black mother, took up the fight against racist police terror after cops murdered her father while he protested, "I can't breathe!" She, like increasing numbers of black women, died in December of a heart attack brought on by the stress of racist terror.

**Israeli occupation, backed by US imperialism, imposes a special burden on Palestinian women.** Ahed Tamimi, age 16, faces ten years in prison for slapping an Israeli soldier in front of her home in the Palestinian West Bank, moments after soldiers had shot her 15-year-old cousin point-blank in the face with a rubber bullet. Three other men in her family have been killed. Her mother and a female cousin are also in jail.

**Racist immigration laws and policies, including reversal of Temporary Protected Status and the Muslim ban, impose a special**

**burden on immigrant women in the US and elsewhere.** Jennye Pagoada López, 32, miscarried in detention while being denied health care. Young women in federal detention who want abortions have to fight for them.

**Wage slavery itself imposes a special burden on women workers.** The ability to hire and fire allows bosses to determine the economic survival of women and their families. This empowers them to sexually harass and assault working women. #MeToo and #TimesUp put faces on women's anger, but all working women face these attacks.

**None of this started with Trump-Pence.**

New York City cops killed Eric Garner under Bill de Blasio, a "progressive" Democrat. Obama's "Justice" Department did nothing. When Erica took up the fight, serial rapist and Democratic Party donor Harvey Weinstein urged Hillary Clinton's campaign to silence her.

Democrats and Republicans alike have supported the apartheid Israeli regime as an instrument of US imperialist policy for nearly 70 years. Israel has been largest recipient of US military aid in the world under both Democrats and Republicans, giving the US a military foothold in this oil-rich strategic region.

Obama's administration deported 2.4 million immigrants. The Democrats support a Dream Act that would actually be a green-card draft for the US Army. They still support divisive and exploitative immigration policies.

Democratic as well as Republican politicians and donors have been notoriously complicit in sexual harassment and assault.

**We need communism**

Capitalism needs racist and sexist terror to divide the working class and make maximum profits off the labor of all women workers and men of color. As the crisis of overproduction intensifies, murderous wars in the Persian Gulf region and elsewhere will intensify. Voting can't end these policies. They are baked into capitalism.

That's why the angry masses must take up the only struggle that can create the world that we need. Don't be diverted into the dead-end of capitalist elections! We must mobilize ourselves to fight for a communist future.



Women's March, Los Angeles, 2017