

RED FLAG

MOBILIZE THE MASSES FOR COMMUNISM



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

CASTELNUOVO RANGONE, ITALY – Migrant workers from Africa continue to mobilize in this center of northern Italy's meatpacking industry. They have been protesting for over 40 days in support of 127 fired co-workers and against the slave-labor conditions of the "caporalato" labor system. Under this system, hundreds of thousands of desperate workers – usually migrants – have been illegally recruited for agricultural labor with little or no pay. Capitalism itself is wage slavery. Native-born and migrant workers from all countries can and must unite to mobilize for a communist world without money, profits or exploitation – a world where workers organize all production for human needs.



CELEBRATING THE BOLSHEVIK REVOLUTION 1917-2017

WORKERS AND SOLDIERS LEARN FROM COMMUNIST HISTORY

EL SALVADOR—The International Communist Workers' Party organized a gathering in this country to celebrate and commemorate the hundred-year anniversary of the 1917 Bolshevik Revolution in Russia.

Workers from the garment area attended along with their families, as well as students.

"Our main goal is to mobilize the masses for communism. We consider it important to learn from the successes and failures of the Soviet Union," said a comrade in the words of welcome.

The speaker explained how the Russian Revolution was the result of an organized, constant, and mass political struggle by the Bolsheviks. Women played an important role. The struggle started with a mass demonstration of women workers in Petrograd. It culminated in the first government led by men and women workers in history. This shows the importance of the role of women workers today, after one hundred years of commemorating this historic event.

In the discussion about the Bolshevik revolution, a youth said, "For the first time the workers and soldiers were ruling. The error of the Bolsheviks was that they did not have confidence that the men and women workers were prepared for communism... That's why the International Communist Workers' Party is proposing to eradicate money."

He added, "It will be the mass organizational structures of ICWP that will replace the institutions and forms of capitalist governments."

Another comrade stated, "The fact that we are here in El Salvador gathered together talking about communism is the result of the struggles of thousands of Russian workers and soldiers. As a party we have been organizing for five years inside the garment factories in El Salvador."

"Getting into the factories took a long time but it was a crucial moment for the life of ICWP — and we want to reach the army," seconded another comrade.

See [EL SALVADOR 100th ANNIVERSARY](#), page 3

NEED REVOLUTION FOR COMMUNISM, NOT NATIONALISM

SOUTH AFRICA—We had a successful day celebrating the Russian revolution, which serves as a great lesson for us in our efforts of mobilizing the masses for communism to free us from this "horror with no end." It was a great day! We managed to invite 28 -30 workers and students, some of them with different views. Some subscribed to black nationalist movement.

One of the first questions that was raised in our discussions was whether there is a need for a revolution in our society, even though we had different views. Some who had never heard of communism agreed that indeed we need a revolution in our society because "voting does not change lives," as one student worker said.

We discussed what this revolution must be aimed at? What must this revolution achieve?

One said "it must be aimed at eradicating these white capitalists so that we have a system where black people prosper because they've been suffering for a long time."

A comrade then answered, "What about the black capitalists?"

"The revolution must be aimed at eradicating capitalism and capitalists regardless of their skin color or nationality. The so-called black people you're referring to are the working-class people. They have been and are still exploited not only by white capitalists but by black capitalists as well. That's why we say the revolution must be a communist revolution that will make sure that not only do we eradicate capitalism but we establish a communist society that is based on meeting the needs of the working class from all corners of the world."

We drew lessons from history. There have been black nationalist movements before. All of them have failed to liberate the black working class or the masses because they didn't destroy capitalism. They didn't destroy the wage system.

A simple example is Zimbabwe where every day the masses are forced
See [CELEBRATING THE RUSSIAN REVOLUTION](#), page 4

**COMMUNISM
WILL END
SEXISM
PAGES 2 & 5**

**INTER-
IMPERIALIST
RIVALRY IN
AFRICA
PAGE 8**

**MANY ARTICLES IN THIS ISSUE
HAVE RAISED QUESTIONS.
WE INVITE READERS AND
COMRADES TO READ CRITICALLY,
DISCUSS AND RESPOND.**

MOBILIZE FOR COMMUNISM TO END THE MATERIAL BASIS OF SEXISM

November 29—In the United States over the past few weeks, dozens of women have accused powerful men—entertainment figures and politicians—of sexual harassment and sexual assault. Women (and some men) around the world have spoken out as well. With hashtags such as #MeToo, #YoTambien, #Quellavoltache and #Balancetonporc, they accuse men of abusing their power, especially in the workplace, to carry out verbal and physical sexual attacks. When *China Daily* printed an article stating that sexual harassment was a Western problem, Chinese women spoke out, revealing that in a 2013 study by *China Labour* bulletin, up to 70% of female factory workers in the southern city of Guangzhou said they had experienced sexual harassment in the workplace.

While there may be a shift in what men in the public eye can get away with, the wage system makes all women workers vulnerable to sexual harassment. A statement by Latina farmworkers from the US organization Alianza Nacional de Campesinas reflects this reality. “We share a common experience of being preyed upon by individuals who have the power to hire, fire, blacklist and otherwise threaten our economic, physical and emotional security.” Under capitalism, women are forced to put up with sexual assault and sexual harassment in all its forms to survive.

Communist society will put an end to the material basis of these attacks by putting an end to jobs as we know them. Ending money and the wage system will mean that there will be no more bosses. No one will be forced to put up with humiliating and degrading treatment to survive. Instead of having to find a job, and put up with whatever the boss or supervisor requires of you to keep a job, we’ll work together to produce what we need.



Neither will a woman be forced to suffer domestic abuse by her husband because he’s the economic support of the family. We’ll organize ourselves in collectives to share the fruits of our labor. No one will be forced to stay in an abusive relationship due to economic necessity.

But it won’t be automatic. The history of the communist movement shows that it will take political struggle to wipe out the sexist practices we inherit from the old order. One example comes from *Fanshen* by William Hinton, based on the experiences of the Chinese village of Long Bow after the 1949 revolution. Men in positions of party leadership abused their power to take sexual advantage of women, among other forms of corrupt and individualistic behavior. This was wide spread enough in Long Bow that the party leadership tolerated it for quite a while.

Finally, a young woman exposed her husband’s abusive behavior and asked for the support of the village in applying for a divorce. A mass mobilization of women supported her and went on to denounce the abuses of power that had resulted in the sexual abuse of women, both by party cadre and by the husbands of many women. Women communists took the lead in doing this, but the mobilization required the mass and active participation of the whole village to change the power dynamics between men and women.

When we take power, the struggle will intensify to wipe out the remnants of capitalist ideologies and practice among the Party and the masses. The party must take the leadership in that struggle. The fight against sexism is similar to the fight against racism. These bosses’ ideologies divide the working class. To fight for communism, we must overcome those divisions. We’ll never be able to smash capitalism and build a communist society until we do. However, to win the final victory over sexism, we’ll have to wipe out its material basis in capitalism.

Sexism came into existence with private property and class society. Sexist culture has justified unequal power relationships, demeaned women’s intellectual potential and encouraged sexual violence in all class societies.

Capitalism has used sexism to increase the exploitation of men and women workers, by super-exploiting women workers, especially women of color, as well as taking advantage of their unpaid household labor. Sexist culture has commodified women’s bodies, using sex to sell everything from cars to toothpaste.

Communist society will come into being burdened with the remnants of the society from which it sprung. Men and women in capitalist society have internalized sexist norms. Women have suffered sexual assault, from their class brothers as well as from the bosses.

But women throughout history have also played key roles in revolutionary movements in Russia, China, South Africa and Latin America. In our own party, women maquila workers in El Salvador and young women in the US and Mexico are taking communist leadership. Fighting against sexism in our party and making the fight against sexism a mass issue in our work will strengthen women’s leadership, the Party and the masses in general.

We invite the women workers around the world who are standing up to sexist behavior to join us in mobilizing the masses for communism. The international communist movement needs your anger and energy in the fight against sexism. And you need a communist world, where doing away with the wage system will allow us to win the final victory against sexism and all forms of oppression.

LIMA, PERU, November 27—International day of protest against anti-woman violence.



Murder of Women in Mexico & Central America

In Mexico, more than 10,000 women have been killed between 2012 and 2017. These are our class sisters, and every day 6 or 7 women lose their lives. In several cities there is a higher murder rate than in the countries of the northern triangle of Central America (Honduras, El Salvador and Guatemala) named by the organization Small Arms Survey as among the 12 most dangerous countries in the world to be a woman. The majority have been killed violently, either shot, dismembered, raped, suffocated, or beaten to death.

Between 1985 and 2009, 34,176 women were killed in Mexico. The upward trend continues to increase. More women were killed in the state of Mexico; between 2000 and 2009, there were 2,881 women killed. Every 15 seconds a woman is attacked and every 9 minutes a woman is raped throughout Mexico. This is not the product of “offended machismo (sexism)” but of a capitalist system in decline. This cries out for communist revolution to put an end to this sexist system. Women and men to arms!



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CELEBRATING AND LEARNING FROM THE 100TH ANNIVERSARY OF THE BOLSHEVIK REVOLUTION

LOS ANGELES (US), Nov. 18 – Sixty members and friends of ICWP celebrated the 100th anniversary of the Bolshevik Revolution with a half-day conference and dinner. We were a multi-racial group of women and men of all ages, long-time comrades and new friends, including groups of transit workers and high school students. The frank and lively workshop discussions raised many questions that will keep us talking for a long time.

The opening session featured greetings from South Africa, the poem “Good Morning Revolution” (recited by four high school students) and the singing of the Internationale, led by a group of workers. A garment worker comrade gave the main speech – his first! He spoke passionately about what the Russian Revolution means for workers today.

We then broke into three groups. (See reports from the Discussion Group Leaders, to the right). The conversations didn’t end when they were supposed to because everyone wanted to keep talking. To the extent that collectives had previously read and discussed *Red Flag*’s Bolshevik History series, the discussions were very rich. Everyone took home packets of articles to read and study later.

The day ended by breaking bread together. There were more songs and poems. We raffled off two revolutionary posters and four books about Soviet history. The final speaker said,

“We have learned from the Bolsheviks that the masses, organized by their communist party, can destroy the bosses’ state power and defeat their armies – sometimes from within.

“We get it now that the Bolsheviks didn’t think enough about how they would lead society. That’s what we’re preparing to do. Not only to take power into the hands of the masses but to organize communist society. That’s why we need to get more practice in talking to people about communism. In mobilizing them for communism.”

Some Party collectives did well in preparing for the event and bringing friends. Others which were less successful are figuring out how to mobilize more workers and youth for May Day. The organization and functioning of the Party collectives is key.

A young worker comrade concluded, “The dinner and further discussions we had were rich and encouraging for a communist future.”



EL SALVADOR 100TH ANNIVERSARY, from page 1

During the discussion, a worker spoke about Social Security, bonuses and unemployment compensation that those who work in the garment factory receive and how the bosses are currently keeping 50% of the workers’ annual compensation. He said, “The bosses don’t give these things because they are good; we, along with our class brothers and sisters, fight every day for this.”

Factory workers and members of the army are vital for the success of the revolutionary process. A comrade mentioned that these people were class brothers and sisters and asked that for the next meeting we invite soldiers who are friends or relatives of members of ICWP and that we organize them and bring them *Red Flag*.

This comrade asked an ex-soldier present, “What did the soldiers recruited for the war in El Salvador think about the condition in which they lived?”

He answered that all they wanted to do was to finish their time and leave. “We didn’t want to harm anybody, but we had to continue to carry out orders...What they are saying is true. You never see the son of a rich person in the barracks.

We are the same class,” he concluded.

“As a conclusion to this activity and knowing the need to organize in the factory and in the army, to make decisions that result in political activities and actions that allow us to take our message to more workers, it is necessary to create a Central Committee of Workers and Soldiers in the country,” added another comrade.

To which the plenary responded unanimously that they agreed and the Central Committee of ICWP in the country was formed.

“I didn’t use to understand what I was seeing because the opportunity to know was not there, but now this gives us the clarity that the revo-

DISCUSSION LEADERS REPORT:

Group 1: Why We Need the Party

Our group started by discussing how this anniversary is commemorated around the world. Since Russia has shifted over the decades into an openly capitalist state, it wasn’t celebrated there. But a few older people still carry the memories of the past.

We also discussed the power of the workers through current events. Mexico’s earthquakes devastated the country and claimed many lives, one comrade said. Another pointed out that when the buildings started to collapse “people ran towards them instead of away” to help people who were buried under the rubble. This provided a clear example of the self-reliance of the working class when the government fails them.

We elaborated on the importance of communist workers’ power and being in the party. The party is central in organizing, planning and carrying out actions. We need organization before anything. We closed our discussion with great hope, talking about how things will be once we take state power.

Group 2: Communist Workers’ Power

Comrades shared ideas on why ICWP fights for communism, not socialism. Analyzing the failures of the Bolsheviks after the revolution, we decided that socialism leaves too many remnants which make capitalism so volatile, mainly the wage system. A comrade who previously lived in a socialist state attested that socialist society pretended as being equal but workers could clearly still see the divisions in labor. You would call someone a “comrade” but you knew they were your supervisor and made more money.

Then we discussed what it means to take state power. One comrade associated the word “power” with a negative connotation and wondered if we should use the word. There were people on both sides.

Near the end a comrade expressed concern at not seeing our party make progress. They felt they always saw the same faces and discussed the same topics. Another comrade said that we should not measure our success just by turnout at big events. We should focus on the success of *Red Flag* and the growth of the party around the world, including South Africa and India.

Group 3: Resolving Contradictions in Communist Society

Building communist liberated areas will require the mobilization of millions to create a society where money is not used. The leadership of the revolution will come from the Party. The masses’ initiative will be the key to resolving contradictions among the masses. In creating the new communist society, the needs of people will be put first. The ideals of the revolution must lead the masses in their day to day work. The Party must provide the example and the guidance for success. How do we figure out what the masses want and need? By the Party and the masses, through discussion, criticism and debate. By listening to the masses and recruiting the most vigilant into the Party.

One thing I learned was that it is important to learn from the history of the struggles of the working class so that we draw the necessary conclusion so that we can win.

lution will triumph and we will take the step so longed for, which is communism...Forward! If we don’t see it our children will,” said a garment worker at the conclusion of the activity.

We had a delicious dinner and breakfast in a beautiful area. We received a revolutionary greeting from Spain. The event had the comradely political atmosphere with a lot of discussion that we can only experience in the Communist Party, ICWP.



STRUGGLING FOR COMMUNISM IN THE BOSSES' ORGANIZATIONS

SOUTH AFRICA—We are communists and party members who live and mobilize for communism, for communist revolution to overthrow capitalism inside the capitalist society itself. We mobilize the workers and the rest of the masses. Some of them believe the capitalists' ideas are correct ideas because they have lived all their lives under capitalism. Some advocate for capitalist reform because they have not yet been won to communism. Some have never heard about communism, some have heard only the anti-communist propaganda by the capitalists media. They even believe the lie that capitalism is the natural system of humans—that there is no alternative.

We mobilize in mass strikes and gatherings, at work, schools, church and social events. Often where we mobilize they are not really open to communist ideas (not the workers but those that control the schools, workplace, churches etc.) especially if you're calling for the overthrow of capitalism.

This was true in an event I attended (the workshop by the NGO "Rising against crime & inequality"). They were hostile to the communist solutions. I often restricted myself from explicitly expressing our ideas, because they

fear the masses and students having communist ideas. They target or labeled those that are against the system as anti-government (which I am! I can not be pro-poverty, pro-injustice, pro-suffering by the rest of the masses while few benefit at their expense).

Only through one-on-one discussions with fellow students and youth I was able to talk about our communist solutions without being prevented. As result, three students from different parts of the province were interested in the Party and agree that the system of destruction needs to be destroyed. This is one challenge (of our collective): to get the new comrades to actively participate and commit, not just to passively agree, but to actively participate in party activities and organizing.

These workshops are reformist in their approach, like other strikes we participate and mobilize in (which is wrong. We know capitalism can never be reformed and reform prevents the working class from full emancipation). At the same time they provide an opportunity to reach many young people and workers who are disgruntled by some of the ills of capitalism.

Question:

How do we then participate in such events

without contradicting ourselves as revolutionaries? We say we want a communist society where the way produce and distribute will completely be different from the capitalist one that is based on exploitation. Even the way our lives are arranged will be different. It will be based on cooperation and collective effort. How do we then live in the immediate time or present future, forging and practicing practices that are in line with our communist principles? Because the communist ideas must be practiced and enhanced, but how do we do that and find solidarity with masses without falling for the reformist trap?

An Inspiring Event

On 18 November the youth collective hosted an event (Celebrating the 100th year anniversary of the Russian Revolution). Our ICWP discussion, in which about 30 people participated, was a very successful and inspiring event.

All the comrades showed leadership and every one participated. Each comrade contributed according to their commitment. I had a very good experience and it is always exciting to see young people are open to our communist ideas.

Three comrades who were part of the event are members of the Black Empowerment Movement. We discussed the differences between the political line of the International Communist Workers' Party and other political parties (Lefties).

They were convinced we are fighting the same enemy: exploitation, discrimination, wage slavery and homelessness. We spent all day talking about the evils of capitalism and how to end them.

"We don't need the bosses"! I still recall those words coming from an angry young comrade who was fed up of this racist system. This comrade was so keen to know how exactly ICWP is planning to overthrow this evil system. We told him we advocate for change through revolution and we must fight directly for communism, not socialism. History has taught us how to struggle for communism.

It is important to keep mobilizing and carry our message to the masses no matter how long it takes, that is the ultimate goal.

From this experience I have drawn many political lessons and it is clear we are going forward as a youth collective in the Republic of South Africa.

We need to expand these discussions amongst our friends so we can grow as a party. Keep up the good work Comrades!
—A comrade in South Africa



South Africa: Comrades mobilizing among college students

CELEBRATING THE RUSSIAN REVOLUTION from page 1

to flee out of the country because of the authoritarian regime of the ZANU-PF under Mugabe.

Hence we draw motivation and lessons from the successes and failures of the Russian communists of the 19th century. They showed that the working class is capable of taking power from their oppressors.

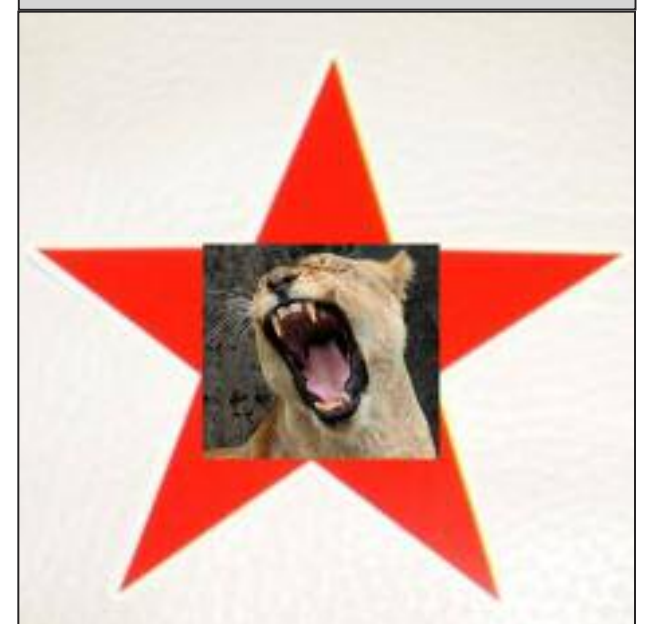
We also take great lessons from their failure to establish communism directly. Now we know that we don't need a stage to get to communism. We need to fight and struggle for it directly. We also know that we won't be able to establish communism through nationalism but to fight for it internationally, when the working class of the world is united under one umbrella party the International Communist Workers Party (ICWP).

Another question was: Can we have a revolution without violence? Almost everyone agreed that it is not possible to have a revolution without violence, that violence is needed in order to have a successful revolution because those that are in power will never relinquish their power without a fight. They have shown that and they continue to do so here. They brutally killed Marikana workers for simply wanting a pay raise. They continue to brutally kill the masses all over the world. That is why we need an army to turn their

guns against the capitalists and fight for their class brothers and sisters.

We talked about how will communism work or look like? We explained: in communism everyone will work collectively to run the society. There will be no profit or private property. No one will be more privileged than the other. There won't be a few individuals owning the means of production. Everyone will work according to his/her ability to meet the needs of all. We will collectively deal with anyone trying to sabotage or undermine the needs of the working class. We will collectively struggle with decisions that affect everyone. Only through collective effort can we best advance and maintain our communist principles and ideas that benefit the working class as whole.

It was very inspiring after the discussions to see more people with changed minds wanting to know more about the party. Every one that was not a party member took our literature like the MMC (Mobilize the Masses for Communism) and the *Red Flag*. Some pledged to come to our meetings. Even those comrades that were not so active said they are going to be active now.



ORGANIZE COMMUNIST CLASS STRUGGLE AGAINST SEXISM

LOS ANGELES (USA) —A young comrade was so angry with his co-workers' steady barrage of anti-woman comments that he punched a friend.

A teacher comrade didn't know what to do when she learned that a male student had texted sexist abuse to two female classmates. They blocked him and he dropped the class.

Five comrades were crowded into a car, going to distribute *Red Flag*. A young man reached over and touched a young woman, uninvited. An older woman rebuked him: "Keep your hands to yourself!"

The #MeToo campaign has dramatized the extent to which practically every woman (and many a man) has experienced sexist harassment and even assault.

It's bad enough when rich and powerful men in politics, Silicon Valley or Hollywood rape and assault women who are trying to get a job. Like their class sisters who work in hotels, restaurants or factories, these women are trapped by wage slavery (see p. 2).

In some ways it's even worse when working-class men, acting on the bosses' sexist ideology, harass or assault their sisters. A working-class divided by sexism can't liberate itself from capitalism. It can't build the communist society we need.

Sexism has been a pillar of class society since it arose less than ten thousand years ago. It grew gradually, over thousands of years. Then, starting a few centuries ago, capitalism's explosive growth spread the most brutal exploitation worldwide — and with it, the worst and most pervasive oppression of masses of women.

Capitalism turned the world into a giant market. Everything—especially workers' labor — became a commodity. Capitalism's object — the accumulation of capital (money) — has no limit. These social relations of production translate into "grab what you can." They shape our social relations in a thousand ways. The commodification of women and the perpetuation of rape culture are inseparable from capitalism.

In communism, nothing will be produced as a

commodity. Nobody will be treated as one. Our goal of working collectively for the common good requires us to respect and value each individual comrade's needs and contributions. Nobody's labor will be exploited, much less super-exploited as women workers (especially dark-skinned and immigrant women) are today.

Communist society will allow us finally to end sexism. But that won't happen automatically. It will take sharp political struggle — starting now.

In all three stories above, comrades tried to fight sexism. But none points the way to a communist fight against sexism.

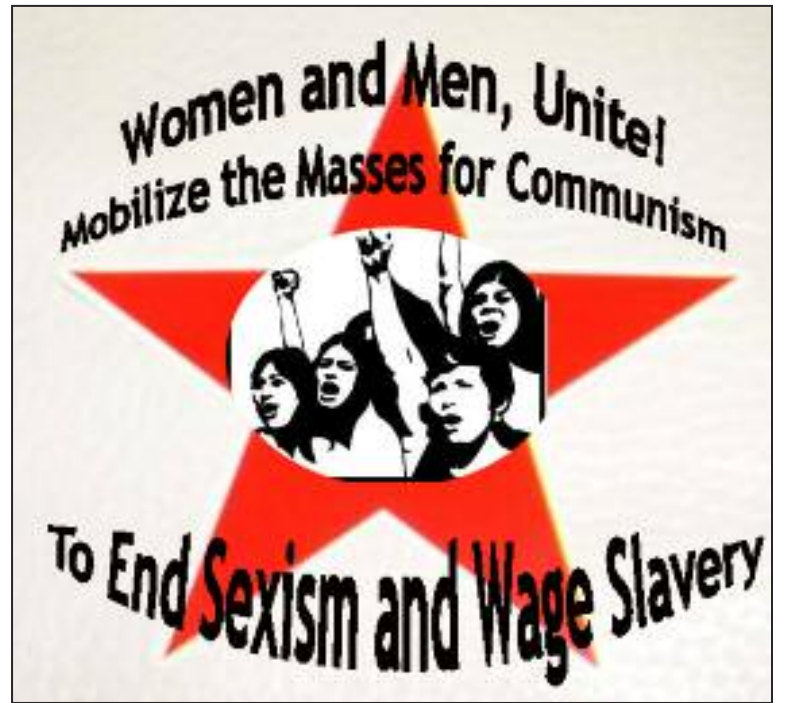
Our party needs to develop our line to better show how communism can end sexism. We are working to understand and overcome obstacles to recruiting more women and developing them as communist leaders. But we also need to struggle harder to wage communist class struggle against sexism, especially in our main concentrations.

Los Angeles Transit Workers: Mobilize for Communism, Step Up Fight Against Sexism

A good place to start is our work among Los Angeles MTA transit workers, where we have a Party collective and mass distribution of *Red Flag*. Many of the hundreds of regular *Red Flag* readers are women. Some have told us about women they know who have been sexually assaulted on MTA premises.

MTA has a public-relations campaign "It's Off Limits" to encourage riders to report sexual harassment. But when workers are harassed (by a supervisor or a co-worker) MTA typically hushes things up with "no-disclosure" settlements — just like Hollywood bigwigs.

A woman comrade distributing *Red Flag* once saw three workers (two men and a woman) walking toward the garage. One man fell behind, then grabbed the woman's butt. Everyone kept walking — without taking papers. The surprised com-



rade didn't know what to do. We need to find communist ways to respond to common attacks like these.

At another division, a supervisor saw a woman comrade distributing papers. He taunted a married male comrade who works there: "Hey, your girlfriend is out there!" Others saw this but dismissed it: "Everyone hates that guy anyway."

This MTA party collective (originally all men) has struggled sharply against a co-worker's sexism. It recently recruited a woman worker. Responding to this incident with a communist leaflet would have been an excellent way to put forward our communist line on sexism, exposing it as a bosses' tool and calling on workers to mobilize for communism.

Pervasive, pernicious and violent sexism characterizes capitalism. It's getting worse as US imperialism spirals into more open fascism amidst its decline and decay.

Today's exposes are part of the sharpening conflict among the capitalists as they struggle over how to respond to their decline by preparing for war.

But the #MeToo campaign also creates many opportunities to sharpen and broaden communist class struggle against sexism. We urge comrades everywhere to share their experiences.

LETTERS

Bolshevik Anniversary Conference: "A Great Play, Where I Was an Actor"

LOS ANGELES, USA — "I want to continue discussing the idea of going directly from capitalism to communism," said an MTA (Metropolitan Transit Authority) mechanic who was born and raised in socialist Russia.

The conference to honor and analyze the Bolshevik Revolution of 1917 was an ideological advance for the MTA workers.

Attendees, mechanics and drivers, actively participated by expressing their doubts and giving examples of how some aspects of communism might work better.

The most important thing is that their enthusiasm has continued since the conference. They are more willing to be involved in spreading communist ideas.

During a meeting after the conference, many wished to continue talking about the topics that were discussed at the conference. One worker said, "What most impressed me was the way the participants seriously discussed how relations would work in communism. The question of basic services, work relationships, and the most interesting was how to live without money. It was like attending a great play, but where I was an actor. I see that there is a plan and that if everyone pushes, it has to work."

LETTERS

LETTERS

Two workers of the six at the meeting were self-critical for not having participated in the conference. One comrade was criticized, as constructively as we could, to help him advance politically. This co-worker has committed to writing a letter expressing his contradictions as a way to find a collective solution, to help other clubs advance the ideological struggle.

In general, the club and the base of the party at MTA are encouraged and ready to follow in the Bolsheviks' footsteps. We will overcome their weaknesses without ever forgetting the great historic advance of the revolution of industrial workers, soldiers, farm-workers, students, teachers, the whole working class of 1917.

—MTA Comrade

We Want Equality

I really liked the celebration because it's important to celebrate the dates that have marked the history of poor people, of all working people. I learned a lot Communism is important because we will all be united. There won't be rich people or poor people.

CRITICISM AND SUGGESTIONS



High school students reading "Good Morning Revolution" during the Los Angeles dinner to celebrate the 100th anniversary of the Bolshevik Revolution

Inequality isn't good, because there are people who think that they're better than others because they have a lot of money or because of the color of their skin. We want equality. We will have a better world, we will be all united and we'll be very happy.

One question I have is this—when we have communism will it be necessary to study to get a diploma?

—A high school student

Communist Work Among Garment Workers in Los Angeles: NEED SHARPER IDEOLOGICAL STRUGGLE

LOS ANGELES, USA—One of the political concentrations of the International Communist Workers' Party (ICWP) in this city is with the men and women workers in the garment industry. As we mentioned in an article in the previous issue, an average of 600 garment workers, in three different factories, receive every issue of *Red Flag*.

We have a club (cell) with eight ICWP members concentrated in this industry, but with different levels of commitment. Some are ex-garment workers, but only one currently works in this industry. Lately the participation of our base in the activities of ICWP has decreased, and recruitment to the party is stalled.

We recently had a meeting to discuss what are the main obstacles that prevent us from mobilizing and recruiting new comrades from the garment industry. Some comrades commented that the fascist laws and immigration and police actions have their effect on many workers to make them less politically active. Others felt that family problems have increased and those cause an obstacle even with the Party members themselves.

But in evaluating the essence of our practice in political and social relations with our base, we could see clearly that the main obstacle is in us.

One of the main errors is the lack of sharp ideological struggle among the members and with our base to mobilize ourselves and to mobilize others to fight for communism.

Believing that the mass distribution of *Red Flag* by itself will bring new members, or that a couple of phone calls to our base will do the work that is needed, is pure idealism. We need much more than that. We need one-on-one communist political struggle.

Fortunately we are not starting from scratch. Some of us have had very good experiences in the past in massively mobilizing men and women workers to the political activities of ICWP and recruiting new comrades.

We made an initial plan and a commitment to change our current practice. For example, to get contacts in these factories, we need to write more about the industry in such a way that these workers see their daily problems reflected in *Red Flag*, politically analyzed to show and convince them that the only solution to our problems is communist revolution.



Also, we have invited a couple of women comrades to participate in the distribution of the newspaper at one of these factories to help us make contact with women workers. At the same time, we made a list of men and women friends in the garment industry to constantly visit and have political discussions with them. We also decided to have a social activity every month to share our lives with these workers.

We believe that we have not reached the essence of our contradictions, but this analysis is a start in trying to overcome these obstacles. The comrades left this meeting more enthusiastic, with a plan of work and open to the ideological struggle.

LETTERS LETTERS LETTERS CRITICISM AND SUGGESTIONS

Imperialism in Persian Gulf Region

Saudi Arabia, with the support of the US military, is carrying out war against the people of Yemen. Over 10,000 people have been killed and a million have cholera. UN food and medical aid was just allowed back into Yemen, but tens of millions remain at risk of famine.

This war against the people of Yemen and the supporters of Abdrabbuh Mansur Hadi, the Iranian-backed Houthi rebels, has been going on since 2015.

At the same time, the Saudi government has pressured the Lebanese Prime Minister to resist the influence of Iran's proxy Hezbollah in Lebanon and the region.

Saudi Arabia also has led an international campaign to isolate and destabilize the nation of Qatar. Most recently, Saudi crown prince Mohammed bin Salman led the arrests of allegedly 500 Saudis for corruption.

This is a regional offensive of Saudi Arabia to re-impose US imperialist domination into the Gulf states through Saudi Arabian economic and political aggression and military brutality.

Saudi Arabia's attack on Lebanon, as well as the war against Yemen and the Houthi resistance, has received support from the Zionist apartheid state of Israel. Israel also supports Saudi Arabia's blockade and attacks on Qatar and Al Jazeera, the Qatar-based news organization. US imperialism abetted Saudi attacks on Qatar, after Donald Trump's visit to the gulf state in mid-2017.

US power has declined in the Middle East in the aftermath of its invasion of Iraq. Iran is the

real winner and the Saudis are engaged in a multi-front campaign to combat their ascendance. Is this a proxy struggle between the US and Russia? Between the US and China?

There is nothing in the Saudi action, or in the actions of the imperialists or the region's dictators, that is in the interest of

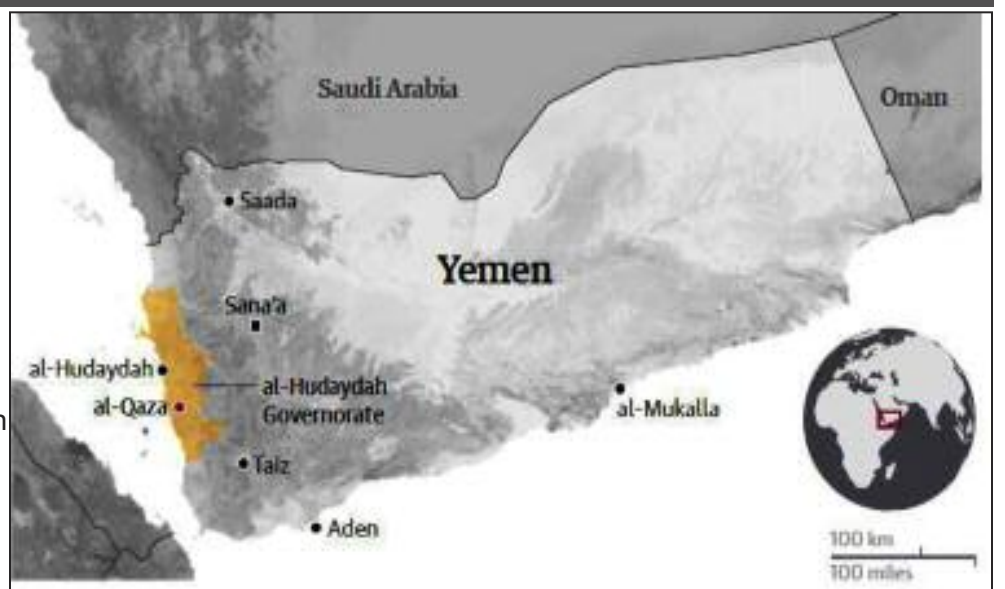
the working class of the nations, regions, or world. Only the joint actions of urban and rural workers, soldiers and intellectuals can create the analysis, build the organizations, and engage in struggle that put an end to the monarchy of Saudi Arabia and all capitalist rulers. Fighting for communism is the only way to put an end to the devastation caused by capitalist competition and imperialist wars.

—West Coast (US) comrades

Two Questions from a Reader

I must admit that there are things in communism that I agree with and there are other things that I do not agree with. I will initially talk first about the aspects that I agree with.

I must agree with the idea that capitalism is not a suitable system for those who want an equal society with no poverty and racism where there is not a single person who is exploited.



And I also agree that socialism is another form of capitalism and that it can't eradicate wars, poverty and exploitation and capitalist brutality.

However I think that communism is failing to take in to account that we are different and we have cultures and as Africans we have traditional beliefs. So I think it is wrong for communism to just dismiss them as same other form of idealism, I need clarity in these two questions that I have

The first one is whether there is a space for people like me in this communist society you want to establish, people who believe in ancestors and who still practice African traditions?

And the second one is whether there is space for people who are gay in communist society because it speaks on how people will live. Thanks comrades.

—A reader in South Africa



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WHO'S STEALING FROM WHOM?

"If someone takes an orange from an orchard, is that not stealing? We are doing the same thing that is criticized," said a student while we worked in a field. Someone else said, "It's not the same if you take it from a tree that's on the mountain and not from another tree that's near the house." The student replied, "The action is the same, it's theft".

I commented that in the case of the orange, it was an act of necessity and not theft, We were working on the mountain; we ran out of water; it was high noon and the heat was reaching the maximum temperature. Therefore, you took the orange to fill a need knowing that only the birds would eat it. Or would you respect the "capitalist morality" that told you it was theft, and not eat it?

The discussion was broadened to topics related to capitalism and all the bad things it is doing to the environment and to the people. Another student said, "Let's make a new party or group to fight against it."

These are good opportunities to present the communist line, either in the moment or later. For example, in a communist society no one will own a plot or "country." What we have will be used to produce to meet the needs of everyone. The bosses tell us about respecting private property and not stealing. But the real thieves are the bosses, their governments, their banks and their factories, who steal the labor of the worker.



I have sharpened the struggle with two co-workers. They appear to be won to anti-class ideas and liberal behavior. but I have told them that class feelings make us more similar than different.

A student wrote me his ideas about how he sees the mobilization of the masses and his contradiction with communism. With him I already started a series of discussions to clarify some of those ideas.

I'm working in a fertile field of ideological struggles. Join the struggle for a Communist society, where our behavior will be guided by communist principles that will favor all our brothers and sisters of the international working class.

—Comrade in Mexico

How Communists Can Give Anti-Racist Leadership

A reader asked (last issue) some specific questions about reform struggles.

The picture of "Water Protectors" supporters taking *Red Flag* shows ICWP in relation to a reform struggle. We're in them to meet folks who are interested in communism and to build our confidence that masses can be won to mobilize for it.

The reader asked why we focus on "defensive" struggles instead of raising "offensive" demands against imperialism, like the Vietnam-war era fight to end officer training on US campuses. Reform struggles are always defensive, especially during periods of global capitalist crisis.

US students responded to US imperialism's genocidal offensive against the Vietnamese masses by showing that their universities were complicit in it. To go on the offensive politically, they should have argued more boldly for defeating imperialism with communist revolution.

The reader's "more important question" is about how committed communists give leadership to friends. These friends might agree with some communist ideas (like "the Marxist conception of race") but be unwilling to advocate communist revolution. This really is important! Most of us need to do it much better. But how?

We used to think that the main aspect of the communist line on racism was that it's rooted in capitalism. That capitalism uses racism to divide the working class politically while reaping super-profits from super-oppressed sections of our class. The reader's letter below implies this.

Now we see that the main aspect of the communist line on racism is that communism can end racism – when masses defy the bosses' racism and mobilize collectively for communism. When we ask friends and comrades to distribute *Red Flag*, that's the theory we're asking them to test: are masses open to a communist line?

Friends who won't do that, or even come watch us do it, can certainly still take advantage of opportunities to see that anti-racist class solidarity is possible. And many do. But they are testing secondary, not primary, aspects of the communist line. We need to "keep

our eyes on the prize" (communism) even when they don't.

—California (US) comrade

Marxism Versus Liberalism on Race and Racism

Class struggle is, under appropriate conditions, a school for communism. Communists should urge their non-communist friends to attend.

These friends must be clear about how liberals and Marxists differ about race and racism. The liberal position comes in lots of flavors. All say that racism is bad but it's a natural position for whichever 'race' is more favorably situated. That's because in the short run at least they benefit from their 'white skin privilege.'

Of course, longer-term consideration and moral reflection can make it rational for some whites to abandon their privilege. This view is almost always associated with some level of contempt for working people (or at least for working class whites).

Educated middle-class liberal whites think that they can pretty easily recognize the moral and longer-term political advantages of being anti-racists. On the other hand, they think it's much harder for working-class whites to reject the short-term advantages of their 'white-skin privilege' unless, perhaps, some charismatic Democratic Party politician moves them with anti-racist patriotic oratory.

Anti-racists who are influenced by the liberal conception of racism and sexism (and by the identity politics that goes with it) will think that white anti-racists objectively benefit from racism. This implies they are only reliable as 'allies' of black or Hispanic or Asian people and have no business playing any leadership

role. If anti-racists ignore this liberal restriction they can be subjected to harsh criticism.

According to the Marxist position, there are, indeed, longer-term and moral considerations favoring opposition to racism, but liberals are wrong in every other respect. Whites do not as a group benefit from racism.

Even when whites are afforded somewhat better salaries or opportunities or rights than blacks they would always be better off if racism were to some extent overcome and greater interracial solidarity prevailed. An example is in the Virginia colony when racist laws were introduced to divide European indentured servants from African slaves. That's how capitalist markets (and politics) work. There is no white-skin privilege to acknowledge.

Not only do most whites have an abstract interest in opposing racism, they're fully capable of understanding that this is so when the case is carefully made and they're invited to participate (and take initiative in) anti-racist struggles.

It will matter a lot for non-communists trying to apply (and thus test) the Marxist approach to anti-racist struggles that they have as good an understanding as possible of that position.

—Anti-racist reader



From Bad to Worse: Russia to Zimbabwe

MASSES WORLDWIDE NEED COMMUNIST REVOLUTION

It is 100 years since the Russian revolution, where the working class of Russia took arms against their bosses who were the Tsarist empire led by the Romanov family. This was because the workers were tired of their living conditions and the social system that existed.

The Russian revolution was led by Vladimir Lenin and the Bolsheviks. It resulted in the formation of the Soviet Union, which collapsed in 1991. The revolution was a great success, but it also yields failures which we're still learning from.

The revolution teaches us many lessons; one of them is that we cannot get to communism by passing through a certain stage (which at the time was socialism). We must fight for communism directly.

It also teaches us that we must fight for communism internationally because we're not living in isolation and the working class all around the world are suffering from same capitalist system.

Thirdly it teaches us that if the means of production are in the hands of the socialist state, we will not reach communism because that state also forces the masses to be subjected to a wage system. It also results in the socialist government officials being the upper class (ruling class).

With this being said, understanding the need to mobilize for communism, we see that in Zimbabwe the rulers are fighting with each other over who will exploit the workers of Zimbabwe.

A month ago the world's longest-serving president, Robert Gabriel Mugabe, axed his deputy president Emmerson Dambudzo Mnangagwa,

who Mugabe wanted to replace with his wife Grace. This move resulted in Mr. Mnangagwa convincing the military to mobilize the masses to join an anti-Mugabe protest, demanding the president to step down and let the former deputy president (Mr Mnangagwa) be the acting president until next year's election.

This plan worked perfectly as the president finally resigned this week before being impeached in Parliament. This marked the end of Mugabe's dictatorship, who was president for 37 years.

What the masses of Zimbabwe and those who have the same view that Zimbabwe will be better need to see is that government officials are just agents who implement the mandate of their masters (elites) who own them. Any such change in government officials will not benefit the working class but is just a shift of power from one master to another.

One can argue that ever since Mugabe became the president of Zimbabwe, the country has enjoyed independence from foreign leadership. But it is public knowledge that Zimbabwean diamond mines have been controlled by the Chinese, who have replaced British colonialism.

The sanctions by the UN on Zimbabwe made South Africa the leading producer of mineral resources in the Southern region of Africa. Mr Mnangagwa promises transformation which will result in job opportunities. But in reality, more jobs mean more workers will be exploited.

This change in government is either a threat to the mine owners of South Africa or an expansion of their empire and either of them means instead

of things being better they will become worse. The fall of Khadafy gives us a great lesson; things didn't improve in Libya but instead they became worse.

This only translates to one thing: no government will ever represent the needs of the masses. Until the means of production are owned and controlled by the working class to meet their needs, only then will the working class stop suffering. Since the bosses won't just give away power, that will be achieved through an international revolution led by the ICWP.



Sign says "Workers of the World Unite for Communist Revolution" in Xhosa

Death of US Special Forces Troops in Niger

TIP OF THE ICEBERG OF RACIST IMPERIALIST WAR IN AFRICA

The deaths of four US Special Forces Troops in Niger in October are the tip of the iceberg of racism and imperialist war.

The media were all over Trump's dismissive racism in his phone call to Myeshia Johnson, the widow of Army Sergeant La David Johnson. Others have concentrated on the racist and sexist insults of Democratic Congresswoman Frederica Wilson who criticized him for it. But this is the iceberg's very tip.

Racism and the US military

Still above water—but barely—is the wider reality of racism and the US military. Soldiers in the imperialist military are working class men and women who face racism, poverty and exploitation in civilian life. This is particularly true of the Army—imperialism's cannon fodder, which is 22% black, while African Americans make up only 13% of the US population. The Army has also historically been the site of dissent and rebellion against US imperialism, especially during the Vietnam war. Imperialism's reliance

on the most exploited members of society is the crack in its armor. This is as true in China and India as it is in the US. During imperialist war, soldiers on both sides can play a revolutionary role.

US military role in Africa

Just below the surface of the water—discussed by some media outlets—is the growing role of the US military in Niger and throughout West Africa. Starting with the Obama administration, the US has used the Authorization of Use of Military Force passed in 2001 for the war in Afghanistan to fight wars throughout the world. Obama sent 100 troops to Niger in 2013 as "support for intelligence collection" with French troops in the region. Four years later, there are about 1000 troops in the region "supporting" a French-led mission to combat "Islamist extremists."

The bulk of the iceberg is hidden deep underwater. The US Africa Command (AFRICOM), organized in 2007, has 6,000 troops in Africa, conducting 3,500 exercises, programs, and engagements each year – almost 10 missions each day. It has one major base in Djibouti on the Red Sea, and has used bases all over Africa.

While the US claims to be worried about "transnational Islamist terror," the real mission is combatting US' rival China.

A 2008 article published by the US Army War College said, "Now China has achieved a stage of economic development which requires endless supplies of African raw materials and has started to

develop the capacity to exercise influence in most corners of the globe...history predicts that distrust and uncertainty will inevitably lead the People's Liberation Army to Africa in staggering numbers."

For their part, the Chinese understand that the US threatens their larger plans in Africa. Lin Zhiyuan, a leading military analyst argues, "By building a dozen forward bases or establishments in Africa, the US will gradually establish a network of military bases to cover the entire continent...[T]he African continent is taken as a strong point to prop up the US global strategy. Therefore, AFRICOM facilitates the United States advancing on the African continent, taking control of the Eurasian continent and proceeding to take the helm of the entire world."

As we explained in the previous issue, China is building a military organized "to take the helm of the entire world." The US ruling class is willing to kill millions to make sure that doesn't happen. Eventually this will lead to war, with Africa one of the hot spots. That's what's below the surface of the news of US troops along the border between Mali and Niger.

In Africa as around the world, workers have no stake in war between one group of imperialists and another. In fact, working-class soldiers will be the ones who kill and die for the imperialists. But they are also the ones who can turn these wars into revolutionary wars. That is why patient political organizing with soldiers and their families is so important.

It's also important to work harder to reach workers in other parts of the world. Self-critically, we can do better in translating *Red Flag* into French on our website to reach out to readers in countries such as Mali and Niger.

