

RED FLAG

MOBILIZE THE MASSES FOR COMMUNISMTHE INTERNATIONAL COMMUNIST WORKERS' PARTY * WWW.ICWPREDFLAG.ORG

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Socialism vs. Communism: **ANSWERING WORKERS' QUESTIONS**

Los Angeles, USA—"What's happening in Venezuela?" a truck driver asked me, during a political discussion. He is part of a big family of several truck drivers and garment workers. A few years ago, 10 of them participated in an ICWP May Day Dinner.

"Venezuela is not communist; it is capitalist. And its crisis is the crisis of capitalism," I answered. Then I explained about the role of oil, buying and selling, and the exploitation of the working class. And that Venezuela is in the midst of an inter-imperialist fight between the US on one side and China and Russia on the other.

Venezuela is the country with the most oil reserves. All the imperialists want to control this wealth. But to get that oil to the market you need multi-billion dollar investments, which the Venezuelan capitalist class doesn't have. For this, they need the imperialists. In this case, President Maduro inclines to the Russian and Chinese imperialists. The US imperialists are not happy with this, since they have been the ones who controlled the wealth from the sale of this oil before.

During the rule of Hugo Chavez and his 21st Century Socialism the price of oil was over \$100 a barrel. Chavez could give some reforms to the workers while his capitalist friends became millionaires. But the US and Saudi Arabia made a deal to lower the price of oil to attack Venezuela, Iran and Russia. Due to this, the crisis in Venezuela sharpened and the masses have been the ones most affected.

"And what about Cuba, Russia and China—are they communists?" he asked.

We got involved in a discussion about the basis of communism, where we will depend on collective production for the benefit of the workers themselves. Therefore we won't need money, banks, bosses, or borders. Socialism (State capitalism) in those countries left the roots of capitalism: money, banks and exploitation, and that is what we see today.

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Organizing in a Transit Union: **BUILDING ICWP AMONG MECHANICS**

A woman worker at MTA (Los Angeles Metropolitan Transit Authority) was invited by another comrade to participate in a union meeting about how to fight "Right to Work" laws. (These laws weaken the ability of unions to organize by limiting their collection of dues money from non-members.) She invited a close friend, who also works at MTA.

Other ICWP members who work at MTA went to the meeting, and met up with *Red Flag* readers from other divisions.

The union leadership is planning a campaign against "Right to Work" laws. Part of their plan is to mobilize a mass participation of MTA workers for the 2018 May Day March.

In previous meetings of our ICWP club at MTA, and in discussions with other workers we have talked about the necessity of working within the union without falling into reformism. The question has been how to do it? In particular, how can we get involved in the union's current campaign, at the same time always putting forward the goal of communism.

This is not just a question for the MTA club. A comrade in South Africa asked in a letter in the previous *Red Flag*: "How do we then participate in reform events without contradicting ourselves as revolutionaries? How do we 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?"

Working in the union as communists

Trade unions, not being revolutionary organizations, do not aspire to end wage slavery. They perpetuate it by signing contracts that justify and legalize our exploitation. ICWP's goal is to end wage slavery, the source of racism, sexism, xenophobia and wars.

As the gravediggers of capitalism, we need revolutionary communist leadership, not reformist trade union leadership, in order to fulfill our

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Imperialist War, Capitalist Crisis in Yemen

FIGHT TO END BORDERS, WARS AND WAGE SLAVERY WITH COMMUNIST REVOLUTION

Masses in war-torn Yemen are enduring a dire humanitarian crisis. Famine threatens tens of millions as Saudi bosses' blockades have prevented most food imports. Water supplies are dwindling and aquifers are shrinking. Saudi air strikes have targeted water infrastructure. Cholera, preventable and treatable, is sweeping the region in possibly the worst epidemic ever.

"Every house in Sana'a [Yemen's capital] has broken windows from the air strikes," reported a friend who lived there. Over half the workforce is jobless. Over a million government and electrical workers haven't been paid in months.

Thousands of workers have defied the economic crisis and political repression with strikes and sit-ins. But the crisis demands something different. The desperate and angry Yemeni masses must mobilize for communism.

Civil War and Inter-Imperialist War

"The civil war is a proxy war between the Saudis and Iran," said a Yemeni friend in the US.

"And behind Saudi Arabia and Iran are the US and Russia," a comrade replied.

But there's more.

Yemen's location has long made it a crossroads for trade and cultural exchange, and a focus of conflict. It abuts the Red Sea, facing Djibouti across the Bab el-Mandeb chokepoint. Its Arabian Sea coastline includes Aden, once the world's second-busiest port.

Yemen was key to the Ottoman and British empires. Today the Chinese imperialists want a stabilized Yemen to help them expand "One Belt One Road" to Saudi Arabia. They want both Iran and Saudi Arabia as strategic partners. They, too, have supported the deadly Saudi coalition assault on Yemen.

Imperialism means ever-sharpening rivalry and increasingly deadly wars. Only communism can end them.

Marxism in Yemen: 1963-1990

In Yemen and worldwide, masses seeking to end exploitation joined and supported Marxist-led national liberation movements. In 1963, armed struggle began against British control. Four years later, the National Liberation Front (NLF) came to power in South Yemen.

The People's Democratic Republic of South Yemen became a socialist state in 1970, aligned

with the Soviet Union. Moscow gained strategically important access to its naval facilities. The US and Saudi rulers backed the Yemeni Arab Republic in the north.

But Yemeni socialism was actually capitalism. The World Bank wrote approvingly in 1979 that Yemen had "demonstrated significant ability in firmly pursuing economic development [with] the implementation of policies geared at increasing the productivity of the economic institutions."

The two Yemens merged in 1990 after the Soviet Union collapsed. Socialist state ownership led to the emergence of a new capitalist ruling class, like everywhere else. This is usually misrepresented as "persistent corruption."

Many ask how communists can avoid this "corruption." The main answer is that we mobilize for communism, not national liberation or socialism.

Communism will abolish private property, money and wealth accumulation. The working masses will plan and manage production, through international communist party collectives. Our goal will not be "development" but meeting everyone's needs.

Since the Arab Spring: 2011-2017

During the 2011 "Arab Spring," masses rebelled against unemployment, poverty and "corruption." Protests spread after government forces killed over a thousand people. Some tribal and military leaders backed the opposition to Ali Abdullah Saleh, Yemen's ruler for 30 years. He was forced from power and his deputy Abdrabbuh Mansour Hadi became president in February 2012.

Hadi faced an Islamist insurgency led by al-Qaeda since 2009, a secessionist movement in the south, and Shia rebels ("Houthis") who had organized in the north since 2004. Saleh supported the Houthis. They took over Sana'a in fall 2014, triggering civil war. A Saudi-led military coalition intervened in August 2015 to support Hadi's government in Aden.



Yemeni women during the Arab Spring, 2011

planes.

While the US-backed Saudis and their Yemeni puppets were fighting the Iranian-backed Houthis, the Houthis were actually fighting Al-Qaeda. In February 2016 Al-Qaeda forces and Saudi-led coalition forces were both seen fighting Houthi rebels in the same battle.

The winners so far are Al-Qaeda and the US capitalists who profit from weapons sales. Yemen's capitalist economy has collapsed. The big losers are the Yemeni masses. Their goal must not be to save or stabilize capitalism in Yemen, but to mobilize for communism to destroy it.

2017: Latest Crisis Adds Urgency to Fight for Communism

Chinese and Saudi bosses signed an agreement in March 2017 to build the first drone factory in the region in Saudi Arabia. Large Russian and US arms deals with Saudi Arabia don't include drone manufacture.

US President Trump has sent even more "boots on the ground" supposedly to fight Al-Qaeda. In May he announced a huge arms deal with Saudi Arabia, the largest arms sale in U.S. history.

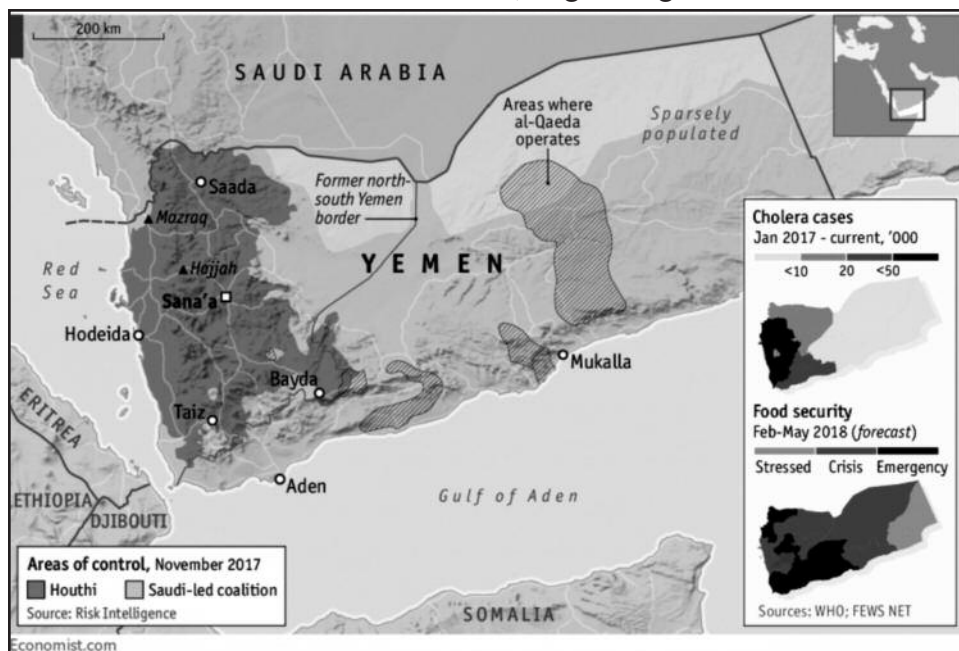
But in October, a bipartisan group of US representatives openly questioned this strategy. The pro-US imperialist Council on Foreign Relations published an article (Nov.-Dec. 2017) claiming that the Yemen war had nothing to do with regional interests after all.

This imperialist faction seems ready to leave Saudi Arabia to the Chinese, and fight them elsewhere. Liberal pro-Democrat groups like Code Pink are starting to mobilize to demand an end to US military involvement in Yemen. But another "anti-war" movement won't end the horrific suffering there.

By December 2017 the Houthis had little use left for Saleh. Seeing that his influence was declining, he switched sides and was promptly killed by his former allies. This has escalated the conflict, strengthened the Houthis' hand, and made the situation more desperate.

"My two brothers are on opposite sides," mourned our Yemeni friend. "We used to hope that the Saudis would drive out the Houthis, but now I see that they're just as bad."

He and many more, in Yemen and worldwide, need to take seriously the communist alternative. Our Party awaits them with open arms.



US cruise missiles and drones had supposedly targeted al-Qaeda training camps since 2009. They had already killed over a hundred Yemeni civilians. The Obama administration now sold the Saudis tanks, planes, bombs, precision-guided missiles and white phosphorous, a deadly chemical weapon. Thousands of US Air Force missions refueled Saudi war-



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COMMUNIST EDUCATION: STUDY TO BETTER SERVE THE MASSES

LOS ANGELES (USA)— “In communism will I have to study to get my diploma?” asked Alicia in a meeting of four high school students and an older comrade in an ICWP collective.

“No,” answered Adriana. “No, because diplomas separate us. They divide us because in some jobs they require your diploma to do a supposedly higher quality job.

“Imagine. You can’t work here if you don’t have your diploma, and you can’t work there because you haven’t studied for a career. With communism, all that will be eliminated. There won’t be diplomas, or careers, or professions.”

That’s how education is in capitalism. Our parents who are workers haven’t studied for a career. They don’t have diplomas. My own father used to tell me, “Son, you have to go to the university, so you can graduate, so you can be someone.” Like as if he himself is saying that he’s nobody.

Capitalist education not only divides the working class, but also covers up the truth that it’s the workers—men and women—who are the true creators of everything we need to survive. Nevertheless, it’s the capitalists who steal this essential production from us.

“And studying?” asked Alicia, and added, “We’re studying to go to the university, so then it won’t be necessary to go to school?”

Studying will be necessary. It’s how humanity advances. We have to study to understand how to

grow food, how machines work, and the universe. And this study won’t be to get ahead as an individual, but we will study to improve the whole human race.

In communism education will be organized to be able to achieve and have everything we need. There won’t be money or different social classes. We’ll all work for the good of everyone and nobody will live better than anyone else. We’ll all live with our needs satisfied. There won’t be borders of racial or sexist divisions. Men and women will treat each other with dignity and respect.

There will be people who understand medicine, but they won’t be “doctors.” They’ll study theory and techniques and carry out medical treatments and operations, but they’ll also do maintenance and cleaning tasks. Other times they’ll go study agricultural theory and cultivate the land or study and work in a new production center, according to what the masses may need.

There will be people who understand mechanics, but they won’t be “mechanics.” The field of mechanics will not only be similar to the field of medicine, but to all the other spheres of human production. In other words, they will be no distinction between mental and manual labor.

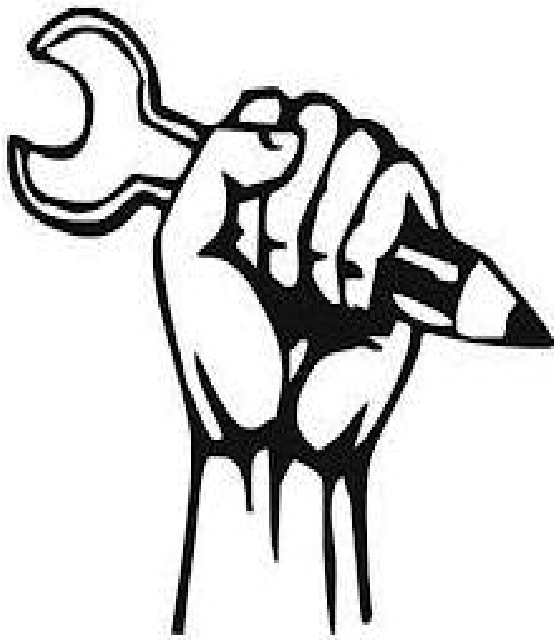
In this way it will be necessary to study. But study won’t be separated from work; theory and practice won’t be divorced from each other. We’ll study and work, not to better ourselves individu-

ally but rather improve the wellbeing of all; a collective wellbeing.

We’ll have to discover new foods and new medicines. We’ll also have to understand nutrition, everything that humans need to live. But it won’t be an individual thing, and theory and practice won’t be separated. Everyone will work and study.

These young people aren’t only trying to understand communist education but also trying to understand communist production relations. They’re also trying to spread communist ideas by distributing *Red Flag*. Each of them distributes from 3 to 6 papers. Little by little they’re having conversations with friends and family members about communist ideas. They’re trying to mobilize for communism. We need to struggle more sharply with them to make communist ideas mass ideas, to participate in the marches and workers’ mobilizations and distribute *Red Flag*.

Read our pamphlet:
**COMMUNIST
EDUCATION
FOR A
CLASSLESS
SOCIETY**



available at:
icwpredflag.org/EDU/EdPamE.pdf
icwpredflag.org/EDU/EdPamS.pdf



SOCIALISM VS. COMMUNISM from page 1

I said that it is not the first time that humanity could live like this. For thousands of years before class society, humans lived in a communist society where they shared everything.

Then he said, “It would be beautiful to live like that, but people don’t understand. Although, where I grew up, we grew corn, others grew other crops, and we shared them. But what would happen with people who don’t want to work?”

We talked about the collective struggle and some examples of China in that regard.

My friend was investigating, with many questions. His disagreements and doubts are still to come later.

“What makes you think like that?” I asked him.

“I don’t like what I see in life. I would like something different,” he answered. Then he

asked me, “How many members do you have?”

“With you we will be one more,” I answered.

I invited him to participate with us in meetings and activities and to see the need for communism as primary. He smiled and answered, “Let me think about it.” He was leaving the door open to future discussions and a struggle in which he can become a leader within his family and the international working class. He took *Red Flag* and left new opportunities for the growth of ICWP.



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SEXISM IS NOT HUMAN NATURE

LOS ANGELES (USA)—I started discussing the *Red Flag* editorial about sexual harassment and assault with a bus driver. I told her about an experience I had many years ago when I kept quiet about sexual harassment on the job because I needed the minimum-wage pay check.

I explained that communist society will end wage slavery. No one will have the power to coerce sexual favors because you need a job.

However, I said, ending wage slavery isn't enough. We'll have to spend a lot of effort teaching men and women new ways of relating to each other, and combating sexist ideas in the culture.

"That's for sure," she said. "I wanted to see what the Bible said, so I've been listening to it on my phone. Do you know that the Bible says that God laid Adam down on the ground and created Eve out of his rib? And people believe that? That's not how nature does it. Women give birth to everyone. I've got the stretch marks to prove it."

"There are many myths and stories like that," I said. "They all date from the end of pre-class communism, when people lived in gatherer-hunter societies. The story of the Garden of Eden, shared by Muslims, Christians and Jews, is only one of those stories. They recount the memory of pre-class society and the beginning of private property and class oppression. At the same time, they blame women for that change – 'Eve ate the apple' and justify women's oppression."

Before Sexism Equally

We know from anthropology that women and men in pre-class societies were treated equally.

Thomas Morgan lived among the Iroquois in North America in the 19th century. His work was an important source for Frederick Engels' *The Origin of the Family, Private Property and the State*. Engels was one of the founders of scientific communism.

Iroquois men hunted, while women farmed and took care of the home. Those activities were

consistent with pregnancy and nursing small children. Society was cooperative and egalitarian, and women's work was valued equally with that of men. Women were honored and lived freely. Since women gave birth to children, family identity was naturally passed on through the mother's line. Men would move from their family of origin into the family circles of their mate.

Another example is the !Kung San people of Southwest Africa. They lived in nomadic, hunter-gatherer societies until the 1960s. Women supplied most of the food supply by gathering. They were seen as responsible for the survival of the group by giving birth to the next generation. While there was division of responsibility, men and women had equal status and respect.

How did that change?

What historians call the "Neolithic revolution," about ten thousand years ago, ended this period of pre-class communism. Private property, in cattle herding and farming, created the conditions for class society. This brought about what Engels called "the world historical defeat of the female sex."

With private property came systems of inheritance through the father's family line. To pass property on to their biological offspring, property-owning fathers now demanded that paternity be established beyond doubt. So they imposed strict limitations on female autonomy. Monogamy—at least for women—was the necessary condition for the inheritance of property through the male line. This is called "patriarchy."

Writing the story

The stories we are taught, including the biblical story of the Garden of Eden, promote sexist



"Egyptian women will live with dignity" -
Cairo, 2013,
women protest against sexual assaults

cultural values and norms that reinforce patriarchal class relations. Because Eve was disobedient, and Adam listened to her, a vengeful male god condemned men to sweat to bring forth bread among thorns and thistles. This god condemned women to bring forth children in sorrow, and be ruled over by their husbands.

The lessons of this story – and others like it—have been passed down through generations of class society. Sexist ideas have robbed the working class of the leadership of women. They have seriously damaged the unity of our class. But the bus driver I was talking to and the woman we have recently recruited to a previously all-male party cell at another MTA division can help us change that.

Our earliest prehistory shows that sexism is not human nature. It is a product of class society. Fighting the sexist ideas and practices that we have been taught can build stronger class unity and allow us to fight for a communist society, where we can wipe out sexism once and for all.

It is our job to write new stories—in the fight for scientific communism.

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historical task. ICWP's strategy is to mobilize the masses for communism.

Unions hold back the ideological advance of the working class, helping the ruling class to build nationalism, supporting the bosses' wars, and tying the workers to the tail of the Democratic Party. Our interest is political. Our goal is to raise the workers' revolutionary communist consciousness to prepare our fellow workers for the inevitable future struggles.

Unions are walking down a dead-end street, dragging the workers to the hangman, consciously or unconsciously, because they defend nationalism. We, as communists, defend internationalism. They defend and support the bosses' wars; we in ICWP support revolutionary war. They fight to win workers to the electoral circus, we say don't vote for your hangmen, organize with ICWP for armed struggle.

Building a communist base on the job

The woman mechanic who went to the union

meeting with us has been reading *Red Flag*, and participating in political discussions with the ICWP MTA club.

The club has developed politically, participating in constant and persistent ideological struggle with our base. We have been able to consolidate a multi-racial club which meets every two weeks or more often if necessary. We also have social activities, dinners or parties with our base.

When we didn't have a club, we wrote about the union, denouncing its reformist character and explaining to the workers the need to join ICWP as a pro-working class communist organization.

Now we have an ICWP collective, we have participated in union activities to contact workers in other divisions, distribute the paper, and most importantly train new members to defend, spread and have confidence in communist ideas.

We've had good results. New comrades have

joined and been consolidated, and we also have a number of contacts who are interested in our party. For now, we go to union meetings and activities, not with the intention of giving openly communist speeches, because we're not strong enough to do that yet. We talk individually with other workers about a communist political strike as a possible and necessary action to advance the ideological level of the workers, not only at MTA, but internationally.

Joining the party

After the union meeting, we invited the woman mechanic who went with us to come to our ICWP MTA club meeting. There, another worker told her, "Thank you for coming. We need your help to build the struggle for communism, and we want you to join ICWP." He explained in detail our communist line and the need for women leadership in our movement.

She said, "Yes, I like that idea. I'm going to participate with you and I want to learn more."



Honduras:

MASS REBELLION SHOWS POTENTIAL TO BUILD ICWP

December 19 —Presidential elections were held in Honduras on November 27, 2017. Thousands of Hondurans—men and women—throughout the country turned out to protest against what appeared to be blatant fraud. They took over streets, roads, communities and called for a national strike that the vast majority participated in.

The government ordered a nationwide curfew. On the first night, police assassinated a youth who was looking for his brother to warn him about the curfew. They have now killed at least 21 more. But the protests continue.

Elections are one of the most sophisticated ways the bosses use to fool the men and women workers into thinking that they govern the coun-

try. But the electoral parties can't solve the problems that the working class confronts anywhere in the world. We need a communist revolution to eliminate money and capitalist social relations of production. The masses must fight for this and nothing else.

This election pitted the ALIANZA movement, led by the LIBRE party and its candidate Salvador Nasralla, against Juan Orlando Hernandez, current president of Honduras, and the National Party. This process, full of irregularities, unleashed a political and social crisis that continues in the shadow of the 2009 coup.

The LIBRE Party is led by the former President Mel Zelaya, who was overthrown in the coup in 2009 (with the support of the US). This

movement creates illusions in a large part of the Honduran population, since it presents itself as an alternative to the problems of corruption, drug trafficking and violence that have grown during the last two National Party governments.

During the protest, a youth took the opportunity to stand in front of the cameras and send a

message to the leaders of the LIBRE party: "We are here in the streets now, tell us what to do and we will do it."

LIBRE called for fighting against the fraud in a peaceful way. As the days pass, the Honduran government is trying to control the situation. The Supreme Electoral Tribunal has declared Hernandez the winner.

These events oblige us to study in depth the Honduran process and see the great opportunity there is to struggle with the Honduran working class to organize for communist revolution. We comrades in El Salvador can help plan communist work with the comrades in Honduras.

The members of ICWP have learned from the experiences of national liberation struggles and elections in the countries where we are, especially in El Salvador and South Africa. These experiences and the commitment to mobilize the masses for communism should help motivate us to reactivate Party work in Honduras.

The masses in Honduras are open to communist ideas. They want a different world that only communism can create. Organizing them under the flag of our party is a slow process. The masses shouldn't show up every five years to an election under the rules of the bourgeois game of electoral democracy. The times demand that we be bolder and more determined. Comrades elsewhere in Central America must build and consolidate lines of communication with our comrades in Honduras and help them build a stronger ICWP structure there.



Alabama:

WORKERS NEED COMMUNIST REVOLUTION, NOT ELECTIONS

Many were relieved at what the media called the "stunning victory" of Democratic Party politician Doug Jones over racist pedophile Roy Moore in Alabama, USA. Black workers, especially black women, made the difference. The main wing of the ruling class is pushing this as a model for the 2018 elections.

However, capitalist elections can't improve things for us! We need to mobilize for communist revolution to put an end to racism, sexism and exploitation, to have a world where the masses' needs are met. The rulers use elections to divert angry masses from communist revolution and to divide them. They help the capitalists keep their dictatorship over the masses of workers as they fight among themselves over how best to exploit and control us.

Communist leaders are and will be those who are most committed to mobilizing the masses for communism—in practice. That means building and encouraging others to build communist collectives. Encouraging and developing leaders, not elections, will be part of the daily fight for communism. Today, we need millions of communist leaders to mobilize millions more to fight for communism.

Moore and Jones's Alabama

Roy Moore, an open racist, said the greatest time in US history was during slavery! He sexually harassed and assaulted teenage girls when he was in his 30's. Even so, 68% of white voters in Alabama, mobilized by Trump and Bannon, voted for him. This shows the depths of racism there.

As a US attorney in 2001, Doug Jones helped convict two KKKers who had killed four little black girls in a church bombing in 1963. He bragged about this during the election, but the information leading to their conviction had been

there all along. In communism, masses will immediately mobilize to prevent and deal with racist terror.

Since the election, Jones has said that he does not support trying to fire Trump over the testimony of the women whom he sexually assaulted. He said that he didn't need to be seated in the Senate before they voted on the tax bill and that he supports cutting taxes on corporations. He supports increasing defense spending. One percent of the people in the US own as much as 90% of the people in the US, and the tax bill will only increase this inequality. But that's ok with Jones.

Racism is deeply embedded in capitalism—in Alabama and everywhere. Mass incarceration of every group is part of US capitalist terror. In Alabama, the median household income for whites is below the poverty line, and blacks earn about 60% of what whites make. Alabama is the state with the third highest incarceration rate, and black people are incarcerated at twice their percentage in the state population.

No election or capitalist politician will change this.

The black workers, especially black women, who organized to guarantee that racist Moore was defeated deserve much better! They and all workers deserve a communist world without racist terror, exploitation or sexism.

There's a lot to learn from the fight of black and white workers in Alabama in the 1930's, led by black communists from the steel mills, mines and farms. The Communist Party (CPUSA)-led Sharecroppers' Union fought Jim Crow racism and Ku Klux Klan terror, and combated the slave conditions of convict labor at US Steel. Tragically, the communist party did not mobilize these



Sharecroppers' Union, Alabama, 1930s

courageous anti-racist fighters for communism, but instead for a "united front" with supposedly lesser evil capitalists—like Doug Jones. This condemned workers to intensified exploitation, racism and war. Today's anti-fascist fighters must fight for communism.

Capitalist competition needs racism to super-exploit a section of the working class. Racist terror and mass incarceration attack the most militant section of the working class. Racist ideology justifies all these attacks and divides and weakens our class.

To get rid of racism, we need a world without wage slavery, money, cops or prisons. We need a world where we collectively produce everything to meet our needs as workers, and where everyone is encouraged to develop to our full human potential in communist collectives dedicated to meeting the masses' needs. We workers deserve no less.

Dialectics in Communist Organizing:
MAKING QUALITATIVE CHANGES HAPPEN

A change where you have more or less of something that can be measured in numbers is a change in quantity. This could be a change in the temperature outside, the score in a game, the size of a political movement, the amount of money in your paycheck—these are all quantitative changes.

If a quantity change is small and sometimes even if it is big, the thing that changes still behaves or can be used in roughly the same way. If the temperature outside goes up or down by a few degrees, it won't change what you can do very much.

There is another kind of change, however. It usually can't be measured in numbers, but means changing the way things behave or how we can use them. When the Sun goes down it gets dark. Usually you can't play sports or do other daytime activities. When you cook raw oats they change into a creamy breakfast food. When workers' revolution creates communism, capitalism's misery and limitations will be over and the masses can make their own future.

These are not just changes from more to less or less to more. They are changes in quality.

Quality change alters the internal organization of things, and allows us—or forces us—to deal with them in new ways.

Many sides of communist organizing involve qualitative change. When you decide to talk about communism with friends and make those friendships political, that is a change in quality. If a *Red Flag* reader begins giving the paper to others, or coming to a study group, those are qualitative changes. Joining the party is a major change in quality. It involves a commitment to work for communist revolution, not just sympathize with it.

A Dialectical Law

Change in quantity and change in quality have a definite relationship. Enough increase or decrease in something will eventually result in a qualitative change. Heat water on the stove for long enough and it will boil.

Bus fares or police murders or unemployment rising far enough, or wages and health care availability falling far enough, will produce

qualitative changes, but not just one kind. Some people will join mass protests or finally decide to be done with capitalism. Others might become addicted to drugs or turn to religion. Which qualitative changes will happen depend on a variety of factors, a critical one being the actions of the communist movement.

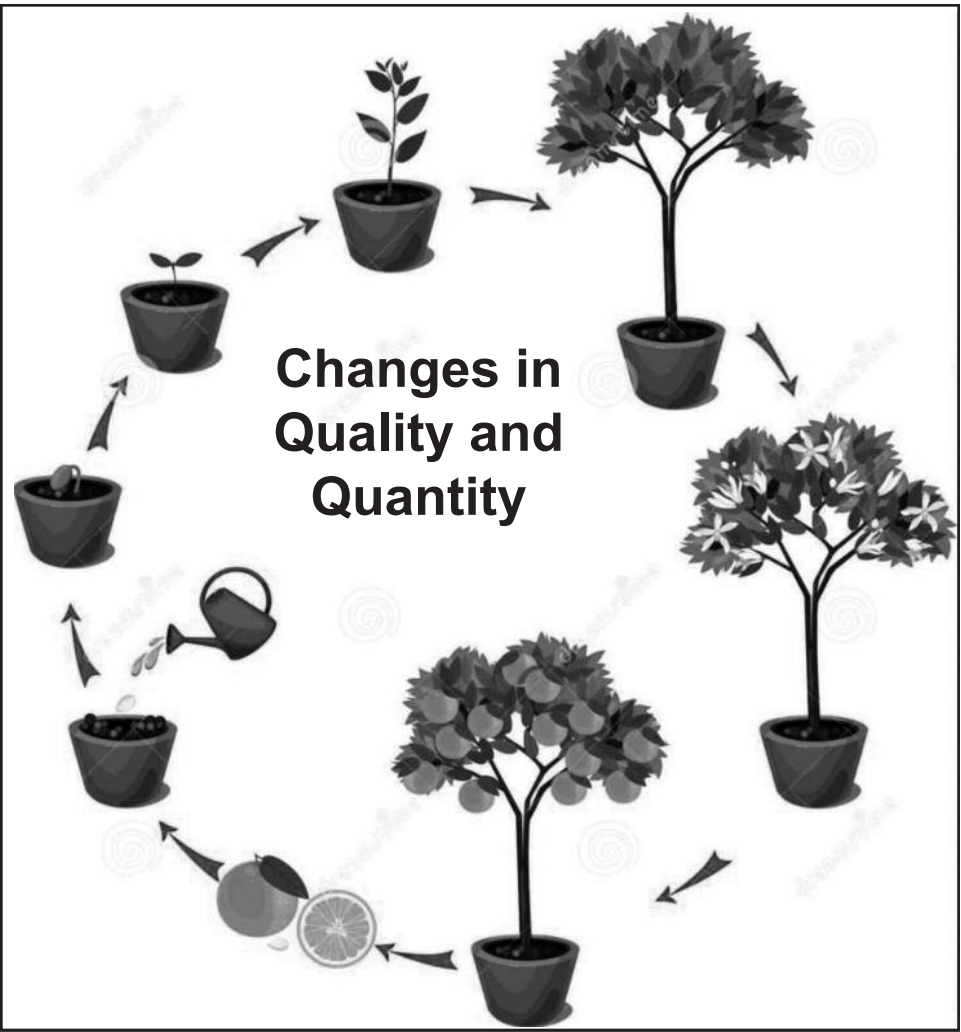
It is a law of materialist dialectics that enough change in quantity will lead to a change in quality. The reverse is also true. Change in quality can produce a change in quantity. It would be a mistake, however, to think of qualitative changes as things that just happen by themselves or that we can just nudge them a bit this way or that. Often we can decide to make a qualitative change. This is an important fact about organizing for communism.

Opening up an important new area of work can lead to growth. This happened when ICWP began organizing in South Africa. Starting to focus on a particular factory or starting military work can lead to expansion of the party's influence. Moving from distributing *Red Flag* outside a workplace to hand-to-hand distribution inside can open up important opportunities for growth. Comrades in some areas are now trying to make a qualitative change in the way we work with friends and new members, counting on people to take more leadership early and learn on the job.

When our work seems to be reaching a limit, we should look for a qualitative changes that we could make that gets beyond

that limit. For a long time comrades in San Diego have had a steady distribution of about 100 *Red Flags* per issue to workers and sailors at Nassco shipyard. Adding more people to our distribution team made little difference. The qualitative change of adding a different shipyard immediately led to a big surge in papers distributed. Now we are trying to add a college campus to our distribution.

San Diego comrades are also looking for closer connections to immigrant rights struggles. Many immigrants there have DACA status, which is due to expire in March. The first worker we talked to at the new shipyard told us that "something's got to change." We talked with him about the difference between socialism and communism. If we use dialectics to develop our political work in the right way, the change that happens will be a communist revolution.



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Ecuador: Seeing the Possibility of Communism

Recently I went with a group to visit Valencia, a community in Ecuador, south of Quito, more than 3,000 meters above sea level. Valencia was originally populated by peasants who got their land through the government's land reform. It's an example of communal organization from which we can learn lessons of how to organize production and social relations without money. However, it also exposes the limits of the "solidarity economy" and autonomy.

"We reject the budget assigned to us by the mayor's office. We want asphalt machinery, that's what we really need," explained Jose, a member of the community. The inhabitants of Valencia have organized themselves in shifts called "Mingas." As we arrived, a group of 50 people, all inhabitants of the community, were working on the asphalt of one of the main streets. This was a collective task, based on need.

The community has also organized for water collection, livestock, crops and recreation. This community dynamic shows us how the masses can be organized in a new economy, a new way of producing, living without money and

without capitalist social relations. The community is constantly fighting to defend its territory from transnational mining companies and state-owned companies. The mining company occupies more and more territory and contaminates one of the rivers of the community. The State wants to get resources from this land for the operation of the industrial and residential areas of the largest cities. But there are also problems within the community: the new generations migrate to the city looking for work. "Young people don't work in the fields. Today they are in the factories or they become police officers." It's here that we see the limits of community organization within a capitalist society are clearest. Valencia shows us that it is possible to mobilize the masses to work collectively, but it also shows us that we need to control a considerable geographical area to be able to get the resources (in harmony with the environment) to meet these needs. To meet the needs of a given population, with planned production based on human needs, we have to organize a communist revolution. It is very important for the members of this community to integrate themselves into the dis-

cussion of the new communist society and how we can organize ourselves to achieve it. We hope that the contacts we have made will become active readers of *Red Flag*. —Young comrade

Hark the Mass of Workers Sing

I found this on an obscure web site that had some old labor songs. I like Mendelssohn's music, but the words about god and angels don't appeal to me. Perhaps other *Red Flag* readers will prefer to sing these words by the US labor activist Joe Hill. I think there are other verses, but I only got this one, and now I can't find the site again. Hark the mass of workers sing, Glory to the future king. Peace on earth and mercy mild, Not one worker is reviled. Joyful all ye nations rise, Give the bosses a surprise, When we win we will proclaim, Love is free; money's to blame. Hark the mass of workers sing, We together will be king. —Musical reader

LETTERS

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CRITICISM AND SUGGESTIONS

Center the Discussion about Racism on the Fight for Communism

Recent letters about liberal, Marxist and communist answers to racism have led to a lot of useful discussion. Here’s my take on it. Some say that the key difference is between a liberal view and a Marxist view. Briefly, many liberals believe racism benefits white people (the “white privilege” argument) whereas Marxists believe that racism is harmful to all workers.

This is true as far as it goes, but I think a true Marxist fights for communism. Since its inception, our party has made convincing people that communism will end racism our priority. In communism, all workers will be better off and there will be no privileges for anyone. That’s where our writing, discussions and practice should focus.

While explaining how only communism can end the scourge of racism, all kinds of capitalist illusions (like white-skin privilege) will come up. How much time should we spend convincing people that white privilege is a myth? Some, but not most and certainly not in lieu of focusing on communist solutions.

Our priority is winning people to communism. Not to just a ‘Marxist’ point of view that says only that racism hurts all workers under capitalism.

I think we should reject the idea that workers need to be prepared before they can consider communism. There are many examples of this on both large and small scales. For most of the last century communists thought that a long period of socialism was necessary to prepare the way for communism. In the mass movement, they believed that workers needed to be prepared by militant reform struggles.

A growing number of *Red Flag* articles and letters start off advocating communism. We’re slowly moving away from postponing the discussion of communism to the second half so that the reader can be prepared for it. In this regard, the difference between *Red Flag* and other left publications is striking.

Do we put off discussing communism with new people in order to prepare them by convincing them (for example) that racism hurts workers under capitalism? In the past, communists set up whole organizations to facilitate such preparation.

A better approach (in my opinion) is to lead with communism. When we meet a new person we can trust, we should start by talking to them about communism and getting them involved in some communist activities. In my experience, even people who have disagreements are often happy to help.

At Boeing, we have a close friend who brings our communist approach to dozens of young and old activists. At one time, he was active in the union and all kinds of movements against racism. Did we spend most of our time convincing him how

bad these groups were? No, we offered him a communist alternative which he adopted as his own. Any discussions we now have about reformist groups we have in the context of his communist work. In the movement, we organize people to fight as communists, not as mere militants in some front organization. Finally, we’ve scrapped the idea of socialism as preparation for communism. It’s communism from day one! —Boeing comrade

We Must Refute Nationalist and “Privilege” Ideas about Racism

This letter adds some comments and some experiences from campus work at a California college to the letter in the last issue (Vol 8, No. 15) titled “Marxism Versus Liberalism on Race and Racism.” The “white skin privilege” idea that most whites benefit from racism is by far the most common view of students and faculty on this campus. This wrong idea supports the nationalist outlook and organizing that is the most common kind of campus activism about racism. Students who like *Red Flag*, including those who have joined our study groups, often see the nationalist organizations like Mecha and A. Ch. A. (Chicano nationalist groups) or Students for Justice in Palestine as alternatives to the party, rather than places to bring communist ideas.

I teach an ethics course that includes a unit on why racism is wrong and how to fight it. Students often get the point that capitalists benefit from racism. Many are very skeptical, however, about the idea that it is class, not race, that determines who has common interests. This seems to be particularly true of African-American students.

Both in campus political work and in class, the “white skin privilege” view proves to be an important obstacle to seeing racism as a product of capitalism and to agreeing with us that only communism can end racism. I think that it

is very important for our party to take on and refute nationalist and “privilege” ideas about racism. This is essential to win masses to our line. — Red Teacher

Tradition and Communism

A comrade in Africa asked about communist society and ancestors and traditions. My parents were from Mexico and I was born there. I was raised in a Mexican household in the USA and still live in the USA. My parents, like many Mexicans in California, were farm workers while I was growing up.

I think the comrade was essentially asking about culture. Culture encompasses all aspects of a group’s way of life. It includes language, religious beliefs, customs, etiquette and values and ideas people use to organize their lives and interpret their existence.

Families have more in common than different, based more on level of income, than on culture. I like and dislike some traditions I grew up with.

I like being well-connected to immediate and extended family. The connectedness extended to our community. Weddings and Quinceneras were huge events with family and community all helping to make them fun and successful. Connectedness was important and valuable.

But I dislike the machismo/sexism in our culture. I recall once when we came home from grocery shopping. My father was tired and hungry, as were we all, but he demanded that my mother hurry and make dinner. My mother was busy putting groceries away and settling us in (I was 3, one sister was 2, and the other was 5). Perhaps she was not moving fast enough for my father. He became aggressive and threw a bag of beans across the room. The bag tore open and we had to get busy picking them up, while our mother wept.

The following day my older sister asked our mom about what had happened. She said something about my dad temporarily losing his marbles, but nothing about the unreasonableness of his expectations.

In Mexican culture the woman is supposed to take care of her man’s needs while the man is the provider. However, my mother worked alongside my father in the fields so I did not understand it. Thankfully for our family, around this time we met the communist party. Comrades struggled with both of my parents around the issue of sexism and my father’s machismo.

I think that under communism we will continue with practices/traditions that are helpful to our collective society. We’ll struggle with each other to do away with past practices that hurt us as a collective society. Each culture has some good and some bad. It will be up to us all to figure this out and to do the struggling.

—California (US) comrade



December 13— Argentine workers, young and old, confront cops and soldiers in massive, militant protests against a new pension reform law that will steal \$5.6 billion USD from retired workers, many of whom will go hungry. Capitalism squeezes its profits from our labor and then throws us away to die. In communism, food and everything else will be shared, not bought and sold. People of all ages will be able to contribute their labor, as they are willing and able, to meet the needs of the masses.

ATTICA PRISON UPRISING CALLS US TO FIGHT FOR COMMUNIST STATE POWER

Our future depends on which class holds state power. That's a big reason why ICWP commemorated the Bolshevik revolution. With the leadership of the Russian Communist Party (Bolshevik) the working class smashed the capitalist state. They held state power for the first time. This great achievement echoed throughout the world and reverberates to the present day.

The 1971 Attica prison rebellion in New York (USA) faced the raw, brutal power of this capitalist state. A powerful history of the uprising, *Blood in the Water* (2016) makes this all too clear.

The lesson should be that nothing less than communist state power will do. This book doesn't address this. Instead, it implies that the slaughter of 42 inmates and guards, the shooting of 128 and the months of brutal torture of over a thousand prisoners, many severely wounded, could have been avoided if more humane voices had prevailed.

Two groups had a clearer understanding of what was at stake. First, the prisoners. A young white prisoner, Blaze Montgomery, said solemnly, "I want everyone to know we gone stick together [Black, Puerto Rican and white], we gone get what we want, or we gone die together."

Governor Rockefeller led the other group. He had inherited the Standard Oil fortune. His family name was practically shorthand for the U.S. ruling class.

Rockefeller told one of his speech writers that "there is a ...political problem, centering on the well-organized national effort of revolutionaries...to wreck the penal system as one more step toward the ultimate destruction of this country." He and his cronies continually blamed Maoists and Marxists and invoked the specter of a communist conspiracy.

Rockefeller knew that the power of the capitalist state required the penal system to mete out punishment, torture and death. That's what he and his minions visited upon the Attica rebels for months after the uprising.

New York State troopers justified this wholesale slaughter with open racism. "Get that n***r!" was heard throughout the prison yard.

Attica means...

"How did this start?" asked a Boeing *Red Flag* distributor who was among many who once chanted "Attica Means Fight Back!"

In 1970, New York City prisoners revolted against overcrowding and other grievances. City officials relieved this overcrowding by sending many young prisoners upstate.

Many were familiar with left-wing revolutionary politics. Many had been politicized by anti-



Attica Prison Rebellion, 1971

racist urban rebellions, including the Harlem (New York City) rebellion in 1964 that had openly communist leaders. Some recently-returned Vietnam vets had rebelled while in the bosses' army.

When the Attica rebellion started on September 9, chaos reigned. But within hours the rebels chose a group of revolutionaries as leaders. They occupied a central table in D Yard and quickly organized security and medical aid. All decisions were collectively discussed among the nearly 1300 rebels. The prison had never seen such harmony and organization under the guns of the prison guards.

One leader was the stirring L.D. Barkley, a twenty-one-year-old black prisoner. According to his mother, he liked to read about communists. He commanded the respect of those much older than he and of all races. He led the drive to unify the prisoners.

Many saw him alive after the prison yard was retaken, including a Buffalo assemblyman. A few days later he turned up among the dead, assassinated. Thousands attended his funeral with raised fists.

Barkley was sent to Attica for a parole violation. His original "crime" was forging a

money order for \$124.50.

In communism, nobody will go to jail for forging a money order. There will be no money orders and no need for money. Everyone will get what they need and will be encouraged to contribute according to the best of their abilities. Most capitalist crimes would disappear along with vast prison populations.

...Smash the Bosses' State, Fight for Communist Workers' Power!

"Attica really didn't mean fight back," concluded our Boeing friend. He now asks whether the fight has to be for communist state power. Our May Day kickoff potluck will sharpen this Attica discussion with other workers and students.

When the working class and its International Communist Workers' Party take power, the nature of state power will be transformed beyond recognition. We won't have a government separate from the party and the masses it mobilizes for communism. Since the masses will rule, we'll have no need to pretend that the government is a neutral arbitrator between classes.

The Russian communists took state power, but maintained the fiction of some separate government apparatus. They needed those institutions, laws and processes to support socialism's wages, money and profits. The working class eventually lost state power.

We will immediately end wages, money and profits and the whole superstructure needed to preserve these aspects of the capitalist mode of production. Party collectives everywhere will involve masses. This time we'll hold onto power by continuously mobilizing these masses for communism.



By 1971, revolution was in the air. Above, the Harlem Rebellion of 1964

Below: Left: Vietnam Veterans Against the War.

Right: The Sharpeville Massacre in South Africa, 1960, transformed the anti-apartheid struggle.

