

RED FLAG

MOBILIZE THE MASSES FOR COMMUNISM



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



**MAY DAY 2018
LOS ANGELES, US
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May Day in El Salvador:

MORE INDUSTRIAL WORKERS MARCHING FOR COMMUNISM

With red flags and communist slogans, men and women workers of the maquilas, students and state workers marched and encouraged the ICWP contingent. The work of spreading our ideas was carried out so that more than 1,000 **Red Flag** newspapers were distributed among the people who attended the march. The lessons and the encouragement continue to this day.

“For many, it was their first time in a march. They were very excited. We believe that they can take the next step and join the Party.” These were the words of a comrade inside the factory when evaluating the reactions to the activity.

“The unions can have 100 members, but they don’t move 30 people. We did. Moving 30 people from the same factory is not easy. Maybe that’s why the unions get upset,” he concluded. The

number of people in the contingent remained the same as last year, but this year the great majority were workers from the maquilas and their families.

“I identified with the chant when they shouted ‘Workers and Students, United and Moving Forward!’ I felt that they made us part of something,” commented a young university student, the son of a worker leader. The march reflected the work with the base that has been built in the last year, and it reaffirmed our commitment with the project of ICWP.

Everyone who marched under the flags of ICWP was mobilized with communist ideas. Communism and its theory can be understood, learned and criticized by the masses while at the same time they can be mobilized to fight for this new society.

Some ICWP comrades and ex-com-

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India

ICWP REJECTS REFORMISM: BRINGS COMMUNIST IDEAS TO MAY DAY

May Day greetings to all of you comrades! ICWP in India celebrated May Day this year by making a bold appeal for the workers to join ICWP to organize for communist revolution. This was a hugely successful day for us as we were able to coordinate three different collectives in different cities of India. About two dozen comrades participated in different May Day marches armed with a special flyer about the need to join ICWP. This flyer was translated into five different languages. At the end of the day we had distributed one thousand flyers and 200 copies of *Red Flag*.

Not a day passes in India without mass demonstrations against the horrors of capitalism. There are many organizations that lead and organize such events. But ICWP is the only group that calls for destroying capitalism and replacing it with communism as a way to solve the problems of unemployment, horrific sexism, the murderous caste system and wage slavery in general.

When we break the chains of wage slavery and the money that binds it, we will be able to create a communist society where each and every one will contribute to building an egalitarian future for all. This society without the bosses and money will, for the first time in history, be able to smash racism and the barbaric oppression faced by Dalits and others.

Our May Day success has given us a sense of more responsibility. The response from the masses, our friends and coworkers is overwhelming. The discussion of communist society brings us closer to understanding the necessity of organizing hundreds of millions around fighting for communism now. Bosses have promised good days for the workers, but capitalism only brings more misery. Any attempt to reform this system misleads the masses. We reject any and all attempts to reform capitalism which does not deserve to exist.

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May Day Mobilizations in South Africa:**BUILDING A MASS COMMUNIST PARTY****Preparing Now for Revolutionary Situations**

The international working class celebrated May Day amidst a deepening capitalist crisis and a growing threat of imperialist war. Increasingly, workers can't live in the old way. Capitalists can't rule in the old way. Revolutionary situations are developing – perhaps sooner than we think.

This paper, *Red Flag*, tries to show how communism can enable workers to end capitalism's attacks on our class. Communist revolution will empower us to abolish private property, profit and the wage system. Instead we'll collectively organize and carry out production and distribution directly to meet the masses' needs.

On this communist basis we'll be able to tear down the walls and erase the borders that divide us. We will learn to see ourselves and each other as comrades – whatever our age or gender, birthplace or language, color or abilities. Together we'll create collective, fulfilling and sustainable ways of living. We'll fully realize our creative and social human potential.

This is not a dream. It's a plan.

Every day, the need for a mass communist party grows more urgent. Everywhere there are possibilities for building ICWP and expanding its communist base.

This report from the South Africa comrades is an excellent start to a broader discussion of how to prepare for, recognize and take advantage of revolutionary situations.



SOUTH AFRICA, May 14 — Several dozen comrades and friends of the International Communist Workers' Party (ICWP) intensified our organizing efforts for May Day. Before, during and after May Day we distributed about 1400 copies of *Red Flag* (RF) and thousands of flyers asking the working class to join ICWP.

This May Day gave us a unique opportunity to bring the message of joining ICWP to the masses. The ruling class of South Africa had organized May Day to mislead the masses. Some of our comrades went to this mobilization. They distributed over 400 RFs and made many contacts.

We were not able to coordinate better between our participation in the bosses' event and our own event. However, we mobilized around one hundred people for the day. At the end of the day we also got the news that our new Marikana comrades had distributed RF and talked about ICWP in the mining area.

Red Flag: Workers' Weapon

At the forefront of our organizing was collective reading, writing and distribution of RF. "*Red Flag* is the most powerful weapon in the hands of the working class and we must use it," said a comrade.

In capitalist society we are taught to do our own things for survival and entertainment. This culture makes it very difficult for many to read and write. With struggle, we are making it a routine habit of reading and writing as a collective process.

This collective reading and writing for RF has fundamentally changed how comrades see the paper. What was once a demanding thing to do has become an activity where everybody participates. Simple questions about a *Red Flag* article provoke deep discussions about communism.

In our meetings each comrade gives a summary of an article or a letter followed by lively discussion. Comrades who are shy and reluctant to talk show keen interest and participate. It changes everybody. We are all gaining more confidence in ICWP.

Collective reading directly changes how we write and what we write. Everyone is inspired to write, and we make this a collective effort. Sixteen comrades were involved in writing our recent articles for *Red Flag*. One industrial comrade was so inspired that he spent many hours writing a letter about his experience of organizing the miners in Marikana.

Our collective reading improves what we write for *Red Flag*. This directly changes how we distribute *Red Flag*. The distribution is no longer just passing a paper. Now it is deep engagement with the masses. We make contacts, follow them up regularly, ever expanding our base.

**Collective Struggle Makes Us Better Organizers**

A week after May Day, over 20 comrades met all day to discuss how we can be better organizers. Our day started with struggle with a key comrade who did not show up for May Day and had been away for few days. He explained that his father had a medical emergency and the family was facing a financial crisis.

A young comrade said that being communist means we are here for each other, especially in times of crisis. We don't have the state power yet to change the healthcare, but all our personal problems are related to capitalism and we must trust each other so we can replace capitalism with communism. We must remain in a collective all the time. The comrade accepted criticism with humility and resolve to be better. This honest discussion guided us to look at our key weakness as a collective.

We identified that many times when we make contacts and agree on plans, we don't follow up with the consistency required to make a breakthrough. This is a form of liberalism we must struggle against. We are determined to overcome this weakness.

May Day organizing has seen many comrades developing as mass leaders with confidence and dedication. We are committed to carrying out plans to intensify our work in three cities among miners, auto and other industrial workers, soldiers and students.

**EL SALVADOR MAY DAY from page 1**

batants of the FMLN in the east of the country, due to various circumstances, found it impossible to participate in the march. The meetings held with them before May Day made clear the

need to give more attention to the work in their areas.

Now there are new challenges and obstacles that we will have to overcome to ensure our advance. We must continue the process of teaching-learning about communist ideas, formalize

our structures each time more and think more each time about what is communist practice, as opposed to reformism. When the march ends, our work begins.



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Seattle May Day:

BUILD A COMMUNIST BASE NOW

SEATTLE (USA), May 1 — “Were the May ’68 demonstrations in France violent?” asked a young May Day marcher. She sought out a veteran comrade in our contingent who was herself a young worker in France during the revolt.

“But, of course!” answered our comrade.

There is no other way to wrest power from the capitalists. Reform won’t do it. We need communist revolution. And to do that we need to build the International Communist Workers’ Party (ICWP) now.

That was the message of the 500 *Red Flag* newspapers distributed to those marching and lining the streets. The discussions with readers were longer than usual. The front-page pictures of masses on the move around the world piqued people’s interest.

Young people, like one quoted above, were particularly interested. One comrade told marchers that she distributed a communist paper because capitalism would never end racism, sexism and xenophobia—and communism would. Not only did she distribute many papers and get a lot of donations, but at least three young people said, “Right!”

Prior to the March

Before the march, a Boeing friend close to the ICWP commented on the revolts of the ’60s and early ’70s. He pointed to the *Red Flag* article about Paris 1968 and began to list various rebellions he knew about or was part of.

“Do you think we’ll see revolts like those again?” asked a comrade.

Our friend paused to ponder the question. “In the U. S., probably in about 3 years,” he estimated.

“Well, if you think we’re headed for a revolutionary situation, how do we prepare?” our comrade continued.

Then the discussion got interesting. It centered on the need to build the party so that this time we fight for communism. It got “real” when we started discussing students he worked with or that

other comrades knew whom he thought could become leaders.

The main contradiction in this debate was whether we replicate what we did in the past, just harder and longer, or do we go all out for communism this time.

Bosses Build Cynicism

The bosses and their press have their answers. The nature of the times forces them to admit that Marx’s critique of capitalism has merit. But that doesn’t really threaten them if it’s not linked to communist revolution. Hence, they focus on trying to portray revolution as impossible and communism as a futile quest.

The New York Times ran a particularly revealing article on Paris ’68. It admitted that some students were not only fighting against the evils of capitalism “but for something — for a new way of arranging society, for new forms of economic and social and class relations.” Then, the article asserted that this change could never happen because, it said, workers were not receptive. In the end, all the revolutionaries got for their trouble was right-wing reaction.

The proof? Strangely, the article’s first example actually showed that aerospace workers were receptive. That certainly is our experience at Boeing when we propose communist solutions to both work-related issues and to capitalist attacks throughout the society.

The article dismissed this example because the sellout French Communist Party tried to block a worker-student alliance. Many at the time correctly concluded that a new revolutionary communist party was needed.



After the March

When we distributed *Red Flag* papers to students at their high schools and to Boeing workers in the plants, many asked us, “How did it go?”

A comrade’s neighbor wanted more information about communism after the march. He thought communism was a good idea, but first said “it couldn’t work.”

Then he said it would take a long while to get there because of “human nature.” He thought some more. “Who knows what will happen after we’re gone?” he speculated. “Then again, the way things are going, it may happen next year.”

This discussion ended the same way as the Boeing discussion: preparation to bring communism to the fore is key as revolutionary situations advance. Building a base for communism is our immediate task.

Demonstrations like May Day can provide crucial training for our members, new and old, as we struggle to put communism in the conversation. At these marches we can learn and teach others how to aggressively distribute *Red Flag*, a tool for communist organizing. The ICWP will grow as we zero in on communist base building.

Spain

FROM THE STREETS TO THE FACTORIES

BARCELONA, SPAIN, May 1—The working class, tired of politicians enslaving their lives with miserable wages, pensioners seeing how they destroy their life savings, the students seeing how they raise the cost of their tuition and the worker seeing how they evict people from their homes, went into the streets this May Day, with the goal and courage to protest against the Capitalist System.

The International Communist Workers’ Party distributed 500 copies of *Red Flag* in Barcelona, because we know that by spreading the ideas among the masses and organizing to build Communism, we will find the solution for all the evils faced by the working class.

We met the old members of the former “Red Flag” that in the 1970’s worked under the Communist Organization of Spain. Those of the old Red Flag were happy, but at the same time they saw that we do not support unions or elections. They gave a quick look and said to each other, “It’s not the same.”

I told them that everything changes and nothing is static, that *Red Flag* is the Marxist-Leninist political line, which is directed by dialectical materialism. Therefore, yes, before we fought for socialism and we have seen that it failed and so we cannot allow the same error again. That’s why we fight directly for communism and we invite them

to join this struggle. They took several copies of *Red Flag*. They said they would analyze it and will communicate with us.

In general our activity was an effective step in the struggle to achieve our goal of freeing the masses from the slavery, borders and racism that exist today. We are ICWP and this May Day we have told the bosses that we are at war against them and that we are going to defeat them.

We are planning regular meetings every two or three weeks coinciding with the publication of *Red Flag*. From that base we will try to follow the example of the comrades in the US of visiting factories to spread the ideas through the newspaper and try to recruit more comrades. We will start to plan this activity this month. We could count more or less on distributing at least 50 to 75 copies of *Red Flag* of each edition that is produced.

**LONG LIVE MAY DAY!
LONG LIVE ICWP!**



Mobilizing for Communism in South Africa:

MINERS TELL COMRADES: “YOU MUST COME BACK!”

April 21 — What happens when four comrades travel over 1400 km (870 miles) – 14 hours each way — to organize miners in South Africa? We talk and struggle about the need for communism. We read *Mobilize the Masses for Communism* and *Red Flag*.

One comrade is new, another is shy, and a third thinks long and hard about imperialist wars and how we can build communism. Everybody participates. Everybody learns. Everyone arrives at the Marikana mines feeling more confident about how communism will work.

On the first day, a few taxi drivers and a worker we have known for a few months gave us specific ideas to reach out to the miners.

We went to the mine shafts where workers go underground. We located ourselves to talk to as many miners as possible as they came out of the mines. This led us to the hostels. Thousands of miners who speak different languages live with each other. We gave them *Red Flags*, they opened their hearts.

They repeated many times, “you must come back”. They are thrilled about a society without the bosses. They want *Red Flag* in different languages. One miner could not believe that we had driven thousands of kilometers to build our party. He said, “People travel like this to make money.



I want to join such organization,” as he understood money will play no role in communist society. Many miners eagerly gave their contacts for future meetings.

Simple Questions Lead to Profound Discussions about Communism

A comrade asked, “What happens when somebody is sick in a communist society?” When we tried to answer, the first question was “What causes a person to get sick?”

In capitalist society, bosses’ need for profit creates a toxic environment, unhealthy food and stressful work conditions. These compound to make hundreds of millions get sick, hungry and susceptible to wars, dangerous migration and preventable diseases. By eliminating the profit system, we will create housing, work, education, culture and healthcare for the needs of the masses.

We talked about the “barefoot doctors” in China and how we can do better in communism. In communism illness will have a collective resolution unlike in capitalism where insurance companies, doctors and hospitals try to make profit from the miseries of the workers.

We can give many such examples where work-



ers asked us simple questions about day-to-day problems of living in the capitalist system. Each led to deeper understanding of how only communism can end exploitation and advance humanity.

Four Days, Four Comrades: Things Change Quickly

In spite of the fatigue of long travel, communism is what we breathed and discussed late into the night, only to get ready in the morning with *Red Flag*.

Things did change very quickly. Each comrade has written for *Red Flag* in a more collective way. A new comrade passionately spoke about how the unions always defend the bosses and how he joined ICWP. He played a leadership role because he also speaks the common language spoken around Marikana. Each one of us is more committed about building the party.

This experience gives us a clear vision of how to advance. The work of four comrades can and must multiply to tens, hundreds and millions. We are sowing the seeds of communist revolution deep. We can withstand any and all obstacles the bosses have in their arsenal.

We have a world to win.

New Comrade in South Africa Describes Visit to Marikana Mines:

MINERS NOT JUST “OPEN” TO COMMUNISM BUT “INTERESTED”

April 21 — At first, I was not really clear about the manifesto of ICWP, *Mobilize the Masses for Communism*. It was a long trip. As a more experienced comrade explained, I became clear that we have to abolish the present system and introduce Communism to the people. I learned that in Communism, when you are sick, you will be able to get cared for, and when you need shelter you will be able to get it.

I was not clear about how we will totally remove the capitalist system. Then the comrade explained that if we can mobilize and we have the masses then we can easily overcome this system, we can easily achieve everything we are looking for. Then I became clear.

When we arrived in the mining area, the response was very positive. People were so interested and wanted to know more about the organization!

Especially when we went to the miners’ hostels. That’s where I was most impressed to see that they are eager. They wanted to know about the *Red Flag*. And they wanted translation of the *Red Flag* in three other languages. Twelve languages are spoken in the hostels.

They saw that we came from a long way. They wanted to know more about the organization. We made some contacts. If we keep in touch with them we can get a lot of great and positive response there.

Someone asked whether the miners in the hostels coming back from their second shift were open to our ideas of mobilizing for communist revolution. It’s not “open” but “interested.”

A local miner said to me that he liked the idea of communism. They were very very interested. They even said that this must not be the last time that we go and visit them and talk about the organization and the ideas of communism. They want us to continue visiting.

Quite a huge number of miners live in that hostel, maybe 2000 to 3000. And there are several hostels like that all around Marikana. It’s an open ground to mobilize the masses for Communism.

If we can make regular visits to them, we can get a lot of people to join ICWP. They were keen. They said we must come back and bring literature about the organization. I must educate myself more to be better able to explain the ideas to them. I can see for myself that they wanted to fol-

low us.

Is Communism Possible?

Communism is a good idea and I think it is possible if we come together and become one and share the same ideology. A society without money—we have to be clearer to people about that, because they won’t understand it.

But the more I read about ICWP’s ideas and how it will work—it says we are going to share skills. If I’m a brick layer and another is a carpenter, I’m going to teach him to be a brick layer and he’s going to teach me to be a carpenter.

So, we can work, end resource wars and be able to look after our children, eat and have shelter. So, if we can do that and share our skills, work and share for common use and not for profit, if we are clear minded about that, I think it will be possible and can work.

I’ve been changed by this four-day road trip. The more I read and discuss, the more interested I become. The things in *Red Flag* happening internationally, they are happening here in South Africa. And especially when we went to the miners and we talked about the Party, I became more committed than before.

COMMUNISM WILL PROVIDE HOMES FOR EVERYONE

Why does the USA, the richest nation on earth, have homelessness? Why are people unable to find shelter? Capitalism, war, and greed are creating this problem over and over and it is worldwide.

Why is this problem so hard to solve? In capitalism, prisons are a profitable industry, but building housing for low income people is not. Building affordable housing, planning for disasters, health-care for mental illness and addiction, job training—none of these are sustainable under capitalism. Politicians are not your friend. They represent the wealthy and voting them in or out will not fix the fundamental problem of capitalism, which is profit before people.

Capitalism in decay in the US is causing a crisis of mass homelessness. Capitalism in the USA seeks new profit streams from niche housing development which requires that homeless people be criminalized, thus justifying their removal. Homeless encampments create ‘eyesores’ which create police measures of banishment, arrest, and criminalization. Capitalist decay, with its inability to rule in the same old way, creates multiple forms of class oppression. Homelessness is one of them. Police power grows. The basis for revolutionary change emerges and deepens.

Alex S. Vitale, in his book *The End of Policing*,

documents how police departments are part of the war on the working class through warring against the homeless:

“Whenever a homeless person was found to be committing any of a number of minor crimes...they were not arrested, but instead banned from a particular area, such as a park, a row of cheap motels, or even an entire neighborhood.”

Homelessness is also tied to gentrification and the efforts of local capitalists to ‘revitalize’ areas that are populated by street people and the poor without permanent housing, but which are now desirable because of apartment, condos, and loft construction.

One aspect of homelessness is how the unemployed population of the homeless are thrown off, so to speak, by the capitalists. There are other homeless people, however, who work but who cannot afford rent or who are denied housing by landlords, rental agencies, or private individuals. These are homeless people as well. Shelters and spaces created by cities are insufficient for any of homeless people. People sleep in cars or ‘couch surf,’ maybe purchase a recreational vehicle or a van and live in it. Both type of homelessness are created by the capitalists.

Communism will get rid of money and the eco-

omic system that says you have to have a job—sell your labor power—to get money to pay the rent and buy what you need to survive. We’ll work collectively to produce what we need and share what we produce based on need.

Under communism, we will fight to guarantee full housing for all, an end to homelessness, and housing development that serves the needs and situations facing all families, be it a single family, multiple families or the elderly. These are some of the beginning moves that will need to be made as the masses’ needs are met under communism and the capitalist system is buried by the new people’s communism.

We’ll take over the mansions of the rich and turn them into collective housing, like they did in the Soviet Union after the Russian Revolution of 1917. We’ll collectively plan and build together the kind of housing that will allow us to break down social isolation and the divisions of “race,” language, and gender that we will inherit from capitalism.

We need communism. We can solve all these problems with the will of the masses and without a money system. Anyone of us can become homeless. Anyone of us can become a communist and together we can change the world.

LETTERS

LETTERS

LETTERS

CRITICISM AND SUGGESTIONS

Don't we have the right to a home?

While we were driving to meet young lions (comrades), our car got stuck in an area where masses of homeless people were trying to build shacks on a vast area littered with garbage. The police attacked them. A comrade who saw this wrote:

Why are you saying that we should remove our shacks from here? And why are you removing us from this land saying that this is the government's land when this land has not been used for years? It's only been used as a dumping place for rubbish for many years. Vast areas were vacant. Now it is a settlement that is being demolished by the police who were ordered by the mayor to remove homeless people who were only trying to build homes for their families.

I could not help but wonder: is this land not for everyone? Don't we have the right to a home? As tears rolled down my face, as I stood there and watched the masses fighting for what they wanted, for what they believed was theirs, I could not help but wish that the day had come that the masses all over the world were finally taking what belongs to them and they were dealing with the capitalists once and for all.

The masses had so much strength as they took big poles and stones to close the roads. They were burning tires and they were not scared of the police, even when the police pulled out guns and opened fire on them, they did not run away. They stood their ground. Instead they started singing, saying “Even though they are shooting at us, we will not stop. We are going forward.”

That proved to me that if we go out there and engage the masses, give them the line, we will have a Communist society sooner than we think. Let us go out there with our heads held up high. Let us mobilize as hard as we can and let us engage with the masses as much as we can.

—Comrade in South Africa

We Need Communism, Not Capitalist Politicians and Reformists

I wanted to tell you about the sadness and frustration that I felt this May Day when I saw how these worms from capitalist hell divided the

working class, not only the immigrants but the working class in general.

They sent the so-called community organizers and pro-immigrant activists to form several marches in different parts of the city of Los Angeles only for the purpose of keeping us divided.

I went to the last march that supposedly started at 4 PM at McArthur Park. The truth was that it was a disaster. The few people who arrived were late. Apart from that, the police quickly started to repress the people. A truck arrived with a sign that called for voting for a socialist politician for the Congress. Then they changed the sign for one that said “Union del Barrio” (Union of the Neighborhood).

They passed out papers with silly messages that I personally saw as disrespectful. The papers said “If Zapata lived, he would be here with us.” It is something stupid and shameful to use the name of someone who gave his life for many of us and put it together with prefabricated heroes like Cesar Chavez.

In addition, it wasn't like a march. It was more like a parade of political candidates and activists who paraded to look good and take a picture for their campaign.

That is why it is urgent to make a communist revolution to put an end to these types of absurd situations that do not benefit the working class in any way. On the contrary it makes us forget a date as important as May Day, International Workers' Day. Join the struggle for a better, communist world! The revolution is waiting for you!

—A comrade in Los Angeles, US

I marched for communism!

When I went to the march I was amazed by how many people were fighting for what they believe in. Everyone was fighting for different things but I marched for communism a world in which everything is fair. No one is wealthier or more powerful. Everyone and everything is equal and fair. There is no hierarchy and there is no currency. There is only sharing and no borders. There is no Mexico or America only the people who live in our communist world. There will only be good times and chill vibes, no unfairness.

The march was long and amazing and hard fought. It was truly an amazing sight and a great feeling to be there and fight for what we believe in. I would do it again in a heartbeat.

The feeling I had when I was walking and we were chanting was great. We were all so determined to get our message out to the world. We weren't scared of the police nor did we have second thoughts about how we felt. We stood proud shouting our beliefs at the top of our lungs while looking forward with nothing but determination. To watch all of us was so inspiring to me and I hope someone else can be inspired as I was. It was truly a beautiful sight and a beautiful feeling to be there with all of us who had so much determination and so much enthusiasm. So sign me up for the next march because I'll go with no hesitation.

—New high school comrade in Los Angeles



LETTERS

LETTERS

LETTERS

CRITICISM AND SUGGESTIONS

First-Time Marcher Learns About Communism

This was my first time marching for communism. When I spoke with other people on the bus, I understood more about communism, I imagined a little more about what communist society would be like, I liked the idea. My first thoughts about communism were only of a society looking for everyone to be the same but now I understand a little more.

Communism means that all workers have power, that there is no more injustice. There will not be that idea that one belongs to a country or not because there will be no borders. Communism will welcome everyone. No one will be looked down upon because of the color of their skin or their nationality.

When we arrived at the march, I saw that there were groups with a different way of thinking. But we were there to march for communism.

In the beginning I was nervous because I thought that people would look at us in many ways. So it was. When I was distributing **Red Flag** some looked at me in an ugly way while others asked me for the paper or they grabbed

it with a smile. A racist man approached to give negative options; he was being escorted by the police along the march, which infuriated me. I saw how the police looked at us with hatred but even so in the end nobody was able to take away the satisfaction I had of having marched and shouted for equality, for my rights, for something I want.

—High school student in Los Angeles

May Day Was Amazing

This year I went to my first May Day March. I've always wanted to do something like that and finally got to. I marched for communism, a world where we can all be equal and not just working for a higher class. I marched for a world where we can all be provided with our needs, where money does not exist, where our mothers and fathers don't have to work two or three jobs just to be able to buy their children what they need. We all need a world where there are no rich or poor but to all be equal, we must break down the walls and unite for a better and equal world.

I invited a friend. When the day of the march

finally came, we got in this beautiful bus with other students. We were excited. On the way there we practiced the chants.

When we got close to our destination, we got off the bus and started carrying our red flags and communist posters and this cool big banner my friend and I volunteered to carry. We arrived at the park where we were starting the march. I was surprised so many people were there, even my aunt was in the crowd. We began to walk chanting our communist slogans. We marched down the streets feeling free. After a half an hour of walking with hundreds of other people two students from our school came to hold the banner we were carrying. It was our turn to pass out **Red Flag**.

My friend and I went running down the streets so excited to see all the people and their colorful posters and flags. We honestly had so much fun and felt proud to do something. We handed out so many papers and returned to march with our group. At the end of the day we went back with our bus and all went home. It was an amazing day.

—New Los Angeles student comrade

A short story arguing for more agitational work**“TIME IS MONEY...AND OTHER LIES THEY PUSH ON US!”**

“Punk-ass driver,” the man shouted, stepping on the bus. “You saw me running yesterday and just took off. So I was late to work and got a write-up.”

“Sir,” the driver began to answer.

“You shouldn't have waited for him,” another passenger broke in. “I've got to make my connection at 14th. If I miss that 72 I'm done for the day.”

Then, turning to the angry one, “You,” he said, “need to get here on time.”

“Talking about time,” the driver said, “check out that leaflet an earlier passenger had left.” She pointed to a small pile she had placed on the dashboard. The angry man took one.

It was a **Red Flag** leaflet: It was short and agitational. In big, bold print its headline read:

“TIME IS MONEY...and other lies they push on us!”

“Time is money,” it explained, “is what the

bosses say. They pay us by the hour so the more work they can get out of us the more profit they can pocket. To them time is money!

“That's why drivers get a schedule from hell which leaves them no time at the end of the run...no time to breathe, no time to pee. That's why passengers get docked pay and lose money if the bus makes them late for work.

“But take the ‘**money**’ out of the phrase and all you have left is ‘**time**.’ Time to bridge misunderstandings, to get to know each other—drivers and riders—time to build community and struggle.

“Money is the lifeblood of this capitalist system. It makes **them** rich and powerful and leaves **us** overworked, rushed off our feet, and mad at each other. Of course, it will take a revolution to replace capitalism with a communist share-and-share-alike way of living. And, at present, our forces are nowhere near developed

enough to make that revolution.

“But we can start to change that today. We can create community here on the bus. Get to know each others' issues. See how we can help each other. They used to say, ‘A journey of a thousand miles (revolution) begins with a single step.’ We can update that—‘A journey of a thousand miles (revolution) begins with our morning bus ride to work.’ Join **Red Flag** readers and build communism.”

Short as the leaflet was, it didn't melt the angry man's attitude. He let it fall to the floor as he muttered to himself and dropped down in a seat.

A high school student who had overheard the exchange picked it up. “Driver,” he said as he got off the bus, “I liked that leaflet.” He paused a second, then turned and said, “See you tomorrow!”

SAN JUAN, PUERTO RICO, May 1 – Thousands of workers, teachers and students joined a general strike against government-imposed austerity measures and attacks on education. The island's masses are still without reliable power or water eight months after Hurricane Maria. When police attacked the demonstration with tear gas and pepper spray, many youths fought back, chanting, “We are more and we are not afraid!”



LETTERS

LETTERS

LETTERS

CRITICISM AND SUGGESTIONS

Advancing with Small Steps

"The May Day dinner went pretty well," a comrade reported at a recent club meeting. "When it was time for discussion, I saw a table without anyone to lead. So, I went and sat with the workers there. I shared with them what I knew about the Paris Commune. It was the first time that workers held power. I talked about the role of women and the ideal of gender equality.

"The people who were new to the Party had the usual questions about communism, Russia, China. I explained that those countries had socialism, not communism. I told them about the difference."

Then the club discussion turned to the front page of the May Day issue of the paper. We all read the article that outlined the general line of the Party and explained why more readers need to join. Everyone liked it.

A more experienced comrade mentioned that a question had been raised about whether the article was the right thing to feature for May Day marchers who might be seeing the paper for the first time. We all reread it.

"I don't see why not," said a friend who often meets with us. "It is to the point. It explains everything very clearly. It doesn't make any promises."

"You mean, promises for reforms like unions and politicians make?"

"Yes," she replied.

That sparked a lively exchange about why unions aren't the way for workers to solve our problems.

"That was a trick question," said the comrade who'd asked about the page-one article. "If you think it's good for first-time readers, then who do you know that you can show it to?"

She talked about the need for more comrades and friends to start building groups of

people (like our group) to read, discuss and act on communist ideas. We talked about plans for the summer and who we could invite to activities.

"The one thing that sticks in my craw," said our friend, "is the part about armed revolution. I am just not a violent person."

"That cop who killed black activist Sandra Bland," burst in a comrade. "I think I could kill him."

Did the friend mean that she objected to armed revolution in principle, asked another? That there might be another way to get to the communist society we all want? Or just that she couldn't see herself with a gun? More discussion. Probably the last reason.

It was time to go. Everyone (including the friend) took extra papers to distribute.

Not everyone in our group made it to the dinner and only a few made it to the May Day march. But overall, we seem to be moving forward.

—A collective in California

May Day Dinner Brings Great Joy to Comrade in Aerospace Industry

My recent experience at the dinner organized S, in anticipation of the May Day celebration, International Workers' Day, was magnificent!

I have family members who have dedicated the major part of their lives to the revolutionary struggle. Even though I am not active, I try to participate in these events since ideologically I share communist ideas and the line of the party.

This time I was accompanied by my father, who also sympathizes with ICWP.

We were also accompanied by a young man, related to my wife. It was the first time he had attended a political dinner like this and at the end he gave his information to participate in

study groups.

The dinner was very well organized from the delicious food to the good literature about heroic struggles of the past. While we ate dinner, we listened intently to the opening speeches. A comrade went from table to table suggesting that after dinner we could start a brief discussion about the reason and purpose of the dinner.

I found this way of interacting very interesting since it involves directly sharing the thoughts of others. Above all, feeling the solidarity among the group was very positive.

Our discussion was focused on the Paris Commune and other struggles that have motivated the working class to follow the same steps to improve the living conditions of the workers. The participation was excellent since we also talked about current events: the attacks on the working class, such as in the Middle East and in the rest of the world, by the capitalist powers to preserve their hegemonies. We concluded that we agreed that World War III is getting closer every day.

Unfortunately it is inevitable. Our brothers and sisters in other countries, like us, will suffer with our blood; the goal is not to simply deactivate the use of nuclear bombs in other countries. It is a bosses' fight for their capitalist profits!

It gives me great joy for the working class to know that the party ICWP is our route to building the revolutionary bases to overcome the failures of the previous struggles that our class brothers and sisters, with their bravery, have bequeathed us. The triumph will be the true wellbeing of social equality for all through the revolution for communism and, as ICWP says, NOTHING LESS!

—A Comrade in the Aerospace Industry

CRISES IN THE MIDDLE EAST from page 8

As the liberal Israeli journal *Haaretz* reported, "Israel realizes that in Syria, there is no longer a war between the superpowers in which satellite states tag along behind 'their' superpower. This front belongs to a single superpower and anyone who wants to operate there has to play by its rules."

Russia, in turn, uses Israel to rein in Iran's ambition to market its oil and gas independently of Russia.

So, Trump's courtship of both Netanyahu and Putin can be seen either as a last-ditch effort to shore up US influence — or as a betrayal of US imperialism's core interests in the region.

Chinese Imperialists Seek Expanded Role

China has mostly stayed out of the Syrian fighting. It supported Russia and Assad diplomatically, while investing heavily in rebuilding Syria. Southwest Asia is geographically key to China's "Belt and Road" infrastructure project.

Israel has sold weapons to China since 1981. Now civilian trade has skyrocketed to well over \$11 billion annually. Chinese investments in Israel are growing at the expense of US and European companies. Israel and China, too, are working on a free-trade agreement.

US Alone in Rejecting Iran Nuclear Treaty

Not only Russia and China but also the German, French and British imperialists are working together to save the Iran treaty.

European companies have billions at stake as the US threatens to impose sanctions on them if they don't cut ties with Iran. They probably won't want to risk losing their business with the

US. However, the European Union is looking at ways to block those sanctions. Trump's move clearly sharpened contradictions with some of its closest allies.

Other developments in the region also undermine US imperialism. These include the recent electoral wins of Moktada al-Sadr in Iraq and Hezbollah in Lebanon.

Renewed US economic sanctions against Iran have further alienated Turkey. Qatar, site of the largest US military base in the region, is increasingly dependent on Iran due to a US-supported blockade.

Workers of the World, Unite — For Communism!

Increasingly isolated US rulers will try harder and harder to use patriotism — alongside racism, sexism and other fascist ideas — to win mass support.

The inner logic of capitalism itself forces them to squeeze maximum profits out of workers in the US as well as elsewhere. It will also force them to mobilize an increas-

ingly miserable working class for war.

Deadly competition — up to and including world war — is built into the very nature of global capitalism.

In contrast, the heart of global communism is cooperation. In communism, there won't be "trade." There won't be borders. Instead, we will share with our worldwide family.

There won't be "war." Instead, there will be revolutionary armed struggle until every corner of the earth is freed from capitalist wage slavery.

All the imperialist and other capitalist rats have sharp teeth. Their bites hurt. Their wars kill. But we working-class cats will claw them to pieces.



May Day 2018 Lebanon

US Imperialism Increasingly Isolated; Israeli Fascists Increasingly Deadly

MIDDLE-EAST CRISES CREATE OPPORTUNITIES FOR COMMUNIST REVOLUTION

May 15 – It was the eve of the 70th anniversary of the Nakba (“catastrophe”): the founding of the State of Israel and the expulsion of over 700,000 Palestinian Arabs from their homes and villages.

Top Israeli and US officials celebrated moving the US embassy to Jerusalem. Meanwhile, tens of thousands of Palestinians protested their incarceration in the Gaza Strip, the world’s largest open-air prison. Outrageously, the Israeli army responded with live fire, killing at least 60 and wounding thousands.

Just a week earlier, Trump pulled the US out of the Iran nuclear treaty. This international agreement severely restricted Iran’s nuclear arms program in exchange for removing most trade sanctions.

Maybe Trump thought he was reasserting US power in the Middle East. Maybe Netanyahu thought the Gaza massacre was a show of strength. Neither is true.

“A cornered rat will bite a cat,” says a Japanese proverb. In the Middle East, the US is the most desperate rat.

After World War II, US imperialism’s military, diplomatic and economic power enabled it to dominate the Middle East. But, as a US official admitted recently, “Great-power competition has returned.”

The Russian imperialists are the new power-

brokers. They can’t stop deadly skirmishes between Iran and Israel in Syria, where Assad is gaining ground. But they can mediate between them while playing them off against each other.

The Russian bosses have a stake in preventing these fights from spiraling out of control. The US, in contrast, deliberately destabilizes the region to limit its rivals’ ability to construct energy pipelines and make further inroads.

Russian trade with Israel jumped 25% last year and continues to grow. They are resuming negotiations on a free-trade agreement through the Russian-led Eurasian Economic Union (EAU), which includes Iran.

Israel’s Netanyahu was honored in Moscow at



May 14 – Tens of thousands of Palestinian in Gaza have taken part in mass protests, since March 31, on the border of this barren strip of land where they are imprisoned by Egyptian and Israeli soldiers who block the movement of people and goods. They are fighting to return to the homes and towns that Israeli bosses stole from them. Workers in Gaza and the West Bank responded to Israel’s fascist massacre with a general strike.

the May 9 commemoration of the Soviet Union’s victory over Nazi Germany. The muted Russian response to Israel’s airstrikes on Iranian targets inside Syria the next day suggested that Netanyahu might have given Putin advance notice.

See [CRISES IN THE MIDDLE EAST](#), page 7

ART, CULTURE AND THE MAKING OF THE 1949 CHINESE REVOLUTION

“In Changchih City [China], the main urban center of the South Shansi Highlands, residents and peasants from the surrounding villages turned out by the thousands to celebrate 1948.

“The city was decorated from one end to the other. In front of every shop a bright red flag, replete with gold hammer and sickle, proudly waved. Across the streets and alleys on all but invisible strings fluttered countless pennants of colored paper.”

This is how William Hinton begins his description of a communist New Year celebration.

“Among the attractions ... was the yangko dancing. A small parade preceded the performance of each yangko team. In the lead came young men with red banners bearing the name of the club, block committee, or peasants’ association which they represented.

“Behind them came the musicians with their drums, cymbals, gongs, and pipes. Next came the acting group and then a long column of dancers. When the group arrived at a likely spot—any place where large numbers of people stood around waiting for something to happen—the dancers started to form a big circle ... inside of which the actors assembled to perform the plays and skits which they themselves had written.”

Some plays were about land reform. They had characters such as the landlord, the middle peasant, the laborer and the Communist party member. Others were about the international situation and featured Chiang Kai-Shek and Kung, the Chinese Rockefeller. Music, dancing, color and outrageous costumes – typical of street theater everywhere. Chiang, for example, wore an over-the-top uniform and Kung carried a big bag of money.

Even before the founding of the Chinese Communist party, activists realized the importance of



The Taihang Mountains Drama Group performing “A Hatred of Blood and Tears”

theater in educating the masses. In 1904 Chen Duxiu, who went on to become the Party’s first leader, said that “some are promoting social reform by writing new novels or publishing their own newspapers, but they have no impact on the illiterate. Only the theater can excite and reform the whole society ... there is no better vehicle for social reform than the theater.”

Qu Qubai, who was briefly the second Party chief, moved into cultural work. He founded the Party’s first drama academy (in liberated territory). He sent theater troupes in large numbers to visit villages and the front lines. By the time of the festival Hinton describes, hundreds of thousands of actors and other artists were performing in the liberated areas.

The Party did not neglect more ambitious forms of theater. They were very successful in adopting the format of traditional Chinese opera

for pieces like the “Red Detachment of Women.”

Can we learn from this? Yes. We can’t yet produce professional-level operas, but street theater is possible. Experience shows that as few as half a dozen committed amateurs can write and perform short skits.

At a big demonstration, music and props can easily attract an audience of 200. They can get across our Communist message as effectively as any leaflet. And if we do have a leaflet, audience members are much more likely to read it. If the troop performs five times, they’ve reached a thousand people and made the ICWP really stand out!

If you’re interested in street theater, especially if you have some experience, let us know. You can join a long tradition of using drama to spread Communism!