

RED FLAG

MOBILIZE THE MASSES FOR COMMUNISM

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

India

Massive "Wall of Women" in Kerala, India:

COMMUNIST REVOLUTION WILL DEFEAT SEXISM AND FASCISM

January 6 — Over six million in the southern state of Kerala, India, mostly working-class women, joined hands to form a human wall that stretched 600 km (373 miles) north to south. This and other demonstrations of women and men in Kerala are responses to violent sexist attacks by the fascist ruling party of India (BJP) and its militia.

A Hindu temple in Kerala had, for centuries, denied entry to women of reproductive age. The supreme court of India recently declared this practice illegal. But sexist/racist religious groups have physically attacked women trying to enter the temple.

Few of the millions actually want to worship at the temple. They are fighting against the reactionary religious ideology that has long justified gender inequality: "We won't go back!"

But the material basis of sexism

is class society. Today it is capitalism. To keep from moving backward we need to move forward to a classless communist society that alone can end sexism.

This massive and defiant "wall of women" in the face of fascist attacks has galvanized the working class. We need to urgently inject communist politics into this movement and propose the communist solution to the rise of fascism.

The state of Kerala is ruled by a fake communist party (CPI-M) that relies on reform and elections to fight capitalism and its violent attacks on the working class.

Fascism is internal to capitalism in crisis and decline. This is the desperate attempt by the bosses to save their system of profit and exploitation. Fascism can only be defeated by smashing capitalism.

The state of Kerala has a long and rich history of fighting British

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El Salvador Garment Worker:

TALKING TO CO-WORKERS ABOUT COMMUNISM

EL SALVADOR—*At the international conference we had the opportunity to talk with comrades from other countries, listen to their experiences, and share our own experiences, which motivated us to move forward in our struggle. During one of the breaks, I talked to two comrades and told them about a discussion about the Party and Communism I had with a co-worker. These comrades encouraged me to write the story below. They invited other readers and members to share their experiences in *Red Flag* as well.*

At a meeting of our group of maquila workers we read the newspaper article from the US entitled "Thirst for Communism."

A co-worker, who we want to recruit to the Party, commented: "You're crazy. Today you have a thirst for communism where there will only be hunger, where you yourselves say that there will be no money."

I explained to him what I have learned collectively with my comrades about Communism. I made him see that we now make dozens and dozens of pieces of clothing every day for the minimum wage. But under communism we will only make what is necessary, what workers need.

In communism we will also work the land collectively to produce what is needed.

If I have a large family with ten people, I will be given what I need of food, clothing and other necessities. If, on the other hand, my family has four people, we will only be given what four people need.

We told him that in today's capitalism only 10% have adequate housing, healthcare, and food, etc. On the contrary, 90% of us don't have these needs met.

The co-worker replied, "It sounds nice, but capitalism is not going to let us get to communism."

I replied "I wouldn't be able to do it by myself. But if we all fight together we can win."

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For a Communist World Without Borders: INTERNATIONAL ICWP CONFERENCE STARTS SMASHING BORDERS NOW!

December 2018 – “Communism is going to come,” a new garment-worker comrade told the boss who was hassling him. “It is not going to come overnight. But it is like the flame of a candle burning brighter and brighter.”

This story was part of a report given by the growing maquila-worker collective in El Salvador at a recent communist conference in Central America.

In her opening speech, an ICWP leader spoke about the “world situation” and the deepening global crisis of capitalism. The reports that followed – especially from South Africa and El Salvador – showed that the modest growth of ICWP is a small but key element of that world situation.

Two comrades in South Africa joined the meeting by video-conference. The racist Air France authorities had not allowed them to board their flight. They electrified everyone with the news that there are now six Party collectives in three provinces. There are three groups of industrial workers, one of miners and two of students.

Even more impressive was the seriousness with which the South Africa comrades listened to criticisms and spoke of plans to improve their work. “We are too relaxed,” one said. “We need to push the boundaries.” (See article, page 3)

The maquila report was equally inspiring. Three clubs of industrial workers meet regularly, as does a leadership collective. All participate in monthly outings. These include fun and family as well as a two-hour meeting. Everything isn’t always smooth but “we don’t let rejection stop us,” as a comrade leader explained. (See her letter, page 1)

About half of the maquila comrades, including half of the leaders, are women. Like many other women, they shoulder heavy responsibilities for child care and homemaking after long hours of hard work. Their contributions to the Party reflect tremendous commitment to communism and the working class.

The maquila comrades regularly discuss international issues (like the migration crisis) and bring those conversations into the factory. These industrial workers can give leadership to broader masses, including relatives who are soldiers, students, construction workers, etc.

Others reported on work in aerospace (in the US), among students (Mexico), and among immigrants (Spain).



Improving *Red Flag/Bandera Roja* to Improve Our Work

There was a thorough discussion of *Red Flag*. Suggestions and comments included:

“*Red Flag* reflects how we will live in communism, but we also need to write about how we are living as communists today,” said a comrade from Mexico.

Red Flag needs to write more about dialectical materialism in opposition to religion, several comrades remarked. We would especially appreciate articles and letters about conversations on this topic, or from members and friends with personal experiences.

A student comrade reported criticisms from a collective in El Salvador. These centered on recent articles about migration that did not say enough about communism or why we need to eliminate borders.

“We are creating new forms every day for how workers take literature and get involved,” said a leader of the maquila work.

Disagreements surfaced over the relationship between theory and practice. This discussion will continue. We did agree that communist practice is primary: “People want to know what we do, not just what we think.”

Without revolutionary theory there can be no communist revolution. But we develop our theory mainly in relation to questions workers have about communism.

“We can’t underestimate the power of stories,” said another. “Stories about the work, like those we’ve heard here, are the basis for a better and more useful paper.”

“Our paper reflects very little of our collective experience,” concluded an experienced leader. “We need to do more and write more to learn more. Mainly, the paper must reflect our struggle for communism within the working

class.”

The more we carry out this struggle, the more we advance theory and improve our work.

Defeat Fascism with Communist Revolution

As a comrade said, “the growth and intensification and rise of fascism worldwide creates the material basis for its own destruction. It’s here, and the solution is communism – and only communism.”

As the concentration of wealth increases, capitalism relies increasingly on extreme violence to repress the masses who have increasing reason to destroy it. The world today is in crisis. Seventy-six countries are at war, internally or externally. With or without war, the crisis of capitalism has created huge opportunities to mobilize for communism.

Many are thinking about the international migration crisis. Masses share our vision of a “world without borders.” Only communism can realize that goal. Our urgent task is to spread this struggle far and wide. We are preparing a new mini-pamphlet to help with this.

The conference gave us a taste of the communist world without borders that we are starting to create right now. There are no “borders” within our International Communist Workers’ Party. That is a break from the history of the old communist “International” which was a coalition of national parties.

We saw that we face the same obstacles everywhere, including nationalism, sexism and electoral politics. We struggled together about how to advance the work. We built and deepened personal ties across barriers of language and a racist travel ban.

Many heads nodded when a South African comrade said at the end, “This was a life-changing experience for me!”

For a world without borders tomorrow... join and build the International Communist Workers’ Party today!



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CRITICISM AND SELF-CRITICISM: THE INTERNAL STRUGGLE FOR COMMUNISM

SOUTH AFRICA — “We just concluded one of the most productive meetings we’ve had,” Comrade Lwazi explained. “We had to struggle sharply with each other to address a lack of commitment, especially with comrades who are leaders.

“First we talked about writing for *Red Flag*. A comrade explained that when we make a commitment to write something, the editorial collective leaves space for it. So, if the articles don’t come, that space has to be filled, usually quickly. That makes it harder for them to put out the paper.

“We reminded ourselves of what is expected as members and leaders of the collective. When comrades, especially leaders, promise to do something, they should do it.

“We are not leaders because of how many years we’ve spent in the organization, but based on our commitment. That has to show in our practice. Practice is primary.

“Our level of commitment is not on par with the goals we have set for ourselves. I think we have regressed. The meeting was trying to get us on track for meeting our goals, including for May Day, to remind all of us why we decided to make this commitment.”

Building Communist Relationships

Comrade Simulko added, “When we go to mobilize, we make contacts, but we haven’t followed up on them consistently to make those contacts members of the party. I blame myself. I also made some commitments that I didn’t follow up on.

“I have to give more time to the party. We are also lacking on the side of communist relations. If we lack on that side within the existing members, it becomes difficult to recruit and establish those communist relationships with other members that we’ve just contacted.”

“Another issue,” said Comrade Kuhle, “is that we always struggle with each other about where we want to be at different times and how we will get there. Today we looked at what we planned and how we’re doing. We identified the weaknesses that prevent us from moving forward with our short-term and long-term goals.

“Sometimes we don’t clearly define what Communist relations should be like. We know what kind of society we want in the future but now the Communist relationships that we have are not clearly elaborated. Sometimes it’s easy for comrades here to find an excuse not to follow through on their commitments to do the Party work.

“I’m a student. It’s easy for me to find an excuse to say that I’m busy with my studies. But being busy with capitalist education doesn’t necessarily help our movement. Sometimes, we plan to go to a rally, a meeting, follow up on a contact, but it’s easy to say you can’t because of school. This opened my eyes. This is our life-long struggle. When we make commitments, we should follow through on them.”

Comrade Themba explained, “We are together now to criticize and help each other build the Party. We are living in capitalist society and we tend to get sucked in sometimes. For some, it’s hard to stand boldly and talk about Communism.

“I am to blame for not being available enough. I have to make time to struggle with the other comrades. The meeting today helped us be more committed to the revolutionary struggle. When things happen in other countries, we can’t ignore them.”

Other comrades were in the meeting, including one comrade who we are struggling with to join.

Comrade Lwazi said, “We have developed some liberal tendencies. If I see something that is anti-communist within my comrade, for the sake of unity I don’t raise the issue. But that should not be the

case. Whenever wrong ideas arise, from any member, I must be able to call that comrade to account, whether he is my friend or not.

“The struggle should be primary. We can’t ignore things that are holding back the development of the organization for the sake of unity.

“Today we were sharp. Fighting these liberal tendencies was good. It is only the internal struggle for communism that can drive the movement forward. External factors cannot determine the nature of the party. Only internal struggle will determine the direction of the party, where it’s going.”

“Also,” said Comrade Kuhle, “we’ve been talking about sexism. We need to recruit and develop more women members—and to be an example to others to do that. We don’t have many female members here. This is an important issue.

“We have been missing meetings. I have had to work when we have had meetings. Comrade Simulko is here today. It’s the first time in quite a while that he has been with us. It makes a big difference when we are all meeting together.”

The comrades at the meeting made plans to correct these errors as they organize for May Day and beyond.



South Africa: Reaching out to the working class with *Red Flag*

Los Angeles Transit Mechanics

BUILDING A COMMUNIST COLLECTIVE

LOS ANGELES, USA—A buzzer announces that it’s noon, and the mechanics, service attendants and other maintenance workers go to their lunch breaks, for only half an hour of rest.

Some use it to play basketball, others dominoes, but our group meets to discuss communist ideas. They start arriving one by one, but where is comrade Horace? He said he was coming. Then he arrives and joins the group of six workers. (Self-critically, there are no women workers.)

Almost all present are young workers, and I think, “What a beautiful day it will be when these comrades, instead of wearing mechanics’ uniforms, are wearing the uniform of the Red Guard.”

We begin the meeting by reading the article by MTA mechanics in the last *Red Flag*. It is precisely Zeke who is mentioned in the article who starts the reading so that others can finish. But as he reads, he gets excited and offers to finish reading it. We all listen carefully.

Then he comments, “It’s true that at first I was insecure. But more and more, I’m realizing that communism is a good solution, because I look around and see problems everywhere. For example the workers in France, the people of Central America (the Caravan) and right here the ruling

class has a rope around our necks. For example, to this day I have not been able to provide my family with comfortable housing. Our salary is barely enough to survive.”

Another comrade says, “And you supposedly earn a decent wage. Think of the thousands of workers who work for starvation wages.”

More examples follow. We all had had an experience of poverty to tell. Families who live with other families in order to pay rent, families who live in dilapidated buildings. Sick workers unable to pay for medicines. All of this is part of the many evils of capitalism.

“I’ve lived under these conditions. That’s why I’ve convinced myself that we have to organize the Party (ICWP). I have no doubt that if we don’t lead the struggle, someone else is going to do it. But it won’t be for the communist revolution that all the workers need, but for something else, as happens in France, Honduras, or the teachers here with their marches,” Zeke says.

The comrade leading the meeting explains the importance of the ICWP as a leader of the workers’ struggles and especially of our communist line. He points out why the industrial workers are important in this struggle. Their collective role in production, at the heart of the bosses’ ex-

ploitation, is key. When they become communists, they can give key leadership to the masses. He also points out the importance of political work within the bosses’ army. Students and teachers are also important, as are all those of our class who are willing to fight for communism.

Comrade Horace also mentions the multiracial line of the ICWP, our international work and the urgent need for more Party members. He says, “We have no alternative. We have to make this Party a great political force.”

Zeke finishes by saying, “I like this. I want to be a member of the Party so that I can win other workers to the Party. I need to learn more about the political line because there is a lot of misinformation and it is important to be able to explain communist ideas.”

The buzzer sounds again. Everyone grabs a *Red Flag* and a *Mobilize the Masses for Communism* pamphlet and returns to their workplace.

Sometimes we underestimate the potential of co-workers when they raise a lot of disagreements, but later we find that they had been thinking about these ideas all along and are much closer to the Party than we think.

FARM WORKERS AND EX-COMBATANTS OF THE CIVIL WAR IN EL SALVADOR CONTRIBUTE TO ICWP'S REVOLUTIONARY STRUGGLE

The International Communist Workers' Party (ICWP) recently held a series of meetings with Party clubs and friends. One such meeting included farmworkers and former FMLN guerrilla fighters in the eastern zone of El Salvador.

These comrades shared their experiences and their history. After many years they have not given up "in the struggle to bring about real changes for the working class and their families," as one comrade put it.

"I lost five of my brothers in the civil war," a comrade told us. "They died with a rifle in their hands, thinking that they were fighting for revolution. Our choices were to die or to flee, and we decided to fight." He added that "I still hate those [bosses] against whom we fought in the civil war."

Workers still feel this class hatred due to the living conditions they face, a direct consequence of capitalism.

"Here the wealth they promised during the war never arrived," said another farmworker and ex-combatant. "Only the leaders of the FMLN party benefited from the elections and their arrival in

power." added another peasant and ex-combatant.

A younger city comrade mentioned the importance of exposing the current elections as a farce. None of the parties act in the interests of the working class. He urged us to struggle to mobilize the masses for communist revolution and to build a new communist system.

Help Make *Red Flag* a More Effective Weapon for Communism

Comrades from the United States and Spain attended the meeting. They spoke about the political and economic situation there. They answered questions about the organization of the party and the production and distribution of *Red Flag*.

Local comrades criticized several recent articles about immigration (the caravans to the United States). These articles did not explain well why we want to eliminate borders. They didn't explain how communism will do this. They didn't say much about communism at all. The El Salvador comrades urged that the editorial collective intervene more forcefully to guarantee the political line of all articles.

The comrade from the US agreed with the crit-

icisms of those articles. She explained that they are trying to encourage more comrades to write for the paper, especially about work – like conversations with friends active with the migrant caravan in Tijuana, Mexico.

She emphasized the importance of reading, discussing, and writing to *Red Flag*: "We need you to write letters about *Red Flag* articles and about our pamphlets" like the ones about sexism and education.

We should be more attentive to the requests that are made from the editors to discuss, send criticisms and/or suggestions for the articles or series of articles that appear in our newspaper. Because that is how the party defines positions regarding a particular situation. That is how the line of the International Communist Workers' Party is collectively developed.

The comrades from other countries, from the city, and from the eastern region ended the meeting by sharing a delicious lunch. All left the meeting very motivated to do the communist work needed to accomplish our revolutionary project.

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colonialism and capitalism with revolutionary communist leadership. The old communist party's mistake was fighting for socialism or just for limited reforms. Many workers have rejected this and are now looking for the alternative offered by the International Communist Workers' Party (ICWP).

An ICWP member and a regular distributor of *Red Flag* reached out to several women who par-

ticipated in the wall of women. Many eagerly talked about need to form a strong ICWP that will not rely on the electoral circus. Instead it will lead the masses to destroy all capitalist bosses.

The discussion pointed out that masses of workers are not satisfied with the reformist politics of CPI-M. They are looking for a true alternative and ICWP has a huge opportunity. Everybody agreed that we need to publish *Red Flag* in the local languages.

One woman said, "All my life I have dreamed about living a life without the bosses, a society where we help each other, we raise our children who will not suffer violence, sexism, caste discrimination and religious manipulation and blind faith. I also know that such a communist society is possible but it cannot happen by itself. It needs a party. I did not know

that such a party existed. I am very eager to know more about ICWP because I want to join in this fight."

This comrade has expressed the sentiments and aspirations of masses around the world. We must seize opportunities like these to build a mass ICWP with fierce tenacity and resolve. We can make a significant advance in building our party by making our collectives stronger by recruiting more and developing more communists.

Four years ago, women who work in the tea plantations of Kerala went on a strike. They said, "We pick the tea and carry the bags on our shoulders, you (the bosses) carry off the money bags."

The working class produces everything. We don't need the bosses and their money to distribute what we have produced.

At that time, friends of ICWP made some contacts with the strikers. The recent "Wall of Women" inspired our friends to reconnect with these workers. They were very happy to talk about ICWP. But they also said we should be there regularly and very consistently. We take this criticism seriously. We are looking into ways of producing ICWP literature in the local languages and then guaranteeing its distribution.



Read our pamphlet:
**The Communist
Fight Against
Sexism**



Available at icwpredflag.org/sxse.pdf

LETTERS FROM PARTICIPANTS IN THE RECENT INTERNATIONAL CONFERENCE OF ICWP

A Unique and Satisfying Experience

The International Conference of the Party seemed to us to be tremendously important. We realized that comrades from other countries live in situations similar to ours in El Salvador, in whatever job. I participated, as a member of one of the three Party clubs inside the maquilas, along with my two daughters.

Racism affects all working people. The comrades from South Africa could not be present in Central America because of the conditions of capitalism that prevented their coming to the conference.

But that was not an obstacle for them to be present at the conference because through technology they were listening and debating the problems experienced in different countries.

The stay seemed to us a unique and satisfying experience of sharing with comrades from different countries. The hospitality we enjoyed was very pleasant. The food was delicious.

The trip was very nice for us and a new experience to share with comrades from different countries to enjoy our beautiful scenery and the delicious pupusas.

—Comrade from El Salvador

Learning from Each Other Strengthens our Commitment

ICWP's international conference brought together comrades from around the world to discuss our work and advances in mobilizing for revolution. I met and broke bread with our comrades from El Salvador, Mexico, Spain and other parts of North America, catching up, meeting new comrades, and taking in how our party is growing and expanding around the world.

During the conference our comrades gave reports discussing their work in both their personal and professional lives. In the maquilas where some of our comrades work in El Salvador, our comrades discussed being open about their politics as they fight to mobilize their fellow workers for communism. They talked about the need to be disciplined, arriving to work early and completing tasks on time to avoid being fired. It was clear that there is uneven development in this, like everything else.

Although our South African comrades couldn't make it to the international conference, thanks to modern technology we were able to video-conference with them over the two-day meeting. Our comrades discussed their successes in expanding the party in South Africa, but also the difficulties they had recruiting women in the party. I'm not sure we really got to the heart of what is holding our comrades back from making this breakthrough.

We discussed religion, race, class, gender and how we believe a communist world will be after revolution. I learned a lot as I built better communist social relationships with my com-

rades both young and old.

Our meetings were filled with insights on our work in the party, but the discussions did not stop there. Whether at lunch or in our rooms late at night our discussions on world issues and social relations continued.

There has been this notion that the United States of America is the land of opportunity and freedom and as my roommates asked me how it was, I explained that there is struggle in the US over wage slavery and racism. I also discussed my pessimistic ideas about my coworkers back home whose machista attitudes, and nationalistic views about Central Americans infuriate me.

"Well, first you need to decide if these people are the kind of people you want to associate with," my comrade said. "If so, then decide if they can come to understand these things and talk to them about capitalism and communism." I admittedly needed advice on how to better approach the situation on my job.

I was more than amazed to find in Central America the abundance of natural beauty and the resilience of the people. Sometimes, it looked just like we were in any other city, but in the rural areas you could see the remnants of US intervention as people worked to survive like we all do under this capitalist system.

My experience was amazing. My attendance at our international meeting strengthens my conviction to work and fight for a communist world. Although there is uneven development, we have each other to learn from and sharpen our work. The harder capitalism pushes, the more people are drawn to our beliefs. Capitalism can't stop the growth in our party. Communism will win!

—Comrade from the US

Overcoming Obstacles as a Collective

Let me first condemn the behaviour of the airline that kept us from going to the conference. But this is something that should not surprise us. Racism is a fundamental pillar of capitalism.

The behaviour should not deter us in our quest of eradicating Capitalism. But it should strengthen our resolve to smash the borders and racism. The destruction of Capitalism will ultimately lead to a Communist society whereby there's no racism, borders, or sexism. To get into the conference I remember my comrade remarking that even though he was not there physically, he felt that he was part of the conference.

We started by giving reports. One of the



comrades gave the international report about the events around the world. She started with the migration crisis. More workers are coming from Central America trying to reach the U.S. Also there is the European migration crisis as more workers from north Africa and the Middle East are fleeing from horrors of war that are perpetuated by Capitalist greed for profit and the rivalry within the imperialist powers.

Another point that was interesting was how we struggle with each other and also how we were critical with ourselves. The other thing was the comradely manner in which we were critical with each other without alienating each other.

One typical example was when a comrade gave his report, the criticism was he gave a similar report about 4 years ago. So we needed to investigate why for this long period of time we haven't recruited any comrades there, It was clear to the whole international collective that this was not an individual failure but of the whole international collective. So we need to make specific plans to address this problem collectively.

The second day of the conference we specifically talked about the development of the **Red Flag** and the need to create a network of **Red Flag** readers with the hope of recruiting these readers to become the members of the organization. We also put more emphasis on the development of communist relations. We mustn't only talk about communism, but we must show the important part, that it is not just for us to convince people to join us. Instead, people themselves must want to join us.

One of our strengths as a collective here in South Africa is the unity within the collective. We sometimes use this unity as one of our recruiting tools. As people see our bond as communists they also want to be part of it.

—A Comrade in South Africa



**READ OUR MANIFESTO:
MOBILIZE THE MASSES FOR
COMMUNISM**

Available at icwpredflag.org/mmce.pdf

LETTERS

LETTERS

LETTERS

CRITICISM AND SUGGESTIONS

Let's think and talk about how and what we eat

"Sol, why are you vegan?" comrade Sebastián asked a college student at the party's end-of-year meeting. As we headed to a beautiful wooded area, this question sparked an interesting discussion about veganism, agriculture, and communism.

"I started out being a vegetarian to support a friend, but then I read about the meat industry, about animal exploitation and abuse, and that convinced me to be a vegan," answered Sol. (Vegan: someone who doesn't consume or use any animal products, doesn't eat meat or dairy).

"So, do you think that under Communism we would have to be vegan?" the comrade asked.

"I think that yes, under Communism there should not be any kind of exploitation or oppression. Animals will not exist for our benefit," said a young comrade.

"Many species of animals exist because humans have domesticated them or because we encourage their reproduction," Sebastián replied.

"But you have to keep in mind that the meat industry is one of the most polluting on the planet," Sol added. To produce one kilo of veal, the equivalent of 27 kilos of carbon dioxide are emitted (a measure that combines the impact of different greenhouse gases), 15,400 liters of water are needed, and 100 kilos of this protein require 6,000 square meters of land.

Luna, another young university student who participated in the meeting, commented, "I believe that under communism we are going to have a different diet. We have to change the perception that only eating meat is eating. But I don't believe that everyone should be vegan. Eating meat helped to develop our brain, our cognitive capacity."

"If we could not use other animals for our needs, we would have to go back to being harvesters and give up animal husbandry. I don't think this is a solution. The problem is not whether we eat meat or not, or whether we eat more vegetables or not. It is the capitalist mode of production. Currently more than 80% of food production is wasted. What we produce today is enough to feed the population of 2050. But your criticism of the meat industry is accurate; beef and chicken meat is the most harmful to humans, especially because of the hormones they inject into animals," Sebastián added.

"We are used to seeing food as something behind the counter, as a commodity, but it is clear that we can produce enough to satisfy the all humanity's food needs," added Jasmine, a Party comrade.

This letter is an incentive to initiate a communist discussion about issues such as veganism, agriculture and diet. We invite everyone to participate with letters and articles to continue the discussion.

—Comrade in Mexico

"The Wife": a Review of a Capitalist Movie

"The Wife," loudly praised by the critics, is seemingly anti-sexist, while in reality it promotes sexism. It also minimizes the work of the working class, portraying the most necessary work (in this case unpaid housework) as mindless. The more we buy into the bosses' lying propaganda against us workers, the weaker we are as a force able to fight against their current attacks and to eventually destroy their murder-



January 7 – Albanian students have resumed their mass protests against tuition hikes, the Education Law, living conditions in the dormitories and other grievances. The new law on higher education puts universities under direct government control while diverting public funds to private universities.

Street rallies grew even after the government nullified the fee increases. Miners and other workers have joined them. This shows that, while the appearance of the protest is strictly reformist, its essence is deep discontent with the capitalist education system. Neither the socialism of Enver Hoxha nor the market capitalism that followed it could possibly meet the aspirations of the masses. Only communism can do that.

ous system, capitalism, replacing it with real communism.

"The Wife" is a good weapon against us. The "wife" (Joan) is the "victim" of the sexist agreement she made with her husband (Joe) decades ago. Joan, the one with talent and skill, would write the novels and Joe would pretend he wrote them. The movie makes it clear that this was because in a sexist society, acknowledging and rewarding accomplishments in anything, including the arts, happens much more readily to men.

Almost all of Joan's time and energy is devoted to her writing; therefore, she cannot be a very nurturing mother. At movie's end, Joan describes the suffering this and the lack of societal acknowledgment of her accomplishments have caused her.

Beginning in his very early years, their son (David) was miserable because Joe, instead of Joan, was his primary caretaker. The film offers no evidence that Joe was an uncaring dad, and so David's "deprivation" comes off as unfounded and illogical. The film relies on the capitalists' lying "logic" that only women can be satisfactory caregivers. The reality is that fathers can be just as nurturing as mothers.

For much of the film, Joan plays her chosen role with such apparent happiness that when she finally reveals to Joe how she's always felt, it's unbelievable. Not to movie critics though. They describe it as "Joan's transformation from self-deprecating wife to fiery force of nature" (rogerebert.com). However, Joan wasn't exactly portrayed as a "self-deprecating" wife.

We're supposed to be outraged by Joe's "calous" acceptance of being lionized for his wife's accomplishments. In Joan's final speech to Joe about why she's so angry, Joe responds by listing his decades-long accomplishments: parenting, cooking and maintaining a healthy, pleasant home environment. Joan replies to this list with scorn.

The truth is that in class society, "homemaking" is socially necessary work which requires creativity and fortitude—and is never recognized.

Under capitalism, work is divided into categories, with "artistic" and "intellectual" work val-

ued (and rewarded) above more "practical" (and necessary) work. These divisive categories serve the bosses extremely well. But humans are capable of performing well in all sorts of categories and, in communism, we will! To quote the poet Langston Hughes regarding capitalism: "But it won't last forever."

—A Comrade

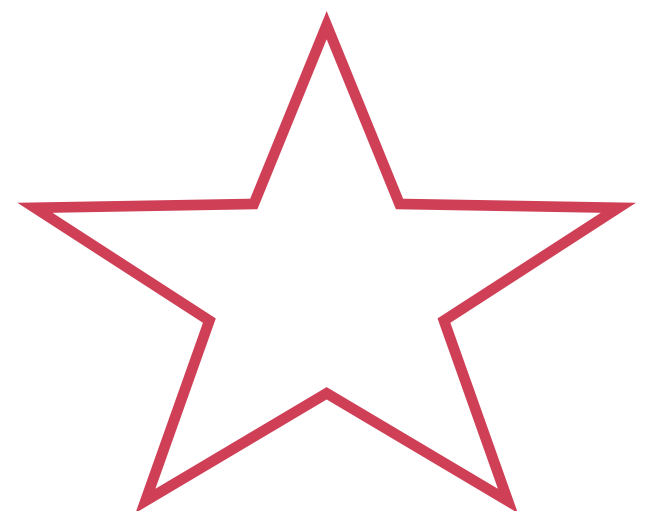
Workers Can Change

I've seen the tears of joy of many Mexicans and residents and friends in California willing to return to a Mexico torn apart by vicious capitalism, in the first hours of the presidency of López Obrador, at work, in the market and in my own home. "Let's go back to Mexico," people say.

Today, Mexicans, full of hope, trust in a political and economic change. I have been in retirement from the International Communist Workers' Party. My story as a parent and member has been very painful. I have doubted the solidarity of the comrades. But when I hear the voices of hope and solidarity in a political and economic change of many workers from Mexico and immigrants from North America it gives me confidence that international workers can change their way of thinking, organize radical changes and bury capitalism.

—A Friend

Red Flag responds: We agree that radical changes are needed, that is, to fight for communism and nothing less. And we have to struggle against the illusion that the capitalist Lopez Obrador and the Mexican capitalist class are going to bring about radical changes.



FIGHTING FOR THE COMMUNIST EDUCATION WE NEED

"We need education and a society that meets the needs of the masses. We don't need the capitalists!" said a comrade.

"That's why I'm here," a teacher replied, taking *Red Flag* and the ICWP pamphlet *Communist Education for a Classless Society*.

"But to get it we need a revolution and a communist society."

"I'll read this. Thanks," he said.

At the teachers' march in LA last month, comrades distributed hundreds of *Red Flags* and also the Education pamphlet: all we had.

50,000 teachers, parents, students and others came to support the coming teachers' strike. But the reform demands of the UTLA

leaders will not result in education that meets the needs of the masses. Capitalism cannot meet the masses' basic needs. We need a revolution and a communist society to do that.

Our struggle is to win people away from the social democratic leadership of the union that talks about workers but is only out to try to fool us into thinking we can reform capitalism to make it meet our needs.

Capitalist education meets the needs of the capitalists to perpetuate class society while aiming to produce loyal workers, soldiers and managers who will work and fight to keep the racist, sexist profit system intact. No strike for reforms can change that.

The LA teachers' strike is an opportunity to show masses of teachers, students and parents that the education and society that students, teachers and all workers need is a communist education in a communist society that will collectively meet the masses' needs.

Taking our communist literature and communist signs to the picket lines is an important step in building this struggle.

We invite readers who agree with us to take signs calling for communist education to the picket lines and to join the International Communist Workers' Party to help us fight for the education and the world we need.

—Los Angeles Comrades

Oakland: Organizing for Communism as Pre-Strike Work

The organizers were expecting some 30 people, but around 60 came to a local meeting building support for the likely teachers' strike in Oakland later this month and the rally to Defend Public Education in Oakland on Saturday, January 12th.

There was a lot of sharp accurate criticism of capitalists and their charter schools, the treacherous role of the CTA, as well as support for the LA teachers and concern for Oakland students.

Only here and there did that concern for the students talk about the hierarchical, capitalist content of public (or charter) school education.

One of the panelists, talking about the 23-day strike of 1996, stressed an important lesson to learn from that struggle: never underestimate the enemy. With schools commanding the interest of billionaires like Eli Broad and Bill Gates, the enemy, he pointed out, was a significant section of the capitalist ruling class – currently one of the most powerful forces in the world.

Red Flag would take it further. The main weakness of the strike was that teachers and their supporters did not fight hard enough to build the revolutionary communist movement many of the activists were privately dreaming of. This has left us facing a more unequal, vicious capitalist system than we saw in 1996.

On the one hand, the Bay Area is the home of 73 billionaires (the third largest concentration of private wealth in the world); on the other, tent cities are springing up throughout Oakland faster than mushrooms after the rain.

Anxious not to repeat that error, a *Red Flag* distributor urged everyone to launch conversations about, and organizing for, communist revolution as the key part of our pre-strike work.

The immediate counter from the panel was that communist revolution was great but organizing around the issues of the strike was what was needed today. However, this did not keep some of the younger teachers from checking out *Red Flag* at the end of the meeting.

—Comrade in Oakland

On the Picket Line with Kaiser Mental Health Workers

"I started working here in 1988. The kinds of problems our patients had were things like being depressed because a relative died, because of a divorce, or losing a job. Now we see a growing number of people facing problems of addiction, abuse, violence... There is more stress in society and so there are more mental health problems," explained one of the strikers.

Another striker added, "We aren't mainly striking for money. Yes, we want the new-hires to be able to get pensions. But it's mainly about patient care. Now they only let us see a patient for therapy sometimes once every two months. You can't really give them the therapy they need like that!"

These comments were made on the picket line of a strike of Kaiser health care workers when comrades brought *Red Flag* and the pamphlet about the communist fight against sexism.

A comrade said, "Capitalism is in crisis and is creating more and more stress. We're fighting for a communist society where we will collectively plan and produce everything to meet our needs food, shelter and health care. The best health care for all will be a priority. There will be less of the kind of stress there is now. Even when things are hard, we will face them collectively, not individually."

"That sounds really interesting. Let me read the paper and see what I think."

With other strikers we talked about how communism was actually practiced in pre-class society. "Native Americans and people all over the world lived without exploitation, money, borders or nations in the past. We can live like that again—on a higher level using science, technology, and ideas that have been developed since then."

"Yes!" said another striker. "We have a lot to learn from the way they shared everything. Men and women were equal. Everyone was respected. I'll read this paper and the pamphlet you gave me about fighting sexism. Then I'll see if I want to contact you. Thank you!"

About 100 strikers gladly took *Red Flag* out of about 250 there. Many wanted to talk. As workers fight increasing capitalist attacks, there are big opportunities everywhere.

—Comrades in LA

Teachers—and all Workers— Need Communist Political Strikes

What is the difference between a political strike for reforms (PSR) and a political strike for communism (PSC)?

A PSR seeks or tries to achieve changes that temporarily improve the situation of workers and those affected. In the Los Angeles teachers' strike demands, for example we have the salary increase for teachers, maintenance of health insurance for them as well as improvements in schools such as reduction in the number of students in the classrooms, and more nurses, librarians and psychologists working full-time in every school.

However, these strikes fail to question the

capitalist system and do not seek to overthrow it. In and of themselves they help create the illusion that this system based on the exploitation of the working class can be reformed for the benefit of the workers, parents, teachers and students. These strikes conceal the nature of the capitalist system which is based on the need to create profits in order to sustain itself.

On the contrary, a PSC seeks and tries to mobilize the working masses (industrial workers, soldiers, students, teachers and others) to not only see and examine the capitalist system but also to understand the need for communism. Such a strike demonstrates the communist social relations necessary for the full development of every human being. By demonstrating these relationships, it also popularizes them as much as possible. The relationships include the association of the masses in collective work in all spheres of human behavior. Here all efforts will be collective and will be carried out with the goal of the abolition of money, borders, sexism, racism and homophobia.

A PSR ties us to the system of exploitation and profits because it ignores how the schools themselves are instruments of the capitalists' domination; they reproduce capitalist ideology and practice; in other words they reproduce capitalist social relations.

On the other hand, a PSC puts us on the path to our liberation. It shows us a present and a future that illuminates a world without hierarchies or privilege. In this world communist principles such as "to each according to their need, from each according to their commitment" among others will be the guide for the new human behavior.

—Teacher comrade

**READ OUR
PAMPHLET:
COMMUNIST
EDUCATION
FOR A
CLASSLESS
SOCIETY**

icwpredflag.org/epe.pdf

Class Struggle Intensifies in Iran

WORKERS NEED REVOLUTION—COMMUNIST REVOLUTION

Jan. 6 — A workers' uprising is spreading in Iran, where poverty, inequality, and corruption are making life unbearable for the masses. Farmers are also protesting.

The spark was a strike organized by women and men workers at the Haft Tapeh Sugar Cane factory. They have gained mass support from other workers for their strike and for the release of their jailed leaders.

So far the workers seem to be fighting mainly for reforms. We invite them – and you — to build the International Communist Workers' Party (ICWP) to fight for communist revolution. In a communist society, workers will lead all aspects of society.

On the 13th day of their strike, the workers marched with their families to the office of the governor of the state of Khuzestan. A woman worker spoke and asked all the workers in Iran to join them. More women joined them on the spot.

The strikers were supported by teachers, steel workers, bus drivers, retired workers and other people from nearby towns. This is one of Iran's richest states. But the workers are among the poorest in the country. Steel workers there haven't been paid in months. They have also struck. Teachers organized their own massive strike.

Two strike leaders were arrested and tortured after the demonstration at the governor's office. They were only released due to the massive outpouring of support from the sugar refinery workers and their allies.

Neither the government's clerical fascist attacks nor their religious ideology have been able to break the workers' militant fight.

Workers Need to Take Control of the Whole World!

The refinery strikers have taken over the factory, demanding their pay and government prosecution of management. They and other striking workers are demanding workers' councils to run the factories. Their slogans include "We don't



Steel and Sugar Cane Workers, November 2018

trust the capitalists!" "The workers will not accept exploitation and will fight to the death!"

But, at the same time they raise the illusory threat that if the government won't hold the capitalists responsible, they would prosecute the government. The government – its laws and its courts as well as its officials – only serves the capitalist rulers.

Building workers' councils sounds radical, but it won't end exploitation. It won't change capitalist relations of production. It won't overthrow the capitalists' state power or end their robbery of the surplus value that workers produce. "Success" would only mean changing the faces of those who manage capitalist exploitation.

On the other hand, communist workers in factories, schools, and neighborhoods would mobilize the masses for communist workers' power. They would organize party clubs whose main job would be to recruit more workers to join the party to mobilize for communism.

This would change the nature of the struggle to a revolutionary fight to bury the capitalists and their wage slavery system. Once workers hold power, they would build a collective communist

society. The masses of liberated workers would plan, produce and share the products of their labor according to everyone's need. Workers would run all aspects of society.

Only communist revolution can do away with all the capitalists, their banks, money, borders and nations. We need communist workers' power through a mass International Communist Workers' Party of workers, youth, soldiers and others.

Is this a revolutionary situation?

The Iranian "Constitutional Revolution" (1905-11) and the Islamic Revolution (1979) show that not every revolution benefits the working class.

A revolutionary situation for the working class means masses mobilizing for communist workers' power.

To forge the workers' unity to destroy capitalism and build communism worldwide we need to fight relentlessly against poisonous ideologies like racism, sexism, xenophobia and religion that the capitalists use to divide us while they super-exploit part of our working-class family.

Iranian government spending on wars in Yemen, Lebanon and Syria, capitalist crisis and US sanctions have deepened the attacks on Iranian workers. War and fascism are built-in to capitalism-imperialism. We can only end them by ending the capitalist system.

Workers will come to realize that making demands on the capitalist bosses or their state will not end exploitation or imperialist wars. They will decide to mobilize masses to get rid of capitalism itself. This will unleash our tremendous potential to build a world where our needs are met collectively and where no one profits from anyone else's labor.

That requires a mass communist party, ICWP. Join us!

Red Flag needs to be spread to masses everywhere. If you can translate into Farsi, Arabic, or another language, please translate our manifesto, *Mobilize the Masses for Communism* and *Red Flag* articles from our website www.icwpredflag.org



Families of Haft Tapeh Sugar Cane Workers, December 2018

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