



RED FLAG

MOBILIZE THE MASSES FOR COMMUNISM

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



ICWP STANDS WITH STRIKING LA TEACHERS - ICWP STANDS FOR COMMUNISM

LOS ANGELES, USA, January 25— Enthusiastic school-site picket lines and mass rallies downtown over six days (four of them in pouring rain) built solid unity at nearly 900 schools and inspired workers around the world.

Thirty thousand teachers and other school workers won the active support of tens of thousands of parents and students and other workers, including firefighters.

The strikers' commitment strengthens our confidence that the working class can fight for the communist world—and the communist education—that we need.

It was a political strike for better schools. It highlighted the devastating attacks by the charter school privatizers, and isolated those capitalists who have pushed the charter movement.

The agreement sets a limit—still way too high—on class size. It promises more nurses and librarians as well as thirty new community schools with a range of social services. It has vague language about limiting charter schools and improving school funding.

Not everyone was happy about the agreement, or the rushed vote on it. However, most teachers see this as a victory, especially since

it came with no cuts to health care and a 6% pay increase.

The real victory for the working class is that more parents, teachers and other school workers are talking about communism.

More than a dozen ICWP comrades went to the picket lines at ten different schools and the mass rallies. We were out there every day. We distributed hundreds of copies of leaflets, hundreds of *Red Flags*, hundreds of copies of our pamphlet "Communist Education for a Classless Society." (icwpredflag.org/epe.pdf)

In some schools we have known teachers, school workers, and parents over the years. We re-established political relationships with them.

Young and newly-recruited comrades, including teachers and relatives of young children, initiated new political relationships. Other comrades got contact information from parents and teachers at schools and at the mass rallies.

We have established a solid base for continuing distribution of *Red Flag* and broader involvement in the Party's activities especially around May Day. (See letters pages 2 and 5.)

See TEACHERS' STRIKE, page 2

FACTORY ORGANIZING IN EL SALVADOR

SAN SALVADOR, January 10—Once again we have met with co-workers at the factory to discuss how to do better work in building the Party after the recent international meeting.

"How do we make a communist world?" "What will a communist factory be like?" These questions from the comrades generated the first part of the discussion.

A comrade who came to this meeting for the first time said that it is hard for him to understand how the world can change in the future because there are very deep roots that capitalism has created. But, he said, it is good to fight because it's clear that in this system that we live in, we can no longer bear the poverty.

Another comrade answered confidently that we are very far from achieving what we are talking about. However, we have to persevere in doing the political work because at the moment we are too few for a communist revolution.

We plan to keep building the three Party clubs inside the factory and visit other factories to expand our *Red Flag* networks.

Then we shared a coffee and the co-workers said goodbye since they had a long way to go to get home.

**MEXICO:
FACTORY
WORKERS'
WILDCAT
STRIKE
PAGE 3**

**U.S. RULERS IN
DISARRAY:
OPPORTUNITY
FOR
REVOLUTION
PAGE 4**

**MOVIE REVIEWS:
ROMA &
SPIDERMAN
PAGE 7**

**VENEZUELA
CRISIS
PAGE 8**



TEACHERS' STRIKE from page 1

What we learned

One lesson was how to make it clear that we supported the teachers, while emphasizing that the education young people need is only possible in a communist society.

We knew the strike was coming, and *Red Flag* had a series of articles about communist education leading up to the strike. But we could have done better in including everyone in the Party in discussing those articles.

A forum about communist education would have helped comrades who don't have direct ties to the public schools feel more confident about talking to parents and teachers.

Young people need communism

We talked a lot about communist education on the picket lines. Teachers agreed that capitalist schools are not designed to serve the needs of working-class kids. This is especially true for the working-class students of color who make up the majority in Los Angeles.

Instead, schools teach students to become obedient cogs in the capitalist machinery, dedicated administrators of capitalist institutions, and patriotic soldiers in imperialist wars.

Picketing teachers agreed that young people need to learn critical thinking, cooperation and sharing. They understood that schooling today is structured to promote conformity, competition and individualism.

We explained that only communist revolution could create a society that fosters the values we all need to learn.

We were able to briefly outline our vision of a communist world. In communism we will work together to feed, clothe and house the masses of workers. A world without money—what Marx called the “cash nexus”—will enable us to build healthier social relations. It will enable us to finally win the struggle against racism and sexism.

We were also able to share a vision of communist education which takes it out of the classroom and combines working for the common good with learning from each other.

Many of the teachers we talked to come from working-class families. They have seen their own parents subjected to racist exploitation, and their contribution to the society unappreciated.

Teachers were interested in our plan to break down the barrier between education and production. In communism, children and adults of all ages will learn from each other as they work to meet the needs of the masses.

These and many other discussions are just the beginning of organizing with teachers, students and their families, not for capitalist reforms, but for communist revolution. The next step is follow-up with this issue of *Red Flag* and invitations to ICWP forums and to May Day.

ON THE PICKET LINE

I went to my local elementary school to leaflet and distribute *Red Flag* on the 2nd day of the Los Angeles teachers' strike. My 5-year-old attends this school and it is also my alma mater.

I received great responses from parents and teachers in regards to *Red Flag* and communism. One teacher has taught there over 20 years, when I used to attend. This teacher said, “Oh, is that *Red Flag*? That's the paper that I wanted to get the other day at the union's march but I didn't get a chance to.”

I replied, “Yes, this is *Red Flag*. We are a revolutionary communist group fighting for a system where we produce for the needs of our working class, not for profits.” I said that in this system our schools are based on profits and they don't care if our students are successful or not.

She said, “I know. My husband is part of the Black Panther Party so I know about the fight and this is the paper I wanted.”

Also, my daughter's teacher was very accepting of the paper. She said she would read it and had an open mind about communism.

I'm hoping to continue to give these teachers and other teachers and parents our *Red Flag* on a monthly basis to continue mobilizing. We need students, teachers and parents to unite with ICWP to help demolish this system that has no interest in our children's future.

-a comrade.



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MLK MARCHERS HEAR THE VOICES OF COMMUNIST WORKERS THE WORLD OVER IN *RED FLAG*

SEATTLE (USA), Jan. 21—Sometimes, the oddest questions reveal important truths.

“Primary or secondary?” asked a young man as a comrade offered him a *Red Flag* at the Martin Luther King Jr. (MLK) rally. After some thought, our comrade realized he was talking about primary (first-hand) or secondary sources.

“Primary!” answered the comrade. “This paper features the voices of workers around the world in the struggle for communism. That’s the only way we’ll put an end to racism, sexism and xenophobia [fear of foreigners].”

The young man thought for a few seconds. “Good! I’ll take two.”

Our comrade changed his approach as he continued to distribute the paper and collect donations: “Would you like a copy of *Red Flag*? Hear the voices of workers in communist revolutionary struggle around the world.” We distributed every paper we brought, over 325.

MLK day is a national holiday in the U.S. Many cities have marches and rallies. In Seattle, the ICWP attends every year. This year, the Women’s March partnered with the MLK rally and march.

Another marcher was immediately attracted to the front-page article from El Salvador. Her par-

ents had emigrated from there in the ‘90s. She was glad to read about how workers there were talking about communism.

Many marchers liked discussing the other front page article, “Wall of Women.” It too featured a conversation with a potential new ICWP member who had been active in the demonstrations.

A woman who came to Seattle from Nigeria had a long conversation with a comrade about communism, socialism and capitalism.

She made a special trip to the Party’s table. She took copies of ICWP pamphlets on the communist fight against sexism, how communism will end racism, communist education and our manifesto *Mobilize the Masses for Communism*. She immediately started to read them.

Boeing Workers Discuss Reactions to Communist Literature

The next day a comrade at Boeing talked to a friend who regularly participates in the MLK march, sometimes as a speaker. This time he couldn’t make it. He wanted to know how people greeted our communist message.

Hearing about the Nigerian woman we met, he responded, “That’s great! But you can’t really talk with people here [US native-born] and expect that kind of reaction.”

“I don’t know about that,” answered our comrade. A group of U.S. high school students took a bunch of papers. One said, “Thank you, comrade” and all his friends did the same.

“That shows respect,” said our impressed Boeing friend. “We should understand that!”

Self-critically, we haven’t discussed the response with enough workers and students. Our paper *Red Flag* is unique in this regard. You don’t find reports just anywhere on international communist struggle that features party members and friends.

Sometimes we don’t have party members or friends involved in a particular struggle. We are forced to write a communist analysis “from afar.” But there is nothing stopping us from struggling about the communist potential with those we see on a regular basis at school or work. We can (and do) report on those discussions.

A comrade noted that some people commented specifically on how they liked the international look of the paper. “Now it’s on to preparing for the potluck,” she reminded us, referring to our next ICWP event. A good response to our communist paper requires following up with all our new and old friends.

Matamoros, Mexico:

WILDCAT STRIKE SHOWS POWER OF WORKING CLASS

January 30—Fifty-five thousand workers from 45 maquilas that produce auto parts, electronics and other commodities went on strike on January 25, in open defiance of their traitorous union leaders and government officials. They are demanding a 20% wage increase and a bonus owed to them of 32,000 pesos (US \$1,600).

Their unity and militancy has inspired millions around the world, including the International Communist Workers’ Party (ICWP) and its base. We see in these masses of workers in struggle their great potential to fight for communism.

The strike is affecting car production in the US and Canada and impacting the economy of the state of Tamaulipas. It shows the power of our class. Without us, nothing moves.

Workers Can Run Society Without Bosses – a Communist Society.

We will achieve this only with a communist revolution that rids the world of imperialists and all other capitalists, together with their money, markets, borders and nations.

In capitalism we sell our labor power for a miserable wage to produce goods that generate huge profits for the capitalists.

In communism we will produce only to meet the needs of our international working class family. Collectively we will plan what, how and where to produce and how to distribute it according to the needs of each - without money.

Eliminating money and wage slavery will destroy the material basis that perpetuates racism and sexism. Destroying borders and nations will end xenophobia and the poisons of nationalism and patriotism.

Nobody will live better than anyone else. Nobody will have special privileges. No one will be anyone’s boss or servant. We will all develop many skills and do many kinds of work, manual and mental.

Industrial Workers Must Mobilize for Communism, Not Reforms

Communism won’t fall from the sky. It won’t emerge from spontaneous reformist struggles. The masses have to be mobilized for communism. Industrial workers - like the Matamoros strikers - have a key role to play.

Why? Because only the working class can lib-

time fighting for reforms. Change has not been easy. But we have to do it.

The working masses have been trained for over a century to fight for reforms. Changing them will not be easy, but we have to do it.

Fight to End Wage Slavery, Not for Higher Wages

Trade-unionism has driven the fight for better wages and benefits. But, wages are the chains that bind us to the capitalists. Wages dehumanize us. They convert us into commodities.

No matter how much they pay us, we will remain slaves of the capitalists. Our historical task is to end this slavery and class society.

Trade union ideology does not aim for our liberation. It only seeks to reform capitalism. The Matamoros strikers hate their traitorous union leaders. But, they should not struggle to create more radical or honest unions. Their struggle, our struggle, must be to build the ICWP. It must be to organize the communist revolution that will end capitalism-imperialism and all its horrors.

Another capitalist ideology that we must eradicate from our ranks is belief in elections. No electoral political party or capitalist politician will liberate us. All are loyal defenders of capitalism.

MoReNa and López Obrador are no exception. The MoReNa Senator, Ricardo Monreal Ávila, following Lopez Obrador’s orders, had the state police ready to reopen the factory gates by force. That didn’t happen only because 27 maquilas have yielded to the strikers’ demands.

Whatever the outcome of this struggle, unionism and the electoral process are dead-ends for our class. Let’s organize ICWP and armed communist revolution to win the communist world that we need and long for.



Strikers in Matamoros:
“Union & Company Kill the Working Class

erate the working class.

In the final analysis, the communist political line - which will determine our failure or success - is forged in the crucible of the class struggle. The tactics and strategies we use in our daily struggles against the capitalists will determine whether we move towards communism or remain slaves to the capitalists.

Do we fight for reforms or do we help the masses visualize a communist society and inspire them to fight for it? This is the burning question.

The struggle for reforms destroyed the old communist movement. Its biggest reform was to fight for socialism, which turned out to be state capitalism.

The original organizers of the ICWP came out of that movement. For decades we spent a lot of

Shut Down Capitalism!

Donald Trump's 35-day government shutdown left 800,000 people out of work without pay. These workers were more likely to be black than the percentage of black workers in the US would predict. Not only did these workers not get paid, but those with certain job categories were required to still go to work anyway.

As a communist, I can see the crime in this: the capitalist system makes us reliant on money and separates us with racist competition.

Although the shutdown is over, Trump promises there will be another one soon unless an agreement is reached on funding the border wall. We need to unite workers in fighting for communism to end our dependence on money and to defeat racism against foreigners

On my job, I have seen some people affected by the shutdown react in a racist way—blaming immigrants instead of Trump. Most black people I know, however, hate Trump so much that they don't buy this. They know this fool is happy to attack black people to promote racism against immigrants.

An interview on National Public Radio stated that African-American workers make up a higher percentage of the federal work force due to the job security and benefits government jobs used to provide.

For more than a month, job security for government workers or anyone reliant on government aid was shattered due to the shutdown. This caused some US-born workers to blame foreigners and the Democrats for not giving Trump the funds for his wall.

But what if money was not in the equation? How would the masses react to such a situation?

In a communist society we will all be expected to contribute work for the better of all of us in society to share. We will all work to produce what is needed for all. Yes, we are working, but not for a wage to pay for the things we need, but actually to help produce what we need.

Communist society shares in abundance and in scarcity. We aren't fighting for a fairy tale. We are fighting for a reality which is on the horizon, which will not have a place for money because of what it does to people and their lives. We are fighting for a world where money doesn't dictate social relationships or economic wellbeing which affects lives. ICWP is fighting for a revolution which will end all suffering and to shut this government down for good.

—Los Angeles Comrade



LOS ANGELES, USA--Hundreds of marchers at the Women's March here gladly took over 700 copies of our pamphlet "The Communist Fight Against Sexism." Many multi-racial groups of young people stopped to talk and take copies of the pamphlet and *Red Flag*. Others took pictures of our communist signs. "I came here to learn. This is what I want. Thank you," said one young woman marcher. Many who took the communist pamphlet were impressed when we said it was written internationally for the fight to eliminate sexism and build a communist world without racism and sexism.

US Rulers' Disarray:

WE NEED MORE COMMUNISM, NOT MORE DEMOCRACY

January 29—Many people are fed up with Trump's racism and xenophobia. They hope he will be impeached, even though Pence, another racist, sexist exploiter, would become President. With each new arrest, the noose seems to be tightening around the necks of Trump's inner circle.

Many are disgusted, not only with Trump, but with the whole political system. Racist horrors, economic hardship and endless wars lead them to look for an alternative. How can we win them to communism?

To Impeach or Not to Impeach

"Impeach Trump Now," screams an article in the *Atlantic* magazine. It argues that's the only way to "restore faith in American democracy."

On the other side, a *New York Times* columnist argues "The Case Against Impeachment." He says that Trump should be beaten at the polls in 2020. In the meantime, he claims, Trump can be controlled by his advisers and other politicians. That hasn't worked so well so far.

This debate appears to be a tactical disagreement among US capitalist rulers about how best to keep US workers trapped into believing in US capitalist democracy.

But it exposes a ruling class in disarray. Its empire is collapsing and they can't agree about how best to deal with it.

Why do major US imperialist bosses hate Trump?

A major US imperialist think tank, The Brookings Institute, points to the cause of the US bosses' collapsing world: the days of cooperation between the US and China are over. Should their policy assume this will end in a cold war, in a world war, or in "managed competition?"

A top Brookings strategist complains that US leaders have retreated from global leadership and responsibility and that Trump has made this worse. He wants the US to fight to maintain dominance.

In contrast, Richard Haass, president of the influential Council of Foreign Relations, calls for "managed decline." He hates Trump because "it is one thing for a world order [NATO] to unravel slowly; it is quite another for the country that had a large hand in building it to take the lead in dismantling it."

Haass concludes that this world order doesn't have to end in world war the way an earlier world order that began in 1815 exploded a century later in World War I. But the rise of a new power challenging an existing dominant power always ends in war. Haass knows this. He admits that another world war is possible. The thrust of his article is about bolstering strategic alliances and "getting the US house in order."

Masses Losing Confidence in Capitalism: Problem for US Rulers, Opportunity for the Growth of Communism

These bosses fear that masses of workers and youth are losing confidence in their system. That's why Haass calls for "reducing government debt, rebuilding infrastructure, improving public education, investing more in the social safety net, a smart immigration system" and more.

But the bosses can only "manage" their decline on the backs of the working class by cutting wages and health care and by unleashing racist terror.

It is capitalism, not just Trump, that attacks the working class. This deadly racist, sexist capital-

ist-imperialist system leaves the masses no choice but to end it with revolution.

We will only have a real say in how society is organized when masses of workers, students and soldiers mobilize for communist revolution. We will build a communist world with cooperative social relations organized to meet the needs of the masses.

We don't need two (or more) parties that represent our exploiters. We need armed revolution for communism.

Twice during the 20th century, global capitalist crisis and competition sharpened into world war. Twice, when the masses of workers and soldiers were forced to starve and fight for the exploiters, they turned their guns on the bosses and taken power through revolution.

By building ICWP collectives now, we are preparing to turn the rulers' present crisis and wars into the fight for communist workers' power. Not for "socialism" or "new democracy" or anything less than the communist society we need.

Communism won't have competing class interests or competing imperialists. There will only be the masses, cooperating globally to meet everyone's needs.

The government will be our mass party, the International Communist Workers' Party. It will consist of millions of workers organized in interconnected collectives that involve many millions more.

These collectives will spread revolution and communism beyond liberated areas to the whole world.

BRINGING COMMUNISM TO THE L.A. TEACHERS' STRIKE

January 15—Comrades of the International Communist Workers' Party have walked picket lines with the striking teachers in the cold gray morning and in drenching rain. We have joined massive demonstrations in downtown LA with our communist signs and literature. Here are a few stories from the first two days of the strike:

Comrade D joined the picket line at the neighborhood school her grandchild attends. She offered her house nearby for strikers who might need to use the bathroom. "Spoke to 3 teachers who knocked on my door this morning," she reported the next day, "about who is behind injustice on a global scale. Forgot to hand out papers." There will be another chance!

Comrade M, a retired teacher, walked the lines at two schools with teachers she had known before and got contact information for two old friends and a new acquaintance. "Union activists

Building a Base for Communism at Our Children's Schools

The Los Angeles teachers' strike has given us the opportunity to bring communist ideas to students, parents and teachers. Our group went to several high schools and elementary schools. Best of all, we managed to get to two elementary schools attended by a daughter of one comrade and a sister of another. These two comrades, together with a third, visited both schools.

In one of these schools we heard, "Today you will not need your backpacks." (In other words, you won't be doing any work.) An administrator said this over and over to parents and students who entered.

At the same school, a teacher in the picket line took **Red Flag**. She raised it high and told those around her, "Take the newspaper!" Many did take the leaflet and **Red Flag**.

A few days before the strike began, two comrades visited a high school. A young teacher approached one of them. The comrade carried in one hand a sign that said, "For the education that our students need... fight for communism" and in the other hand flyers and **Red Flag**.

"What is this?" asked the teacher.

"We are from the ICWP and we recognize that no strike will bring the education that working-class students need. Schools are capitalist institutions, they are part of the State and they are part of class domination."

"Interesting," interrupted the teacher. "These schools reproduce the relations of capitalist exploitation and that is why we need a real communist system."

With a smile, the teacher grabbed **Red Flag** and the flyer and said, "I'm going to read this," as she entered the school campus.

—ICWP schools collective

were very happy to see me," she commented. "Took **Red Flag**. Several said they'd been thinking about me a lot; saw me as a mentor. But this is largely based on trade unionist practice. Even though I gave a brief rap about communism any real progress will take more time on the picket line."

Comrade O handed out hundreds of Red Flags and leaflets at two downtown rallies despite heavy rain. She commented that distributing leaflets "was harder than distributing RF. People did NOT like the title ('No Strike Can Win the Schools We Deserve')." This was an old version of the leaflet; the newer one said 'Strikes Can't Win the Schools We Deserve.' But the comrade added that "I had to do a lot more talking

...but it was useful."

—Los Angeles comrades



Communism on the LA Teachers' Picket Lines

Three comrades went to a high school where we have had political work for many years.

It was the first morning of the strike, in pouring rain. Many of the teachers and students on the picket line were glad to see us.

We explained that to get the education the masses need, we need communist education and a communist society without racism, sexism or exploitation. Where everything, including education is organized to meet the masses' needs—to produce and distribute everything the masses need.

We offered **Red Flag** to one teacher who refused it until another told him, "That's the group that what's-his-name is with."

"Oh," said the first teacher. He took the paper and our leaflet.

One teacher objected to communist sign being on the picket line. But more welcomed us. When we left, we said we would be back.

Two comrades did go back on the last day of the strike. We had another leaflet that explained more about communist education. It said that even if the teachers win their reform demands, education will still serve the capitalists and we need education that serves the masses.

This time, more strikers wanted to talk—about the strike, the unity it created, and the possibility of a different society and a different education system. Some agreed that the capitalists want the schools to produce loyal workers and soldiers, while they want to encourage students to learn to be critical thinkers and doers.

"What do you think education should be like?" a comrade asked a young teacher.

"I've never thought about it," he admitted. He took our education pamphlet and promised to read it.

We said the unity in the strike showed the potential for revolution. Several said they would like to continue the conversation.

"These experiences helped me to feel in my bones what I already knew in my head – that masses are open to communism," said a comrade.

—LA Comrades



LETTERS

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CRITICISM AND SUGGESTIONS

No to Elections! Join ICWP! Fight for Communism!

The past two conferences in Central America and the USA have been great experiences for the collective in South Africa. They have encouraged us to be more determined and active in contributing to the growth of ICWP to be a mass movement to mobilize millions of working-class brothers and sisters to a communist revolution.

After hearing about the work and progress of the party, we are encouraged by the working class from the rest of the world joining the struggle for communism and joining the mass party ICWP.

With elections around the corner here in South Africa, again we are seeing the show about to intensify. The Capitalist political parties are campaigning for votes. They are going to the working class, telling them they are their hopes and that the working class should trust in them to deliver the necessities of life. They claim they take care and will take care of the working class's needs while also claiming that workers must exercise their power by voting for them.

If that was the case our needs would be taken care of by now. In fact, power is with the working class and the masses, not their votes. Elections are the illusion given as fake democracy and freedom in capitalist societies.

The horror faced by the working class is not as a result of a particular government or particular political party. It is the result of a particular class, the Capitalist ruling class, which dictates and exploits the working class and the rest of the masses. This exploitation is facilitated and administered by the different governments or political elites within artificial borders they call nations that are used to divide and conquer the working class and keep it from uniting.

The crisis of capitalism and the capitalist imperialist rivalry continue to produce exploitation and horrible living conditions and death for the working class. We mobilize our brothers and sisters to join the struggle for communist revolution to smash capitalism and start building communism, to smash borders and build a world where the working class produce for their needs.

It does not matter which political party is at the helm. Their goal is to exploit us for profits. They have killed the working class brothers like the Marikana mine workers the minute they demand even for reform.

The courage of the mine workers to fight and die for their needs showed us the will and the need to accelerate the destruction of capitalism and fight directly for communism.

The reluctance of the working class to participate in the elections shows us they need a revolutionary change that will produce a society and a system that will be based on the needs of the working class. We invite our sisters and brothers who see communism as the only solution that can free us from this exploitation to join the mass party ICWP and play a leadership role in capitalism's destruction.

—Comrades in South Africa

A Mountain of Cheese

"While Americans consumed nearly 37 pounds per capita in 2017, it was not enough to reduce the country's 1.4 billion-pound cheese surplus. The glut, which at 900,000 cubic yards is the largest in U.S. history, means that there is enough cheese sitting in

cold storage to wrap around the U.S. Capitol." — National Public Radio (NPR)

This amounts to about 20 pounds of cheese for every child in the USA.

NPR blames the fickle tastes of consumers: "Suppliers turn that extra milk into cheese because it is less perishable and stays fresh for longer periods. But Americans are turning their noses up at those processed cheese slices and string cheese — varieties that are a main driver of the U.S. cheese market — in favor of more refined options."

NPR conveniently forgets that millions of hungry poor people (in the US alone) can't afford to turn their noses up at anything edible. But if they want a piece of the cheese mountain, they have to pay!

In communism, nothing would stop hungry people from starting to chew through the mountain. Because food would be distributed freely, not sold.

The real cause of the cheese mountain is capitalist overproduction. But NPR's sources see the only problem as low prices: "If you've got too much of something, the price has to go down until consumption rises," Cornell University Professor Andrew Novakovic says.

"Too much" ... too much to sell, not too much to feed hungry people.

The capitalist solution to overproduction is not to give food away. That would undercut the market. Instead, cut back production:

"The price of letting pounds of cheese sit idle in cold storage comes back to dairy farmers. Since the 1970s, the industry has consolidated but now even those [larger] farms can't compete. In Wisconsin alone, hundreds of farms closed in 2018.

"A lot of farmers would say, 'Well, make it stop.' But the fact of the matter is we're still pushing out a little bit more milk than we know what to do with," Novakovic says.

We workers know what to do with that milk. Let hungry kids drink it!

Hunger under capitalism is not caused by food shortages. Workers already produce plenty of food. We could easily produce plenty

more — say, by reopening hundreds of closed dairy farms.

Hunger is about labor discipline. It functions to keep workers in their lousy jobs by threatening them with hunger. Even more effective, capitalism threatens to make their kids go hungry. And to make the threat believable, it has to be carried out sometimes. So hungry kids are vital to making capitalism (and workers) work.

In communism there will be no hungry kids. And no need for terroristic labor discipline because workers will eagerly work for a system that takes care of them and doesn't lock up mountains of food.

—Angry comrade

Love Life, Love the Struggle for Communism

In the recent international meeting of ICWP, I shared in the political development of several comrades, from the newest to the most veteran in the class struggle. It was fascinating to listen to the comrades, as well as those who nodded or shook their heads, expressing their feelings.

However, I was struck by some questions that were not answered and I returned home with them. These revolved around how will education be in the communist society? How are we educating ourselves now? What kind of communism are we? These could be very general and we could downplay them in our class struggle, but I didn't stop thinking about them.

These questions are also part of a love for defending life. It means having confidence in what we do, "feeling" what we do, loving the struggle.

I shared this with a friend of the Party. She commented that she usually sees the people of the "left" as sad, angry with life, or cold. She sees that I am not like that, because of all the negative events that we have shared.

This is what another comrade in Mexico says: "Why wait until communism? Let's make communism our way of life starting now." This means transmitting life, not in a mechanical way, but in a conscious and dialectical way.

Many negative things exist in capitalist society and we are fighting for this system to come to an end. Each comrade, each member with their commitments that do not imply tolerance, comfort, competence, minimum demands, etc.

I believe that each comrade must be motivated to read, to develop skills, to expand their limits, to leave their comfort zone. They should not wait for another to tell them what they should or must do. This must arise from that need to educate ourselves as human beings.

It is true that communism is developing and we are developing it with our practice, theory and practice, practice and theory. We are directly responsible for our political advances. We are our Party.

I know that we should not be embarrassed or insecure when talking and expounding the ideas. This is normal up to a point, but we should talk about it. Only then can we unite and transmit trust.

We want quantity and quality and we need a communist society where money does not classify us or indicate how much we are worth and where each worker can find complete development as a human being. This makes them stay to fight with us in a conscious way for our emancipation. Join our struggle.

—A Comrade from Mexico



Movie Review: Roma

BEAUTIFUL... BUT WHAT IS ITS CLASS OUTLOOK?

“My father was in the Mexico student protests,” said a friend in the US. “He heard that ‘Roma’ was about those protests. But he walked out halfway through. He called to tell me not to see it.

“I saw it anyway. It is beautifully done,” the friend continued. “But it has zero content. Absolutely zero.”

‘Roma’ is indeed beautifully done. It’s easy to like for its sympathetic portrayal of a strong indigenous domestic worker. It calls out the racist elitism of her middle-class employers in Mexico City’s Roma neighborhood.

It makes connections between sexism and fascist ideology. While it draws parallels between the impacts of sexism on the main character and her employer, ‘Roma’ emphasizes the deep class divisions between them.

But it’s not true that this movie – or any movie – has “zero content.” Our question should be: What is its class outlook?

‘Roma’ is a fictionalized version of the childhood experiences of the director, Alfonso Cuarón. The main character Cleo is modeled on Liboria “Libo” Rodríguez, who was a live-in servant in the Cuarón home. Cuarón consulted with Ms. Rodríguez to get authentic details of their daily life. But Cleo barely gets to speak. We learn almost nothing about her motivation, her feelings, or her thoughts.

As one critic wrote, the “effacement of Cleo’s character...that burnishes the director’s conscience while smothering her consciousness and his own, is the essential and crucial failure of ‘Roma.’”

But it gets worse. Cleo is portrayed as an un-

usual, heroic individual. She is cut off from her family. Nowhere is there a hint that she is part of the working class. Or that a working class exists. Or that it has a path to escape capitalist exploitation.

In reality, sharp class struggles rocked Mexico City before and during 1971. Railway workers, bus drivers, garment workers, teachers and others defied trade-union leaders in militant strikes. They were attacked by the same US-trained fascist “Halcones” (Falcons) shown in ‘Roma’ murdering student protesters.

The film reconstructs the Corpus Christi massacre of June 10, 1971, when Los Halcones opened fire on peaceful student protesters. The students had their own demands – not shown in the film – around educational issues and against repression. But many joined the workers’ protests, too—also not shown.

And there is no hint that the massive protests in Mexico were part of an international wave of class struggle that included the Great Proletarian Cultural Revolution in China. Many workers and students were radicalized – including a current leader of the International Communist Workers’ Party. Left-wing groups emerged and grew, such as the September 23 Communist League.

But ‘Roma’ chooses to show instead a fictional “silent nobility of the working poor.” Instead of

celebrating the masses in class struggle, it “exalts heroes who do manual labor without having to look closely or deeply at elements of their heroes’ lives that don’t elicit either praise or pity.”

Cuarón chose not to even hint that the working class has the power to liberate itself. Instead he leaves us with images of endless hopeless drudgery. That is its true content.

‘Roma’ is a beautifully-made movie about a working-class heroine that takes the class standpoint of her (and our) oppressors. No wonder that most capitalist critics are raving about it.

We’re not saying “don’t see it.” We’re saying “don’t get sucked in.” We’re saying that if you want to see movies with a working-class outlook, then join the fight for the communist society that will make the lives and the art we need.



Strikers in Ayotla, a community in the city of Ixtapaluca in the state of Mexico, 1966. The strike was provoked by the mass firing of 100 workers. They were organized as an independent union with thousands of supporters. The strike was suppressed by the US-trained fascist “Falcons” and federal troops. But a wave of mass worker protests across the state of Mexico soon followed.

SPIDER-MAN: HOLLYWOOD’S PATRIOTIC PROPAGANDA

The new film *Spider-Man: Into the Spider-Verse*, supposed to be the best animated film ever of the genre, is not very far from the original comics of the past.

The current wave of production of superhero films is a lot like the period when superhero comics were first produced.

The American capitalist masters at the end of the Great Depression and the beginnings of World War II urgently needed to promote an iron-clad patriotism to defend the status quo and to save their empire. That’s why the government promoted the creation of superheroes in comics. Superman first appeared in 1938, Batman in 1939 and Captain America in 1941.

They chose comics because about half of all enlisted personnel in the armed forces as well as millions of civilians were habitual comic book readers.

Two days after Pearl Harbor, in December of 1941, the government established the Writers’ War Board (WWB). This civil organization was formed at the request of the chief of the writing staff of the Treasury Department.

In appearance, the WWB was an independent organization composed of volunteers committed to the creation of an antifascist and pro-American culture. In essence, the WWB received funds and direction from a federal agency called the Office of War Information (OWI). The OWI allowed the government to create unofficial propaganda for consumption by civilians and military.

Within the WWB there was a Comics Committee that created comic book characters and story ideas that were then passed on to the cooperating editors. The writers and artists would create works of art and language around the ideas sent by the Comics Committee and then send drafts to

the WWB for review. Often, the WWB returned these drafts with very specific requests for more anti-Japanese, anti-German and pro-U.S. images and narratives.

What does this have to do with the new *Spider-Man: Into the Spider-Verse*?

The main character is an Afro-Latino teenager, Miles Morales, 14 years old and a student in an elite boarding school in New York City.

He is the son of an African-American cop and an Afro-Latin mother who speaks Spanish. The uncle, brother of the father, is a rebel and graffiti artist. Against the wishes of the father, Miles meets with him secretly. He’s like a mentor to Miles. Then we realize that his uncle is part of the gang of villains led by Kingpin.

Miles is bitten by a radioactive spider and becomes the Spider-Man of his “dimension.” Then, he encounters five arachnid characters from other dimensions that join their efforts to defend the city and the other realities from which they come.

Coming soon:

**FIGHT FOR
THE DAY WHEN
NO WORKER WILL
BE CALLED
FOREIGNER**

—a new pamphlet by the
**International Communist
Workers’ Party**

They include Peter Parker (the original Spider-man), Gwen Stacy, a white South African teenager, an anime-style girl, a comic cartoon pig and a black-and-white 1930s Spider-Man Noir. By joining forces and defeating Kingpin and his gang they will be able to return to their own universes and save them from destruction.

Just as the capitalist masters relied in the past on the original comics to promote propaganda that defends the status quo, they now rely on this type of films. The times we are living in are not so different from the Great Depression and World War II. Today we live in a general crisis of capitalism and more wars that will soon lead us to World War III. The father as a policeman, the multicultural, multilingual and international grouping of different “Spider People” is an attempt to win over the population to a multicultural imperialism—to defend and protect a system based on exploitation and inequality.



Venezuelan Crisis:

DON'T SIDE WITH ANY BOSSES – WORKERS AND SOLDIERS NEED COMMUNISM

January 30—Venezuela is living through its most tense days since the protests of 2017. The opposition, in an act of provocation, declared Juan Guaidó, president of the National Assembly, as the “President in Charge” of the country. Maduro’s government declared the National Assembly in contempt.

The failures of Venezuela’s “XXI Century Socialism” are plain to see. The need to mobilize the masses for Communism is increasingly urgent.

The opposition argues that Maduro’s election as president in 2018 was fraudulent and illegitimate. That’s why, at the end of his 2013-2019 term, the opposition carried out the present maneuver to pressure him to leave office and call new elections.

The Venezuelan conflict has reaffirmed the pieces in the deadly chess game of inter-imperialist rivalry. US Vice-President Mike Pence was the first to recognize Juan Guaidó as “President in Charge.” Then Canada, Colombia, Chile, Costa Rica and other countries aligned with US interests did the same. A few days later, so did France, Germany and Spain.

Meanwhile, China, Russia, Bolivia and their allies continue to recognize Maduro as president of Venezuela. It appears that they have not lifted a finger to avoid the intervention maneuvers.

The likelihood of a direct confrontation between the major powers is small, but a confrontation between US-backed armed opposition groups and Maduro’s supporters is possible.

It is true that the US intervention has aggravated the crisis, but we cannot reduce our analy-

sis only to this, as do the leftists of “the possible.” The Venezuelan experience shows once again that socialism – which keeps money, markets and capitalist social relations of production intact – inevitably leads to crisis.

The Hugo Chavez era achieved great macroeconomic, political and social success. It was not because of the political choices of his government. Chavez achieved temporary success because his government was able to take advantage of the second big rise in the price of crude oil in recent history. He used some of this wealth to benefit the masses. It was a wild oil inflation driven by elements external to Venezuela that financed fast-growing wages, massive housing solutions and spending for educational, medical and nutritional needs.

But Chavez bequeathed a time bomb to Maduro. The inevitable happened. The price of oil collapsed in 2014 and the country entered a crisis from which it finds no way out.

Learning from this process means understanding that communist revolution cannot depend on the ability to buy and sell resources under the control of the Party. The masses must not be seen as mere beneficiaries of economic reforms.

Build a Mass Base for Communism among Workers and Soldiers

The masses must be won to communist ideas and organized in the Party. ICWP is not just a party of leaders or the “enlightened.” The masses must be the main engine of the changes necessary for a new way of life. Immediately eliminating money and production for profit unleashes the ingenuity of the masses for the solution of their

problems (food, water, housing, security).

We will fight for food production for all, industrial production for needs, communist education, and mass campaigns to eradicate health problems in the areas controlled by the Party. The success of these goals will be the participation of the masses and the organizational capacity of the Party.

The Venezuelan top army officers remain loyal to the official government, despite pressure and an offer of amnesty from the opposition. But the outcome of the immediate crisis depends on the positions taken not just by the high officers of the Bolivarian Army but also on the mid-level officers and the rank-and-file soldiers.

ICWP is mobilizing for Communism in South Africa, El Salvador, Mexico, Spain, India, Honduras, Canada and the US, but not yet in Venezuela. The Venezuelan crisis makes clear the need for a communist party independent of the ruling class, with a firm goal: communism, and nothing less.

A communist base among Venezuelan soldiers and workers would call on the masses not to defend and die for either one of the two factions of the bourgeoisie and instead to turn the crisis into a communist revolution. But this base doesn’t exist. There is a lot of work to be done.

For now, we ask our readers to discuss this article and the rest of the *Red Flag*, and to make an effort to spread the ideas of the ICWP including to reach our Venezuelan class brothers and sisters outside or inside Venezuela.

India, January 8-9, 2019



West Bengal



Mumbai

The largest general strike in world history brought major cities across India to a two-day standstill (January 8-9) as 150-200 million workers poured into the streets. Factory workers (including aerospace), public transit workers and construction workers marched alongside farmers, office employees, child care workers, social health activists and many more.

This was a political strike against the fascist Modi government and its racist attacks on the working class. The organizers, a coalition of mainly left-led trade-unions, put forward a “charter of demands” for large-scale economic reforms.

But the masses they mobilized in a sea of red flags were looking for something else. Some chanted “Long Live the Revolution!” Leaflets called on unions to “challenge the system of capitalism” and proclaimed opposition to “all the wings of the capitalist class and its representatives.”

What comes next? All the socialist and so-called “communist” parties in India will try to steer this powerful and inspiring display of workers’ power into the dead-end of elections. All parties — except for one. Comrades of the International Communist Workers’ Party (ICWP) are taking advantage of this huge opportunity to make communist ideas become mass ideas. All *Red Flag* readers everywhere should do the same.

Workers and others inspired by communism will become a material force capable of challenging the capitalist system in a way that unions can never do. They will organize armed insurrection and revolution to destroy all wings of the capitalist class in a way that even the most powerful general strike can never do. And they will build the communist world that the masses in India and everywhere so desperately need. Long live communism!