

RED FLAG



MOBILIZE THE MASSES FOR COMMUNISM

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



LOS ANGELES (US), October 27—ICWP protest at Mexican Consulate. Capitalism in crisis has forced millions of our working-class family to migrate for survival. The bosses are mobilizing fascist bands and their armies to attack them. On October 13, Mexican President López Obrador ordered hundreds of refugees from Africa, Haiti and Central America stopped in their journey north from Tapachula to the US. Obrador is a faithful servant of capitalism and US imperialism. Workers must mobilize to destroy capitalism and its borders with communist revolution.

GARMENT WORKERS ON TWO CONTINENTS MOBILIZING FOR COMMUNISM

EL SALVADOR, October 17 — “Does the ICWP (International Communist Workers’ Party) have members in Ecuador?” a co-worker at the factory asked me. “Things are happening there that are very violent. There’s a lot of blood.”

As a worker I want to share this conversation with all of us who read our newspaper *Red Flag*.

My co-worker has been reading *Red Flag* for several years. She recently accompanied us for the first time to a Party meeting. She said that since I belong to the ICWP, maybe I could explain to her what was happening in this country to the south.

My comrades had already sent me the ICWP leaflet on the situation in Ecuador. I told her that we don’t have comrades there yet, but that we are fighting to organize more workers all over the world. I said that this would be a great opportunity— if we had members of our party there— since the masses of workers are open to communist ideas.

In the next few days we’ll give workers the leaflet so they have more information.

I also told her that the protests began because of the increase in fuel costs and other measures imposed by the International Monetary Fund, an organization that gives instructions to capitalist governments. I explained that the people didn’t just stand by. They took to the streets, first and foremost, the indigenous people. They fought a hard battle, including workers and students.

I saw that she was worried about all the repression suffered by the workers in Ecuador, because she told me, “These things shouldn’t happen.” Capitalism is not going to give up its power easily, but there are more of us who want a better world for workers and their families. I told her I was going to give her an example: there was a lot of workers’ blood spilled so that we workers have eight hours of work. If the exploiters could, they would not give us any free time for ourselves, because they only seek their profits by squeezing our labor power.

That’s why we need Communism. Then all this capitalist terror will come to an end. That’s why we need you and everyone in this factory. Together we’re going to advance the revolution for Communism organized by the International Communist Workers’ Party.

INDIA, October 17 — “My supervisor has been asking me for sexual favors for months. I refused. Now he verbally abuses me in front of coworkers,” said Rita, a 28-year-old garment worker in Bengaluru, India. She is among half a million garment workers, mostly women, who work in about 1200 units. They produce clothes for global brands like Zara, H&M, Prada, Chanel and Burberry.

Rita and co-workers, fed up with the humiliation, approached the union. The union said that this is the industry and if you want to work, you need to accept this reality.

Rita, now even angrier, went to a local office of a Non-Governmental Organization (NGO) that supports women who are sexually harassed. They were very sym-

pathetic and took her case to court. After nine months, the court dismissed the case, claiming there was no ‘evidence’ of sexual harassment.

Rita’s story took an unusual turn. Amit, a young computer engineer, comes from the same village. He has been reading *Red Flag* for two years. Bengaluru is also the Silicon Valley of India. Every major US and European multinational has huge back offices in glitzy campuses far from the garment factories.

Amit heard about Rita’s story through the NGO. He visited Rita with *Red Flag*. He spoke with her and her family about how only communism can end the humiliating harassment that so many women in the garment industry face. Amit translated some old *Red Flag* articles written

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US Imperialist Spokesman Calls for Focus on “Great Power Competition”

JOIN AND BUILD ICWP TO TURN IMPERIALIST WORLD WAR INTO COMMUNIST REVOLUTION

October 30— Trump’s announcement of the assassination of Abu Bakr al-Baghdadi is US imperialism whistling in the dark.

The real news in Syria is US tanks being pelted with rotten potatoes as they exit Qamishli. It’s Russian videos of footballs, animal crackers and a refrigerator full of soft drinks in an abandoned US base in Manbij. It’s fifty US nuclear weapons stranded in Turkey that the US neither controls nor knows how to remove.

The raid that killed the ISIS commander was one of the last gasps of US power in the region. It took place with the assistance of the Kurdish allies Trump has abandoned, and in spite of the chaos that Trump’s surprise declaration of US withdrawal has caused.

On October 6, Trump tweeted that the US would withdraw US troops from the Kurdish region of Rojava in northern Syria. This allowed Turkey’s Syrian jihadi thugs to carry out genocide in a 20-mile-deep “buffer zone” along the Turkey-Syria border.

The result: a new alignment of forces in the region.

First, Russia brokered a deal. The Syrian Kurds asked the Syrian government, backed by Russia and Iran, to support them in the fight against the Turkish invasion. This has not stopped the attacks. Syria reestablished authority over an area from which it had been expelled. Syria promised to take over the prisons where Kurds guarded ISIS captives.

Then Russian President Putin and Turkish President Erdogan met in Sochi, Russia. Erdogan agreed to Russian limits in the buffer zone and joint patrols by Russian and Turkish forces.

Russia and Iran have been the main backers of Syrian President Assad. Russia is now brokering deals with both the Kurds (formerly protected by the US) and with Turkey (formerly a NATO bulwark against Russia).

Russia has achieved a major victory. This is the

end of the US as a dominant power in the Middle East.

This situation did not begin with Trump’s October 6th tweet. It didn’t begin when the US refused to respond to an attack on a Saudi oil refinery by Iran-backed Houthis in Yemen. Both events are part of a pattern of a declining imperialist power in retreat from the Middle East.

Pivot to Asia

The latest US Defense Secretary, Mike Esper, laid out the consequences in a press conference at the German Marshall Fund in Brussels on Oct. 24.

Esper said that Turkey was going to invade northern Syria whether or not fifty US troops were there supporting the Kurds. So he just decided to get them out of the way. The US was already irrelevant in Syria. Events in October just sealed that.

Esper urged other NATO nations to “make sure Turkey trends back to being the strong, reliable ally they’ve been in the past.”

Why? Because, he said, the US from now on “prioritizes China first, Russia second, as we transition our primary focus towards great power competition.” That means war between the major imperialists: world war.

Mostly Esper spoke about China. He railed against China’s Belt and Road Initiative. He cautioned NATO allies against underestimating the threat to their national security by Chinese economic and military expansion. He denounced in particular the militarization of the South China Sea. He called it an example of “Beijing’s unwillingness to abide by international rules and norms.”



Not Peace but War

The US withdrawal from the Middle East to “pivot to Asia” began under the Obama administration. This is not a pivot from strength. It is an act of desperation of a declining imperialist power.

The US is in decline, economically, politically and militarily. Russia’s ascendance in the Middle East is matched by Chinese ascendance as an economic power worldwide.

Esper’s speech makes it clear that US imperialism does not plan to go down without a fight. It can’t. Capitalism’s competition for maximum profit makes inter-imperialist rivalry inevitable. And so are the wars for profit – including world war – that it spawns.

We must see these wars as opportunities to end capitalism and imperialism once and for all with communist revolution. This means recruiting more members to build a mass International Communist Workers’ Party, especially in the factories and in the military.

It’s up to us.

Syrian Kurdistan:

THE FUTURE OF THE “LEFT” OR A FRONT FOR US IMPERIALISM?

October 29—A video circulating on social media shows armed men threatening to rape and murder a Kurdish female soldier, Cicek Kobane. This has happened to at least two more Kurdish women since October 9.

Turkey is using these Syrian thugs to enforce their “safe zone” inside Rojava (see map). These forces are the worst of the anti-women religious fanatical murderers who have formed ISIS and Al-Qaeda.

Supporters of Rojava, under the hashtag #RiseUp4Rojava, are posting this video to condemn the US “betrayal” of its Kurdish allies in the fight against ISIS. The US has abandoned Kurdish people half a dozen times in the last century.

The Kurdish ethnic group has millions of members, stretching over the national boundaries of Iran, Iraq, Syria and Turkey.

Kurds have participated in both nationalist and working-class movements since the 1880s. Communist parties in Iran, Iraq and Syria united Kurds, Arabs, Persians and smaller ethnic groups, including many religions, in working-class struggles. Their reformist and popular-front policies defeated them. But they show the possibility of the working-class unity we need to fight for communism in this region and worldwide.

Kurdish nationalist movements have repeatedly sought alliances with imperialist powers. And have been repeatedly betrayed when this suited the imperialists’ interests.

The real betrayal of Cicek Kobane, and the workers and farmers of North East Syria is the opportunism of the political leaders they have followed.

Rojava’s history starts with the PKK (Kurdistan Workers’ Party) founded in eastern Turkey

in the 1970s as a Marxist-Leninist Party led by Abdullah Ocalan. The Kurdistan Workers’ Party organized a guerrilla army. They fought what they called a war of national liberation starting in 1984, supported by the Syrian rulers. They used urban guerrilla and suicide bombing tactics. The US, NATO and Turkey designated them a “terrorist group.”

In 1999, Ocalan was captured by the Turkish state. In prison, he read the work of US anarchist Murray Bookchin. As the undisputed ideological leader of the Kurdistan Workers’ Party, Ocalan reoriented it toward eco-feminist anarcho-communism.

The Kurdistan Workers’ Party now rejects the goal of state power. It claims to work for democracy and equality within existing state structures

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TRUMP IS SMALL POTATOES COMPARED TO THOSE WHO RULE BOEING

SEATTLE, USA, October 27—The business press heralded David Calhoun, the new chairman of the Boeing board of directors, as the savior of the Boeing workforce. He's the man that can navigate the company through the 737 MAX crisis, they assure us.

"Is that good or bad for us?" asked a tool design engineer. Who could blame her as the company just announced there will be no bonuses for engineers and technical staff this year? Of course, chief executives will get much bigger million-dollar bonuses as they "are written in their contracts."

Boeing's board has changed over the last decade, facilitating Calhoun's rise. Gone are the ruthless "captains of industry." They've been replaced by political operatives and private equity vampires.

This change—and its spread to other US industrial firms—is unstoppable under capitalism. It's part and parcel of an emergent fascist corporate state. No matter who is president, the system dictates this development. Only communism can uproot the capitalist forces that make it inevitable.

The Nature of the Beast

Boeing's board and chief executives are quite skilled—at generating wealth for the ruling class. Not so good at manufacturing safe airplanes! The

corporation is a finetuned political machine with a side business of making aerospace products.

Boeing's general counsel, former judge Michael Luttig, is the former boss of FBI director Christopher Wray. Luttig was also the groomsmen for the Supreme Court Chief Justice John Roberts.

The company's board includes Nikki Haley, until recently Trump's United Nations ambassador, and former NATO supreme commander Edmund Giambastiani. They are joined by the ex-CEOs of Allstate and Aetna and a host of former political officials and private equity bigshots.

But none rise to the level of the new chairman. Calhoun is the senior managing director at Blackstone Equity.

Blackstone has \$554 billion assets under management. It is the world's largest hedge fund investor and private owner of property.

Boeing chairman Calhoun is in charge of the largest section of Blackstone: private equity. All the bosses are parasites living off our work, but he is a particular kind that flourishes as capitalism outlives its usefulness.

Blackstone doesn't produce a thing. Calhoun just steals wealth with financial shenanigans. How can that be good for us?

The Rise of the Fascist Corporate State

The changed board and its new chairman re-

fect the deep and continuing capitalist crisis of overproduction. Too many manufacturers around the world are producing more than the market can bear. Just building factories does not work (for the U.S. ruling class) anymore. Hence, the emergence of the "Corporate State" and misnamed financial "tools."

Sometimes, even the business press notes the parallels to the 1930's Italian and German fascist corporate states. But like their 1930's forbears, they try to mix this up with communism.

THE GENESIS OF A FASCIST EQUITY FIRM

Peter Peterson and Stephen Schwarzman founded Blackstone 30 years ago with a hefty dose of Rockefeller money. Peterson is known for his campaign to end defined pension plans while cutting social security and Medicare allotments. He succeeded David Rockefeller as head of the Council of Foreign Relations (CFR). To maintain the dominance of US imperialism, "It's weapons or walkers!" he famously declared.

After Peterson retired, Schwarzman carried on the political tradition. A leading member of the CFR, he today advises Trump. He's actually Trump's Palm Beach neighbor. Trump's daughter and son-in-law regularly attend the Schwarzmans' lavish parties to beg for money and favors.

The fascist corporate state maintains private ownership of the means of production. It intensifies exploitation, supercharging attacks on any fight-back. This development is inevitable as capitalism's global crisis intensifies.

On the other hand, communism will put the means of production in our hands. The value we create will go directly to our fellow workers. No more corporations, no more corporate profits, no more financial "tools," no more overproduction, hence no more capitalist crises!

It's not hard to convince most Boeing workers that the working class creates all value. Nor is it a hard sell that these equity guys (and they are almost exclusively guys) are vampires that suck wealth from our hard work.

"The big question is whether or not these people [pointing to his co-workers] take this information and run with it," advised a Boeing friend as we discussed this article. "Or will they say this is interesting and put it aside for future reference."

To all our friends at Boeing: Run with it! Join the ICWP now and attend our January conferences.



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in such a way as to make the state irrelevant. Now there is a cult of personality where huge posters of Ocalan's face are everywhere in Rojava.

Does this sound like baloney? It is! In class society, the state is always the armed force of the ruling class. In this historical period of capitalist states, promoting this dream of anarcho-feminist-democratic egalitarianism is a profound betrayal of the working-class masses. We must fight for state power—communist workers' power.

What happened in North East Syria? A civil war began in Syria in 2011. Kurdish forces led by the Kurdistan Workers' Party (PKK) took this opportunity to consolidate power in an autonomous region along the Turkish border. They organized their own military forces, the YPG and

the YPJ (the women's militia) and began to fight to liberate territory. The Syrian government, which had its own problems, tolerated them.

Meanwhile, the US aimed to destabilize the Russian-backed Syrian regime and to defeat ISIS. The US government worried about Turkey's hostility to the PKK. It wanted to get along with Turkey while still allying with the PKK to occupy the strategic gas, oil and wheat resources of NE Syria.

So the US asked the PKK to "rebrand" itself. And the Syrian Democratic Forces—the army of Rojava—was born. It was still led by the Kurdistan Workers' Party (PKK) but now included non-Kurdish forces. This fig leaf enabled the US to support Kurdish militias in the fight against ISIS. It has also made Rojava a tool of the US imperial project in the region.

The Kurdish militia YPG/YPJ forces have been by far the best fighters in the region. They ejected ISIS from Raqqa and consolidated Rojava as a secular, socially egalitarian society, but one that still maintains money and markets. And they have always operated at the pleasure of US imperialism. And now the US has thrown them under the bus.

The history of 20th century communist movements in China and the Soviet Union have taught us to beware of personality cults. The politics of the "Great Leader" means that the working masses are not involved in a critical analysis of history and society. And in this case it allows opportunist leaders to make deals where you're supposedly fighting for a better world on the one hand while serving the interests of the imperialists on the other.

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Massive Rebellion in Chile:

THIS TIME, FIGHT FOR COMMUNISM AND NOTHING LESS!

October 29—Workers in Chile are mobilizing massively and defiantly in Santiago and other parts of the country.

It started when Sebastián Piñera’s government increased fares for the Santiago subway. Thousands of students protested, refusing to pay. They faced repression from the Chilean police (Carabineros de Chile) and won the sympathy of the workers.

Large leftist groups and the main unions were silent. But workers began joining high school students and teachers in the streets.

The Carabineros and some army units brutally attacked them, too. That made thousands of workers even angrier. They organized into committees and street assemblies. They decided to occupy the streets and shopping malls.

This grew into a general strike – a political strike against State-sponsored violence. The port workers took the lead, motivating workers from the factories and even government workers to join.

With workers in the lead, the masses now took aim at the Piñera government’s neoliberal economic attacks. They denounced the degrading of

public health and schools to benefit private enterprises. They protested the theft of workers’ wealth in the pension system.

The Chilean bosses watched similar mobilizations in Ecuador, Costa Rica and Haiti. They confronted the workers with inhuman repression reminiscent of the Pinochet dictatorship.

And the Chilean working class continues to fight back, to organize, and to mobilize! Some say they’ll keep going until Sebastián Piñera falls.

What Is to Be Done?

Chilean workers are already tired of the lies of every government that has ruled since Pinochet’s fall in 1990. Many reject the “constitutional way” of reforms proposed by the Socialist Party, the “Communist” Party, and now even by Piñera and right-wing parties.

Some workers’ groups hope to use these mobilizations to create pre-revolutionary conditions. They want to direct them towards seizing power and destroying the state apparatus inherited from the Pinochet military dictatorship. The songs of anti-fascist heroes like Victor Jara, Violeta Parra, and Los Prisioneros resound in the streets.

But we must not repeat the tragic errors of the past. It was left-wing President Salvador Allende’s refusal to arm the masses that paved the way for the 1973 CIA-backed Pinochet coup.

The continued world domination of capitalism-imperialism today is only possible because 20th century communists fought



“We are the grandchildren of the workers you couldn’t kill”

for democracy or socialism or national liberation but not for communism itself.

Because of this mistaken line, workers’ seizure of state power in Russia, China, Cuba and elsewhere turned into its opposite: another form of capitalism.

Revolution is again in the sights of the Chilean working class. Their massive mobilizations are setting an example for the workers of the world. Even sections of the Chilean army have refused to repress their working-class family in the streets.

But this time the fight must be for communism and nothing less.

The International Communist Workers’ Party greets the insurgent working class of Chile with a comradely embrace. And we call on you to help build this organization into the force that will construct a new world on communist principles.

From each according to ability and commitment! To each according to need! Venceremos - we will win!



“Soldier, don’t shoot at the workers!”

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by garment workers in El Salvador.

The discussion began to make it clear that Rita and her co-workers cannot win this fight within the capitalist system. Sexism arose with private property and class society. Today it is rooted in the capitalist profit system. This system creates the conditions for humiliation and sexism to keep wages low, profits high and the working class divided.

Communism will get rid of bosses, profits, and the sexism that comes with them. All of us will work together as comrades and equals. Sexist humiliation – any sexism and any humiliation – won’t be tolerated.

Party comrades met with Rita, Amit and other garment workers invited by Rita. We read again about the garment workers in El Salvador. Rita said that the stories of the maquila workers were exactly what happens to her and others in India. The difference was that the workers in El Salvador were organizing for communist revolution by joining ICWP.

This meeting took place in three different languages. Everybody could see that, regardless of the distance, language and culture, there were more things in common between workers in India and El Salvador and everywhere. We are all wage slaves and the bosses make profit from us.

The bosses compete with each other, so they need to exploit us more. They make us work faster so they can have a bigger market share and defeat their rival capitalists. They control courts and unions. They create NGOs to make us believe in the system.

ICWP to organize for communism. Rita and Amit agreed to join. Rita said, “I have been looking for a permanent solution all my life. Now I see clearly that we need to destroy the system. I am joining ICWP and I will be a dedicated organizer.”

Amit expressed profound confidence in the working class. As a computer engineer, he makes a lot more money than garment workers. But he says he has more in common with the workers than the bosses who he works for.

“I considered myself a supporter of ICWP but now I am going to be an active organizer,” Amit said. “I work with others just like me. We can use our skills in computers and high tech to effectively organize and distribute our ideas.”

Three other garment workers decided to join

We asked everyone if they would like to join

too. Others are thinking about joining. We had another lively discussion about how Rita and her coworkers will organize to physically confront the sexist supervisor.

Rita and her family, in their extremely modest home, made food that we will never forget. We all helped cleaning. The spirit of communism was there for all to see.

We continued talking informally about how in communism there will be no fashion industry. We will make clothes to suit the environment, our work, our communist culture of sharing.

Without the capitalist bosses, women and men will develop communist relationships as we are already doing in the International Communist Workers’ Party. We will write more about this. As more join the party, our vision of the future communist society will become clearer.



Read our pamphlet
**THE COMMUNIST
FIGHT AGAINST
SEXISM**

available at
icwpredflag.org/sxse.pdf

More articles about the fight
against sexism are at
icwpredflag.org/sexs/

UNITE THEORY AND PRACTICE TO BUILD COMMUNIST SOCIAL RELATIONS AND GROW THE ICWP

SEATTLE (USA), September 14 – A comrade’s neighbor recently asked him how he could justify working for a huge capitalist corporation (as he also does). The comrade replied: “That is where the workers are that we need for a revolution. Many of these workers are young and come from many areas of the world.”

The neighbor identified an important contradiction. The comrade identified the way to resolve it. This shows how dialectical and historical materialism – communist philosophy of change — helps advance communist work.

Almost ten years ago, the International Communist Workers’ Party set out to mobilize the masses for communism. Will we succeed?

That depends mainly on the hard, but rewarding, day-to-day work of building communist relations with many people at different levels of political development. Our clubs must analyze our progress and build a collective base with our friends.

Sometimes, we mistakenly conclude that fighting directly for communism means staying away from all reform activities. Or we might think that we just need to be in mass organizations and write leaflets, articles, social media posts.

The real question is what we and our friends should do in these activities that will win more communist fighters to join our party. This requires long-term struggle.

For example, Boeing workers have struggled a lot at work over immigration issues and the fight against fascism. We’ve gotten some workers to help and recruited a few.

In Los Angeles, MTA transit workers have raised communism at one worksite for many years. Dozens of workers have come around the

Party and some have joined. Some now work elsewhere and distribute *Red Flag* at their new worksites.

Investigation, Criticism and a Plan

The Seattle party club discussed expanding the struggle and recruiting at a high school with a very international student population. Over 100 students and staff have read each issue of our paper for several years.

Many love it. Students snapped up the issues that described our communist response to Islamophobia. A friend who volunteers at the school got a few students to distribute the paper.

But the opposite side of this story is that we have only made one solid connection from our outside distribution. We haven’t recruited anyone. What can we do to create the kinds of relationships we need with students and staff to recruit and consolidate them as party members?

We figured out a way for one of the comrades doing this work to get more deeply involved with students and staff. We hope this will help us work more collectively with our friend. Meanwhile, we’ll maintain outside distribution.

Another comrade, an immigrant worker, has distributed the paper to co-workers in small numbers, also for about two years. His friends – also immigrants — tell him the paper is good. But it has not created any sparks.

What does create heat is the debate about communism and President Obrador of Mexico. The TV coverage confuses his friends. Is Obrador good or bad? Has Obrador been blocked by right-wing forces in Mexico and the U.S.? Is he a communist or not? Is communism good or bad?

Our club discussed this. We compared it to questions that friends had raised about the Obama

presidency in the US. By helping the comrade with the struggle to resolve these specific dialectical contradictions in his friends, we expect to advance the process of recruiting and consolidating them. The collective in Mexico has agreed to help.

The only way to find out the main contradiction in communist work is to do it.

The Dialectics of Growth Based on Our Political Work

In Seattle, in South Africa, and in other areas we are learning how to examine our political work and how to advance it using dialectical materialist philosophy.

Identifying the contradictions of capitalism – especially the main contradiction— is useful in discovering the potential for recruitment and its present limits. These contradictions are sharpening rapidly.

From the townships in Port Elizabeth to the maquilas in San Salvador, we’ve only begun to tap the vast pool of potential communists and communist organizers. We need to sharpen and resolve the internal contradictions that keep us from doing more and better.

To realize this potential, we have to spend the bulk of our time building a communist base with those we hope to involve and recruit. The bulk of our party discussions should center on this topic. Let’s share our experiences in these pages.

Friends, readers, comrades: Plan now to attend one of the conferences that ICWP is planning to mark our tenth anniversary in January! Contribute your ideas about how to make them as useful as possible! Raise and contribute the funds we need to make them happen!

HOW DO WE MAKE A BREAKTHROUGH IN RECRUITMENT?

SOUTH AFRICA, October 16—Recently we’ve seen many uprisings in Latin America. What can the party do to reach these workers? Without communist leadership it always reverts to some kind of reform that will ease the pain but will not alleviate the suffering. The party has to grow everywhere.

As the party celebrates 10 years of existence, we need to honestly analyze our advances and the obstacles that hold us back from realizing our potential level of recruitment. Our fundamental task is to recruit workers to fight for communism. Without recruiting workers and soldiers, there can be no revolution.

Worldwide we distribute thousands of Red Flags every issue. Why aren’t more workers joining us? We don’t ask them to join. People will not simply join.

For example, comrades here were excited when we came back from distributing 2000 *Red*

Flags at a May Day event. But when asked “How many people agreed to join or agreed to come to our next meeting?” most of the comrades who had distributed the paper didn’t even ask anyone to join.

And when you ask the question, it provokes other questions, like “to join what?” and then you explain “to join what.” It’s a starting point.

When we had a conference call recently, comrades in Seattle reported that they distributed RF in a school for close to two years. Yet they haven’t recruited any students there. Why? It’s not because the comrades are not distributing hard enough. Are they engaging with the students to get to know them and struggle with them?

When we focus on the quantitative changes that lead to qualitative changes in recruitment, the results can be really encouraging.

Comrade M is an auto worker in our collective. He joined last year, but we’ve been friends with

him for more than 3 years. First he didn’t see the need to join us. He was unemployed and didn’t have first hand experience with exploitation by the bosses and labor brokers. But once he started working he understood more deeply what we had been saying. As a result he was the one who asked us to join.

Another factor that led him to join was the unity of the collective. The way we live made him want to join

us. If someone is struggling with food, or a place to stay, we try to help. People see this closeness and some want to become a part of it. A comrade remarked that comradeship is the highest form of friendship.

Social relationships are the life blood of communism. Without this our growth would not have been possible. We are focusing on building relations with people we want to recruit. Then they feel comfortable to tell us their disagreements. We can struggle with them openly. We should focus on this worldwide.

It doesn’t have to be people we already know. For example, we met Comrade P at the May Day dinner. We have built communist relations with her, having dinner, spending time. She opened up to us. Over time it became easy for her to interact with the collective. It seems that she’s been with us for years, but it’s only been for a few months.

Things are interconnected. We need to build communist relations within the collective and also with people we are trying to recruit. The participation of comrades worldwide helps. If someone in the US contributes money, it helps here. Without contributions for the dinner, we wouldn’t have met some of the comrades who are now active in the party.

Our collective here is about five years old now. We have made advances but objectively we can do much more.

We need to critically look at our internal factors because those are the ones that will drive our forward movement. We need to be honest and not exaggerate—so we can understand how we will advance as our party approaches ten years.



Movie Review: *The Joker*

CAPITALISM IS NO JOKE

“Shocked and disturbed” is how my comrade described how he felt after we saw the new Joaquin Phoenix film, *The Joker*. The famous Batman villain now has his own movie with a dark and, at times, hard-to-watch origin story. He starts as a mentally ill and down-trodden worker, Arthur Fleck, and descends into madness, being transformed into the title character.

This film tackles societal issues which are symptoms of the capitalist nightmare we live in. Be that as it may, why would capitalist media want to massively sell such a film which promotes violence and shows the reality of the decaying of capitalist society?

The movie is set in a decaying Gotham—New York in the 1980s. This is when the Reagan administration was discarding the Mental Health Systems Act and attacking the workers’ standard of living, all of which combined to lead to the homelessness crisis we see today.

Fleck, who works as a clown, is victimized by some young people. A friend gives him a gun for protection. He suffers from mental illness and sees a therapist who is overworked and on the brink of losing her job due to budget cuts. The crisis in the movie is when he shoots three Wall

Street men who are harassing a woman on the subway.

Not only does he feel no guilt, but he confesses to this murder on TV. This puts the city in an uproar. Masses of people go to the streets in clown masks in solidarity with the subway clown killer who attacked the upper-class men. Riots ensue as the city burns and Joker is saved by the masses from the police and praised as a hero.

Arthur’s mental illness is unfortunate, but the isolationism and the decline in resources that he and many people like him face is what leads to anti-social behaviors. These result in mass shootings, stabbings and other act of violence towards our working-class brothers and sisters.

Arthur laughs to keep from crying as he suffers through his illness alone. No one checked on Arthur the way he needed because the psychiatrist was already overwhelmed with patients dealing with similar issues.

In a communist society this won’t be the case. We will all build long-lasting relationships with our community that will extend beyond blood relatives. We will look after one another and pro-



duce all the resources we require for a quality life for all.

Capitalism needs the working class to be disturbed, horrified and left feeling hopeless. By doing this, the capitalists win the masses to the idea that there needs to be a superhero to save us from the villain. The bosses don’t want us to be our own heroes and realize that they are the ultimate villain. They rob us of our labor and resources while they keep the abundance of profits for themselves and give us the crumbs.

Capitalist media expects us to sit back and laugh before we cry, but the working class must fight before we die.

LETTERS

LETTERS

LETTERS

CRITICISM AND SUGGESTIONS

It is a season of discontent worldwide

A protesting bus driver killed by the hated fascist Carabinero (police) in Chile. In response, all the bus drivers walked off their job. The general strike in Chile saw half of the population of Chile marching on the streets. Personal details of every Carabinero now are making rounds online, exposing them to the revenge by the masses. Violent clashes have intensified in Iraq, Haiti, and the African nation of Guinea where million people participated in confronting the president. As one analyst commented, “If it can happen in Chile, it can happen literally anywhere at any time.

The deepening crisis of overproduction is putting workers and capitalist face to face in violent struggle. Neither the capitalists nor the working class can live the same old way. Tens of millions around the world are open to communist leadership. The bosses’ response to resolve this crisis is more repression and cuts in basic necessities so more capital can be invested to in the means of production. This creates an army of the unemployed. And since profit can only come from the exploitation of the workers, it intensifies the crisis.

This development, “therefore, cuts from under its feet the very foundation on which the bourgeoisie produces and appropriates products. What the bourgeoisie therefore produces,

above all, are its own grave-diggers. Its fall and the victory of the proletariat are equally in evitable.” (Marx)

A few issues back, a reader from India wrote, “The field is wide open for real communists.” While it is true, it is also full of obstacles. The main obstacle is internal to the party. How we resolve our internal contradictions is crucial.

—Internationalist Comrade

Capitalism Needs War

I have just read a history book, *The Empire of Guns*, by Priya Satia, that argues capitalism is war driven. The book awakened a new awareness of the way I understand the present-day crisis. Capitalism could not exploit us without the continual use and threat of war.

With that outlook in mind, I thought of making three alterations to the useful article “Communism will end the horror of world capitalist crisis.”

“But when industrial crisis deepens, banks and other financial capitalists compete for shrinking opportunities for profitable investment. They increasingly turn to speculation on the one hand and wars of destruction or conquest on the other. “

“Economic wars lead to shooting wars – up to and including world war” True but generalizations are never as powerful as actual events.

The 1999 NATO war on Yugoslavia reduced the Zavasta Auto plant to rubble and left the workers jobless. The bombs dropped on Yugoslavia subdued the whole of Eastern and Central Europe. The area’s low-cost workforce was put at the service of Western, not Russian, imperialists. In the auto industry, Ford, Fiat, Volkswagen and General Motors moved plants from the West to East and Central Europe and a higher rate of profit was made. Wars of conquest and destruction are central to capitalist economics.

Finally, I would add to the criti-

cism of the Unions. They play a reactionary role. They never talk of inter-imperialist rivalry. While they claim to defend the quality of our lives, actually they defend the wars of their imperialist masters.

—Comrade in Northern California

Inviting Transit Workers to Join ICWP

I have been distributing *Red Flag* to transit workers for several years. The response is always positive. Many workers take the paper and some take two papers to give one to a friend or family member. They say things like, “Give me one for my mother, she likes it.”

But I have been too willing to leave things at that—like trying to boil water without turning up the heat high enough. Inspired by the article from South Africa in the last issue of *Red Flag*, I decided I had to sharpen the struggle we began earlier. The next time I distributed the paper, I asked workers to join us.

The response was very interesting. A few workers asked, “Oh. Do you have meetings?” Some said, “Maybe later.” Two workers gave their contact information to get together to talk about the Party. It’s too soon to give the results, but I should have been doing this all along.

The other day a worker stopped to ask, “What do you think about what’s going on in Hong Kong?” I told him that it was a mass movement around voting that wouldn’t change the masses’ situation. I gave him our leaflet about Ecuador and told him about the mass rebellion there. He hadn’t heard about it. He agreed that the US media is publicizing the rebellion in Hong Kong to attack China but keeping the mass rebellions in Ecuador and Haiti quiet.

I told him that some soldiers joined with the striking workers. He said, “That sounds like a revolution.”

I said for that the workers need a revolutionary Party, ICWP, that fights for communism. I asked him if he wanted to join us.

He said, “Hmm—I’ll think about it.”

Thanks to the Comrades in South Africa!

—A comrade in Los Angeles(USA)



Haiti: Masses, in the streets for eight weeks, seek alternatives to their capitalist-imperialist hell.

Catalonia: Workers Must Fight for Communist Revolution, Not Nationalist Politicians

The workers in Catalonia took to the streets on October 11 to demonstrate after the Spanish State imprisoned pro-independence politicians.

In a previous issue of *Red Flag*, (Vol 8, Number 13) we discussed the need for communism instead of nationalism. Many workers have been beaten by police forces such as Mossos de Escudra (the autonomous police of Barcelona) and the national police. But the demonstrations have been escalating and continue to grow.

Now the demonstration is not just against the imprisonment of these politicians. The masses are fighting the system. At the street

level, protestors are being interviewed. They are asked if they are pro-independence. Some answer yes. But also a large majority say that they fight against the oppressive system to free the people.

This is a great opportunity to win workers to the ranks of the International Communist Workers' Party. We need to sharpen the struggle and bring communist ideas to the streets. The struggles of the workers (such as Ecuador, Chile, Syria, South Africa, etc.) have to lead the communist revolution.

Nationalism is only a tool that the system uses to deceive the masses and make them believe that some politicians are better than

others.

In the end all politicians are still part of the capitalist system and the only thing that feeds this system is the true wage slavery of the working class. Communism will do away with money, borders, and racism. It will lead to the liberation of workers. They will be able to live a life of quality without being a wage slave. They will have opportunities to study, and to have decent housing and a healthy life. We will produce what we need, not for capitalist profit.

We have to learn to fight not for politicians but for an international communist revolution.

—Comrade in Spain

Why I Fight

Even as an anti-imperialist, it is possible to become numbed to the daily, weekly, monthly, and yearly assaults on the working class, the oppressed people, and the environment. But it took me scouring the internet for videos, audio, and photos of the late October 2019 raid on a housing area in Syria where the purported leader of the Islamic State Caliphate, Abu Bakr al-Baghdadi was killed.

The noise of the helicopters hovering over the soon to be victim, machine guns and small arms blazing bullets upon bullets upon the compound, the colossal bombing of the compound after the murders had ceased, an act designed to leave little evidence besides rubble and human remains.

The sickening to my stomach made me realize this is why I am a revolutionist, and this is one example of why I will never stop working for the liberation of suffering humanity from imperialist wars, military aggression, and domination by capitalism and imperialism. We need communism.

The best response to this act of banditry so far has been the boos that Trump received at the World Series Game. Large numbers of fans held banners calling for his impeachment and yelling slogans such as Lock Him UP and holding signs calling for his impeachment. It's high time for this, but it's also high time for more people in the USA to oppose military imperialist aggression and domination. No support for the troops or their officers in the carrying out of imperialist military orders.

—A comrade

Workers Need Communism, Not Unionism

I recently attended my union's annual meeting. It was the usual, we are great; this is why; and what politicians should we support? Oh, and give us money to support these politicians.

We are supposed to be preparing for a strike and the treasures' report included that there is no money in the "strike fund." Our union president is discouraging an open-ended strike, but has had a difficult time getting shop stewards to agree to his agenda. The union president wants a publicity stunt to continue to grow membership and put money in his pocket, while members are hung out to dry. Now they plan a five-day strike in November.

Most members hold on to the illusion that the union makes us strong. However, communists know that workers don't need unions and don't need bosses. We are strong and powerful without them, because the bosses can't do without our labor power. Unity makes us strong and

there is no "union" without workers. We need the correct political line for our weapon because without this we can never win more than a battle.

This was the 3rd annual meeting I attended and at each meeting I distribute *Red Flag*. Many now recognize me and the paper. Many thank me, some ask for additional copies, and a few reject the paper. My 50 papers were gone within half an hour. As I knew this would likely happen, I should have been better prepared. It would have also been helpful if I had written an article prior to the meeting about our specific struggles so I could point this out to them. Lastly, it would be helpful to get people's contact information.

I have a few internal contradictions. One is between individualism vs collectivity. I have my collective that could have struggled with me, if I had made it a point to talk to them about th

We discussed this in a recent club meeting and plan to work more collectively for party work around the upcoming five-day strike activity.

—Comrade in California

Climate Change Movement: An Opportunity, Not a Distraction

"Only when the profit motive and money are totally out of the equation can we truly focus on cleaning up the environment. No task is insurmountable under communism. Collectively, guided by communist ideas and principles, we can change the world."

So concluded, truly, a letter in the last *Red Flag*.

The letter, however, misleadingly suggested that climate change is a distraction (if not a hoax). And that capitalist media hype it so that "young workers focus their energies on climate change, not xenophobia, racism and sexism."

It is true, as the letter says, that climate issues have pushed some into despair and passivity. However, many others, especially youth, have been propelled into activism. The climate change movement is an opportunity to put forward communist class struggle to counter reformist all-class-unity ideas.

We need to use every issue and every attack to make the case for communism.

Reformists propose different reforms for different issues. They argue about which is more important or urgent. Communists aren't stuck in these contradictions. We have one solution for all issues: Get capitalists and their money and profit motives totally out of the equation.

Capitalism can't solve any of these problems because they are baked into its essential nature. But we can: by mobilizing masses for

communist worker' power through armed revolution. By continuing to mobilize them to build a new communist world.

In Los Angeles (USA) we have taken *Red Flag* and other communist literature to mass climate mobilizations and to organizations we're in. Many welcome communist ideas. Many have already concluded that capitalism is not "sustainable." Some carry signs saying "System Change, Not Climate Change."

The letter's information about the environmental movement may be useful. Some of us remember how "Earth Day" in 1970 was offered as a distraction from the US war on Vietnam.

But it wrongly suggests that climate change is a non-issue just because capitalists fund the research. That's like pooh-poohing Newtonian physics because Newton worked for the Royal Mint and believed in astrology. (He did.)

Only capitalists, their foundations and their governments, have the money needed to do most science today. Money that they stole from workers' labor.

In the communist world we fight for, workers will decide what needs to be studied. Workers will participate in designing and doing the research. Workers will decide how to use the results. Money and profit motives will be out of the equation.

Fifteen years ago, climate scientists predicted things we are seeing now. These include loss of sea ice and faster rises in sea level. Communities are already having to migrate from islands where they lived for centuries. Warming oceans are fueling fiercer hurricanes and typhoons.

No wonder people are worried. Our task isn't to tell them to stop worrying. It's to convince them to become communists. If they see climate change as an urgent problem, they need to see communism as the urgent solution. Let's write more about that.

—Collective in California (USA)





Ecuador: An Exploding Powder Keg

ONLY MOBILIZING FOR COMMUNISM WILL END THE CONTRADICTIONS OF CAPITALISM

October 17—In Ecuador, the mass rebellions – that triggered the sharp class struggle between the working class and the capitalists - have died down. The spark that lit the fuse was the increase in fuel prices and other austerity measures dictated by the International Monetary Fund and implemented by the capitalists.

Mass demonstrations and pitched street battles between protesters and the repressive police bodies paralyzed the country for almost two weeks. A general strike called by the indigenous movement launched hundreds of thousands of city workers, indigenous rural workers, teachers and students into the streets, closing factories and schools—all in defiance of their pro-capitalist leaders.

Indigenous people gave indispensable leadership at critical moments of the struggle. The indigenous rural workers have great political influence among the masses because of their militant, constant and tireless struggle against centuries of racist capitalist oppression.

The agreement between the government and the indigenous leaders allowed the capitalists to stop the rebellion. They will implement an austerity package very similar to the one that was repealed. However, it's "acceptable" to the masses because of the indigenous leaders' participation in elaborating it. In appearance, the masses have been appeased.

But this is simply the calm before the next storm. The masses in Ecuador and worldwide were inspired seeing the government flee the capital when the masses surrounded the National As-

sembly building. They were motivated by seeing military units refuse to attack the masses, and instead attack the police and march with the masses.

They saw the revolutionary possibilities of the situation. If the International Communist Workers' Party (ICWP) were there with a massive base among the industrial workers, the indigenous population, soldiers and youth, we would be leading the masses in an armed insurrection for communist workers power. Then, this rebellion would not end like others: changing one capitalist executioner for another.

There will be other opportunities, products of the sharpening contradiction of capitalism. A contradiction is the unity and struggle of opposites. Capitalism is the unity and struggle between the working class and the capitalist class. We are united - not by our own will - but because we cannot survive without selling them our labor power for a miserable salary.

It is a unity between slave and master, the product of the wage system. Wages are chains that bind us to them. That unity, however, is temporary. The struggle, as Ecuador shows, is ceaseless and absolute.

To break those chains, we need to resolve the contradictions of capitalism through a communist revolution that ends the capitalists and their wage system (including money, banks, markets, and their poisonous ideologies).

Only communist revolution and building a communist society can create the world we long for and need: A world without borders or nations,

without racism, sexism, xenophobia or homophobia. A world where we collectively produce and share what we produce according to the needs of each one. A world where our destiny is in our hands - without anyone being above anyone else.

The capitalist contradiction - like any contradiction - is resolved by sharpening it. The capitalists sharpen it (but they can't and don't want to solve it) because they have to compete for the markets. Those who do not compete successfully sink. That is why they intensify our exploitation: demanding more work for less wages and benefits.

Eventually the social powder keg explodes in great rebellions because we cannot live under those conditions. If we take advantage of them, we can solve the contradictions of capitalism forever through communist revolution.

To achieve this, we must sharpen the class struggle by building ICWP where we are, especially in the bosses' armed forces. The old communist movement - with the exception of Russia's - put little effort into doing so. Ecuador shows the great potential of communist soldiers and workers joining together to lead the revolution.

We invite all who are reading this article to join ICWP and organize Party collectives to read, discuss, distribute and write for our *Red Flag* newspaper. By massifying communist ideas and ICWP, we will sharpen the class struggle so that the coming social explosions resolve the contradiction between workers and capitalists in favor of communist revolution.

Struggle in Ecuador Inspires Comrades in India

ICWP members in India had very a lively discussion about the situation in Ecuador with some auto workers. "If they can do it to (Ecuador's president) Moreno, why can't we do it to Modi?"

Our discussion led to concrete things we can do to build our party. Some workers wanted to send a message of solidarity to the transportation workers in Quito. Others talked about how we can recruit more to the party.

An autoworker wrote a poem in solidarity with the workers called 'Teargas in Quito.' He has a nephew who joined the army and wants to talk to him. This immediately got a response from almost everyone in the room who has a relative in the army. People looked at each other as if somebody had turned the light on. The seeds of the revolutionary army are for us to nurture.

We know that the world is rife with crises which will create the potential for communist revolution. Our biggest weakness is that we underestimate the opportunities in front of us. The experience in Ecuador pushes us to advance. Every collective should draw its own particular lesson and produce leaflets for mass distribution.

In the absence of communist leadership, the situation in Ecuador will be settled with another set of capitalist bosses taking over. But this will leave millions yearning for communism. We established a beachhead in South Africa in a very challenging situation after learning from the miners' strike in Marikana. We have the potential to establish a large party in Ecuador if we take the opportunity seriously. Comrades in El Salvador, Mexico and Brazil who have friends in Ecuador have a leadership role to play. We have a world to win.

Teargas in Quito

Comrades in Quito, we see plumes of teargas in the street
We want to be with you comrades, shoulder to shoulder
We want to breath the teargas with you
Because when the mighty working class extinguishes it,
We will breath communism.

Comrades in Quito, we see plumes of teargas in the street
We want to be with you comrades, shoulder to shoulder
We want to be with you because our mothers cried at night
We saw their sorrow and tears because they could not feed us.
We are hungry for communism; we want to feed you.

Comrades in Quito, we see plumes of teargas in the street
We want to be with you comrades, shoulder to shoulder
Because Moreno, Modi and Maduro are all the same.
We want to be with you because we are all the same
The international working class. We are members of ICWP
Join us, comrades in Quito.

This poem, written in Tamil by comrades in India, was read aloud in English and Spanish by an ICWP comrade at a protest called by indigenous activists in front of the Ecuadoran Consulate in Los Angeles.