

RED FLAG



MOBILIZE THE MASSES FOR COMMUNISM

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



**BOLIVIAN
MASSES
REBEL
AGAINST
FASCIST COUP
SEE PAGE 8**

PUBLIC TRANSIT WORKERS ORGANIZE FOR ICWP INTERNATIONAL CONFERENCE

LOS ANGELES, USA— “We already know how capitalism works. Let’s see what communism would be like,” said a worker who is new to our meetings. This was one of the interesting questions that workers bring to the meetings of our collective of public transport workers in Los Angeles (MTA), of the International Communist Workers Party (ICWP).

A worker, H, said, “In communist society, production will be to meet the needs of the population and distribution will be equitable. Our motto is ‘To each according to their need, from each according to their commitment and ability.’ A world without money, or borders, with only one class.”

These workers have read *Red Flag* for a long time. They have read about the different aspects of communist society.

C said, “I don’t know if I agree that if I work hard, someone else gets as much as I do, because no one will want to work.”

E replied, “Here in this society many don’t work and receive a lot.” He Meant bosses and managers. “Here at MTA we don’t all work exactly the same, and we all get the same wage. We don’t all have the same abilities. But I think people will give what they can.”

Comrade X explained, “I believe that in the minds of most workers, communist society is an aspiration, but few believe it can be achieved. That is why it is very difficult to win them to participate in the party, because they don’t see communism as the society they have in their minds and based on all the wrong ideas about it, they put up resistance.”

J commented, “That’s our struggle: to win them to participate, starting with the most politically advanced. Bring the most open to discuss communist ideas and then we concentrate on the others. For example, some time ago I thought the same as those who don’t want to do anything, but reading *Red Flag* and discussing these ideas, I am now planning how we advance communist ideas.”

A said, “I’m open

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SOUTH AFRICA: MOBILIZING MINERS FOR COMMUNISM

Two comrades recently traveled 1100 km (700 miles) to spend two weeks with miners in Rustenburg. The party collective in Port Elizabeth undertook this as part of our effort to win this key section of industrial workers to mobilize for communism. There are over 456,000 mine workers in South Africa. They have a history of militantly confronting the racist mine owners and their government. They have an important role to play in leading masses to join and build ICWP.

SOUTH AFRICA, November 16 –Our party organization started here because of the militant massive miners’ strike in Marikana (2012) and the African National Congress (ANC) government’s attack and murder of miners.

ICWP wrote a pamphlet on the miners’ strike, the betrayal of the workers by the unions and the ANC leadership, and the need to fight for communism. The pamphlet exposed billionaire Cyril Ramaphosa, who had been a leader of the ANC and mine workers’ union, and who was on the Board of Directors of the Lonmin mine when they ordered the police to attack and kill striking miners.

A comrade in the USA made contact with a comrade in South Africa. Since then, we have visited Rustenburg several times to distribute *Red Flag* and make contacts with miners.

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“Who does the planting? Who does the watering? Who does the harvesting? Coffee, cotton, rice, sugar cane, cacao, corn, bananas, vegetables, and all the fruits, who’s going to grow them if we don’t? Yet with all that, we’re poor, we’re miserable, that’s true. But do you know why? Because we don’t know yet what a force we are... Some day, when we get wise to that, we’ll rise up... Then we’ll call a General Assembly and we’ll clear out poverty and plant a new life.” – Jacques Roumain, *Masters of the Dew* (1944 novel)

Roumain (1906-1944) helped to found the Haitian Communist Party (PCH) in the early 1930s. Another founder, Henri Rosemund, had previously organized fur workers in New York City.

The Haitian masses have long considered communism. They – and all of us – must embrace it now.

Masses in Haiti rebelled against racist US imperialism when it invaded in 1915. In December 1929, amidst the global capitalist crisis, US Marines attacked a protest march in Les Cayes. They killed ten Haitian peasants. Communists in New York and elsewhere, including Caribbean immigrant workers, marched in solidarity.

The PCH was small and not immersed among the rebellious masses. Yet the terrified Haitian rulers suppressed it in 1936.

Again: The communist Popular Socialist Party, formed in 1946, sought power through elections. It, too, was suppressed. But the CIA worried in 1963 that “The communist threat in Haiti is increasing.”

And again: The communist Haitian Workers Party arose in 1966. The Unified Party of Haitian Communists (PUCH) formed in 1968 to take “the path of armed struggle.” A year later, the staunchly anti-communist US-backed Duvalier regime tried to smash it. Hundreds were jailed and tortured. Four leaders were killed. The PUCH survived as an illegal organization. But its leaders soon called for “unity of all progressive forces” and linked the PUCH to the revisionist Soviet Union.

Racist-imperialist occupation. Nationalist resistance. Armed struggle. Brutal suppression. Masses in rebellion, seeking radical alternatives to their miserable lives. This is the history – and the present crisis – of Haiti.

Learn from the Heroic Struggles of the Haitian Masses

The potential for communist revolution has existed in Haiti — despite brutal repression — for close to a century. There was and is a mass base for international, anti-racist working-class unity (versus nationalism). There was and is popular enthusiasm for revolutionary militancy (versus the pacifism of former president Aristide).

Past communist movements have squandered that potential by following an incorrect analysis and program. Some organized for national liberation. Or built illusions about electoral politics. Or abandoned working-class politics for unity with “progressive” exploiters. Or followed the Soviet line of fighting for socialism, mistakenly thinking it a step toward communism instead of another form of capitalism.

The way forward exists today – if communists in Haiti learn from the mistakes, as well as the victories, of the past. If women and men, in Haiti and elsewhere, join and build a mass International Communist Workers’ Party.

Mobilize Now for Our Communist Future

The masses have virtually shut down Haiti for six months with violent protests. The sparks were rampant inflation and government plans for increased fuel taxes. They demand the resignation of President Moïse. Again, the Haitian government has responded with bullets.

Haitian workers endure the worst poverty and shortest life expectancy in the Americas. Meanwhile, Moïse and his cronies have embezzled some \$2.8 billion from PetroCaribe. This fund, part of a now-defunct Venezuelan oil program, was supposed to have helped the masses.

But the anger is much deeper. Polls show that only 13.5% of the Haitian masses have faith in any of the political parties. The *New York Times* worries, “At the heart of the crisis is a broad despair [with] the existing political and economic system.”

Nearly ten years ago, a massive earthquake killed over 200,000 and destroyed tens of thousands of buildings. A UN “peacekeeping” (police) mission brought with it a cholera epidemic and rampant sexual abuse.

Many around the world helped with supplies and labor. The Red Cross collected nearly \$500 million, but kept over a quarter of that for itself and, in the end, built only six permanent homes.

Haiti: A History of Struggle

Before Columbus, a million Arawak/Taino people lived on an island of abundance they called Haiti (land of mountains). Everyone, including chiefs, helped to hunt and fish, to gather, plant, and harvest. The Taino were committed to feeding everyone—even the Spanish invaders.

This cooperative production and sharing was an early form of communism. It left ample time for cultural life and for collective problem solving. Even some of the Spaniards were impressed.

The Europeans quickly wiped out Taino society through disease, brutal greed and outright genocide. The French replaced the Spanish. The island was still rich, but its riches benefited France’s rising capitalist class. They continued to force enslaved Africans to produce cash crops, subjected to torture and under conditions so horrible that few survived for long.

By the French Revolution, Saint-Domingue (Haiti) accounted for a third of the Atlantic slave trade. It was called the “Pearl of the Antilles:” France’s most profitable colony, the world’s largest exporter of tropical products, and the second-largest trading partner of the United States.

Thousands freed themselves, escaping into the mountains and forming “maroon”

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Since then, increasingly strong and frequent hurricanes – an effect of global climate change – have battered Haiti. Many workers lack food and even clean water. Neither imperialism nor the Haitian bourgeoisie can offer even a pretense of a solution.

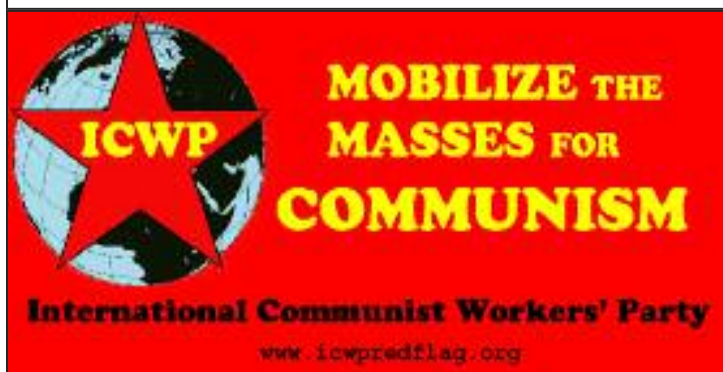
It’s time to organize the International Communist Workers’ Party (ICWP) to mobilize the masses for communism and nothing less.

A communist party that doesn’t hide its politics or bury itself in reform organizations. That fights to end the material basis of racism and sexism with a revolutionary struggle for state power. That welcomes with open arms all who want to build communist society “from each according to commitment and ability, to each according to need.”

As Roumain wrote: “Get wise. Rise up. Plant a new life” – by joining ICWP!



The Haitian Revolution terrified slave masters and inspired enslaved people throughout the Americas



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SOUTH AFRICA STRIKES CALL US TO MOBILIZE THE MASSES FOR COMMUNISM!

They shot them in the back. They shot them from helicopters. They shot them at point-blank range. Did the police massacre of 34 wildcatting platinum miners at the Lonmin Mine in Marikana, South Africa, end the wildcat? No.

Did the arrest of 270 (and torture of some) end it? No. Did charging those 270 with murder (one or two cops had been killed earlier) scare them? No. Did the call of the official National Union of Miners (NUM) to return to work have any effect? No. Did the company's threat to fire every striker? Certainly not!

Did the state-organized brutality at Marikana intimidate the rest of the working class in South Africa? Hell no! It emboldened them.

Clearly what is happening in South Africa is no ordinary strike wave. The



communist revolution. Communism will abolish private ownership, money, profits & exploitation. It will rip away the need for racism, as well as sexism and nationalism that pit worker against worker. It will create a society where we cooperate to produce for need.

On the one hand, the masses have woken up. On the other, the crisis in capitalist production that has gripped the world shows no sign of being resolved yet. As a result there will be many more Marikanas... in all corners of the globe. Opportunities to organize for communist revolution will come thick and fast.

It's our job to seize them. Then the international working class will be not just the "grave diggers" of capitalism, but the builders of a brand new communist world in its place!

WHO WON THE FIGHT AGAINST APARTHEID?

The front page of our pamphlet about the struggle in South Africa, published in March of 2013 and available at <http://icwpredflag.org/MMC/SApamE.html>

If the century-long struggle in South Africa has taught us anything it is that our battle is not to reform capitalism once again. It is to replace it with communist revolution. Communism will abolish private ownership, money, profits & exploitation. It will rip away the need for racism, as well as sexism and nationalism that pit worker against worker. It will create a society where we cooperate to produce for need.

MINERS from page 1

We decided to come back to where it started to form a functioning ICWP collective that actively recruits miners, soldiers and students.

Our main focus here has been on miners. We two comrades have distributed more than 500 *Red Flags* in one week. We have done this in a limited time space to those going out and in at shift change. Mine security doesn't let us inside the mines.

We also distributed at other places miners go,



Rustenburg, 2018

like the taxi stand. About a dozen people gave us their contact information to talk more. Tomorrow we are meeting another person who we've already known for a few years. He has a circle of friends, miners who we met before. They know who we are and why we are here. Last time they made a brai (barbecue) for us.

We are trying to develop some relationships. Tomorrow the meeting will be informal but with the goal of struggling with our friend. He agrees with us on many things but there are some things to struggle around. He thinks unions are the first line of defense for the workers. We say that the unions work to preserve capitalism and that the reform struggle is a dead end. We should be active in unions to win workers to communist revolution—the only way to meet our needs. We want to discuss these things with him in detail.

Then the following week we want to focus on meetings rather than distributions. Wednesday we will distribute our remaining RFs. On Friday we will evaluate the new friends we have gathered. We will try to create a group of *Red Flag* readers, where we can share our material and also answer questions from new friends. These are the practical steps so we can assess progress of new comrades' understanding and articulating the line.

One challenge is that we do not have someone who stays here permanently who can struggle with these comrades. The most important way for

them to learn is to practice. We need to emphasize this. The way for them to learn is to do the work, to distribute the paper inside, invite people to join and then ask the more experienced comrades to explain some things that they are still also in the process of learning.

It will be easier for them to recruit while they are also learning because they are doing this as a collective instead of individually. This method helped us comrades to actively recruit while still learning the line.

We are trying to earmark comrades like our friend to take this leadership role. It's a challenge but it's also an opportunity to organize. He is passionate about the wellbeing of the working class, regardless of some disagreements. We think he can fully be won to our cause. This will be the most crucial thing.

There has to be consistency. More experienced comrades should come to Rustenburg maybe every two months so we can check on the progress and advance the work to try to mobilize this group of comrades. We should have communist classes for a few days. This will also aid their development. Then the comrades won't have to rely only on us. They can actively distribute the paper when we send it here.

Editorial note: An article in the print issue of the last *Red Flag* misstated the name of Port Elizabeth. We apologize for the error.

HAITI from page 2

communities. A massive and ultimately successful revolt of the enslaved workers in 1791 took the French Revolution to a whole new level. The rebels' pledge to "live free or die" resounded across the Atlantic. Those who survived won their legal emancipation – but not freedom from exploitation.

In 1802, Napoleon sent a massive invasion force to tighten France's grip and restore racist

slavery. But an army of former slaves again rocked the world by defeating his best fighting units and winning independence. We can learn a lot from the decades of struggle that followed.

Then in 1825, France threatened another invasion. The French capitalists forced Haiti to pay 150 million gold francs (later reduced to 90 million) to "compensate" plantation owners for the loss of the property they'd extorted from enslaved labor. That would be some US\$40 billion today!

This is the true source of the impoverishment of the Haitian masses. They had to pay down that debt over the course of more than a century. Meanwhile, they continued to fight back and rebel and revolt.

The US invasion of 1915 – in the interest of US banks trying to collect on still more debts – provoked the unsuccessful "Caco" uprising of 1919-20. By then, the flames of communist revolution were already burning in the hearts of masses in Haiti and around the world.

Capitalist Negligence and Exploitation is “Unexcused”

CALIFORNIA WILDFIRES SHOW BURNING NEED FOR COMMUNIST REVOLUTION

LOS ANGELES (USA)—“There’s no way I could have made it in to work during the fire. The cops gave us five minutes to evacuate. We had children with us and the fire was right across the street,” said an MTA bus driver who got an “unexcused absence” for missing work for two days during the Tick Fire.

Many workers at MTA (Metropolitan Transit Authority) couldn’t get to work during the October wildfires, including eighty drivers at one division alone. A major freeway and other roads were closed because driving was either impossible or very dangerous and unpredictable.

Management originally told workers that if they couldn’t get to work, they would still be paid for the day. But a few workers felt pressured to drive for hours and take serious risks to get to work. Then management wanted all the workers to do that. Absent workers lost pay after all. Their absences were “unexcused” even when they called to report they couldn’t get to work.

Over six thousand fires ravaged California this season. They destroyed homes and air quality, killing three people and sickening many more.

This inferno is a product of capitalism.

Capitalist-caused climate change plays a big role in making fires deadlier and more widespread – not just in California. In Australia, over 120 uncontrollable brushfires have ravaged huge areas and destroyed 300 homes. And it’s not even summer there yet.

But the main problem is capitalism’s social relations of production. That’s obvious in the Amazon!

The few capitalists call the shots. We masses are their wage slaves. What counts for them is

their profits, not our needs. That’s why we need to mobilize for a communist system!

In California, many workers (not just rich people!) lost their homes. Sonoma County bosses forced farmworkers to pick grapes and other crops while breathing dangerous smoke and soot.

In Los Angeles and Santa Rosa, some employers ordered housekeepers and gardeners to report to work in mandatory evacuation zones. No labor laws protect them from that.

Imprisoned workers risked their lives to help fight the fires. They trained as firefighters, but earn only \$1 an hour. The overcrowded prison system’s pool of \$1 firefighters helps subsidize the utility companies’ lax maintenance.

California utility companies make huge profits from an old, outdated system. A broken jumper cable on a PG&E transmission tower probably caused the Kincade Fire, the company admitted on October 24. The Maria Fire in Santa Paula started 13 minutes after PG&E restored power there.

Would state ownership help the working class?

PG&E filed for bankruptcy in January, citing the huge fines they owed for causing previous fires. Liberal forces now call for the state to take over this huge utility. However, a state takeover would leave the taxpayers – mostly workers – liable for fines. Capitalism can only try to solve the crisis caused by its malfunctioning electric grid and the fires it sparks by passing the burdens and hardships to the masses.

Even more, the state’s job is to guarantee the capitalists’ profits. They care more about controlling the cost than controlling the flames. More destruction means higher costs to insurance com-

panies and banks.

A public power company would still serve the bosses’ needs to maximize profits. It would contract work to contractors who charge hefty fees to fix the power lines. These low-paying contractors will cut corners, risking workers’ safety and lives.

A state-controlled electric company would be like MTA, a state-controlled transportation company. MTA gets workers to work on time for the bosses—for as low wages as possible. If drivers stay home because of dangerous roads, other businesses lose money. The bosses won’t admit it openly, but punishing the drivers shows how important they are to the system. During the last transit strike the bosses lost \$100 million a day. It shows that no type of capitalism—state or private owned, liberal or fascist— can meet workers’ needs.

We need communist revolution to do away with production for profit, money, and the capitalist state. In communism, the collective knowledge and power of the working masses will mobilize to create safe energy and transportation. Communist masses can clear underbrush, put out fires, build underground electric cables, harness solar and wind energy, and avoid fossil fuels that cause global warming.

In communism, without bosses or wage slavery, no worker will have to take needless risks to keep a “job.” Communist relations of production, not money, will guarantee the safety, health, and lives of all workers.

We call on all workers – including MTA workers, farmworkers and prison slaves – to join the International Communist Workers’ Party.

MTA from page 1

mindful and I’m here because I know what capitalism is and I want to know more about communism to advance the struggle. I don’t know if a revolution will happen during my life, but I’m glad to have contributed so that the new generations will live a full life.”

H said, “In times of crisis, conditions change radically and workers look for leadership. For example, the Bolsheviks increased in membership in a matter of months during World War I. This was the product of the political work they had developed. This shows the importance of our *Red Flag* newspaper to bring communist ideas to the masses and the need of our group to visualize the communist future so we can be prepared and lead the revolution.”

This has given more confidence to the new comrades in this club, because they see that the apparent anti-communism is just that: appearance. In essence among the workers there is great anger against capitalism and the need for a real alternative.

In recent weeks our club has been meeting with these workers weekly to discuss political topics and our political work regarding the International conference. We have been emphasizing the significance of the history of the ten years of ICWP and its crucial political contribution of the communist line of mobilizing the masses directly for communism.

For the last meeting, three black workers and four latino workers attended. This has been very encouraging, since we can see how the number



ICWP/PCOI INTERNATIONAL CONFERENCES AND CELEBRATIONS SAN SALVADOR (El Salvador) - December 2019

LOS ANGELES (USA) January 2020 PORT ELIZABETH (SOUTH AFRICA) May 2020

Plan to attend a conference as a participant or an observer
Contribute money for international travel and other expenses
Read, distribute and write for Red Flag/Bandera Roja
Join and build the International Communist Workers’ Party

of meetings and discussions is leading us to meetings with more workers and to more complex political discussions, that is, to qualitative changes.

Apart from these discussions, there is the distribution of the *Red Flag* to other men and women workers. They also bring questions and new discussions. In this work site, distribution has recently increased, both internally and externally. On average 80 workers accept each edition of newspaper.

We have our plans to mobilize a group of MTA workers to participate in the ICWP conference in January 2020. But we are fighting one of the most

visible obstacles which is the lack of commitment to participate in party activities outside the workplace. That’s why we are planning meetings outside work, as well as visiting workers at home and social activities.

Some of these workers have committed to participate in the ICWP conference. With daily struggle we will try to make this a reality. For our group, mobilizing these workers to a communist activity with other workers from many parts of the world in the international conference will be a qualitative change.

Life in the Party:

THE COMMUNIST STRUGGLE TO END CORRUPTION

SEATTLE (USA), Nov. 15—*This synopsis of our last two meetings shows how the International Communist Workers' Party struggles around a political line.*

This collective discussion came out of our work. Every member's opinion was informed by communist struggle with our friends. "From the masses, to the masses" is how our party functions.

Capitalism always carries with it the curse of corruption. Nonetheless, focusing on corruption can blind us to the root cause of capitalism's evils.

This system relies on robbery. It is built on a foundation of capitalist exploitation. Every day, the bosses steal most of the value that the working class produces.

The ruling class are selfish parasites. They have built a culture and laws that justify this exploitation.

Gangsters and petty corrupt officials mimic this mentality and behavior. They are small potatoes, but they can make the life of workers insufferable.

Communism will end the thievery of our labor. It will be organized around collective labor providing for our collective needs. This behavior opens the door to a collective mentality, the antidote to corruption.

Futile Calls for Capitalism without Corruption

The ICWP collective in Seattle recently discussed what this means for us workers. We are striving to reach a consensus that can provide a communist solution: one that will end the corruption we see globally.

The newly elected "left-wing" president of Mexico, Lopez Obrador, ran, in large part, on an anti-corruption platform. So far, he's done little but attack workers.

"Obrador is surrounded by corrupt officials (from past administrations)," said a comrade to begin the discussion. "They make it hard for

him to do anything for the workers."

As an example, he related his experiences with Mexico City cops. They force workers to give them bribes. When you are barely making enough to eat, this petty corruption is a big deal.

On a bigger scale, Obrador formed a new national guard. It was sold as an answer to corruption in the police and regular army. Now the national guard spends all its time attacking Central American immigrants.

In the U.S., the *New York Times* calls for a fight against Trump's corruption. They warn us not to focus on his racism, sexism, xenophobia and promotion of fascism, lest Democrats lose the election.

On a global scale, millions are fighting in the streets. The bosses' media portray this wave of rebellion as a revolt against corruption. Only infrequently do they mention inequality or other, more relevant issues that are on the minds of the masses. Never does the bosses' press single out the root cause: capitalism!

We would very much like to hear from other party collectives in El Salvador and around the world. What are your experiences when struggling with our base around the issue of corruption?

The Big Lie

"Didn't corruption ruin attempts to create communism in Russia and China?" our comrade added.

Every worker knows corruption runs rampant in capitalism. Rather than deny it, the capitalists try to shift the focus. They point

to corruption in socialist societies. Sometimes they make stories up.

They conveniently forget that socialism maintains the wage system and exploitation: the material basis of individualism and corruption. While socialism may promote the ideals of cooperation and unselfishness, it forces everyone to "look out for number one."

Communist-Inspired Masses Will End Corruption

That's why the ICWP fights directly for communism, a society that ends wage slavery. Socialism, with its maintenance of wages and all that goes along with that, caused these first attempts to fail. We won't make that mistake again.

"I blame the schools," our comrade continued, after we discussed how capitalism sets us up for unbridled corruption. "They teach us to step on other people, not to cooperate."

Education in communism — in contrast to capitalist education — will not mimic and promote capitalist competition. It will be based on collective work.

An anti-corrupt capitalism is an impossibility. Communist-inspired masses will change society and how we relate to our fellow workers. Corruption will become a distasteful memory of decadent capitalism.



CORRUPTION MEETS ITS MATCH

SEATTLE (USA) — "You can't get rid of corruption," was a close party friend's initial reaction when he saw the first draft of the above article.

He changed his tune a bit after reading it. "How can we change workers' mentality?" was his next thought.

We agreed that capitalist production and the wage system promote individualism. Individual gain is at the heart of corrupt practices.

Even so, communists have led massive fights against corruption based on their vision of a collective society. Starting in the 1920s, right-wing socialists in the garment union opened the door to New York gangsters in their attempt to destroy Communist Party (CP) locals. The communists responded by mobilizing masses of garment workers to physically end the reign of corruption in the furrier section.

The battle came to a head on April 24, 1933. Mobsters stormed the headquarters of the furriers' union. They were intent on beating and killing the left-wing leadership.

The workers responded with the tools of their trade, including cutting knives. Eventually they drove the hoodlums away.

The communist-inspired workers went on the offensive. The CP organized Defense Brigades throughout the furrier district. They organized a massive demonstration with a flyer that read: "Let Us Take up the Struggle to Drive the Racketeers and Gangsters from the Needle Trade Industry." Tens of thousands demonstrated and hundreds of thousands of flyers, pamphlets and issues of the CP's paper flooded the city.¹

¹ David Lee, *The Convergence of Organized Crime and Organized Labor in New York Garment Industry, 1920-1940*, Master's Thesis, CUNY city college, 2014, pp.38-48.

The workers' collective spirit succeeded for a time. But the contradiction between this spirit and the material basis of capitalism eventually undermined the workers' success. Nonetheless, we can see the potential for mobilizing the masses to put an end to corruption within a communist society.

The material basis of communism relies on collective production. There will be no money to covet and corrupt. Our needs will be met collectively.

In communism, the party will mobilize great numbers of workers to stamp out the last vestiges of capitalist corruption when they arise. This time the material basis of society, collective production and distribution, will be on our side.

Living and struggling in this kind of society will change our view of what is possible. Communist relations will open a new era.



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HOLLYWOOD'S "HARRIET" LEAVES OUT THE BEST HALF OF THE STORY

"Harriet" tells the story of Harriet Tubman, who escaped from slavery in the US in 1849. It shows her bravery and heroism, as well as the work of the clandestine network known as the Underground Railroad. Tubman worked with the Underground Railroad, rescuing a total of 70 enslaved people, and leading them to freedom in the north, and, after the passage of the Fugitive Slave Act in 1850, on to Canada.

She was part of the large interracial abolitionist movement. She spoke at fundraising events, participated in at least one mass action to rescue a captured slave, and helped the militant white abolitionist John Brown plan his raid on the federal arsenal at Harpers Ferry, Virginia.

When the Civil War began, she served in the Union Army as a laundress, nurse, and a spy. In 1863 she led 150 black soldiers in a raid at Combahee Ferry, South Carolina, where they freed nearly 800 people from of slavery.

But "Harriet" is a movie.

"Harriet" is the story of an action heroine. Loyalty to and betrayal of Tubman and struggle is its theme. The filmmakers invented characters that represent generic realities to carry that narrative. They include the young white master obsessed with Tubman, the black slave hunter, and the free black woman in Philadelphia who defends Tubman with her life.

These characters, along with the real-life characters of Tubman's family, and actual members of the Underground Railroad, illustrate the message that loyalty is not a question of family ties, but a question of political commitment to the struggle.

But what's the struggle? Chattel slavery was only ended in the United States by a civil war. And the movie downplays that reality. On the one hand, when Tubman is trying to rescue her sister from slavery, the sister refuses to leave her chil-

dren behind, saying, "Everybody can't run." Tubman knew that, but the movie doesn't depict her as believing that. In a meeting with abolitionists, she is shown arguing for rescuing individuals rather than leading a movement to end slavery altogether.

And the masses, black and white, and John Brown are left out altogether.

John Brown: Tubman met Brown in 1858. A white abolitionist who had participated in violent actions against slaveowners in Kansas, Brown was organizing among abolitionists for support for his raid on the Federal Arsenal at Harpers Ferry, Virginia. He hoped to seize enough guns to start a civil war.

Tubman was enthusiastic about his proposal. She gave him tactical advice in planning the raid. She also gave fundraising speeches to support it. She did not accompany him to Harpers Ferry because of her illness, but she never wavered in her support of Brown.

The Nalle Affair: In 1860, Tubman played a key role in the mass rescue of Charles Nalle, who had escaped from slavery and was imprisoned in Troy, New York. A mob of nearly four hundred abolitionists rescued Nalle from a judge's office.

This was not the only time that a mob of black and white abolitionists took the law into their own hands to rescue runaways. Tubman was not the only black woman to play a heroic role in these fights. But the movie—and history in general—only shows the pacifists and Quakers of the Underground Railroad.

So what's the poison being pushed here?

The fight against slavery is portrayed as a "black" struggle. Loyalty is seen as loyalty to your "race"—not

to your class. Whites are "allies"—not comrades in a common struggle against a system which divides us to oppress us all.

And mass, armed struggle, is only shown in the movies when it's the US Army.

The raid at Combahee Ferry is heroic, and the one place in the movie you see masses of people, led by Tubman, liberate hundreds from slavery. And she rightly says that the Civil War could not be won without black soldiers.

But in 2019, imperialist war is on the horizon and black politicians like Kamala Harris, Cory Booker and Deval Patrick are trying to win the loyalty of black Americans. "Harriet" is finally a patriotic lie which, like "Glory" in 1989, and the *NYTimes* 1619 Project, attempts to win black Americans to patriotism and war.

Watch "Harriet" with a critical eye. Then read the history of the mass, interracial struggle against slavery. One place to start is our racism pamphlet: *To End Racism, Mobilize the Masses for Communism* at icwpredflag.org/rpe.pdf. And read *Red Flag* for the struggle today against racist global capitalism. Join the International Communist Workers' Party to fight for a communist world without exploitation, racism and war.



Tubman and the rescue of Charles Nalle

LETTERS

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CRITICISM AND SUGGESTIONS

"The Joker": Appearance and Essence

"We liked this movie because what it shows is true. Things are really messed up—like in the movie!" said a youth after seeing "The Joker."

A young worker said, "'The Joker' presented life as it really is." Many young people feel this way.

Some youth clapped when Joker killed the TV host who made fun of him.

Some think it is a revolutionary movie. That is the appearance. It shows people who support the Joker demonstrating in the streets in clown masks with a sign that says "Kill the Rich!"

The main character, a mentally ill man, kills three young rich white men who attack him on the subway. But as he descends further into mental illness, he also kills a co-worker, a psychologist and others.

The clown masks that the Joker and his supporters wear are reminiscent of the Guy Fawkes masks worn by many in the Occupy movement—a symbol for anarchists.

The movie portrays rebellion against the rich as anarchy and chaos—rather than masses of organized workers, youth and soldiers fighting for a world that meets our needs.

As the review in the last edition said, "Capitalism needs the working class to be disturbed, horrified and left feeling hopeless."

Angry masses need a plan to mobilize not just to lash out against the rich, but to overthrow capitalism and build a communist society where relationships based on comradeship and

collectivity replace money.

Capitalism is the source of today's growing inequality, racism, sexism, and the stress that causes mental illness. We can get rid of it and build a communist society made up of collectives that nurture all of us, where we produce and create for the needs of the masses, not the profits of the rich.

The appearance of the movie is revolutionary, anti-capitalist. In essence it is a cynical movie that gives the only alternatives to capitalism as anarchy and chaos.

The only real alternative to capitalism is communism. The rulers are terrified that angry youth will opt for communism. Let's fight to make that a reality.

—Comrades

Celebrating Ten Years of ICWP

"What do you think of the tenth anniversary of the International Communist Workers' Party?" a comrade asked me.

I am answering that question the best I can in this little letter.

I believe that the birth of the International Communist Workers Party came at a time when it was necessary to leave behind reformist struggles and decide to fight directly for communism.

A very important decision that marks our path and the present... and that will mark our future. There are great advances since the birth of the ICWP. For example the growth in the areas of India and Bangladesh, and the consolidation of the work in South Africa inspires us very much

to continue our work here in El Salvador.

In El Salvador we are very impressed and inspired with the quantitative and qualitative growth within the country's garment factories. There has been a commitment and discipline on the part of the ICWP workers within the factories that has borne fruit... We have a long way to go and a great task in the east of the country to continue with the advances and to be able to travel and reach the point of where our co-workers are in the country's free trade zone. There is a lot of work to be done...

Courage and always forward comrades.

—Comrade in El Salvador

Greetings, comrade readers of Red Flag!

We would like to tell you that in the first days of November we had an activity with comrades from the factory. We told them about the work that is being done in the International Communist Workers' Party, with the aim of making them aware of this work. The workers listened to it with great interest.

We went on a tourist outing to a beach that is very remote from the factory where we work. There were several people we did not know because transportation for that beach is not usually within the reach of the factory workers.

That's why I wanted to thank the MTA comrades in Los Angeles, USA, who gave us their support to make this possible.

—Thank you very much, from a comrade in El Salvador.

Experiences we have had in the struggle to build a communist world

We know a couple of workers who for many years worked in the textile factory and read our newspaper, but for personal reasons left the factory, and we lost contact with them. A few days ago we met and they asked us if we were still active in the ICWP (International Communist Workers' Party). We replied that we continued organizing inside the factory.

After talking a little about how their lives were, they told us that they wanted to continue receiving the newspaper, and participate in the collective meetings. We invited them to a meeting and they attended. They said they wanted to continue participating in the meetings, even though they are no longer working in the factory. So we planned to meet at their house and they told us that the doors of their house were open for us to meet and continue talking about the communist line of the party.

We set a day and time for the meeting. Unfortunately, the day we were going to meet,

they called to tell us that they had to go on a trip immediately, that they would notify us for an upcoming date. Although we were a little discouraged, we talked with the rest of the comrades in the collective and decided that we would continue struggling with these comrades. We understand that sometimes there are some unforeseen situations. This situation also encouraged us to take other actions that we had been planning for days.

One day later, a worker from another factory where approximately 60 women and very few men work came to visit my family and we started talking about how we were doing at work. I spoke to her about how work is done, what garments are made and how the bosses pay. When she heard these details, she said that where she works, it's not so different.

"We also work from Monday to Saturday, but so as not to go for only 4 hours on Saturday, we make them up from Monday to Thurs-

day, leaving an hour later. Exploitation is the same everywhere," she said.

Several comrades in the collective decided that it is necessary to spread communist ideas in other industrial centers. We made the decision to go to distribute our **Red Flag** newspaper to the factory where this worker works. This action left us very satisfied since we distributed the newspapers and they were well received by the workers.

We will continue to distribute **Red Flag** in other factories, where exploitation of our class by capitalist bosses is the order of the day. We will work hard to bring this exploitation to an end. In the next article we will give more details of how this action went, in the factory where this friend of the ICWP works.

—Comrades from the Maquilas in El Salvador

More about Communism and Education

In our party club in the east of El Salvador we have been talking about communist education. A phrase I wrote in a letter published in Volume 10, #12 was criticized as being anti-communist. I want to explain my thinking about this.

I said, "The communist revolution must not be a steamroller of the collective consciousness of the masses." This is a quote from those who saw in perestroika the opportunity to revitalize and safeguard the revolutionary conquest of October 1917 and opposed Russian revisionists like Boris Yeltsin or Gorbachev who used this historical moment in the USSR to give a death blow to the state of workers and peasants.

It is a call to avoid the mistakes of the past and present, of controlling the thinking of the masses, prohibiting criticism of the rulers and promoting the cult of personality such as that in North Korea.

It is a call to avoid the deformation of the revolutionary project like the infamous "socialism with Chinese characteristics" that condemned millions to poverty and created thousands of millionaires in the "People's Republic"

A comrade mentioned that we must have control of the state and education to provide a new education to the masses. In that sense the article calls for this new type of communist

education to emancipate the collective thinking of the masses. It must not be a means of coercion and repression of the masses disguised as red as it happens in the brutal censorship in China and North Korea.

The article points out the importance of the transformation of material reality to generate a change in the thinking of the masses. The line of the party is constructed daily and collectively. We must not be frightened by phrases or questions that are thorny to us or see criticism as counterrevolutionary or revisionist.

Let's build our collective vision of the type of education we need for the present and future. Let's discuss the questions asked in the previous article and do more.

—Student comrade in El Salvador

On the letters about Education and Communism.

The comrade who wrote about Universities in Vol. 10 #12 raised a lot of questions. One, about the role of students in the creation of the FMLN was answered in Vol. 10, #13, so I will focus on another point.

Today our work is the construction of the International Communist Workers' Party for the world proletarian revolution, so that all sectors of the population can unleash their creativity, courage and boldness, under the leadership of the working class and the Communist ideology that overcomes the limitations of the old movement.

Affection and care are essential for the strengthening of communist social relations. This is something that has cost me a lot to learn and put into practice, so I take this opportunity to send a revolutionary salute to the comrade. I was thinking about him when I read the following paragraph in the Communism and Education letter of Vol 10 # 13:

"Communist practice must be the basis of the education process. The International Communist Workers Party has a plan, Mobilize the Masses for Communism. Establishing reading networks of our Red Flag newspaper in the school, factory, army will help us expand the line of the Party"

And I thought about him because we have discussed many times how we understand from the Party the relationship between theory and practice. Practice, we argued, to be communist, has to serve the negation and transformation of the current state of affairs. We believe that the 10-year anniversary conference of the Party will be a moment that we can take advantage of in order to take stock of our objectives, strategies and methods of struggle to achieve mass mobilization for communism.

Hoping that this letter serves to nourish the discussion and that I generated some response, we send warm revolutionary greetings from Mexico.

—Student comrade in Mexico



NEW DELHI, INDIA, November 18— Students of Jawaharlal Nehru University overran police barricades during a massive three-week protest against skyrocketing fee increases and police attacks. Student comrades of ICWP are giving communist leadership in this struggle. More next issue.

Fascist Coup Against Evo Morales:

IMPERIALISTS FIGHT FOR CONTROL OF BOLIVIA AND THE WORLD

November 19—Some capitalist media denounce the Bolivian coup as a vile racist attack on a democratically elected leader. Others praise it as a democratic act to prevent a dictatorial president from holding onto power.

All hide that the coup is a product of the struggle among imperialist butchers for world domination: US versus China and Russia.

Evo and the Bolivian capitalists represented by their Movement to Socialism forged alliances with China and Russia. The oldest Bolivian capitalist sector wants to maintain its alliance with the US.

Indigenous masses are motivated by their hatred of the racism they have suffered and relentlessly fought against for centuries. But without communist leadership they are being mobilized to fight for one capitalist-imperialist side against the other.

Bolivia is in a pre-revolutionary situation that can either install fascism, unleash a fratricidal civil war or become a communist revolution — if there is communist party to lead one.

Evo Was Supposed to Prevent Civil War

In 2000, the government privatized water and charged for it. The Water War broke out. The working masses, including indigenous groups, rose up heroically against this racist and fascist attack on their survival. Faced with a growing prerevolutionary situation, the government retreated.

Three years later, the government planned a pipeline to Chile to sell gas cheaply to the US. The masses rose up even more massively and militantly against this theft of their resources, bringing Bolivia to the brink of civil war.

Both times, trade union and indigenous leaders such as Evo Morales were key to pacifying the angry masses. In 2005 Evo was elected as the

first indigenous president of Bolivia.

This guaranteed that for almost 14 years Bolivian resources and workers were exploited “peacefully” by Creole and imperialist capitalists.

Evo has Never Been a Communist

Evo started out as a trade-unionist. He founded the Political Instrument for Popular Sovereignty (IPSP) to advance himself politically. In 1997 the IPSP allied with the Movement to Socialism (MAS).

MAS had nothing to do with the socialism of the old communist movement. It took the name of an extinct faction of the fascist Bolivian Socialist Falange Party.

This alliance allowed Evo to participate in the 1997 elections because MAS was registered and ISPS was not. Evo was elected to Parliament, beginning his career as a bourgeois politician.

There’s no middle ground: If a government is not communist, it is capitalist.

If the communist working class does not govern, the government remains capitalist. It can never meet the needs of the masses.

So Evo began to lose popularity. He proposed projects to “develop” indigenous areas for the benefit of capitalists and imperialists. He confronted indigenous protests with beatings, tear gas and rubber bullets.

The price of gas has been low since 2014. Evo’s government has less income for popular social welfare programs.

His approval rate fell to 43%. The capitalist-imperialists saw him as less and less useful for appeasing future workers’ explosions.

Then came his latest “crime.” He granted two Chinese companies the right to exploit the world’s largest lithium reserves. This mineral is indispensable, for example in electric car batter-

ies. US imperialists could not allow that. Hence the coup!

Communism: the only alternative for the international working class.

Only communism, without money or capitalists, can guarantee our self-sufficiency in providing all our basic needs. For what we do not produce, we will depend on other workers around the world.

Unlike the capitalist-imperialists who fight over oil, natural gas, lithium, etc. for their profits, we will share all the resources of the world with the international working class to meet our needs.

In communism we will not have electoral parties or elections. We will have only one Party of many millions of communist leaders. Together with the masses, the party will make all the decisions that affect our lives.

Our red army - made up of millions - will defend our revolution. We will not stop fighting until we have built a communist world without borders or nations.

Pre-revolutionary Situations Show Urgency of Building ICWP

Mass movements in Bolivia, Ecuador, Chile, Iraq, Haiti, Sudan and elsewhere show the capacity and fighting potential of our powerful international working class. This makes it urgent to build a mass International Communist Workers’ Party (ICWP) with a mass base in the working class, in the army and among the youth.

Let’s support our international family in struggle by building ICWP where we are. If you are not a member, join! Distribute *Red Flag* to workers and soldiers, co-workers, family and friends. Recruit them to organize ICWP collectives.

This is how we prepare so that future pre-revolutionary explosions bring the communist working class to power!

Bolivia: The Barracks Are Disputed Spaces

SOLDIERS ARE KEY TO THE VICTORY OF COMMUNIST REVOLUTION

Soldiers are not only up for grabs—they are crucial to the victory or defeat of a workers’ revolution. The situation in Bolivia is the latest example. As we go to press, dozens of units have deserted the Bolivian Army. These soldiers have refused to murder the masses in the street. While at least 30 people, mostly indigenous protestors, have been killed, video has surfaced of protestors calling on soldiers to join them. And some have.

This was also an inspiring aspect of the uprising in Ecuador. Soldiers united with workers, including indigenous protestors, against the police.

The current situation in Bolivia, Ecuador, and Venezuela shows us that the barracks are disputed spaces. Soldiers are politicized. They can refuse to attack their class and they are capable of defending causes they are convinced of. It is the responsibility of the party to win them to the cause

of international communist revolution.

The coup against Evo Morales succeeded when the General Staff of the Bolivian army forced the president to resign his position. The position of the army has guaranteed, for the moment, the imposition of fascist reaction on the MAS Social Democratic project, marking a turning point in the days of violent protests after the presidential elections.

The betrayal by the military is a setback that Morales and his movement tried to avoid in their fourteen years of government. Like the Chavistas in Venezuela, under the MAS government, the military received government support to create their own companies. Officers and soldiers benefited from a series of salary and labor benefits, such as pensions equal to 100% of their salaries as active military (*El País*, 12/10/2019).

In contrast, the Venezuelan military, unlike the Bolivians, has been the fundamental piece for Maduro to continue in power. Despite attempts by the US government to persuade the Venezuelan army to rebel against Chavismo, only a few insignificant units have changed sides.

The coup d’etat in Bolivia has revived hatred and fears of Latin American armies among leftists and liberals. They ask, as a maximum and radical proclamation, the elimination of all the armed forces in the continent as in Costa Rica.

Instead of being a revolutionary demand, this is a bourgeois demand. The army is not the only repressive apparatus of the state. When the class struggle intensifies, the Bourgeois State is capable of turning its police forces into an occupying army, as it does in the black communities of the United States.

Other liberals and leftists defend the armies “loyal to the socialist cause.” They do not see that within these the hierarchy, professionalization and isolation of the masses continues. The experience of the Soviet Red Army and the People’s Liberation Army in China have taught us that by leaving intact bourgeois social relations within the army, it can become the armed force of the new capitalist ruling class.

What we propose is not loyalty to a socialist state which maintains wages, money and exploitation, albeit with some reforms. And we do not advocate bribing the military to win its support. We are fighting for communism. The loyalty of soldiers and all workers must be to the working masses, and to a society that produces for need, not for profit. In such a society, new communist social relations are our best strategy to protect the advances of the revolution.

Weapons are the guarantee. Our security and that of the revolution will depend on the social relations mediated by weapons. The masses organized by the Party must have control of the weapons and make the fundamental decisions at a tactical and strategic level. But the main question will be the political commitment of the armed masses to communism.



Read our pamphlet:

**Soldiers, Sailors
and Marines:
Crucial to a
Communist
Workers’
Revolution**

icwpredflag.org/mpe.pdf