

RED FLAG

MOBILIZE THE MASSES FOR COMMUNISM



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

NOTE TO READERS: This is a special edition of *Red Flag*. It's focused on the COVID-19 pandemic and communist responses to it around the world. It is coming out only electronically (in several formats). The next print issue (Vol. 11 #4) will appear next week, on schedule. It will include much of this material, updated as needed. Please stay as safe and healthy as you can under the unhealthy and fascist conditions imposed on us by capitalism-imperialism! At the same time, please do whatever you can to spread this communist analysis and to build the International Communist Workers' Party far and wide.

Spain: Mercedes Vitoria workers in Basque Country stop production when bosses refused to shut down the plant
See article page 4



“COMMUNIST REVOLUTION NOW!” RESOUNDS IN DELHI STREETS

DELHI, INDIA—The fascist Indian government is totally unprepared to deal with the spread of coronavirus. Prime Minister Modi went on national TV spewing his fascism and organizing the masses to xenophobia. He asked people to observe a 14 hour ‘people’s curfew’ to stave off the virus. He then asked people to clap and bang their empty pots and pans at 5 pm on Sunday.

Members of International Communist Workers’ Party have been in various locations. We try to explain to our friends, neighbors, students and even some soldiers that this capitalist system of profit is at the root of coronavirus and many other diseases that can be easily prevented in communism. There is a widespread anger and confusion that we are struggling to transform into a revolutionary force where our readers of *Red Flag* feel compelled to join our party.

At 5 pm, the time given by Modi to support his fascist policy by clapping and banging the pots, many of us wanted to take this opportunity to attack capitalism and fascism. In many Muslim- and Dalit-dominated areas where we have members, we asked people to bang the empty pots to demand food and medical care.

Students from Jawaharal Nehru University, Delhi University and Jamia Millia University have been fighting against xenophobic citizenship laws. Many started slogans saying ‘long live communism’, ‘women of Jamia have shown the way to fight fascist

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Boeing Factories in Turmoil: COMMUNISM: A LIFE OR DEATH QUESTION

Flash: An ICWP friend and regular Red Flag reader from Boeing’s Auburn plant died from COVID-19 Sunday night. As workers started leaving in droves Monday, the company suspended all Puget Sound operations, starting Wednesday, for 14 days.

PUGET SOUND (US), March 23—Last weekend, the first Boeing worker died of Coronavirus. He was a 27-year veteran inspector at the Everett plant.

“Boeing Everett plant... shut down!” wrote his brother on Facebook.

The Everett mayor announced a stay-at-home directive starting Monday. Similar directives followed in other cities with Boeing facilities.

Surviving Boeing workers breathed a sigh of relief. Finally, the Everett factory would close. It’s the biggest manufacturing building in the U.S., with over 36,000 workers. It’s the lynchpin of commercial jet production. Other plants would have to follow, involving 70,000 workers in this area alone.

But relief was short-lived. The mayor quoted Homeland Security guidelines to excuse Boeing from complying. Aerospace products and parts manufacturing is considered “essential.” This sounds more like a war plan than a mobilization to halt the coronavirus pandemic.

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CORONAVIRUS PANDEMIC: WE NEED TO END CAPITALISM SOONER RATHER THAN LATER

THE TIME TO MOBILIZE MASSES FOR COMMUNISM IS NOW

“Most of us live in a small room with ten people sleeping in different shifts,” reports a garment worker in India. “And the factory is asking us to keep social distance of 2 meters!”

Masses are angry and getting angrier. The capitalist rulers who control the world can't manage even basic measures to protect our health amidst the worsening coronavirus pandemic. No tests. No masks. No ventilators. No preparations for emergency hospitals.

The bosses' "solutions" are handwashing and "social isolation." These are impossible for more than half of us around the world, especially refugees and the poorest of the poor.

The capitalists' plans in Italy and elsewhere include letting us die if we are older or have health problems already. If they don't expect to be able to squeeze their profits out of us.

On the other hand, in large factories like Boeing (USA), they expect workers to keep making airplanes even though coronavirus has already hit their co-workers, to try to stem their losses and keep Boeing afloat for their war needs.

This capitalist system must go! We must end it! We need communism, and the sooner the better.

In communist society, workers will be organized to make decisions that will meet the needs of the masses. No bosses, no profits, no borders, no money or markets.

We'd be prepared for epidemics and other emergencies with stockpiles of emergency supplies. We'd have high-quality health infrastructure in place for everyone. When a crisis hits, we'd drop everything to produce what's most needed. We'd organize to get everyone what they

need: protection, health care, food, shelter, social connection, everything.

A huge International Communist Workers' Party – open to everyone who wants to join – would mobilize masses to do all this. Nobody would pay for anything.

Fighting an epidemic or pandemic like coronavirus would still involve big disruptions, but not living on the street and going hungry. People will be willing to make the needed sacrifices if they know that society has their backs.

In contrast, the capitalists are mobilizing their state to impose curfews, quarantines and martial law. They are spreading racism, xenophobia and panic. They are rightfully afraid that the masses will resist them.

Masses are already resisting! In Chennai, India five thousand workers defied government warnings not to demonstrate. They refused to give up the struggle against the fascist citizenship laws there. In Detroit, USA, bus drivers went out on strike demanding safety equipment – and won.

Masses are showing the solidarity we need to fight for and win communist society. In Spain and Italy, apartment dwellers sing together from their balconies every night. In Los Angeles (USA) people are forming support networks for co-workers.

Capitalist Competition and Crisis

The coronavirus emergency is sharpening and revealing the contradictions that always exist at the heart of capitalism. It is accelerating the bosses' economy going into recession and depression.

It is intensifying the conflict between US, Chi-

nese and Russian imperialists: Chinese rulers are showing their strength internationally while the US rulers' weaknesses are exposed. Wars are already decimating the lives of millions. World war will affect everyone – worse than coronavirus.

More and more are seeing the failures and the fault-lines in capitalist society. In capitalist schooling as well as in public health, the workplace and the environment.

Communism can create and provide the education we really need – in place of the capitalists' ridiculous and divisive assembly-line system of indoctrination.

Communism can create the conditions for all of us to live healthy lives. Clean water, healthy food, decent housing that fosters community. No more workplace stress, drug addiction, despair-driven suicide, racist police terror. No racism period. No sexism or ageism or xenophobia. No wars, no refugees. Truly we have a world to win!

This is exactly the time to spread the discussion of why we need communism and how to win it. This is the time to join and build the International Communist Workers' Party everywhere. Circulate this leaflet by social media and any other means possible. Get in touch with us and become part of the solution.

Need More Red Flags

So far, I am also safe. I ran out of **Red Flags**. It is very difficult to work without them and mostly I am concentrating on the youth. There is a high school close to my home. Those young people are interested and they want to form an active group on Facebook. Some of them want to learn dialectics on Facebook and I was using old Red Flags.
—Janitor Comrade in South Africa

Wants More ICWP Literature

Note: The following comments were written to a comrade in the US after a discussion about our fight for communism as the capitalist crisis deepens with the spread of coronavirus:

My grandfather was a nationalist freedom fighter and a respected teacher. He lived up to Gandhi's ideals as best he could. My father, on the contrary, was a fervid Marxist. Both my grandfather and father suffered jail terms. I grew up in a thoroughly Marxist atmosphere at home and outside.

It is really heartening that you have still remained young at heart and can dream of a better world and fight for it.

Simply incredible! To remain a communist in the citadel of capitalism! I too am a diehard socialist. My dad was a communist and went to jail several times.

Can you send me please more literature of ICWP?
—Friend in India

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police'. We did not start this, but we got involved and many streets made deafening sounds of 'communist revolution now'! This was in a stark contrast to Modi's RSS and BJP supporters who were dancing and supporting the government.

This outrage of the masses continued. We realized that we had to act fast. We are circulating our literature in many different ways, but we want the masses to join ICWP.

We met as collective many times. In India, almost 80% of the workers are wage slaves on an informal, day labor basis. In India there are about 300 reported cases of coronavirus. But the complete shutdown of the cities have left literally hundreds of millions without any means to survive. Before people die from the coronavirus related illnesses, the masses are left to starve to



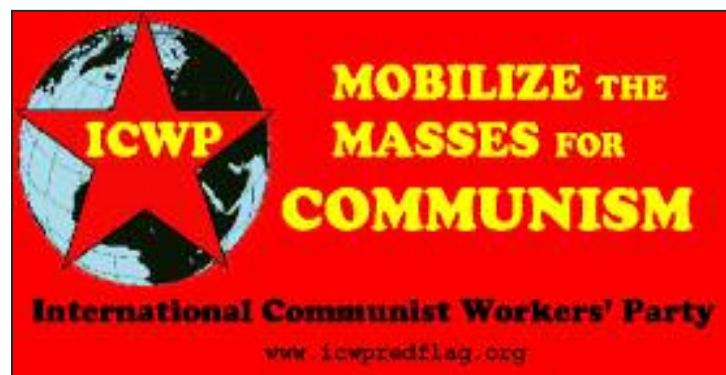
India: Women of Shaheen Bagh take precautions while protesting Modi's fascist citizenship laws.

death.

Some comrades remember the 1968 food crisis in India, when the Vietnam war was at its peak and US imperialism was in retreat. We see the current situation as a beginning of mass upheaval, food rebellions.

Only communism can bring azadi (freedom) to the workers and poor masses in India.

—Youth Collective in India



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Safer With the Masses

MOBILIZING FOR COMMUNISM UNDER AN ORDER TO SHELTER AT HOME

LOS ANGELES, USA, March 20—Yesterday the County Board of Supervisors issued a “Safer at Home” order. And comrades produced a leaflet entitled “Coronavirus Pandemic: We Need to End Capitalism Sooner Rather than Later — The Time to Mobilize Masses for Communism Is Now

A group of party members decided to go to a local grocery store the next morning and distribute literature to the workers stocking up on food and other necessities.

An older comrade printed off the leaflet, and three younger comrades and a long-time friend of the Party (ranging from 30 to 50 years old) met up in the parking lot. Our plan was to place the leaflets on car windshields, to keep as much as possible a six-foot distance from people.

Most people were receptive. We distributed over a hundred leaflets and about 60 RF in an hour and a half. We had some long conversations, including one with a coworker and neighbor of one of the comrades.

Rather than panicking and allowing ourselves to be suppressed, we are organizing for the world we envision. Comrades made a plan. Those who were at lower risk went out and distributed our

literature to the masses. Those who couldn't help in other ways.

“It was medicinal,” said our friend. “People were very welcoming for such a tense time. I hadn't done outreach like this in about 10 years, so I really enjoyed engaging the community from a safe space like we did today.”

The comrades who participated in this action are unanimous that we should continue doing this as long as possible.

“The need exists to create rapid response groups of 3 to 4 so as to mobilize actions as needed. We all should think about this and start building these groups,” said a comrade afterwards.

“We have to keep these things going so long as we are able to leave our homes,” commented another comrade.

“When we are not able to leave our homes,” responded the third comrade, “we have to make a plan to reach workers clandestinely. Social media is nice, but nothing compares to eye to eye contact.”

Other comrades expressed doubts about the advisability of this action. One comrade pointed out that it's an illusion to think that only old peo-

ple are in danger from this virus. 40% of people hospitalized in the US are between the ages of 20 and 55. They urged us to self-isolate so as not to spread the virus.

We took this criticism seriously, and are still weighing it carefully.

But we also thought about our friends, family members and comrades who don't have the option to self-isolate. Grocery store clerks and warehouse workers, hospital workers, mail carriers, bus drivers and mechanics.

We thought about Indian garment workers, prisoners, migrants in detention and refugee camps and workers at Boeing. We thought about the 47% of the world's population without access to clean water. And we decided to take precautions, but to continue doing this and to involve others.

Leaflets and *Red Flag* are our weapons in the war against capitalism. In times like this we need not be immobilized but rather mobilized. The masses worldwide are responding to the call of communism. And we must do all we can to make sure to sound the call, loud and clear.

TRANSIT WORKERS DISCUSS CORONA VIRUS; BUILD COMMUNIST COLLECTIVE ON THE JOB

Los Angeles, USA—Today is a day of victory for our International Communist Workers' Party. The political work that we have been carrying out during these past years is beginning to yield qualitative changes. Just as in society you can see these changes from quantity into quality, as the current situation which many workers are in some afraid from not knowing what is happening or if in fact it is happening — whether it is reality or it is a lie.

But we as a party have our analysis, and we are showing that more workers are opening up to our ideas. Today we recruited a new member and another comrade passed *Red Flag* to a new worker.

We had a meeting of 4 party members who have been consolidated and are already thinking

about how we are going to make the party grow. Four members who are leaving the internal meetings that we previously had to meetings already in the houses of other workers. It is a huge step that is being noticed in the conviction and commitment of these workers to build the party.

During the meeting we had today there were several theories about what is happening with the coronavirus, all with mistrust towards the bosses, all with mistrust towards the bosses' plans. We know that nothing good can come of this situation - except for us who can take advantage of this situation. And that was the discussion: how can we take advantage of this situation and build the party because more workers are open to our ideas and believe and respect what we have been

saying for a long time.

There was talk that we must get used to this type of situation to meet because this is probably the beginning of what will deepen: this crisis and the bosses' attacks and the growth of fascism. So there is no need to face this situation with fear, the workers said.

Far from it: let us be on the offensive and tell the working class that this day is an example that when we talk to the working class about our ideas, many are open to join us.

They all said goodbye with the idea of doing more work for the party and making a deeper analysis in the process to see what will happen with the coronavirus.

—Comrades at MTA

PLEASE SEND US YOUR LETTERS, RESPONSES AND SUGGESTIONS TO ICWPREDFLAG@ANONYMOUSSPEECH.ORG

El Salvador: Fighting Fascist Exploitation in the Sweat Shops

Factory workers were discussing the coronavirus, which has affected humanity. They ask, “Who is responsible for all this?”

One worker said to his co-workers, “Some who are very religious said that it was God, others said that it was humans.”

“These are things that have to happen during this time,” said a worker.

But a worker who reads *Red Flag* said: “Its not god, nor anything supernatural. This is the product of this capitalist system.”

This conversation came before the moment that the boss of the factory refused to allow the workers to go home. The capitalist system is not interested in the health of the workers, and the bosses are interested in not stopping production. These discussions have taken place in the production modules.

The bosses did not want to send pregnant women or those over 60 home. “We need to finish the outstanding orders we have,” one of the factory bosses told the media.

Some Party comrades reacted to these statements and questioned the boss, managing to have this group of people sent home.

The emergency we have is to change this

capitalist system that is in decline. Now that we have the opportunity for the women and men workers to realize that the bosses' system cannot be sustained.

Last night the government of this country put the whole country in quarantine. Already many people have been arrested and sent to isolation centers and the Attorney General of the Republic assures them that they will be criminally prosecuted.

Fascism does not want to cure you but to lock you up so that you do not protest because there is no water. They want us to wash our hands but not a drop of water flows in many Salvadoran homes.

This crisis has unmasked this system and has made many co-workers see the need to read *Red Flag* and join the International Communist Workers' Party, for the creation of a world where health is one of our main priorities.

—Comrades of the Maquilas

Bangladesh: Garment Workers Want Communist Solution

The government told the garment workers to report to the authorities or stay home if we have any signs of coronavirus.

There is a situation of panic and anger. Even

before the outbreak of the coronavirus, the workers come to the factory even when they are very sick. Because not coming to work would seriously affect their family who would starve.

There are almost 4 million garment workers in Bangladesh in about 5000 factories. But these 4 million workers support 30 million family members.

We are sure that this capitalist government is not going to be able to control the pandemic. The garment workers want a real solution that can only be achieved by communist revolution. We stand in solidarity with all the workers around the world.

—Comrades in Bangladesh



Workers Shut Down Plant to Protect Lives – Now Need to Mobilize for Communism

SPAIN—We workers are furious. The capitalist system will never be able to solve our problems because they only look after super profits and their own interests. Capitalism has created many diseases and the main ones who have been harmed are us wage slaves. We are facing a crisis that cannot be controlled without the organization of the people, the unity of the people.

Workers of the Mercedes Vitoria factory, the largest in the Basque Country, halted production. More than 5,000 workers and subcontractors arrived at their jobs. The company gave them gloves and masks to protect them from the COVID-19 virus. But the workers got angry and stopped the plant because management didn't even explain what they had to do. They didn't know if a plan had been drawn up to prevent contagion. This factory stopped completely. The workers knew that a few days earlier one of the workers tested positive and the factory had not even disinfected the work areas. The protest started at 6 am and at 2 pm the multinational decided to stop production.

The workers at Mercedes Vitoria would probably have been exposed to death if they had not taken a stand and stopped the production facility, but the owners would not have cared as long as they had done the work.

Now we have learned that Renault is closing its four plants in Spain, IVECO is closing in Madrid, and Nissan is closing its plant in Avila.

Roque Dalton wrote a poem depicting the Salvadorans who died of malaria building the Panama Canal. We workers don't need to die to keep the rich richer and the poor poorer. The working class needs a new system that cares for the needs of its own comrades.

We Need to Build a Communist World!

Why communist? Because we don't need money, we don't need borders. In a crisis like the one we are living in all over the world, the scientists, doctors, nurses, etc. will help each other without having to worry about paying the mortgage, the rent, the bank loan or electricity or water. Instead we will only focus on the fact that we should be united fighting shoulder to shoulder for the health and well-being of our comrades.

We don't need a system that is based on the power of money that overwhelms us every day

by telling us that hard times are coming and that we have to be more of a slave than before in order to get ahead! We need a world without money! A world where healthcare is for everyone!

To establish a communist system, we need a Party to lead us and that Party is the ICWP. The International Communist Workers' Party is the only party that today really fights for communism. We work collectively so that we can objectively analyze how we can build a better world. We also work collectively to edit and produce the newspaper *Red Flag* so that the workers of the world can receive news and information to build this new system.

Join ICWP! That's how we can avoid disasters like the one we are living in today.



Spain: Hospital workers strike against new shift schedule that puts them and patients at risk

BOEING FACTORIES IN TURMOIL from page 1

“That’s insane!” said a healthcare worker. She and her co-workers agreed that some of the most essential workers in this crisis are janitors, delivery people, truckers, etc.—the very people that capitalism disrespects.

What’s so essential about making more planes? Thousands are already parked in the desert and company parking lots. Boeing even wants to start making the MAX again and it’s not yet certified. Do we want to risk our lives (and those of everyone in the Puget Sound) for this?

For weeks, Boeing workers have demanded basic personal protection equipment and disinfectant. We still haven’t gotten them. Thousands fear bringing COVID-19 to vulnerable relatives.

This week workers had had enough. Workers, particularly those armed with communist ideas, turned crew meetings into shouting matches. They are demanding the company shut down the factories. Comrades and friends have followed

up these meetings with day-long discussions about how communism and its production for need, not profits, is the only solution.

The ICWP is circulating two leaflets electronically and hand-to-hand: one written for Boeing employees, and the party’s international leaflet. Friends have posted them on social media.

Hundreds of new workers discussed the meaning of a wildcat strike. Old friends are reading *Red Flag* again. So are newer, younger workers who are seeing the paper for the first time. We immediately ask these new readers to circulate the paper to friends and family.

Workers have bombarded the union demanding they fight to end production. The union sent out an email asserting they have been fighting for us since the beginning of the crisis. What nerve! And they still refuse to demand that the company shut down!

By Saturday afternoon, there were 29 confirmed cases among Boeing workers, 24 of them

in the Puget Sound area. The majority were in the Everett plant, but now COVID-19 has spread to most area factories. These plants pack thousands side-by-side in close quarters. Over 1200 have been sent home to self-quarantine.

Thousands more have stayed home with unpaid leave. At first, the company refused to give leave, but relented after the turmoil in the plants.

CEO Calhoun has vowed to muster all available resources—including a \$60 billion dollar bailout funded with our tax dollars—to keep production going. “And profits flowing,” add workers on the shop floor. Calhoun’s plan has proved infeasible for now as more and more workers are leaving.

The pandemic has shown how we need communism, now more than ever. The time is now for Boeing workers (and everybody) to join the ICWP to turn this need into a reality.

COMMUNIST PRODUCTION WILL ALLOW US TO MAKE VENTILATORS AT THE FLIP OF A SWITCH

Boeing workers want to help fight the pandemic but not by making planes that will end up in parking lots. Party comrades have discussed with small groups of workers what it would take for us to make ventilators instead.

Capitalists call this “retooling” but it takes much more than tools, machines and factory buildings. Chiefly, it requires prepared and motivated workers and clean environments. Under capitalism, you can’t just flip a switch and produce a lot of ventilators instead of planes.

Normally, we work furiously get the planes out the door. Every plane maker does the same, flooding the market. There is no time to prepare for emergencies like the coronavirus pandemic.

Communism will produce for need. A friend asked, “How do you determine need?” He knows that the need for profits is the driving force in capitalism.

In communism, what an individual thinks we need does not take precedence over the needs of the collective working class. But how will the whole working class decide what is needed? That’s where the ICWP comes in.

The party will mobilize the masses to determine what we need most: “From the workers to the workers!” It seems reasonable that the party will struggle for factories like ours to have reserve capacity so it can produce ventilators or whatever else is needed in an emergency.

In communism, we won’t have “companies.” So instead of ensuring the survival of “the company” we’ll ensure the survival of our global working-class family.

As we consolidate communism, we can prepare for pandemics. All ventilator designs will be shared. No need for patents to protect profits.

In communism, engineer-machinists will fig-

ure out how to make and program machines to fabricate the necessary parts. Everyone will practice assembling ventilators or making parts for them. Many factories in many areas can prepare like this.

We do this all the time with new planes. The difference is that jobs are segregated under capitalism. Engineers design the parts. Programmers make the programs to run the machines. Usually, machinists try out the programs and point out errors. Assembly workers see if it all comes together.

This process can take years before a new plane is ready. (In Boeing’s case, ready does not mean airworthy!)

In communism, we can do all this before the emergency hits. We will no longer be helpless victims of nature or of capitalists.

MASSES NEED COMMUNISM TO PREVENT AND STOP LIFE-THREATENING NEW DISEASES

In March 2019, four Chinese scientists from Wuhan and Beijing published a scientific paper called “Bat Coronaviruses in China.” They reviewed three recent large epidemics caused by coronaviruses (CoVs). These were: Severe Acute Respiratory Syndrome (SARS, 2003) and Middle East Respiratory Syndrome (MERS, 2012), in humans, and Swine Acute Diarrhea Syndrome (SADS, 2018), in pigs.

The paper summarized the evidence that these viruses originated in bats, and were transmitted to people, camels and pigs. Many thousands of people died in these epidemics

Ten months before the first reported COVID-19 cases, the paper warned that it is “highly likely” that future coronavirus outbreaks will originate from bats, and that this would occur in China. It reported:

“It is generally believed that bat-born CoVs will re-emerge to cause the next disease outbreak.”

There are bats almost everywhere in the world. MERS began in Saudi Arabia. Ebola may have come from bats in DR Congo.

Viruses also jump from other animals besides bats. The H1N1 flu virus came from birds. That doesn’t mean that bats and birds are to blame.

Capitalist activities create conditions that encourage animal diseases to pass to humans.

Capitalism is mainly responsible for the destruction of wild animal habitat. Capitalist agribusiness includes huge livestock farms that produce huge waste, attract wild animals, and increase output with antibiotics. People in rural areas often have to hunt animals for food, another source of risk.

The spread of life-threatening new diseases is a

certainty. The masses not only need good medical care and health education, but constant large-scale efforts to prevent and stop epidemics.

Obviously, capitalism does not do this. Capitalists’ priorities are always making more profits and preparing to fight imperialist wars with other capitalists. Epidemics are only important to them when they threaten profits.

Now strong competition among capitalists and the falling rate of profit force them to cut back on all kinds of health care, including finding and stopping epidemics before they kill millions.

We cannot live under this system. The time to fight for communism is now.

NOTE: The paper is in English and free to download at <https://www.mdpi.com/1999-4915/11/3/210>

CORONAVIRUS, IDEALISM AND IMPERIALISM

The COVID-19 crisis exposes the possibility of communist relations emerging as existing capitalist relations of production are seriously undermined.

When the Corona virus first spread in China, US bosses engaged in China-bashing. They accused the Chinese government of suppressing information, restricting movement and generally mishandling the crisis. The unsubtle message was: “China’s loss, America’s gain.”

A scientific, Materialist analysis starts with the understanding that everything changes. In contrast, the US bosses promoted an unscientific Idealist outlook that nothing would change. Their response assumed that Coronavirus was a “foreign” virus and that US capitalism will remain intact.

The Chinese imperialists have already emerged stronger from the crisis. They have been

able to reopen factories while the US and Europe are likely to remain locked down.

State-capitalist China can organize their entire society, which traditional free-market economies can’t. Chinese workers, however, are still wage slaves and are experiencing hardships and possible loss of jobs. They, too, need real communist revolution!

Western capitalists’ inability to organize as effectively as the Chinese capitalists will intensify and sharpen the inter-imperialist contradictions. COVID-19 has allowed China to rehearse and showpiece its war-preparedness. Meanwhile, the Trumps and Bolsonaros are mired in their anti-scientific idealism.

The possibilities of communist class struggle are endless. The key is to encourage collectives and comrades to use **Red Flag** as the most powerful weapon in the hands of the international

working class.

Comrades in South Africa can confront bosses who are requiring workers to bring their own hand sanitizers. In India, mass outrage against fascist citizenship laws continues. In some places it has intensified. Energetic young comrades are spreading **Red Flag** and giving support, moral and financial, to the garment worker comrades.

Communist society will be organized around scientific knowledge. The working masses, trained in dialectical materialism, will quickly grasp the science of how viruses spread and how to end that.

Science and communist relations will bury Corona-like situations in no time. However, now it is time for us to organize the masses to bury capitalism. Let’s make a concerted effort to recruit new members to the Party.

PLEASE SEND US YOUR LETTERS, RESPONSES AND SUGGESTIONS TO ICWPREDFLAG@ANONYMOUSSPEECH.ORG

Class Struggle in the Time of Coronavirus

By March 22, coronavirus had killed two people in Colombia. A rebellion in an overcrowded prison claimed the lives of over twenty-three in the capital city, Bogota. Prisoners, mostly working-class poor, fought the military. A mass attempt to break out spread to 83 prisons across the country.

There is widespread fear. Stores are running out of supplies. Hospitals are without any credible equipment to deal with the possible explosion in the number of coronavirus-related cases.

Bogota, one of the largest cities in Latin America, has the most day-laborers. Many live in factory zones where the population density is over 55,000 people per square mile.

To add to the panic and chaos, the right-wing president asked people to pray. This caused many elderly poor to rush to church, further ag-

gravating the crisis.

It is a matter of days before we see food riots.

In recent years, tens of thousands of young people started working for Rappi. Rappi is an online order-delivery service like Uber. It delivers everything from food to documents. Any morning you can see lines of young people in front of the fast food chains and other restaurants for delivery orders. They are all out of work. The tourism industry has collapsed. Tens of thousands of trade work done by electricians, plumbers, carpenters, clerks are gone.

Even before many start dying of coronavirus, poor children are starving, causing lifelong health problems. The government free-lunch program for schools fed hundreds of thousands of working-class children. Now the schools are closed and hunger has overtaken their daily existence.

The real mass attack on the working class

has started in the form of job loss, eviction notices and empty shelves in the supermarket.

Last year there were massive demonstrations against the economic crisis that has affected our lives. University and high school students started street protests, and they were soon joined by the working class.

The government called in the army then, and now they are mobilizing troops in anticipation of massive protests. These soldiers come from very poor rural families.

It’s absolutely right that we need to organize soldiers, workers and students to overthrow capitalism that cannot even provide basic necessities. Colombia is one of the richest countries in the world in natural resources but we are constantly starving.

Indeed, we need communism. I and my friends read Red Flag with renewed interest.

—A comrade in Bogota, Colombia



Colombia – Prisoners rebel after COVID-19 kills more than thirty in Bogota’s Modelo prison.

BUILD THE INTERNATIONAL COMMUNIST WORKERS' PARTY FIGHT TO TRANSFORM OUR LIVES!

EL SALVADOR — The current Coronavirus crisis has shown the weakness of public and private healthcare systems worldwide. It also shows the need for a revolutionary alternative to the capitalist crisis. We need a change— now.

In capitalism the decision is easily made to abandon old people to their fate and let them die. The capitalists show little interest in human life.

In Mexico, El Salvador, and everywhere in the world, business groups and transnational corporations have “voluntarily” furloughed workers—without paying them.

In El Salvador, the health crisis exposes the precarious healthcare system. In 2018, according to official figures, there was only one doctor for every 767 inhabitants. There are not enough ventilators or beds in Intensive Care Units to deal with a pandemic of this magnitude.

Patients will need ventilation and metabolic support. Currently, there are not even 100 Intensive Care Unit (ICU) beds and they are overcrowded. The government intends to build a provisional hospital with 300 ICU beds, but most of the medical and support personnel don't have information about where.

The Salvadoran government has issued a plan for response and economic relief in the face of the COVID-19 emergency: “\$2 billion will be

used to strengthen their Emergency, Recovery and Economic Restructuring Fund; \$50 million will go to medium and small businesses and \$80 million to the agricultural sector.” But most of it is for refinancing \$1,049,856.20 of short and long-term Treasury Bill debt. The capitalists are rubbing their hands with glee, expecting more profits.

The unity of the working class, in all its diversity, is imperative to confront COVID 19 and the crisis of capitalism. This unity is made concrete by building the International Communist Workers' Party, a permanent organization of the working class.

The situation in El Salvador and Mexico also shows a lack of organization of the working class around communist principles. We need a Communist Party, organized in the main concentrations of capital with a line that overwhelmingly surpasses the bourgeois conception of life. A party that will shake the world and transform life. It will not only overcome COVID 19, but all the economic and cultural structures of capitalism, which have caused crises like the one we are facing today. It will mobilize massively to struggle for Communism.

At this moment, our task is to fight for health through communist solidarity and struggle. The

workers must stop production, not because a government says to or not, but because the workers' position, which is fundamental and revolutionary, allows them to enter fully into changing the reality of the lives of millions of people.

The opportunities to mobilize the masses for communism don't always present themselves in the same way. Now it's key to reaffirm what is being demonstrated day by day: Workers' labor moves everything in the world. A new way of life depends on the working class and its revolutionary tradition.

“This is screwed up. We are just waiting for it to burst,” a fast food worker tells me. It's true and it's not true.

We shouldn't be resigned to expect the worst from COVID-19. It's possible to face this crisis with strong ties of solidarity and massive political and social organization of the workers. We are fighting for the working class to use its revolutionary experience in the International Communist Workers' Party.

To those who read this message: Organize and work for a system of health, a different system whose principle and goal is human life of the masses: Communism!

Read, learn, and distribute *Red Flag* our communist newspaper. Join ICWP!

WE WANT TO CARE FOR OUR PATIENTS, BUT CAPITALISM GETS IN THE WAY

NEW JERSEY (USA) — Health care workers across the United States are being thrown into this pandemic without adequate training or supplies to take care of patients exposed or infected by the corona virus. I work in a small hospital in New Jersey. Every worker in the hospital is emotionally and physically drained.

There has been no training. Infectious disease protocols are confusing. There is a severely limited supply of N95 masks. Workers are forced to reuse them during the day. Some other hospitals in the area have run out. Everything else we need to care for the patients is lacking.

Workers often have to demand the masks to perform necessary tests on suspected or confirmed patients (results often take up to a week). Workers have taken up the slogan “no mask, no test!”

The bosses answer: no masks then wear bandannas and scarves!

The CDC loosened their guidelines for health care workers. The guidelines used to be that if you were exposed you had to self-quarantine for 14 days. The guidelines now state if health care

workers are exposed to the coronavirus, they should continue to work with a face mask. This not only puts their co-workers in danger, but, even more importantly our patients, the majority of whom are elderly with cardiovascular problems.

The communal transmission from health care worker to patient to coworkers and family and community will obviously cause the domino effect they are claiming they want to prevent!

This is how capitalism works. Big business bailouts and profits first, the working class (human lives) way down on the list. This unpreparedness, and lack of supplies is symptomatic of capitalism. The bailouts of airlines and cruise ship companies are a priority over the production of health supplies such as masks and ventilators to save human lives.

In communism this will never happen. We will have no borders. One working class that eliminates racism and xenophobia. If only one worker anywhere in the world got sick the response would be auto-

matic free treatment and immediate prevention for the rest of the working class.

In communism, there would be continual mass production of medical supplies, drugs and treatments. We will have redundant capacity, including training workers how to make necessary medical supplies in all kinds of factories. We will mobilize masses to prepare (and train) for any health crisis.



Nurses at Kaiser in Fremont CA (USA) demand personal protective equipment

PLEASE SEND US YOUR LETTERS, RESPONSES AND SUGGESTIONS TO ICWPREDFLAG@ANONYMOUSSPEECH.ORG

Why It's Really Time to Try Communism

The COVID-19 pandemic has very quickly changed the way we are living in the United States. Millions of us have been asked to remain at home. The more fortunate among them will still be receiving a paycheck. The lowest-paid workers, many in service industry jobs, are facing the loss of income. Many are unable to buy food, medicine, gas, or to pay bills.

This new and uncharted territory will either bring the best out in each of us, or it will reveal our worst flaws. The sad truth is that most huge corporations are most concerned with their bottom line: raking in profits.

As someone who believes that Communism is the way forward, I am watching the many

ways that the capitalist system leaves the working class out of their equations. The concern with extracting wealth from human beings, without addressing their basic needs, is what points to the evil built into the capitalist society.

As an older single person, I have been contacted by my adult children, at least four siblings, and my comrades. I am very fortunate to have a support system, where people are concerned about my health and wellbeing. Communism would be a support system for everyone.

As a believer that communism holds the answer to the problems of modern society, I am seeing the many ways that the capitalist system dooms so many to misery, even death. For example, take the case of a sick person

with few options to access medical care. A communist state-run system that would guarantee that every person would have access to medical attention, would have a healthier population. The existence of records to follow a person from birth to death would also contribute to a healthy society.

Most of all, in a society where goods and services were guaranteed, as a human right, sick persons could focus on making a full recovery. They would not have the stress of worrying how soon they might return to work.

I am trying to do my part to work for a communist society.

—Comrade in Los Angeles County, USA

Soldiers in India Discuss Communism

My father is an auto worker in South India. He works in a factory, but I grew up in a small village that is very poor. My father would send money every month to support the family. I only saw my father when he came home on holidays. When I was 18 years old, my family had no money to send me to school. I joined the Indian army.

Recently my father has been talking to me about communism and the organization International Communist Workers' Party. He says there is a newspaper *Red Flag*. I found it on the internet when I am outside of the army on my days off.

I liked the articles about the students who are fighting in Delhi. In my barracks the situation is the same as the students face. The quality of our food is very poor.

We have very close friendship among the soldiers. When we started reading about coronavirus, the officers told us that we might have to go to the cities to maintain law and order. Then we heard that one soldier was infected with coronavirus. We are in a very close physical contact with each other and we are extremely concerned.

My father told me the stories of widespread rebellions in the Indian army when it was under British rule. The famous Bombay rebellion started due to lack of food in the Indian navy. The rebellion spread like a wildfire and eventually forced the British to leave India.

We are in a very similar situation. The government is very oppressive, there are no jobs and now with the coronavirus many people are losing jobs, they have nothing to eat and support their family. I will continue to talk to my father about how communism can bring freedom to the poor and oppressed people.

—Concerned soldier in India

Talking About Communism and the Coronavirus with Soldiers in Mexico

A few days ago I was in the Mexican state of Chiapas, near the border with Guatemala. In spite of the coronavirus, daily activities continue in this region. People are not mainly worried about the virus. They're worried about how to survive—to bring home food to feed their family.

But schools and universities are closed because of the virus, so I was able to travel to the center of the country. Here daily activity continued in various sectors, except for the educational sector which had already been in quarantine.

I decided to contact my friends in the military and I started to talk about this. For them, at



Baghdad, Iraq – Protesters carry banners reading: "The people want to overthrow the regime." One declared that "the government and its militias are more dangerous than a virus."

first, worry did not exist. They were focused on the fight against narco trafficking and gasoline theft. But now, soldiers have begun to raise their voices, commenting that there's no plan to confront the epidemic, although the president announced that there would be hospitals under the control of the National Defense Forces.

I asked my friends about this and they said they didn't know anything about it. All they know is that they're not ready to confront anything like that. They don't have the necessary equipment. One of them asked me, "What should we do?"

I answered that one day we would form an unbeatable Red Army.

Another said: "When a person wants to work, time passes slowly in carrying out plans," referring to the question of a Red Army. Another person said that now they haven't even been given masks, but they keep going out into the streets and they have very little information about the virus. We talked about ICWP and I sent them our military pamphlet and other articles from our paper.

In conversations with others, I have seen again that the virus wasn't seen as a real threat. In other words, people know it's there and it's killing a lot of people, but they think it won't happen in Mexico. You hear nationalist sentiments and songs on social media.

Family members and friends said, "It's only a cold." I looked for information on the internet

and in WhatsApp groups to clarify the situation and start a discussion.

Now, as days go by, we are beginning to see the effects of the virus. The obligatory work stoppage in the US has begun to cut into the remittances Mexican workers in the US send home. Acquaintances and family members work in the US. They have said that they can't send money because they aren't working. Families are worried about their immigrant relatives and also because they won't be getting money.

In spite of everything, there's a feeling of calm—the calm before the storm. Lopez Obrador's declaration, to have faith in order to stop the virus, which was working at first, is fading little by little. The working class is beginning to realize that what the president is really worried about is the bosses' economic losses, not workers' lives.

I've had more conversations with people from different sectors, and as the situation develops, I will share some actions that have been proposed or are being carried out.

Now, thanks to conversations with Party comrades and reading *Red Flag*, I am strong enough to face this situation and even more, the recession that is coming closer. We have to point out that capitalist is killing us and to fight for communism.

In a communist society we won't need to choose who lives and who dies. In a communist society we'll work collectively and without pay we will work for the common good, without nations or bosses. Now more than ever: Join our revolutionary struggle. Now more than ever: You need us and we need you.

—Comrade in Mexico



Germany: Neighbors sing "Bella Ciao" in solidarity with quarantined Italian masses.

Read our pamphlet

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

icwpredflag.org/mps.pdf

CORONAVIRUS AND CAPITALIST CONTRADICTIONS

The coronavirus is already being blamed for the world-wide economic crisis that is about to explode. Don't be misled. It's merely the trigger. The crisis is the inevitable result of contradictions in the capitalist system.

Capitalism cannot work without crisis.

By November 2019, the two leading economies, the USA and China, had produced a huge stockpile of unsold cars, steel, aluminum and other commodities. They were running at only 75% of their productive capacity. That is, a quarter of the capital invested in them was not being used.

No sale, no profits! Capitalist production is all about profits. That's in trouble. The world's rate of profit has fallen since the 1970s from around 42% to around 17% today (see box). The bankers and captains who live off our labor are finding it harder and harder to make profits out of manufacturing. They turn to borrowing, juggling accounts and speculating. The London Financial Times (a major business newspaper) estimates that world debt levels now exceed \$250 trillion or 320% of what we workers of the world produce every year!

The interest on that \$250 trillion debt has to be serviced every month. This eats away at profits even more. It was itself unsustainable even before the coronavirus interrupted fragile markets.

There is now a general crisis of capitalism, the size of which the world has not confronted since the Soviet Revolution (1917) and the Chinese Revolution (1949) – that is, since World Wars I and II.

Crisis is not collapse. Crisis is a period where either capitalism advances or communist revolution advances. It is a period of destruction of capital value.

Destruction by many means

Destruction can be caused by market forces. Imagine an enterprise that only makes \$3 million

a year in profit from an investment of \$100 million. Its rate of profit is a mere 3%. It goes out of business, is devalued and is bought by a rival for \$10 million. Now the rate of profit is 30% and the rival's section of capitalism rises. "One capitalist," Marx pointed out, "kills many."

Destruction can be biological, like the coronavirus! As it shuts down economy after economy, the ability to service the \$250 trillion debt will end. Banks will collapse.

Destruction is now increasingly by military force, as it was in the years leading up to World Wars I and II. The invasion of Iraq, the bombing of Libya, the sanctions on Venezuela and Iran — all limited or removed rival oil producers from the market. This allowed US shale oil to flood the world markets at the right price. War and military power are essential economic forces.

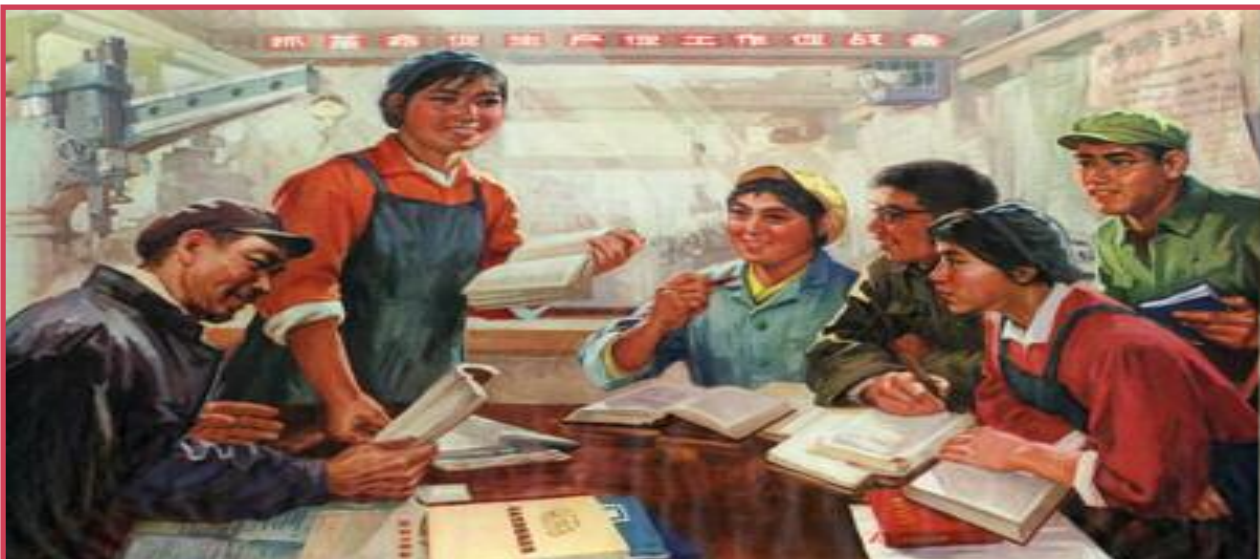
At each crisis, the US loses geopolitical power to its rival, China. It was the industrial might of China that pulled the world economy out of the 2008 crisis. Now as an economic crisis triggered by the coronavirus pandemic begins to unfold, it is China that leads the world scientifically.

China has dispatched teams of medical experts to help two outbreak hotspots, Iran and Italy. The US has failed to produce a coronavirus test that works

A revolutionary working class

Another economic force could be decisive: the working masses. We are entering a pre-revolutionary period. Cooperation, collectivity, and communism are necessary to defeat the virus attack.

Capitalist relations of production have produced not only a global economic crisis, but a climate crisis and a future of pandemics and plagues. This is an existential crisis. A desperate capitalism will turn to more war and fascism. We must work to win the angry working masses to revolution and communism.



Chinese poster: Create Marxist Theoretical Troops in the Midst of Battle

OTHER RESOURCES ON THE WEBSITE ABOUT THE CORONAVIRUS AND THE FIGHT FOR COMMUNISM

Capitalism is Deadlier Than Any Virus

<https://icwpredflag.org/wp/wordpress/volume-11-number-2/capitalism-is-more-deadly-than-any-virus/>

Articles about the Coronavirus from Iran, a health worker in Texas (USA), and Boeing Aerospace workers

<https://icwpredflag.org/wp/wordpress/wp-content/uploads/2020/03/RF040120.pdf>

Covid Emergency Leaflet (from page 2) as a leaflet

<https://icwpredflag.org/wp/wordpress/wp-content/uploads/2020/03/COVID-emergency-leaflet-2.pdf>

Covid Emergency Leaflet in Spanish, Italian, French, German & Russian

<https://icwpredflag.org/wp/wordpress/coronavirus-other-languages/>

WHY CAPITALISM CAN'T BE FIXED

The capitalist system is a roller coaster. It moves from economic crisis to boom to crisis to war. Marx worked out how the laws of motion of capitalism must produce these crises.

The main idea is that only workers' labor creates value. When bosses hire workers to make something, they have to provide raw materials, machines, and energy. In order to make a profit, however, the business must produce new value. This new value is created by the work workers do. Some of that new value is returned to workers as their wages. The rest is kept by the boss. This new value is called "surplus value" and it's where the profits come from.

WAGES ROB WORKERS EVERY DAY

Profits come out of scamming the worker. The workers' wages don't come from what they produce. It only comes from the number of hours they work. Say a chair made from wood and leather takes 8 hours' labor to make, and sells for \$400. Say the wood and leather cost \$100. The workers don't get \$300 in wages. If the workers' wage is \$15 per hour, the workers get 15 times 8 or \$120, leaving the boss with \$180 in surplus value.

Competition forces capitalists to produce as cheaply as possible. This often leads the boss to replace some workers with machinery. The problem with this is that surplus value only comes from the work workers do. When bosses buy a new machine that replaces workers, they must invest more money to obtain less surplus value. Hence, their rate of profit falls.

REVOLUTION WILL ABOLISH WAGES AND CRISIS

Capitalists have some ways to deal with this situation. They can lower workers' wages. They can get their government to lower their taxes. They can move production to a low-wage country, and so on. But the basic problem, lower profit rates, remains. It eventually leads to crises.

When the rate of profit is low, capitalists don't make investments in the real economy which creates services, products and jobs. Capitalists will then try to invest abroad then capital, or hoard their cash, or invest in financial assets like stocks and bonds, what Marx called "fictitious capital." In any case, profits and new production dry up and a crisis results.

Right now, with massive unemployment and the stock market in free-fall, the COVID-19 crisis is certain to result in an economic crisis, which was already overdue 12 years after the 2008 crisis.

Crises can only overcome the profit rate problem by destroying capital. This happens when the stock market falls, or when capital is physically destroyed in an imperialist war or by rust and lack of use in a depression. Because the tendency for the rate of profit to fall is a law of motion of the capitalist system, there is no way out of this cycle but communist revolution.