

RED FLAG

MOBILIZE THE MASSES FOR COMMUNISM

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



IRAN PROTESTS SEE PAGE 3



Iran:
striking
industrial
workers



Iran:
Isfahan
steelworkers
on strike

FIGHTING FOR COMMUNISM IS A LIFE AND DEATH ISSUE FOR WORKERS, OUR CHILDREN, AND THEIR CHILDREN'S CHILDREN

SEATTLE (US), November 13—Boeing makes billion\$ producing weapons systems that slaughter workers all around the world. It is less well known that these profits are built on a foundation that necessitates poisoning tens of thousands of the company's employees.

Three families of Boeing employees have sued the company. The parents' exposure to toxic chemicals in the factories caused birth defects in their children. One child has a life-long heart condition, another a neurological disorder resulting from a missing part of her brain, and a third a debilitating genetic disorder.

According to more than 100 depositions and internal company documents, Boeing's top doctors estimated that 30,000 employees were exposed to "toxic chemical mixtures." Fifteen hundred would suffer "outbreaks of serious illness—including sterility, fetal abnormalities, stillbirth, lifelong chronic illness, cancer and death."

C., a retired Boeing worker, described how his crew washed their hands with toxic solvents, breathed in lead dust that saturated the hammer shop, and ate their lunch next to acidic tanks. The factory was evacuated several times when toxic fumes spread throughout the building.

The company considered demolishing the building. Boeing headquarters squashed the idea. It would cost too much to clean up the polluted ground under the factory.

"We're lucky to be alive!" C. told another comrade who also worked on the factory floor.

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India: Garment Workers Prepare for International Communist Workers' Conference

THE FIGHT FOR COMMUNISM UNITES US ALL

BENGALURU (India), December 4— "For the first time in my life, I can tell my story and see how my life is no different than my brothers and sisters around the world. That is because I read *Red Flag* regularly and the fight for communism is what unites us all," said Poonam.

"I feel like I am talking to those exploited masses. Each one of us has a unique story, but they all point to the truth that we have our capitalist exploiters." Poonam was among about a dozen friends and members of ICWP in Bengaluru talking about the upcoming conference in El Salvador.

We started by asking how many of us have read *Red Flag* and how many of us distribute it regularly. That is when Poonam told her story of brutal exploitation that led her to read *Red Flag* seriously.

Everyone in the room had similar stories, and *Red Flag* became a unifying way of recruiting more comrades. When we read in *Red Flag* the story of another female worker in El Salvador, we forget where they are from. We feel that they could be somebody in our factory, our neighbor, our friend.

We are learning that when comrades feel confident about *Red Flag*, they feel confident about talking to their friends. It leads to a deeper struggle about why we need to fight for communism. Many comrades said that when we talk about communism, we must think clearly about how a communist society will be different from the bosses making a profit.

Communism Will End Thousands of Years of Sexism

Alisha is a garment worker who started coming to meetings recently. She struggled to get others to read *Red Flag*. So before giving it to her

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Volume 13 Number 16, December 7, 2022 to January 4, 2023

This is a 4-week issue

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CALL TO THE 2022 INTERNATIONAL COMMUNIST CONFERENCE

EL SALVADOR, December 3—A world without borders, racism, caste, sexism, and wage slavery will only be possible under Communism!

We are holding an international conference at the end of this month to build the ICWP to unite the masses. We need to strengthen communist relations, organize new collectives, and massively distribute our newspaper *Red Flag*. To develop leadership of women and men in the factories, among others. Recruiting youth and soldiers is key.

This will be an occasion to evaluate the work of organizing and recruiting workers who are essential to the fight for communism.

Now is the time to organize and mobilize for communism. This is an important moment.

Maquila (sweatshop) workers in El Salvador, like millions around the world, organized in the

International Communist Workers' Party, are a key part of this struggle.

Meetings of collectives after exhausting workdays, *Red Flag* distribution and leafleting, visits to other factories to distribute *Red Flag*, and larger extended meetings are among the actions that comrades carry out in El Salvador. In the process we have been learning that workers' daily lives matter, practicing principles of solidarity and strengthening communist social relations.

Here we are under attack by the bosses and their fascist government whose "regime of exception" (martial law) serves to repress the working class. This shows the need to grow the party with a strong base of workers in the factories fighting for Communism: building communist relations among workers, developing and strengthening communist leadership.

The working class worldwide is in motion, protesting the effects of the generalized crisis of the system: waves of layoffs, hunger, misery, forced migration, and imperialist wars.

The need to organize is urgent. Our class must respond with communist revolution. These mobilizations represent an opportunity for ICWP to grow.

This conference will be partly face-to-face and partly by Zoom. It is open to all comrades and friends who want to participate with questions, suggestions, criticisms, or short comments about their own experiences. For more information, ask the person who shared this paper with you or contact us at ICWP@NYM.hush.com

In struggle for Communism and nothing less!

SPREADING AND ADVANCING OUR COMMUNIST LINE THROUGH RED FLAG

How can we make *Red Flag*/Bandera Roja a more effective weapon for the working class? This is one of the key discussions for the upcoming international conference.

The editorial collective tries to guarantee that each issue puts forward a sharp communist line. But articles are only effective if they are read and discussed. It's important to read articles that are not about one's own specific situation. The letter from India in this issue shows this.

How can articles be improved so that more comrades and friends will want to read them? What articles and letters are most helpful in dis-

cussions? What else do we need?

Our party does not believe in relying on "experts." How can we start developing many more writers of letters and articles with our line?

As more people write, they bring different ideas – some very helpful. The last issue was a step forward, with more comrades contributing articles and letters. But some of us thought it didn't explain enough about communist politics. One way to learn to write is by helping to produce (and distribute) local leaflets, especially about international issues.

Two things go hand in hand: The struggle to

write and the struggle over the line. The main work of the editorial collective is political struggle over the line. How to organize articles or make them clearer is secondary.

Several younger comrades are getting more involved in this work – an important step forward. More must do so. We all must help make that happen.

Let's work to decentralize the theoretical work, encourage local initiative, and develop a broader viewpoint! Dare to struggle, dare to win!

INDIA

From Page 1

friends, she would read it and talk to them about it. In this way they are more likely to read it and spread it to other coworkers. She built a strong relationship with three women by talking about their lives. One told a story of facing spousal abuse. Alisha was eventually able to take her coworker to stay in a safe place.

The December conference will be very important in advancing our struggle for *Red Flag* to be a revolutionary organ of the party. It will tell the stories of Alisha and many others in building networks of *Red Flag* readers.

Another young comrade who joined recently said, "Growing up, I was expected to cook and clean every day. My brother was very abusive, and the family tolerated it. When the government gave a free cell phone to people in my village, my brother was the only one allowed to use it. One day I tried to use my cellphone, and he beat me up."

She continued, "When I started reading *Red Flag*, I saw how sexism is everywhere in society. The domination of women has been going on for thousands of years. But we see that this society of making maximum profit from women workers leads us to fight for a communist society where nobody makes a profit."

Our collective felt that the conference should emphasize more about how women workers are struggling with sexism and how we are taking leadership in building more women worker comrades. The sexist abuse our comrades have described is the tip of the iceberg as almost all women have experienced it.

Defeat Bosses' Casteism and Anti-Muslim Fascism

It's important to talk about how we are dealing with the increased oppression of the working class. The rulers are putting more restrictions on the workers every day. We face the effects of Covid that reportedly killed over 600,000 people here, high youth unemployment, hunger, and skyrocketing inflation.

The capitalist rulers constantly promote the division between Hindu and Muslim workers as a cause for all these problems. The Muslim workers are targeted for pogroms, bulldozer drives, police 'disappearance,' and long jail sentences without charges. But this is an attack on all the workers, especially

Dalits, Adivasis, and even 'Upper caste' workers. The rulers are using these fascist tactics with cell-phone use because they can very quickly suppress mass dissent.

Finally, the conference will open much-needed discussion about dialectical materialism. The important aspect of 'likeness' and 'difference' will lead to a better understanding of internationalism and the communist struggle for it. If workers everywhere in India, El Salvador, the USA, and South Africa are more alike than what is dividing us?

The bosses use nationalism, gender, identity politics, religion, caste, race, language, tribe, etc. We propose that we discuss our party that is small in quantity has the quality to potentially change the world by becoming a mass party for communist revolution.



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COMMUNIST SOLIDARITY: “WORKERS HELPING EACH OTHER”

I come from a very small village in Bihar. Bihar is one of the most impoverished states in India.

My father was a day laborer who was trying very hard to support five children. My mother did the household chores. The money that my father brought was so little that many days we did not eat. It was very hard to hear my younger sibling crying at night when there was no food.

As the children grew older, my mother started working in a coal mine. It was very hard work. She would leave early in the morning. Her job was the most demanding task. She would carry heavy loads of coals on her back and another large basket on her head. There was no break as she worked over twelve hours a day. She would come home covered with coal dust all over her body.

My mother was only able to work in coal mines for about six years. She started having serious health issues. Her breathing was difficult. We had no money to take her to the nearest clinic eighty kilometers (50 miles) away. The

government clinics are the last places people go. They lack sanitary conditions, and the doctors are poorly trained.

During those six years when my mother worked, we were able to have at least one meal a day. My older siblings were in big cities working odd jobs. When I was sixteen, I also left home. Many young girls in our village found jobs in the garment factories of Bengaluru. I followed them and have been working in various garment factories in Bengaluru for over eleven years.

I cannot remember when I joined ICWP. I guess it may be two years, during the pandemic. I received *Red Flag* either from a friend or someone who gave it to me at work. I am ashamed to say that I did not read it. However, I kept it in my room.

A few weeks later, someone gave me another copy of *Red Flag*. It was very hard for me because of the pandemic, my work was reduced. So, when I saw a *Red Flag* with a headline that said, “El Salvador: Communist Solidarity in Practice.” I grabbed it and read the

whole article.

The article said, “only workers can help each other.” It made a deep impression on me. The more I read it, the more I understood that I was a worker also. And only workers like me, no matter where they come from, men or women, if we are united, can smash the oppressive system.

This article aroused my curiosity, and I started reading more articles from other areas. I like to read all the articles from El Salvador because what they are describing is related directly to the garment work in Bengaluru.

Comrades in our collective in garment factories are discussing the conference in December. This will be a great opportunity for us and other comrades all around the world to put into practice the communist principle of “workers helping each other.” I am very excited about the conference.

—Garment worker comrade in Bengaluru (India)

IRAN: DEFEAT ALL CAPITALISTS AND IMPERIALISTS WITH COMMUNIST REVOLUTION

December 7—Iran has been rocked by nationwide protests since the death of 22-year-old Kurdish Iranian woman Masha Amini on September 16 while in police custody.

Last week the Iranian government announced that it might disband its “morality police” as a

ploy to try to head off mass strikes against the government’s fascist attacks.

The ploy failed. On Dec. 5, the call for nationwide strikes was widely answered, with industrial workers, truck drivers, nurses, teachers, and others striking and protesting alongside students and shopkeepers.

In the last three months, per Human Rights Activist News Agency, over 18,000 protesters have been arrested; hundreds have been killed.

The courageous masses

need the International Communist Workers’ Party to mobilize for communism. That’s the only solution to the murderous exploitation, racism, sexism and homophobia of this and all capitalist governments. Fighting for anything less will only change the face of the exploiter, not the lives of the masses. No capitalist or imperialist will save us.

US imperialists want to use this struggle to destabilize Iran and pressure its government to stop allying with Russia. But many remember that the US supported the murderous Shah until the end. Many more will come to see the need to fight for a communist society where the masses of women and men together organize all production through their mass communist party and use resources only to meet the masses’ needs and not for profit.

must end it!”

Only communist revolution can end the poisoning because communist collective production eliminates the profit system. Without money, profits and corporations, communism will organize production for our collective needs.

In communism, the ICWP will mobilize masses to study the science so we can judge what is safe and what is not. We will not be at the mercy of capitalist regulators who weigh profits and costs above human life. The international working class will guarantee our safety, the health of our children and their children’s children.

But to get there we need to build the ICWP and expand our communist base.

At a recent potluck, friends and comrades were angry and frustrated when they heard what was going on at Boeing. We will be working with them to organize discussions with more friends about this issue and communism. We will revitalize the distribution of *Red Flag* at Boeing in the new year and encourage our *Red Flag* readers there to discuss this on the plant floor.

Capitalism kills in peacetime and war, with toxic chemicals and military weapons. The international working class must have one goal and one goal only: to end this murderous system with communist revolution.



FIGHTING FOR COMMUNISM

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On March 18, 1980, Boeing’s doctors tried to warn company leadership about the fatal potential of toxic chemicals. One doctor noted that CEO Stamper “did not appear at all sympathetic” about having this brought to his attention.

Chemicals identified in the lawsuits, like Chromium VI, are still used in the Everett Boeing plant. Chromium VI contaminated the groundwater in Hinkley, California, as dramatized in the film “Erin Brockovich.”

Communists Organize Factory Struggle

Around the time the doctors were warning the company, Boeing workers launched a campaign against poisonous gas exposure in the Auburn (Washington) plant. Auburn workers focused on the degreaser methyl chloroform (TCE), a derivative of a poison gas used during World War I.

In 1979, a pregnant employee asked a Boeing doctor about the risk. “There is no sure way of protecting ourselves from TCE fumes,” he replied.

The company started a “safety” program that punished injured employees with letters of reprimand. Auburn employees responded by posting a cartoon depicting a worker kicking the safety supervisor into the degreaser vat and saying,

“Take your letter and soak it in methyl chloroform.”

Leaflets distributed throughout the plants emphasized that the workers could not expect anything better from a company that “supported genocidal fascism in South Africa where 50% of the children under the age of 5 die.” The leaflets invited Boeing workers to communist May Day events and insisted that the union include demands to end the poisoning in the plants.

The poisoning continues forty years later. In 2021, Boeing toxicologists reviewed more than 100 chemical information sheets. Decades after scientific literature documented the link between birth defects and organic solvents, the company added a single line to the TCE information sheet: “May be toxic to reproduction.”

Capitalism Is Poison; Communism Is the Antidote

Workers who are now ICWP comrades helped lead the Auburn campaign. We have learned from our mistakes. No matter how widespread or militant the effort to reform capitalism, we can’t let reform be a substitute for mobilizing the masses for communism.

“No company can end the poisoning,” comrade C. commented. “Capitalism is based on lies and exploitation. If Boeing spent the money needed to protect our health, other companies would take over. That is what history teaches us.

“This system is a joke,” he concluded. “We

Down the Rabbit Hole Again:

“REPARATIONS” FOR SLAVERY: CAPITALISTS’ DIVISIVE TRICK

CALIFORNIA (USA), December 6—A nine-member UC Berkeley task force is proposing a reparations plan “on a scale that is the largest since Reconstruction,” according to task force member Prof. Jovan Scott Lewis. The task force is throwing around the idea of \$200,000 or more for each Black California resident who can prove direct descent from a person enslaved in the US.

Don’t spend it yet. Lewis says the report will have “plenty of options” because it knows the State Legislature won’t ever come up with that money. Remember that formerly enslaved people never got the “40 acres and a mule” promised during Reconstruction.

Meanwhile, these promises are tremendously divisive. It’s not just that they are calculated to stir resentment among non-Black Californians. Black people whose ancestors were enslaved in the Caribbean or Latin America, or who migrated from Africa, won’t get a dime.

They, too, have suffered from the “housing discrimination, mass incarceration, unjust property seizures, devaluation of Black businesses, and health care” that the panel recognizes as legacies of racist capitalism.

Oops. The panel doesn’t mention capitalism.

Capitalists created the US system of racist slavery. US capitalism arose on the theft of Indigenous lands and the enslavement of African bodies. That’s how the original rulers accumulated the capital for trade and manufacture that enabled them to exploit their poorer cousins and other immigrants from around the globe.

The theft of land, bodies, and workers’ surplus labor accounts for 100% of the wealth of the United States. If we go down the rabbit-hole (dead-end) of reparations, how would it even be possible to calculate what’s owed to whom? It

wouldn’t.

The only way forward is communist revolution to abolish private property and take collective control of the products of our labor and that of our ancestors.

Communism will abolish capitalist “exchange” and replace it with “sharing.” Production for use (not for sale) means that goods and services we produce and perform will not have price tags. There will be no money (or credit cards or bitcoins). There will be no wealth, and no poverty either.

To win and build a society that collectively meets everyone’s needs, we urgently need to overcome all the divisions that capitalism creates among us. That means sharp communist class struggle to defeat racism and its cousins: xenophobia, nationalism, Islamophobia, casteism, colorism, and more.

Yes, there’s a huge gap between the resources available to Black, Hispanic, and white households. Ruling-class policies created this racist “wealth gap” intentionally. For example, the post-World War II “GI Bill” provided for no-down-payment home loans for white veterans but not for Black veterans. Freeway construction in California targeted Black neighborhoods for “urban renewal.”

The racial “wealth gap” is real. But to see the whole picture, we need to look at the intersection of race and class.

The Brookings Institute, a capitalist think-tank, reported that the net worth of a “typical” white family in 2016 (\$171,000) was nearly ten times greater than that of a Black family (\$17,150). But the report doesn’t mention that the net worth of the top 0.1% of the popula-

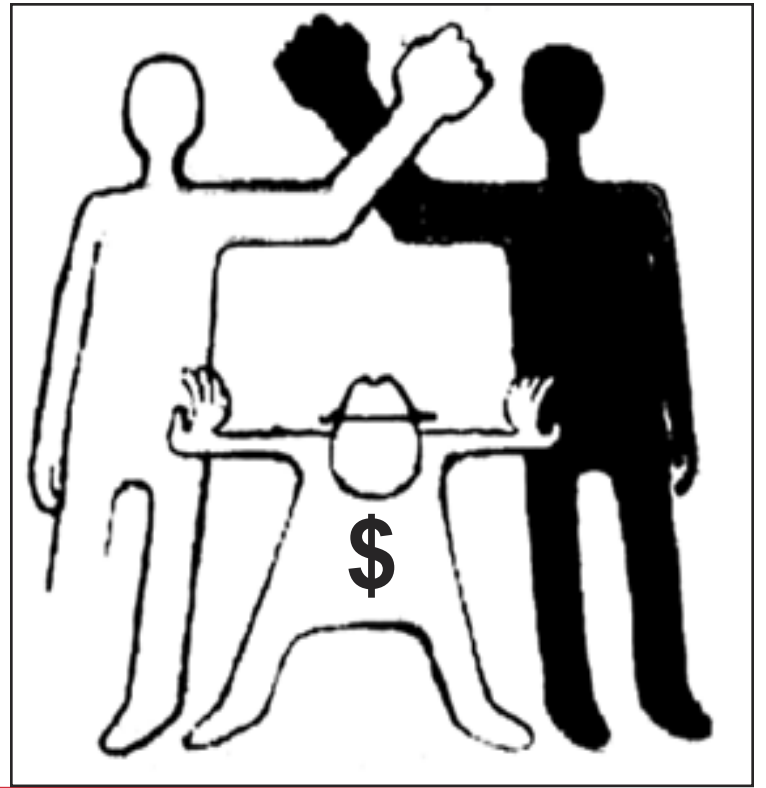
tion was 100 times greater than that “typical white family”! And the top 0.001% is almost 100 times greater than that.

Racist terror and lies have kept the working class divided and have allowed the capitalist class to maintain power.

No cash payment can compensate for the life of a loved one, or for slavery’s kidnappings and family separation. The pain and anger of slavery and racism demand revolutionary communist transformation, not a cash payout.

Black workers and youth in the US, and other industrial workers, soldiers, and sailors, are key to making this happen.

All *Red Flag* readers, especially Party members, must build and strengthen communist relationships that enable us to struggle successfully against all of capitalism’s diversions and divisions.



MEXICO— November 21 was “International Day for the Elimination of Violence against Women.” Thousands of people in various parts of Mexico marched to express their solidarity with women victims of violence and their families. The masses are furious with the capitalist, sexist system. As the International Communist Workers’ Party, we believe that more communist political awareness is needed to guide that anger toward the destruction of the system. To make this possible we must organize communist cells of the ICWP to build a society where gender equality is a reality.

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Qatar 2022: World Cup Stained with Workers’ Blood

“The soccer World Cup party has started,” said a friend in Los Angeles (USA). Another replied, “It’s a party stained with workers’ blood.”

In 2010, Qatar won the contest to host the World Cup without having a football (soccer) history. But it has immense wealth in oil and natural gas. And at the same time racist, sexist, homophobic, and anti-immigrant policies.

Krisma Timislina, a migrant worker who worked on the construction of hotels and stadiums in Qatar said, “It was hell on earth,” referring to the dire living and working conditions.

Qatar had to hire immigrant labor from India, Nepal, Sri Lanka, and other parts of the region to build the mega-attraction in the middle of its

deserts. It was no source of joy for these immigrant workers, who left with their backs broken (and many died) because of being forced to work up to sixteen hours a day in inhumane conditions.

According to the British publication *Guardian*, around 7,000 migrant workers lost their lives in the construction of World Cup facilities.

Just as responsible for this atrocity as the Qatari ruling class is the complicity of the FIFA organization. Profit is your goal. But it is not only Qatar. In every imperialist country where previous World Cups have been played, the bosses have their hands full of workers’ blood.

The organizers say, “We Unite the World.” But these festivities are full of nationalism and patriotism that disunite the working class. For example, a sentiment pushed by propaganda

is, “My team, my country, to hell with everyone else.”

On the other hand, these events have a global political point. FIFA, the US, and NATO boycotted Russia and gave Ukraine international support.

In a truly communist society, soccer and all sports will be even more exciting and joyous because they will not be measured by superiority or profit. I don’t know how they will be organized. The communist masses will find the best way to do it.

But I am sure that it will be to unite the working class. We will abolish nationalism, racism and fanaticism that today are instruments to divide workers.

—Comrade Red Sportsman

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Capitalist Education Hurts All Workers

December 4— In the biggest national strike of the year, 48,000 academic workers are on week four of their strike across the nine-campus University of California (UC) system. These are the workers who teach classes, lead discussion groups, labs, and tutoring sessions, do the bulk of day-to-day research tasks, grade papers and exams, and keep the university running.

A living wage is their major demand. It's very modest. The average UC academic worker spends more than half their income on rent. Some sleep in their cars, work two or three jobs, take on credit and student loan debt, and/or commute from hours away as year after year they chase the interest on their debts.

Exploitative low wages mean that working-class students, single parents, and disabled students are driven out of higher education. It's an unspoken feature of all levels of capitalist education that money plays a divisive role.

The University of California has a \$152 billion dollar endowment fund. Yet this state-funded institution has created a financial situation that makes it increasingly more difficult for working-class students to work in academia.

Yet, as powerful as it is, it is not money alone that divides the students. From K-12 through graduate school, the very structure of capitalist education isolates them. Knowledge society has accumulated collectively is expressed privately in exams or thesis papers. Step by step, everyday pressures distance the young intellectual worker from the community.

It's an isolation that hurts us all. Forty-eight thousand strikers organized and unified demanding a living wage is a powerful statement. It would resonate as loud as thunder through the ranks of millions of essential workers who also need that living wage. But the gap between intellectual and manual labor that capitalist education has engineered means the significance of the strike is misunderstood.

"Education," our pamphlet on Communist Education points out. "is more than schooling." It's a statement the present situation clearly supports.

In Berkeley last week, comrades passed out the *Red Flag* to strikers. The strikers wanted to read about the struggles against austerity capitalism all over the world. Self-critically, we didn't apply the argument of the pamphlet to the actual conditions of the strikers themselves. We didn't prepare politically and hadn't really thought about it. We can do better next time.

The grad students' resistance to their exploitation by the prestigious UC system entailed exhaustive organizing, training strike captains, creating committees in every department, and teaching workplace leaders how to have organizing conversations. The energy and skills they developed to resist the unlawful and bad faith bargaining by UC are how all workers can and will spread the communist message. We need a fight not for a living wage, but to organize a system based not on the profit margin, but on the needs of each human being.

The exuberance of the graduate students and researchers as they strike against the University is a hopeful foreshadowing of the resistance all workers will feel as we rise up against the capitalist system.

—Comrades in California (USA)



Communist Versus Capitalist Education

The report (last issue) of the student strike in Puerto Rico shows how important young people are in the class struggle. I'd love to know what students in the US, South Africa, and elsewhere thought about it.

The article explains clearly why students and teachers need to teach and learn class consciousness. It suggested, but could have been clearer about, the main contradiction in capitalist schools.

As the article said, young people "really are the school. They are the majority sector in the school community and the axis of the educational system." But, like workers who don't own or control the factory where they work, students and even teachers don't control the schools.

Capitalist schools are part of the capitalist state. That's why "critical thinking is not stimulated and the struggle for social justice is repressed." Not because "the capitalist system and its education do not take students seriously."

They take very seriously that youth are quick to see and hate oppression. That class anger is certainly "something that capitalist education tries to destroy" in its future workers and soldiers.

Class-conscious teachers and students, especially communists, fight a daily battle inside and against the capitalist schools to spread that working-class consciousness.

They fight a system where points, grades,

and all the rest exist to divide students and force them to compete. Where capitalist practices reinforce divisive and misleading ideas like individualism, patriotism, nationalism, and reformism.

The capitalist school system cannot exist without working-class students, and students can't escape the system. Capitalist schooling is a contradiction: a unity and struggle of opposites, with the struggle being primary.

We can only resolve this contradiction by destroying capitalism with a new communist system. That means struggling for

communist class consciousness.

Not only to "ensure the seizure of power" but also to guarantee that post-revolutionary society will grow on an entirely different basis. That there will be a real qualitative change that cannot be reversed.

We think that education in communist society will be qualitatively different from today's capitalist schools in many ways. More learning will take place in connection with work. There is no real separation between "mental" and "manual" labor, and we'll organize work and society accordingly. No more "degrees" to justify unequal treatment.

We will spend much less time segregated by age and nobody will be pushed along in assembly-line fashion as students are today. No more "tests" and "grades" as we know them. There are better ways to ensure that people have the skills they need to do their work safely and well.

The way we teach and learn in the ICWP today is the seed of communist education. We all teach, we all learn, as we do communist work and strive to do it better. We encourage all to learn about politics, philosophy, science, and more. We invite everyone to write for *Red Flag*.

I look forward to hearing more about the struggles of students and teachers in Puerto Rico.

—Teacher Comrade in Los Angeles (USA)



Read our pamphlet:

**COMMUNIST
EDUCATION
FOR A
CLASSLESS
SOCIETY**

Available at:
icwpredflag.org/epe.pdf

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El Salvador: Soldiers Don't Blindly Follow Orders

During the 1970s, there was a revolutionary effervescence in El Salvador due to poor working conditions and poor pay. Farmworkers, industrial workers, and teachers went on strike.

I was a corporal in the army in San Miguel in the third infantry brigade. Although I did not have a communist revolutionary consciousness, I did know that I belonged to the working class.

One day the lieutenant came and told me, "Corporal, I need you to get the section together and prepare them to break a strike."

The section consisted of 40 soldiers with anti-riot equipment including batons, protective helmets, gas masks and more. I told the section that we were called to go to a strike and disperse the strikers.

However, my feelings were completely mixed. I knew that disobeying an army order could mean jail or death. But I also knew that among the striking teachers were some who had been my teachers.

I started by asking some soldiers, "How are you going to respond when we go to the strike? What do you think of the mission they have entrusted to us?"

The responses were mixed. Some said, "You have to go and hit them hard, beat them, arrest them, or possibly kill them. Because we are people from the army, and they are civilians who are trying to cause disorder."

Others said "No, you have to be tricky. Many of those strikers had been our teachers and they are fighting for better living conditions."

Finally, it was my turn to speak to the section. I was alone with the soldiers; there was no officer. So, I started telling them, "Our mission when we get to that strike is going to be to try not to hit or arrest anyone. If we have to shoot, we're going to shoot into the air. Just scare them and tell them to disperse. I said that it was not necessary to kill anyone. That we were not part of the system, that we were civilians dressed in uniform.

Then I continued, "In a few years, we are going to be back on the streets. Probably some of us are going to become teachers, other laborers, farmworkers. So, it's going to be best not to shoot anyone or arrest anyone. Try to pretend we're going to attack them to discourage them from spreading out, but don't hurt them."

After I spoke like this, many of the soldiers agreed with my position and said that it was fine that we were going to do it that way. If they didn't touch us, we weren't going to hit them.

Many of these soldiers were my friends. We knew each other, and we had already talked about political things and the hardship of our lives.

That experience and others that I lived within the army showed me that soldiers do not just blindly follow the orders of officers. But that they are open to see reality when it is presented to them and can be won to join the fight with the working class, especially industrial workers.

The end of the story: We were all ready to go when the order came that it was no longer necessary to go out and disperse the strikers.

History is full of examples like this. Both in local armies and imperialist armies, soldiers have, at times, joined the working class to fight together against the bosses.

Today, fighting for a communist revolution, we are better prepared ideologically to win many of those soldiers, sailors, and marines to join our fight for communism.

—Comrade Ex-Soldier

I joined the US Army on Purpose to Organize for Communism

Once, while I was on leave from military service, my uncle approached me and said, "I'm confused. How are you a communist and also in the Army?"

While I was doing my service, my whole family knew that I was a communist. And my enlistment in the Army was completely purposeful for comrades, but it was an almost hypocritical contradiction for some friends and family members. Yet, I've always known how to respond to everyone who questioned my position as a communist soldier.

I love to be asked that question because it paves the way to a sharp political discussion about organizing a communist revolution in a capitalist society. I told my uncle that to organize a successful communist revolution, we must undoubtedly organize soldiers to turn the guns around.

"Where else are we going to get our weapons?" I asked him.

However, it wouldn't simply be a robbery of the capitalists' weapons. Our philosophy of organizing in the military is far more sophisticated.

The military is made up of sons and daughters of the working class. Throughout history, it has been working-class soldiers who have been sent to fight and die in imperialist wars. In Vietnam, there were 58,220 US military fatalities. In Iraq, 4,490.

Imagine the countless civilian lives lost: at least 2 million in Vietnam and about a half a million in Iraq. And those soldiers were working-class too.

The 9/11 attacks killed 2,996 Americans, while current estimates in the NATO vs. Russia



Rebellious US soldiers in Vietnam

conflict in Ukraine are 3,000.

Capitalists and imperialists from all parts of the world depend on giving orders to soldiers. They give us the training and weapons to go out and do their dirty work. It's time to go out and do our own work: organize in the military to build a solid communist base among soldiers and sailors in order to build the military infrastructure necessary for overthrowing capitalist governments around the world. That's the only way we can take state power, and it begins in the barracks.

This communist military work is possible, and we already have experience doing it. In the decade I was in the service, I managed to bring our communist politics to soldiers in the barracks. It was difficult work, but I clearly remember the first time I told my close soldier friend that I was a communist. He was a white boy from Iowa, and I was a Latino boy from Los Angeles. And I felt completely connected to this person since we both came from working-class families, and we knew this was a f*ed-up capitalist system in which we live.

With a little more base-building, I remember making more solid connections with two other soldiers to the point that we organized a group of three soldiers to go to Washington DC and march on May Day under a communist flag.

I did two tours in Iraq, and I saw a lot of hypocrisy on the part of the US government—claiming to fight for freedom and democracy while trying—and ultimately failing—to be an army of imperial occupation in the Middle East.

Being a communist organizer in the military is not hypocritical; it is necessary. It is necessary in order to take power from the bosses, and it is necessary in order to unite seemingly opposite people from different ethnicities, countries, or languages.

Therefore, we must continue to encourage young comrades to join the Army and organize for our ranks - the working class ranks that will someday turn the guns around. Iraqi, American, Vietnamese, Ukrainian, Russian, and South African soldiers must unite to turn the guns around and organize for communist revolution.

—Comrade Veteran

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Foxconn workers in Zhengzhou, China, November 2022



Foxconn workers on strike in Chennai, India 2021

FOXCONN WORKERS REBEL FROM INDIA TO CHINA

December 7— Workers from the world’s biggest Apple iPhone factory in Zhengzhou, China, run by Foxconn, confronted security forces on November 23. Last year, Foxconn workers in Chennai, India protested and blocked a major highway when co-workers fell ill after eating factory food.

As in Iran and elsewhere, the masses are fed up with grinding wage slavery which translates into mass unemployment, hunger, and a bleak future. US imperialists are trying hard to portray and mold the mass movements in their favor, especially where pro-US elements participate in the protests.

But the masses must not remain stuck between competing capitalist butchers. Fascist onslaughts will continue to increase until more workers, soldiers, and youth embrace the communist alternative.

We must take advantage of the present circumstances in Iran, China and elsewhere to put forward and defend our communist line and to build the International Communist Workers’ Party.

USSR CENTENNIAL

From Page 8

slogan “all power to the Soviets” and seized power in October 1917.

In January 1918 they formed the Russian Socialist Federal Soviet Republic. Local workers’, soldiers’ and peasants’ soviets elected representatives to regional soviets. These then elected representatives to the All-Russian Congress of Soviets.

In practice, the Party controlled all these elections. It needed the fiction of an independent government to support its socialist economy.

We think this was a mistake that hid the nature of class rule. The Party became the core of a new capitalist class as it managed socialism’s capitalist social relations.

In contrast, we are organizing a mass party which includes everyone who agrees to fight collectively for communism. In the future it will include the whole society.

We won’t have a government separate from the party and the masses it mobilizes for communism. The masses will rule directly to guarantee the victory of communism as long as remnants of the capitalist class exist anywhere. Later, the masses will run society without there being anyone to “rule” over.

One Global Party Fighting for a World Without Nations and Borders

Fraternal Bolshevik parties in Belarus, Ukraine, and the South Caucasus were part of the revolutionary movement leading up to the November 1917 victory. They led their own struggles against the czar and the reactionary forces during the civil war.

At that time, the Russian party, with the agreement of Lenin, Stalin, and Trotsky, made unprincipled compromises with the Shah of Iran and the nationalist Ataturk of Turkey instead of supporting the communist insurgencies in those countries. Instead of fighting for world revolution, Soviet Russia began to build state capitalism, with a governmental structure to match.

After the civil war, the Soviet Republics of Belarus, Ukraine, and the South Caucasus joined Soviet Russia in one nation-state. Russia wanted a unitary state with limited autonomy for the other republics. The other republics, remembering czarist Russian imperialism, wanted a confederation—a much more limited union. They compromised on a “Union” and adopted the Declaration of the Creation of the USSR. It included the right of any republic to secede.

Today we fight for a world without nations and without borders. We embody that commitment in the organization of one party of the working-class worldwide: the International Communist Workers’ Party. We are not a confederation (“Com-



intern”) of national parties.

We understand the idea of the Party “center” not as geographical but as the center of ideological struggle. This includes the pages of *Red Flag*. Our core collectives include comrades from many places. We use technology to cross the bosses’ boundaries as we struggle to advance our line and to improve our work.

Our areas of concentration include garment workers in South Asia and Central America, students in South Africa and India, and immigrant industrial workers in the United States and Europe. We invite you to join us in fighting for a truly communist world.

US Railway Workers Confront the Capitalist State

LET'S MOBILIZE THE MIGHTY INDUSTRIAL WORKING CLASS FOR COMMUNIST REVOLUTION

USA, December 7— President Biden and Democrats in Congress used a century-old law to squash a nationwide railroad strike set for Friday, prohibiting workers from walking out for a meager seven days of paid annual sick leave. The US is the only industrial nation that doesn't guarantee any paid sick leave at all.

So much for the Democrats' hypocritical claims to be "pro-labor" and "pro-health care"! Even most "Progressive" Democrats (including most of the "Squad") voted to impose a contract the workers had already rejected. "We have to protect the economy" (not the workers!) they whined. This is their democracy in action.

A union leader complained that this "takes away the strength and ability that we have." That's because trade unions bow to the capitalist state and its laws. Communists organize to smash them.

As we go to press, it's not clear whether any groups of railroad workers will wildcat (strike illegally without union approval). If they do, we applaud their courage! But strikes can't break the stranglehold of finance capitalism over the US government and our lives. Only communist revolution can do that.

If strikers openly opposed capitalist wage slavery, if they called for a communist world without money, borders, or nations, they would inspire the international working class. ICWP industrial comrades should work toward organizing actions like that to build the Party nationally bring us closer to the revolution we need.

Finance Capital Forces Railroads to Maximize Profits on Workers' Backs

After Congress partially deregulated the rail-freight industry in 1980, competition among railroad companies increased. Businesses paid less to ship their goods, and rail began to win back market share from trucking. But the law of capitalism is "eat or be eaten." The thirty-three large railroads that existed in 1980 have now merged into just seven that control 80% of the market.

The rail industry reported record profits in 2021 and expect even fatter ones this year. Seven paid sick days per year would barely make a dent. That's not the main issue at stake for the railroad bosses. They need to maximize profits to satisfy the demands of the finance capitalists (Wall Street and hedge-funds) that own them.



"The great strike—The Sixth Maryland Regiment fighting its way through Baltimore."

In the summer of 1877, a nationwide strike brought the US to a halt. Eighty thousand railroad workers went on strike. Hundreds of thousands of workers joined in solidarity, angry at the misery of a four-year-long depression. Police, state militia, and federal troops battled strikers in dozens of cities and towns. They killed more than one hundred and wounded thousands.

Workers, inspired by the 1871 Paris Commune and recovering from a devastating Civil War, attacked the railroads and capitalism itself. "Capital has overridden the Constitution," said one St. Louis worker. "Capital has changed liberty into serfdom, and we must fight or die."

President Rutherford B. Hayes, a former Civil War Major General and leader of the pro-capitalist Republican Party, was a friend of the railroad owners. Hayes had just become president in March by making a deal: he bought the electoral votes of three southern states by agreeing to withdraw federal troops from the South. This deal ended Reconstruction and opened the floodgates of racist terror in the post-Civil War South.

Now he sent federal troops to break the railroad strike. Hayes' action showed the naked rule of capital over labor and set a precedent for future strikes: federal troops and court injunctions became powerful weapons for the capitalist class.

Wall Street pressures railroads to prioritize cost-cutting over investment and growth. That's why one-third of railroad jobs have disappeared: to provide stockholders with \$191 billion dollars from 2011-2021

Remaining workers are subjected to a new bare-bones work-rule system called Precision Scheduled Railroading. Understaffing is part of the plan, and the reason the bosses are holding the line against paid sick days. They'd rather raise pay and make other concessions to maintain their "ultra-lean" and "ultra-flexible" business model.

That's the model Congress is imposing. As a worker explained, "now all of a sudden, you can get called out of the blue to go to work fifteen minutes from now because they need somebody to fill a train."

Monopoly capitalism – Finance capitalism – Imperialism. That's what the rail workers and all of us are up against. That's why we need communist revolution.

In communism, workers (organized as a mass International Communist Workers' Party) will collectively make all decisions relating to our work. Sometimes (while we are still fighting for power, and during emergencies) we will volunteer to work long and hard hours. But it will be for the benefit of the masses, not for some bosses' profits, and it will respect individual needs.

As global communism develops fully, all will have meaningful work, opportunities to learn and grow, and the resources we need to live healthy productive lives.

Centennial of the USSR:

REAL COMMUNISM WILL NOT BE A UNION, NOT SOCIALIST, NOT A SOVIET REPUBLIC

"Would you like to read *Red Flag*, a communist newspaper?" a comrade asked a Black postal worker at a rally against the US Supreme Court decision denying abortion rights.

"Communism?" he responded. "They tried that in Russia. It didn't work."

"Not really," the comrade answered. "You can tell by the name—the USSR—the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics. They didn't even claim to be communist. We've got a different plan. We have learned from the errors of the past that building socialism after a revolution is a dead end. We fight directly for communism."

The postal worker and his partner took *Red Flag* and promised to read it.

December 30, 2022 is the hundredth anniversary of the founding of the USSR. We can learn three hard lessons from the last century.

Fight for Communism—Not Socialism

The strategy of the 19th and early 20th century communist movement was revolution to overthrow capitalism and seize the means of production—factories, banks, railroads, land. They would keep a market economy with jobs, money, and wages.

But, they said, the surplus value that workers created would go to the whole society rather than private capitalists. They called this socialism and saw it as a stage necessary to build a material basis of abundance and allow an eventual transition to a communist society.

The Russian communists (Bolsheviks) instituted "war communism" during the civil war that followed their revolution. But they always saw it as an emergency measure.

Amid the chaos and rebellions that followed, they retreated to the New Economic Policy. This policy created openly capitalist relations—a mar-

ket economy with capitalist competition for jobs, housing, and customers. It continued the material basis for individualism, selfishness, sexism, and pitting workers of different "races" and genders against each other.

Socialism never led to communism anywhere. We won't make that mistake. We prepare now to build communism directly whenever and wherever we lead workers to power.

Workers Need a Mass Communist Party—No Governmental Fig Leaf

When Czar Nicholas II abdicated in February 1917, Russia became a republic. Workers and soldiers reorganized the soviets (workers' councils) that had been important during the defeated 1905 revolution. They shared power with Kerensky's bourgeois Provisional government.

The Bolsheviks opposed Kerensky under the

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