

# RED FLAG



## MOBILIZE THE MASSES FOR COMMUNISM

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



Los Angeles, USA



Gqeberha, South Africa

### On the Picket Lines in Los Angeles School Strike **LONG-TERM COMMUNIST RELATIONSHIPS OPEN DOOR TO NEW ADVANCES**

LOS ANGELES (USA), March 25— “I’ll read *Red Flag*. I know a little about Marxism. I used to read this type of literature in the Philippines,” exclaimed a teacher at a rally of school workers on March 15. The unions representing teachers and non-teaching school workers had mobilized thousands to demand a pay increase. The ICWP West Coast (US) schools collective prepared carefully for this opportunity to spread communist ideas.

Nearly eight hundred school workers took *Red Flag* that day. They also eagerly took a leaflet that attacked capitalist schooling for training youth to be wage slaves for capitalism. It called for communist revolution for the education young people need. Hundreds more took our literature at the closing rally. This was the work of the whole party, not just the schools collective.

Union officials announced on March 15 that Service Employees International Union (SEIU) Local 99, which represents bus drivers, gardeners, cafeteria workers and special education aides, was calling a three-day strike. United Teachers Los Angeles (UTLA), which represents teachers, school nurses, counselors, and psychologists, would honor the picket lines.

**On March 21, in the pouring rain, a united force of school workers marched, chanted, danced, sang—and shut the schools down.** We work together and depend on each other every day to do our best for the young people in our charge. But we often don’t recognize how racism, sexism and the wage system operate together to divide us. On the picket lines, people took on those divisions directly, See **SCHOOL WORKERS**, page 4

### To End Capitalist Crisis: **FIGHT FOR COMMUNIST REVOLUTION, NOT SOCIALIST REFORMS**

GQEBERHA (South Africa), March 20 – Masses demonstrated today throughout South African cities, against President Ramaphosa and the crisis of capitalism characterized by exploitation, poverty, hunger, crime, blackouts, and corruption. Throughout the continent there were demonstrations too, including in Kenya and Nigeria. All over the world there are similar demonstrations.

Although the strike was led by the socialist reformist EFF (Economic Freedom Fighters) and the South African Federation of Trade Unions, we as ICWP nonetheless participated and distributed our *Red Flag* to the masses. Our line was that we should fight for communism directly, not for socialism, which inevitably leads us to the same place of capitalism. The his-

tory of communists in the past has shown that.

We had interesting conversations with demonstrators, including EFF members. They showed enthusiasm as we distributed all the 120 copies of the paper that we had.

A truck driver asked, “What is this, comrade?”

Comrade N answered, “It’s *Red Flag*, a communist newspaper. We are ICWP members”.

“I’ve never heard of ICWP, is it a new party?”

“We are not new”, comrade N replied. “It’s been almost 10 years the party operating in South Africa, especially here in Gqeberha. We call to fight directly for communist revolution. Capitalists have long exploited us, and if we don’t fight to change it, nothing will change”.

The comrade truck driver replied,

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## Banking Crisis Exposes Capitalist Social Relations

### HOW COMMUNISM WILL SERVE WORKERS' NEEDS WITHOUT MONEY

March 25—Forbes Magazine celebrated Silicon Valley Bank (SVB) on March 6th as “one of America’s Best Banks for the 5th straight year.” SVB collapsed four days later, as other banks teetered towards financial oblivion.

What triggered the SVB crisis? The US Federal Reserve Board raised interest rates to fight inflation. That made the bonds that SVB held less valuable, and they had to be sold at a loss.

A shock wave from Israel, Singapore, India, and Frankfurt fueled capitalist investors’ panic. A mounting crisis in Credit Suisse added to the uncertainties. The Federal Deposit Insurance Corporation (FDIC) moved quickly to take over SVB on March 14th. It will fully fund all depositors even above its stated limit. However, this exposes many other weak banks when they face similar runs on money.

And SVB’s problems are complicated by US-Chinese imperialist competition in high-tech.

#### Money: Not Just a Medium of Exchange

We often think of money just as a way to exchange things. And sometimes it is. Workers exchange the money we earn from wages for commodities such as rent, medicine, food, clothes, transport, entertainment, services, and to reduce mortgage and other debt.

But for capitalists, money is a social relationship of extracting surplus value from workers. They are organized with one and only one goal: *invest money to make more money.*

Industrial capitalists use money to organize factories and employ workers. They pay workers only a portion of the value of the labor they contribute to production. The remaining unpaid portion is the surplus value that capitalists steal from every worker. When the goods embodying this surplus value are sold, the capitalists make more money: profit.

This social relationship of exploitation pits the working class against the capitalist bosses. Our interests are directly opposed. The less they pay us, the more they profit and the more we suffer.

But where do industrial capitalists (whether in high-tech or low-tech industries) get the money (capital) to invest in starting and expanding their businesses? To tide them over until they can realize their profits in the market?

From banks and other financial institutions. Finance capital dominates the world today.

Banks attract money (deposits) by paying interest. In effect they are renting the money. Then they turn around and rent out that money to workers (mortgages and other loans) and to other capitalists. Of course they charge higher interest rates for that, pocketing the profit.

Financial institutions also provide capital to businesses by buying a stake in them. Since their only purpose is for their money to make more money, they try to invest in the most profitable busi-

nesses they can find.

That forces all capitalists to compete in a frenzy to maximize their profits. And that leads directly to intensifying exploitation, misery, catastrophic climate change, imperialist wars for profit, starvation, preventable disease, and much more.

This competition is international. Silicon Valley Bank’s problem started when high-tech industries faced stiff competition from Chinese capitalists. They produced cheaper goods by more intensively exploiting the workers. US high-tech had to employ fewer workers and exploit them more. In just three months, over 150,000 workers (many of them immigrants) lost their jobs.

Privately-owned banks hide their complicated investments from other banks and the public. “It is too complicated to understand,” said the Wall Street Journal. That is, capitalists are afraid to admit that SVB was just the start.

#### Not Complicated for the Working Class

We don’t need a system that decides the fate of millions of workers based on the interest rate. We need to end this system based on wage slavery, on capitalist social relations. We need communism.

In communism, the masses (organized by ICWP) will figure out how to distribute everything we produce according to needs, without banks or money in any form. We won’t “exchange” things – we’ll share them. Instead of working for wages, we’ll work to contribute to the common good, knowing that we won’t need money to get what we need.

To create this society, we need to join ICWP collectives and try to convince everyone we know to join and be active too. These conversations require mutual respect while we show how

every problem we face has a communist solution. The social relations we build today are the foundation of the society to come.

As our collectives grow and become more diverse, and as collectives arise in more places around the world, we will be moving closer to our aim of communist revolution to win a society without the capitalists. This is the message we will bring to co-workers, friends, family, and the masses in the streets on May Day.

#### China-US Imperialist Competition and the Banking Crisis

It’s not just about Tik-Tok. Sharpening rivalry between the US and China is spreading quickly in high-tech industries.

The US is banning some advanced microchips from entering the Chinese market. These microchips are produced in the US, Europe, and Taiwan. Microchips are essential in the next generation of automation, artificial intelligence (AI), gaming, and biotech.

Most of the technological innovations are based in California. The collapse of Silicon Valley Bank and its subsequent bail-out are crucial for the supremacy of US high-tech industries. The quick fix enabled by FDIC will likely unravel into a much bigger financial crisis. As the Covid pandemic takes its toll, as the US gets bogged down by the war in Ukraine, as rising European energy costs strain NATO ties, the US imperialists are losing their edge over China.

#### Even Highly Skilled Immigrant Workers Under Attack

Sunil and Deepika (not real names) lived in Fremont near San Jose. They were among thousands of immigrants who moved to Silicon Valley to work in high-tech. Then Sunil got laid off from Google and his visa restrictions do not allow him to work for another company. Deepika became the sole source of family income. Three weeks later, she was laid off from Intel. They are not eligible for green cards.

They are among thousands of recently laid-off tech workers, mainly Indian, who must leave the US within 30 days. The panic-stricken family was forced to sell their house at a huge loss. They must sell their cars, their furniture, their household appliances, and leave behind the life they built over decades. Their teenagers, natural-born US citizens who only speak English, will now have to live in India or be separated from their parents by oceans.

Sunil and Deepika are caught up in Fremont’s tsunami of layoffs. The Cato Institute estimated that it would take Indian immigrants at different stages of the approval process 151 years to get a green card.

Capitalism brings misery to the working class everywhere. Its sharpening crisis attacks immigrants (especially undocumented workers) and, actually, all workers. As a friend said, “Capitalism = Getting Away With Great Train Robberies.”



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## Planning for May Day 2023

# ACCELERATING CAPITALIST CRISIS LEADS TO GROWTH OF ICWP IN SOUTH ASIA

BENGALURU (India), March 11— “We’re going to keep on fighting,” said a comrade who spreads *Red Flag* in the Sri Lanka garment factory where she works. “When I read *Red Flag* amid massive demonstrations in Sri Lanka, I felt that change to overthrow the capitalist government is possible. This May Day, we’ll show that to the masses.”

This was in a hybrid international meeting here and online. Participants included auto workers from Chennai, the largest automobile manufacturing hub in India.

A comrade who works for Ford reported on the world capitalist crisis, focusing on south Asia. He noted that the US/NATO-Russia war in Ukraine has created huger opportunities all around the world for our party to grow.

In Sri Lanka, the government collapsed because it couldn’t supply energy. As petrol stations ran out of gas, buses and cars queued up for miles, stalling public and private transport. Millions of workers took to the streets, fed up with mounting hunger, skyrocketing unemployment, and inflation. During these massive upheavals, a comrade from Chennai first contacted our comrade in Sri Lanka. Today, we are trying to go further and establish a working collective there.

**Similar opportunities have arisen in Pakistan, Bangladesh, Afghanistan, and Nepal, where we already have *Red Flag* readers.**

Conditions in Pakistan are very similar to the crisis in Sri Lanka. Nationwide protests erupted on March 15 against the attempted arrest of opposition leader Imran Khan, whose party openly supports China and Russia. The military regime’s top generals have a long pro-US history.

However, Pakistan has a \$50 billion infrastructure project supported by China. Even the pro-US ruling party sees the China Pakistan Economic Corridor as a way of moving away from depending on US energy companies. With the International Monetary Fund making it harder to provide loans, Saudi Arabia is emerging as a key player in rescuing the Pakistani economy.

India’s fascist government is preparing for the 2024 general elections which will decide Modi’s future. Modi’s BJP is plagued by the scandals of companies led by the billionaire Adani. The scandal was exposed by Hindenburg short sellers in the US, but the core issue is that the Adani empire was challenging US multinationals. The BJP section of the Indian ruling class openly defies the US by accepting Russian oil at a discount price.

That’s why the BBC (representing an important section of the British ruling class) and India’s opposition Congress Party reacted so swiftly. Congress Party freely quotes the sharp attacks on Modi from the anti-communist billionaire George Soros, supporter of European “color revolutions.”

As in Brazil, Israel, and elsewhere, the divisions among ruling classes in south Asia are playing out in the streets. Workers must not support any capitalist faction or any of their imperialist backers. When the rulers set the masses in motion, we must do everything we can to mobilize as many as possible for communism.

### ICWP Grows Amid Capitalist Crises

The international meeting in Bengaluru had a lively debate about how our party can grow in the face of mass unemployment and inflation. Comrades reported that in the garment factories where

they work, the bosses are forcing workers to meet higher targets, which takes a toll on the workers. The long hours and hard physical work leave them less time with their families. The stress leads to alcoholism, sexual abuse, and violence.

Trade unions control garment workers everywhere in Bengaluru. They demand wage increases that the government meets with inflation, resulting in even lower purchasing power. This endless cycle keeps us dependent on capitalists.

But ICWP was able to lead hundreds of families in the struggle of a comrade who was harassed by her supervisor. People we hadn’t known before were distributing *Red Flag* and discussing in the evenings and in their workplaces its call to smash the sexist system of capitalism. More workers have joined our meetings and recognized the need to expand *Red Flag* circulation. This gets us closer to breaking capitalism’s endless cycle of exploitation.

Our increased activity has brought unwelcome attention from BJP-supported goons. With state elections coming up in May, BJP is determined to eliminate any obstacles to winning. While we denounce the state elections, our call for communist revolution concerns them. They have threatened to find out the leadership because our *Red Flag* does not have an address in India. We made plans to improve and expand our work in the face of fascism and to double Party membership.

**Inspired by the participation of the comrade in Sri Lanka, we expect to bring large groups to the streets of Delhi, Bangalore, and Chennai to massively distribute *Red Flag* and our line of communist revolution on May Day.**



March 20—This image captures the moment when security forces in Nairobi, Kenya, found themselves outnumbered by the masses and turned and ran.

“We were having demonstrations about the high cost of living. It’s a tough life, not only in Nairobi. It was country-wide,” texted a friend in Kenya.

Thousands in Kenya demonstrated nationwide in many cities against prices of food and the cost of living on Monday, 20 March. They were repressed by the Kenyan police, who used tear gas against the masses in the streets and murdered a student protestor with live fire in Kisumu. Kenyan security forces, trained and armed by the US and Israeli capitalists, have suppressed these protests for the moment. But the capitalist crisis is making life impossible for the masses everywhere. We will work harder to bring *Red Flag* to friends in Kenya and around the world.

## SOUTH AFRICA: RED FLAG TO THE MASSES, from page 1

“Yeah, indeed we are fighting the same thing. That’s why I’m here. Capitalism must fall. We will go forward with socialism”.

Another ICWP comrade replied, “we believe socialism will lead us in the same place we are in now. We agree with the EFF that capitalism must fall. However, we don’t agree with the socialist line because socialism just wants to reform the system and not eradicate it. Hence it is another form of capitalism”.

The comrade then said, “Wow, I hear you, that is an interesting perspective. I never looked at it that way. Take my Facebook and maybe we can chat further, however I am always busy as I am always on the road”.

These are often the kind of conversations we encounter with the masses who are angry and wanting alternatives. More often than not, they

want reforms.

We had similar conversation with students at the march. They thought if we get free education in tertiary (academic and technical universities) then things will get better because “we will be employable”.

We continue to explain that we cannot make peace with class enemies as they only seek exploitation, which inevitably will lead to the same issues we are complaining about. Reforms do not change the situation of the working class and are increasingly becoming impossible in the crisis of capitalism as it exists.

Many workers around the world must be won to communist revolution not reform. The capitalist system needs workers to be retrenched (laid off). They need wages to stagnate or fall. They need xenophobia to divide us. Capitalism needs

wars to continue the profits and exploitation.

Another example we made to the EFF students is that in 2017 similar strikes were held against Zuma and he resigned. But nothing changed; in fact, some things have gotten worse. Therefore, it doesn’t matter which face governs. It is the capitalist system that must fall and not be replaced by reforms where the bosses still exist to exploit us and make profit.

We must strive and continue to spread our communist ideas and we continue to do so in these marches and strikes. Workers do welcome us, and we can confidently build and lay foundation for a communist revolution. We encourage workers and students here in South Africa and around the world to join ICWP in our fight against capitalism.

## TEACHERS' WILDCAT STRIKE: FIGHT CAPITALIST HIERARCHIES AND DIVISIONS

OAKLAND (USA), March 24— Hundreds of teachers walked off the job at fourteen middle and high schools today in a wildcat (unauthorized) strike.

A wildcat strike exposes the class-collaboration of the union leadership. The teachers are standing up for themselves and other school workers, while the union officials are still sitting down with the bosses.

Teachers are angry because the district has laid off over one hundred school workers—dozens of people who work in student support—while they offer chump change as a raise to the teachers.

The board's cheap attempt to divide teachers from other school workers exposes its hypocrisy. Its members were elected on a platform of "equity" but have emphasized identity politics while closing schools in working-class communities.

After picketing their schools, teachers and their supporters rallied downtown. ICWP was there with a leaflet calling for communism for the ed-

ucation students need. It included:

*I (teacher) getting a raise but you (the aide) getting unemployment? Hell no to that! We're all in this together. It is called class consciousness and, using the wage system, it's the very thing capitalism as a system strains every sinew in its body to destroy.*

*We're all in this education system together because it takes an educational village to graduate our kids. It takes our academic smarts, our community smarts, all our lived life experience to reach out to, wrap around, and educate our kids.*

*It's bad enough that capitalist schools prioritize competitive, individual achievement, continually grading and stratifying students and forcing teachers to teach to the test.*

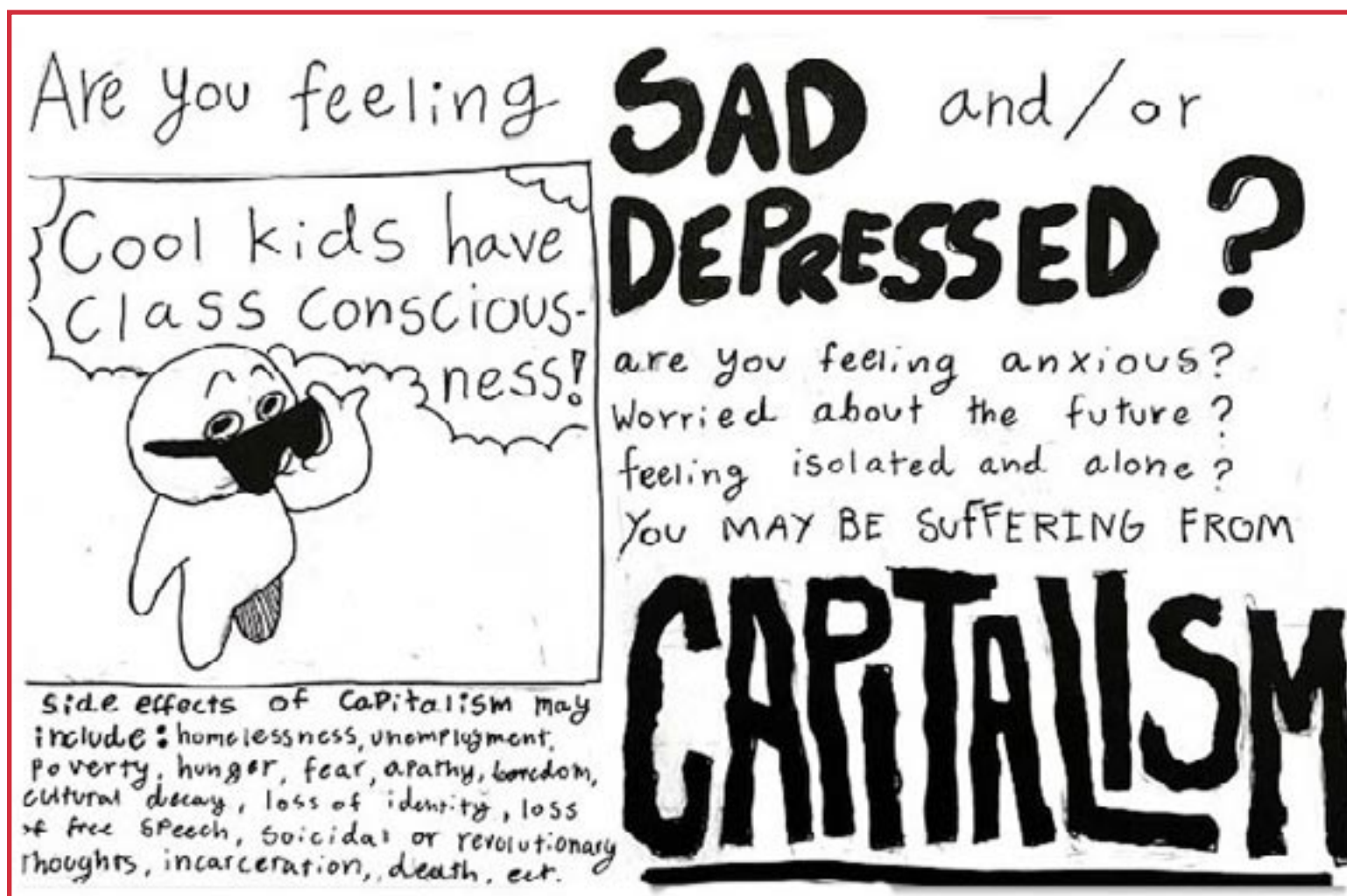
*Most teachers counteract this everyday with lesson plans that strive to include all students. Now the Oakland Unified School District board wants to throw away its claim to champion EQUALITY and demonstrate its abject servility*

*to the dog-eat-dog capitalist system. They offer teachers a 3.5% raise and start laying off classified staff to pay for it!*

*What sort of lesson in "equality" is that? How does that serve our working-class kids? The fact is that public schools are incapable of delivering equality. Grades themselves are a ranking system teaching students to accept as normal the hierarchy the capitalist system at large needs.*

Nearly half the teachers at the rally took the leaflet, which included the cartoon drawn by a Seattle student. We invited them to read *Red Flag*, and to join the fight against the day-to-day assaults of capitalism in a way that can build the revolutionary communist share-and-share-alike world we so desperately need.

We met old friends and made some new contacts which we will follow up. This is the kind of activity that can expand the conversation about how to build a world without the job hierarchy that capitalist education justifies.



March 26— A Seattle high school student drew this and showed it to a comrade who was distributing *Red Flag* outside his school. He and two friends were planning to post it around the school. The comrade took a picture of it, and it was used on the ICWP leaflet distributed at the wildcat strike of Oakland (CA) school employees.

The student read this leaflet and texted, "I think that is awesome! I could talk about how right it is for a very long time." We look forward to hearing more from him and his friends.

### SCHOOL WORKERS from page 1

building militant bonds of solidarity and working-class unity.

Comrades who had worked in the schools in these communities for decades brought our signs and literature to the picket lines. On Thursday, after the rain stopped, we had some deep conversations.

"It's ridiculous that essential workers in the school system earn less than teachers and way less than administrators—what do they do again?" said a middle-school Spanish teacher. "Like school bus drivers. Classroom management and Los Angeles traffic at the same time? There's no way I could do that!"

A special education teacher added, "My aide and I work with severely handicapped youngsters. We are a team. It's disgraceful that she doesn't earn a living wage."

There were many conversations like these. Comrades talked about how the schools themselves reinforce this hierarchy. The "hidden curriculum," including grades, creates a tracking system that sorts students into "college bound" and "the rest." Charter schools skim off the stu-

dents with the strongest family support. All this helps justify sorting workers into false categories of "skilled" and "unskilled" labor.

**Schools help capitalism divide and rule. On the picket lines, we worked to build the working-class unity that can end this system.**

"Your generation, the 'boomers', blew it," said a teacher friend in his forties to an older comrade. "You fought against racism and the Vietnam War, and then it all got turned into a culture war. That just divides us. Younger generations are much more concerned about bread-and-butter issues. We see things more in terms of social class."

The comrade explained that the working-class struggle was an important aspect of the anti-racist and anti-imperialist movements of the 60s and early 70s in the US, Mexico, France and around the world.

After a long conversation, we agreed that the ruling class uses identity politics to divide the working-class struggle. Our job is to build revolutionary communist working-class unity against the whole capitalist system.

**The unity on the picket line was a victory for class consciousness.**

The Board of Education agreed to the SEIU

pay demands over the weekend. But the basic inequality of the wage system remains. It is still blatantly obvious throughout the school system. As are all the divisions of racism and sexism that are built into capitalism.

A teacher friend said, "I'm with you, man. Power to the people! What we need is socialism." Two comrades spoke with her about the limitations of socialism and the need for communism.

**We invited everyone we spoke with to read and contribute to *Red Flag*.** We asked them to help build the revolutionary movement needed to win and build a world without the job hierarchy that the capitalist schooling justifies—without jobs or markets, money, or wages. A communist world where the divisions of "race" and gender can be eliminated by a society organized around collective work for human need, not capitalist greed.

The in-depth picket line conversations signal a period of growth for ICWP in the Los Angeles schools. We renewed long-standing relationships, made new friends, and invited people to our May Day barbecue. We're looking forward to building on decades of work in the schools, with the energy of enthusiastic younger comrades, to organize for May Day and beyond.

## Massive French Protests Against Pension Reform:

### **BUILD ICWP TO WIN STRUGGLE AGAINST INEQUALITY WITH COMMUNIST REVOLUTION**

March 23— Millions of workers and youth went on strike, marched, and protested today against an increase in the retirement age that the Macron government pushed through parliament without a vote.

Transit workers shut down most of the Paris Metro and many train lines. The main airport was partly closed. Oil workers shut down refineries. When police attacked with tear gas, demonstrators fought back in cities across France. It was the largest action so far in a two-month series of general strikes and demonstrations.

Women workers are leading many of the street protests. Pension reform hits them hardest because their wages average 22% lower than men workers. Women often take years off from paid work (or work part-time) to be the primary unpaid caretakers of their children. Their pensions already average 40% lower than men, and more older women live in poverty.

“It’s always those at the bottom of the pile, who have poorly paid or part-time jobs like nurses, health assistants and cleaners, who are made to pay,” said a woman retraining for a nursing job, “always the same people, many of them women, asked to make the sacrifices.” Two extra years at a hard job is a quality-of-life issue, not just a money issue.

Some are starting to compare the situation to the massive French worker-student rebellion of May 1968. “Don’t underestimate people’s power to mobilise,” said Amina, a student from an impoverished mainly-immigrant suburb, whose mother is a hospital worker.

French capitalists claim they must raise the retirement age from 62 to 64 years old and require 43 years of work for a full pension, to “make the French economy more competitive.”

“What kind of society [do] we want to live in,” said a French sociologist, “one ruled through

market-orientated rationality or one which is focused on reducing inequalities.”

Communism aims to end (not “reduce”) sexism, racism, job hierarchies, and all inequalities in workers’ standard of living and our ability to help make the decisions that shape our lives.

That means building networks of collectives whose communist relationships will enable us to build a new society without money, nations, or borders. Where all work throughout our lives, as we are willing and able, to contribute to the common good while receiving what we need without worrying about wages or pensions.

Where ending wage slavery will create the conditions for ending, too, the racism, sexism, xenophobia, casteism, and all the rest of capitalism’s divisive ideologies and discriminatory practices.

Defeating inequality means organizing masses, especially industrial workers and soldiers, for armed revolution to destroy the capitalists’ stranglehold over our lives.

“Anyone looking at France right now could be forgiven for thinking the country was on the edge of a revolution,” wrote a British columnist.

But that revolution can’t happen without a revolutionary communist party, deeply rooted among the masses. That was a main lesson of the 1871 Paris Commune and of the May 1968 uprising.

The “Communist” Party of France is hopelessly reformist, with slogans like “64 years, no!” So is the new “left-wing” NUPES parliamentary



coalition. Meanwhile LePen’s fascist coalition is preparing to take advantage of the disarray in Macron’s government in next year’s elections.

But workers in the streets carry banners like “300 years of capitalism – time for it to retire!” A student member of an anti-capitalist revolutionary group reported that many young people are angered by their experiences of police violence. “More are joining in since the pension changes were pushed through,” she said.

Capitalism won’t retire itself. The international working class needs to put ourselves out of its misery with revolution for communism, nothing less. Let’s not allow Macron’s flagrant defiance of the French democratic process to distract us from the fact that this “democracy” is really a class dictatorship of the rich over the masses.

Our International Communist Workers’ Party (ICWP) is working to become the mass revolutionary organization needed in France and everywhere around the world. Learn more about us from [icwpredflag.org](http://icwpredflag.org) or from the person who gave you this paper. Talk it over with friends and family. Let us know what you think. We want you to join us!

### **PARIS COMMUNE OF 1871: IMPERIALIST WAR CREATED CONDITIONS FOR COMMUNIST REVOLUTION**

On March 18, 152 years ago, workers in Paris, France took state power. They established the Paris Commune and set out to build a society that met the needs of the masses. Marx declared that the Parisian masses “dared to storm heaven.”

The Commune’s influence extended far beyond its brief existence. We continue to learn its lessons.

In 1871, at the end of the bitterly fought Franco-Prussian war, the French imperialists surrendered. The Prussian (German) army surrounded and laid siege to Paris. While the masses starved, the capitalists drank champagne.

Masses of soldiers in the Paris National Guard, along with workers, especially women, vowed to defend Paris. They had to fight both the German invaders and the French rulers’ government.

Communist soldiers, influenced by the First International, took the lead. They declared they would not fight for “despotism.” The masses supported them.

Women workers took leadership in every aspect of fighting for, organizing, and defending the Commune. Many were communists. They fought to abolish sexism and all exploitation.

Masses of soldiers and workers met in collectives in working-class neighborhoods. They struggled and planned how to feed and house everyone and how to run the Commune.

On March 18, when French Government troops came to Paris to seize the workers’ cannons and

other weapons, Paris National Guard soldiers and workers fought them off. They killed two generals—but not all of them—and won some government soldiers to their side. They kept their cannons. The bosses’ army fled Paris.

#### **The masses took state power—an advance for the international working class!**

They set up the Commune. Its goal was to eliminate exploitation and organize society only to meet the masses’ needs for food, weapons, bandages, and comradeship. They welcomed Communards from everywhere.

But they didn’t pursue the French capitalists who had fled to Versailles. They didn’t destroy the banking system. Two months later, these capitalists regrouped and colluded with the German imperialists to smash the Commune, which represented an existential threat to global capitalism.

The German rulers freed 250,000 French soldiers from German prison camps. With German support, these troops stormed Paris. They killed thousands of communards and ended the Commune.

The Commune inspired masses worldwide. Its lessons shaped the work of Marx, Engels, Lenin, and many more. They influenced the Russian and Chinese revolutions and the Cultural Revolution in China. They are still vital today!

The communist movement learned that masses can mobilize during imperialist wars to overthrow capitalism, take power, and build a new society.

We learned that the capitalist state — the mor-

tal enemy of workers and soldiers — must be smashed, not negotiated with or reformed.

We also learned that the masses need a communist party with a red army to lead the struggle for communism. That communists must organize soldiers in the imperialists’ armies.

The Franco-Prussian war between the continent’s main imperial powers set the stage for the world wars of the 20th century. It showed how these inevitable world wars would create opportunities for communist revolution. The Paris Commune’s victories – as well as its errors – inspired and informed the international communist movement throughout the twentieth century and it still does.

Today ICWP is building a mass international party to fight directly for communist revolution, nothing less. We are fighting to build a mass party of millions of thinkers and doers with unbreakable ties among masses worldwide. We fight to eliminate money, markets, wages, and borders from the start.

Amid the bosses’ devastation and wars, with communist leadership, the masses will fight for revolution and build a communist society. Basing production and all life on communist relations of collectivity, and not money: This is the way masses will win the struggle to eliminate racism, sexism, and nationalism.

The only wars communists organize are for communist revolution everywhere.

## TO DEFEAT ALL TYPES OF BIGOTRY WE MUST WIN THE FIGHT FOR COMMUNISM

GQEBERHA (South Africa), March 19— Racism, xenophobia, and nationalist ideology are alive as capitalism is alive in South Africa. Recently a Foreign Ministry spokesperson gushed on Twitter about denying eight Afghan asylum seekers entry to South Africa. This, he hopes, will buy him and their government sympathy from the emerging right-wing racist movement that says #putsouthafricafirst.

Politicians always use such racist slogans whenever the capitalist crisis intensifies. They do this to divide the working class by race, nationality, and religion. To put the blame on immigrant workers to divert us from uniting against capitalism. Their fear is that the masses will unite to end their rotten system.

As communists we must fight against this right-wing racist ideology. We cannot end this racism without winning the masses to communist revolution. However, we need to expose it now to lay bare the real enemies of the working-class: the capitalists and their politicians. And in a way that forges communist relations among workers.

In South Africa, as in many other parts of the world, there is a direct connection between capitalism, organised crime, anti-immigrant racism, drugs, wars, migration, human trafficking, and xenophobia. Not only do bosses win because these ills divide the working class, preventing us from uniting and fighting against our real ene-

mies. The capitalist bosses also drive—and profit from—wars, human trafficking, slavery, lower-paid migrant labour, and crime.

Most immigrants in Africa are running from horrible conditions created by capitalist wars for resources on different parts of the continent. Some who are looking to feed their families are forced to pay gangs to take them to different countries.

The conditions created by capitalists enable local criminals to traffic members of our working-class family to different regions, where they are killed or super-exploited. They are used as slave labour in the factories and farms of capitalist bosses in Asia, Africa, and elsewhere.

Organised criminals, particularly operating in South Africa, are cooperating with elements in police departments, senior politicians, and other organised groups. They send immigrants brought here illegally to lower-paying factories and to brothels run by organised crime groups.

Local mafia politicians in places like Durban and Johannesburg fund fascist propaganda to exert political pressure against their rivals who run drug cartels and brothels in different Central Business Districts. Other politicians fuel the xenophobic sentiments, expressed and caused by frustration resulting from the massive joblessness, poverty and overall desperation engulfing the country.

To prevent us from blaming capitalism for these attacks, politicians seek to divert the masses' anger towards our working-class siblings from other African countries and religious or ethnic backgrounds. It is the capitalist bosses who pay lower wages to some workers to make super-profits and then lower wages of all workers.

We can and must forge serious ties with our working-class siblings from all over in order to fight against this racism and to defeat nationalism. Immigrant workers have a key role to play in the fight for communism.

As the saying goes “we only have our chains to lose.” We must reject this racist ideology in theory and in practice to unite the working class to destroy wage slavery.

A few comrades from our collective are neighbours with immigrants and also work with them. We plan to invite those we know to our collective discussions and mass events. There we can create a dialogue and forge communist working-class bonds and relationships. This will help overcome divisions, xenophobia and racism.

Ultimately, to defeat crime, racism, and xenophobia, we must defeat capitalism which feeds and fuels these social ills. Ultimately, to win against all types of bigotry we must win the fight for communism—a world without borders. Aluta continua!

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### Communism Will Demolish Capitalism's Deadly Borders

“My heart breaks for my working-class siblings who have died in imprisonment seeking a better life,” said a young Black comrade in the US. He had just learned about the terrible tragedy that resulted in the death of 39 migrants from Central and South America, including at least 28 of Guatemalan origin.

“The United States has destabilized countries in Latin America like Guatemala,” he continued. “Now it is working with the Mexican government to imprison migrant workers for chasing promises the USA had no plans on keeping.

“We must demolish borders, which separate and imprison the working class,” he admonished. “We cannot continue to watch our brothers and sisters become martyrs for a cause we all have a stake in, our right to live equitable lives. That, unfortunately, can't be done in a capitalist world no matter where you live.”

As the comrade says, this life-and-death

issue is a class conflict between the worldwide working masses and the capitalists. Both the US capitalist state and the Mexican capitalist state are responsible for the murder of these migrants. They have workers' blood on their hands.

The deadly blaze broke out on the night of March 27th at the National Institute of Migration in Ciudad Juárez, Chihuahua, Mexico. Some reports say that it was the result of a protest near the immigration station that got out of control.

Others, like the wife of a migrant who was injured in the fire, blamed Mexican authorities. “The doors of the immigration facility in the men's section were never opened to allow the detainees to get out to take shelter from the flames,” she added.

One survivor reported that the guard refused to open the gate to the area where they were confined. Most of the fatalities caused by suffocation from the smoke.

Yes, we do have to demolish the borders that

separate and imprison workers – and then murder them. To do this we need to start mobilizing the working-class masses for communism. To fight for and create a different world in which every single human being will be cherished and provided with a decent and fulfilling life. One of our communist principles is “From each according to ability and commitment, to each according to need.”

—Comrade in Los Angeles (USA)

### Greetings from a Garment Worker in El Salvador

I'm José, a garment worker in the Free Trade Zone near the capital of El Salvador.

I had the opportunity to attend a meeting where I met the International Communist Workers' Party for the first time. It's the first moment that I'm getting to know their plan of struggle and it motivates me.

After attending a large meeting, I had a second get-together with a group of comrades. There they talked about the situation that workers face and that it's the same situation that we face in all the factories. I think that the struggle that the party puts forward is just and necessary.

I hope to continue learning a little more about the communist line and to be able to be part of this effort.

Greetings to all the workers of the world!  
—Worker in a Maquila (sweatshop)



Read our pamphlet:

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

Available at: [icwpredflag.org/ffde.pdf](http://icwpredflag.org/ffde.pdf)

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## WHAT IS RACISM AND HOW CAN WE END IT?

**Red Flag Note:** A letter in the last issue asked: “What exactly is racism and what does it mean to end racism? What is the plan to get from here to 0% racism? How close can we get to 0% racism right now, before communist revolution? What concrete steps would you take to eliminate racism? What could interfere with this plan?”

We tried to answer some of these questions in our pamphlet *To End Racism: Mobilize the Masses for Communism* (available at [icwpredflag.org/rpe.pdf](http://icwpredflag.org/rpe.pdf)). A group is now working on a new anti-racism pamphlet. We hope that more readers will send in their answers, comments, questions, and suggestions.

### Did Racism Exist Before Capitalism?

The answer is “yes,” because racism has existed in all class societies as an excuse for slavery and conquest.

Ancient empires made claims of inferiority of those they wanted to conquer or enslave. They did this to justify war and slave hunting. The ancient Greek philosopher Aristotle argued that some people ought to be slaves because they were so inferior mentally that they were only able to recognize that the master was rational but were not rational themselves. He said that people this inferior are better off as slaves. Aristotle said slave hunting wars are naturally “just” if their victims refuse to submit to slavery. (Aristotle, *Politics*, written about 2400 years ago).

There was an active slave trade in Europe during the Middle Ages, especially in Venice, and in Arab countries. A huge revolt of enslaved African people took place in Iraq in 869. Not all the slaves that were traded were Africans, but they were almost always of some other ethnicity or religion other than those that captured them. The Vikings, for example, enslaved Irish people and sent them to Iceland.

During slavery in the U. S., pro-slavery intellectuals often cited Aristotle’s justification of slavery and applied it to enslaved Africans. His idea that those conquered and enslaved would actually benefit from it became the main justification of European colonizers. They then brought the horrors of massive exploitation to Africa, Asia, and Latin America. Japanese imperialists were racist as well, regarding the Chinese and Koreans they conquered as racially inferior.

Racism is always a product of class rule, whether the rulers be slaveowners, feudal lords or capitalists. Their laws and their ideology divide those they rule and try to dehumanize those they want to conquer. They often do the same thing with religion. Rulers do this be-



cause a minority class can’t hope to exploit the masses for very long without dividing them and violently repressing those they treat the worst and exploit the most.

Because racism is always produced by class rule, the only way to eliminate it is to end classes forever with communism. Only then can the battle to destroy the ideology and culture of racism finally be won.

—Comrade in San Diego (USA)

### Capitalism: The Material Basis of Racism

The letter “Questions about racism” asks interesting questions, but it seems to me that it is focused on racism as a problem separate from capitalism. This approach limits us to thinking that racism is only ideas and keeps us from considering its material base—capitalism.

Capitalism with its social relations: On one hand the bosses and their exploitation of the working masses; on the other, the workers and their status as wage slaves.

The material base of an idea is always primary. Without capitalism there will be no more racism. Racism, sexism, and the wage system are the lifeblood of capitalism. If we destroy the system and replace it with a communist system, within a certain period, life for the working masses will be completely different from what we see in the capitalist system.

I asked a friend in Mexico, “What do you think racism is?”

He answered, “It’s the hatred between people motivated by ethnic origins, skin color, usages, and customs.” A very common response in many places.

I let a few days go by and then asked him the same question, but now focusing on his work. He lives in Monterrey. He replied, “Racism is more directed towards people from rural communities. They are labeled with an insult, and they are the workforce in many factories.”

In big Mexican cities, labor is badly needed to do the toughest and lowest-paid jobs. But that work is reserved for workers from small towns and villages, who leave in search of a salary to feed their families.

In this situation, the bosses benefit from racism by labeling these workers as “uneducated” to justify paying them low wages and no benefits. At the same time, they divide them from those already established in the cities. Capitalism does not create work for everyone.

Thus we can see that only by organizing for communist revolution to eliminate wage slavery will the material basis of racism be eliminated, and at the same time capitalism will be eliminated from human history.

It is important that we understand the philosophy of dialectical materialism and historical materialism, so as not to fall into erroneous assumptions that may lead to defeat for the working masses. Our practice in putting forward communist ideas will inspire workers to fight for communism.

—Comrade in Los Angeles (USA)

### Inter-imperialist Fight in Central America Calls for Communist Revolution

“If Honduras’ Castro Gets Her Way, the US Will Pay,” headlined an opinion piece in *Newsweek*. It referred to Honduran president Xiomara Castro’s March 14 decision to break diplomatic and economic relations with Taiwan and start them with China.

The article urges the US to act immediately on the Economic Development and Employment Zone program to recover the Honduran economy before it falls into China’s hands. “This concern must fall on the shoulders of human rights champions Senator Marco Rubio (Florida) and Ted Cruz (Texas).” These two fascists are known in the United States for their right-wing, anti-communist politics.

“It’s too late, buddy,” a friend responded.

“China has already invested in construction projects such as the Patuca III Hydroelectric Plant and huge condominium constructions.”

The Honduran foreign minister said, “Honduras is grateful to Taiwan, but economic ties with China pushed us to cut those relations... These are political decisions. The world has been moving in this direction. We believe that this step will benefit the country.”

That step is like a bucket of cold water for US imperialism. Honduras joins El Salvador, Nicaragua, Panama, and the Dominican Republic, which have recently abandoned the US ally Taiwan and sought shelter under the Chinese empire.

Central America is once again a point of confrontation between the US imperialists and Russian-Chinese imperialists. In the 1980s, during the civil war in El Salvador, the US gov-

ernment had several hundred soldiers in Honduras ready to fight the FMLN. They supported the (pro-US) Contra mercenaries who were fighting against the (pro-Russian) Sandinistas.

Central American bosses are like rats abandoning the sinking US ship. In this fight between imperialists, the workers have nothing to gain and much to continue to lose. The Chinese bosses will not be that different from the exploitation, repression and death caused by local governments and US imperialists.

Central American workers have a history of fighting against the bosses. Many have fought and others continue to fight for a vision of a communist world. Our alternative is to continue building our Red Flag networks and collectives to fight for our society without exploitation, a communist world.

— Comrade in Los Angeles, USA

## FIRST-TIME PARTICIPANTS IN ICWP COLLECTIVES DISCUSS THE FIGHT FOR COMMUNISM

EL SALVADOR, March 25— “We are very excited and impressed by the new comrades who have come to this meeting, especially the youth,” said a worker and party leader.

Workers from different factories expressed their concern about how regional conflicts between capitalist powers affect us and impact workers’ daily lives.

“Since the conflict between Russia and Ukraine began, the prices of products made from flour and many other basic necessities have skyrocketed. This is due to the increase in oil prices. The capitalists always take advantage of these crises and wars to increase their profits,” commented a worker.

These conflicts between local and regional capitalist powers set the stage for the formation of capitalist factions according to their economic and political interests. This means the death of thousands of workers in the armed forces and factories. “We will never see a capitalist or leader of a state dying in a war. We’re the only ones who die,” added a young student.

Some workers think that “the war between Russia and Ukraine/NATO, is the scapegoat for increasing the production of weapons by Europe, the United States and Russia.” But the reality is that inter-imperialist rivalry is driving the US/NATO-Russia war in Ukraine and other wars.

Russia recently withdrew from the nuclear weapons treaty with the USA. This is a danger signal for the lives of thousands of workers in the world. The international Communist Workers’ Party mobilizes the workers of the world to turn

imperialist conflicts into revolutionary war against the true executioners of the workers: the capitalists.

Another topic of the meeting was the history of the International Communist Workers’ Party. In different workshops, comrades guided the discussion and answered the doubts of the young workers and students who came to the meeting.

A worker asked, “Are there more people in the international party?”

A working-class leader responded, “The ICWP is present in many places around the world. There are a lot of us, and we can’t all be at every meeting. Thanks to the efforts of workers around the world, we can carry out these activities. The party is of the workers, for the workers.”

“The ICWP was born more than a decade ago from the decision to fight directly for communism without intermediate/socialist phases as was advocated by the old communist movement,” a comrade explained. “We fight directly to abolish money, borders, sexism, etc.

“Communist philosophy allows us to question current reality, to question whether the ways of life and production should be as they are now, and whether they have always been this way in the history of humanity. It allows us to reflect and use essential critical thinking in the fight for communism,” she concluded.

“The examples of how capitalism works and how they steal the fruit of our labor are really interesting to me,” said a young garment worker who had come to our meeting for the first time. “We earn our daily wage in two hours. The rest is profit for the bosses. I would like to read more about it. I’ve heard that *Red Flag* has had articles about this.”

We ended the discussion with a history of May Day and our role on International Workers’ Day: not as a festival, but as an act of commemoration. It’s an opportunity to take to the streets under our red flags and communist slogans—to take our line to the thousands of workers who go out to march that day.



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### Students Learn About ICWP and Communism

Greetings to everyone!

We were recently invited to a meeting of the International Communist Workers’ Party here in El Salvador. I went with my father (a worker), my brother, and a friend.

It was our first meeting. They explained what the party is and what its objectives are. That they fight for the working class against the exploitation by the bosses and the capitalist system that the workers face every day.

The party fights for students to have a better understanding of ICWP’s effort to replace the capitalist system with communism.

A woman worker explained the history of May Day, as a prelude to inviting us all to the May Day March, an opportunity to publicize the party.

After this discussion, we enjoyed lunch and

the outing, together with our family.

—Student in El Salvador

### New Comrades Join ICWP in El Salvador

Two young workers from J Clothing Company joined a communist workers’ cell. This is a factory where approximately 900 to 1000 workers work. It is a great opportunity to expand our International Communist Workers’ Party, and hopefully to share our *Red Flag* newspaper.

It is the second time that we met with them to integrate them into our party and our fight directly for communism. In the factory where they work, they make Jeans Champion and other brands.

The main objective is to share with them the need to do political work in that concentration of workers, which is very extensive.

These young people shared with us their on-the-job experience. We gave them our *Red Flag* newspaper, our tool for spreading the party line.

One of them asked for the online link to *Red Flag*: “I need it, I want to read and get to know the party well.”

“I like communist ideas, because that is how we identify ourselves. We are all one class,” said the other.

A woman comrade said that her youngest son wants to participate in these meetings. Even though the repression is very strong, they agree with communist ideas.

We ended up exchanging phone numbers to have more frequent communication. We closed the discussion with plans for May Day, very enthusiastic about continuing the struggle.

—Comrade worker in El Salvador

Amid Capitalist Crisis and Imperialist War

**CELEBRATE MAY DAY 2023**

**Mobilize Masses for Communism**

**Raise the Red Flag with ICWP**

El Salvador - India - Mexico - USA - Spain - South Africa