

# BOEING WORKERS ON ARMY, DEMOCRACY & COMMUNIST POTENTIAL

SEATTLE, WA — A day never passes without Boeing workers debating the meaning of the Mid-East uprisings. I consciously started a number of these discussions, but, by now, my friends bring it up on their own.

Workers have a genius for expressing key political questions in sharp, riveting ways. We kept revisiting questions on the army, democracy and the possibility of communist revolution.

## Veterans Discuss Armies

“I can’t believe the Bahrain army beat those demonstrators as they slept in the parking lot,” said a veteran friend at shift start. No hello, how was your weekend!

“Remember how the sergeants used to yell at us to never let our rifles out of our sight, even when we were sleeping,” I joked.

“No shit!” he agreed adding that we may need those guns in Wisconsin.

“Has anybody started a petition to recall that governor?” he asked.

“Come on!” I answered. “Do you really think we get rid of one guy and it’s going to change capitalism?”

“You’re right, he can’t be doing this on his own. Some big money-men must be behind it.”

“You’ll never see the U.S. Army breaking into that Governor’s, beating him up, telling him he can’t destroy those workers lives.”

“No shit!” again.

## Capitalist Democracy = Dictatorship

Another mill hand wandered over with Egypt and democracy on his mind. I tried to explain that democracy was, in reality, just another form of the bosses’ dictatorship.

“We live under a dictatorship,” I insisted.

Before I could continue he interjected, “Yeah, and the name of the dictator is John (our boss)!”

“You see,” I said. “You come to work and you understand the real nature of capitalist dictatorship. Our boss is the capitalist’s agent.”

He took a *Red Flag*.

## Communism Will Change How We All Think

A third discussion took place in

a co-worker’s living room with his wife. He read *Red Flag*’s lead article, “Capitalism Fails Egyptian Workers.” It showed how the bosses are not invincible and how the working class can be a vehicle for revolutionary change.

He was not so sure. “There have always been these ideas around,” he theorized. “Sometimes the capitalist ideas win out; sometimes the communist ideas. Sometimes the unions are in retreat and sometimes they advance.”

“Well, ideas don’t exist in a milk bottle,” I retorted. “There’s a material basis to think the working class can lead a communist revolution. Mobilizing the masses for communism in the here and now will allow the workers to reach their potential.”

We discussed how different relations of production led to different ideas dominating a society. The exploited in slavery were property; the exploited in feudalism were serfs tied to the land and nobles. Capitalism, wage slavery, gave birth to a new class of exploited, the working class, and with it the potential for communism. Human nature is defined differently in each of these societies.

We then discussed the material basis of racism under capitalism. The bosses have huge economic and political incentives to promote racist ideology and practice. Communist production organized around need, not profit opens up the possibility of eliminating racism. His wife lit up.

He hemmed and hawed even as he saw the logic. Because of our long friendship, I knew I could put him on the spot (and me too).

“Is it possible you’re clinging to this theory that ideas have no basis in reality because it takes you off the hook?” I said. “If ideas and movements just come and go with no rhyme or reason then you don’t have to grapple with these important questions of reform or revolution.”

“Look,” he interrupted, not liking where this was going, “I think these communist ideas are great and I’ll contribute in any way I can.”

We arrived at a dollar amount he would contribute to *Red Flag*.

