

CAN'T GET TO COMMUNISM THROUGH SOCIALISM

Marxism has become much more popular as the present capitalist crisis destroys the lives of billions. Lenin had it right: this system is a “horror without end.”

In the past three columns, we examined how “capitalism’s laws of motion” don’t allow any other outcome. Some have mistakenly concluded that this means history must always repeat itself.

Part of the reason people are fooled by this stale idea is the failed strategy of fighting for socialism. But even in this historic failure lie the seeds of communist success.

For most of the history of Marxism, the communist movement has fought for socialism, hoping that it would be a stepping-stone to communism. But the socialist systems of the USSR, China, and Eastern Europe, all turned into open capitalism. These events were spread out over a number of years, and history repeated itself. Did this have to happen or could it have been avoided by “doing socialism right.”

We now realize that it is a law of motion of socialist systems that they eventually turn into open capitalism. The reason for this is that socialism is actually a form of capitalism in which the means of production are owned by the government. Thus socialism is subject to the laws of motion of capitalism, in particular, laws about money and the market.

Analysis of the operation of actual socialist systems shows that their wage systems, inequalities and state organization lead to the rapid rise of a new capitalist ruling class, which takes over the government and the former communist party. The political power of the working class (when

that power actually exists) can’t be maintained against the capitalist institutions of socialism. The new capitalist classes of different socialist countries even fight wars with each other, like the USSR-China war in 1969, and the Vietnam-China war in 1979.

Once a new ruling class is firmly in control, socialism is no longer the best way for it to rule, and open capitalism eventually returns. The result is that if communists were to try to create socialism again, history would certainly repeat itself. There is no way to “do socialism right.”

No New Ruling Class Under Communism

A central problem that faces our new communist movement is how to make sure that communism can be achieved and continue, so that a new ruling class can never arise and restore capitalism. Analyzing the reasons why socialism can’t lead to communism is critical for understanding how to do this.

A major source of the new ruling class that was created under socialism was the high income and special privileges that the top party and government leaders had. Thus we cannot allow privileges for anyone.

This means we cannot have a wage system, either, since wages always mean that some get much more than others. Wages also undermine communist politics by providing a material basis for racist, sexist, and elitist ideas.

Knowledge of the specific features of socialism that prevented it from reaching communism is fundamental to our strategy for fighting for communism now. Mobilizing the masses for communism is the program for creating and

keeping communism that specifically rejects the socialist ideas and practices that led to working class defeat. This knowledge shows us the way forward to communism.

In the next column, we outline specific communist answers to three other examples of the failed socialist strategy.



ICWP has published our manifesto **Mobilize the Masses for Communism**. It's available in English and Spanish. Order your copy or copies. Please send donations for the costs of printing and mailing. We also ask for your suggestions and criticisms.

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