

# POSSIBILITY AND ACTUALITY

Possibility is one of the important categories of dialectical philosophy. It describes events and situations that might happen or which people might be able to make happen, that is, to make actual.

### **Making Things Happen**

Some things are possible by themselves, without human action. It is possible that the earthquake zone near Japan will produce another tsunami. For the communist movement, however, we are most concerned with what it is possible for us to make happen to move toward communism, or what it is possible for the capitalists to do to their system or to their enemies, including us.

For some event to be possible, it isn't enough that we can imagine it. It isn't possible for pigs to fly, but people can image this or write a story about it. For something that doesn't exist yet to be possible, there must be some way to get there, some factors that exist now or will exist that creates that possibility. This means that possibilities are limited, even though there is usually more than one at any one time.

Something will be possible at some specific time only when there is already something in the current situation that can bring it about. It is possible now for a basketball player to make 20 free throws in a row only if he or she has already developed the skills needed to do this. It is possible to double the number of *Red Flags* sold at a particular workplace only if there are enough people who don't already read it, but who would be willing to if the sellers can organize the effort to reach them.

### **Creating Possibilities**

There are lots of things that are not possible now, but we know or expect that they will be in the future.

Some of these possibilities come into existence by themselves. It isn't possible for a normal 5-year-old girl to have a baby, for example, but in the normal course of events, she will develop that possibility. Other things become possible when we create the conditions they need to exist. Distributing *Red Flag*, making political friendships, and fighting for communist ideas on the job will open up more possibilities for the growth of the party, possibilities that don't exist yet.

Communist revolution isn't possible today, and two kinds of developments are necessary to make it possible. ICWP needs to grow larger and stronger, especially in the industrial working class and in the military. The capitalist system also needs to grow weaker. This is a development we can see going on in front of us, as its economic crises, imperial rivalries, and wars grow more deadly.

### **Finding Out What is Possible**

There are several ways that people can find out what is possible. It is easy to see that something is possible if it is already actual, or has been. For example, we know that it is possible for very large numbers

of people to live under very equal conditions, since this happened during the communist revolution in China in the 1930s and 1940s.

Other knowledge of what is possible comes from practical experience. An experienced furniture worker can look at a fault in a piece of wood and tell whether it can be fixed with putty or has to be tossed out.

In many cases, however, we have to rely on the best theories we have to tell us what is possible. It will never be possible for capitalism to serve the working class. It will be possible to defeat it, however, because the contradictions of the system continue to grow, and can only be resolved by destroying it.

Adding to practical experience and correct theories, however, there is another crucial way to find out whether something is possible—by trying to make it happen! Trying to make something actual is sometimes the only way to know for sure what can be done now. You have to take a risk. This important idea is the basis of the slogan we should take over from the revolution in China: "Dare to struggle, dare to win!" Join ICWP and make your contribution to the struggle to win communism.

**2011 SUMMER PROJECT:  
ICWP'S RED SUMMER  
BRING RED FLAG'S COMMUNIST IDEAS  
TO INDUSTRIAL WORKERS, FARMWORKERS  
AND SOLDIERS  
IN SEATTLE, DELANO AND LOS ANGELES**