

# FREEDOM IS MASS MOBILIZATION FOR COMMUNISM

## Capitalist Freedom

Capitalists love to identify freedom with capitalism. Their idea is that the freest possible person is a capitalist with lots of money and nothing to prevent him or her from investing it to exploit workers. The essence of this idea is that any kind of external interference is a limitation of a person's freedom. Thus the most perfectly free person would be an individual who wasn't formed by his/her circumstances, but made himself/herself. Capitalist philosophers call this idea of freedom as creating yourself "autonomy" or "self-determination."

## People Don't Create Themselves

In reality, no one is his or her own parent, and by the time children are old enough to make their choices, they are already strongly influenced by their circumstances. We are all products of our society, our class, our families, our neighborhoods, the capitalists' government, schools, religious institutions, the media, etc. People don't make themselves. What capitalists call a "self-made man" is just someone who stepped on many people to get a pile of loot he didn't inherit.

## Materialist Freedom

In their book *The German Ideology*, Karl Marx and Frederick Engels explained the materialist conception of freedom. They defined freedom as power "over the circumstances and conditions in which an individual lives." This idea acknowledges the materialist principle that people are products of their circumstances, but rejects self-determination as merely "imaginary freedom."

The materialist view of freedom explains why workers are not free under capitalism. The bosses, our enemies, have much more power over our circumstances than we do. Many of the world's workers don't even have the power to feed themselves adequately, and we all depend on capitalists for our wages. Control of the means of production, of money, of the government and

the media—all give capitalists tremendous power over us, power we don't have over our own circumstances

## Freedom Requires Collective Action

People can get power over their circumstances by acting collectively. Many people working together can have the creativity and strength for tremendous accomplishments, but it's mighty tough for workers to do this under capitalism. Most mass movements—from trade unions to civil rights to the Arab Spring to Occupy Wall Street—are ignored, lied about, taken over, or smashed by capitalists.

Although capitalists have much more power than workers, capitalism limits collectivity so much that even capitalists have limited power over their own circumstances. The economic crises and imperialist wars that necessarily result from conflicts among capitalists themselves make the system uncontrollable. So even capitalists aren't all that free under capitalism.

## Communism is Real Collectivity

Marx and Engels pointed out that under communism, "the community of revolutionary proletarians ... takes their conditions of existence and those of all members of society under their control." Without capitalists, without a repressive government, without money or wages, collective humanity can decide how to use our labor, natural resources and technology to meet our needs, direct our own future and provide lots of choices for individuals.

This kind of freedom wasn't (and isn't) possible under socialism, with its wages, inequalities, and life-long trades and professions that limit the kinds of work a person can do. Only the united action of the masses gives us the greatest power over the conditions and circumstances that make us what we are and provides the resources for individual development. Thus "personal freedom becomes possible only within the [communist]

community," Marx and Engels wrote, because "only within the community has each individual the means of cultivating his gifts in all directions."

## Mass Mobilization for Communism

Achieving communism will take a long, hard fight that can only be won by the mass mobilization of the working class. But mass mobilization isn't just the way to get to the goal of communism. Mass mobilization for communism gives workers the greatest possible power over our conditions and circumstances, and is thus working-class freedom itself. Join us in the fight for workers' freedom.



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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