



Students at China's Beijing University put up a big-character poster (dàzìbào) like those above on May 25, 1966, announcing that the university administrators were pro-capitalist anti-revolutionaries. This struggle helped to spark a monumental rebellion against the "people in Party leadership taking the capitalist road." During this Great Proletarian Cultural Revolution, left-wing workers and youth tried to transform education literally from the ground up.

"Our school must not be like the old bourgeois-dominated schools which caused our sons and daughters to degenerate into good-for-nothings unfit for manual labor."

— *Chinese farmworkers, 1968*

At first, schools in revolutionary China imitated Soviet schools (see page 2). Mao complained that these socialist schools imposed on students three "separations:" separation from communist ideas, from the working class, and from work itself. As in capitalism today, schools kept youth away from workers, and encouraged students to consider themselves superior.

The Cultural Revolution of the 1960s struggled—unsuccessfully—to wrest power from capitalist-roaders in the Chinese Communist Party. The fight over education was central. "The existing educational system is extending and prolonging the three major differences—between mental and manual labor, between worker and peasant and between town and country," middle-school students criticized.

Communist teachers and students demanded an end to college entrance exams, which encouraged students to bury themselves in books, ignore politics and shun practical work. The system stifled initiative, bred careerism and forced out "difficult" students. "They were so busy with lessons, memorizing texts and doing homework [that] ... their thinking stagnated and they lost the power of analysis." Few rural students attended schools.

In contrast, students and teachers organized the Tarim Institute of Land Reclamation in 1958. They reclaimed wasteland while living and studying outdoors. They felled trees, made

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YOUTH, WORKERS, PARENTS, TEACHERS -- MOBILIZE INTERNATIONALLY FOR **COMMUNIST EDUCATION FOR CLASSLESS SOCIETY**

International Communist Workers' Party www.ICWPRedFlag.org
Español Adentro

What we learn and how we learn it are tied up with how society organizes production. This was true in pre-capitalist societies and in capitalist society. It will be true in communist society.

Education is more than schooling. It includes all the ways we are socialized. All social institutions—the family, the exercise of power, popular culture, and more—help shape children and youth.

Capitalist schools are important institutions of class dictatorship. They serve the interests of the ruling class just as much as the cops and the courts. Capitalist schools prepare the children of the rich to be bosses and most children of workers to be workers and soldiers. They teach the ideology, social behavior and skills required to play those roles and to make exploitation and imperialist war seem acceptable.

Some say that public schools are "our schools" that working people fought for and won, our hope for a better world. This is a deception, like the ideas that government is impartial and justice is blind. Government is an instrument of class rule. In capitalist society, all schools serve the interests of the capitalist class.

Communism will do away with money and classes and the private ownership of the means of production. Everyone will contribute as best they can, and everyone's needs will be met so that nobody lives better or worse than anyone else. The individualistic and competitive behavior which capitalist education promotes will be replaced by the collective and cooperative behavior necessary to build a communist society.

Communism is the only answer to the horrors inflicted by capitalism on the masses of people and on the planet, especially as global economic crisis leads to rapidly-increasing environmental destruction and world war. The international movement for "education reform" is part of this development (see page 4).

As soon as the working class takes power anywhere, we must mobilize the masses to build communism. We will immediately abolish money, commodity production (producing for sale) and the wage system (which forces workers to sell their labor power or starve).

Workers will be motivated not by the prospect of individual gain, but by the possibility of living in a communist society, in which social relationships of cooperation, collectivity and share-and-share alike are primary. These relations will provide material experience that can develop into a framework for all other decisions."

Communist education is the opposite of capitalist schooling, not a "new and improved" version of it.

Capitalism gives lip-service to critical thinking and life-long learning. But capitalist schools actively discourage anything beyond what's required of particular groups of wage-slaves or managers.

In contrast, mobilizing the masses for communism demands that everyone possible, not just a few, must learn to analyze, criticize, and help decide everything. The purpose of Communist education is the creation of communists and communist social relations.

"We would not believe in teaching, training and education if they were confined only to the school and were divorced from the storm of life," wrote Lenin. "[Education] must train [the youth] to be participants in the struggle for emancipation from the exploiters."

Today, under capitalism, communist education prepares us to struggle for workers' power and the classless society. To win com-

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bricks, built the school, and grew their own food.

Capitalist-minded intellectuals demanded that Tarim restore traditional class relations (“workers work, peasants till the land, students study books”). Revolutionary students and teachers insisted on breaking down these divisions. Classes combined study and production. Book-learning was tested in practice. Students wrote essays based on their work. They became competent technically and capable of organizing work and engaging in ideological struggle.

Workers Lead Communist Education

Communist youth in Jimo County took the struggle against capitalist education to the farms, the factories, and the barracks. With soldiers’ backing, these revolutionaries took power. New schools admitted vastly more children. Middle-school graduates taught primary students. Teams of workers – some without formal education – helped lead schools. Textbooks were rewritten, sometimes by the students.

Revolutionary schools featured political education. “Chairman Mao’s works... are the sole teaching material,” said an admiring account. But in this strength lay a fatal weakness.

The cult of Mao kept Leftists from fighting the Communist Party itself. They fought fiercely against “capitalist roaders” but never saw that the socialist road was itself capitalist. They tried to practice communism without mobilizing the masses directly for it.

Sometimes this political weakness led to bitter battles with pointless casualties that only served capitalist factions within the Communist Party leadership. Today’s capitalist-imperialist scribblers use such examples to turn us against the whole Cultural Revolution, especially its most revolutionary experiments.

Young revolutionaries mistakenly thought that communist education would transition China quickly from socialism to communism. Instead, socialist (actually capitalist) production relations defeated their struggle for communist education. But their heroic struggle helped us learn the need to mobilize the masses directly for communism.

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Communist power millions of workers must be committed to that goal and armed with an understanding of political economy, dialectical materialist philosophy and more.

Our Party educates through **Red Flag**, study-action groups, conferences, summer projects, and through our practice. All our work – organizing demonstrations or picnics, producing and distributing literature, raising communist ideas wherever we can – trains us to end the distinction between mental and manual labor, to struggle sharply politically and to work collectively.

After our class wins political power, communist education will vastly extend its reach. It will mean different things at different times, based on the particular needs of the international working class. But basic principles are clear:

Communist education must place the creation of communist social relations before the acquisition of technical knowledge or intellectual expertise. It must prepare us to fight for and build a classless society, without money or racism or sexism or borders or exploitation.

Communist education will not replicate inequality, exploitation, racism, competition, and privilege. Instead, it will expand relationships of equality and cooperation, creating more and better communists.

Communist education must help to merge “mental” and “manual” labor. The agronomist and the farmworker, the engineer and the construction worker, the molecular biologist and the nurse will be the same person. This requires a deep understanding of science for everyone, not just for the few.

Breaking down the division between manual and mental

Communist Education, Not Socialist Education

The current capitalist crisis forces people to question capitalism and consider alternatives. However, many fear that communism will just become capitalism under new management. This is understandable considering Russia and China today. Twentieth-century revolutionaries believed that a long socialist period was needed before society was ready for communism. Socialism, however, did turn out to be capitalism under new management.

The solution: mobilize directly for communism.

Marching Backwards: Soviet Socialist Education

“Lenin,” said N. K. Krupskaya, “demanded that the Soviet school... should train its pupils for both mental and physical work.” Lenin “wanted children to be molded into a well-knit collective that would do social work too.”

A Soviet educator explained in 1925 that “we are trying to combine the knower and the doer in one person; to unite theory with practice. This education is possible only where there are no social classes.”

China and the Soviet Union never became classless societies. But we have much to learn — positive and negative — from their best educational experiments.

For example, A.S. Makarenko organized delinquent orphans into the self-sufficient Gorky Colony



in 1920. He described his sharp struggles against racism, individualism, and bourgeois theories of education in *The Road to Life*. One perplexed Soviet bureaucrat remarked, “It’s a pedagogy of struggle.”

In the early 1920s, Soviet students learned by solving practical problems and doing real work like cooking, cleaning, and simple repairs. They practiced reading and writing in the context of planning an outing or holding a meeting.

Teachers were coaches and mentors, not preachers or prison guards.

Lenin and Krupskaya fought for “polytechnic,” not “technical,” education. Youths would learn everything about the production process in an industry, including the social relations of production, not just one trade. As socialism consolidated capitalist practices, this line was defeated. Capitalist practices came to dominate Soviet education.

Soviet socialism kept money and the wage system, and the capitalist values that came with them. In his *Handbook for Parents*, Makarenko struggled against the ways this distorted children’s development in Soviet families.

In 1931 the Soviet leadership imported the Prussian “academic model” as US capitalists had done earlier. Students were age-segregated and knowledge was chopped up into lifeless, abstract subjects. This was exactly when ranks and decorations were restored in the Red Army, and pay scales and piecework in industry. Socialism turned out to be capitalism with a “proletarian” mask, and the “academic model” played a key role.

labor, and between the “experts” and the masses, will help eliminate the material basis for the capitalist idea that some people are more important than others and deserve a bigger say or an easier life.

Communist education means combining lifelong work and study, theory and practice. Mass mobilization for communist production requires breaking down the barrier between education and work. Communism will end the marginalization of children, youth, and the elderly. Everyone will learn and work their entire lives.

Instead of relying on full-time expert teachers, everyone will share their experience and knowledge. The division between teacher/expert and student/learner will be destroyed. Students will learn where people actually work, not in isolated classrooms.

We have taken only the very first steps in learning/teaching about what education and work will be like in communist society. Further insights come as we put into practice our line of **MOBILIZING THE MASSES FOR COMMUNISM**. We invite you – we urge you! – to join us in this world-historic task.

Read the ICWP manifesto
Mobilizing the Masses for Communism
and our newspaper ***Red Flag***

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INTERVIEW WITH FORMER GUERRILLA FIGHTERS IN EL SALVADOR

Becoming a radio operator

“Fight to change the system by organizing ICWP”

I was born in the village of El Zapote de Joateca. In that place there was only one school where they gave first and second grade classes.

When I was 11, in 1981, the organization got started in this sector. My whole family was organized, and in that same year I started at that school but I only went for 3 months, because the civil war started in El Salvador. I moved to the town; they killed my mother there. I had to return home to look for my father, who was already organized.

In the encampment there was an organization, and there was literacy education, taught by those who knew how to read and write. Later a popular school was organized for minors, two hours of schoolwork where you got language, mathematics, and two hours of military work.

They didn't prepare anybody for a profession, but people left that school as radio operators of military radios, medics (nurse-practitioners) [or doctor-nurses]. The comrades who taught us weren't teachers. They taught us what they knew: to read, write, and the four basic operations of mathematics.

How did you become a radio operator?

People's education leads you to develop abilities that you already have. There are things that aren't learned in school but in practical life. The new concept of education should combine theory and practice.

I started to become a radio operator when I was 14. I was in the first class of the school. They taught me mathematics and language in the technique of using the radio, to decipher sys-

tems of numbers and understand the message.

From the start it took at most a week to memorize the code, according to capacity and ability. It was a work in progress. Later they sent you to the military units, and according to your assimilation, you were promoted to units that were more strategic.

The training took place out in the open, under a tree. It was physical and mental work, preparation for combat.

I ask myself: How to evaluate? Knowing that we have two types of populations, youth and adults.

The objective in the revolutionary school for youth was to survive in those times, but it was to live, day by day, learning things that were going to help us win the war.

And after the war?

All the ideals remained half-way done. Nobody wanted war, but we were not prepared for the “peace.” All of us were left not knowing what to do. I had dedicated the years of my youth to handle weapons, carry out military actions, since I was also a radio operator. So I felt frustrated. I didn't know what to do.

They only gave us agricultural tools and a little money, and most of us didn't know how to work the land.

When the demobilization occurred, there was nothing guaranteed. We were all left as orphans, ideologically. It was frustrating for me.

So I looked for the family members who were



left alive, and they helped me.

It was very hard to move from the collective process of struggle to individualism and integrate ourselves into civilian life.

It was a mistake of the FMLN leadership to leave us ideologically abandoned.

What happened with your revolutionary ideas?

The human being always seeks to form relationships with others. I felt the need to belong to a group that would pursue revolutionary ideals.

It was in that way that I got in touch with one of the political people for whom I had a lot of respect and it was he who talked to me about continuing to fight to change the system.

My principles of struggle haven't changed since I was a boy, and now that I am mature, my ideas are universal. I feel re-energized when we talk about communism and I think I will continue talking to other co-workers about *Red Flag* and that they should organize in the International Communist Workers' Party.

Becoming a battle field medic

“What interests me now is world communist revolution”

I come from a village called Corinto. I was born in 1963. In that time I saw that nobody knew how to read or write. I remember that there was one school for several villages, with only one teacher. They registered students for three days. It was hard to go to school because of the distance, and because of the way my parents thought. Back then my father told me, “Learning isn't useful, what's important is agriculture.”

I never went to school, but one day I worked up the courage and whispered to my mother to tell my father to send me to school. My father asked her, “What did he say?” “He said that he wants to go to school,” she said. “Okay, tomorrow I'll buy him a pencil,” he said. And the next day, Sunday, he went to the town and bought me a machete instead and he took me to work all day.

I had an older brother. One day he had 30 cents and he gave me 15 cents, and with those 15 cents I bought myself a little notebook. On Monday I told my mother that I wanted to go to my sister's house. She was married and lived near the school. I went, but I didn't go into my sister's house. I went to the school. I arrived at recess and stayed near a tree.

When recess ended, everyone went to the classroom. I went to the door and saw an empty desk and sat down. The teacher hadn't erased the lesson and I started to copy it. I remember that he had made a little doll, among other little things. The teacher didn't say anything, but he came near me and looked at my work. I only remember that he said to a boy near me, “Look, he's doing it very pretty. You should do it like that too.”

But I only went to class for one week. In that week I learned the numbers to 100. After all this they enrolled me and I studied until the fourth grade. That was a lot back then.

The repression came. Clandestine schools already existed and I helped to teach others. The commander convinced me, he spoke to me about the struggles. My brother was already organized and he took me to a meeting, one of



many, where they told us about the strategies they were using, and it was there that they asked me to write down what was said in these meetings. I joined the Revolutionary People's Army (ERP) and later I moved on to the Armed Forces of the National Resistance (FARN).

How did you become a combat medic?

I was 18 years old. I received 15 days of training. The one who was preparing us taught us by practicing on a comrade who was wounded all over. They had him naked. We practiced dressings and sutures on this comrade.

I remember that many wounded came. I think there were 25 of them. I had to do 76 injections a day. For one of them they told me to count his ribs up to number 7 and that there I would put in a big needle. They asked me not to fall asleep, to take care of him, or else he wouldn't wake up alive. This comrade survived.

We went through a lot of experiences and we were learning along with the comrades and in my case especially with a Mexican doctor. Do you remember “Eduardo,” a Mexican doctor? Like him, other doctors and nurses came, Salvadoran and internationalists, who taught us on the battlefields to make tourniquets, remove bullets, give injections, etc.

They wounded me in a battle and when I got better I asked to be transferred and they sent me

to the production zone in La Union and later to another area to be a scout, which was delicate and dangerous work.

When the war ended, I came to live in this area. I didn't know anybody.

One time a farmworker friend asked me, “Do you like to read?” I answered in the affirmative and he gave me *Red Flag*. An anecdote: when I got it I kept it on a shelf and only read a few articles. Later he visited me and asked me what I thought about the paper. I felt that he had challenged me so I read it carefully and began to talk with him about the contents of *Red Flag*.

What impressed me most about ICWP are the objectives it puts forward. Since capitalism is the worst thing for humanity, it's necessary to fight it from the four corners of the earth so that it falls. If a group came to me now and told me that we should organize a guerrilla adventure, I would tell them no, because I already went through that stage of guerrilla war (“foquismo”) and what interests me is worldwide communist revolution.

It has to be a struggle in all countries. If capitalism is globalized, we as the working class have to organize ourselves worldwide.

Some conclusions:

As human beings we have capacities to deal with intellectual and manual questions. We develop activities without having professional preparation because I learned through practice and so I insist on practice and theory.

Educational proposal: transform educational centers into shops (carpentry, handicrafts, tailor shops, mechanics, weavers, spinning, etc.). So while the carpenter is teaching, the teacher is in the fields learning with another group of students.

That educators like me won't be working for wages, but rather be encouraged.

Capitalist Education Reform: Imperialism, Exploitation, War

FUTURE FOR WORKERS AND YOUTH: COMMUNISM, NOT SCHOOLING

In fall 2013, thousands of teachers in Mexico held mass demonstrations against the bosses' Education Reform. They marched, organized encampments, confronted police, and attacked the offices of major political parties.

These teachers have become more receptive to communist ideas. "We frequently visited a primary-school teacher from Oaxaca," reported a comrade. "Each time we took *Red Flag* and some food that we had collected. All the repression and discredit that she is living through, her reading of our newspaper and of *Mobilize the Masses for Communism*, and the long talks about communism, have advanced her understanding about the purpose of the education, energy, and finance reforms, and above all about communism."



Striking teachers in Guerrero, Mexico, attack political party offices, 2013

"Education reform" in Mexico, the US and elsewhere is the rulers' attempt to make schools more effectively build loyalty to capitalism. This international movement is backed by imperialists like the Ford, Lumina and Gates Foundations.

The main role of capitalist schools is to push the rulers' racist and nationalist ideology. Especially now, as the rulers make long-term preparations for world war, they need to win masses of youth to patriotism so they will actively support the capitalists as industrial workers and soldiers.

The rulers must reform education "on the cheap." Charter schools are one method. A critic of Bill Gates' pet KIPP schools says they are "founded upon capitalistic and militaristic ideals.... By subscribing to a dictum of no excuses, KIPP essentially puts the onus on the victims of poverty and institutional racism."

Gates and other high-tech capitalists push technology as a "quick fix" for urban schools. Industry-designed training programs and the barrage of standardized tests, aim to increase the technical ability of working-class kids.

Technical education is not a bad thing, except that

the plan is for these students to be brutally exploited and sent to fight the imperialists' wars.

No "Golden Age" of Capitalist Education

Schools and classrooms are the production lines for the bosses' specialized worker/components. Children and youth are taught to show up on time, keep quiet and take orders. They are trained to work for "points" that add up to "grades" that add up to "credits" and then "degrees" – just as they will later work for "money."

Many teachers and workers see free universal public education as a reform won by working-class struggle, wresting from the hands of the capitalists a portion of the surplus value they reap from our labor. Seeing schools in this way leads us to reformism.

Demands such as "Money for Books, Not for War" orient the struggle around the idea that a "better education" can help one (or one's children) to be upwardly mobile. It strengthens bourgeois ideology: working-class students struggle to "be somebody," as if their parents, who produce all value in the bosses' factories, are "nobody." Schools themselves are structured around individualism and competition, in which helping another student is "cheating," and

grades rank students from "best" to "worst."

Communists participate in these struggles to build relationships with other working-class fighters and to contrast capitalist education with an entirely new relationship between work and education that communism will make possible. We analyze concretely how "educational reform" meets the specific needs of capitalism at this moment.

For example, Obama's Education Secretary Arne Duncan wrote an article for the US bosses' policy journal *Foreign Affairs* (Nov.-Dec. 2010) entitled "Back to School: Enhancing U.S. Education and Competitiveness." It echoed the lead article, "The Future of American Power: Dominance and Decline in Perspective," calling for improved K-12 education to help stem the U.S.' relative decline.

The American Federation of Teachers jumped on board with a resolution

supporting "national standards" so as "to ensure that all American students learn what they need to compete in the global economy and to be active citizens in our democracy."

Working-class parents, teachers, students and soldiers should shed their illusions about education and careers. The real future of our class is world war. It's up to us, to organize seriously in the schools, factories, and barracks, to turn that war into a revolutionary war for communism.

Opposing Reform,

Proposing Communist Revolution

In one mass situation, a comrade said, "The schools have been established by the capitalists to create and recreate human relations with the purpose of maintaining the capitalism system. The ideology that schools teach is an ideology of patriotism and nationalism, of democratic and capitalist values, nothing of communist values."

A teacher agreed: "The whole educational structure from elementary, to high schools to colleges and universities is a big propaganda machine. They teach conformity."

We said that capitalist education can never liberate us from profit production, or exploitation, or racism, or poverty or war.

"Yeah," a young teacher responded. "This education is not set up to liberate us. I agree with everything you are saying."

We issued our call: "Down with capitalist education! Learn and teach for communist revolution! Read, distribute and write for *Red Flag*! Join the International Communist Workers' Party!"

Another young teacher replied: "That's a good call to action!"

We are confident that many teachers will join with industrial workers, soldiers and youth in fighting to create a world where we can thrive in human dignity for the benefit of all.



Students in Soweto, South Africa rebelled in 1976 against racist schools. They raised the slogan "Liberation before Education," rejecting the lie that schooling creates better anti-racist fighters. The students sharpened the anti-Apartheid struggle, voicing the urgent aspirations of the working class for a world without exploitation. But their abstract call for "liberation" masked the important truth that these aspirations can only be met by mobilizing the masses openly for communism.



RED FLAG

MOBILIZE THE MASSES FOR COMMUNISM