

WHY COMMUNISM CAN WIN

Nearly 20,000 copies of *Mobilize the Masses for Communism* have been distributed. We will dedicate the next series of dialectical materialism columns to deepening our understanding and practice around this line. Please read and study them with your fellow workers and let us know if they are useful.

It's no secret that the communist movement suffered a big defeat when the pro capitalist forces won out in Russia and China. Some workers and students ask why a revolution led by ICWP won't turn out the same way. Some people even claim that history always repeats itself, so that our struggle must eventually fail.

If revolution were always part of a cycle that leads back to open capitalism, our fight for communism would be hopeless. But this certainly isn't true. This column and the next three will explain how we know when history does and when it does not repeat itself, and specifically how we know that the fact that socialism cannot lead to communism does not show that communism will fail too.

New Things Do Happen in History

We all know about things that have never happened before but stick around once they do occur. Inventions like the steam engine, cell phones, atomic weapons, etc., were made at a certain time and didn't need to be repeated.

The most important cases of things that are really new, however, are new social movements and systems. Capitalism began in the Middle Ages in Europe. Small manufacture and trade had existed in ancient Greece and Rome, but that wasn't capitalism, because it mainly used slave labor, not wage labor.

Capitalism first developed in individual towns and cities of Europe. It took a long struggle before capitalists could win state power in large countries, like England in the 1640s and in France in the 1790s.

Communism was also new in the early 19th century. Although ancient communist societies existed long ago and peasant communist movements existed in Germany in the 16th Century, a communist movement based on scientific economics and dialectics only began in the 1840s.

Repeating Patterns

Things that are truly new do happen, but there are also some kinds of events that occur over and over. Wars between capitalist rivals have existed as long as capitalism, and these wars grew into enormous slaughters in the 20th century. Capitalist economic crises repeat regularly: about every eight years since 1825.

Recognizing and recording patterns and regularities like these are vital parts of scientific knowledge in any field. But seeing patterns is only the first stage of knowledge. Noticing that capitalist crises keep happening does not explain why crises happen and does not tell us whether they must happen or could be stopped somehow.

But these issues are exactly what must be understood in order to know that capitalism can't be fixed, and how it can be destroyed. To fight to overthrow capitalism we must find and use what Marx called the "laws of motion" of capitalism, which he said was his ultimate aim in his work *Capital*.

The next column will describe the all-important laws of motion and how they differ from legislative laws.