The supply system the Chinese Red Army adopted during the revolutionary struggle showed that an egalitarian communist society is achievable, even under the most difficult circumstances. They fought together against the Chinese bosses and Japanese invaders while producing and sharing everything without wages or privileges, motivated by political conviction—fighting for the liberation of the working class. The supply system was based on the communist principle that the working class possesses a high degree of political consciousness, capable of creating a new society based on meeting workers’ needs, without money or exploitation. Today, that principle should guide us to build our new Communist Revolution.

Unfortunately, despite their great success, the communist leadership failed to reinforce and propagate the ideals of a communist society. What went wrong? It failed to abolish money, and retreated from the principle of the supply system, “From each according to ability, to each according to need.” Throughout the struggle for communism in China, there was always an internal struggle in the Chinese Communist Party between two lines: rely on communist relations or on money. Eventually, the theory of stages, first socialism and then communism, became the dominant line in the party leadership, leading to the building of state capitalism instead of communism. After the Red Army achieved power in China, leading a movement that required no money, their first mistake was the implementation of military ranks and a job grade salary wage system, starting in the mass Red Army. These capitalist ideas led to the formation of a privileged stratum among higher party leaders that enjoyed a different life style. This privileged group became separate from the masses. Gradually, this new grade and wage system gave way to the formation of a bureaucratic regime with its own political power, a new capitalist class.

Even though many resisted, and fought to implement the supply system in the whole country, the wage system was nonetheless implemented, supposedly to increase production. Some in the leadership mistakenly believed that monetary incentives were needed to increase production. Some party leaders, including Mao, did not completely agree. The masses were not yet ready to respond to goods on the market and political goals of producing for need. But most did not understand the fatal consequences of going back to the old system of wages. Yet, the workers had just come out of a system where millions of people were willing to produce and risk their lives in the war for liberation where there was no reliance on monetary incentives, but instead on the communist ideas of sharing and collectivity.

**STRUGGLE FOR SUPPLY SYSTEM CONTINUES**

During the period of promoting both production and collectivity, known as “The Great Leap Forward”, large groups of people, often 10,000 or more, formed communes, starting in 1957. To encourage collective production and living, many communes included communal meals, known as “communist distribution according to need, not wages.” In the face of wages and rank, many rank and file peasants and workers organized this return to the supply system. They showed that arguing that communism leads to laziness is capitalist ideology. During the Great Leap Forward, industrial and agricultural production were combined in the communes, which used the supply system. Educational and practical work were also combined. Millions took part, inspired by moving to communism.

However, based partly on bourgeois behavior of careerist comrades, partly on a drought, and partly on sabotage, the Great Leap Forward ended during a famine in which many people died. Many party cadre had given false estimates of how much grain they expected to produce, to paint a rosy image to aid their personal promotion. This was an outcome of the wage grade system. The right wing of the party seized on these errors to fight against the communes and the supply system.

Later, in 1966, in The Great Proletarian Cultural Revolution, rank and file peasants, workers, students and red guards responded by fighting to overthrow the revisionists and to institute communism. This left group attacked the leaders who were taking a capitalist road. Unfortunately, the movement, which didn’t build a new party, was defeated by the CCP leaders, who were on the road to openly institute capitalism, making even more concessions to the rich peasants and capitalists.

**THE STRUGGLE BETWEEN THE RIGHT AND LEFT**

What went wrong? Money was not abolished. The two stage road meant retreating from communism to capitalism. Monetary incentives along with rank privileges stemmed from a very serious internal struggle in the party between having confidence in the masses of workers and peasants to mobilize for communism and the stages theory that says the masses can’t be won directly to communism. The struggle between the left and right was constant in the old movement.

This struggle continues today inside our party, ICWP. This history shows that reformist and revisionist concessions have proven catastrophic. We foster internal struggle to mobilize the masses for communism. Money and capitalism are the ultimate destroyers. We need full confidence that the time is now for the masses to be won to communist ideas. This is why the political line is primary in order to accomplish communism and why ICWP fights for communism—to abolish wages and money. We have fought after the revolution to produce for need, not profit.

The lessons from the courageous Chinese movement are critical to us as we fight to build a communist society today.

**THE DIALECTICS OF OPPOSITION AND CONTRADICTION**

Contradiction is the central concept of dialectical philosophy, and some of our previous columns have focused on it. In this column we discuss a more general concept that includes contradictions, the concept of opposition.

**What Opposites Are**

In order for things or processes to be opposites, they have to be different, but much more than difference is required. Opposites have to be exclusive, so that nothing can be entirely on both sides of an opposition at the same time. Also, opposites have to interact and change each other, at least some of the time.

An important example that shows these features of an opposition—exclusion and interaction—is the relation between parents and their children. In every particular parent-child relation, the parents are one side and the children are the other. So being a parent excludes being a child in that relationship, and vice-versa. In each relationship, the parents are influenced by their children, and the children are influenced by their parents. So the parent-child relation is an opposition.

**Is Something Wrong Here?**

Some people are bound to object that they don’t oppose their parents, but get along with them fine. This objection brings out the meanings of the concepts of “opposition” and “contradiction” in dialectics, which are a little different than the ordinary use of these terms. Contradictions are defined as opposites in which the two sides interfere with each other, struggle against each other, or hold each other back. Not every opposition is a contradiction, however, at least not all the time. If an opposition is not a contradiction, it is called supplementary. Oppositions between parent and child, husband and wife, discussion and action, buying something and selling it, etc., can be supplementary at least some of the time.

**Supplementary Oppositions Change**

Suppose a diesel mechanic works on an engine that comes with a really good manual. The procedures and settings in the manual work perfectly in practice. The ideas in the manual and the practical work on the engine are opposites. Statements on paper and actual work on an engine are exclusive things—nothing is both. But the book’s ideas become actual work at the engine factory and now guides actual work in the shop. So the contents of the manual and engine repair work interact, and are supplementary opposites.

Further experience by the mechanic is likely to change this situation, however. No manual is perfect. The mechanic may find better ways to do certain jobs, and not follow the manual any more. Or, he or she may find that if you tighten certain bolts as much as the manual says, they tend to break and create a problem that is hard to fix. Then the manual and the mechanic’s practice aren’t supplementary anymore, but in contradiction. It may be possible to eliminate the contradiction by getting stronger bolts or by changing the manual. Even if this is done, however, some new contradiction is bound to show up later. Like the relation between parents and children, this case illustrates a general truth about opposites: They don’t stay supplementary, but are contradictory at least some of the time.

**Worker-Capitalist Opposition**

The opposition between the capitalist class and the working class is always a contradiction, never supplementary. In the rare cases capitalists do something that workers actually want, it’s only a tactic to keep exploiting them. But union bosses and politicians regularly say otherwise. They call on us to “share the sacrifice” of capitalist wars and economic crises, and push the lie that both workers and capitalists would benefit from this. The fact is that the worker-capitalist relation is always a struggle of opposites. Capitalists are always the enemies of workers, as the slave-owners and feudal lords were in previous systems based on the exploitation of labor.

**The Dialectics of Opposition**

Some oppositions are always contradictions, and all oppositions are contradictory sometimes, but there are important principles in communist dialectics that apply to all oppositions. In the next column, we will discuss the principle that things can turn into their opposites in particular circumstances.

**JOIN THE ICWP**

**2011 SUMMER PROJECT! MOBILIZE THE MASSES FOR COMMUNISM!**

**During the Chinese Revolution, soldiers were not divided by rank or wages**

**REVERSAL OF SUPPLY SYSTEM IN CHINA SHOWS WE CAN’T RETREAT FROM COMMUNISM**

**During the period of promoting both production and collectivity, known as “The Great Leap Forward”, large groups of people, often 10,000 or more, formed communes, starting in 1957. To encourage collective production and living, many communes included communal meals, known as “communist distribution according to need, not wages.” In the face of wages and rank, many rank and file peasants and workers organized this return to the supply system. They showed that arguing that communism leads to laziness is capitalist ideology. During the Great Leap Forward, industrial and agricultural production were combined in the communes, which used the supply system. Educational and practical work were also combined. Millions took part, inspired by moving to communism. However, based partly on bourgeois behavior of careerist comrades, partly on a drought, and partly on sabotage, the Great Leap Forward ended during a famine in which many people died. Many party cadre had given false estimates of how much grain they expected to produce, to paint a rosy image to aid their personal promotion. This was an outcome of the wage grade system. The right wing of the party seized on these errors to fight against the communes and the supply system. Later, in 1966, in The Great Proletarian Cultural Revolution, rank and file peasants, workers, students and red guards responded by fighting to overthrow the revisionists and to institute communism. This left group attacked the leaders who were taking a capitalist road. Unfortunately, the movement, which didn’t build a new party, was defeated by the CCP leaders, who were on the road to openly institute capitalism, making even more concessions to the rich peasants and capitalists.**
Who Do You Trust: The Law or Workers’ Power?

The capitalist tells you to rely on the law. Commu-
nists tell us to rely on workers’ power.

At first glance it may seem it may seem easier to rely on the law. That’s the route the International As-
sociation of Machinists (IAM) took in their complaint to the National Labor Relations Board (NLRB).

Acting on that complaint, the NLRB charged that Boeing’s decision to open a new 787 plant in South Carolina was an illegal act of retaliation against the union for striking. That it was in retaliation for strik-
ing is obvious; the CEO admitted as much. The NLRB says Boeing should operate it’s second 787 line in Washington State—mananned by union workers.

Seems like a victory, right? Upon closer examina-
tion, it becomes clear that in the real world this ruling carries no weight.

Appeals will go on for at least 5 years. By that time, the South Carolina plant will have been up and run-
ning for at least 4 years. The eventual decision will be moot.

Foolish and Dangerous

The unions strategy is more than useless. It’s dan-
gerous!

Our class must mobilize to break the bosses’ laws now more than ever. The bosses need to prepare for bigger wars, even world war, has been responsible for more and more fascist laws. Would we advise the Ger-
man working class to fight for better laws in Nazi Germany?

Advocating reliance on “better” laws sabotages the move ment we need to build. Soldiers need to “break their contracts” and turn the guns on their imperialist oppressors. As legal strikes become harder to come by, workers will have to be prepared to wildcat. Racist exploitation must be met with the full might of a uni-
ted working class. Our class must learn through prac-
tice that only direct workers’ power—personified by mass action—is the answer.

Law is only the codification of the right of the ca-
pitalist to exploit us. Rather than futile attempts to pass more “even-handed” laws, we need to mobilize our class to smash the bosses’ system of laws.

Mobilizing masses of workers should be our stra-
tegy—now and in the future. When we seize state power, we’ll have a huge weapon with which to or-
ganize these mobilizations. Communist mobiliza-
tions, not laws, will insulate that the needs of our class are met.

Labor Law Not Any Better

The IAM just sent every member in the nation a letter calling on us to fight for “collective bargaining.” “The collective bargaining process,” wrote IAM in-
ternational president Buffenbarger, “is the very con-
cept of the American ideal of democracy in the workplace, an idea championed by Abraham Lincoln, Teddy Roosevelt and Franklin D. Roosevelt. President Dwight Eisenhower often cited the practice of collec-
tive bargaining as the “glue” binding America’s eco-
omic progress.”

And what of this trade-unionist collective bargai-
ning process next year as our contact expires in the fall of 2012. It looks ominous.

The IAM and the Engineers union have built an alliance with Washington bosses and their govern-
ment politicians called the Washington Aerospace Partnership. For the first time union officials will be traveling with the company bosses to the Paris Air Show to promote Boeing. This all-class partnership is spearheading a campaign to ensure the next version of the 737 is built in the Puget Sound.

Everybody on the shop floor expects the 2012 con-
tract battle to be among the most fiercely fought in our history. Rather than preparing for a huge and lengthy strike, the IAM is telling us to rely on the be-
nefits of “partnership.” Such is the danger of collec-
tive bargaining under a capitalist system in crisis.

When our class wins communism, there will be no collective bargaining with the bosses because there will be no bosses to bargain with. Our party will mo-
obilize workers in every nook and cranny of society to lead production to provide for our class.

Relying on the law and collective bargaining is both foolish and dangerous. The prudent thing to do is to assure Red Flag reaches the hands of many more Boeing workers. The wise course is to build a move-
ment based on workers’ power: mobilizing masses for communism.

Dialectics and Transitions into the Opposite

In the last issue we discussed the dialectical con-
cept of opposition, and its relation to contradiction. In order to be opposites, things have to meet two condi-
tions: they have to be exclusive, and they have to interac-
t. Opposites are called supplementary when they work together and support each other. Opposites like parent and child or discussion and action are sup-
plementary at least some of the time.

Opposites that struggle and interfere with each other are contradictions. Some opposites, like workers and capitalists, are always contradictory. Many poli-
tical debates are precisely about whether an opposi-
tion is contradictory or not. Revisionists, people who claim to be communists but say that workers cannot won be to fight directly for communism, often claim that the opposition between reform and revolution are supplementary, that reforms and revolutionary politi-
cal activity can work together. The truth is that reform and revolution are always contradictory, and that all opposi tions are contradictory in at least some cir-
cumstances.

Opposites Have a Dominant Side

When opposites interact, one side is almost always stronger than the other. Practice, for example, is richer than theory and often corrects it. The capitalist class is dominant until a successful revolution and then the working class has the upper hand.

In each relation of opposites, the side that is domi-
nant determines the quality of the system or process that the opposites form. When parents have small chil-
dren, the adults are the dominant side. When the pa-
ents grow old or become ill, however, the quality of the opposite relationship changes and grown children often make decisions for their parents. This shift of the dominant side is called a transition into its oppo-
site, or as we described it in an earlier column, a dia-
lectical negation.

Transition into its Opposite

It is an important idea of dialectics that under spe-
cific conditions, things can make a transition into their opposites. This transition does not mean, for example, that the working class will turn into capitalists after the revolution. It means that in its relation with the capitalist class, the working class will make the tran-
sition from being dominated to being in the more po-
werful position, and will use that power to set up communism.

Some people refer to the transition into its opposite as a law, but this may not be appropriate, since the specific conditions required are different for different opposite relationships, and might never occur for some of them. For example, in the nucleus of many atoms, attraction is dominant over repulsion, and it may stay that way indefinitely. In atoms that are ra-
dioactive, however, repulsion can become dominant and make the atom split apart.

How to Make a Transition Happen

A transition happens when a weaker opposite gets stronger or a dominant one gets weaker. In some op-
posite relations, like the relationship between parents and children, the transition is inevitable. In other cases, the transition isn’t inevitable, but something can be done to make it happen. At work places, cam-
puses, and military bases the bosses’ ideas are domi-
nant, because the capitalists have a near monopoly on the means to distribute ideas. But distribution of Red Flag, communist political discussion, and involve-
ment in practical struggles can spread communist ideas that make sense to many workers, students and soldiers. This means that consistent communist politi-
cal work can eventually make communist ideas do-
minant in most areas.

This should be the goal of our work wherever it is possible. Even in areas where communist ideas don’t eventually become dominant, their acceptance by some will weaken capitalist control and help advance the fight for communism. Of course there are cir-
cumstances where we know that communist ideas will never become dominant, like the management of big cor-
porations or inside the leadership of capitalist govern-
ments, which means that those institutions have to be destroyed. All this is in line with the idea of transition into an opposite, since that only happens in appro-
priate circumstances. Transition into the opposite is not rare, however, but occurs often and illustrates that importance of understanding dialectics to understand how to change the world.
'Beggars thy neighbor' was a phrase coined during the Great Depression of the 1930s. Rather than act collectively in face of the world crisis that was then developing, the major powers began to take economic actions that protected themselves at the expense of their neighbors. It is now generally agreed these individual actions deepened, rather than averted, the crisis. When the US unilaterally began printing money again to flood the world with dollars (it was called QE2) it was not "Beggars thy neighbor." It was "Beggar the world!"

US Bosses Print Dollars Without Value

The US dollar is the world's reserve currency. For the last 40 years, oil has been traded in US dollars on the world market. This has given the US a huge advantage. All the major industrial powers, the other imperialist nations, have to save dollars so that they can buy oil. In order to earn interest on those dollar reserves, the major powers have to invest them in the US -- mainly in US Government bonds. All this extra money has allowed the US to do things other imperialists couldn't afford to do, like build a massive military with which to threaten or coerce others.

Currency War Among Imperialists:

Making Things Happen

There are lots of things that are not possible now, but we know or expect that they will be in the future. A basketball player to make 20 free throws in a row will be willing to if the sellers can organize the effort. It is possible to double the number of workers needed to do this. It is possible to do this. It is possible now for pigs to fly, but we know or expect that they will be in the future.

Workers Need Communist Revolution

Rival Imperialists Plan to End

Oil Dealings in Dollars

"THE DEMISE OF THE DOLLAR" was the headline in the October 6, 2009, Independent, a British mainstream paper. "In the most profound financial change in recent Middle East history," the article goes on, "Gulf Arabs are planning -- along with China, Russia, Japan and Brazil." The article said that India, too, was interested and, in May of this year, India began paying for its Iranian oil in Indian rupees, not US dollars.

This is the general context in which the US launched its QE2, or the printing of $600 billion of fictitious money, money without a base in the productive activity. Like a bull in a china shop this cash from-nowhere crashed around the world -- raising food prices here (helping spark the rebellions in Egypt and Tunisia), straining the economies of rival imperialists there (like Brazil) and helping the US to buy its own Government bonds that other imperialists were no longer interested in buying -- at least at the same rate as previously. It was not from arrogance and power that the US launched this QE2, but from isolation and desperation.

Which brings us to the crucial month of June when three watershed events are due to take place. First, QE2 is due to end. Second, an expanded Shanghai Cooperation Organization (the SCO) is due to meet bringing together Russia, China, India, Iran, Pakistan and the so called 'stans' of Central Asia in a defense alliance. Third, the International Economic Forum will meet in St. Petersburg, Russia. At this meeting, Russia and China will probably sign a huge energy agreement. As an article in the January 10th Asia Times observed, "...when the world's fastest-growing major economy and the world's biggest energy exporter come to an agreement, it goes far beyond a matter of bilateral agreement.

What secret meetings talked about two years ago, now begin to emerge as public agreements. As the US dollar gets weaker and more isolated, its rivals grow in organization and trade agreements.

Workers Need Communist Revolution

As the crisis deepens, the rivalry between the imperialists sharpens. As the desperation grows, the military incursions grow more brazen. As the period of regional wars passes, the prospect of world war grows. But these developments -- of crisis and world war - open new possibilities: the possibility of workers' revolutions, of the overthrow of the continual bell of capitalism. As workers, whose skill and discipline build everything of value in this world, grow more contemptuous of the capitalist-imperialist world, their confidence in building a communist alternative can grow.

This is not automatic. We need a revolutionary communist party to achieve it. But it is historically accurate. The inter-imperialist World War I was ended with the Bolshevik revolution. World War II ended with the triumph of the revolution in China. Both those revolutions eventually turned into their opposites because socialism kept too many aspects of capitalism. By learning from their mistakes we can organize the first revolution directly for workers power.

Dialectical Materialism:

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 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 imagine 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 they knew about the fort 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 Flags, 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, 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 FROM WORKERS

AND SOLDIERS

IN SEATTLE, DELANO AND LOS ANGELES
Appearance and Essence:

"THE TITANIC WAS ALL RIGHT WHEN IT LEFT HERE"

Essence and Illusion

Last week, the city of Belfast in Northern Ireland celebrated the 100-year anniversary of the launch of the Titanic, which was built there. One spokesman said that the ship, which went down on its first voyage, was “all right when it left here.” It’s easy to see why some people thought this was so at the time: the ship was brand new and advertised as “unsinkable.” But this idea was — and still is — superficial and wrong. Although it was not obvious, the Titanic, like many other ships, had a serious flaw: if enough compartments were damaged, it would sink.

This example brings out a fundamental distinction between two different aspects of things. The appearance of something is its superficial side, the part that we can see or easily find out about. The essence of a thing is its real, inner or underlying character, which may or may not be what it appears to be.

Appearances are not necessarily subjective, but may be recognized by many people. A lightning strike, for example, may be photographed and measured, and seen by hundreds of people. What they don’t see, however, is the essence of lightning, electrical discharge that produces the flash and the bang. The appearance of chicken pox is obvious, but the essence of the disease, a viral infection, isn’t visible.

Finding the Essence

The essence of a thing or process explains what causes it, and figuring out that cause can be difficult since it is usually different from appearances. Marx wrote that scientific study would be unnecessary “if the manifest form and the essence of things directly coincided.”

Finding the essence usually means constructing a correct theory and testing it in practice. One of the designers of the Titanic, who was on the ship when it struck the iceberg, immediately used theories of physics to calculate that the ship was going down, once he knew the extent of the damage. Marx was able to develop theories that explained important features of capitalism. Prices of things, for example, are appearances, but the essence that underlies them and explains the average price is the human labor necessary to produce those things.

Essences Develop

Some people make the mistake of thinking that an essence is permanent and prevents changes. This idea would rule out the dialectical development of things. Marx pointed out that the human essence is not “inherent in each single individual.” Instead, it is contained in people’s social relationships, so the essence changes as society changes. The inner nature of the US economy has also changed over the last five or six decades. It has moved from primarily producing goods into finance and speculation that led to the recent crises. In 2010, US corporate profits from finance were 50% more than those from manufacturing.

This is the first part of a series on the political economy of the new Soviet Union during the first years after the 1917 Bolshevik revolution.

Part I: State Capitalism and Socialism

Communists took power in Russia amidst wartime economic chaos. They knew they could build socialism only (in Lenin’s words) “by drawing on the masses, only by the independent activity of the masses.”

But they had won the masses to “Peace, Land and Bread.” The first Land decree gave most land to peasants to farm privately. This clearly strengthened small-capitalist thinking, but was thought necessary to maintain the worker-peasant alliance at the heart of Soviet power.

The harsh Brest-Litovsk Treaty brought temporary Peace with imperialist Germany. The immediate crisis for the workers’ government was Bread.

The most advanced communist theory of the time put full confidence in the workers’ ability to take power but criticized their ability to organize and run production. Their line was to fight for the dictatorship of the working class (on the political front) but to build an alliance with small producers and even capitalist owners (on the economic front).

“Comrades, working people!” Lenin declared in November, 1917, “You yourselves are at the helm of state. No one will help you if you yourselves do not unite and take into your hands all affairs of the state…. Get on with the job yourselves; begin right at the bottom, do not wait for anyone.

“Establish the strictest revolutionary law and order,” he continued, “mercilessly suppress any attempts to create anarchy…. Ensure the strictest control over production and accounting of products. Arrest and hand over to the revolutionary courts all who dare to injure the people’s cause.”

But “control over production” meant only that factory committees were to “supervise management,” not “to take possession of the enterprise or direct it.” It didn’t mean the abolition of markets, wages, or money.

When groups of workers visited Lenin to ask his support for nationalizing their factories, he gently struggled to convince them that they didn’t have the technical skills to manage a large enterprise. But the main problem wasn’t technical. It was political: The Bolsheviks hadn’t tried to win the masses to communism.

Continuing the pre-revolutionary mass direct-action movement, many committees defied policy and took over factories anyway. But many were not experienced in technological, not communist. They wanted to run factories for the benefit of those working in them, not for the whole working class. A leader of the Metal Workers’ Union described these committees as “another proprietor… who was equally an individualist and anti-social as the former one.”

"Transitional State Capitalism"

The Workers’ State took over a war-ravaged, barely functioning economy. It quickly monopolized critical trade sectors, including foreign trade. It took over grain elevators and warehouses, controlling distribution of scarce foodstuffs. Basic industries (aerospace, munitions) were nationalized as capitalists shut down factories and fled.

In April 1918 Party leaders introduced capitalist methods of industrial “scientific management,” including “pay for performance.” A sharp struggle ensued, as some Party leaders denounced these measures as “relics of capitalist exploitation.” They objected to “state capitalism” but had no proposals to mobilize the masses for communism or anything else.

Lenin responded that “state capitalism would be a step forward as compared with the present state of affairs.” The main contradiction, he said, was not between State Capitalism and Socialism. It was with the private capitalists who opposed any large-scale, centrally-controlled economy.

Lenin was right that State Capitalism and Socialism weren’t in contradiction. He was wrong to think that either could lead to Communism. The crisis continued to worsen as the weather turned over the summer by counter-revolution and imperialist invasions. The Soviets lost control of nearly all their coal, over ¾ of their iron, half their grain, and 90% of sugar. Trains were stopped in their tracks. Famine struck large cities. Shortages of materials (including fuel), semi-starvation, and lack of transportation paralyzed industry.

“War Communism” developed as a response to this crisis. In June 1918, all large-scale enterprises were nationalized. Smaller ones soon followed. All agricultural surpluses (beyond the peasants’ need for food and seed) were requisitioned, to be allocated between industry and the army. But was this really communism? Not! The next articles in this series will explain why.
Communist Centralism and Idolizing the Masses

Before we sat down to discuss communist centralism I knew capitalist democracy was not in the interest of workers and that it frames issues, like voting republican or democrat, to hide the real problems for the working class. One person asked if someone from another region is considered a representative of that region. I knew the answer was no, but I didn't really know why. So, I suggested that the person from another region was not a representative in the same way there are representatives in capitalist government, but that people from different regions need to inform the party of the work in their region.

But not only are people from different regions not representatives, I also learned that communist centralism is a completely different type of decision making. My problem was that I was trying to tweak the capitalist representative idea to fit communism when I should have completely abandoned this type of bourgeois decision making.

Revolution is a science, and the only way to confirm scientific principles is to put them into practice. We want to materialize our decisions and principles in practice so we can see what works and what doesn't. But also, as a political party, we want to make things happen, to grow and develop our political line to be exactly what workers need now; the party cannot argue indefinitively about a topic or else nothing gets done. Communist centralism blends practice into decision making. The party should hold political power, since to who else could workers entrust power? The party is responsible for ensuring the entire global working class is considered when workers carrying out communist society.

On one hand, they need to ensure that we eliminate inequalities between workers of different regions.

On the other hand, the Party needs to ensure that some workers are not doing more necessary labor than other workers. Voting is not the solution to these problems. If we act scientifically, we know that voting never makes a solution correct; we experiment with our best ideas and see in practice what works, what doesn't and what needs refinement. Voting has no place in this process.

We also talked about how the party decides for the masses. Lots of people wanted the party to obey the masses, but the problem is that the masses are not always for working class interests. For instance, before I was a communist, I didn't understand classes. I wasn't in class society. Right now, the party understands how to fight against capitalism better than the masses. This does not mean that the masses are hopelessly brainwashed or incapable of becoming party leaders, but capitalism feeds us so much junk and for so long that we internalize capitalist ideology. One comrade said that we should be careful not to idolize the masses because they also make mistakes. I think that was true and shows the importance of having a party. At the same time, our party needs to have unshakable faith that the masses can rule.

--A young comrade

In Memory of My Co-Worker

Southern California—In memory of my co-worker, murdered in a garment factory by the rotten capitalist system, I’ve planned to dedicate my life more to the struggle for communist revolution. A few months ago, when I got to work, I saw many women and men workers nervous without knowing what to do. An Asian worker was having a heart attack. The manager called the boss and he told her to call the family, not the 911 emergency services.

The worker’s daughter came and took her to the hospital. The boss forgot about the problem and continued as if nothing had happened. Asian and latino workers talked about how capitalism treats workers and that the bosses only care about their profits. For them, we workers are only more commodities. This worker was 57 years old and worked under constant pressure to get out more production. She constantly complained about headaches and that the boss treated her as if she was a lazy person.

In one of these discussions, another Asian worker said that the boss only paid her for 5 hours of work a day even though she worked everyone else, from 7am to 7pm. The boss says that she has a nervous “ tic,” and that no one else would give her work, and that she should be grateful that at least she paid her for 5 hours!

Two months after the heart attack, we got the news that our co-worker had died. I felt both a lot of anger and impotence. I told some of my co-workers, including some Red Flag readers, that we should do something to confront the boss and expose capitalism as the cause of her death.

Now I feel even more the need for communist revolution, where we workers won’t work until we drop, but instead we’ll have a life of healthy work to benefit the international working class. In a communist system there will be a healthcare system for all workers and we will finish the organization of the means of production that only exist to enrich a few. I’m fighting so that this incident leads to more Red Flags in the hands of more women and men garment workers, potential communist revolutionaries. Comrade Garment Worker

Don’t Wipe Up After Bosses—Wipe ‘Em Out

“Hyatt housekeepers and all workers need to smash this ugly system with communist revolution.” Hundreds of hotel workers and their supporters welcomed an ICWP leaflet with this message at a rally in West Hollywood, part of a national union campaign for better working conditions at Hyatt Hotels. Some even held the leaflet like a sign as they marched.

The leaflet explained that “Communism means that we all work for the common good, to help each other. No money, no wages, no racism and no bosses. We, the masses, will all make, carry out, and evaluate every decision. That includes who does what, who produces what, and who gets what.”

The union is pushing for a law to guarantee that hotels will use fitted sheets and long-handled mops. The ICWP leaflet said that in communist society, “Workers will not have to beg for the right tools, because we will be in charge. Work will be lighter because we know the best way to organize it, and even more because we will be working directly to serve our class.”

“Nobody will have to do the same job all the time. We will all share the hardest tasks and also constantly learn new skills. Work won’t be divided into ‘thinking’ jobs and ‘doing’ jobs. … We will all live as comrades, without privilege or poverty.”

During the rally, a comrade commented to a group of housekeepers, “The union is fighting to improve the conditions of wage slavery, but not to abolish wage slavery.”

Guests pay hundreds of dollars a night for a room, but the workers figured out that a housekeeper only earns about $7.50 to clean that room. “Yes, we are slaves,” one said.

ICWP members at the rally should have been much bolder and more creative in getting Red Flag, not only leaflets, to the workers. Our collectives need to be more flexible in order to take better advantage of situations like this.

Union staff were under strict instructions to “stick to the chants” on the sheet provided. “They know that many workers are ready and willing to mobilize for far more than sheets and mops.”

“We know that many are ready and willing to mobilize for far more than sheets and mops.”

Study Group Discusses Contradiction

What is a contradiction you face in your personal life?” asked a high school student who was leading our summer project study group on dialectical materialism after a brief presentation about contradiction as the unity and struggle of opposites.

Comrades and friends came up with an amazing range of contradictions.

“Hating sexism, but sitting with my family every day watching sexist soap operas on TV.”

“Knowing I want to be a teacher, but holding back from doing it for fear I won’t do a good job.”

“Taking a shot-gun approach to mobilizing masses of high school students versus concentrating on developing a few students who can mobilize their friends.”

“Wanting to serve the working class by organizing in the military, but being afraid to get killed.”

We talked about each of these and other contradictions in turn, trying to get more deeply into what was actually going on with each of these contradictions. Is sitting quietly with your family during the soap opera really a contradiction? Is getting a teaching job based on an unrealistic assessment of what communist teachers do in the classroom? Is taking a shot-gun approach to organizing based on an idealistic, wishful thinking, view of what is required to develop communist cadre?

Then the young comrades leading the group gave a brief presentation about how contradictions are resolved. One comrade told the story of a wise old man who said he had two dogs fighting inside of him, one pulling him to do good and the other pulling him to do bad. When asked which dog wins, he responded, “The one I feed the most.” We decided that once we identify a contradiction, we need to intensify the struggle, strengthening the side that we want to win. Using our dialectical approach, the comrades figure out how to raise the struggle against sexism in soap operas with her family, or having communist teachers talk about their strengths and weaknesses in the classroom so that the future teacher has a more realistic view.

We talked about the revisionist (phony communist and allegedly diplomatic) approach to conflict, or contradictions. The comrade whose contradiction was about the military said that he thought he was smoothing it over at this point rather than sharpening it.

For now he’s going to ignore the question of joining the military and concentrate on organizing students, but he realizes that this is a reformist answer. We pointed out that the basic contradiction is between individualism and serving the collective, and that this contradiction comes up over and over again in the lives of all of us. We assured him that he will have to deal with this contradiction in one form or another all his life, and that his comrades will be there with him to fight it through.

--Always learning
"How can you tell whether or not someone will be interested in our paper, Red Flag?"

That’s what we discussed in the first of two study groups about dialectical materialism. We started the meeting reporting on our experiences in several transit divisions as well as on the streets of a town near a military base. This group had distributed about 600 Red Flags at transit divisions during the first week of the project, and another 60 to Marines.

“If they’re dressed conservatively, I would think they wouldn’t want it, but if they’re dressed like me (less conservatively and with an anarchist patch on his shirt) I would think they would be more receptive,” said a young man. “But I haven’t tried it.”

“If I see them turn down two other people, I won’t try myself,” said a fifteen-year-old high school student participating in his second summer project.

“But sometimes people surprise you.”

“That’s for sure,” said a veteran comrade. “I went up to a very buttoned-down looking bus driver, and was surprised to find that he was very interested in our ideas. He said he hated the union leadership because they were just like the bosses and was very grateful for our paper.”

“If somebody rejects two other comrades,” said a young man who joined ICWP at May Day, “you should still try to talk to them. Maybe you will have a different approach, and be able to point out something that your other comrades didn’t.”

All these comments led to a very interesting discussion about dialectical materialism, the communist philosophy that helps us understand the world and change it. We discussed the difference between idealism and materialism. We first clarified that we’re not using the terms in the traditional sense: idealism meaning you have high moral standards and ideals and materialism meaning you’re all about the money. For communists, idealism means having ideas that are not backed up by material reality, and materialism means understanding the world by scientific inquiry—investigation being the first step.

So we had been doing a lot of investigating in the summer project about how people respond to communist ideas. From these experiences, we found out that you can’t judge people by appearances. You also can’t accept the kneejerk, the International Working-class stereotypes you get from TV, church, school, etc. You have to go out and talk to workers, presenting a communist analysis of the world situation. Then you see how they respond, and how much workers have in common.

We ended the discussion by asking, “How do we know we can mobilize the masses for communism?”

The answers to this question clearly pointed out the difference between idealism and materialism. One person said, “Well win because we have guts!” Others said, “We’ll win because workers need these ideas, and we have seen from our experience that when we take Red Flag to them, they take them as their own.” We concluded that it’s not just about guts, you can’t accept that characterization. It’s about doing the day-to-day work of putting forward communist ideas to workers, whose own lives prove them to be true.

The main idealism we have to combat is the idea which holds us back from seeing the urgency and taking the opportunity to mobilize the masses for communism.

--Struggling for a Materialist Outlook

Workers’ Vs. Suits

On July 12 at the study group on idealism and materialism, a discussion on racial profiling took place, focusing on who fellow communists believed should take Red Flag. During our discussion ideas concerning race and dress attire were a common theme amongst our group’s ideas on who would be interested in our literature. We later came to the conclusion that we can no longer have these idealistic ideas about people because as a multi-cultural communist party we welcome members from all walks of life who consider themselves as part of the working class.

This discussion led to implementation the following day as we distributed Red Flag to workers at Boeing trying not to stereotype people. Many workers of different ethnic backgrounds were interested in our paper. I realize that I myself was at first reluctant to go up to older white workers which is the majority at Boeing, but the only people who were completely uninterested were those who dressed in suits.

Over all, distribution of Red Flag at Boeing was a success in the sense that we distributed a great deal of newspapers. My only criticism is that we all could improve on asking for donations because donations play a major role in funding the paper.

--New Comrade, Learning Fast

Planting Red Seeds Among Farmworkers

I went to McFarland to distribute Red Flag to farmworkers and talk to them about communism. I saw that people didn’t panic when we said the paper was communist, so I felt comfortable talking to them about Red Flag. I came across 2 young women who work in the grapes. They told me they’re under tremendous stress. They only make minimum wages and when it’s too hot, the boss sends them home for two hours and that’s taken out of their already too little wages. I told them that I had worked in the fields and I know what it’s like to work in the hot sun—it’s a killer. They gladly took the paper. I told them and other people that they should read the paper with and give it to a retired farm worker who invited us into his house. He knew about the struggles in the fields and knows the veteran communist farmer worker. He said he can’t read so I encouraged him to have one of his children or a friend read him the articles. He agreed to get the paper and to seek out friends to read it to him. I know what this life is like. When I was a girl we didn’t have much. But my father taught me to defend myself and be a fighter, and that’s what we have to teach too. I told the workers that we’re organizing the whole working class, not only latinos, but black workers, white, Chinese, Koreans, everyone who’s oppressed. I told my son who went with us that one day the red flag will fly everywhere, not the US flag, Mexican flag or any other bosses’ flag!

Next time, we should get there earlier and spend less time talking among ourselves and go out and spend our time with the workers and then be back home early to do our work.

--Commited New Red Flag Seller

Workers’ Leaders Must Be Communist

"As your international president, it gives me great frustration to observe how some of our most committed local union leaders are under constant attack by the members of their own unions."

With these strong words, traitor Larry Hanley, President of the Amalgamated Transit Union, which represents the MTA mechanics, complains bitterly about the workers who are beginning to ask for accounts and to demand that the union leaders take real working class leadership and not collaborate with the bosses.

A working class leader must be honest and militant, with a revolutionary vision because the economic crisis demands that the workers’ leadership be bold, with a political understanding that breaks with the capitalist molds of the workers’ leaders who are lackies of the Democrats.

Because we live in a class society, to negate or hide this reality or try to pretend that some bourgeoisie politicians are our friends is a lie meant to brazenly fool the workers.

Every leader who participates in this farce consciously or unconsciously is an enemy of our class, because he’s helping to perpetuate wage slavery and collaborating in the suffering and hunger of millions of unemployed.

There’s no justification for these parasites and their bosses. They have to be smashed because they hold back the political advance of the base.

The workers’ leaders have to be communist revolutionaries with a class understanding, who study and teach the political ideas and are willing to take the struggle to the final victory no matter what sacrifices are needed. Only a leadership of communist revolutionary leaders committed and dedicated to their class can pull the workers away from the swamp in which the cowards, sellouts and treacherous union leaders have them imprisoned.

Join our international revolutionary communist party and take part in this battle to start to clear the road that will take us to our final goal of communist revolution.

--A Comrade

My First ICWP Summer Project

My experiences with the International Communist Workers’ Party have fulfilled my expectations. In the first place I didn’t know much about communism, but through the communist study groups, people have clarified many of the questions I had about communism, for example: In communism wouldn’t there be laws? And I asked myself wouldn’t a state without laws be a failed state?

So I learned that the laws favor the bosses, they favor the ones that have the money and don’t benefit the working class; that’s capitalism. In communism, everything would change. We would implement a control of the neighborhood where everyone would meet to determine some problem or conflict derived from a problem. Also, in communism, there wouldn’t be social classes and we will work together to meet our needs.

One of my experiences was that we went to a garage factory and passed out Red Flag and I saw that many people liked it and took it. They started to read it, nodding their heads in a favorable way. I felt very happy to support the party that I now belong to, the International Communist Workers’ Party.

In conclusion, I now feel more convinced of the need to struggle for communism and to increase Red Flag networks.

--Summer Project Youth

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Workers’ Leaders Must Be Communist

Revolutionarie
Workers’ Leaders Must Be Communist

Revolutionarie

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Class struggle demands we prepare to break the law. The capitalist crisis has pushed this necessity to the forefront. Five articles in the last Red Flag spoke to this point: teachers, grocery and longshore workers, MTA, auto.

What you do about the law follows from how you view “the canon of law.” Liberal reformers accept the rule of law as a given. Union leaders, for example, say if the law is bad get a good lawyer. If that fails, change the bad laws to good laws. They spend our union dues on campaigns for “good” politicians who will pass “good” laws. If pushed, they call for rallies and demonstrations to pressure lawmakers.

Communist theory, on the other hand, should view laws as a cover for class domination. Which view we accept shapes our struggle today as well as our communist future. Theoretical knowledge has advantages over just raw experience. Correct theory derived from one set of circumstances guides correct practice in a different set of circumstances. What we learn about law today can be applied to a different situation tomorrow.

The bosses love to define law in classless ways. Then they pile it on with rules of behavior, company codes of conduct and contracts. Yet even under capitalism law can lead to a more profound and useful understanding of these weapons of class oppression.

Even seemingly “neutral” laws exist only to the extent that they facilitate exploitation. Where I work, the bosses prattle on about traffic safety. A number of workers have been hit at shift change.

Management responded with more security cops, letters of reprimand for infractions, and escalating threats. Big bosses lurk behind buildings spying on workers as they drive around the plants. But accidents have increased.

“Those guys!” Management decided to release everyone at the same time instead of using staggered shift times as before. Chaos ensued. It’s amazing there aren’t even more accidents.

The superintendent refused to discuss the issue when confronted at a general meeting. “I want to talk about how to grow the business, not shift time,” he said.

It’s easier to keep track of our comings and goings with one shift time. Management can make sure they get every minute of exploitation possible. The bosses are only concerned about traffic safety to the extent it is useful to maintain exploitation.

The law exists not only to facilitate exploitation, but also—an even more importantly—sabotages the mobilization of the masses. Take the battle of Longview.

Longshore workers and supporters busted the law and took over the port to fight for their jobs a few weeks ago.

Local authorities recently began to arrest longshore workers and supporters on masse. About a dozen were arrested, mostly women, for blocking a train. Locals are arrested and harassed as they go about their normal routines around town.

The union sued over “brutal arrest tactics.” Not only is this an ineffective strategy, but also it puts a damper on mobilizing the masses.

Hundreds of thousands have followed this story. “Good, someone is finally doing something to fight back against the bosses’ attacks,” was the popular sentiment in the Boeing plants. Workers we know all over Seattle said the same thing.

A thousand have already demonstrated at the headquarters of the company that runs the port. Thousands more, from up and down the west coast, would heed a call from the longshore workers to protest this bosses’ fascism. ICWP members could organize carpools from our jobs, advancing the fight for a revolutionary perspective.

The masses could shut the port down. Our rallying cry could be: “Shut It Down, Shut It Tight.” The Bosses’ Days Are Numbered When The Workers Unite!” Instead, the working class is disarmed as the struggle is tied up in arcane legal arguments.

A New Society With New Possibilities
Slavery, feudalism and capitalism were all ruled in the interests of a relatively tiny, exploiting ruling class. Slave owners, kings and nobles, and capitalists needed common law to hide their brutal oppression. The rule of law is just what the bosses needed.

Communism is different from the exploitive societies that preceded it. For the first time the masses can rule in their own name. Communism gets its strength not from masquerades, but from the ruling masses who know what they are fighting for. Anything that gets in the way of this knowledge must be done away with— and quickly. Law is right up there on the list.

Law leads people to focus on the rules and not the principles behind the rules. Fighting for communism is not the same thing as fighting for “good” or “left” law.

Communism will succeed because the masses can be mobilized around communist principles. Millions will learn through their own practice how to apply those principles to many different circumstances. Practice derived from principle will be our ticket to victory.

The bosses can’t trust the working class. The masses are decadent and brutal, according to the bosses’ culture. Law must rein them in.

The ICWP, on the other hand, has confidence the working class and its allies can be mobilized to defeat the class enemy, stop anti-social behavior and spread communist morality.

Mobilizing the masses for communism is our guiding principle. In contrast, law is a diversion and an obstacle.

**Communist Philosophy:**

**UNIVERSAL, PARTICULAR AND INDIVIDUAL PART I**

Being human is something we all have in common. We are all also animals and mammals. Most of us are workers. The philosopher’s term for the general characteristics, humanity, being an animal, being a worker, etc., is universals. A universal is a general characteristic, but that doesn’t mean it applies to everything. It is the kind of characteristic that applies or could apply to several or many things.

The things that have these general characteristics are called individuals. An individual can be a person, a thing, or even a process or social class. If we say that “Barack Obama is male,” we are saying that one individual, Obama, has a characteristic that he shares with a huge number of other individuals, and this characteristic is a universal, being male.

Besides universal and individual, there is a third category, particular, that fits in between the general and the individual. Particulars exist in a narrow range of cases of some universal. If we talk about a group of workers in a single shop, and learn that some of them are Red Flag readers and some are not, then we have several individuals in a particular group or situation that have the characteristic of being Red Flag readers, a universal.

Why bother with this terminology?

There are several reasons why communist philosophy uses these terms. As we saw in previous columns, knowledge in the form of laws and generalizations is essential for organizing the fight for communism, and these laws and generalizations use universals to describe individuals and particular situations. Another reason that especific conventions concern us here, however, is that wrong ideas about universals are a major area of idealist and pro-capitalist philosophy. To understand what these theories say, we need to separate several ways of talking about universals.

Universals are described by words like “human,” “animal,” “capitalist,” “strike,” etc. But the word “human” is not the same as the concept human. “Human” is a word in a particular language. The concept human, a creation of thought, is not the same as any particular word, and can be expressed in any language. Both the word and the concept are also different from the biological, social and historical factors that make something a human being. These factors, characteristics or laws that make up the real universal human are not words or thoughts but aspects of the real world.

**Two Capitalist Theories about Universals**

Several completely wrong ideas about universals are influential in capitalist philosophy. One view says that there are only words and concepts, but no real universals, at least none we can know about. This is a kind of nominalism, says that we humans form concepts only by a process of leaving out details—including the particular. Thus we form the concept horse by leaving out the size, weight, color, health, breed, etc. of individual horses.

The conceptualist says that if there is a real universal that corresponds to this concept we form, we know nothing about it. Conceptualists say we can form the concept of a worker by leaving out the details of any particular job and be left with only with being paid a wage. The real causes and consequences of being a worker, the essence of being a worker, which is the real universal, is unknown and irrelevant. If this were true, there would be no social laws about being a worker, nothing behind the surface that would need to be figured out about work under capitalism.

A similar, more extreme idea is called nominalism, which flatly denies that there are any universals. Nominalism says that the different things we apply one word to have nothing in common except that we use the same word for them. If this were so, there could have been no laws of nature before humans evolved, since there were no languages then.

Conceptualism and nominalism have in common that whenever we say that that some individual has some general characteristic, that characteristic has no counterpart in the real world. Our words and concepts correspond to nothing behind the surface, nothing beyond speaking and thinking, a clear example of an idealist point of view. Unfortunately these are not the only idealist views about universals. In our next column, we will talk about a different idealist viewpoint, and outline the dialectical materialist view of universals.

**A New Society With New Possibilities**

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STOP WALL STREET’S WARS WITH WORKERS’ COMMUNIST POWER

LOS ANGELES, Oct. 7 – Hundreds marched through downtown LA for “Jobs Not War!” on the tenth anniversary of the US war in Afghanistan. Similar demonstrations were held in England and elsewhere.

As the march passed Occupy LA, the chant became “Stop Wall Street’s Wars!” Many youths and other workers joined in. “We were downtown to take care of business,” said a Latina worker carrying a baby, “and we decided to walk with you.”

Dozens took Red Flag and gave money for it. “I’ve seen this paper before, and I agree with most of it,” a marcher told a comrade. “But I’m concerned that younger people maybe can’t relate to it.” The comrade replied that she was heading over to Occupy LA and would find out. The paper got a great reception there too.

Throughout the longest US war, most of the liberal peace movement has been silent about this so-called “good war.” Protests focused instead on the “bad war” in Iraq. The liberal anti-war movement is closely tied to the Democrats, who united with the Republicans around the strategic importance of Afghanistan to US imperialism. Afghanistan is key to the energy resources of central Asia, and borders US imperialism’s two main rivals, Iran and China.

For ten years and half a trillion dollars, US imperialism is still scrambling in the region. Bin Laden is dead, but Pakistan is no longer a reliable ally. Central Asian energy flows to China from Kazakhstan and Turkmenistan, while the US-backed TAPI project is stalled in negotiations. Once again Afghanistan is proving “a graveyard for empires.”

The Working Class Is Key …To Everything

Linking the anti-war movement to the fight for jobs recognizes two things: First, imperialist war attacks workers inside as well as outside the imperialist country. Second, no revolutionary movement can succeed without workers’ mass participation.

However, the slogan “Money for jobs, not for war” conceals the fact that it’s workers with jobs who create the value that capitalism transforms into money. Plus, the main section of the US capitalist class plans to put people to work mainly preparing for even wider imperialist wars.

In contrast, communism will organize everyone to work for the needs of the masses without the intervention of “money.” No longer will we stand on streets outside the halls of power, yelling or singing in a vain attempt to make those inside respond. Instead workers will directly exercise power, making all decisions collectively in our own interest – meaning global cooperation, not global war.

The LA march and rally ended with fourteen people intentionally getting arrested in an act of “civil disobedience.”

Many more people need to get used to breaking the bosses laws!

But such symbolic protest – staged with the cooperation of a special LAPD unit – doesn’t prepare us for the necessity of violently destroying capitalism. Civil disobedience has the appearance of confronting the system, but its essence is submission to authority.

Communism encourages us to struggle rather than to submit, now and always. Our goal is not a static “peace” but a dynamic and creative conflict in which the masses are mobilized to move society forward.

“Civil disobedience” diverts attention from the role of the masses. It builds a wall between activists who believe that “the police are our friends” and the masses who know the police as a brutal repressive occupying army in their neighborhods and workplaces.

Mass unemployment, endless wars, and growing inequality worldwide are leading many to question the very nature of this capitalist system in crisis. Rival capitalist factions (within or among nations) increasingly need to set the masses into motion for their own selfish purposes. Our task in this critical period is to clarify and make real in action the communist principles that alone can guide us forward.

COMMUNIST PHILOSOPHY:

UNIVERSAL, PARTICULAR AND INDIVIDUAL, PART II

Conceptualism

Nominalism’s cousin is “conceptualism.” Conceptualism says that there is nothing outside thought that corresponds to concepts. This makes it impossible to explain why we work out particular ways of describing what individuals have in common and reject others. Good concepts are ones that describe accurately and also help explain. If we defined “human” as “a two-legged creature with soft earslopes and no feathers,” it would pick out human beings accurately, but is still a crazy concept. It doesn’t describe the things that actually make us human like the ability to work, plan, cooperate, and fight oppression, etc.

Using bogus racist concepts, like defining “intelligence” as what IQ tests measure, gives wrong results but makes them look scientific. Conceptualism excuses this scam by claiming that scientific concepts are merely “hypothetical constructs” which don’t have to correspond to anything real. But corresponding with reality is just what knowledge must do to guide practical activity.

Platonism

Nominalism and conceptualism leave no room for universals, but Platonism makes an opposite mistake. Derived from the ancient Greek philosopher Plato, Platonism imagines that there is a separate ideal realm of universals, which most people can barely perceive. Each universal is supposed to be a perfect example, and things in the real world are considered to be just defective imitations of them.

Platonists think universals as if they had a kind of spiritual power. After World War I, the French government built a huge building on the battlefield at Verdun to hold the bones of 150,000 soldiers who died there in a single battle. Stained glass windows on the building portray this imperialist slaughter as a battle of Justice and Humanity (the French side) against Ignorance and Brute Force (the German side). But rival capitalist powers fought this war, not universals!

Platonism is common in religion, too. The Bible describes God as “the Word” that “became flesh and lived among us” as Jesus. “The Word” ("logos") here means “explanation” or “reason,” so God is being described as a universal.

Marx and Engels gave an example of how Platonism holds people back from struggling for communism. A Platonist sees the real humanity as something perfect, but the humanity he actually finds is “a crowd of run down, overworked, sick, hungry, poor people.” The Platonist tries to ignore this and focuses on his idealized higher reality, and “thus falls directly back into idealism, the idealism of nominalism, conceptualism, and Platonism.

In the next issue, we will summarize the dialectical materialist view of universals, which rejects the idealism of nominalism, conceptualism, and Platonism.

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“Most of the people that produce the oil are here. We can do without...the managers. We can start from tomorrow if we have enough transport, equipment, tools and materials,” said an oil engineer who has worked for Libyan Waha Oil for 36 years.

Oil workers got rid of the old Kadhafi managers. They were furious to find out that the new managers were just like the old ones. They and all Libyan workers will be as furious when they find out that they traded one set of capitalist exploiters for another.

Just as some oil workers concluded that they don’t need any managers, they can be won to conclude that we don’t need any capitalists and must fight for communism. Under communism, workers the world over can and will organize production and distribution for the needs of our class without managers or bosses. This will require revolution to destroy capitalism.

As the world’s imperialists, especially English, French, Italian and US, scramble for control of Libyan oil, Libyan workers pay a huge cost for the imperialists’ bloodbath carried out in the name of “protecting” them.

In Sirte, Kadhafi’s stronghold, 80,000 civilians and a few thousand soldiers were bombed for weeks. Only 20,000 civilians escaped. The rest were forced to survive without food, water, or electricity. As in Fallujah, Iraq, NATO bombed and destroyed Sirte in order to “save” it—for the capitalist-imperialists.

Don’t Trust Any Capitalist
Kadhafi took power in 1969. He was seen as a leftist and a champion of Arab nationalism. He nationalized oil companies and, temporarily, made health care and education more accessible to Libyan workers. However, his reforms were meant to pacify Libyan workers, not to put them in power. In 1995, this supposed champion of Palestinian workers expelled 30,000 Palestinian refugees from Libya to “punish” Arafat for making a peace deal with Israel.

In 2003, after the fall of Saddam Hussein, he made deals with Western imperialism, giving up his weapons program and opening up oil and other companies to private investment. Since then, the reforms he instituted were cut drastically. Libyan workers’ standard of living fell. At the same time Kadhafi and his family reaped huge profits off their oil deals with the imperialists and lived in luxury.

Many believe that Kadhafi was a friend of the workers because the false revolutionaries and communists who led the movements for national liberation in the 1960’s and 1970’s praised him for his economic support and for denouncing US imperialism. He was an old friend of Fidel Castro, and Hugo Chavez bestowed on him the highest honor of the Venezuelan government in 2009.

However, neither he nor any capitalist is our friend, no matter what temporary crumbs they allow workers. They all live off the exploitation of the working class. In a capitalist crisis, they turn on the workers with a vengeance, as Kadhafi did.

Some try to take us into the trap of thinking that “the enemy of my enemy is my friend.” No boss, whether from Libya, NATO, China or Russia, can be an ally of the working class.

Trust the Workers—Take them Communist Ideas
As the competing imperialists vie for control of Libya’s oil, it’s too soon to say who will be the winner. But it’s clear that the struggle for control will continue among the imperialists and inside Libya.

Libyan workers paid dearly to get rid of Kadhafi and will not happily be put under the stranglehold of NATO or their local henchmen in the National Transitional Council. As rebellious oil workers see, workers can run things better without any bosses. In the bloodbath created by the imperialists, workers can see that capitalism has to be destroyed with a communist revolution—when these ideas are presented to them. To make this a reality, Red Flag and ICWP need to reach workers in Libya and around the world to grow into the mass voice and organization of communist revolution.

Final Part
UNIVERSAL, PARTICULAR AND INDIVIDUAL

Roughly speaking, a “universal” is what different individual things or particular situations have in common. Human beings, planets, revolutions, etc. have groups of specific properties that make them humans, planets, etc. A useful term for these groups of core properties is “essences.”

As an example, let’s consider the essence of humanity. We are not looking for a definition of “human” or a way to tell if some animal is human. Definitions, like “man is the tool-making animal,” (which doesn’t actually apply just to humans) wouldn’t tell you what makes something human, anymore than wearing a mechanic’s uniform would determine what makes someone an auto mechanic, even if every mechanic wore one. The Marxist viewpoint is that what makes something human is both biological and social. At any given period in history, social relationships make up part of our nature, and that nature will change when social relations change. In particular, someone’s social class, which is part of his or her social relationships, has powerful and wide-ranging effects. Both the biological and social sides of the human essence are material, however, not something immutable or merely ideal, as Platonists would say (Platonism was explained in the last issue).

The humanity example shows that the essence of a universal can change over time—it’s a moving target. In the future, when people have grown up under communist social relations, everyone will be less competitive and individualistic, and better at cooperation.

Universal and Individual: A Dialectical Relation
Universals depend on individuals and can’t exist without them, since they are the common characteristics in these individuals. Lenin wrote that “Every universal is a fragment, or an aspect, or the essence of an individual.” A universal can’t exist unless something has it or at least could have it. If humans had never evolved, there would be no such universal as humanity, but the universal “mammal” would still exist if there were mammals.

Individuals also depend on universals, since universals are the characteristics of individuals and define their relations to other individuals. Earth is a planet with a solid surface, liquid water, and an atmosphere. Each of these properties is a universal, and partly defines which individual thing Earth is. But there is more in an individual than any short list of universals can describe. As Lenin put it, “Every universal only approximately embraces all the individual objects” that have it. Astronomers are now discovering more Earth-like planets, and each is different from Earth in some way.

Understanding the universals in individual things is important because the essence of a universal can have big effects. All revolutions have some features in common, like mass mobilization, hatred of the government, etc., that partly determine the course of the revolution. Universals point to necessary connections, like imperialist rivalry causing wars, and they are key parts of theoretical principless and generalizations.

The Right Universals Matter
Some universals do a much better job than others in indicating the capabilities of individuals.
Youth Responds to the Struggle

In the latest issue of Red Flag, an anonymous writer wrote a response to a letter I had written for Red Flag from the previous issue. This person advised me to join the military or go into the industrial sector. Every young cadre, every young reader or writer of Red Flag should take that advice into serious consideration. If workers want to take down this government, we need to take it down from the inside and make sure it stays down. What the youth need to do is use the government’s weakness and use that as our strength. This is our time and we need to take advantage of it.

A young cadre

Red Flag Mistakes Quantitative for Qualitative Change:

The front page article in Vol. 2, No. 19 of Red Flag made a mistake when it said that Obama sending US troops to the African country of Uganda is a “qualitative” change in US policy. It’s a change, all right, but not a qualitative change. One of the laws of dialectics is that quantitative changes lead to qualitative changes. An example of that is boiling water. The contradiction in the tea kettle is between the forces that keep water molecules loosely bound together in a liquid state and the motion that splits them apart. The quantitative changes are when the water gets hotter and hotter. The qualitative change is when it boils and turns to steam. Heating the water increases the motion, and when it reaches a tipping point, you have steam. It’s something else—not water, but steam. That’s why we call it a qualitative change.

In the case of inter-imperialist rivalry between the US and China in Africa, there have been lots of relatively small moves by both the US and China to intensify the contradiction between them—they both want and need to be the dominant imperialist. You can see that, for example, in Libya, where the US and NATO took out Gaddafi, who had been making oil deals with China. Uganda has just discovered oil in their border regions and Chinese companies are moving into the Eastern Congo to buy coltan for cell phones. In response, the US is sending “military advisors” into the region.

While it is a change that the US is sending ground troops to Africa for the first time in almost twenty years, it’s not the tipping, or nodal, point that transforms small scale conflicts, largely between proxies, into world war. That will be the qualitative change. We don’t know if that will happen in Africa, or somewhere else. We do know that world war is inevitable, and that communists around the world must prepare for this future by mobilizing the masses for a communist revolution, to put an end to imperialism and its wars and build a world of collectivity and cooperation among the toiling masses.

Red Flag Editorial Collective

Talking to a Bus Driver

Recently, I had a text conversation with an LA MTA operator. It went like this:

“Youth Responds to the Struggle”

Social class universals, like worker and capitalist, refer to essential factors that have strong effects, and are more important than other social universals that refer to race, gender or nationality, which reactionary “identity politics” treats as primary. The qualitative investigation is finding the right universals, universals that name the common factors that mainly determine what happens in particular situations and leaves out factors that matter less. Using universals that are too abstract and leave out too much can be especially misleading. It would be a mistake, for example, to try to understand the prospects of life under capitalism by focusing on human nature. That’s why Marx wrote that his economic studies did not “proceed from man but from a given economic period.”

It would also be a mistake to discuss the fight for communism by talking about revolution in general. The French Revolution replaced the feudal aristocracy with the capitalists, but kept exploitation and class rule. Revolution to destroy capitalism will be different, since destroying class society altogether requires relying on mass understanding of, commitment to, and mobilization for communism.

How to mobilize the masses in the rural environment for communism?

This question is something that has made my head spin. I work for a Civil Association (C.A.) that tries to bring development to the rural environment, for the overcoming of poverty, using the natural resources in a sustainable manner. But I became aware that the same capitalist evils that we attack so much in editions of Red Flag are the order of the day in these areas.

We can’t achieve anything sustainable with the conservation programs that aim to help to achieve a better way of managing natural resources in a capitalist system.

Life in rural areas in the last 20 or 30 years, from what I’ve been able to see in my experience—without counting the time that the state and private property have existed—has sharpened the bad things; people seem disinterested in changing the bad things from which they suffer.

The government, with its paternalistic programs, has made the people submissive; much more than before, they aren’t moved to act as much in grave situations of poverty. The society of consumption and globalization has fomented in the rural environment forms of life like industrialized cities. The youth have left and have returned to their communities with an aggressive attitude, with vices like alcoholism. They are away from home and everything that used to be normal in my community young children of 12 or 13 years lost in alcohol and drug addiction. This wasn’t seen ten years ago. Childhood isn’t enjoyed. The parents aren’t even attentive to what’s happening around them.

It’s hard to open eyes in a world so lost, and we must act urgently. How should we discuss Mobilize the Masses for Communism in the rural environment so that the people aren’t so alienated from what’s happening? I’m perplexed and I analyze all the time why (I already know) the work that I do for C.A. is going backwards. The people don’t show interest in conserving and making good use of the natural resources when the priority is to resolve the most basic problems the rural societies live day by day.

I have a lot of doubts, that the mobilization for communism now is being done with working people from the cities, in the factories, teachers, work centers, etc. and I’d like to know if today we have work in rural areas, as we need to have here. I’m not referring to that only a few do this work, or in what areas we find ourselves. I’ve become very disconnected and I’d like to know what experiences there have been in the rural environment. Let’s see if you can publish this idea or send some information about this.

Comrade in rural zone in Mexico

Red Flag responds:

Thank you for your questions and for giving us the opportunity to discuss your observations. First, we know that the reformist and revisionist movements have done much damage to the working class (in the cities and the fields) and have submerged it in a desperation and lack of interest in struggling and resistance to seeing a real alternative for victory for our class. Defeating capitalist ideas that have been in the atmosphere for centuries is a constant struggle and not easy. We think that we must use dialectics to understand the process of building a consistent base with communist ideas and actions.

Articles in Red Flag have come out with examples of work in the fields and factories. For example, in the San Joaquin Valley, California there are many farm workers who gladly receive Red Flag. Some distribute it. Many of them come from rural areas of Mexico. We also ask the comrades from rural areas to write their comments about your letter.

The right universals, put into the right theories, are vital guides in the fight for communism, but the particular or individual still has more content than universals do. Even a good theory doesn’t fully describe all particular cases, but knowing about those cases can be the basis for improving it. Thus the party needs to learn from many individual workers’ experiences and struggles, and combine them into better knowledge of universals and better theories based on them. The ICWP will play this central role in developing the science of revolution, and use it to lead the working class to communism.

UNIVERSALS from page 6

“Hi! How are u? This is Tom from Red Flag. Sorry I haven’t been in touch. Was out of town visiting family. How r things @ work?”

“Things r good. My phone was off 4 a week but m back on line hope all is good.”

“Good! Im glad. Have u been receiving the paper?”

“Yep got it last week at the job even passed some around the Div.”

“Great!”

“We have UTU elections coming up so I wanna see how this turns out? Trying to get sun new people in there 4 what is worth.”

“So sorry to tell you not to hold your breath. No mat -
ter whom U elect things won’t change much. The
system is in a deepening crisis and can’t give major concessions. On the contrary, it is demanding more
from us.”

Unfortunately, the text conversation ended here.

However, I had begun to tell him that the main crime of union officials is that they believe in capital ism, are anti-communists and tell us we can ren-
sert the state and private concessions. On the con tra ry, it is demanding more of us.”

Unfortunately, the text conversation ended here.
Egyptian workers and youth are again rising up against the military dictatorship that effectively constitutes the main section of the Egyptian capitalist ruling class. The cutting edge of this uprising is anti-racism.

The crisis started with the burning of a Coptic Christian church on September 30 in southern Aswan, instigated by a local government official. Thousands of Christians marched on the Egyptian state TV building to protest the lame government response to this hate crime. Army tanks attacked the march, driving directly into the crowd, crushing and killing dozens. When troops opened fire, protesters fought back.

More Copts and a significant group of Muslims, some of them Leftists, joined the demonstration. They chanted “Christians and Muslims, Hand in Hand” “Down with the Field Marshal!” Since then, anti-government demonstrations have mushroomed.

This is an important and inspiring development. Christian groups that formerly called on the police for protection against Muslims are now targeting the government itself. Christian-Muslim unity — when combined with the power of the working class — can shake Egyptian capitalism to its very foundations.

The Egyptian masses need to overthrow not one dictator, nor even a circle of dictators, but the dictatorship of capital: the capitalist system itself. They need to organize and mobilize themselves to rule. Like all of us in “the 99%,” the revolution they need is for communism.

Strike Wave of Postal Workers, Bus Drivers, Teachers and More

The backdrop to this confrontation is a massive strike wave that has swept Egypt since the end of Ramadan. In September, 22,000 Mahalla textile workers threatened an open-ended strike mainly around economic demands. The bosses averted this with small concessions, but later that week, postal workers shut down half the post offices in Egypt. They crippled a major profit-center of the Egyptian government.

Since then, striking bus drivers conducted an 18-day strike, sometimes continuing to drive but letting passengers ride free. Teachers struck for the first time in sixty years. Irrigation and sanitation workers flooded Cairo from all corners of Egypt for a mass demonstration. Air traffic controls, university professors, and doctors have joined the strike wave.

The masses are angry that Egyptian rulers refused to grant even the modest pay raises that they promised after the “Cairo Spring” uprisings. They are disgusted by the corruption at all levels of government.

The Egyptian rulers are not stupid. The global capitalist crisis limits their ability to grant concessions. The large cotton industry faces increasing competition from India and China. Political instability has hit the tourism sector hard.

According to the MidEast investment bank Beltone Financial (10/11/11), Egyptian capitalism faces “a lack of investments needed to boost weakened economic growth rates, increased unemployment, a widening fiscal deficit and currency pressures.” These challenges are “exacerbated by pressures emanating from a faltering global economic recovery.”

Capitalism is corrupt at its very core. It is absolutely incapable of meeting our needs.

Capitalism needs racism to keep the masses divided and the bosses in power.

Egyptian rulers use religious divisions to divert workers’ anger away from the military dictatorship and against other workers. Members of the Coptic Christian minority (10% of the population) face many restrictions on employment as well as on the practice of their religion. Islamic Life and Religion

Another example was during the strike of farm workers in Cesar from 1965 to 1970. The company, Christian Brothers, promised the leader of the strike that they would negotiate and sign a labor contract. But they said that the union should first try to get labor contracts with other companies. Once it was successful, then the company promised to sign with no problem.

The leaders were confident that the company would fulfill its promise. After five years of striking, when more than thirty agricultural companies had signed labor contracts with the union, Christian Brothers was asked to negotiate the promised contract. But, since in money questions sentiments don’t count, the company completely refused to negotiate a contract. It was necessary to declare a strike and a boycott of their products to force them to sign a labor contract.

The Christian Brothers Company is owned by religious people very committed to the business of producing wines and liquors through the exploitation of workers. That’s how all the capitalists are — no matter what their beliefs, nationality or “race.”

Political strikes against capitalism: springboard for revolution?

A strike is not a workers’ revolution for political power and the overthrow of capitalism. Generally, workers’ strikes only concentrate on fighting for certain reforms or concessions from the bosses. However, communists can organize political strikes against capitalism.

These strikes shouldn’t be underestimated, because they could well be the “spark that lights the prairie fire,” if we consider how useful big strikes or a general strike could be if linked to the struggle for political power.

Clearly we would take the strikers to other factories, schools and barracks to organize mass mobilizations in the streets so that these could serve as a springboard to spur on the workers’ revolution for communism and defeat capitalism.

This is the only way to put an end to the contradiction between the workers and the capitalists, between the exploited and the exploiters. Join ICWP to speed up this process.
**U.S.-Chinese Rivalry Sharpens**

**MYANMAR: PARADISE, INFERNO, BATTLEFIELD**

Myanmar (Burma) is a country rich in oil, natural gas, coal, and other natural resources. It is a paradise of forested mountains and fertile valleys irrigated by rivers with tremendous hydropower potential. Yet, for its working class, Myanmar is a capitalist-imperialist created inferno. Ninety percent of its 60 million people subsist on $1.25 a day or less. Thirty percent of its children under 5 are malnourished, while 10% die before that age, mostly from diarrhea. Between 40% and 60% of Myanmar’s population is infected with tuberculosis. Its health system ranks second worst worldwide.

Only capitalism-imperialism can create such destitution and death. Only communism, by destroying wage slavery, can liberate these workers from crushing poverty.

Now, US imperialists are fighting the Chinese imperialists over Myanmar’s strategic geographic position and natural resources. US-style democracy and Chinese authoritarianism are different faces of capitalism’s brutal dictatorship. These butchers will further increase Burmese workers’ misery, while bringing the world closer to World War Three.

**Hillary Clinton’s Myanmar Visit Sharpens China-US Rivalry**

In spite of the hype in the media, Clinton’s December 1st visit did not win over the Burmese rulers, firmly allied with the Chinese imperialists. Her visit, however, did strengthen these bosses’ resolve to stop US bosses’ encroachment on “their backyard.”

An editorial published in *People’s Daily* and *Global Times*, mouthpieces of the Chinese Communist Party, views Clinton’s visit as furthering China’s efforts to diversify its energy routes. It concludes: “China cannot afford to lose the Myanmar route.”

A highway and pipelines from Myanmar’s ports to China’s western provinces are being built. These will transport China’s exports and energy imports, bypassing Malacca, while shortening their exposure to US battleships.

China is also expanding and modernizing its navy. The Chinese president recently called for “navy deputies to accelerate the transformation and modernization of the Navy, and make extended preparations for warfare.” He camouflaged his bellicose plans, claiming it is “to make greater contributions to safeguarding national security and world peace.”

**China-US “Cat and Mouse Game” Won’t Last Forever**

Obama’s Asia-Pacific policy is not about opening markets and creating jobs. It is about regaining US primacy in Asia-Pacific by rolling back Chinese bosses’ influence there. Without this, the US can’t reclaim its position as the world’s dominant power.

US bosses must control the South China Sea.
As US imperialism extricates itself from its losing wars in Iraq-Afghanistan-Pakistan, Obama crow's about fulfilling his campaign promises to end the Iraq carnage. He is also winding down the Afghan war. Meanwhile, his masters openly squabble about whether to attack Iran now or to concentrate their resources for their inevitable war with China.

For this eventuality, Obama is increasing the US military presence in Asia-Pacific. Warmonger Hillary Clinton camouflages this by saying it is to serve as “a bulwark against threats or efforts to undermine regional peace and stability.”

We should never be fooled by the bosses’ and their politicians’ peace lullabies. War is an integral part of capitalism. Its built-in competition and relentless pursuit of maximum profits make wars inevitable. Only communist revolution can liberate workers from capitalism’s endless slaughter. Communism will eliminate the capitalists and their exploitation based on wage slavery, money, the market, and profits.

Communism will depend only on the brains and labor power of the international working class to produce for all our needs. It is this power, and only this power, that produces all the value in society. The bosses use money to represent this value. They enslave us through wages and make us believe we can’t live without money.

But it is the bosses who can’t survive without it. It is their lifeline. That is why Mao Zedong, leader of the Chinese Revolution, wrote that they will continue to “Make trouble, fail, make trouble again, fail again . . . until their doom.” That is their logic and they will never go against this logic.

The logic of the masses, Mao pointed out, is to “Fight, fail, fight again, fail again . . . until their victory; and they too will never go against this logic.” Our logic propels us to fight for communism, for a world without racism, sexism, borders, and imperialist wars for empire and profits. The bosses’ logic drives them to greater bloodbaths.

US Bosses Squabble over Attacking Iran Now or Later

“Time to Attack Iran,” an article in the latest Foreign Affairs, US idealism’s most influential foreign policy magazine, argues that the US should strike Iran now to eliminate its nuclear facilities or suffer later. It claims the US can do this and avoid or reduce many of the feared consequences of full-fledged war and global economic crisis.

“The Worst Case for War with Iran,” an article written by Stephen M. Walt in Foreign Policy, another influential magazine linked to the Washington Post, attacks the above article, calling it “a textbook example of war-mongering disguised as ‘analysis.’” Walt argues against attacking Iran. US Bosses’ in-fighting over Iran: really about when to confront the China-Russia axis.

Iran’s nuclear pursuit, for peaceful or military purposes, is just an excuse. US bosses’ real targets are China and Russia. These rising imperialist powers are the real threats to US imperialism’s dreams of prolonging its world hegemony well into the 21st century.

China’s threat is economic. It is winning the competition for the world’s markets and is on the verge of replacing the US as the world’s biggest

See IRAN, page 14

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, or dependent on, or molded by the conditions of his/her own existence—his/her circumstances. 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.

Material 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. In 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. Mass movements that unite 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.

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U.S. Bosses Debate Iran Strategy

REAL TARGETS: CHINA AND RUSSIA

ICWP has published our manifest, 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.

Write to: PMB 362
3175 S. Hoover St.,
Los Angeles, CA 90007

Los Angeles, CA 90007
Elections are a cheap disguise (although they cost a lot of money) appearing to give workers a voice, but actually they serve only to cover up the fact that the capitalist class monopolizes political power. Elections, and democracy itself, are the sheep’s clothing used to hide the wolf of the dictatorships of capital. We need to work for qualitative change that exposes to all workers the bosses’ political dictatorship and end the myth of democratic elections.

In US elections, there are two parties: the Democrats, who stand for the masses as standing for social programs; and the Republicans, who appear to stand for small government and religious issues. However, if we scratch the surface appearance, we find that there are no serious differences between, for instance, Obama and McCain during the last US presidential election. Both wanted to fund the war in Iraq and escalate the occupation in Afghanistan and Pakistan. Both agreed that the main focus of foreign policy is the War on Terrorism, and agreed on expanding the military. Both agreed to the Patriot Act, a policy permitting government to monitor people’s phone calls and internet usage, to use warrant-less wiretaps, etc. Each had his own stealth form of pushing the military draft. Obama proposed national service; McCain proposed to expand Americorps and ROTC.

The essence of elections is determined by the bosses’ class interests. This essence is the inner, hidden nature of what primarily drives elections, and it explains why elections are needed at all. Understanding the nature of elections involves analyzing the needs of the capitalist class and figuring out which policies and politicians serve those needs best, while still appearing to workers that they have a choice.

The appearance and essence of elections together compose a contradiction; they depend on each other for their existence but are opposites. The phony election process appears to be genuine and tries to hide from the working class the essence of elections: the tyranny of capitalism over workers’ lives.

The capitalist-driven essence of elections is commanded by the mechanisms of capitalism: competition, the anarchy of production, inter-imperialist rivalry, etc. The bosses cannot control these mechanisms. As the development of capitalism leads again and again to inter-imperialist world war, the bosses permit only candidates who advocate policies that do not disturb the usage of tools that maximize exploitation, such as sexism, nationalism, the wage system, which is wage slavery, and money.

The resolution of contradictions requires a qualitative change, a transition into the opposite. Currently, the appearance of elections is crucial to disguising and maintaining capitalist dictatorship. Workers need to bring about a qualitative change that transitions this situation to one where the essence of elections becomes apparent: expose and abolish the capitalist-driven election process that perpetuates wage slavery.

Considering the limits of both the appearance and essence of elections, voting guarantees the perpetuation of all the tools to maximize exploitation and capitalist power; it maintains the status quo. The qualitative change grows closer as we continue with our quantitative work to organize and strengthen ICWP in all areas. We need to write, read, donate to and distribute Red Flag to strengthen our connection to the paper and also to strengthen Red Flag’s connection to our working class, to cast aside false hopes in voting and instead turn to actions that hasten communist revolution to abolish capitalism and build a system without exploitation.

Red Flag Editorial Comment: This article does a good job at explaining that elections hide the dictatorship of capital over the working class. It doesn’t make it clear that there is no way that elections can serve the working class. In a communist system, there won’t be elections. We won’t decide things by voting. The way the Party works now is a model for the way communism will work in the future. Leaders are and will be chosen by workers and others who have confidence in their comrades’ leadership in developing and fighting for our communist ideas and uniting us to mobile, for communism. We do and will make decisions by analyzing, discussing and struggling to advance the fight for communism, to advance the interests of the international working class.

Voting is a passive act that doesn’t require our full participation. Communist centralism, however, means that all comrades and friends actively participate in the discussion and the work of understanding, spreading, and developing communist ideas and practice. All will participate in planning and carrying out and evaluating production and distribution in all their social relations.

The bosses’ definition of politics is a passive process of electing someone who will do all the leading. That’s the opposite of communism, in which masses of workers through their party will lead every aspect of society to guarantee that the needs of the working class are met.

History shows that soccer originated in China, dating back from the 2nd and 3rd centuries BC followed by England in the 18th Century when they started modernizing it and introduced it to the rest of the world. Throughout history, soccer was used by ancient empires as political propaganda to divide the countries. Today is no exception. Although often overlooked, sports and politics are intricately intertwined. For example in the 1978 World Cup in Argentina, the dictatorship in that country utilized the World Cup as an instrument to show the rest of the world that there was supposed harmony within the country. The 1930’s, 40’s and 50’s marked a new turn in the sports field when political leaders of fascist regimes created a global political atmosphere. Mussolini and Hitler were architects of promoting fascism, nationalism, and racism in soccer and other sports. These dictators could see that fostering nationalism in soccer would divert many of the youth and other people away from the main problems in the society. They associated soccer with their own power and tried to use it to control workers. In this new era we can clearly see that capitalists haven’t stopped following the examples of their old masters with new influential marketing techniques in soccer. The 21st century has witnessed an increase in euphoria that arises every day between the famous classic “Real Madrid vs. Barcelona,” a tremendous battle on the field as well as off between fans, particularly in Europe, the USA and Latin America.

The rules that apply in soccer are parallel to those applied similarly by our whole society which are uniform, unbreakable and ultimately non-negotiable. The objective of sports world-wide is a double-edged sword for imperialism as they strengthen their empire and at the same time exploit and create separation between workers. We can analyze and conclude that capitalism teaches us to measure the athletes, based on strength, superiority and of course to be defenders of the system. Thus it is that while we continue to let ourselves be manipulated by this system, participating in discussions or attacking our same class, then unwittingly we become complicit with the same system which, seeing it in perspective, does not benefit us in any way whatsoever. On the contrary, it affects us by taking us away from the real issues that occur in our lives.

Soccer is indisputably fascinating. It’s the sport that is played the most on our planet. Unfortunately it has been affected and taken to another dimension by the same corruption that this system offers us.

How I imagine sports will be under Communism:

I think that winning medals and titles in competition should be abolished. The athlete as well as the whole working class will be free of all types of exploitation. Sport will be practiced collectively, exclusively as part of the exercise that human beings need to live a healthy life.

No athlete will be seen as superior or inferior to another. Let’s say, “Enough!” to division based on nationalism! Help us to fight this capitalist evil and contribute to building a new communist society. Social equality for all! Strength is on our side! It depends on us to make the change happen!
SOLDIERS DISCUSS COMMUNIST PHILOSOPHY OF CHANGE

While pulling guard duty one night with a few other soldiers we started a very good discussion regarding dialectics.

It started off as a conversation regarding different philosophical topics. We started off discussing Descartes and then moved on to Plato. Next we moved on to how many truths there are in the world. I was very into the conversation and when I got the opportunity I introduced dialectics into the conversation.

None of the soldiers knew what it was, but some had heard of it. I began by explaining to them the difference between idealism and materialism, the scientific way of looking at the world. This intrigued them very much, especially since most of them had heard of idealism and materialism but didn’t know the real meaning of either. Most of them were using the media definitions—like idealists care about other people and materialists are all about the money. After a pretty long discussion about whether they themselves were idealists or materialist we had to end the conversation because our shift was over.

I really didn’t know the impact I had made on them until the next morning. While standing in formation, the guys I had pulled guard duty with the night before all came up to me and even brought a few others with them and asked me to continue on discussing what I knew. This time I started off by explaining to them what dialectics is. Once I was done explaining dialectics I introduced them to dialectical materialism: the philosophy of change, which includes all processes, including how to change the world.

The way they hung on to every word I said was amazing. We continued the conversation every chance we got, each one bringing new questions every time. I was amazed at how much they enjoyed discussing dialectics. It just goes to show that we shouldn’t fear discussing deep topics like this with soldiers or anyone else.

Later, one guy asked me how I knew so much about this stuff, and I told him about this paper I read, Red Flag. He got really interested in it, and we agreed that, since he’s going home soon, I would send him the paper when he got home.

JEJU ISLAND VILLAGERS FIGHT US/SOUTH KOREA NAVAL BASE AS US-CHINA WAR LOOMS

Workers in Jangjeong Village, a South Korean fishing community on Jeju Island, are fighting bravely to save this beautiful island from destruction. The US capitalist-imperialists and the South Korean capitalists plan to build a massive nuclear naval base there as part of the Obama administration’s “pivot to Asia-Pacific.” Peace and environmental activists around the world are joining this struggle to preserve three UNESCO World Heritage sites and nine UNESCO Global Geoparks on an island that is designated a Global Biosphere Reserve.

Meanwhile the seabed and coral reefs are being dredged for a base that will likely support the naval component of the US ballistic missile defense system. Peaceful protests won’t stop this military base or the coming US-China war that it’s intended to serve. Workers, soldiers and youth from South Korea to China, the US, and around the world must turn imperialist war into communist revolution.

Communism unites the masses into one Party that fights for our common need to destroy capitalism everywhere. Capitalist competition for maximum profits is the root cause of imperialist war. Communism will end these wars because there will be no money or profits to fight over. Instead, we’ll organize ourselves to produce and share what we need. We will fight only to spread communist society worldwide, smashing all borders in the process. We will take the “long view” and protect the world’s beauty and resources instead of destroying them for short-term profit or military advantage.

Is North Korea communist? NO! Like the rest of the 20th-century communist movement, North Korean leaders mobilized around nationalism and for socialism. Instead of leading the masses to abolish wage slavery and the money system, “communist” party officials became the new capitalist class. Workers in North Korea, like workers everywhere, need to overthrow these capitalist bosses. In 1948, in the aftermath of World War II, communist-led workers on Jeju Island rebelled massively against a police assault on a demonstration celebrating Korean resistance to Japanese imperialism. They attacked 12 police stations, burned polling centers, and called for insurrection against the US military government. The South Korean government sent 3000 soldiers to suppress the rebellion, but hundreds of the soldiers mutinied and handed over large caches of small arms to the rebels. But eventually the rebellion was crushed and thousands massacred while US representatives looked on.

This historic struggle continues to inspire Gangejong villagers. They have blocked bulldozers and cement trucks. They have confronted the police and the army. And they, in turn, are opening our eyes to the immediacy of the imperialists’ war plans. Let them start their wars! The masses will finish them.

ICWP SUMMER PROJECT 2012: SEATTLE, BAY AREA, LOS ANGELES
BRING MOBILIZE THE MASSES FOR COMMUNISM AND RED FLAG TO INDUSTRIAL WORKERS AND SOLDIERS!

STUDY-ACTION GROUPS – SOCIAL EVENTS – VISITS WITH WORKERS – COMMUNIST SCHOOL

CONTACT US FOR DETAILS
1912: MASSACRE OF SIBERIAN MINERS SPARKED MASS REVOLUTIONARY MAY DAY

The gold heaped in the vaults of British and Russian capitalists came from the Lena mines in Siberia. In 1912, over ten thousand gold miners and their families lived and worked under appallingly harsh conditions. Tsarist Russia was in the grip of reaction after the failed revolution of 1905. The Russian communist party was tiny and fragmented. But on February 29, 1912, hundreds of miners could take it no more. They went on an economic strike and were soon joined by six thousand more who shut down the entire district. In mid-April, soldiers fired on a mass march, killing or wounding fifty hundred.

Join our Summer Project!
Bring Red Flag to workers, soldiers, marines and youth from Seattle to San Diego! Participate in our study groups about Communist philosophy and mobilizing the masses for communism!

Anti-Struggle Philosophy Aids Bosses: DALAI LAMA HAS COMPASSION FOR IMPERIALIST WAR MAKERS

SAN DIEGO, April 19. The 14th Dalai Lama is completing his tour of college campuses in Southern California, preaching “Compassion Without Borders.” The DL has been the leader of the Tibetan nationalist movement since the feudal government that he headed was overthrown by the Chinese Red Army in 1959. Preaching compassion for everyone, he has often shown his own compassion for leaders of the U.S. empire.

Hypocritical Pacifism

The DL got the Nobel Peace Prize in 1989 and has been hailed as a “man of peace.” Although he claims that “war is outdated and illogical” [1], he says that “you can’t blame America” for “still relying on showing force” in international relations [2]. The DL has long refused to say that the U.S. wars in Iraq and Afghanistan are wrong, claiming that “it is too soon to tell” about Iraq but “Afghanistan may be showing some positive results,” [3] and may lead to “perhaps some kind of settlement,” [4] and may lead to “perhaps some kind of liberation.” [5] The DL has announced his affection for George W. Bush: “I love him. Because since my first visit, I noted he is a human being [who is] very nice, very open, very straightforward” [5]. He also endorsed Bush’s “War on Terrorism”; “Terrorism is the worst kind of violence, so we have to check it, we have to take counter-measures.” [6] Although the DL expresses sympathy for Palestinians, he doesn’t denounce Israel’s oppression of the Palestinians or seek the liberation of Palestine. Instead, he endorses the settler Zionist economic development: “To the Arabs I say, it is sad, sad what happened to you. But look at what the Jewish people have done here. Take the good.” [7]

“Don’t Fight for Equality”

Although he is an anti-communist, the Dalai Lama claims to be a “Marxist as far as economic theory is concerned” and says that equal distribution is a correct moral principle. [8] He rejects fighting for equality, however, and attacks “agitators” who “claim to be fighting for equality or for justice.” The rich “have to decide on their own that it is good to share what they have.” They should realize that “in the long run it is in the interest of the richer people themselves to make sure that there is a less extreme gap between themselves and the poor around them.” [9]

Tibetan Nationalism and U. S. War Preparations

Tibetan nationalism has been useful to the U.S. empire since the 1950s when Tibetan guerrillas were trained by the CIA. These days, as the rivalry between the U.S. bosses and China’s capitalist rulers intensifies, Obama has met the Dalai Lama several times, and “underlined the importance of the protection of human rights of Tibetans in China.” [10] Like all capitalistic countries, Chinese capitalism produces racial inequality and conflict like that between the Han majority and Tibetans and Uighurs. But nationalist movements, which don’t see racism as an attack on the working class, help generate racism, don’t destroy it, and can help imperialists make propaganda against their rivals, as Obama does against China.

Non-Struggle Philosophy

The DL’s consistent message is not to fight the bosses. Don’t act out of anger or hate, he says, but forgive instead. Everyone should become a “peaceful person” (except U.S. imperialists?) and “inner peace creates useful energy.” [11] Getting a “peaceful life” is supposed to be the main thing, which Buddhist claims to make possible even in the midst of unemployment, the bosses’ drive for imperialist wars, and racist murders. The truth is that there is no peace under capitalism, and hatred of the bosses is a good thing that can drive us to fight harder. It is internal contradictions, not “inner peace,” that cause change. Communsists understand that collective struggle not only moves us towards communism, but is the best way workers can live under this system. Workers and students shouldn’t search for an impossible subjective peace, but join the struggle for communism and serve the working class.

References:

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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