Elections and the Capitalist State

Excerpts from a Speech Delivered at the Party School, Summer, 1980

"At bottom, all politics is a struggle for power in the state, for control of the state. And on a historical scale, that is a struggle to control class relations. Political parties are organizations representing the interests of a certain class, and the class struggle is the driving force of history. All political parties exist for the purpose of gaining control over the government and directing state power for a class. This applies also to the Communist Party of China. The party's policy is to make the people the masters of the country. We make no bones about it. We are out to win political power for the working class.

But we don't mean that the way the party engages in the struggle is as a class. The party is the vanguard of the working class. Our strategic task is to go beyond the working class and extend our influence to all classes. That is why the party emphasizes ideological work. The party works to win over political allies. But the ultimate goal is to tell the whole people that the Chinese revolution is a struggle for socialism and communism."

"The state is not eternal. It is a product of history. To put it graphically, it is a move of a pawn in the capital accumulation or so many years of human existence, then first the states arose only about 25 years ago. Clearly, there is something happening in very recent human history that gave rise to the state.

Put it graphically. Assume you are thirty years old, and humans first appeared on the earth the same day you were born. In that case, you've lived all your life until three weeks ago on a slave state. Then, after 200 years, the state arose in the civilizations of ancient China, Greece, Persia, India, etc., and the state grew and the state made its first full-blow appearance with the American Revolution in 1776, or less than 18 hours ago. The first socialist state was established in the world somewhere in 1917, or about five and a half hours ago. Clearly, there is something wrong with our interpretation of history. We take it as a given that the human history that gave rise to the state.

We therefore followed a fairly detailed account of how the state emerged, along with classes, some tentative democratic institutions on the basis of profound technological developments in the way societies lived and produced.

[Stone tools were replaced by metal, hunting and gathering gave way to sedentary agriculture, large and complex industry emerged, production for use was superseded by production for sale, the division of labor and the skill of human labor were accompanied by a division of mental and manual labor, etc., etc.].

..."
The November Elections...

(Continued from page 6)

possible to say that in the recent period, particularly since 1978, U.S. imperialism has reached a new turning point. A new phase has emerged in the course toward a new imperialist world war.

At the same time, there has been a corresponding turn in domestic events as well, a turn toward a new phase of the fascist menace, the chaos of the fascist movement and the economic and political crisis.

The central feature of the rule of monopoly capitalism in the U.S. is the growth and development of the reactionary imperialist state. In the State and Revolution, Marx and Lenin recognized this development.

"Imperialism" — the era of bank capital, the era of monopoly capitalism... The communist party, the party of the working class in the U.S. in the case of national liberation, the party of the socialist revolution in the U.S. in the case of the U.S. state, the state monopoly, the era of development of monopoly capitalism into state monopoly capitalism. In the U.S., this development has been demonstrated with particular force an extraordinary strengthening of the state apparatus and an unprecedented growth of its bureaucratic apparatus in connection with the intensification of repression against the proletariat.

This can be seen in the economic, social, ideological and political balance in the U.S. today.

The periodic economic crisis which grips the U.S. economy in connection with monopoly capitalism, expansion in unemployment, the decline of productive capacity, the systematic waste of productive capacity, the systematic waste of savings, and the severe situation in the auto and steel industries underscores the point that to lack of space, these portions of the presentation have been omitted.

While there may be some important economic fluctuations in connection with the period, the disparity of capitalist countries will not easily extricate themselves from this crisis, and seek every opportunity to pass the burden of this crisis along to the working class in a massive devaluation of working class life.

The consequence of these major economic crises in ten years in the European states, in the U.S., in other states is coming closer and closer together and with even greater intensity.

The social decay and degeneration are everywhere obvious, in the fiscal crisis in the cities, the turmoil in the public schools, the proliferation of small farms, the rise of pornoiping, child abuse and "wife beating," and the growing radicalization of the effects of the crisis... Both the youth and the aged face special problems and special hardships in this crisis.

Various national minorities face increasing national oppression which has obliterated many of the hard-won democratic rights they gained in the '60s. These developments fully verify the reality that national oppression is a component part of the imperialist system.

Ideologically, we must note the sharp rise of national chauvinism and white supremacy in the U.S., the spread of mass and state-organized ideoloyical and political tendencies, the rise of the fascist movement, the rise of racism, and the rise of spiritualism, metaphysics and anti-scientific theories of every variety... It is no secret that the imperialist state has promoted a campaign to spread reaction in the media, thinking, lavishly flooding the so-called "born again" movement... Such organizations are intensifying the attack on the foundations of capitalism, the foundations for fascism.

What Conclusions Do We Draw?

All of the various tendencies were economically, politically, socially or ideologically reflected in the actual political balance of forces... In this light, there is a number of points to recognize about the present situation.

First, there is no doubt today that a growing number of people have entered in the imperialist election circuit. Voter participation has plummeted from 62 percent in 1960 to 50 percent in 1976, and even less in the 1978 election.

As a consequence, the number of people who are interested in the political role of the imperialist state has greatly increased. The same is true in reformist and revisionist activity in the recent period, concomitant with the needs of imperialism and the relatively quiet situation in the class struggle. On many fronts the credibility of the imperialist politicians has eroded... and the propensity of the imperialists to plug the gap.

Second, there is a definite polarization occurring in the U.S. The Right, unmistakably more powerful than the Left, is accumulating forces rapidly, and indeed, this is one of the reasons for the political role of the imperialist state. While the Left is splintered, the spontaneous revolutionary movement of the working class is growing. As a result, there is a definite collision of classes and the working class is emerging on a scale not seen since the 1930's.

Third, we notice that today the U.S., in all cases of class-against-class, is unable to rule and larger and larger numbers of people are unwilling to be ruled. This cannot be interpreted as a class-consensus cleavage, but as mounting spontaneous resistance, an objective phenomenon.

Fourth, the state is definitely preparing for fascism. Fascination of the state is occurring at breakneck pace, the movement for power in the executive; the increasing force of the bureaucracy and the military... The CPUSA and the revolutionary mass organizations for the large class battles ahead of them. That is why the building of the Party in this period is a question of forging real revolutionary cadres to build a real revolutionary core to the working class movement.

We are confident that the November elections will inspire the CPUSA and the revolutionary mass organizations for the large class battles ahead of us.

Our Program makes the case: Socialist Revolution!

"This is the only road that can win better conditions, genuine democracy, peace and equality for the proletariat and its allies.

This is the only road out of the crisis of capitalism, the only way out of the oppression, the only road that can prevent imperialist world war. The PCs in the U.S. have an historic opportunity to fight the dictatorship of the bourgeoisie and world reaction.

Women, black women and women of color throughout the U.S. rise up and wage the people's war. "Now is the time to try to fight for the dictatorship of the proletariat!"

The banner of all nationalities, oppressed nations and national minorities, small farmers and revolutionary fighters of the U.S. unite in the struggle against the bourgeoisie! Build the CPUSA and the CPUSA/MIL fight for the dictatorship of the proletariat!"