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# **The Capitalist Theory of the “Democratic” State**

**- G. Pierce -**

*From one of our upcoming books, “Socialism and the CCF”, written and published in 1934, NEPH has decided to release a preview excerpt that we believe has the most value of any part of the book for today. As anyone familiar with Canadian politics knows, the CCF was a social-democratic party, the predecessor of the NDP, formed to take away working class popularity from the Communist Party. This excerpt expounds the historical materialist outlook on the state and universal suffrage, demonstrating why the conditions in Canada were not different in content, in character from that which was theorized by Marx upon observing the Paris Commune. Further, it explains the character of this “democracy”, which is in reality democracy for the propitiated class, the universal franchise we have won cannot change that fact. Just as social productive forces has not, without struggle, given up the capitalist relations, neither can universal franchise, without struggle, give up the class character of the state. Currently, all the workers have to do is show up and check the mark for one of five candidates the bourgeoisie has chosen. It is a sham suffrage, a sham democracy and socialism cannot be established by merely voting for the “right” candidate, as the revisionists have always proposed. The need presents itself for a new democratic renewal, a democracy for the workers and oppressed peoples, not for those who own capital.*

*The book was written from a pro-Communist Party perspective, but ironically, the Communist Party has adopted the same methods of achieving socialism by electing a majority in parliament since the 1940s. Today, the Communists (Marxist-Leninists) have to put themselves forward by exposing the essence of the false “democracy”, matching up these problems with solutions and working to prepare the subjective factor for revolution.*

**NEPH**

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Declaring themselves to be against capitalism and for its abolition, while in reality advocating a programme of capitalist panaceas and state capitalism, the social-reformists



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base their system of deception of the working class on the capitalist theory of the democratic state. Beguiling the masses with the deception that they stand for the attainment of Socialism, they come forward as the main champions of capitalist democracy, and occupy themselves mainly with spreading the idea among the masses that Socialism can be attained through the capitalist parliament. The CCF programme declares:

“This social and economic transformation (!) can be brought about by political action, through the election of a government inspired by the ideal of a Co-operative Commonwealth and supported by the majority of the people. We do not believe in change by violence. We consider that both the old parties in Canada are the instruments of capitalist interests and cannot serve as agents of social reconstruction, and that, whatever may be the superficial differences between them, they are bound to carry on government in accordance with the dictates of the big business interests who finance them. The CCF aims at political power in order to put an end to this capitalist domination of our political life.”

Here we have the social-reformist promise of a “co-operative commonwealth” by the election of a CCF Government. We will leave aside for a moment the fact that what the CCF promises in its programme is, of course, not Socialism at all. We will consider the question of the capitalist state as a whole in relation to the working-class aim of Socialism: Can the working class attain its aim of doing away with the capitalist system and establishing a socialist system in which capitalist private property in the means of production will be done away with through the election of a majority to parliament?

The capitalist class always answers this question in the affirmative, declaring to the workers that all or any changes can be brought about by elections to parliament. Colonel Price, Attorney-General of the Ontario Conservative Government, the capitalist “hero” who distinguished himself by prosecuting the Communist Party under Section 98, recently made a fundamental, capitalist declaration on this question. He said:

“Under the representative system all and any changes are possible, the only condition is that you must first convince a majority of the people of the desirability of such a change. That is, our system is designed so that a numerical majority of the people must approve of what is to be done, on the theory that what suits most of the people, the rest must be content with.” (Mail and Empire, Sept. 10, 1933.)



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This is in essence the capitalist position on the “democratic” state. This theory is taken over as a whole by social-reformism and advocated and supported in the working-class movement. This theory is the final link in the whole social-reformist chain of capitalist theories. This capitalist theory was fully exposed by Marx and Engels. At the time, when Marx lived, the military machine and state bureaucracy in England was relatively undeveloped. For that reason, Marx considered it possible for the workers to gain power peacefully in England, but at the same time showed that it could only retain power by the forcible suppression of the capitalists, who would organize a rebellion against the working-class power. This concrete historical observation of Marx was taken by the social-reformists and developed into a complete revision of the scientific, Marxian analysis of the state. They tried to transform Marxism into the theory of Colonel Price and the whole capitalist class, at a time when the capitalist state had developed the full characteristics of the present day, a tremendous military machine and an immense bureaucracy. It is significant that Colonel Price as a foremost representative of the Canadian bourgeoisie devoted a special speech from which the above quotation is taken to just such a distortion of Marx. It shows the tremendous importance which the bourgeoisie attach to the maintenance of the illusion among the masses that all changes can be brought about through parliament.

The bourgeoisie and the social-reformists of Canada develop this theory by contrasting the “democratic” state of Canada with the Tzarist state in Russia before the revolution, or with the present existing Fascist dictatorships and frequently they contrast “democratic” Canada with the workers’ dictatorship in the USSR. They admit that no democracy existed under the Tzar or exists under the present Fascist regimes in Europe in order to try to emphasize that Canada is one of a few special countries in which genuine democracy exists, and in which, therefore, no proletarian revolution is necessary in order to attain Socialism. The bourgeoisie and social-reformists develop a vast range of arguments in support of the theory of the “democratic” state. They constantly place the question: bloody or bloodless revolution? By this, they would like to paint the Communists as bloody and violent people in order to play upon the people’s natural opposition to blood and violence. At other times, they paint revolution as imminent, and put forward the CCF as the only safeguard against revolution.

Mr. Irvine, MP, has formulated the capitalist theory of the “democratic” state in a full



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fashion in the following:

“The state,” writes Mr. Irvine, “under democratic government is not something that controls the people, but is the people in control of themselves.” (Mr. Irvine’s emphasis on the word “is” — GP) (“Political Servants of Capitalism,” p. 22.)

Here we have the essence of the capitalist deception of the masses concerning the state which is the fundamental basis of the whole social-reformist system of betrayal of the toiling masses of farm and city. Let us examine the true meaning of this capitalist theory.

We have seen that capitalist society is a class society. Its contradictions constantly sharpen the antagonism between the working class and the capitalist class. We see that capitalism has come to a position where its maintenance is conditioned by the constant deterioration of the position of the masses. The question arises: By what means has capitalism maintained the private ownership of the means of production in its hands? By what means has it imposed its will upon the masses throughout the decades? By what means does this minority class continue to hold in its hands the private control of all the wealth production at the expense of greater and greater hardship to the masses? The means by which the capitalist class has maintained its rule is the STATE POWER.

The state is an organ of coercion. It came into existence when class society came into existence. The ruling class of every society appropriates the labour of the subject classes and in order to do this and maintain its rule, it must have in its possession the means of enforcing its will upon society. State laws are nothing but a political expression of the economic supremacy of the master class. Throughout the ages each state power bore the form and character best suited to the maintenance of the position of each particular ruling class in accordance with the various modes of production, i.e., the various ways by which the different rulers of different societies appropriated the labour of the exploited classes (slavery, feudalism).

Under capitalism, the state takes on the form best suited to the interests of the capitalist class. The state is a concrete historical formation arising from the concrete historical conditions under which the bourgeoisie came to power. The bourgeoisie as a class came to power by the violent overthrow of feudalism. The growth of capitalism necessitated the



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overthrow of the old feudal regime, which was based upon serf labour. Capitalism ripened within feudalism to the point where it could go no further without overthrowing feudalism. This overthrow represented the transference of power from one ruling class to another. The early capitalist class took over state power. It replaced the old feudal laws with capitalist laws for the protection of its private property and its rule. It established under its control the organs of state coercion, the army, the police, the courts, jails, etc. In addition to its weapons of coercion, the old feudal regime told the masses that it was appointed by God to rule over them and thus maintained its influence over the thoughts of the masses. In order to drag the early proletariat in its train, the new bourgeois rulers not only suppressed the unrest of the masses by means of its new state organs of coercion, but came forward in the sham role of “liberators” of all “humanity,” and established its organs for controlling the thinking of the masses, part of which is the ““democratic” form of the state, the parliament, etc.

During the course of the growth of capitalism, the capitalist state appears in its “democratic” parliamentary form. The bourgeoisie is confronted with a growing proletariat. Its economic power as the ruling class is the basis of its political rule and of its domination over the thinking of the working class. Its whole complicated state mechanism grows up on the basis not only of its direct coercion of the masses and their forcible subjection to the interests of private property, but also on the basis of the ideological domination of the masses, whom it teaches to identify their interests with those of their masters. It controls the mighty instruments of the press and the schools, etc. By its complicated method of the two party system, it maintains the forms of “democracy,” and by blinding the masses so that they are unable to distinguish behind each party, each programme, each statement or declaration, the special class interests represented, it is able to develop for a certain time, the faithful connection between the masses and its very instrument of class domination, the state.

In his pamphlet, “An Indictment of Capitalism,” Tim Buck fully exposed the essence of capitalist democracy. He exposed the essence of the apparatus of the franchise, the party system, the separation of legislative and executive functions by means of parliament and the Government. All of these “sacred” institutions which are said to represent democracy are really a sham. The whole press, the schools, the halls, the radio, are directly controlled by



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the capitalist class. The bourgeoisie places every possible obstacle in the way of the growth of the class-consciousness of the workers, and it is only the most determined struggle of the working class party which makes possible the expression of the class position and interests of the workers.

Tim Buck writes:

“During the war, the ‘democratic’ state becomes the instrument of forcing on the mass of the people the violent imperialist aims of Canadian imperialism in alignment with British imperialism against German imperialism, which was encroaching upon the markets and imperialist hegemony of England. The democratic state becomes the organizer of mass murder and war, the organ of the violent suppression of all opposition to its policy and the most vicious deception of the masses. The war cabinet, chosen by the capitalists, becomes an all-powerful dictatorship, without the usual expedient screens and masks — all at the behest of the capitalist ruling class. The Government and big capital drop the mask of formal separation and big capital and the state become one, working hand in hand for the war and enforcing their rule by open armed force. The government bureaucracy, together with the military machine, grow tremendously. Big capital is seen almost nakedly as the direct ruler, carrying through all measures and operating directly through the state for its enrichment through graft, bribery and every form of plundering and robbery with which we are acquainted.

“Following the war, during which we see the ‘democratic’ parliamentary state of Canada as the direct agent of big capital in the organization of imperialist war for profits, the state bureaucracy not only retains its tremendous size, but continues to grow. The police forces everywhere are augmented, and special measures carried through in accordance with the needs of the capitalist class to crush the unrest of the masses, whose wages are being cut, who are unemployed and destitute. In the Winnipeg strike and later in the Nova Scotia miners’ strike, the police, the soldiery, and the militia are mobilized to bludgeon, suppress and disperse the ranks of the workers, who are awakening to the tremendous deception of the great slaughter which has enriched the capitalists, murdered the best sons of the working-class, and left the workers destitute and starving.” (“An Indictment of Capitalism.”)

Again, he writes:



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“In Canada, as in the European cradle of capitalism, violent revolution was the mid-wife at the birth of the contemporary capitalist ‘democracy.’ Under the conditions of the growth of capitalism, the ‘democratic’ parliamentary system flourished. It gave to the bourgeoisie as no other form of the state could give, the widest possible use of the two methods of rule employed by all ruling classes, — ideological domination and armed suppression.

“All Governments — from absolute monarchy to contemporary ‘democracy’ — rule by two means. Under absolute monarchy — the priest and the hangman. Under contemporary democracy — the whole bulwark of capitalist deception of the working class including, in the first place, the reformist labourites, and on the other hand, the police forces, the judiciary, the army and navy, and the whole apparatus of state force and violence.

“The ‘democratic’ form of capitalist rule has built up a powerful machine of deception of the workers on the one hand, and on the other hand has built a bureaucratic police and military machine for violent suppression of the workers, far superior to that of any absolute monarchy. The parliamentary system of the opposition and government capitalist parties gives the broadest base for deception of the masses. When Bennett is in opposition, he practises the most shameless, lying demagoguery about ‘solving unemployment,’ etc. When Bennett is in power, King takes over the role of demagogic deception, Bennett, of course, at the same time still attempting to deceive the masses. The capitalists own the press, the radio, the schools, the church, and the hundred and one organizations and sacred institutions of bourgeois domination and deception of the workers. The election of members to the parliamentary pig-sty in no way determines the rulers. The rulers of Canada remain one and the same — the capitalist class, and above all, the financial oligarchy.” (Ibid.)

Further:

“Suffrage at best can only be a partial index to the class-consciousness of the workers who have the suffrage and can provide the workers with an additional platform in the parliament from which to expose the capitalist dictatorship to wider and wider masses. Suffrage can never express the will of the majority of the producers, the workers and poor farmers, and can never bring about the realization of their will! It only permits some sections of the producers to vote once in five years on which particular representatives of the ruling class shall hold the bureaucratic posts of parliamentary ‘democracy!’” (Ibid.)



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In this way, Tim Buck correctly exposes the real character of capitalist “democracy” as an institution of capitalist rule.

The state apparatus is the means by which the bourgeoisie, as a class, carries on its dictatorship in capitalist society, its economic and political domination. This state organization assumes different forms, depending on the development of the class struggle. The forms of this state vary from bourgeois democracy to Fascism, in accordance with the needs of the capitalist class in suppressing the masses of workers and farm toilers.

Bourgeois democracy is characterized by the formal equality of all citizens before the state, while in reality the masses of toilers of city and farm are under the dominion of the bourgeoisie, i.e., the majority are ruled by a minority class. The general franchise, parliament and the freedom of press and assemblage, which supposedly make all citizens “free” and “equal” before the state are, in reality, instruments for the service of capital.

At the time of the origin of capitalism, the bourgeoisie was compelled to take up the fight against feudalism in the form of a struggle against the juridical forms of feudalism with its nobility and its juridically established rulers. It could not fight for the removal of the obstacles to capitalist exploitation, represented by the feudal economic system, without fighting for formal, juridical, political freedom. Its classical, political ideology had to be expressed in “freedom” and “equality.”

But what was the real meaning of this “freedom” and “equality”? Its meaning is easily understood when we see that the rule of the bourgeoisie did not and could not rest upon the old, feudal, juridical forms of the aristocracy. The whole ideology of the bourgeoisie rests upon PRIVATE PROPERTY. For its rule it is impossible for the bourgeoisie to base itself upon the old, feudal forms of the rule of the aristocracy. Its juridical system is designed to safeguard the rule of capital, of private property only, and consequently formal political liberty and equality is indispensable to its juridical system.

The juridical “equality” under bourgeois democracy must be viewed in the light of bourgeois “economic equality.” The worker is juridically free to do as he pleases; but in reality he must work for a capitalist master or starve to death. Juridically, he is free to become a capitalist, but in reality the overwhelming masses of the whole population are condemned to spend





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their life in toil and hardship for the enrichment of the capitalist parasites. This economic “freedom” is nothing but the freedom of the bourgeoisie to exploit and rob the masses. The formal “economic freedom” is merely the ideological disguise which the bourgeoisie employs to hide its economic domination and exploitation, based upon its monopoly of the means of production.

Bourgeois juridical “liberty” and “equality” is of the same order. During the period of its growth, the parliamentary system and the franchise serve the bourgeoisie to drag the masses in their train, and hold them under their political and ideological domination. The bourgeoisie control the press, which is “free” only because it remains a monopoly of the bourgeoisie by virtue of its control of all the means of production. The bourgeoisie control the schools and the church as well as the auditoriums for public assemblage. Under these circumstances, the parliamentary system and franchise fully guarantee the selection of the representatives of the capitalist parties. The working-class, under the leadership of its revolutionary party, must utilize all the possibilities of bourgeois democracy to build the working class press, organize workers’ meetings and elect working-class fighters to the capitalist parliamentary institutions in order to strengthen the struggle of the working-class against capitalism. But it is seen that although the bourgeoisie, in advance, is guaranteed the only “free press” and “free speech,” by its ownership of all property, it commences at once its attack upon the working-class press, working-class meetings, and the working-class party. In spite of the fact that the bourgeoisie has the only real possibilities of a “free press” by virtue of its property monopoly, it confiscates and suppresses the revolutionary working-class papers. In spite of the fact that it owns all the auditoriums, which make possible for it alone the only real “freedom of speech,” it smashes with terror and violence hundreds of working-class meetings. Finally, when the bourgeoisie sees fit, it suppresses the working-class party and declares it to be illegal. The worker is “free” and “equal” before the state to propagate any views he wishes, but in reality he is deprived of his job, hounded by police, thrown into jail, clubbed on the head, and at times shot down and murdered in cold blood for his political views.

The parliamentary form of the capitalist state, which is by no means permanent but out of which an open dictatorship is developed when the bourgeoisie requires it, is characteristic of bourgeois democracy. The parliamentary form represents a division of executive and



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legislative functions; the parliament “legislates” and the government “executes.” This so-called legislative function of parliament merely means that the so-called representatives of the people carry on debates for the purpose of deceiving the masses. The parliament is a special institution of the bourgeoisie for the ideological deception of the masses. Periodically various capitalist parties interchange the parliamentary positions of “government” and “opposition.” A vast system of deception is built up through the mechanism of the capitalist, parliamentary parties, with their mutual parliamentary attacks and manoeuvres. But the real government is carried on in the chamber of the big banks, in the offices of the big trusts and stock exchanges, in the courts and in the offices of the government police and the military. Through the parliamentary system the bourgeoisie develops its special stratum of skilled deceivers of the people, the whole riff-raff of the capitalist parliamentary system.

The bourgeoisie and their social-reformist lackeys always represent the state as being “above classes.” They represent the state as an instrument of “society as a whole,” à la Mr. Irvine. The state is alleged to be an eternal thing erected by “society in general” for its own good, which acts for the protection and maintenance of the “society as a whole.” They picture the state as an expression of the “majority” of the people. This theory is founded upon the capitalist deception of the equality of exploiters and exploited, and in reality is a justification of capitalist exploitation in general. It represents the whole outlook of the capitalist ruling class which pretends to speak for society in general, precisely because it is a minority ruling class, attempting to maintain its ideological domination of the masses. Every ruling class attempts to represent its state power as the embodiment of the interests of society as a whole. This is built into a broad theoretical superstructure by the bourgeois “scientists,” who in seeking to represent the state as eternal and a “general necessity” in the interests of society as a whole, even go to the length of “discovering” that a state exists among animals. This whole theory of the state is for the purpose of suppressing the working-class and the toiling masses, and at the same time deceiving them. The bourgeoisie is above all, interested in holding the faith of the masses in its rule, obscuring the fundamental antagonism of class interests and preventing the masses from recognizing the necessity of overthrowing its state power. It therefore, always represents its state as an organ of “society as a whole.”



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Lenin profoundly summed up this question in the following:

“Parliamentarism as a state system has become a ‘democratic’ form of rule of the bourgeoisie, which at a certain stage of development needs the fiction of national representation, which outwardly would be an organization of a ‘national will’ standing outside classes, but in reality is an instrument of oppression and suppression in the hands of the ruling class.”

The state is an organization. It is an organization which has grown up in its present form in each country with the development of capitalism in each country. It is an organization of the capitalist class. It is quite true that by means of their state and the fact that they control all the means of production as well as the school, press, and all means of wide public expression, the capitalist class has been able with their apparatus of the parliamentary party system to make the masses their victims, to drag the masses along and get the masses to vote for their members of parliament. But that alters the character of their state in nothing but form. It remains an organization of a class, the exploiting and ruling class in society.

The state is the product of the irreconcilable antagonism of class interests. The economic exploitation and robbery of the masses by the capitalists, the ownership of all the means of wealth production by them is the very basis of their state organization. The franchise is merely an expression of the fact that the capitalist class has been able temporarily to establish its domination over the thinking of the masses by virtue of its economic and political domination. Political power is always possessed by the economically dominant class because otherwise its economic domination and exploitation of the masses would be impossible.

The idea that the masses participate in government or that the government is the reflection of the will of the majority of the people is expressly perpetuated by the ruling class by means of the superficial “democratic” forms and frills that the bourgeoisie has established, the franchise and the parliament.

These “frills” or special “democratic forms,” which are a special historical product arising in the bourgeois revolution to overthrow feudalism are said to represent the “equality of all



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classes.” In reality, it is the political domination and suppression of the masses by the capitalist class and the monopoly of the means of production, which makes it necessary for them to use this deception. It is clear why the capitalist class, which is a small minority of society, finds it necessary to hide their organization of rule under the label of “equality” and “democracy.”

The state as a capitalist organization is the fixed and solidified embodiment of the monopoly of the capitalist class in the means of production. It is the chain which holds this monopoly intact. It is the organization which holds the whole system together. It is a bureaucratic machine and above all, a military machine, to maintain capitalism and capitalist private ownership. No equality between exploiters and exploited is possible. There can be no “pure” democracy in a class society. Capitalist democracy is democracy for the capitalist class only; it is the dictatorship of the bourgeoisie over the masses.

It is the fixed, state organization which prevents the capitalist system from being sprung to pieces by its own contradictions. We have seen that the basic contradiction in capitalism is the contradiction between social production on the one hand and private ownership and appropriation on the other hand. If it were not for the state organization, this contradiction would break up the capitalist system because it divides society into the two antagonistic classes of rich and poor. The private ownership of the means of production acts as a fetter upon social production. It holds back the operation and growth of the productive forces of society. But it is maintained by the state organization of the capitalist class. So long as the capitalist class has this state organization it will maintain private ownership of the means of production. It will prevent social production from being freed from the fetter of private ownership. It will maintain the working class in bondage, so long as it can maintain its state power. That is why the working-class must attain state power before it can do away with capitalism and establish a Socialist society. For this reason the class struggle is a political struggle, a struggle for power.

The social-reformists would have us believe that this state organization can be taken over by the working-class by means of the frills and “democratic” adjuncts, the franchise and the parliament, which the capitalist class have attached to their state organization. They would have us believe that this “democracy” is not the solidified expression of the dictatorship of



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the capitalist class, but that it is a flexible, “neutral” organization, which can pass into the possession of the working-class, by virtue of the vote. No class struggle against the bourgeoisie is necessary, according to them. It is only necessary to utilize the vote. No class organization of the proletariat is necessary. All struggles of every kind become futile, according to these gentlemen. All that is necessary is to elect a majority of CCF candidates to parliament!

What is the essence of this theory of the CCF and Mr. Price, and the whole capitalist class? It is that the social-reformists, like the capitalists, wish the working class to see only the frills, only the special forms and fixtures screening the state organization of the bourgeoisie, in order that the masses will not understand the necessity of class organization for revolutionary struggle. It is precisely these fixtures and “democratic” frills which have been used by the bourgeoisie to deceive and drag the masses along under their influence for decades.

The capitalist state organization can never pass into the possession of the working class. That the capitalist class could or would ever permit their state organization (Government machine, state apparatus, army, police, courts) with all of its monstrous equipment of suppression and class rule to pass peacefully into the hands of the working class is a total absurdity. The whole state machine is directly headed and run by capitalists and representatives of capitalism, who are running it and have created it for the precise purpose of preventing the working class from getting political power. There is no other reason for the existence of the state except the maintenance of capitalism, the forcible suppression of the working class and the conducting of the predatory foreign policy of capitalism. The idea that the capitalist state machine can ever pass into the hands of the working class is in contradiction to the whole reason for the existence of that state machine.

It would be a hundred times more sensible to try to prove the absurdity that the capitalist class will merely hand over the means of production to the working class and resign in a body as the owners and controllers of all wealth production than to try to contend that the state machine of capitalism can ever pass into the hands of the working class. For if the capitalists will not simply hand over the means of production to the working class, then, it is obvious that they will never give up the instrument which they have created to defend by



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force their ownership of the means of production. If the capitalists will not automatically cease to be capitalists, if they will not automatically give up their ownership and ruthless exploitation of the masses, how absurd it is to imagine that they will give up their state apparatus to the working class.

For the capitalist class to “give up” their machine or permit it to pass into the possession of the working class means that they give up their existence as a capitalist class. It would mean their automatic “resignation” as a capitalist class. It would be more reasonable to imagine that Socialism could be ushered in by the capitalist class, one and all, committing suicide at a given signal, than to imagine that the state machine of capitalism could pass into the possession of the working class. No ruling class ever gives up its rule without the most desperate struggle in which it uses its whole power to prevent itself from being overthrown. The capitalist class has perfected its tremendous state machine for the very reason that it is ready to prevent, by the most ruthless exercise of force and violence, its overthrow. To believe that they will give up this machine peacefully to the working class is to believe that a wolf can shed its fangs and its claws at will and cease to be a wolf.

The idea that the working class could ever come into possession and control of the capitalist state machine is, in itself, absurd, since such a state machine could under no circumstances, be useful for working class aims and purposes, that is, the aim of abolishing capitalism and establishing Socialism.

From the army and the police to the courts and the bureaucracy, the state machine is built up of capitalists and small henchmen of the capitalists, recruited from the small bourgeoisie. To think that such a machine, built up on the basis of the system of exploitation and to serve this system could be utilized to do away with the system of exploitation, is a contradiction of ideas. One could more readily believe that a machine gun could sprout bananas than believe that the capitalist state could be utilized by the working class.

The whole history of capitalism reveals that it is completely unthinkable that the capitalist state machine could ever pass into possession of the working class and be utilized by the workers to put an end to capitalism and commence the building of Socialism. The working class has many, many decades of experience which show the real role and character of the capitalist state and the utter absurdity of such an idea. During many decades this state



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machine has directed the most ruthless force and violence against every revolutionary movement among the working class. This state machine has met by force and violence even the smallest struggles of the workers against the constant drive of the bourgeoisie to reduce their standard of living. Witness the violent strike-breaking of the bourgeois state machine, in spite of all its professions of neutrality. The great historical lessons of the Paris Commune and more significant still, the lessons of the proletarian uprisings in Europe and the victorious revolution of the working class in the Soviet Union are the living historical proof of the whole nature of the capitalist deception about the “democratic” state.

The capitalist state machine carried through the bloody slaughter of 1914-18. This fact alone is sufficient to show how absurd the idea is that the capitalist state machine can pass peacefully into the possession of the working class and be used to abolish capitalism and establish Socialism. That the imperialist bourgeoisie which conducted a slaughter of ten million people in a war to maintain its profits, to maintain its position as the ruling class, would give its state machine peacefully to its class enemy to be used for its destruction as the ruling class — this is what the social-reformists and the capitalists would have the working-class believe.

The fact is that the capitalist class will use their state machine for the violent and bloody suppression of the working-class struggle for power to the last ditch. They will expend every last resource of violence and slaughter by their state machine in order to try to prevent the working class from gaining power. They would seek to slaughter half the working class of Canada, rather than give up their state power. Their violence, however, is by no means invincible.

It is clear that the franchise and the parliament are merely FORMS of the state which in no way alter but only conceal the real CONTENT of the capitalist state as A DICTATORSHIP OF THE CAPITALIST CLASS.

The position of the working class on the capitalist parliament in contrast to the position of social-reformism can be summed up in the words of Lenin:

“The attitude of the Socialist parties towards parliamentarism was originally, at the time of the First International (1860-80), one of utilizing the bourgeois parliaments for purposes of



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agitation. Participation in parliamentary activity was looked upon from the point of view of developing class consciousness, i.e., of awakening in the proletariat class hostility towards the ruling class. Changes in this attitude were brought about not through change of doctrine, but under the influence of political development. Owing to the uninterrupted advance of the forces of production and the widening sphere of capitalist exploitation, capitalism, and together with it the parliamentary state, acquired lasting stability.

“This gave rise to the adaptation of the parliamentary tactics of the Socialist parties to ‘organic’ legislative activity in bourgeois parliament, and the ever-growing significance attached to the struggle for reforms within the capitalist system, as well as the predominating influence of the so-called ‘immediate demands’ and the conversion of the maximum program into a figure of speech as an altogether remote ‘final goal.’ This served as a basis for the development of parliamentary careerism, corruption, and open or hidden betrayal of the fundamental interests of the working class.

“During the previous epoch parliament performed a certain progressive function as the weapon of developing capitalism, but under the present conditions of unbridled imperialism, parliament has become a tool of falsehood, deceit, violence, and enervating gossip.

“Parliament has lost its stability like the whole bourgeois society.

“Parliament at present can in no way serve as the arena of struggles for reform, for improving the lot of the working people, as it has at certain periods of the preceding epoch. The centre of gravity of the political life at present is completely and finally transferred beyond the limits of parliament. On the other hand, owing not only to its relationship to the working masses, but also to complicated mutual relations within the various groups of the bourgeoisie itself, the bourgeoisie is forced to have some of its policies in one way or another passed through parliament, where the various cliques haggle for power, exhibit their strong sides and betray their weak ones, get themselves unmasked, etc., etc.

“At the same time, however, the revolutionary general staff of the working class is vitally interested in having its scouting parties in the parliamentary institutions of the bourgeoisie.”





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Social-reformism has become an integral part of the capitalist, parliamentary system. Basing itself on the capitalist theory of the “democratic” state, social-reformism grew up as one of the party wheels of the parliamentary system. But this parliamentary system, together with capitalism, has long since ceased its progressive function; it is decaying and rotting. Social-reformism, however, cannot shift from this base and is going through the process of degeneration together with capitalism and the capitalist parliament.

A CCF majority in parliament would represent a continuation of the whole reactionary policy of the capitalist dictatorship without any change whatever. The only difference would consist in the “Socialist” phrases with which the CCF ministers of the government would attempt to conceal their imperialist, capitalist policy.

Parties represent class interests and class ideology. The common deception of the social-reformists that their party represents the people in general is part of their whole bourgeois system of ideas for misleading the people, which they share with all capitalist parties. The class interests of the working class cannot be reconciled within one party with the class interests of the bourgeoisie. The working-class party has the task of mobilizing the masses of semi-proletarians and toilers of the farms in support of the revolutionary programme of the working-class, but this does not mean a fusion of class interests. The only possible so-called fusion of class interests means that the working-class must give up its revolutionary aims and purposes of overthrowing capitalism. It is the very nature of capitalist parties that they pretend to represent all people, and thus seek to drag the masses in the train of the bourgeoisie. It is precisely the fact that the masses begin today to see the capitalist class interests behind the “old” parties, which makes it necessary for capitalism to create a new party, which can pose before the masses as representing them. This capitalist party is the CCF.

The fact that the working-class can never secure control of state power through the mechanism of parliament does not mean in any sense that the CCF would not be entrusted by the capitalist class with the task of forming a parliamentary government. This follows directly from the CCF programme. The whole content of the CCF programme means that the CCF moves and operates entirely within the framework of capitalist parliamentary deception. Its whole content of liberal-capitalist theories and state capitalism means that its



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whole scope is entirely within capitalism, the administration of capitalism. The whole character of this programme is a capitalist programme, covered with superficial and hypocritical “Socialist” phrases. The “carrying into effect” of this programme in practice is nothing but a continuation and the administration of capitalism. Tim Buck clearly shows his fact, when he writes:

“If the coming to office of a reformist-labourite government were in any way a threat to the existence of capitalism and the rule of the capitalist class — in short, if the reformist party were a real working class party as it claims to be, and not a ‘third’ party of capitalism, as it is in reality, the capitalist class would commence the violent and forcible suppression of that party long before it came to a parliamentary majority and, if in spite of that, a real working class party gained a majority in a parliamentary election, the capitalist ‘democracy’ would drop its mask and the capitalist class, having long since prepared the Fascist weapons of armed and violent suppression of the workers, would attempt to establish its Fascist dictatorship and advance on the path of the destruction of the working class party by murder of its main ranks, as we have seen in numerous countries. The capitalist class always advances on the basis of violence and murder against the working class party much before the question of the ‘parliamentary majority’ of the party is on the agenda.

“But such a supposition in regard to the reformist Socialist and Labour Parties has nothing whatever in common with reality. The reformist party leaders develop through years of faithful service to capitalism. They are reared and trained through decades of capitalist tutelage in the deception and betrayal of the workers and are sometimes placed at the head of parliamentary governments as the most important and effective means at the disposal of the capitalist class for the deception of the masses.” (“An Indictment of Capitalism.”)

The whole deception of social-reformism that it can introduce Socialism peacefully through securing a parliamentary majority and thus taking over the state is in itself a contradiction of ideas. If capitalism will not automatically transform itself into “Socialism” without the utilization of the state by the working class in order to transform it into Socialism, it is clear that it will never allow its state to pass into the hands of the working class to be used against it.

To see examples of how a CCF government would function, it is only necessary for the



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Canadian workers to look at the experience of the Labour Governments in Great Britain, the Labour Governments in Australia, the Socialist Governments in Germany, etc. The working class of Canada has an example of how a CCF Government will function in the Brownlee UFA Government of Alberta. The practice of any CCF Government would be the practice of the essence of its programme, a capitalist practice, the maintenance of capitalism.

Thus, the CCF, basing itself upon and functioning within the limits of capitalist “democracy” supports the dictatorship of the capitalist class, a minority over the majority. To attain democracy for itself, i.e., for the majority, the working class in alliance with the toiling farmers must do away with the state representing democracy for the capitalist class, i.e., for the minority. He, who genuinely stands for democracy for the working class and toiling farmers, i.e., the proletarian dictatorship, must stand for the overthrow of capitalist democracy, i.e., the capitalist dictatorship.