

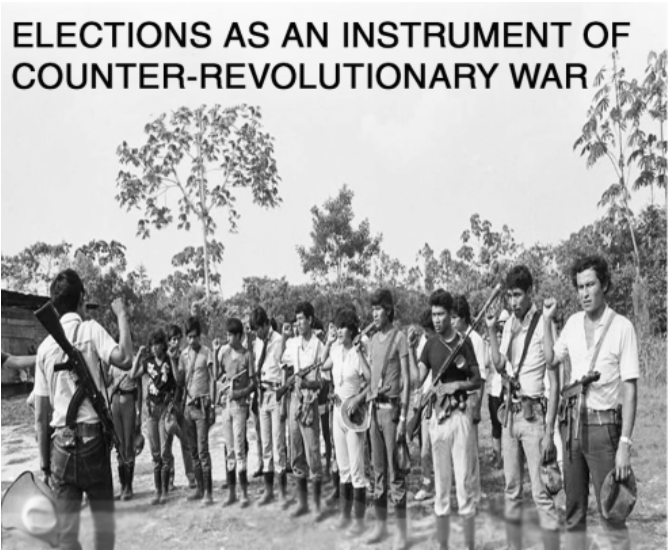
# Elections As An Instrument Of Counter-Revolutionary War

JANUARY 21, 2020

STRUGGLESSESSIONS

---

## ELECTIONS AS AN INSTRUMENT OF COUNTER-REVOLUTIONARY WAR



### Elections as an instrument of counter-revolutionary war

By Kavga

“To decide once every few years which members of the ruling class is to repress and crush the people through parliament—this is the real essence of bourgeois parliamentarism, not only in parliamentary- constitutional monarchies, but also in the most democratic republics.”

—Lenin, the State and Revolution

“Instead of deciding once in three or six years which member of the ruling class was to represent and repress the people in parliament, universal suffrage was to serve the people constituted in communes, as individual suffrage serves every other employer in the search for workers, foremen and accountants for his business.”

—Marx, the Civil War in France

“In the present era when imperialism is heading towards total collapse, revolutionary struggle in every country has taken the form of armed struggle; ...world revolution has entered a new higher phase; and socialism is marching irrepressibly forward to victory – in such an era, to take to the parliamentary road means stopping this onward march of world revolution. Today, the revolutionary Marxist-Leninists cannot opt for the parliamentary road. This is

true not only for the colonial and semi-colonial countries, but for the capitalist countries as well.”

–Charu Majumdar, “Boycott the Elections” International Significance of the Slogan

The three above quotations accurately sum up the Marxist view of electoralism, as well as demarcate between proletarian democracy, and bourgeois democracy. Of particular importance is the fact that imperialist development, and its concentrated expression of US imperialism as the world sole hegemonic superpower, has stripped away any ability for parliamentary struggle in a non-revolutionary situation. Now the revolutionary situation has been thrust upon the world and imperialism cannot go further, it faces a general and deepening crisis. For this reason Majumdar, the ideological leader of the People’s War in India, asserted that election boycotts are a universal requirement. This carries over into the emergence of MLM and the People’s War in Peru, which was initiated May 17, 1980 by burning the ballots of the general election.

Understanding that revolutionaries cannot opt for the parliamentary road extends to the understanding of revisionism as the main danger to revolution, the immutable law of revolutionary violence and its role in carrying out people’s war until all the world enters the luminous communism. People’s war cannot be defeated by imperialist militaries in the conventional sense, which is the experience of every imperialist army that has come up against a people’s army. It is why the top brass of US military schools all have Mao Zedong as required reading. In response, they have fine-tuned their counter-revolutionary ventures with “low intensity warfare” which must be understood as the imperialists efforts to win hearts and minds away from armed struggle, while using reactionary violence to suppress revolutionaries and of course, propping up social-democracy, revisionism, or fascism in the process.

Studying the maneuvers of imperialist reaction, allows for revolutionaries to detect the tools used by the imperialist to carry out counter revolution. We can

see that elections and revisionism are two of the tools at its disposal. While Lenin was correct to assert that Marx understood opposing anarchism and using the parliamentary tool in non-revolutionary situations, this understanding cannot be stripped of time, place and condition. With any tool, its use is defined by the user, by their aims and ability to use a given tool. Time and conditions change, and hence the exact tool used to serve an exact task also change.

This principle is evident in the fact that revisionists and social democrats in the US have virtually no electoral success. They are not even able to get on most ballots, they pose not even the gesture of a threat to the ruling class, for one thing. In fact, they are in service to the ruling class, albeit an insignificant asset. The emphasis that revisionism puts on using elections has proven to whither their movements, exhausting their resources and failing to get them any electoral success. Their participation does not demarcate between themselves and other bourgeois parties and it does not grow their social base, via utilizing a platform as they suggest.

Electoralism just discredits them more among the masses. It has made them appear for what they are, just another bourgeois politician looking for a seat at the bourgeois table. Still, due to their dogmatism and irrational faith in bourgeois democracy, they persist for decades in running hopeless candidates and trying to get the masses who do not vote to starting voting for them. By registering people to vote and dragging a small number of people back into the electoral circus, they become tidy little tools for counter-revolution.

In 1978, the Communist Party of Peru correctly stated that, “For the people [bourgeois elections] are neither instruments of transformation nor a means to overthrow the power of the current rulers. Therefore, the correct orientation is using them only as a means of agitation and propaganda.” This is true today and true well beyond Peru.

Who votes? According to US Census data, voting demographics as they relate to age, race, and income show that older, white, and wealthier people vote at a

higher percentile than younger poorer people, and people who are not white. The only demographic increase was among the youth, who voted at only half of those eligible still. When numbers of voters increase as they do, this tends to correspond to population increase. It cannot reflect the political dispositions of those who do not vote, as by any measure this section of non-voters who are able to vote is about half the voting age population. Meaning that when you add up those who can vote but chose not to, with those barred from voting, and those who cast mock ballots or spoiled ballots, you come to a majority. In a country with the largest mass incarcerated population in the world, you begin to see that those voting are but a fraction of the people.

Since the 1930s, voter turnout has consistently hovered in the mid 50 percentile, going up and down with only a slight variance. Revisionism provides a litany of excuses for why almost half the eligible voting age population does not vote. For example, with younger and poorer people voting the least, they like to claim that the masses of people who do not vote are apathetic or lazy, but they will also opportunistically rattle the specter of “voter suppression” in order to consistently orient toward the older, whiter, and more wealthy population. Maoists on the other hand insist upon the principle of going deeper and lower among the most profound masses.

According to the bourgeois Business Insider, 138 million people voted in the 2016 election, which is just over half of those eligible, a number which cannot account for those ineligible or unwilling to register. 2016 still did not reach the participation levels of 2008. Despite this reality, electioneering is still the preferred platform of revisionists, opportunists, and social democrats, all who end up playing fiddle for, and bowing at the feet of the establishment elite in the Democratic Party.

Pew Research Center, a data tank, assessed that:

“The Census Bureau estimated that there were 245.5 million Americans ages 18 and older in November 2016, about 157.6 million of whom reported being registered to vote. (While political scientists typically define turnout as votes

cast divided by the number of eligible voters, in practice turnout calculations usually are based on the estimated voting-age population, or VAP.) Just over 137.5 million people told the census they voted in 2016, somewhat higher than the actual number of votes tallied – nearly 136.8 million, according to figures compiled by the Office of the Clerk of the U.S. House of Representatives, though that figure includes more than 170,000 blank, spoiled or otherwise null ballots. That sort of overstatement has long been noted by researchers; the comparisons and charts in this analysis use the House Clerk’s figure, along with data from the International Institute for Democracy and Electoral Assistance (IDEA) and individual nations’ statistical and elections authorities.”

In late November of 2016, after the presidential election, bourgeois media empire CNN reported that voter turnout had reached a 20 year low, and that this low number did not even reflect the number of people ineligible or non-registered. So the 20 year low was only considering those who registered to vote, but abstained from voting.

This supports the argument that voting is not the activity of the broad masses, and when you consider those who cannot vote, combined with those eligible to vote but who do not, a clearer picture emerges depicting the electoral farce. In the entire developed world, the US maintains the lowest voter turnout rate, meaning that it has the highest number of eligible people already abstaining from voting, while having the highest number of voter eligibility. Even among countries oppressed by imperialism, in some cases, there is a higher voter turnout than in the US. For instance, a higher percentage of people eligible to vote do vote in Mexico.

Of all electoral cretins the most historically and contemporarily notable has been the Democratic Socialists of America (DSA). Michael Harrington and the forces around him were greatly encouraged by the rise of Lyndon Johnson to the U.S. presidency and his attempt to formulate a “Great Society” of new social programs (wedded to the Voting Rights Act) as a response to the restless struggle of Black people. This excitement over the liberal “domestic agenda” and the ability to garner voter support around it made the DSA very wary of the

emerging anti-war movement, emerging as a response to Lyndon Johnson's escalation of Kennedy's intervention in Vietnam. Using the excuse of "communists" in the antiwar movement to take their distance — i.e. being wedded to an old and very reactionary 1950s policy of refusing to work in any coalition that included "the Stalinist totalitarians" — DSA's leadership argued that such a movement would be instantly lacking credibility in the U.S. (and more importantly to them, in imperialist ruling class circles where the Democratic Socialists were seeking sympathy and possible allies). The DSA's sympathy for Lyndon Johnson and their reliance on these tactics meant that they never were present in the mass movements of that time, even as the ground was fertile for other revisionists to recruit within them.

Though analogies are difficult, we today see much of the same thing today with the DSA and Bernie Sanders, even now as he supported voting for a \$1.2 trillion F-35 fighter jet, the first Gulf War, the Iraq Liberation Act which placed sanctions that killed as many as 500,000 Iraqi children on the people there, the American bombing of Kosovo, the invasion and occupation of Afghanistan, the gargantuan post-9/11 military budgets and financial and military hardware support to Israel as it wages war on the people of Palestine. The legal left claims to oppose this record and will draw people out into largely symbolic liberal street demonstrations against them, but do not want to be so publicly honest to suggest that whoever sits in those government seats will, in the final instance, not serve imperialism. To do so would run into contradiction with their chauvinist fascination with the "domestic agenda" of the liberals-in-power. For the Democratic Socialists they have a constitutionally ambivalent-or-paralyzed stand on imperialist moves, a fact that will prove to be unforgivable to the masses, especially as their sick dream becomes deferred and the crisis of new crimes gives rise to new rebellions.

Even while the legal left is crushed by the same electoral system it worships, they are unable to reformulate tactics. The PCP considered this "just punishment for revisionists, opportunists and traitor to the class and the people." Even those most faithful to their electoral cretinism were dismayed at the fact that Donald Trump, who lost the popular vote, was elected president.

Their outrage that he is not legitimate is correct; their reasons for thinking this are not. Bourgeois rulers are illegitimate because bourgeois democracy is outdated, and is itself illegitimate – that election (and all elections in the U.S.) are “rigged” before voting even starts, with all cliques being totally committed to this system, to imperialism, and to common strategic and policy frameworks.

Revisionists and their brood can only seek legitimacy or illegitimacy within the confines of the existing ruling class order and cannot develop a revolutionary viewpoint which sees past the narrow confines of this system.

But the electoral cretins, in unison, declare: the election boycott is just as much a failure as their elections! To which the revolutionary answers: it is not a matter, at least at the current low stages of organizing the boycott, of affecting voter turnout. It is a question of propaganda and tactics. A question of what does electoralism propagate, and what does a boycott propagate? The answer is simple, electoral cretinism propagates for surrender to, and cooperation with reactionary bourgeois democracy, while the boycott propagates revolutionary resistance to it. Understanding that a boycott starts out small, but promotes a concrete political line, which is the revolutionary line, and that it develops over time, focusing on the lowest and deepest masses, is crucial.

It is through this focus on developing the quality of actions around boycott that quantity can grow with time. The PCP explains this well:

“Let’s point out how we began ‘out of nothing,’ because that is how Chairman Mao taught us. The main thing is to have a Party with a correct and just line, then the problem is to begin. Since the problem is not how many we are but is rather, if we want to initiate the armed struggle or not. With the People’s War we have developed the Party, built the People’s Guerrilla Army (today the People’s Liberation Army) and molded the New Power, and our mass work has experienced great quantitative and qualitative leaps; we have been wresting



the weapons away from the enemy and the transfer of modern weapons is taking place more often.”

It is a matter of who wants to initiate armed struggle and who does not. The main feature of electoral cretinism is the fact that it does not want to initiate armed struggle. On the other side, we find that the boycott of the electoral farce grows incrementally, promoting the reconstitution of the vanguard party, armed struggle as the only means of revolution, for the conquest of power, the establishment of the dictatorship of the proletariat, socialist construction, and the continuance of revolution under socialism, all in stages which relate to one another. In other words, conquering and defending power by mobilizing the masses for war, in short, people's war until Communism.

For Maoists, elections are a question of propaganda, and propaganda itself is a question of war, the two being a thing that cannot be separated. Lenin insisted that in moments lacking a revolutionary crisis, the only involvement in electoral politics was for the purpose of propagating for armed revolution, and he considered this a concession made to draw more workers into the struggle, he did not view it as a quest for reforms. Revisionism today fails in this, they take the participation part, even if it is not even orienting toward the broad masses, and they leave out the responsibility to propagate armed revolution. In the place, they propagate gradual reformism within the bourgeois state, only serving to smooth over its rough surface. With every bourgeois election, the fundamental class character of the state remains unaltered, with the foundation of real and lasting reforms being made based on the class struggles of the masses, and not the positions of politicians who rule them. Therefore, we can consider the elections to be a mere propaganda circus of the ruling class, tailed faithfully by leashed dogs, revisionism, opportunism, and social democracy. Hence, the revolutionary view to boycott elections is also propaganda—to propagate revolution, it uses the bourgeois elections to denounce and confront the ruling class politically.

So, then the question asserts itself, and it must be answered clearly: how is the success of the election boycott assessed? First, by its ability to reach the

masses that are already abstinent from electoral participation with a political message of revolution, to affirm their refusal, provide them with revolutionary analysis and then to encourage them to go further than not voting, to actively oppose the electoral farce. Secondly, by winning people away from the mire of electoral cretinism, especially young people with a new interest in socialism, which is done by citing the history of all the failed efforts of voting in falsified socialism, and the success of armed struggle. Thirdly, by issuing a challenge to the masses who do vote, who know full well that voting is not going to markedly improve their lives, by showing them a better way, and organizing them, whether they vote or not, into the forms developed by revolutionaries to conduct class struggle in the interests of the proletariat. Fourthly, to demarcate between the diehard true-believers in bourgeois democracy and the rest of the people who see elections as deficient in some cases, and reactionary in others, by combating and resisting the snakes who emerge from the weeds of capitalism every election season, those who want to spread their venoms among the people and drag them back into the scam. All of the above considerations demarcate revolutionaries from revisionists, and at the same time serve as a measure for the success of an election boycott.

Election boycotts serve to develop the tendency among the people, a tendency which concretely and irrefutably exists, against the elections. This means the people already have a tendency against elections, and that revolutionaries take up the boycott to develop this tendency in the interest of developing and initiating armed struggle. Relying on the fact that imperialist elections, facilitated by the imperialist state, get exactly the results the imperialists want. And countering this, boycotts organized by revolutionaries counter the myth that they do otherwise.

US society and the institutions of US imperialism, must constantly be undermined, opposed and negated. In this act of negation, there is affirmation, affirmation of the revolutionary road toward communism. Condemning the historically obsolete system to defeat by arms, which starts by small manifestations of struggle, through which grow in escalating

confrontations, leading to people's war, the sole means of conquering and defending political power of the class.

Election boycotts therefore seek to propagate the revolutionary line among the people, harassing and frustrating election efforts and obstructing them when possible. They do not serve to prevent bourgeois elections, which will continue taking place as long as the bourgeois state remains intact, until it has been crushed in people's war, and the dictatorship of the proletariat is erected. Its impact is two-fold, to encourage, educate and organize the masses on the one hand, and to harass and obstruct the enemy on the other. The task of education and demarcation, increasingly improve the ability to harass and obstruct.

Election boycotts are a gesture toward carrying out the instruction of Marx, organize the sea of armed masses, the PCP remarked that: "the historical main tendency is the fusion of the People's War led by the Party, with that great torrent represented by the millions of non-registered, non-voting and those blank or null vote casters; this is the torrent, which the Party is helping to structure as part of the sea of masses which necessarily will sweep away the old order of exploitation and oppression."

Thus, election boycotts, which defy electoral cretinism, and demarcate from all forms of revisionism, are part of the struggles to reconstitute the Militarized Marxist-Leninist-Maoist, principally Maoist Communist Party which alone can initiate and lead people's war, through which it builds the Party and accumulates forces for seizing power.

Counter-revolution ceaselessly dreams of whipping out revolution, even when the revolution is nascent and just an embryo. And it does not stop dreaming even when it has been overthrown. It will use its demands for bourgeois democracy in all stages, either to prevent revolution or to restore capitalism once socialism has been accomplished. Bourgeois and proletarian democracy cannot co-exist, if the bourgeoisie have democracy it is always at the expense of the proletariat. For the bourgeois to have democracy, they must impose

their dictatorship and suppress the proletariat. Hence, proletarian democracy cannot emerge within the confines of bourgeois democracy which strangles it in the crib, nor can the class character of democracy be altered with an increased participation of workers voting in bourgeois elections.

Bourgeois democracy is death, rotting on the vine, awaiting its burial. It can only undergo a steady but uneven process of reactionization, its mask slips revealing the horror underneath. In moments of extreme crisis it can discard its democratic illusion altogether with fascism, when it does not have to seek these extreme measures, it maintains its reactionary trajectory by promoting elections to divert energy away from its ultimate overthrow. This is the behavior of a dying beast; doing everything it can to sustain itself on the blood of its victims. Bourgeois democracy is like the sociopath who begs his victims not to leave his side or expose his abuse, and the minute they muster the strength to leave, he resorts to unbridled reactionary violence in a fit of rage. Those who legitimize it, in the name of criticism of the two-party system, by begging for socialist votes are nothing but its enablers. They sit by with their useless remarks, still participating in the abuse, watching the state become increasingly reactionary, and what is more they do its bidding by attacking revolutionaries, the masses, and revolutionary strategy. Their intentions are but a secondary distraction to their necessary function within the imperialist system.

So how do revolutionaries orient toward the electoral cretins? The PCP explains things clear enough:

“Revolutionary violence and parliamentary cretinism comprise an antagonistic contradiction and evidently a fundamental question of Marxism. Marx spoke of violence as the midwife of history and in the Manifesto, along with Engels, he laid out: ‘The Communists disdain to conceal their views and aims. They openly declare that their ends can be attained only by the forcible overthrow of all existing social conditions. Let the ruling classes tremble at a communist revolution. The proletarians have nothing to lose but their chains. They have a world to win. Proletarians of all countries, unite!’” Similarly, Lenin

wrote: "No significant revolution in history has come about without a civil war. No serious Marxist would conceive the transition from capitalism to socialism without civil war." He reiterated the following: "Between capitalism and socialism there will be a long period of 'birth pangs', because violence is always the midwife of the old society," and that the bourgeois state "cannot be substituted by the proletarian state (by the dictatorship of the proletariat) through 'extinction', but only, as a general rule, by way of a violent revolution." Similarly, he insisted on "the necessity of systematically educating the masses in this, precisely because this idea about revolutionary violence is basic to the entire doctrine of Marx and Engels."

"In the same vein, Chairman Mao's point of departure that 'all Communists must understand this truth that political power grows from the barrel of a gun,' establishing that '... in class societies revolutions and revolutionary war are inevitable. Without them there would be no leaps in social development, and the dominant reactionary classes could not be overthrown nor could the people conquer political power... The central task and superior form of a revolution is the seizure of power through arms, the solution of the problem through war. This Marxist-Leninist principle of revolution has universal validity, both in China as well as in other countries.' And "the experience of class struggle in the era of imperialism teaches us that only through the power of guns can the working class and the working masses overthrow the bourgeoisie and the armed landlords. In this sense, we can say that only through arms can the entire world be transformed.' With respect to the parliamentary cretinism condemned by Marx, Lenin was powerfully clear: 'the followers of Bernstein accepted and continue to accept Marxism with the exception of its directly revolutionary aspect. They see parliamentary struggle not as one of the methods of struggle that is used particularly in some periods of history, but as the principal and almost exclusive form of struggle, which makes 'violence', the 'seizure of power' and 'dictatorship' unnecessary.' And: 'only the knaves and fools can believe that the proletariat should first win a majority of votes in elections realized under the yoke of the bourgeoisie, under the yoke of wage slavery, and that only after this should they conquer power. This is the height of silliness or hypocrisy. This substitution of the class

struggle and revolution for elections under the old regime, under the old power.’ And: ‘This is now the most pure and vile form of opportunism. It is to renounce the act of revolution while revering it in words.’”

Following this precise and correct analysis, and teachings of Marx, Lenin, and Mao, we can begin to grasp that elections must be opposed on the basis of opposition to the labor aristocracy, and the mire of legalism which infects the working class through the agents of the bourgeoisie within its ranks:

“Here you have the living dialectic of opportunism: the mere growth of legal unions and the mere habit that stupid but conscientious philistines have of confining themselves to bookkeeping, and have created a situation in which, during a crisis, these conscientious philistines have proved to be traitors and betrayers, who would smother the revolutionary energy of the masses. This is no chance occurrence. The building of a revolutionary organization must begin that is demanded by the new historical situation, by the epoch of proletarian revolutionary action but it can begin only over the heads of the old leaders, the stranglers of revolutionary energy, over the heads of the old party, through its destruction.”

The establishment of socialism and the dictatorship of the proletariat must be understood as the main goals of revolutionaries today, in order to meet these goals, revolutionaries must reconstitute the Communist Party, forging it in the flames of class struggle, and as soon as possible initiate people’s war.

In the face of abstract democracy, the revolutionary imposes concrete democracy. If there is any freedom for the exploiting classes, there is no freedom for the exploited. The abstractionists, the great defenders of bourgeois democracy, view democracy as end and not as a means, “Democracy sometimes seems to be an end, but it is in fact only a means. Marxism teaches us that democracy is part of the superstructure and belongs to the category of politics. That is to say, in the last analysis, it serves the economic base.”

Teaching clearly that democracy always has its purpose in administering class rule. We can understand how bourgeois democracy perpetuates bourgeois class rule, and how proletarian democracy, only possible under the socialist dictatorship of the proletariat, perpetuates proletarian rule. These two are irreconcilable. Democracy is therefore relative; it comes into being on the basis of historical conditions.

Private ownership, is itself an ever reproducing attack on real democracy, any trickster who aims to keep private ownership intact, is not advocating for proletarian democracy, but insisting the proletariat submit to the bourgeoisie on the basis of more favorable reforms. We can understand that the 8 hour work day, the 5 day work week, etc. was not accomplished from voting for this or that candidate, they were the bi-products of violent class struggle, of the proletariat seizing violence and turning it on its masters.

Revisionism seeks to traffic in all these struggles, and in so doing make a neat return to its electoral cretinism. This is what led Majumdar to state that: “Chairman Mao has taught us that we cannot advance even one step to attack imperialism without hitting revisionism.” And, “in the era of raging revolutionary struggles revisionism is the main danger.”

One of the main functions of revisionism is to denounce Marxism-Leninism-Maoism, as this is the very weapon which is used against revisionism, revisionism seeks to blunt all revolutionary theory, and of course it uses its electoral cretinism to accomplish this in many cases.

In response it is the role of revolutionaries to uphold, defend and apply Marxism-Leninism-Maoism, principally Maoism, against all revisionist encroachment from within and without. This means seeing through the various distortions of revisionism. Revisionism insists on electing the bourgeoisie, because they do not consider the workers capable to wage revolution, or competent enough to run things themselves, and they believe that the bourgeois can. They forbid attacking the bourgeoisie, even symbolically with direct action protest, and instead insist that they can be

“won over” with propaganda oriented toward them. And to secure the support of the labor aristocrats, and NGO’s, the revisionist will insist that nothing is done to offend their cushy sensibilities. They will categorically ignore, or distort hundreds of years of violent class struggle in the US at the point of production, and consider a bit of red paint “adventurist.” When miners disobey their yellow unions and wage guerrilla actions against mine security, as our history is rich with, the revisionists forget and ignore. They will distort history and insist that for the sake of reforms they must dawn the gowns of the ruling class, forgetting the blood spilled by the masses for the 8 hour work day, forgetting that all major and important reforms are the byproduct of the masses making history, rising in their millions and grasping revolutionary violence. In spite of all proletarian history they will insist that any action not palatable to bourgeois democrats and yellow union bureaucrats is “ultra-left.” The revisionist grovels at the feet of the ruling class, always demarcating themselves from revolutionaries, they are demure, they are the domesticated-reds, the peculiar little house pets of the bourgeoisie.

In order to escape a burning house, you must smell smoke or see fire, the election boycott does this, and serves to separate itself from the rubble.

---

**PREVIOUS POST**

*Race, Class, and Stratification*

---

**NEXT POST**

*A SINGLE WILL: Disagreements with the “Maoist Revolutionary Party”*

---

Leave a Reply



Enter your comment here...

Search ...

## ARCHIVES

---

December 2021

---

November 2021

---

October 2021

---

September 2021

---

August 2021

---

July 2021

---

June 2021

---

May 2021

---

April 2021

---

March 2021

---

February 2021

---

January 2021

---

November 2020

---

October 2020

---

July 2020

---

June 2020

---

May 2020

---

April 2020

---

March 2020

---

February 2020

---

January 2020

---

December 2019

---

November 2019

---

October 2019

---

August 2019

---

July 2019

---

June 2019

---

May 2019

---

April 2019

---

February 2019

---

---

January 2019

---

December 2018

---

November 2018

---

October 2018

---

September 2018

---

August 2018

---

July 2018

---

June 2018

**BLOG AT WORDPRESS.COM.**