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WHAT IS the State?

G. BELOV



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WHAT IS
THE STATE?



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ABC СОЦИАЛЬНО-ПОЛИТИЧЕСКИХ ЗНАНИЙ

Г. БЕЛОВ

ЧТО ТАКОЕ ГОСУДАРСТВО?

На английском языке

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INTRODUCTION

Each individual lives within the borders of a certain country, which has one or another state system.

The state's activities have an impact both on the individual and on society as a whole. It influences every aspect of life. Most states are headed by elected officials: presidents, prime ministers, members of parliaments, etc. The state has large groups of people in its employ; some of them are involved in administration, others make up the army and the police, while a third group works for the mass media. Together, all of these groups form the state's political system.

Human history has seen a long succession of states which differed

from one another in terms of forms of government, typical functions, political parties and institutions.

The world's first states emerged about six thousand years ago. They underwent change with time, and other states came to replace them. Today there are 160 states in the world, all of them different in terms of territorial size, population, political structure, and economic and cultural development. Fundamental distinctions which have their origins in the specific features of socio-economic development exist between socialist and capitalist states.

In order to understand the complex and multifaceted phenomenon of the state, scientific knowledge and a theoretical approach to the topic are essential.

In ancient times and the Middle Ages the state was defined in theological terms. In *The Proverbs of Ptahhotep* (Egypt, 3rd millennium B. C.), for example, the word *God* was often identified with the word *Pharaoh*, and unquestioning obedience to one's superiors was seen as man's greatest virtue. In *The Speeches of Ipuwer* (Egypt, 8th cent. B. C.) the king's will is declared to be the cause of all events which occur in the state. The most ancient laws which have come down to us are permeated with religious notions about the origin and role of the state. Certain modern bourgeois ideologists have also advocated the ideas of the

state's divine origin and predestination. Catholics, for instance, recognise the views of Thomas Aquinas, a medieval philosopher and theologian (c. 1226-1274) as the official theory of the state. He called for obedience to the state by virtue of its divine origin.

Since ancient times an idea that the state is the result of a social contract has been put forward. Early Buddhism held that social inequality, fraud, thievery, etc. had replaced the Golden Age, so people established the institution of the monarchy to do away with all these evils.

The idea of the social contract became particularly popular in the 17th and 18th centuries when the bourgeoisie sought to bring down feudalism in Europe. In order to oppose the king, who served the interests of the feudal lords, it was necessary to prove that his power was not of divine origin but rather that it was man's invention. The authors of the theory of the social contract maintained that in ancient times people lived in the state of nature. As the children of nature they lived in harmony with nature. Later, hostility became an element in interpersonal relations, and the need arose to guarantee one's safety and allegedly natural rights. It was at this stage that people agreed to set up states. The theory of the social contract helped the bourgeoisie win power and make the masses believe that the new bourgeois state was the result of the general will and there-

fore served everybody's interests.

The theory of the social contract cannot be deemed scientific. Its proponents ignore the fact that the state emerged and evolved at the same time as private property came into being and society was divided into classes—the exploiters and the exploited. Therefore, the social contract theories, and their theological counterparts, pursue but a single goal: to mask the state's unjust, exploitive nature.

However, political thought accumulated knowledge as it developed, so mankind was able to interpret the state's essence with increasing accuracy. Even within the context of the above-mentioned social contract theories, political thought began to be freed from religious views. Even some ancient philosophers had noted that the state system was to some degree determined by the relations which existed between the rich and the poor, the haves and the have-nots.

Two main approaches to the state and the interpretation of its essence can be traced down through history. The first reflected the interests of the exploiters and justified their domination. Supporters of this view tried to convince the masses that only the elect are capable of governing. The works of those who advocated the second approach voiced the protests of broad sections of people against injustice, the domination of the minority over the majority. Protagoras (Greece,

c. 490-c. 420 B. C.), for one, came to the conclusion that all citizens must take part in politics and decision-making concerning affairs of state. Plato (427-347 B. C.) held the opposite point of view. In his opinion, the ideal state was an aristocratic republic, i. e. a state where the elect, the best and wisest held sway. Democracy, or the power of the people, was, according to Plato, an inferior form of government.

The democratic trend in political thought came to the fore when broad popular movements against exploiters arose. Thus, Thomas Münzer's (c. 1490-1525) revolutionary-democratic teaching appeared during the Peasant War in Germany, while the Diggers championed the interests of the poorest peasants and proletarians in the English bourgeois revolution of the 17th century. The most prominent revolutionary democrat in England at that time was the Utopian Socialist Gerrard Winstanley (1609-c. 1652).

Revolutionary-democratic ideas concerning the state were contained in the doctrines of thinkers of 18th-century pre-revolutionary France, particularly in those of Jean Jacques Rousseau (1712-1778), and the Utopian Socialists Jean Baptiste Meilleur (1664-1729), Gabriel Bonnet de Mably (1709-1785) and François Marie Charles Fourier (1772-1837). Russia, too, had its revolutionary-democratic traditions. The works of the Russian revolutionary democrat

Nikolai Chernyshevsky, for example, contain profound ideas on the state. Despite his utopian socialist views, Chernyshevsky was a profound critic of capitalism.

No scientific theory of the state could be created until the historical process was interpreted in materialist terms. This was accomplished by the founders of scientific communism, Karl Marx (1818-1883) and Frederick Engels (1820-1895).

Marx and Engels were the first to fuse the scientific interpretation of the evolution of society and the state, and the revolutionary dreams of the broad masses into a single theory. In their works, they gave a scientific explanation of the phenomenon of the state and analysed its essence from the revolutionary-democratic point of view, thereby giving the ideas concerning the struggle of the masses for a just social order a solid scientific foundation. The theory, laid down by Marx and Engels and adapted to the modern epoch by Lenin, is called scientific communism.

The Marxist-Leninist doctrine of the state argues convincingly that oppression and the exploitation of the majority by the minority and of man by man are not only inhuman, but act as a brake on progress, and that exploitation can be done away with if the millions of working people in the world set themselves the goal and work to achieve it.

The enemies of socialism go out of their way to distort the Marxist-Leninist theory of the state. Attempts to tear working men and women away from this revolutionary theory will continue to be made as long as exploitive classes exist. Nevertheless, scientific communism is thriving, growing and attracting more and more new adherents. Today, almost on all continents, there are states whose actions are based on the theory of scientific communism, and more than 90 communist and workers' parties founded on Marxist-Leninist doctrine.

What is the Marxist-Leninist theory of the state? How should Marxism-Leninism approach it? The answers to these questions are provided in this book.

1. Materialism and the Theory of the State

Any scientific theory of the evolution of human society in general, and of the state in particular, must present a true picture of life, or reality. These are the three basic principles of the dialectical-materialist method as applied to the study of the state. First, one must bear in mind that states are not static. They are constantly developing, so a distinction should be made between those aspects of their activities which are temporary and transient and those which are stable and the most typical. Second, Marxists-Leninists regard the state in concrete-historical terms. In other words, in each particular case—they consider what kind of state is under review—feu-

dal, bourgeois, socialist, or developing (states of the latter type, in turn, fall into two categories—those which have opted for socialism and those which have embarked on the capitalist path of development).

The specific features of the modern epoch should also be considered. All modern states are being formed and are functioning at a time of gradual transition from capitalism to socialism; this period is characterised by the existence of two diametrically opposed systems (the capitalist and the socialist), by a broad national liberation movement, and a popular struggle to ensure peace and to avert a thermonuclear conflagration on the globe. It is impossible correctly to assess the politics of modern states without taking these world social processes into account. To approach the question from a concrete-historical angle, one must also examine the specific national-historical features of each particular state.

Third, and the most important: each individual state can only be understood if it is studied together with its economic relations, the interests stemming from these relations of all classes and social groups, and its cultural level as an organic whole. The essence of the state cannot be revealed if the material basis of its origin and existence is ignored. Likewise, it is impossible to understand why different types of state emerge in different epochs, if the socio-economic and class-related

reasons for their emergence are not duly considered.

Marxist-Leninist theory does more than merely establish the objective fact that the state is the outcome of a certain level in society's material and spiritual development. Marxists also pose the question: what aspect of society's structure is essential, definitive for the state? The materialist view of society's historical development helps provide an answer to this question.

The founders of scientific communism Marx, Engels and Lenin earned their place in history because they recognised that the changes which occur in society are an objective natural-historical process. Marxist-Leninist materialist theory opposes the idealist concept that society is the result of chaotic, arbitrary activities by individuals, the outcome of their subjective will. The significance of the materialist view of history lies in the fact that it helped reveal and theoretically substantiated objective laws governing society's evolution. Each stage in the development of productive forces corresponds to a type of human relations linked to production and distribution. Marxism-Leninism sees the development and replacement of the modes of production used in creating the material goods necessary for society's existence as the chief reason why one social system replaces another.

Marx and Engels singled out production rela-

tions, i. e. the relations involved in the production of material goods, from the entire system of human relations as the determining factor in the life of society. It is precisely on the basis of the growth of production that the social conditions of life take shape and a community of interests involving large groups of people emerges. The principal groups of this type are classes.

What do Marxists mean by the word classes? "Classes are large groups of people differing from each other by the place they occupy in a historically determined system of social production, by their relation (in most cases fixed and formulated in law) to the means of production, by their role in the social organisation of labour, and, consequently, by the dimensions of the share of social wealth of which they dispose and the mode of acquiring it. Classes are groups of people one of which can appropriate the labour of another owing to the different places they occupy in a definite system of social economy."¹

Classes emerge with the appearance of private ownership of the means of production and property inequality. The rich and the poor, masters and workers come into being; understandably, their interests are not the same but are, rather, diametrically opposed. Therefore, as antagonistic

¹ V. I. Lenin, *Collected Works*, Vol. 29, Progress Publishers, Moscow, 1977, p. 421.

classes emerge, the history of society becomes the history of class struggles.

History has known three main forms of exploitation of one class by another: slavery, feudal bondage, and exploitation of wage labour under capitalism. As the forms of exploitation changed the class structure of society changed accordingly. The first division of society into classes (which occurred in about the 4th millennium B. C.) resulted in two groups—the slave-owners who were in the minority, and the slaves who comprised the majority. The slave-owner possessed all the means of production, including the slave, who had the same status as any other thing he had.

Slavery was replaced by feudalism. The feudal lord became the absolute owner of the land and all that grew or lived on it. The serfs were, in fact, the property of the big landowners, but, unlike slaves, they could not be killed with impunity. In addition, the serf possessed some means of production of his own—a horse, livestock and a primitive plough. He also had a house and a family.

Feudalism was, in turn, replaced by the capitalist mode of production. Under this system all the means of production are concentrated in the hands of those with private property. As opposed to the slave and the serf the producer—the wage worker—is formally free. Yet he is fully

dependent upon the capitalist economically, as he must sell his labour to him. The capitalist lets the worker have an insignificant part of that which the latter has produced so that he can live, but appropriates the greater part of the product—the entire surplus product.

The state's activities are primarily influenced by the people united by common interests, i. e. by classes and social groups. Whose interests does the state promote, and which class exerts the most powerful influence over it—that is the question. In capitalist society, it is the capitalist class, the bourgeoisie. The working class and all the working people wage a social struggle for their rights; nevertheless, in order to win and hold power, and turn the state into an instrument for realising the working people's interests, fundamental socialist change is needed, a transformation of the very essence of the capitalist state.

To sum up, the state is not static. As society develops, the state undergoes change, too. It is influenced by a number of different circumstances, the chief among them being the mode of production prevailing in society. Each mode of production is characterised by the existence of historically defined classes, and the class which is dominant in economic and political terms. It is the interests of this particular class that the state promotes.

2. How Did the State Come into Being?

An explanation of the causes underlying the emergence of the state does not have purely historical value; it helps us establish our bearings in today's diversity of state systems and understand under which conditions the state will no longer be necessary. Indeed, if it is known why and under which circumstances the state emerges, then it will also be possible to answer the question, when will it wither away, when will the need for it disappear?

It has been proved that the first type of social organisation was the commune. Commune members were united by joint labour, a shared dwelling, common property, and by the need to acquire the means to maintain life. The commune was self-governed, i. e. all members took part in the decision-making on all essential matters. All members of the commune were equals. Any conflicts that arose between commune members were resolved either by reconciliation, or by expelling the unruly member of the clan in accordance with custom. Communes were united into tribes; the land was the property of the whole tribe, and defence of the tribe's possessions was considered the duty of all its members.

Thus, both the commune and the tribe had power and all their members were subordinated

to a single will. Over the millennia of its existence, the tribal-communal system worked out specific ways of exercising power. Clan members elected chiefs, elders and war chieftains at general meetings. The chiefs, elders and war chieftains did not need any special apparatus of coercion to effect their will and orders: their great personal authority and custom were sufficient. Vestiges of clan and tribal relations have been partially preserved in some countries to this day. However, contemporary communes are being strongly affected by feudal and capitalist relations; moreover, those tribes which remain all exist within the territory of a state, so they have to abide by the laws pertaining to that state.

About ten thousand years ago, clan and tribal relations began gradually to change, primarily due to the division of labour amongst communes and tribes. First, cattle-breeding communes and tribes split off, and later artisans followed suit. Labour productivity began to grow, so more was produced than was needed simply to maintain the strength of each person. As all that was produced could no longer be consumed, the opportunity to accumulate things arose. With the establishment of the division of labour equality began gradually to give way to inequality. As surplus product came into being, it began to be inequitably distributed among clan members; power was no longer used in the interests of all the

members of the clan, but to enrich the chiefs and elders. It also began to be more profitable to make slaves out of prisoners of war than to kill them, because they could produce more than they consumed and thus add to the wealth of their owners.

In this way, a minority which amassed wealth was formed in the commune. Organs of self-government began to be changed into organs for the suppression of the majority by the minority. But custom, the moral authority enjoyed by chiefs and joint decision-making were not sufficient any more to turn these organs into regular organs of power. Special detachments (armies, first and foremost) were created to effect, by force of arms, or by the threat of using them, the will of the rich—those who owned the land, livestock and slaves. The appearance of organs of suppression and coercion ushered in the history of the state.

Thus, it is clear that the state differs from primitive communal self-government in principle. Its emergence testifies to the beginning of a qualitatively new stage in the evolution of mankind. How does communal self-government differ from the exploiter state? The state emerges when there is no unity of interests within society, and, moreover, when society is torn apart by irreconcilable contradictions. Self-government is only possible when a community of interests dominates and when there is no need to maintain groups of peo-

ple who ensure that all members of society are subordinated to a single power. Engels wrote that as soon as it had come into being, the state became independent of society; it helped consolidate class inequality and grew into an active force in establishing the domination of the minority.¹

3. The Essence of the State

To reveal the essence of the state is to point out the most important, principal features of its activities and organisation. Capitalism's defenders try to avoid the question of the state's essence, describing the bourgeois state as a national institution, a supra-class instrument of universal justice and harmony; at the same time, they distort the essence of the socialist state.

At first glance, it may seem that the exploiter state really does express the interests of society as a whole, uniting all of its members within a structure everybody can see. But no state has ever existed which served the interests of the exploiters and the exploited in equal measure. In those countries where the minority gathers to itself the

¹ See Karl Marx and Frederick Engels, *Selected Works* in three volumes, Vol. Three, Progress Publishers, Moscow, 1973, p. 371.

bulk of the national wealth, the state primarily acts out as an oppressor of the majority rather than as the promoter of the interests of all citizens. This is the basic postulate one must bear in mind in order to fathom the essence, or the class nature of the state; only then can the true meaning of the state's activities be understood.

The essence of any state is determined by its economic and social base. If society is founded upon private property and the exploitation of the poor by the rich, the state inevitably becomes an instrument in the hands of the minority for consolidating its dominance. A fine example is provided by the modern bourgeois state. Conversely, if society is founded on common property and the objective conditions for inequality and the exploitation of man by man are absent—such is socialist society—the state, too, becomes an instrument for expressing the will of the masses.

The question may arise: if the bourgeois state defends the interests of the minority, how is it then that this type of state can exist for so long? The means are many. A ramified party system is one of these. Bourgeois parties try to create the illusion that the bourgeois state expresses the interests of the entire nation. Each party, as a rule, designates its own candidate for presidential and parliamentary elections. Each of the parties wishes to come to power and place its members in high government posts. The rotation of ruling

parties serves to strengthen the exploiters' power through the constant renewal of the state's leadership. On the surface it would seem that the state reacts sensitively to the mood of the electorate. In fact, however, policies change but slightly, and the essence of the bourgeois state remains the same. One example to illustrate this point is the mechanism by which the ruling parties in the US rotate. The candidates designated by both parties—the Republicans and the Democrats—only vie with each other in deceiving the voters. During the election campaign, they go out of their way to win the voters' support by promising them all the blessings they can think of. As soon as one of the candidates is elected, however, most of his promises turn out to be just so many words. Thus, while giving their support to the alleged defender of their interests, the voters actually cast their ballots for a representative of the dominant minority in order to strengthen the power of capital.

The class essence of the bourgeois state is not always easily discernible. The state enjoys relative freedom of action. The limits of this freedom are determined by the balancing act it must do. Not only must it serve the interests of the bourgeoisie, but it also has to consider the interests of the working people and their mounting strength as they campaign to defend their rights in the struggle to improve their position. No bourgeois state could have withstood the onslaught of the mil-

lions of working men and women if it had not met some of their demands from time to time.

The impact the state has on the economy and on every sphere of life depends on a great variety of factors which affect the state itself. The state can retard social development and cater to the most reactionary forces of society, or it can try to mitigate class conflicts. A situation may arise, too, under which, although society is dominated by exploitative relationships, democratic forces become strong enough to exert a decisive influence over the state and implement through it, if only partially, democratic reforms. That is why Communists are fighting to extend democratic rights in capitalist countries and to ensure that the rights of working men and women are observed. At the same time, Communists realise that the essence of the state cannot be changed even through the best of reforms; to achieve this, a fundamental social transformation must be carried out—in other words, a socialist revolution. Only as a result of such a revolution can a fundamentally new state emerge. This question is dealt with at length in Chapter Three of this book.

4. The Basic Characteristics of the State

The defining characteristic of the state is that it has power over every member of society, i. e. its

power is universal. Decisions taken by state organs are binding upon all. Only the state can lay down rules and standards of behaviour which must be complied with by all those living within the territory of the state without exception, and even by those of its citizens who live abroad. Having issued laws binding upon all, the state concerns itself with their abidance by its citizens.

The state with its apparatus is a system of special organs and agencies which are engaged in exercising power. They are: the legislative bodies (parliaments, national assemblies, Congresses); the agencies of local self-government (municipal councils); the government and the administrative bodies established by it (Ministries); the courts of justice, the police and the army. The system of state organs comprises the actual mechanism of state power. In bourgeois society it is primarily an organised force for suppression and coercion, while in socialist society it is an apparatus for directing national economic development and managing the economy.

The above-mentioned characteristics of the state—the binding nature of its decisions and the existence of a special apparatus—lend public nature to state power. Due to the public nature of state power, the state embodies a single political power at the level of society as a whole. There have been, it is true, examples of dual power in history. This situation arises during civil wars and

powerful partisan movements against dictators. Eventually, however, a single power is bound to be established. The unity of state power means that each of the state organs is vested with specific terms of reference and a strictly delineated range of rights and duties; all the organs operate within the limits set by the central authority.

The unity of state power as an inherent characteristic of the state is not generally recognised. For example, the principle of division of power is regarded as a bourgeois-democratic principle. In essence this entails the existence of several types of power within the state, not dependent on one another: the legislative, executive and judiciary. This principle was formulated at the stage when the nascent bourgeoisie was waging a struggle against the arbitrary rule of omnipotent feudal lords and was aimed at restricting the absolute power of the monarch. For that time and in the specific conditions which existed in Europe in the 17th-18th centuries, this principle was justified and progressive. With time, however, as the bourgeoisie came to acquire more and more power, this division of power proved to be unrealistic. State power is integral in its class essence, in its main thrust.

The state is also distinguished by its sovereignty, i. e. its autonomy in relation to any other power both within the country and beyond its borders, the right to use its own discretion in

making decisions concerning domestic and foreign affairs alike. The concept of sovereignty was taking shape in the course of struggle against tyranny of feudal lords and during national liberation movements, when peoples strove to uphold their rights for state self-determination; it is, therefore, not only a feature of the state, but also an important democratic achievement amounting to the right of nations to political independence and self-determination.

Given the neocolonialist policies of imperialism, it is also necessary to distinguish between actual sovereignty and the illusion of sovereignty. Liberation from colonial dependence does not in itself constitute the achievement of sovereignty. Many developing countries continue to be dependent upon industrialised capitalist states and transnational corporations.

A sovereign state is vested with the exclusive right to divide its territory into administrative units and to guard its borders. Those who live within the territory of such a state are either its citizens or foreigners who are bound by the laws of that state. The state's higher organs determine the country's administrative-territorial divisions: they demarcate regions, states, provinces, departments, etc.

The problem of borders is one of the most complicated international problems in many regions of the world. This is explained by the fact that the

borders dividing states have been repeatedly redrawn, and frequently do not correspond to the actual areas inhabited by individual nations or ethnic groups. This problem is especially acute in Africa, where 44 per cent of the borders follow meridians and parallels, 30 per cent have been drawn in straight or arched lines, and only 26 per cent follow natural geographical boundaries which usually coincide with the areas populated by individual ethnic groups. This type of border demarcation gives rise to separatist sentiment. In the interests of peace and the stability of inter-African relations, however, the existing borders must be maintained.

Bourgeois political scientists have invented the concept "conflict strategy". This concept is based on the myth that military clashes are unavoidable in Africa, Asia, and the Middle East. Theories such as this serve to camouflage not only the prejudices imperialists have concerning developing countries, but also the attempts by imperialism, and especially by the US, to justify its "presence" in every strategically important region of the world. In fact, the interests of nations dictate that the system of inequality, which was created by the centuries of colonial domination, should be abolished, and distrust and hostility between nations should be overcome.

Communists have always defended the principle of national sovereignty and the right of peo-

ples to determine their own destiny. From the very first days of its existence, the Soviet state has pursued a policy based on the principles of national equality, sovereignty, and the liberation of the peoples of colonial and dependent countries. The Soviet Union supports the desire of young states to achieve independence and maintain their territorial integrity; it is in favour of having young states exercise complete sovereignty with respect to their natural wealth, restructuring economic relations the world over, and establishing international relations based on equality and justice.

To sum up, the state is characterised by the universality of state power; the generally-binding nature of the legislation passed by it; the existence of a special administrative apparatus; sovereignty; and the defence of state borders.

5. Types of States and Their Functions

There are as many types of states known to history as there are socio-economic systems. History knows of four such systems—the slave-holding, feudal, capitalist and communist. Correspondingly, there are states which may be termed slave-holding, feudal and capitalist. In addition to these there is the socialist state, which corresponds to socialism, the first stage of communism.

The socialist state is a historically new type of state, since it does not promote the interests of an exploiting minority. It emerges as a result of socialist revolution and serves the interests of the broadest mass of working people.

Within each historical category there are variations, each with their own specific features, forms, and regimes. For example, there were essential differences between slave-holding states: in some, the emperor enjoyed unrestricted power, while others were democratic republics where all free citizens took part in governing the country (slaves, of course, did not have this right); there were also aristocratic republics in which power was concentrated in the hands of the top echelon of slave-owners. No matter what its form, however, the slave-holding state always served the interests of the slave-owners and brutally suppressed slave uprisings.

Under feudalism, states were, as a rule, monarchies, in which power was held by the king, tsar, shah, sultan or emperor. Monarchies differed one from another in the degree to which power was centralised; in addition, quite a few city republics (free cities) existed. But in all cases without exception, the dominant class in the feudal state was made up of the owners of the big landed estates, feudal lords and the gentry.

Bourgeois states are extremely diverse (they are described in detail in Chapter Two). Yet the

bourgeois state, in the words of Marx and Engels, is always a "committee for managing the common affairs of the whole bourgeoisie".¹

Socialist states, too, differ widely in their history, traditions and forms of activity; this activity, however, is invariably carried out in the interests of the broad working masses.

History has witnessed several transitional types of state. Today, most Asian and African countries which have thrown off the yoke of colonialism must choose their state system. They are going through complicated transitional stages of development: some of them are advancing towards socialism and others have taken the road to capitalism.

The delineation of the above-mentioned types of states is based on a scientific, Marxist-Leninist analysis of the question of the state. Any other approach leads to errors, deviations, and a distorted picture of the real political situation. For example, there is a trend among bourgeois theoreticians to divide all contemporary states into two groups, Eastern and Western. There is, no doubt, some ground for making such a distinction, since all the states of East or West share certain historical and cultural traditions, and no country can advance without taking these tradi-

¹ Karl Marx, Frederick Engels, *Collected Works*, Vol. 6, Progress Publishers, Moscow, 1976, p. 486.

tions, the concrete historical past, into account. Yet, does this mean that socialist Bulgaria and capitalist France, or socialist Czechoslovakia and capitalist Belgium are first and foremost European states? In other words, if the division into Eastern and Western states is accepted, then it follows that, in the case of the Republic of Cuba and the US, the fact that they are both located in the Western Hemisphere is more important than the differences in their social and political systems. Similarly, states like the German Democratic Republic and the Socialist Republic of Vietnam would be thought to be poles apart, as the GDR is situated in Europe, while the SRV is in the East. In fact, however, it is the other way round: the US Administration pursues a policy hostile to Cuba, while bonds of friendship and cooperation link the GDR and the SRV, as they share socialist ideals. There are differences between these two countries, but they mainly involve the level of economic development, culture, and the stage of socialist construction. The essence of the state is the same in the case of the GDR and the SRV – they are both socialist states.

The state's class essence is most clearly revealed by its activities. The primary functions of the socialist state are economic management and monitoring labour and consumption. These functions are determined by social ownership of the means of production and the need to implement

the basic principle of socialism—"From each according to his ability, to each according to his work". This principle is out of the question in a bourgeois state, since it contradicts the economic foundations of capitalism—the domination of private property and appropriation of the profits. The bourgeois state fulfils functions which are alien to the socialist state, such as the coercion and oppression of working men and women. Another area in which the functions of the bourgeois and socialist states differ fundamentally is foreign policy. The goal of the foreign policy pursued by bourgeois states is to undermine the world revolutionary process and preserve the world capitalist system at all costs. That is why their policies are so aggressive. Socialist states, on the other hand, pursue a peaceful foreign policy. In trying to safeguard peace on the globe, their international activities are directed at promoting mutual confidence and friendship among nations, and providing assistance to all progressive forces in their struggle for democracy and social progress.

6. Forms of the State

In order to better understand the features which set the form of any one state apart, Marxist-Leninists make use of several concepts: the

state apparatus, or the mechanism of state power, the form of government and the form of the state structure, the political regime, the political system and democracy.

The *state mechanism* is the system of state organs and agencies, established to fulfil the functions of the state. The state mechanism consists of the organs of power (the head of state, Parliament, and the government), the organs of state administration (the government, Ministries and other state administrative bodies), the organs for maintaining public order (the courts, public prosecutors' offices, and militia or police), and the state-owned mass media (the press, radio and television). The state organs also include the army and other special armed groups. All the state organs have at their disposal arms and means of transportation and communication, along with special structures.

All contemporary states are characterised by a particular system of state organs. Each system, however, differs in terms of the actual role they play and in the way they are related to each other. In other words, states differ in terms of their concrete-historical forms.

The *form of government* is the organisational structure of supreme power, its organs, and the relationships between the state organs and the population. Among the exploitative states, two basic forms of government stand out, the two

most widespread: the monarchy and the republic. The monarch (emperor, sultan, king, emir, or tsar) has absolute power; moreover, upon the monarch's death power is inherited by the person who is next in the line of succession. This form of government has died away for the most part; still, the institution of the monarchy has been preserved in some countries to this day. Laws are adopted in these countries by the Parliament, while the monarch must ratify them. As a rule, the government is headed by the leader of the ruling party; the monarch is formally vested with the right to appoint the head of government and ministers, but in fact he only approves the candidates proposed by the leaders of the majority party. No act issued by the monarch acquires juridical force until it has been confirmed by the Parliament.

The republic is characterised by the following features: organs of power are elected and representative; decisions in the elected bodies are taken by a majority vote; citizens are officially recognised to enjoy equal political rights and to be equally subject to the law.

The *state structure* is the territorial and political structure of the state, the status of its component parts, the system of relationships linking the central and local organs of power. There are two principal forms of state structure: unitary and federative.

A unitary state is a uniform state formation, which contains specific administrative-territorial divisions within its framework. In this kind of state, there is a single constitution, and a uniform system of organs; the power vested in them is extended to the entire territory of the given state, with local organs subordinate to central organs.

A federative state, or federation is an association of two or more state formations. Each of them has its own legislative, executive and judiciary organs. The independence of the state formations which comprise a federation is only restricted by the rights vested in the federal organs. The Parliament usually consists of two chambers. Of the capitalist states, for example, the US, Canada, Australia are federations; of the socialist countries – the Soviet Union, Czechoslovakia and Yugoslavia; of the developing countries – India and Nigeria. In legal terms, the federation is a union state.

The *political regime* is the system of the ways and means of exercising power which has developed over time. The specific features of the political regime in any one country are manifested in, for example, how broad the rights and authority of the individual organs of power are, what kind of ties between the state and public organisations, and in particular between the state and political parties, prevail, to what extent public opinion is

taken into account by the government in its activities, what the position of a person in society is in political terms, etc. Contemporary bourgeois states are characterised by two principal tendencies which are determinative for political regimes. On the one hand, there are the monopolies which are oriented towards the forces of reaction and strive to curtail democratic institutions and restrict the rights of working men and women; on the other, there is the struggle of democratic forces, the conscientious section of the broad working masses, to extend democracy and see that human rights are observed.

In certain capitalist countries, open coercion and the suppression of democratic movements prevail, while in others, concessions and the search for compromise predominate. More often than not, however, the bourgeoisie tries to make use of both these methods in order to retain power. Political regimes differ from forms of government and state structure in that they are dynamic and can change quickly.

Socialist society promotes comprehensive development of democracy, i. e. the power of the working people in the interests of the working people and exercised by the working people themselves. It should be noted that such development of democracy is not so smooth in all socialist-oriented countries. In some of them, the development of socialist democracy meets at the initial

stages with direct resistance by the overthrown forces.

The *political system* includes all the organisations which participate in the formation of state organs and have real influence over the activities of state organs. Therefore, the political system also encompasses, in addition to the state apparatus, political parties.

In socialist society, the political system is noted for its inner homogeneity, as all the organisations which constitute it are made up of working men and women. In bourgeois society, even classes are split internally, so organisations appear which reflect the interests of this or that section of a certain class. Thus, there are numerous organisations in developed capitalist countries which reflect the interests of certain sections of the bourgeoisie; the working class, too, has several trade unions, some of which really are active while others are characterised by their loose organisation; these, in fact, grovel before monopolies.

Of particular importance for the state's activities is the party system traditional in the country—is it a single-party, two-party, or multi-party state. The party is a politically organised group of people which reflects the interests of certain classes or sections of society. As a rule, the more fragmented a society is, and the more irreconcilable the contradictions, or antagonisms within it

are, the greater the number of parties the country has.

7. The State and Democracy

What is understood by the word *democracy* today? By what criteria is it judged, and what are its features? Let us make it clear from the very beginning that there is no such concept as democracy per se, because the term is interpreted quite differently by Marxist-Leninist theory and by bourgeois ideologists. Marxist-Leninists do not just point out democracy's formal-juridical characteristics which often amount to the outward aspect of political life: they concentrate on its social essence.

If the interests of the classes existing in society are antagonistic, democracy, like the state itself, serves the interests of the ruling class alone. The class which is dominant in an exploitative state tries to create the illusion in the minds of the bulk of the population that the existing state of affairs is the best possible, and thus win support for its domination. This situation is typical of industrialised capitalist countries today.

Bourgeois democracy was quite attractive at first. Democratic demands were directed against the arbitrary rule of feudal lords and were con-

sonant with the aspirations of the vast majority of the people. As the bourgeoisie gradually took the reins of power in its own hands, however, it began to represent and defend its narrow class interests, those of the minority. Freedom was thus reduced to freedom for the minority to oppress the majority.

The essence of democracy is primarily reflected in the nature of the rights and freedoms enjoyed by the individual. Bourgeois constitutions lay heavy emphasis on the inviolability of private property. If a man possesses means of production, he is free to dispose of them as he deems fit: he can exploit the labour of others and thereby derive profit, or lease his property, or sell it and invest the money he receives into some profitable business, etc. But if a man only possesses his hands and intellect, he has the right to look for a job and then apply his abilities. The bourgeois state does not guarantee him a job, however, so the army of unemployed is constantly growing. A member of capitalist society also enjoys the freedom to receive an education; but if he has no money to pay for it, this right, too, remains on paper.

In socialist society, the individual enjoys a radically different status. His rights and duties as laid down in the state's constitution are aimed at creating all the opportunities and conditions necessary to ensure the individual's all-round,

harmonious development, stimulate his activity in labour and in government, and raise his cultural level. Socialist democracy is the system of the individual's rights and freedoms as guaranteed by the state.

1. The Apologist
of Monopoly Interests

The decisive role in any industrialised capitalist country is played by the largest monopolies. The banks, concerns, trusts and corporations amass the bulk of the country's wealth and dominate all its vital spheres. The state is therefore bound to protect first and foremost the interests of the monopoly bourgeoisie; it guards the capitalist order, while the working people must work to enrich the small group of exploiters. The bourgeois state carries out its activities at a time of unabating political struggle. The opposing nature of the interests of the working people and the monopolists, of the bourgeoisie and the working class, and the conflicting interests of the monopoly

and the middle bourgeoisie, the urban middle classes, the petty bourgeoisie and the intelligentsia determine the political situation in capitalist countries.

The urge on the part of the monopoly bourgeoisie to maintain and consolidate its domination, and the striving on the part of the working people to protect their own interests and provide for the fuller satisfaction of their needs have brought two diametrically opposed political trends into existence: one, the onslaught of reaction in every sphere of life, and two, the intensifying struggle waged by the foremost forces for democracy and social progress. The actual balance of strength between these two trends varies from country to country and over time. Class conflicts sometimes impel the bourgeoisie to make certain concessions and resort to political manoeuvring. While glossing over the contradictions inherent in capitalism, the ruling elite tries to moderate class conflict by mitigating the effect of economic crises, reducing unemployment and inflation, etc.

In recent decades, the bourgeois state has worked to regulate social relations. It has been involved in improving labour relations between workers and employers, and it has tackled the issues of working hours, wages, and pensions. In this way the bourgeoisie is attempting to check the progress of organised struggles against capital.

The establishment of state-wide health care networks and school systems, the initiation and funding of scientific research, along with the establishment of athletic and cultural institutions are all part of the state's social work. The scale of this work is different in every country.

The social work of the bourgeois state should not be idealised, however. The fact that the struggle waged by working men and women to protect their rights does not abate for a moment speaks for itself: they are not satisfied with partial concessions. This is quite understandable, since the social work done by the capitalist state is fully in keeping with its class essence. It pursues a clearly formulated socio-political objective set by the bourgeoisie – to preserve that class's domination. It is clear then that the social policy of the bourgeois state is determined by the correlation of class forces in the world and within the state itself; it is imposed upon that state and is carried out by it in order to perpetuate the bases of capitalism.

The bourgeois state assumes the task of managing state property for, among other reasons, the sake of fulfilling its basic task – the consolidation of the capitalist order. As a result, it directly participates in the reproduction of capitalism's economic relations. State property is managed by people who have close ties with monopolies. The

state interferes with labour-capital relations. Why? Because working people, as a rule, have trade unions, having won the right to legalise and institutionalise their economic struggle. State organs plant their agents in workers' and democratic organisations, have progressive figures shadowed, tap telephones, etc.

In the current age the bourgeoisie would be unable to exercise power consistently if the state did not have special agencies at its disposal ideologically to manipulate the population. The mass media are used extensively for this purpose. The press, radio and television, as well as the leading agencies of the state apparatus all take an active part in ideological work.

In protecting the capitalist system, the bourgeois state pursues the policy of militarisation, based both on aggressive plans directed against other countries and on the urge always to have at the ready a powerful means of suppressing actions within the country. If the state did not have such a formidable weapon at its disposal, controlling the discontent of millions of working men and women would be no easy task. The bourgeoisie profits by charging the atmosphere with fear, as it makes people uncertain of the future and so renders them subservient to the powers that be.

2. The Mechanism of Power

The mechanism by which state power is exercised includes the activities of the state apparatus and the system of non-governmental organisations.

The Form of Government. Modern bourgeois republics are either presidential or parliamentary. In the former case it is the president who forms the government, and to whom the government reports on its activities. The president is elected independently of the parliament.

In a parliamentary republic, the government is formed by the prime minister in accordance with the parliamentary majority; the government is responsible to the parliament. The programme the government puts forward must be approved by a majority of the members of parliament; a vote of no-confidence in parliament means that the government must either resign or propose to the president that he dissolve the parliament and set the date for a new election.

The State-Territorial Organisation. A unitary structure prevails among bourgeois states. Bourgeois federations have come into existence as a result of the development of the bourgeois state system in a number of countries. A federative bourgeois state does not eliminate the unevenness of development in various regions; neither does it try to eliminate differences in the population's liv-

ing standards, or resolve the nationalities question: the territorial distribution of nations and ethnic groups is not taken into account in the state's federative organisation. The bourgeois federation is presently going through a crisis, which is largely revealed by the increasing centralisation of bourgeois federations today.

Two types of political regime prevail among bourgeois states: the bourgeois-democratic and the authoritarian.

The *bourgeois-democratic regime* is characterised by bourgeois-democratic rights and freedoms which are constitutionally guaranteed and partially implemented in practice. The activities of the various parties, including the opposition parties, as well as of the mass public organisations are allowed; representative organs are determined in general elections; most of the working people enjoy suffrage.

Still, the bourgeois-democratic regime is far from ideal, as it is perfectly adapted to maintain exploitation, and the tendency to limit democratic principles is becoming more and more obvious. The state apparatus is expanding and becoming inextricably linked with monopolies. Representatives of monopolies occupy posts both in governments and ministries. Professional statesmen often possess large numbers of shares in big companies. When they leave governmental employ, they are offered lucrative positions in

banks, trusts, corporations, etc. The merger of the state apparatus with monopolies leads to the emergence of powerful reactionary economic and political forces. The most formidable of these associations is that between the monopolies and the top echelon of the military, known as the military-industrial complex.

The growth of the state apparatus is a reflection of the monopoly bourgeoisie's desire to impose limits on the sphere of parliamentary activity. This can be seen, in, for instance, the direct restrictions on the parliament's legislative competence and the formulation of the government's legislative authority in the constitution, and in the restraints on the application of the vote of no-confidence, as a result of which the government is ensured maximum independence from control by the parliament. In other words, the imperialist bourgeoisie does everything in its power to abolish even those few democratic freedoms that are still in existence, to limit the power of the parliament and modify the constitution so as to establish the personal power of monopoly protégés and go from parliamentarism to some type of dictatorship.

The tendency to place restrictions on the bourgeois-democratic regime is also seen in the fact that most bourgeois states regulate the activities of political parties. The state has the right to eliminate parties which are not to its liking, demand

that their members be registered, that information be provided concerning their sources of funding, etc.

The *authoritarian regime* is characterised by the partial or complete absence of constitutional rights and freedoms, the prohibition of democratic parties and working people's organisations, reductions in the number of elective state organs, and the concentration of power in the hands of the head of state. The extreme form of this type of regime is fascism.

Fascism is not a thing of the past. Fascist organisations, though small in number, now exist in many capitalist countries. The psychosis of militarism helps strengthen right-wing bourgeois parties, fascist parties included. Today neo-fascism is striving to expand its social base. Its growth is promoted by the strengthening of bureaucratic power, the broadening of the legal base for police repression, and the enactment of anti-worker, anti-popular legislation.

3. Political Parties

After the state, political parties are the chief institution in the political system. Parties nominate candidates to be elected to the Parliament and for the presidency. In addition, they help control election campaigns. It is bourgeois parties that

determine the personal composition of the ruling elite. Parties serve as an instrument for shaping public opinion in the struggle for power.

There are several party systems in existence: a multi-party system where one party dominates (one of the bourgeois parties enjoys an absolute majority in the Parliament); a multi-party system without a dominant bourgeois party; a two-party system (the steady predominance on the political scene of two large parties); and a single-party system (only one party is officially allowed, while all others are prohibited).

The party system does not perfectly reflect social structure. Parties can reflect the interests, for example, not of the bourgeoisie as a whole, but of certain individual groups alone and at the same time the interests of a few middle strata. Some parties claim to reflect the interests of several classes or social strata simultaneously. It is at times difficult to see their true essence, particularly as many of them conceal their objectives, and camouflage their activities with nationalistic slogans and religious dogmas.

In order to evaluate the goals and substance of a party's actions, one must consider how it goes about solving various political problems, and how it *behaves* in matters affecting the vital interests of various classes. These criteria were first put forward by Lenin. "To see what is what in the fight between the parties," he said, "one must not take

words at their face value but must study the actual history of the parties, must study not so much what they say about themselves as their *deeds*, the way in which they go about solving various political problems, and their *behaviour* in matters affecting the vital interests of the various classes of society – landlords, capitalists, peasants, workers, etc.”¹

Bourgeois Parties. In capitalist society, there are parties affiliated with the monopoly bourgeoisie, the middle bourgeoisie, and the petty bourgeoisie. They differ in the nature of the interests they represent, their level of organisation, objectives, attitudes towards power, and in the ways they utilise it. Some monopoly bourgeois parties are organisationally formalised, and others are not; the latter have no officially registered membership, no membership dues, and no party cards. They do, however, have a ramified party apparatus and professional party functionaries. Monopoly capital parties are characterised by the vagueness of their world outlook and programmes of action. This vagueness is not unintentional: it is much easier to conceal the social essence of a party behind the facade of organisational and ideological amorphousness. Moreover, the monopoly bourgeoisie would not have a party

¹ V. I. Lenin, *Collected Works*, Vol. 18, Progress Publishers, Moscow, 1973, p. 45.

comprised exclusively of capitalist big wigs: that would make the party too narrow. Therefore, they seek to garner the votes of all the dissatisfied from every social stratum, and to that end they make use of the difficulties and errors of other parties.

Bourgeois parties fall into two categories in accordance with the ways in which they utilise power: the bourgeois-democratic and authoritarian. The former prefer to achieve their objectives within the framework of bourgeois-democratic institutions, while the latter reject these institutions (elections, the division of power, the autonomy of territorial units, human rights, etc.), their aim being the establishment of "powerful" regimes; such parties are founded on a racial, nationalistic and fascist ideology and they preach the cult of violence. These parties exist in practically all capitalist countries. Admittedly they do not have large memberships, so none of them represents a formidable force today. Yet, by conniving at the existence of pro-fascist organisations, the bourgeois state secures itself a reserve for the rapid growth of reactionary forces. The activation of reactionary organisations also provides the "grounds" for other kinds of political acts, such as military coups, attacks on the democratic rights of working men and women, and increasingly bitter opposition to communist and other left-wing parties.

Bourgeois-democratic parties pursue different political goals. Those which openly reflect the interests of the monopoly bourgeoisie are usually right-wing parties and represent the reactionary bourgeois trend of neo-conservatism. These parties hold power in the major capitalist states. They are rabid opponents of all progressive democratic reforms.

Among the bourgeois-democratic parties there are parties which are centrist or, as they are frequently called, liberal. As a rule, they represent the interests of the petty bourgeoisie and the middle strata. On certain issues they come out against the omnipotence of monopolies thereby allying themselves with the working class in its anti-monopoly struggle. They do not have a clear-cut position and often vacillate, siding now with the right, then with the left.

Why should we take the political differences which distinguish between parties into account? Indeed, no matter which particular bourgeois-democratic party comes to power, it will serve the capitalists. Yet it is not all the same to democratic forces how the bourgeois state operates. And that is why Communists and all the left democratic forces should try not to let reactionary neo-fascist parties come to power. Their anti-democratic essence must be exposed.

Although bourgeois parties have a well-oiled machine for the defence of capital's interests at

their disposal and have so far managed to secure big business direct representation in government, the bourgeoisie also has other associations, exclusive and strictly homogeneous in their class make-up, which have a large, and at times even a decisive influence, on the government apparatus. They are, in fact, a shadow cabinet. These organisations unite the bourgeoisie on a national scale and are the nucleus of the monopoly bourgeoisie's power.

One of the bourgeois state's functions is the creation and constant renewal of the political elite, i. e. the leaders of the state, the parties and public organisations. Closely associated with the political elite is the bureaucratic elite—the administrative, military and ideological apparatus, which is made up of representatives of monopoly capital, and of other clans in part, if they have proved their loyalty to the capitalist system. On the whole, the political elite is a socially exclusive group.

Why are multi-party systems characteristic of bourgeois-democratic regimes? The main reason is that bourgeois society is split into classes and strata whose interests are diametrically opposed. The bourgeoisie itself is not homogeneous either. The interests of the monopoly, big and middle bourgeoisie, far from coinciding on all issues, are poles apart at times.

The existence of two-party and multi-party sys-

tems is also explained by such characteristics of bourgeois life, as isolation and alienation, which are caused by private-property relations as well as by the high degree of individualism, cliquishness and occupational isolation. Sometimes the multi-party system is a long-standing tradition, the result of the existence of broad petty-bourgeois strata. When such strata do not play important role politically, the number of parties is, as a rule, small. But when a variety of political slogans abound the number of parties is always great. The existence of a multiplicity of parties also persists due to national and religious differences.

The multi-party system serves the political interests of the monopoly bourgeoisie, enabling it to react sensitively to the aggravation of any conflict. The emergence of new ruling coalitions, changes in the alignment of forces in the parliament, and the replacement of leaders all give birth to illusions of impending change and give the masses hope for a better future. In this way, the edge is taken off political conflicts and the politisation of the masses is prevented.

Social-Democratic Parties. The existence of two types of party—the social-democratic and communist—is connected with the history of the working-class struggle. Social-democratic parties first appeared in the 19th century. They are a long-standing tradition, and in many countries they enjoy influence among a sizeable portion of

the working class. Some of them have long ceased to be workers' parties in terms of their membership, their social base now being comprised of petty-bourgeois and middle strata. This is not the main point which must be made concerning these parties, however. The social-democratic parties of today have adopted the practice of carrying out individual social reforms. In addition they have rejected the notion that revolutionary change must be brought to bourgeois society. The socialists' conciliatory policy does not on the whole represent a threat to the foundations of the bourgeois system. Therefore, monopolists in certain countries are not opposed to having governments which are either headed by or even entirely made up of socialists. At the same time, however, influential left-wing forces can also take shape within the ranks of a socialist party. In that event the party could become a powerful organisation in the struggle against reaction. And this possibility is also considered by monopolists. Therefore, if circumstances permit, right-wing forces elbow the socialists out and prevent them helping form governments.

Communist parties are the consistently revolutionary organisations of the working class and all politically conscious working men and women. They see as their ultimate goal the eradication of man's exploitation by man, as well as the causes giving rise to it. That is why the forces of

imperialism wage a constant, uncompromising struggle against Communists. In this they use the bourgeois state. Communist parties are outlawed in those countries where military, authoritarian regimes rule and bourgeois-democratic institutions have been suppressed. Membership in the communist party is considered a criminal offence. In situations where bourgeois-democratic institutions are relatively stable and the left is weak, however, communist parties are not officially banned.

Monopolies try to isolate communist parties politically, restrict their activities, or ban them outright. The parties of big capital are the political adversaries of the communist parties. They use the mass media to distort the communist parties' objectives and methods, as well as to bolster anti-communist myths. All of this has an impact on the activities of left-wing bourgeois-democratic and social-democratic parties, which frequently choose to ally themselves with the right-wing parties rather than with the Communists. The policy of restricting the communist parties' opportunities for concluding agreements on certain concrete issues with other parties is also implemented by manipulating and even murdering those realistic-minded politicians who seek to establish ties with the communist party if it enjoys great influence in that country. This is why Aldo Moro, the former President of the Christian

Democrats party (Italy) was murdered. Moro was a bourgeois politician who came to realise that in order to achieve political stability, a way should be found to come to an understanding with the Italian Communist Party. This prospect frightened the reactionary political forces in Italy and Moro was killed.

Despite these difficulties and dangers the Communists continue to act, mobilising all of the capitalist states' democratic forces for the struggle for peace, democracy and socialism.

4. Words and Deeds

What does the principle of equality actually mean in practice? This general principle stands out in the long list of rights and freedoms that are usually proclaimed in the constitutions of bourgeois-democratic states. Equality is interpreted as equality before the law and administrative authorities, equality in taxation and the exercising of rights and freedoms. However, the fact that all citizens enjoy equal rights does not ensure actual equality. Moreover, bourgeois-democratic equality of rights is in fact based on inequality. Indeed, what sort of equality is it, when around fifty per cent of the population of the non-socialist world suffers from malnutrition, and over 100 million people are out of work? The funds allocated for

social needs go more often than not to the rich. As a result the share of the national wealth appropriated by the well-to-do is growing, while that of the poor is shrinking.

The basic bourgeois-democratic principle of equality is a mere formality, since at best it reduces equality to equality before the law, and even at this level is neither absolute nor strongly guaranteed. Bourgeois constitutions freely expatiate about the state guaranteeing rights and freedoms to all citizens, but they say nothing about how these rights and freedoms are guaranteed. In actual fact, real guarantees are only offered to those who have the property to back them up. There are some legal guarantees, of course, such as the right to bring suit in court if one's rights are directly infringed upon. However, the question naturally arises, how can a court of law ensure the right to work if there are fewer jobs than there are people who need them? And how can freedom of speech be guaranteed if the mass media are at the disposal of those who use them to further their own interests?

In making certain concessions to the forces of democracy, the bourgeoisie occasionally agrees to guarantee constitutionally rights and freedoms that go beyond the range of traditional bourgeois-democratic principles (examples are the right to work, the right to participate in the management of an enterprise, and the right of the state to

nationalise industries). But these provisions remain in large measure empty words. Thus, the Italian Constitution contains an article which guarantees the right to work; yet Italy has one of the world's highest unemployment rates. These examples prove that not a single bourgeois constitution, though it may seem democratic at first glance, can change that state's social nature.

Socio-Economic Rights and Freedoms. As a rule, when bourgeois authors discuss the question of rights and freedoms, they turn first to personal rights and freedoms, i. e. those that guarantee an individual's inviolability and safety. No doubt, man could not live or work if he did not have personal rights and freedoms. However, the mere proclamation of personal freedom does not amount to much. For example, what is the sense of being guaranteed inviolability of the home if one has no home at all? Or take the constitutional right to a defence in a court of law; this is an illusion for the working man, as he cannot afford to pay the barrister's fee. Therefore, socio-economic rights and freedoms are of the greatest significance, as they reflect, more clearly than all other rights and freedoms, the essence of any society. Their nature in bourgeois society is determined by the division of men and women into two categories – the exploiters and the exploited, the propertied and wage labourers.

The fact that some bourgeois constitutions

recognise the right to work is the result of the working people's prolonged and difficult struggle to defend their interests. Certain constitutions, moreover, state that it is the duty of all citizens to work; they also grant freedom of labour, declaring that everyone has the right to choose his trade or profession, and his job; the right to job security and a minimum wage are also granted. In actual fact, however, everything depends on the economic situation that prevails at any given time and no guarantees are provided. Significantly, in 1980 the US delegation to the UN voted against a resolution which noted that the only effective way of guaranteeing human rights and the dignity of man was to guarantee the right to work and participation by working men and women in the administration of state and social affairs, as well as the right to education, medical care and the protection of civic, political, economic, social and cultural rights.

The right to rest and leisure, unemployment, insurance maintenance in old age and protection of women's and child labour should also be listed among the socio-economic gains working men and women have made; still, these rights do not alleviate the workers' situation completely, since they are not enjoyed by all. Far from every worker is entitled to unemployment compensation. A battery of conditions must be met in order to qualify. Frequently unemployment compensa-

tion is denied to those who need it most.

Without the constitutionally established and guaranteed right to medical service all other rights lose their meaning. Nevertheless this right does not exist in bourgeois countries. For many it is an unaffordable luxury as the cost of medical care is constantly on the rise. In Britain, working men and women have managed to get free medical care, but this does not mean that everyone actually enjoys the right to receive treatment free of charge. The Conservative government is cutting back the number of hospital beds and medical personnel, and closing hospitals. As a result, the waiting lists for urgent medical treatment and operations are long.

The right to education does not exist in bourgeois countries (it, like the right to work, is unrealistic), but the freedom to engage in educational activities does exist. This encompasses the right to open schools, the freedom to attend the school of one's choice (the existence of church schools has a direct bearing on the establishment of this freedom), and academic freedom, i. e. curricular freedom. Without the right to education, however, all these freedoms become freedoms for the elect only, and a secondary and higher education a luxury for most people. In the majority of capitalist countries only elementary education is provided free of charge.

The bourgeois state does not guarantee the

right to housing either. Inordinately expensive flats and steadily rising costs—this is the reality. The homeless poor are an inherent feature of bourgeois life. At the same time, in the industrialised capitalist states there are hundreds of thousands of empty flats complete with every modern amenity.

Political Rights and Freedoms. Citizens of industrialised capitalist countries enjoy the right to vote, and that gives them the chance to take part in the formation of representative organs. Yet that is just an illusion. In actual fact the bourgeoisie manipulates the voters with the help of the huge mass media machine.

The following facts show, who is actually elected and whose interests that person really represents. Twenty-five out of one hundred US senators are presidents, directors or co-owners of corporations, 36 own large blocks of shares in banks and insurance companies, 31 have investments in the oil and gas industry, 47 work for companies which are involved in real estate transactions, etc. The majority of senators receive money from corporations in the form of honorariums for lectures and consultation fees.

As a rule, bourgeois legislators do not include a clause in their country's constitution or electoral laws which stipulates that a candidate can only be elected to office if he receives an absolute majority of the votes cast in the election; neither

is there, as a rule, a requirement that the majority of voters in each electoral district vote. An election is regarded as lawful irrespective of the number of voters who did cast their ballots. If one candidate receives more votes than any of the other candidates, he is declared the people's "representative". The mass refusal of voters to take part in elections is a reaction to the pro-bourgeois nature of the right to vote.

The constitutions of bourgeois states grant freedom of speech, opinion, and association. However, in every country there is a whole series of reservations and restrictions, which reduce the realisation of these freedoms to nought. Typical of bourgeois freedoms is the practice whereby the constitution proclaims broad rights, but the laws in force sharply limit them.

In many capitalist countries political freedoms of working people are limited: political strikes are banned and trade unions are forbidden to engage in political activities, while economic strikes are subject to strict control.

The bourgeois state is stepping up its efforts to expand its control over political parties. Every aspect of party work is now being regulated by the state, including funding, party building and goals. Some constitutions give the state the right to declare a state of emergency, under which the exercise of basic rights and freedoms is limited and the job of maintaining law and order is

handed over to the military.

Freedom of conscience is regarded as a traditional bourgeois-democratic principle. It grew out of the fight against religious domination, and initially concerned the right to believe or not to believe in God. Now this right has been reduced to freedom of worship, i. e. the right to profess any religion, while freedom of non-belief, of atheism is not encompassed by the term freedom of conscience. The reduction of freedom of conscience by bourgeois laws to freedom of worship, the establishment of inequitable rights with respect to believers and non-believers, and discrimination against atheists contradict the norms of international law.

1. Born of Revolution

The socialist state is fundamentally different from all other types of state past and present. It is a historically new type of state.

The socialist state emerges as a result of a socialist revolution, when broad masses of working people with the working class at their head topple the exploiters and take power in order to build a new society, a society that is free of oppression and inequality. On the one hand, the socialist revolution is the culmination of the struggle waged by the working class and all working men and women for their liberation; on the other, it is the dawn of a new historical era, the era when socialism is built. In order to achieve socialism, to bring

together all working men and women, and organise them to create a new life, a new type of state is needed.

Time and time again history has seen how a new class emerged on the historical scene and made use of state power. Yet each time it was a matter of replacing one exploiter class with another and adjusting the existing state apparatus to serve the interests of this new class. The working class, working people, pursue different goals as they work to establish a new social order.

As the socialist state is built, the actual sovereign power of the working people headed by the working class and its political vanguard, the Marxist-Leninist party, is created. The principal task this type of state faces is to build socialism, i. e. to build a society based on social, public ownership of the means of production, equality before law, and the following principle of distribution of material blessings: "From each according to his ability, to each according to his work."

The bourgeois state apparatus is incapable of taking on these new socio-economic tasks, as it is an instrument for the coercion and suppression of the working people and can be used by the toppled bourgeoisie against the working people's revolutionary achievements. The bourgeois state becomes an obstacle to genuine democracy and the liberation of the broad masses from oppression and dependence. Therefore once the

working class and all working people have wrested power from the bourgeoisie, they must crush the old state machinery.

State power under socialism is needed to organise the new society's political, economic and ideological life, as well as to monitor work and consumption. The fact that the old state apparatus has been smashed does not by any means signify the negation of all the institutions that were created by bourgeois society. Lenin wrote of the possibility and even the necessity of using the accounting and registering apparatus created by capitalism in the form of banks, syndicates, the postal service, etc. in the interests of the working class and all working people: "This apparatus must not, and should not, be smashed. It must be wrested from the control of the capitalists; the capitalists and the wires they pull must be *cut off, lopped off, chopped away* from this apparatus; it must be *subordinated* to the proletarian Soviets; it must be expanded, made more comprehensive, and nation-wide."¹

The main principle underlying the activities of the socialist state apparatus is democratic centralism. In essence it is the interrelation and combination of the working people's sovereign power, their initiative and independent action, election

¹ V. I. Lenin, *Collected Works*, Vol. 26, Progress Publishers, Moscow, 1972, p. 106.

of leaders and their report to the masses, with centralised management and planning, strict discipline and the observance of the law. Democratic centralism presupposes that the working people will take an active part in running all of society's affairs. "...The minds of tens of millions of those who are doing things create something infinitely loftier than the greatest genius can foresee."¹

The consistent application of this principle ensures not only the growth of the masses' initiative and activity, but also the strengthening of social discipline and socialist law and order, and strict observance of socialist law, i. e. the strict observance of all the laws passed by the state. These laws reflect the will of the absolute majority of the state's citizens and meet socialist society's vital needs. Therefore, they not only have the support of the centralised power, but are also backed by millions of working men and women.

Smashing the old state apparatus and setting up a new one in its stead is a very complicated business. Lenin said that it was much easier to seize power in the age of revolution than to know how to use power properly.² This is why it has not

¹ V. I. Lenin, Vol. 26, p. 474.

² See V. I. Lenin, *Collected Works*, Vol. 33, Progress Publishers, Moscow, 1973, p. 229.

always been possible to consolidate a victorious socialist revolution and achieve socialism. That is also why the political vanguard of the working people, who have acquired power, must develop their revolutionary creativity, the ability efficiently to implement the principles of the new socialist state while keeping the specific national features of that society in mind.

The Great October Socialist Revolution constituted the first instance that a state machine had been successfully crushed. The masses' revolutionary creativity gave birth to new representative organs of state power—the Soviets of Workers', Peasants' and Soldiers' Deputies (now the Soviets of People's Deputies), which constituted the political and organisational foundation of the entire new state mechanism. Various executive organs, as well as the people's militia and armed forces, were made accountable to the Soviets.

In the socialist countries of Central and South-Eastern Europe, the primary task was to liquidate the state institutions of fascism. In Cuba, it was first, to abolish the dictatorial regime with its machinery for the suppression of the masses and the protection of the latifundistas and capitalists, and second, to set up a state that would follow a course independent of American imperialism.

The more diverse the forms of accomplishing socialist transformation, the more diverse the

ways of building a socialist state. But in every instance, the bourgeois military-police organs, the entire bureaucratic apparatus must be abolished first. In every instance, the new state must be prepared to crush the resistance mounted by reactionary forces, further politicise the broad masses and conduct economic and organisational, cultural and educational work to introduce and develop socialist principles in society.

2. Landmarks on the New Road

The victory of a socialist revolution creates the prerequisites for building socialism. Yet socialism does not follow in the immediate wake of revolution. There is a transition period between capitalism and socialism, during which the new struggles with the old, and the nascent but not yet fully formed socialist political system combats capitalism, which though overwhelmed politically is still quite strong economically. The state's position is contradictory during this period: it is socialist in its goals and interests, but it has to function in a situation where socialism exists side by side with capitalism in the economy. The economy in this period is multi-structural: social ownership increases in influence, but private ownership also persists on a small scale. There continue to be classes in society whose interests are diametrically

opposed and irreconcilable.

The working class dominates in political terms; it has formed an alliance with the entire working masses. The bourgeoisie is deprived of power but it can put up resistance, so revolutionary forces must crush it. In regards to working men and women the socialist state is a powerful organising and mobilising force. It works extensively with vacillating elements explaining the advantages of socialism. The state of the dictatorship of the proletariat is the power of working men and women, firmly resolved to build socialism in their country; it exists as long as there is a danger that antagonistic forces could band together to mount a struggle against socialism. The forms of class struggle in this period are determined by concrete historical conditions. In the USSR, for example, the class struggle in the transition period took the form of civil war, in which counter-revolutionary forces within the country received assistance from the imperialist bourgeoisie of Great Britain, France, the US, and Japan. The enemies of socialism had miscalculated, however; the people did defeat its internal and external enemies.

The experience of establishing the world's first socialist state demonstrated that a new state must not only organise socialist construction, but it must also defend the Motherland against external threat. These circumstances are the main reasons why in the transition period the state is character-

ised by the dictatorship of the proletariat, the instrument by which the working people maintain their political domination over the bourgeoisie.

In the transition period the material and technical base of socialism, founded on social ownership of the basic means of production, is created; medium-sized enterprises partially remain in private hands, however. A cooperative movement develops among the peasantry and urban artisans. A revolution occurs in the sphere of spiritual life: education becomes available to all. Changes also take place in the people's way of life: it comes to be based on humanism, collectivism and friendship among peoples.

The need for the dictatorship of the proletariat disappears as the foundations of socialism are laid down, and the state becomes the state of the whole people, which has a new social base—the entire working people—to rely upon.

Internationally, socialist states conduct a vigorous and consistent struggle against imperialism and aggression, for social justice and peace.

3. The State's Creative Role

Under socialism, the nature of the state's activities changes, and its tasks become more diversified. The socialist state's economic and organisational activities begin right after the revolution

has triumphed. It must reorganise the economy and subordinate it to the interests and needs of the broad masses of working men and women. The specific historical forms used to accomplish this task differ from country to country. In the USSR it was accomplished in the course of socialist industrialisation and the organisation of agricultural cooperatives. The young Soviet state was for many years surrounded by capitalist countries, and that could not but have a telling effect on the development of the economy. During the Great Patriotic War which was waged against German fascism and Japanese militarism (1941-1945), the entire economic activity of the Soviet state was geared to the task of rebuffing aggression and routing Hitlerite hordes. Subsequently, the Soviet Union had to heal the wounds inflicted by the war, and only after that had been accomplished could it set about furthering the growth of the national economy. At present, the centre of gravity has been shifted to intensifying the economy, improving quality, and ensuring the growth of output by raising productivity and improving the organisation of work.

Given the aggressive policies pursued by imperialism and the militarisation of capitalist countries' economies, the socialist countries must strengthen their defence capability.

Work and consumption are regulated under socialism in accordance with the principle:

“From each according to his ability, to each according to his work.” Work is both the right and duty of every citizen. The state, for its part, must regulate labour relations and the distribution of consumer goods; lay down and ensure the observance of the rules governing hiring, and of workers’ labour rights and duties; establish and improve the system of wages; oversee the payment from the public fund of benefits and allowances for mothers and children as well as for the upkeep of children’s institutions; provide pensions and social insurance, free education at all levels, scholarships, free medical care, etc. As the scientific and technical revolution unfolds and people’s needs increase, the state’s social functions expand. The network of consumer service establishments grows and all kinds of appliances are introduced to lighten housework, thereby furthering the working people’s growing involvement in community affairs and providing them with greater opportunities for raising their level of culture.

The socialist state’s cultural and educational activities include the supervision of public education, the development of science, the work of the mass media, and the development of sports. Socialist ideas together with the spread of the scientific Marxist-Leninist world outlook among the masses help create a new moral climate in the country. The working person acquires a strong

sense of dignity, and servile attitudes are overcome.

The formation of a new national intelligentsia is an integral part of the socialist revolution in the spiritual sphere. When the modern material and technical base of socialism has been created and the intelligentsia has taken shape, scientific development and promotion of artistic creativity assume special importance. The global problem of the socialist construction as a whole, i. e. the creation of the prerequisites necessary for the gradual emergence of a fully developed, harmonious individual who takes an active stand in life, comes to the fore.

The establishment of socialist law and order involves protection of the social and state system, socialist property, citizens' rights and duties, as well as the rights and legitimate interests of public organisations. The state combats all violations of law and order by establishing who is the guilty party in every instance. In addition to combating crime, the socialist state does extensive educational work to prevent crime. This function of the socialist state will die off when crime, parasitical attitudes and the desire to live off others have been eliminated.

The state's activities in the international arena are determined by socialism's humanistic nature. The need to defend the country has been engendered by the existence of the world system of im-

perialism and by its aggressiveness. The Soviet Union has unilaterally undertaken the obligation not to be the first to use nuclear weapons. The taking of this obligation was motivated by the desire to create a situation in the world under which no one will be the first to use these weapons. In this way the very possibility of a nuclear war breaking out will be reduced. The struggle for peace and peaceful coexistence is aimed at eliminating war as a means of resolving conflicts, and finding mutually acceptable solutions. The policy of peaceful coexistence incorporates activities to normalise bilateral relations, as well as the struggle for peace throughout the world. In this struggle the socialist states join forces with those peoples who are combatting aggression in any form.

The USSR and other socialist countries support detente and are in favour of reducing armaments and ending the arms race. The peaceful coexistence of states with different social systems is objectively rooted in developing economic ties, promoting businesslike cooperation, and expanding cultural exchanges. The states of the socialist community base their actions on the conviction that peaceful coexistence only concerns relations between states, not the ideological sphere.

With the appearance of the world socialist system in the wake of the fascism's defeat in World War II (1939-1945), a new type of international

relations took shape. It was based on the common goals of achieving social justice, progress, equality and democracy. Cooperation among socialist states embraces the political, economic, cultural, scientific and military spheres. The socialist countries support national liberation movements and are expanding their cooperation with developing countries.

4. A New Type of Democracy

The emergence and development of the socialist state is impossible unless a new type of democracy, socialist democracy, takes shape. What ideals form the basis of socialist democracy? What sets it apart from bourgeois democracy?

Apologists of capitalism usually maintain that bourgeois democracy is the most perfect form of democracy possible, and that, even if certain elements of capitalist society can still be improved upon, this is by no means true of bourgeois democratic institutions.

This is essentially the position taken by the leaders of both the socialist and the social-democratic parties in the majority of capitalist countries. Their stance amounts to a defence of bourgeois-democratic principles. Similar views also testify to Eurocentrism, i. e. belief that the Western pattern of political organisation is a model for

the rest of the world.

There is another and seemingly diametrically opposed view according to which: both the bourgeois and the socialist varieties of democracy are rejected and the proposition that bourgeois democracy can play a positive role in the destiny of socialism is rejected out of hand. This point of view is not just shallow; it is detrimental to social progress. According to this theory, socialism can be built on historically vacant ground, irrespective of whether the necessary conditions exist or not. What the result of such negation of all democratic principles can be has been clearly demonstrated in Kampuchea by the Pol Pot and Ieng Sary regime. This clique of adventurers and misanthropes destroyed cities, exterminated intellectuals and wiped out cultural values, all on the pretext of negating everything old, everything capitalist. In doing this they turned the country into one huge concentration camp, in which the policy of genocide reigned. Today, the people's government of democratic Kampuchea is engaged in opening up before the working people the prospect of gradually going over to socialism.

A creative, Marxist-Leninist approach to the problems of democracy is fundamentally different from an apology for capitalism. It is also different from a nihilistic view of the achievements of bourgeois democracy. Socialism has not sprung from nowhere. Quite a few of the institutions of social-

ist democracy were proclaimed during the epoch of bourgeois revolution, but were subsequently consigned to oblivion as capitalism moved forward. Take the principle of the equality of all citizens in socialist society, for example. It does not mean the equality before the law alone. Rather it is a component of a broader and more democratic principle – that of the people's equality in all spheres of political, socio-economic and spiritual life.

The socialist state is the first state in history to proclaim constitutionally and to actually realise the socio-economic rights of citizens – the right to work, to health protection, education, etc. Socialist democracy has also been extended to the sphere of production: working men and women actually participate in production management and the regulation of labour relations. The principle of equality presupposes that citizens are equal in all respects, as well as society's advancement along the path of overcoming social distinctions which serve to conceal citizens' unequal status. Examples of such distinctions are those made between people engaged in physical and mental labour, between the town and the countryside, between men and women, and social distinctions between various regions of a country due to the unevenness of their economic development. The effectiveness of socialist democracy is embodied in the fact that rights that are pro-

claimed are guaranteed politically and economically, and in the growth of a society's economic potential and culture.

Socialist democracy is distinguished by its creative, constructive nature. Its purpose is to reveal and to make the greatest possible use of the people's creative powers for their benefit. For instance, the right to work comprehends the most important condition for revealing man's powers, since labour is the main sphere in which a person's abilities can be manifested. The principle of creativity also underlies the right to education, the opportunity to avail oneself of cultural achievements, and the freedom of creative activity. The right to education is ensured by the fact that all types of education are free, that no fee is charged for the use of school textbooks, that the majority of students are granted scholarships by the state, and that all of them enjoy a variety of privileges. The Constitution of the USSR guarantees everyone free secondary education.

Soviet citizens are also guaranteed freedom of creative activity in science, technology and the arts. This is ensured by the wide scope of scientific research, work in the areas of invention and rationalisation, as well as by the flourishing of literature and the arts. The state also creates the conditions necessary to make all this possible. It provides material assistance to voluntary societies and creative unions. It also sponsors the introduc-

tion of inventions and rationalisation proposals to the national economy and other spheres of life.

Socialist democracy is constantly being developed and improved. The issues involved in extending it are always taken up at congresses of ruling Marxist-Leninist parties.

As socialist society advances towards perfection, it will face ever new and increasingly complex problems. This process will continue throughout the period of socialist development, and up until the time when the socialist state system has developed into communist social self-government. The more tangible the economic and cultural achievements of a socialist state, the more urgent the issues concerning the further evolution of socialist democracy, and the extension of the rights, freedoms and duties of citizens and work collectives. At the present stage in the USSR, urgent issues of expanding democracy involve steadily putting into life the principles of socialist self-government, i. e. all-round improvement of the work of elective bodies of state power—the Soviets of People's Deputies, raising the effect of the masses' participation in government and management and of the activity of control bodies, invigoration of public organisations, democratisation of economic management and of the process of decision-making.

It would be wrong to think of socialist democracy as a complete and perfect system. Socialism

continues to grow. It is constantly being improved. More and more nations are helping build it. As a result of joint creative activities and the mutual enrichment of cultures, the edifice of socialist democracy is emerging as power by the people, for the people, and in the interests of the people.

5. What Is Soviet Power?

At first glance, the socialist state's mechanism is reminiscent of the bourgeois state's mechanism: they have the same representative organs of power, administrative and judicial bodies. This similarity, however, only testifies to the fact that in both cases we are dealing with the state as such. There the similarity ends. The socialist state is fundamentally different from its bourgeois counterpart.

One of the most important characteristics of the socialist state is that it draws extensively on the principle of voluntary social activities. Thus, the Soviets of People's Deputies, representative bodies of state authority in the USSR, combine the features of state organs and public organisations. The Deputies continue to work at the jobs they had before they were elected: they do not become professional legislators but take part in the state administration on a voluntary basis. All

of them attend sessions of the Soviet to which they have been elected and are members of the Soviet's standing commissions set up to deal with questions pertaining to economy, culture, health care, problems of young people, nature conservation, maintenance of law and order, etc. Not only Deputies, but also experts in the relevant fields are invited to take part in the work of these commissions.

The socialist nature of popular power is seen in the specific forms of government. All of the socialist state's organs of power are elected by the working people and report to them about their activities. All of these representative organs are vested with broad powers within their territory and constitute the foundation of the state apparatus. The entire adult population without any kind of socio-political restriction enjoys suffrage. The Deputies' activities are determined by the mandate of the electors, where the latter express their interests and demands. The Deputies are obliged to consider these in their work.

Electors have the right to recall Deputies. If any Deputy has not justified the confidence placed in him, he is recalled at the initiative of his constituents, the work collectives or public organisations in his district. Thanks to this right the electors have control over the composition of the Soviets. Working people in the USSR widely avail themselves of this right.

The consistent implementation of the principles of electiveness and the accountability of all executive state organs to representative organs of power gives working men and women in socialist countries genuine power. These representative organs are vested with real power and are working agencies as they combine legislative, executive and control functions. For example, the Soviets of People's Deputies not only adopt laws and take decisions, but also help implement them and monitor their application in practice. All the organs of state power are interrelated. This is the result of the application of the principle of democratic centralism, which was discussed above.

The socialist principles of government are not always introduced immediately in their full scope. In individual countries, elections may be restricted during the initial stages of socialist construction for certain specific historical reasons. In the first few years of Soviet power the exploiter classes and non-working elements were deprived of the right to vote and to be elected to office. Inequitable representation quotas were established in favour of the workers. When socialism triumphed in the USSR, universal and equal suffrage was introduced. A different situation prevailed in the countries which embarked on the road to socialism following World War II: as a rule, no restrictions on suffrage were made on the class principle.

Forms of government in socialist states also bear the stamp of the concrete historical features of the political culture and traditions prevailing in each country.

The development of democracy in socialist countries bears a direct relationship to the population's increasing participation in decision-making concerning affairs of state. In the USSR, for example, not a single major legislative act is adopted without a preliminary nation-wide discussion. Thus, 140 million people took part in the discussion of the draft Soviet Constitution of 1977, while over 110 million participated in the discussion of the draft Law on Work Collectives. The most important decrees of the Cuban government are adopted by a show of hands at meetings and rallies of working men and women.

Socialist democracy has given birth to variegated and interesting forms of government in each socialist country. There are both unitary and federative states. A unitary republic consists of administrative-territorial units, within which representative organs of state power are established. A federative republic is a voluntary union of states or state formations built on the principle of nationality. The sovereignty of all nations is observed, and their economic, political and cultural development is guaranteed.

The Soviet Federation is based on the democratic principles of sovereignty, equality and the

free development of all nations and nationalities, their friendship and cooperation in the building of socialism. These principles, coupled with the concrete historical conditions which prevailed in Russia, gave rise to a complex form of federation. Today there are 15 Union Republics, 20 Autonomous Republics, 8 autonomous regions and 10 autonomous areas in the USSR. Each Union Republic is a sovereign state; it independently exercises state power within its boundaries and adopts its own constitution which takes the specific features of the nation and its traditions into consideration; it has its own supreme organs of power and administration and establishes its own territorial and administrative system; it has the right to enter into diplomatic relationships with foreign states, sign treaties and exchange diplomatic and consular representatives with them, and may also join international organisations.

Autonomous republics provide national-state autonomy for nations within the respective Union Republic. Autonomous republics have their own constitutions which must not contradict the USSR Constitution. They are responsible for overall economic and social development within their respective territories. The boundaries of an autonomous republic may not be altered without its consent.

Autonomous regions and autonomous areas also provide national minorities with autonomy.

They enjoy self-government in regards to their internal affairs and have their own state organs. In all the state and national-territorial formations, the state administrative institutions, schools and cultural and educational organisations use both the local national and the Russian language as a means of communication among national groups.

The establishment of the federation has played a great, positive role in the solution of the nationalities question in the USSR; it has helped promote friendship and cooperation among the nations and nationalities populating the Soviet Union, and has been conducive to the creation of a new historical community—the Soviet people. The Soviet experience is specific, since the Soviet Federation emerged when several nations had already been formed, so granting them state sovereignty was of fundamental importance for their development, the development of relations of mutual assistance, and in order to strengthen confidence in the central organs of power.

In some multi-lingual states that have embarked on the road to socialism the pattern of relationships is different. Sometimes a number of different nationalities are united in a single state, in which vestiges of tribal-communal relations are still strong, and centripetal tendencies can be detected. Under these conditions, a unitary, and not federative, form of state is warranted.

The socialist state is characterised by the steady

and comprehensive development of democracy. It is founded on democratic centralism. The Communist Party plays a leading role, the masses take an active part in government, the rights, freedoms and duties of citizens are expanded, and socialist lawfulness is strictly observed. Lawfulness means that all citizens, organisations and state organs are obliged to observe the laws promulgated by the state. Scrupulous observance of the law prevents abuses of power and manifestations of subjectivism.

The main principle of socialist lawfulness is ensurance of the supremacy of law with respect to all enactments by local organs of power and administrative bodies, as well as to acts by judiciary and investigatory agencies. Laws are made by the supreme organs of power. Socialist lawfulness presupposes that laws are observed by all without exception, that citizens' rights, as well as state discipline, are observed and protected, that the state and the public exercise control over law enforcement, that citizens' complaints concerning the actions of administrative bodies or court rulings be considered in due time, etc. Socialist lawfulness is founded on the principle of equal rights and duties for all the citizens.

The government relies in its work on the working masses' activity, and enjoys nation-wide support for its domestic and foreign policies. Socio-political activity and initiative are coupled with

the labour of millions, and are manifested in the masses' broad participation in the management of production. Over 80 million Soviet people take the floor annually at workers' meetings and production conferences. Those forms of labour organisation in which self-management is developed, are becoming more and more widespread.

The ruling communist parties attach great importance to improving planning and substantiating scientifically the activities of all administrative bodies on the basis of a single national economic plan.

6. Common Objectives

State and public organisations together with the norms of their activities form the political system of socialist society. Since there are no class antagonisms in socialist society, the political system is free of inter-party struggles for power. All organisations are united by the common goals of building socialism, and each of them has its own tasks.

The primary cell of the political system under socialism is the work collective – an association of people united by a common productive activity at a plant, factory, or building site, in agriculture, at an institute, hospital, school, etc. Work collectives take part in discussions and decision-making

concerning state and public affairs. They help plan production and social development, train and place cadres, and manage enterprises and institutions. They are also concerned with ensuring that management improve the people's working and living conditions and keep tabs on the expenditure of funds allocated to develop production, sponsor social and cultural programmes and boost material incentives.

As the masses' creative activity increases, millions of working men and women are drawn into the administration of state affairs, and the role of public organisations grows. The Communist Party, true to Marxism-Leninism, the only scientific theory of social development – the organisation which enjoys the greatest respect and authority due to its vast historical experience – forms the nucleus of the political system and becomes the leading force in socialist society.

Communists are united by their profound awareness of the community of fundamental interests which unites all working people. Communists, who share the same views, have a decisive impact on the course of social development and make the ideals of scientific communism a reality. The role of the ruling Communist Party as the political vanguard of the people is not contingent on whether the country has a single-party or a multi-party system. The experience of the GDR, Czechoslovakia and Bulgaria has proved

that the existence of parties representing the interests of separate sections of the people does not prevent the Communist Party from acting as society's political guide. The guiding role of the ruling Communist Party is guaranteed constitutionally.

The leading role of the Communist Party grows in strength as socialism is built. Its role as the people's political vanguard impels the Party to make particularly large demands upon its organisation and activities. The Communist Party of the Soviet Union is guided by Marxist-Leninist teaching, which it develops creatively while ensuring the organic unity of revolutionary theory and practice. It organises its activities according to the principle of democratic centralism, and is constantly concerned with consolidating the ideological and organisational cohesion of its ranks, strengthening conscious discipline and making its members more active. The CPSU subjects its own activities to critical analysis, while studying, assessing and applying the experience gained by the international communist movement. It consistently implements the principles of proletarian internationalism. The Party takes an uncompromising stance towards every sort of fraction or group, as well as towards manifestations of revisionism, opportunism and dogmatism.

In practice real socialism has elaborated

diverse forms of mass participation in the running of the state. For example, practically all the citizens of socialist countries take part in elections. Millions of people give unending help to the Deputies in fulfilling their duties, actively participate in people's militia squads and other voluntary organisations which help the militia maintain law and order. Public organisations also take part in the running of the state. The system of public organisations varies from one socialist country to another, yet all of these systems have much in common, which stems from the very nature of socialism. For example, in all of the socialist countries there are mass trade unions and voluntary associations of creative workers, such as scientific societies, unions of writers, composers, and architects, societies for the dissemination of knowledge, etc. The strength of public organisations consists in the fact that they unite people on the basis of their occupation, or on the basis of shared interests and inclinations. The Communist Youth Leagues, for example, bring together the most politically conscious and active section of the younger generation. They assist the Communist Party and act as its reserve.

Trade unions in socialist society do not have to wage a class struggle against the bourgeoisie, as the bourgeoisie does not exist. And their relationship with the state is radically different, too, since the socialist state represents the interests of the

majority, not the minority. Under these conditions, the trade unions become a mass school of administration and economic management. They also organise socialist emulation campaigns among the working people. The trade unions take part in the socialist state's day-to-day economic and organisational activities. Participation in the management of production makes workers more active, raises their level of culture and awareness, and helps determine which workers are most capable of leading the trade unions and the economy.

The trade unions take an active part in planning the national economy and in implementing state plans. In the USSR, for example, plans are first mapped out in work collectives. The plan is adopted and made law only after all proposals have been considered. The trade unions do not limit the scope of their activities to participation in management; they also protect the interests of the workers. Under socialism, the worker does not need to be defended from the arbitrary actions of entrepreneurs, or from exploitation; in protecting the legitimate interests of workers, collective farmers and employees, the trade unions must combat narrow departmental attitudes, red tape and formalism, and everything that is alien to the very nature of labour relations in socialist society.

The work collective bases its activities on an agreement concluded between the management

of an enterprise and the trade union. This collective agreement stipulates the principal conditions of employment. If these are not met, the trade union has the right to break the agreement and bring the matter before higher organs which will consider discharging those managers who are guilty of violating the conditions of the agreement. There is a democratic rule in the USSR: no worker can be fired by the management of the enterprise which employs him without the consent of the trade union obtained prior to the firing. If the management violates this rule, the court will reinstate the worker, without examining the motives for the firing: the fact that the worker was fired without the trade union's consent is considered sufficient grounds for reinstatement.

7. The Rights and Duties of Citizens

The right to work and everyone's duty to work, as well as the rights to rest and leisure, housing, health protection, social security, education, and the duty to protect and augment socialist property are the basic socio-economic rights and duties of the citizens of a socialist state. Among their basic political rights are the right to vote and to be elected to public office, the right to associate in public organisations, the freedom to

express one's opinion, the right to take part in the management of production and state administration. At the same time the socialist state imposes political duties upon its citizens. The USSR Constitution states that citizens are obliged to safeguard the interests of the Soviet state, enhance its power, respect the national dignity of its citizens, strengthen the friendship of the nations and nationalities, take an uncompromising stance towards anti-social behaviour, promote friendship and cooperation with peoples of other lands, and help maintain world peace.

The socialist state also guarantees its citizens rights in the sphere of private life and personal freedom: inviolability of the person and of the home, privacy of correspondence, freedom of conscience and the right to possess personal property. At the same time citizens are obliged to respect the rights and legitimate interests of other persons, concern themselves with the upbringing of children, train them for socially useful work, and raise them to be worthy members of socialist society. Children, in turn, are obliged to care for their parents and help them. Underlying the rights and duties of the citizens of a socialist state are democratic principles unknown in bourgeois democracy, such as socialist humanism, the combination of social and personal interests, the universality of all rights, equality, and the unity of citizens' rights and duties.

Socialist humanism means that the state acts in the name of man and for the benefit of man. The realistic nature of socialist humanism is expressed in the abolition under socialism of exploitative relations, and the application of the principle "From each according to his ability, to each according to his work", in state assistance to mothers and children, the right of citizens to health protection, the care of the aged and disabled, and the right to education. Citizens' constitutional rights are guaranteed by socialist society's socio-economic system and by the consistent improvement of the working people's welfare. For example, in the USSR the right to health protection is ensured by free medical care, expansion of the network of therapeutic and health improvement institutions, development and improvement of safety measures and production hygiene, broad preventative medicine campaigns, environmental protection, and special concern for the younger generation. Child labour is outlawed in the USSR, with the exception of labour which is part of the school curricula and elementary work training; research in the prevention and reduction of disease and prolongation of citizens' active lives is underway.

The combination of social and personal interests means that all citizens' rights and freedoms serve to ensure the comprehensive and harmonious development of each individual, while at

the same time strengthening and furthering the development of socialist society. On the other hand, fulfilment of obligations to society helps the individual develop his various abilities. For instance, the right of a USSR citizen to participate in administration of state and public affairs, the discussion and adoption of laws and decision-making at both the national and local level is a vehicle for personal expression and promotes development of his sense of civic responsibility. Simultaneously, by exercising this right each individual promotes the general cause of perfecting socialist society. Take another example. The carrying out by every citizen of his duty to work conscientiously in his chosen socially useful occupation and strictly observe labour discipline clearly serves the interests of society; at the same time, however, the fulfilment of this duty contributes to the individual's comprehensive development and forms in him the need to work, transforming it into his most basic need.

The rights to be enjoyed by all are guaranteed by the economic and social foundations of socialist society. In order to clarify this point, let us consider man's most important right – the right to work. In practice, this right means the absence of unemployment and the guarantee that every citizen will be gainfully employed and paid in accordance with the quantity and quality of work done. This spells freedom from exploitation, and

gives every worker a chance to choose a trade or profession in keeping with his abilities and inclinations, to receive training and improve his skills. The right to work is ensured by the socialist method of organising the national economy, the steady growth of Soviet society's productive forces, and the elimination of the very possibility of economic crises and unemployment. The right to work is also guaranteed by legal and administrative measures. In the USSR, for instance, the arbitrary dismissal of a working person by an administrator on personal grounds, and non-abidance of a court ruling concerning the reinstatement of the person in question, or any other conscious violation of the Labour Legislation by an official, a state enterprise or a public organisation, are punishable by correctional labour for a term of up to one year, or by release from the post.

The Prosecutor's Office is obliged to protest the unlawful dismissal of any working person, just as it is obliged to protest the unlawful refusal to hire a job applicant. It is against the law to give anyone a task that is outside the range of activities for which he or she was employed. If staff cuts are planned, those employees who are to be dismissed on grounds of redundancy should be shifted, in accordance with their expressed wish, to another permanent job, or to a temporary job in the same enterprise or institution, or at another enterprise

or institution situated in the same district.

The right to work is increasingly being enriched by the individual's freedom to choose his trade or profession. In the USSR, for example, every citizen enjoys the right to choose a trade or profession in keeping with his abilities. The significance of this freedom increases as the working people's cultural level rises, and their needs, including the need to make work increasingly rich in substance, acquire a new dimension. The expansion of the freedom to choose a trade or profession is consonant with scientific and technical progress and the increased range of jobs.

The right to labour protection and the improvement of working conditions are integral parts of the right to work. Two important aims of the state's social programmes are to carry out broad prophylactic measures and to make work less hazardous.

Socialist equality amounts to creating all the conditions necessary to make everyone completely equal in all spheres of social life. The status of an individual does not depend on his class affiliation or origin, his property status, the language he uses, his religion, or his age. Socialist equality presupposes that young people are entitled to the same rights as all other categories of the population, that women enjoy equal rights with men and that all citizens, irrespective of their nationality or race, are equal. The equality of national

groups means that every citizen has the right to use his national language in all state and public organisations, including a court of law, and that every nationality is vested with the right to have its own schools and conduct instruction in their native tongue, to develop the national culture, to issue newspapers, magazines and print books in their own language, and to set up national theatres and other cultural and educational institutions. It also means that, whatever his nationality, every citizen is entitled to be represented in the organs of power and occupy any post, including elective office, and to join public organisations, sport and scientific associations; that he enjoys the right to be elected to the leading organs and to occupy administrative posts; it also means that citizens have the right freely and without hindrance to move from place to place within the country, and enjoy personal immunity and the protection of the state.

Socialist equality relies upon the state policy of erasing social distinctions between people based on the nature of their work, standard of education and material well-being. This is being done by reducing the number of people engaged in unskilled physical labour, by expanding the range of benefits for large families, for expectant mothers and mothers with small children.

Of great importance for the establishment of equality is the universal right to education. As his

educational level rises, the individual has more opportunities to avail himself of the material and cultural values placed at his disposal by socialist society, to change his trade or profession and to improve his skills. The right to education is ensured by the fact that it costs nothing, by the institution of general compulsory secondary education for young people, and by the extensive development of vocational, specialised secondary, and higher education as well as of extracurricular, correspondence and evening courses. All these guarantees of the right to education lay the groundwork for the establishment of equality in society. The conditions which now prevail in socialist society enable all of its members to receive the education they desire. All they need is to have the urge, patience and perseverance indispensable for studying.

The principle of socialist democracy is the unity of a citizen's rights and duties: the exercise of rights is inseparable from the fulfilment of duties. This principle permeates the entire system of rights and duties laid down in the constitutions of the socialist countries. Thus, the universal right to work also presupposes that it is the duty of all citizens to work for the good of society. The broad rights to rest and leisure, health care, material maintenance in old age, housing, education and access to cultural achievements, creative work, participation in administration and manage-

ment, the right to criticise, and political freedoms are offset by the duties to consolidate socialist property, to combat misappropriation and squandering, to safeguard the interests of the socialist state, to defend the country and to enhance its power and prestige, to respect the rights and legitimate interests of other people, and to promote friendship among the peoples of one's own country and cooperation with all the world's nations.

THE STATE
IN DEVELOPING
COUNTRIES

1. The Task
of Overcoming Backwardness

The developing countries of Asia, Africa and Latin America that have won their political independence have now taken on the task of overcoming their socio-economic backwardness. Young sovereign states are all faced with the same national tasks: to rapidly develop their economy and culture, establish effective control over their natural resources, and create their own, national cadres. In many countries the formation processes are still under way, with the tendency towards capitalist development prevailing. Other countries have opted for the socialist path of development; in these countries, the state works to mobilise all of the national resources and consoli-

date those social forces that help accomplish the tasks involved in independent economic development.

Young independent states have an insufficiently developed class structure; there is no clear-cut alignment of all the class forces. This is why political instability and military coups are a frequent occurrence. A great deal is determined by chance in these countries, and by the correlation of forces between various groups in the army and the state apparatus.

In most of the developing states the working masses' level of participation in social and political affairs is low. The low level of economic and cultural development, the weakness or complete absence of political traditions—all this serves to retard the growth of the masses' political consciousness and activity. These difficulties are reflected in their own way in the activities of the ruling elite: the creative potential of the broad mass of working people is often sneered at, and this situation is further aggravated by the fact that vestiges of the old, tribal-communal relationships are combined in these countries in peculiar ways with new concepts, which appeared after sovereignty was achieved.

Most of the developing countries continue to be dependent on imperialism, on industrially developed capitalist countries and transnational corporations. Imperialists go out of their way to in-

crease that dependence by carrying on neocolonialist policies, which differ from the old colonialism only in that it employs new methods while pursuing the same end – the enslavement of these countries. Imperialists set great store by justifying their policies in ideological terms; yet they readily resort to economic pressure. In essence neocolonialism is an attempt to maintain at all costs the developing countries' dependence on foreign capital, and through this to ensure their political dependence on it as well. As in the days of colonialism, the forces of imperialism would like to see the young states remain raw material appendages to their own countries. The agreements including those on military and technical cooperation, that capitalist countries conclude with developing states are all designed to further a single goal – maintaining their influence over the developing states.

Imperialist propaganda widely advertises its aid to developing countries, but keeps silent about the fact that this is only a facade for its selfish monopoly interests. Investments are only made in those developing countries which are openly oriented towards capitalism, and then primarily to those rich in mineral resources. This system is based on the assumption that once the recipient country has spent the money it received in the form of a loan, it will ask for more. Most of the income from these investments goes to the

monopolies, as they own the bulk of the shares in the new firms which have been set up in the developing countries.

Neocolonialism does not exclude either direct aggression or armed intervention. The policy of heightening international tension and of imposing the status of "belligerent state" on certain countries is also in the imperialists' interests. Such is the position of newly independent states in southern Africa, which must defend themselves against the aggressive actions of the South African hirelings. The policy of aggravating tension in the Middle East is also a component of neocolonialism.

The aggravation of tensions throughout the world plays into the hands of neocolonialists. This policy is not only pregnant with the threat of a new war, but also gives birth to distrust in relations between states and prevents them from fighting internal reactionary forces and introducing an equitable New International Economic Order. That is why Marxists-Leninists hold that peace and detente are conducive to creating the more favourable conditions required for the complete liberation of the peoples of developing countries from economic and political dependence.

Most young states have taken an anti-imperialist stand. This is most clearly manifest in their demand that international economic relations be rebuilt on the principle of equality and democ-

racy. The anti-imperialist stand taken by developing states is also seen in the activities of international organisations, such as the Non-Aligned Movement and the Organisation of African Unity. Typically, the activeness, purposefulness and efficiency of these international associations are mounting. In fighting imperialism the developing states call for economic decolonisation, ensurance of their sovereign right to dispose of their own resources natural and otherwise, to participate extensively on an equitable basis in the decision-making on global economic problems, and putting an end to the outflow of capital and skilled human resources. If these demands were to be met, the prospects for the just development of international relations as a whole would be good.

The Non-Aligned Movement hopes to further the strengthening of peace throughout the world, peaceful coexistence, and disarmament. It is also working to secure the national independence, the economic and social development of all countries. The Organisation of African Unity (OAU) plays a major role in international cooperation and anti-imperialist unity. It is made up of states of different social orientations which results in considerable difficulties and conflicts between member countries. Yet on the whole it successfully opposes colonialist policies, racism and apartheid.

Anti-imperialist tendencies are also manifest in

the Organisation of American States (OAS). Following the example set by a number of countries, the OAS adopted the principle of "ideological pluralism", which runs counter to the doctrine of Marxism-Leninism's "incompatibility" with the principles of the pan-American system promulgated by Washington at the height of the cold war. In 1975, a number of the "sanctions" imposed on Cuba were in fact lifted due to the concerted diplomatic efforts of the Latin American countries. At the same time, beyond the framework of the OAS a system of organs has been established to promote mutual economic cooperation, including the Latin American Economic System in which Cuba participates. These kinds of positive changes testify to the new alignment of forces in Latin America, as well as to the fact that many of the countries on that continent are gradually leaving the United States' sphere of influence as they strive to set off on their own, independent course in the world.

In their struggle for independence, the developing countries rely on the assistance rendered them by the socialist states and all of the democratic forces throughout the world. The socialist states help the peoples of newly independent countries consolidate their positions in international relations as well as in the sphere of their traditional exports. Their rise from the status of underdeveloped nations, the gradually closing

gap between their levels of economic development, and the establishment of extensive international links in the sphere of the economy, science and technology are a proof of the developing countries' economic stability. Responsibility for the age-old backwardness of these countries lies with the former mother countries. For this reason the socialist countries recognise as just the demand of the Asian, African and Latin American countries that the capitalist states considerably expand the transfer of resources to these countries by way of compensation for the damage inflicted on them through colonial plunder and that the debt of the developing countries be reduced and easy-term credit granted to them by international credit agencies. The socialist states vigorously support the anti-imperialist thrust of all the international organisations formed by the developing countries, oppose all interference in the domestic affairs of these independent states, and develop equitable and mutually beneficial cooperation with them.

2. Choosing a Road of Development

A question faces those peoples who have achieved political independence: will they be able to overcome, in the foreseeable future, the economic and cultural backwardness and the resulting dependence on imperialism and estab-

lish a New International Economic Order? Imperialist states and international monopolies would like to subordinate the economic and social development of these countries to their own interests. To this end, bourgeois ideologists have formulated a variety of theories to justify imperialist policies. In the 1950s-1960s, these goals were promoted by attempts to make young countries set out on a road modelled after the capitalist West. These attempts were frankly egotistic, as they did not take the specific features of these young states into account nor did they reckon with the popularity achieved by real socialism.

Most of the leaders of young Asian and African states were able to recognise that the former colonisers had a vested interest in the concept of Westernisation, however. So in the 1970s, new theories of modernisation were developed, which did not openly pressurise newly independent countries into following Western models. Modernisation implied restructuring socio-economic life in its entirety and passing from disorganisation and disorder to organisation and order, from the traditional to a modern, industrialised society. In practice, however, this vague formula concealed the assertion that the developing countries would inevitably go through all of the stages the industrialised capitalist countries had.

Advocates of the modernisation concept sometimes emphasise the need to develop stable politi-

cal institutions and establish an order. At others they emphasise the need to create a political elite, i. e. specialists in government. They are even ready to emphasise the importance of preserving the developing countries' uniqueness, but in doing so they try to avoid the question's socio-political implications. The fact is, however, that modernisation per se does not exist; it can only be accomplished within the framework of either capitalist or socialist development. For example, advocates of this line of thought equate the young states' political development with a mere accumulation of bourgeois-type political organisations (examples are the increasing number of parties and developing parliamentarianism), thereby promoting the idea that the Western model is the only developmental alternative. Yet the appearance of "modernised" institutions does not preclude the cultivation of archaic traditions, the authority of tribal leaders, tribalism or caste exclusiveness. Clearly this is not the way rapidly to overcome economic and cultural backwardness. The problem young states now face is not one of expanding certain institutions and organisations. They need to be able to take on large-scale, complicated tasks involved in bringing about their nations' economic and cultural development.

Another theory, that of an alternative approach, or a third road is also being dissem-

inated in developing countries. This amounts to a rejection of both the "Western" and the "Eastern" models. In several African states, for instance, the idea of the "Africanisation" of economic and cultural life is being promoted. Thus it is clear that the theories of a third road are nationalistic in nature.

On the one hand, the ideas of an alternate road reflect the need for reform in the developing countries. Many leaders of young states are aware that the rapid growth of national revenue alone is not enough to ensure progress and that profound social and class change is necessary: the working class and the intelligentsia must grow in numerical strength, the cultural level of millions must be raised, their well-being must increase and national revenues must be justly distributed.

As a rule advocates of the third road think that all these problems can be solved while preserving and cultivating ancient traditions. It is as if they were prepared to try and resolve modern problems by archaic methods. In fact, however, references to the exceptional nature of Asian and African countries act more as a kind of a screen designed to hide the fact that this is a variety of the social-reformism disseminated by European social-democracy. Characteristically, those who hold this view have borrowed many elements of their "theory" from the policy papers of social-democratic and socialist parties.

But the main point is not whether or not these ideas are borrowed. If under the cover of national socialism the masses' material standard deteriorates, monopolies step up their plunderous activities, inequality increases, and the gap between the rich and the poor grows still wider, then it is clear that the third road is, in reality, anti-popular.

Indeed, what kind of socialism is it, if exploitation of man by man persists, private property remains the basis of economic relations, and foreign policy hinges upon the stance taken by the capitalist countries? This path lies far off the direct road to equality, social justice and independence.

The idea of national socialism is used by some people so that they can pass as socialists. Others use it as a vehicle for their own views concerning the conditions which must be created if the ideals of equality and justice are to become a reality. Communists determine their attitude towards this approach by considering its real content and class motives. If the actual features of national problems are distinguished, local features are taken into account, and the need of social reform is well-founded, they give their support to it. But if the idea of national originality is used only to justify nationalism and racism and substantiate loyalty to traditional structures, Marxists-Leninists take a critical stand, for in this case it

can serve as the ideological basis for the consolidation of reactionary and conservative elements.

What stand do Marxists-Leninists take on the question of which road of development young states should take?

From the point of view of Marxism-Leninism, the most promising road is that of socialist development when together the broad working masses, the patriotically-minded petty bourgeoisie and the intelligentsia gradually advance towards socialism. Development along the socialist road has as its goal the eventual transformation of all aspects of life, both material and spiritual, in accordance with the principles of justice, equality and collectivism.

The preconditions necessary if socialism is to be quickly achieved do not yet exist in many of the developing countries. The base indispensable for their industrial development has yet to be built, and the modern social structure, the working class and the patriotically-minded intelligentsia are yet to be formed. Socio-economic changes must go hand in hand with revolutionary changes in other spheres of life: illiteracy must be eradicated, the population's cultural standards raised, medical services improved, etc.

In the course of socialist reforms, independence from imperialism is achieved not only in the political sphere, but also in the economic and cultural spheres, and this is fully in keeping with the

interests of the bulk of the people – the peasants, workers, artisans, the patriotically-minded petty bourgeoisie and the intelligentsia.

How a country advances towards socialism is determined by its history as well as by a number of constant and transient factors. The policies the countries which have embarked upon the road towards socialism pursue are determined by their actual level of economic development, the correlation of tribal-communal, feudal and capitalist elements in their social relations, the policies pursued by the leadership and the position that country occupies in the system of international relations. The difficulties and contradictions facing each country, and its firm advance along the road of socialist change ultimately depend on the real nature of its relations with capitalist and socialist countries.

3. Progress Towards Socialism: Specific Features

All countries are unique in terms of the rate at which they advance towards socialism and the forms that progress takes. Yet the main thrust of social policy is the same in all of them.

What elements can be said to be indispensable to the socialist path of development?

In Chapter Three of this book it was stated that

the economic foundation of socialist society is social ownership of the means of production, while its social foundation is the unity of the working people's interests. Exploitation of man by man has been done away with in socialist society, and the state acts exclusively in the interests of the working people. A new type of democracy emerges: the power of the people and for the people is exercised, and cultural levels are raised in all sections of society.

As the state works to attain these goals, it must sooner or later nationalise the major means of production, organise the artisans and peasants into cooperatives, arrange mass education, and raise living standards. The policies of the states which have embarked on the road towards socialism are pursued with the aim of promoting the interests of the working people, improving their welfare today and guaranteeing their prosperity tomorrow.

The areas of preeminence in the social lives of these states are not immediately apparent. In certain countries which have embarked on the road towards socialism the living standards of the working masses do not yet meet modern norms. This is due to the fact that their material and economic base is still weak and, in addition, they must combat internal counterrevolution and attempts on the part of the capitalist states to interfere in their domestic affairs. Most of the devel-

oping countries face major difficulties as they work to solve economic problems and search for sources of financing.

Given the difficulties the road towards socialism entails, one may well ask, whether socialism can be attained if the material and cultural prerequisites for its building have not all been met. However, the experience of many countries which have succeeded in building socialism shows that backwardness can only be overcome in the process of moving towards socialism. The peoples that have opted for socialism do face many difficulties, it is true. Yet there is no reason to be pessimistic: all of these difficulties can and will be overcome eventually. Socialism has become a reality in many countries now, and it has been transformed into a powerful world system. The stronger the impact the forces of socialism make the more anti-imperialist tendencies in the national liberation movement grow in definition. Periodical cataclysms in the economic and socio-political development of the capitalist states give the lie to the myth that the West is the embodiment of all that is good and progressive—the myth which has for ages been spread in the subjugated colonies to enslave the oppressed peoples spiritually.

In practice real socialism has proved that today the developing countries have an opportunity to put an end to their backwardness and step onto

the road of rapid economic and cultural progress, to establish equality and justice in society, and overcome the gap between the wealth of the minority and the poverty of the majority. The young states want to create an economically advanced and just society and this aspiration can become a reality as they have an opportunity to take advantage of the comprehensive assistance made available by the socialist states. The danger of intervention by imperialists in the affairs of newly-independent nations has been greatly reduced because of the position taken on this issue by the Soviet Union and other socialist countries. The world socialist system is the chief factor holding the aggressive ambitions of imperialists in check. The socialist countries establish equitable and mutually advantageous relations with all states. This policy has a favourable effect on the activities of the developing countries, too, since it enables them to reduce their dependence on foreign capital, while expanding their relations with socialist countries.

Today, some two dozen states are advancing along the path of socialism. Their leaders face a complicated task: to find optimal, well-thought-out solutions to all the problems involved in political and socio-economic development, while taking the specific conditions which obtain in each particular country into account. They must combine the policy of increasing the people's well-

being with greater social activity on the part of the broad working masses, and draw them into government and the building of a new society.

The chief and most characteristic aspects of the course pursued by those states which have chosen the road of socialist development are: the undermining of the economic domination of imperialism; the creation of state and cooperative sectors—their development is given priority; the regulation, and later restriction of the private capitalist sector, up to the nationalisation of foreign capital or establishment of control over it; the transition to planned economic development; the implementation of social reforms in the interests of the masses (agrarian reforms, the elimination of social privileges, the abolition of illiteracy, the granting of equal rights regardless of sex, progressive labour and social legislation, etc.); the struggle against bourgeois ideology; the dissemination of a revolutionary-democratic world outlook with the purpose of spreading the theory and practical experience of scientific socialism; the development of comprehensive cooperation with socialist states. Some of these countries declared the land to be state property; in others which have proclaimed: "The land belongs to those who till it", the size of large, privately-owned estates is limited, and the excess land is given to the landless peasants for their use.

Cooperation, particularly in agriculture, is

applied on a broad scale, since it helps solve the economic and social problems faced by all of these countries. Cooperatives pool the peasants' labour and make it more productive. As cooperatives develop, the danger that capitalist relations can penetrate into the countryside decreases. Instead, collectivist relations emerge and take root in labour and everyday life. In most cases they are consonant with the age-old traditions of the rural commune.

Cooperation in itself cannot solve all problems which arise as the peasants move forward towards socialism. Widespread illiteracy, primitive work tools, tribal prejudice and a slavish, servile mentality are all vestiges of the past, which must be overcome in the course of socialist development. In order to effect a massive surge in social activity the peasants' cultural level must be raised. They must be drawn into government, and the alliance between the working class and the peasantry must be strengthened. Cooperation, together with political and cultural reforms, constitutes a genuine revolution in the life of the countryside. It is accomplished in stages, since the peasantry must pass, in a historically short period, from pre-capitalist conditions to those which are close to socialist. Matters are also complicated by the fact that rural reforms cannot but meet with resistance on the part of reactionary forces, especially in those countries in which stratification into rich

and poor groups has already begun. If socialist reforms are to be implemented under these conditions leaders must be capable of neutralising opposition.

However, nationalisation and cooperation alone cannot ensure the implementation of social reforms. Leaders must subordinate the development of the state sector to the interests of the people and to the task of winning independence. In order to prevent the state sector from becoming a sinecure for government officials and in order to keep a new section of the bureaucratic bourgeoisie from being born, control must be established over the development of the state sector and democracy must be extended.

The expectation of quick change is a widespread "disease" among young revolutionaries. It manifests itself in the exaggeration of the opportunities at the disposal of state power and engenders hasty decision-making. As a result, nationalisation sometimes goes beyond sensible bounds, and is applied not only to big, but also to middle and small property owners. Such extreme measures could jeopardise further socialist progress and breed pessimism and disappointment. Among the masses, enthusiasm, romantic ardour and activeness may give way to disillusionment. Therefore, Marxists-Leninists oppose the ultra-left method of forestalling events and skipping historically inevitable stages, they oppose the ne-

glect of universal democratic tasks, whose accomplishment is essential to the modern national liberation revolution and which are a natural transitional stage on the road towards socialist revolution.

Socialist reforms do not preclude the existence of private property and the development of private enterprise within certain limits. As revolutionary-democratic parties see it private national capital can, for a time, play a positive role in the country's socio-economic development and in the satisfaction of the people's needs in regard to some industrial and agricultural products and certain consumer services. Mixed economies are for a time inevitable and therefore typical of developing countries.

One type of mixed economy is state capitalism under which private enterprises function with the participation and under the control of state agencies. Joint state and private enterprises are set up for the extraction of oil, diamonds and rare metals. The state's share in these enterprises gradually increases, thus strengthening the material and technical base of the state and expanding its opportunities for raising the working people's material and cultural level. The productive forces develop in a more organised and balanced manner, and this is conducive to the emergence of the material prerequisites for building a socialist economy in the future.

Anti-imperialism, the struggle against colonialism and racism is a distinctive feature of the foreign policies pursued by the states which have taken the road towards socialism, and the chief prerequisite for real social change is the consistent struggle to liberate them from economic dependence on imperialist monopolies. Independent young states try to implement democratic principles in international relations. They come out for equality in international affairs and mutually beneficial cooperation with other countries. They are in favour of positive neutrality and the strengthening of peace everywhere. They support the Non-Aligned Movement. Yet there are various trends within the framework of this movement: some states steadfastly pursue the policy of active neutrality and wage a resolute struggle against imperialism, while others succumb to the temptation of keeping their distance from both the capitalist and socialist countries. The latter group adheres to the thesis that there exist two superpowers and the world is divided into rich and poor nations.

4. The Political System under Socialist Development

The developing states which are advancing along the road of socialist development can be

divided, in accordance with their form, into two categories: the national-democratic states and the people's democracies. Typical of the latter is the fact that state power is exercised in the interests of the main strata of working people and effects anti-capitalist reforms, that the revolutionary-democratic parties have a decisive say in the decisions of the state, and that the broad popular masses play a noticeable role in political life. The state structure gradually undergoes change as a result of these phenomena: elections are held on a larger scale, public organisations take greater part in discussing state plans, etc.

In all the states which have opted for socialist development, forms of colonial government have been eliminated, absolute monarchy has been abolished, and the political and administrative power of chiefs has been done away with. Step by step, democratic principles are introduced into the life of the state, such as the electiveness of the organs of state power, the broad representation in them of the working people, the collective nature of government, and the right to recall deputies who have not justified the confidence of their electors. The institution of professional parliamentarians, i. e. members of the parliament who become part of the state apparatus, has been eliminated. In many countries, special laws have been adopted in accordance with which deputies must conduct explanatory and organisational

work among the electors, in order to mobilise the masses to implement decisions. Of course, full realisation of these democratic principles is still a long way off, but the first steps have already been taken.

The social composition of parliaments—the supreme legislative bodies of the state—speaks for itself: they are dominated by representatives of the broadest sections of the population—workers, peasants, women and youth. In some countries, the state is headed by a collegial organ: a presidium, state council, revolutionary council, etc. Representative organs can also be found in the provinces. In some countries, there are commissions for controlling property, revolutionary tribunals, voluntary workers' or people's militia squads, etc. which act in accordance with the collegial principle.

The state's supreme organs extensively employ in their activities the so-called syncretic norms, i. e. instructions which are not only a legal norm, but also a political and moral principle. As a rule, such norms are contained in policy papers—charters, which are adopted by general consensus at meetings held throughout the country. In these charters, achievements are assessed, the aims and tasks of development are explained, and the principles of social life are proclaimed. The principle of citizens' participation in government is, as a rule, legally formalised. In some countries peas-

ant associations and the peasant militia play a big part in the distribution of land and in the struggle against counter-revolutionary bands.

Power is highly centralised in most of the states which have taken the socialist road of development. The will of the president is decisive. All government measures are as a rule decreed from above. Emissaries appointed in the centre direct both local administrative organs and party organisations. This system operates wherever there is a need for extraordinary measures. There are also mixed systems, under which the institution of government representatives is combined with local elective bodies. At the initial stage of state building, the broad power vested in the president, administrative control over local elective bodies, and interference by the state in the activities of public organisations help overcome any resistance by reactionaries. The existence of numerous tribes in many of the developing states, as well as of inter-tribal strife and distrust explain the fact that in Asia and Africa unitary republics are more common than federative republics. Yet the absolutisation of centralism is contrary to socialist ideas, since it prevents the democratisation of public and state life. Given these conditions, democratic principles, such as participation by the masses in government and broad representation of the working people in the parliament, cannot be implemented consistently. It is not un-

common for peasants to be represented in elective bodies by kulak elements (rich peasants), and even by landlords.

The underdevelopment of political relations is also evident in developing countries' legal codes. As yet most of the developing states lack a system of legal norms, so customary, i. e. unwritten law, which has taken shape over the centuries, prevails. Even today when a judge considers a case he must take tribal norms and customs into account. Although tribal chiefs have been stripped of their administrative authority, their influence among their fellow tribesmen remains great, especially in the countries of Tropical Africa.

Bourgeois political scientists use the strong centralisation of power as an excuse for accusing the socialist-oriented states of being dictatorships, in an attempt to discredit the policies of these states. In Chapter One of this book, however, the reader had an opportunity to acquaint himself with the Marxist-Leninist theory of dictatorship. The principal question concerning any state structure is: whose interests does the government serve? Marxists-Leninists take a principled class approach to the issue of the state. In young progressive states, authoritarian elements exist side by side with new, socialist principles of democracy. The combination of authoritarianism and democratic principles helps overcome opposition

to the building of a new life at the initial stage of socialist development.

Political life in these countries is governed by the ruling revolutionary-democratic party. This party is the centre of political life, a vanguard leading the way towards socialism. The party determines the country's prospects for development, and works out economic plans. It also initiates radical social changes. In some countries, the party is looked upon as the supreme power. The president is elected by a party congress in some countries, while in others, the leader of the party is "entitled" to occupy the post. Local party organisations are regarded as lower organs of state power.

For the most part revolutionary-democratic parties have sprung up in those countries where capitalism has not developed, where socialist ideas have spread against the backdrop of the general capitalist crisis. It is no accident that revolutionary-democratic parties sprang up in those Asian and African countries where there were no influential bourgeois parties, and where, at the moment the country achieved independence parties had yet to be formed. More often than not, there were no other mass organisations in these countries either—no trade unions, no associations of any kind. In some of them, revolutionary-democratic parties began to evolve during the struggle for independence. Examples are

the Tanganyika African National Union (TANU), the Popular Movement for the Liberation of Angola (MPLA) – the Party of Labour, and the Mozambique Liberation Front (FRELIMO). History shows that if a revolutionary-democratic wing prevails within a nationalist party, then the entire party will gradually be transformed, and becomes a vanguard in the struggle for socialist orientation.

After the emergence of such a party, its leaders pursue a policy aimed at bringing about the gradual growth of its membership. Experience shows that this matter must be approached sensibly. Party membership should not be forcibly expanded, but neither should there be distrust in the growth of the activity and political consciousness of the masses. An increase in numbers can change a party from a vanguard into a loosely organised mass movement. It is therefore natural that the parties-movements or the parties-fronts are transformed into narrow political organisations which make strict political demands on their members. As a rule, revolutionary-democratic parties have rules and programmes. Each must become the collective political vanguard of the working people and try to strengthen its impact on the life of labour associations.

A revolutionary-democratic party is often considered society's political structure while the state is considered its administrative structure. The

party is regarded as an organisation which exercises power and takes decisions, while the state is regarded as an organ which must implement the decisions of the party. In practice, however, the way the revolutionary-democratic party develops depends upon the evolution of the state. Therefore as with states, revolutionary-democratic parties can be divided, with certain reservations, into two groups: popular-democratic parties and national-democratic parties. The former recognise Marxism-Leninism as their ideology and replenish their ranks with workers, peasants (with the exception of rich peasants), soldiers and intellectuals. Importance is attached by these parties to the mastery of the fundamentals of scientific communism not only by their leaders but the rank-and-file members as well. The deeds of each party member should meet the high standards of communist political consciousness, organisation, discipline, and responsibility. By mastering Marxist-Leninist doctrine and meeting the high standards that have been set a qualitatively new stage in the evolution of popular-democratic parties will be ushered in. National-democratic parties are ideologically based on non-Marxist concepts of socialism; they gladly welcome members of the petty bourgeoisie into their ranks. In some of the countries that have taken the road towards socialism there are right-wing conservative parties. When this is the case, political struggle is

aggravated, and the evolution and activities of the revolutionary-democratic parties become more complicated.

As a rule, there are united trade unions in these countries, as well as peasant, youth, women's and religious organisations, and the ruling revolutionary-democratic party establishes close ties with all of them. The leaders of public organisations are party's members and work in its leading organs. Public organisations take part in the preliminary discussion of issues which are to be resolved at party congresses. In some countries, public organisations also have administrative duties. Trade union activists are allowed to use a certain amount of their paid time to carry out their union duties. Representatives of public organisations and peasant cooperatives are members of various administrative bodies and sit on commissions on property matters. These commissions are authorised to confiscate property that has been acquired through other than legitimate means. In some countries, trade unions help organise workers' militia at enterprises, and take initiatives aimed at improving economic management.

Occasionally corrupt persons or even masked enemies of socialist development penetrate the leading organs of public organisations. This is dangerous when the working people's level of political culture is still not high. To offset this

danger, the principle of centralism is employed by public organisations. The president is vested with the right to dissolve individual organisations, and he may replace the leaders of public organisations. As a rule, the activities of all public organisations must be approved by the president. Organisations which are considered political are set up only by decision of the party's leading organs and the president. In some countries public organisations must make annual reports to the president.

One component of the political system is the National (Popular, Fatherland) Front—an association embracing all of the country's progressive organisations led by the revolutionary-democratic party. The National Front takes on national tasks, such as consolidating independence, rebuffing aggression and counter-revolution, and developing the economy and culture. This kind of political organisation serves to stabilise the country's position politically. Regrettably, the influence of such organisations is not great in all states. The National Front cannot make the best of all the opportunities it has at its disposal because it sometimes underestimates the social activity of the masses, does not place trust in the parties it is allied with, or substitutes some of the ruling party's organs for those of the Front. As democratic norms take firmer root in social life, these shortcomings will be overcome.

5. Capitalist-Oriented Countries

This group of countries is made up of those developing states where private ownership of the basic means of production forms the economic base of society and is the chief type of labour organisation, and where the bourgeoisie has been, or is becoming the dominant class. These states give every possible incentive to big private capital, and help transnational corporations increase their influence within the country and develop the national bourgeoisie. The state sector, if it is present at all, has an auxiliary role, and is most frequently called upon to assist the development of private enterprise. In some countries capitalist development has brought monopoly associations in its wake, although in none of the developing states do they dominate the economy.

The bourgeoisie is divided into two categories, the national bourgeoisie and the compradore bourgeoisie depending on the level of development reached by the local bourgeoisie and the nature and closeness of its ties with international capital and transnational corporations. The national bourgeoisie, as a rule, is interested in bringing the national liberation revolution to its logical conclusion, i. e. to the country's economic independence. The compradore bourgeoisie, on the contrary, seeks to ally itself with international monopolies and foreign capital. In capitalist-

oriented countries, the owners of the land and livestock have an important role to play. In some instances, they are the backbone of the state. The working people do not play a particularly noticeable role in political life. An object of political manipulation, they are subjected to fraud, intimidation and direct reprisals.

Some states which are oriented towards capitalism lean towards reforms and partially take the interests of the working masses into account in policy-making. In addition, persistent economic backwardness impels practically all of the classes and sections of this type of society to strive for independence. This circumstance prompts some of the leaders of these states to launch actions that are contrary to the interests of imperialism, such as the nationalisation of foreign monopolies.

The community of the economic and social principles which unites capitalist-oriented countries and the positions they occupy in the system of international relations (strong dependence on foreign capital and big foreign debts) determine their common political, social and economic policies. First, emphasis is placed on the necessity of modernising society while maintaining the domination of private ownership of the basic means of production. Second, belief in the myth about society's political unity, the absence of class antagonisms and the state's supra-class nature is encouraged. Third, traditions are idealised and

the significance of unique aspects of the history of developing countries is exaggerated, as are the racial and psycho-biological features of the "African" and "Arab-Moslem" personality, etc.

The states of capitalist orientation can be divided into four major groups:

The first group. The national bourgeoisie has developed and political bourgeois parties exist. At the same time, there are also political organisations affiliated with the working class and other sections of the working people, as well as revolutionary-democratic parties. On the whole the state represents the interests of the national and compradore bourgeoisie. Such states take the forms of bourgeois-democratic republics or military dictatorships.

The second group. State power is held by a bourgeois-landlord bloc. The alignment of forces within the ruling bloc may vary. These states frequently rely heavily on the army to suppress all forms of protest against the regime.

The third group. State power is vested in the capitalist-minded feudal lords.

The fourth group. The exploiter classes are just beginning to take shape. The countries of Tropical Africa and Oceania belong to this group.

The concrete historical features of capitalist-oriented states have an impact on state activities and the forms these states take. Presidential republics and monarchies prevail. Absolute

monarchies also exist. In the latter case, all legislative, executive and judiciary power is vested in the head of state. There are dualistic monarchies, too, in which power is vested in both the king and the parliament. In the case of the elective monarchy the supreme ruler is vested with power not through the right of succession, but because he has been chosen from among a narrow circle of governors of the states and emirates. The elective monarchy is characterised by a combination of elements, some typical of monarchies, some of republics, with the former prevailing.

Most of these countries are presidential republics. The president is as a rule elected by those who possess the right to vote. In all countries without exception power is firmly concentrated in the hands of the president. Not infrequently, the president is appointed by the military junta which has seized power by means of a military coup. As distinct from the states which have taken the road towards socialism, there are no institutions in capitalist-oriented countries for involving the masses in government, or raising their level of activity.

Federative state structures do not easily take root in developing countries. There are a number of instances of federations collapsing. Those that remain differ radically from capitalist federations. For instance, as a rule federal authorities have the right to interfere in the affairs of provinces. There

are several reasons for this centralisation of power. In Latin America, for example, it is largely connected with the prevalence of military-dictatorial regimes, while in Africa and Asia it is a peculiar form of reaction to separatist tendencies.

In the majority of capitalist-oriented states power is secured with the help of an authoritarian regime. Authoritarian regimes most frequently arise in those states where the feudal lords and landowners still have substantial power. The central political figure in an authoritarian regime is the president or monarch. Sometimes, it is difficult to draw the line between a presidential republic and a monarchy, since the president has been declared to be head of state for life in which case he enjoys the same power as a monarch.

The activities of all opposition parties are usually banned in capitalist-oriented states. The existing parties come under the president's control on the principle of "presidential guardianship". In some countries, Marxist-Leninist propaganda has been outlawed by special presidential acts, and membership in workers' or communist parties is considered a criminal offence. There is a tendency for the state machinery to merge with the party apparatus. In an authoritarian regime the president is not only head of state and party leader, but also the prime minister and head of the principal ministries. He is proclaimed to be the Father of the nation and the

founder of the nation's ideology. This glorification of the president is often accompanied by a turning to the forms and symbols of power used at the tribal-communal stage of development. The president is bestowed with titles, designed to create an aura of infallibility and holiness around his person.

Oligarchic, totalitarian and military regimes are types of authoritarian regimes. Under the oligarchic system the state is run by a narrow circle of people whose defining characteristic is their membership in the family of the monarch, president, or feudal ruler. Within this narrow circle the monarch makes all the decisions and the key posts go to his relatives. Only those parties which reflect the interests of the nobility are permitted. Higher party and government officials merge with the traditional feudal and tribal elite.

Elements of the oligarchy also exist in those countries where the government appoints tribal chieftains to the post of village elders, while the chiefs of larger tribes sit on the provincial council of chiefs and maintain law and order in the provinces. In a number of developing states there are special seats in the parliament for chiefs; moreover, the political leaders are frequently tribal chiefs by birth, or have been awarded the title. Sometimes, the country's tribal composition is taken into account not only in the composition of legislative organs but when governments are

being formed as well.

In the case of military regimes power is concentrated in the hands of the military. In Latin America military-dictatorial regimes are, as a rule, neofascist in nature. Dictatorial regimes usually have close ties to international imperialism. The opposition, if it is allowed to exist at all, only serves to camouflage lawlessness and terror.

Bourgeois-democratic regimes exist in a small number of developing countries, where the national bourgeoisie holds power and the left is strong. In these countries, democratic rights and freedoms are legalised, and there are several parties, including the revolutionary-democratic party. Elections are held regularly, and the parliament is the only legislative organ. Presidents, prime ministers, and legislators are changed in accordance with the results of elections. Working people in these countries are naturally unable to exercise all the rights they have been given, but it is easier for them to fight for their rights in these countries than it is in countries with authoritarian regimes.

In the capitalist-oriented countries, political parties play a limited role in politics and the life of society; they are mainly an instrument of political struggle designed to win power and retain it. They do not become the nucleus of the political system, or the centre of attraction for the most advanced members of their class. In some coun-

tries two-party or multi-party systems exist, but the government supports the activities and ideology of the ruling party exclusively in every case. In its turn, the ruling party supports the state and its regime. Hence the number of parties a country has does not alter the class essence of the state.

The other public organisations (trade unions and various types of associations) do not exert a noticeable influence on the state, if they exist at all. This is due to the fact that a modern class structure has not developed and that the ruling circles are not interested in the existence of powerful large-scale public organisations. State organs often interfere in the affairs of public organisations. Leaders of public organisations are often appointed from above. In some countries, the top posts in public organisations are elective, but if the results of an election are not consonant with the wishes of those in power, that election may be declared invalid. The bourgeois essence of all capitalist-oriented states is clearly manifested in the belittling of the role public organisations play and restrictions on their initiative.

Capitalist-oriented countries are greatly influenced by the manner in which law is practiced in developed capitalist states. The practical activities of the state organs are enormously influenced by tribal traditions, and vestiges of the caste structure. Traditionally privileged groups use these vestiges of the past to their own advantage,

so caste distinctions often prevent capable people from occupying high state and public posts, and even from entering the civil service. The state policy of consolidating and reviving these customs and traditions serves to maintain them. The instability of the position of the ruling circles and the quick rotation of leaders results in a rapid succession of constitutions and major differences between the *de jure* and *de facto* constitutions.

CONCLUSION

How will the state develop in the future? The Marxist-Leninist teaching on the state provides a scientific answer to this question. The state will cease to exist when the reasons for its existence disappear. The building of socialism is the first step in that direction. As socialism is built class antagonisms are abolished, and relations of equality and collectivism are established. The socialist state does not have the task of suppressing one or another class in order that another might dominate. Under socialism the state relies on the support it receives from the whole people, and its social base is formed by all of the classes and sections of society, united by a single,

shared relationship to the means of production and a community of fundamental interests.

At the same time the state does not disappear under socialism, rather, it is constantly being perfected. This has its roots in both foreign and domestic policy. First, the socialist countries must provide for their own security: this will be necessary as long as imperialism exists. The socialist countries' security is closely related to the strengthening of peace throughout the world and the policy of peaceful coexistence and international cooperation.

Second, under socialism the state is preserved because the prerequisites for the existence of communist society based on self-government have not yet been created. What kind of society must be created if the need for the state is to disappear? First of all, work should become the first necessity of life for all: then there will be no need for the state to control labour. Communist society will fully satisfy everybody's material requirements within the limits of reason, so there will be no longer any need for the state to control consumption vis-a-vis the quantity and quality of individual labour input either. There will be no need for authorities to regulate relations between people who occupy different social positions due to their unequal input of labour in terms of quality or quantity. There will be only the need to distribute material values, labour resources and working

time in a rational, scientific manner. But no special apparatus that would blend the aims of production with the interests of each person vis-a-vis the satisfaction of his requirements will be needed to carry out these tasks.

The members of communist society will take an active part in managing the affairs of their work collectives and society as a whole. Some of today's managerial functions will be assigned to computers. Hence there will be no longer any need for people engaged exclusively in management who are materially remunerated for their efforts.

Crime will have been eliminated in communist society. A new and perfect system of social relations, and a high degree of social culture will become the rule; non-observance of the law will be reduced to the bare minimum, and no special bodies will be needed to maintain law and order.

The fact that the state will wither away in the future does not mean that power per se will cease to exist. Even under communism, the individual will be subordinate to the interests of society and the will of the majority. And he must comply with demands made on him by the organs of communist social self-government. Moreover, while the state will wither away it will not disappear without trace. Managers and administrators, special organs of coercion and the army will no longer be necessary, of course, but the experience gained in economic-organisational and cultural-

educational activities will be used in new conditions. As the relevant socio-economic and ideological prerequisites mature and all citizens are involved in state administration, the socialist state will acquire a non-political nature and progressively become, under appropriate international situation, a transitional form from the state to non-state, as Lenin predicted¹. Communism will see the highest form of social organisation – communist social self-government.

These ideas about the future are based on knowledge of the logic involved in the evolution of socialist society. It is in socialist society that all the necessary prerequisites for the withering away of the state will be gradually created. Under really existing socialism today, economic development serves to increase the quantity of material and spiritual benefits placed at the disposal of man, and government relies on the growing activity of the masses. The broad development of democracy is the chief feature of the socialist political system.

Under capitalism, the prerequisites for the withering away of the state cannot be created. The exploitive, anti-popular nature of the bourgeois state and the suppression even of bourgeois-democratic institutions preclude any rapproche-

¹ See V. I. Lenin, *Collected Works*, Vol. 25, Progress Publishers, Moscow, 1977, p. 437.

ment between the state and the masses and constantly alienate the individual from political life. Profit-hunting and money-grubbing, the cult of property and gold, the unabating pursuit of wealth, and mass culture which aims to deceive and befuddle man are all characteristic features of bourgeois society.

We cannot predict when and how social self-government will be established. Each man, who attentively follows the course of world events, is aware that the forces opposing socialism are nurturing plans of aggression and that the threat of a nuclear catastrophe is quite real. Therefore our main goal today must be to avert the threat of a military conflagration. There is only one alternative open to all working men and women, to honest people around the globe—to struggle for peace, both for their own country and for the world as a whole.

Today the nations of the world live under different social systems and have different forms of government. Understandably, the attitude to the state varies from nation to nation. But in every case the people themselves create their own history. Therefore, the political and socio-economic conditions under which they will live depend on how quickly and deeply they come to realise this.

GLOSSARY

Aggression – an attack by one or several states on another state with the aim of seizing its territory, enslaving its peoples, and subordinating it to the aggressor state; a policy of imperialism.

Capitalism – the socio-economic system under which the basic means of production are concentrated in the hands of the bourgeoisie and production is founded on the exploitation of wage labour.

Centralism – the system of government and organisation, under which local organs are subordinated to higher, central organs of power.

Class struggle – the struggle waged by classes with antagonistic interests. The bourgeoisie tries to retain ownership of the basic means of production and power and to increase the exploitation of wage labour while the working people wage a struggle against the economic and political

dominance of the bourgeoisie. In the end the class struggle leads to social revolution.

Colonialism—the political subordination and economic exploitation of the peoples of colonies by developed capitalist states (mother countries). In the 1970s, the system of colonialism collapsed.

Communist social self-government—the organisation of the governing of society under communism, a non-political stateless form of government, under which participation in government becomes a vital need, a recognised necessity for all.

Decentralisation—the extension of the rights of local administrative bodies by giving them some of the central authority's functions.

Democracy—a form of government and political life as a whole. It is distinguished by the republican form of government and official recognition of the equality of all citizens. However democracy per se, in its "pure" form, does not exist. The specific content of democracy is primarily determined by the nature of the social system.

Democracy, bourgeois—a form of political domination by the bourgeoisie, based upon the electiveness of state organs and the proclamation of universal equality before the law. It presupposes, however, inequality in practice between

property-owners and wage labour, the rich and the poor, men and women, as well as racial and ethnic discrimination.

Democracy, socialist—the form of political life typical of socialist society. The principal features of socialist democracy are as follows: the state acts in the interest of the broad masses of working people, power is exercised with the masses participating extensively in the government, the high ideals of equality and freedom are realised, political rights and freedoms are enriched by the granting of broad socio-economic rights and the ensurance of their exercise.

Democratic centralism—the principle underlying the government and organisation of socialist society. It is a combination of the independent activity and initiative of all collectives and groups, and the electiveness of the leading organs on the one hand and the subordination of the minority to the majority, and the recognition of a single guiding centre and discipline on the other. It is opposed to bureaucratic centralism, which precludes independent local activity, and anarchism, which rejects the need for the state, i. e. of a single guiding centre.

Deputy—a person elected to represent a constituency in a standing organ of power. In the USSR, the working people elect deputies to the

Supreme Soviet of the USSR, the Supreme Soviets of Union Republics and local Soviets of People's Deputies.

Dictator—a person vested with unrestricted power who exercises one-man rule. A dictator usually comes to power as the result of a military coup.

Dictatorship—1) the power of a dictator; 2) political domination by a certain class.

Dictatorship of the bourgeoisie—political domination by the bourgeoisie (the capitalists) over the working people, which comprises the essence of all capitalist states.

Dictatorship of the proletariat—political domination by the working class over the bourgeoisie in the interests of building socialism. It is established in the course of a socialist revolution to suppress the resistance put up by the exploiters and is of a temporary nature. The dictatorship of the proletariat reflects the essence of the state in the period of transition from capitalism to socialism. The state of the proletarian dictatorship is gradually transformed into the state of the whole people.

Exploitation—the appropriation of the fruits of others' labour by big and medium property-owners of the means of production. It is charac-

teristic of societies which are founded on private ownership of the means of production.

Imperialism—the highest and last stage of capitalism. It began when the domination of capitalist monopolies became a fact both within a single country and internationally.

Legislation—the body of laws in one country.

Marxism-Leninism—a system of views on the laws governing the development of nature, society and thinking, a theory of knowledge and the transformation of the world; the ideological foundation of the communist parties' activities.

Monarchy—a form of government, under which the state is headed by a single person—the tsar, king or emperor—and the power vested in the head of state is as a rule hereditary.

Monopoly, capitalist—a powerful association of capitalists in the form of concerns, corporations, etc. Domination of the capitalist market by monopolies and their decisive impact on government organs are the chief features of bourgeois states.

National bourgeoisie—that section of the bourgeoisie in developing countries which is genuinely interested in the independent political and economic development of their country. The national bourgeoisie does not encompass that sec-

tion of the property-owners, which serves as the middleman for capitalist monopolies and promotes the policy of neocolonialism.

Neocolonialism – the continuation of the policy of colonialism under the new conditions. It is aimed at preserving the former colonies' dependence on industrialised capitalist states, and, if the opportunity arises, at restoring their political dependence as well.

Oligarchy – political and economic domination by a small group of wealthy and aristocratic persons.

Political power – the ability to exert a decisive influence over all the members of society. It is exercised with the help of the authority of state organs, politicians, conviction and coercion. The main instrument of political power is the state.

Political reaction – the active resistance put up by the bourgeoisie, landowners and all representatives of the dominant class to revolutionary, democratic and national liberation movements; the regime of terror and mass violence directed against the working people.

Republic – the form of government under which the supreme organs of power are made up of people's representatives elected for a certain term of

office in the manner laid down in a constitution. Compared with the monarchy, it is an historically advanced type of state. The genuine significance of the republic is determined, however, by the existing socio-economic system, so a distinction should be made between socialist and bourgeois republics.

Scientific communism – a component of the theory of Marxism-Leninism, substantiating the conditions governing the transformation of society along socialist lines and the ways of effecting that change as well as the ways of gradually building communism.

Socialism – the first phase of the new socio-economic system – communism. Under socialism, public ownership of the basic means of production prevails, exploitation of man by man is non-existent, the national economy develops according to a single plan devised in the interests of all the working people, and equally favourable conditions for vital activity are gradually created for all.

Socialist revolution – the transition from capitalism to socialism. It is initiated when the working class in alliance with all working people seizes power, smashes the old state machinery and establishes the dictatorship of the proletariat.

Types of state – the concept reflecting the historically changing class essence of the state. There are four main types of state: slave-owning, feudal, bourgeois and socialist.

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