

SOCIAL AND STATE STRUCTURE OF THE COUNTRIES OF PEOPLE'S DEMOCRACY

(Constitutions of the people's democratic republics)

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The Second World War brought about a change in the correlation of forces between capitalism and Socialism in favour of Socialism. This is seen in the strengthening of the Soviet Union, growth of its economic and defence power, strengthening of the moral, political unity of the Soviet people, increasing the international authority of the Soviet State.

The changed correlation of forces between the capitalist and Socialist systems is also shown in the dropping off of a number of countries of Central and South Eastern Europe from the imperialist system.

The peoples of Central and South-Eastern Europe who have come out of the clutches of imperialism were able to solve independently the question of the character of their States and to create a new political organisation, namely, a State of People's Democracy, because the Soviet Army which had entered their territory drove away the German Fascists and prevented Anglo-American intervention which was being prepared for. Without the Soviet Union and its Army the peoples of these countries would not have escaped the lot of Greece where the Anglo-American interventionists and native reaction foisted on the people by means of violence and terror a monarcho-Fascist regime and bloody civil war. The victories of the Soviet Army which brought about the complete military defeat of Fascism and drove away the German Fascist occupiers, were the decisive conditions for establishment of the order of the People's Democracy in the countries of Central and South-Eastern Europe.

The overthrow of the old order in these countries resulted in the removal of the bourgeoisie and the landlords from power and the transfer of it into the hands of the working people with the working class at their head. The authority and the influence of the working class among the masses of the people of these countries have increased beyond all measure because it showed the greatest heroism, consistency and irreconcilability in the fight against Fascism, in the fight for the overthrow of the power of the exploiting classes and for establishing the power of the toiling people!

The toiling people, led by the Communist Parties have achieved success in

the fight against Fascism and in the consolidation of People's Democracy. The Communist Parties ensured the leading role of the working class during the course of the national liberation struggle and establishment of people's power. By their self-denying struggle for the interests of the toiling people the Communist Parties won the tremendous affection of the masses of the people.

The Communist Parties showed themselves as the most active force of the peoples of these countries in their struggle against the German Fascists, the most consistent and determined fighters against the exploiters, against Fascism and reaction, for national sovereignty of their States. The Communist Parties are the initiators and carriers of the democratic changes in the countries of People's Democracy. All the blows at reaction were dealt at the initiative and with the most active participation of the Communist Party.

The people's democratic power carried out profound changes which have transformed the social and State structure of the countries which have dropped off the capitalist system. The people's power immediately after its emergence set about carrying through the agrarian reform, with the object of satisfying the hopes and requirements of the broad masses of the people by abolishing landlordism and giving land to the landless and poor peasants.

The agrarian reform was carried out on the principle: "Land belongs to those who till it". There are differences as regards the time and tempo of carrying out of the agrarian reform as well as regards the maximum land that can be privately owned, in individual countries of People's Democracy, but one thing is common to all these countries that the agrarian reform has brought about the liquidation of the land ownership by the landlords and of the feudal remnants and handed over land and agricultural implements to the peasants who had no land or had very little.

Another most important measure carried out in the countries of People's Democracy is nationalisation of banks, of the big and medium size industry and confiscation of the property belonging to the war criminals and to the persons who collaborated with the German Fascist usurpers.

Nationalisation of industry and banks, differing in each one of the countries of People's Democracy from the aspect of the time within which and tempo at which it was carried out, everywhere as a rule covers all the branches of industry and undermines the economic power of the bourgeoisie. In consequence of the nationalisation of industry and banks the toiling classes in the State of People's Democracy occupy the decisive position in economy: mines, sources of energy, transport, communication, big and medium size establishments and banks. As a result of the nationalisation of industry the State (Socialist) sector has been brought into existence in these countries which plays a leading role in the whole of the national economy. The State sector in industry of the countries of People's Democracy at the

present time constitutes from 80 to 95 per cent of the entire industrial production.

Nationalisation of the industry and banks as well as agrarian reform took place in conditions of stubborn resistance by the exploiting classes, in conditions of sharp class struggle. The success of these changes was guaranteed by the fact that those changes corresponded to the profoundly vital interest of the broad toiling masses and therefore met with their full support.

The new people's power had to face the task of organising the new State apparatus. Without this, State power could not become the real power of the people. "By the State apparatus", V. I. Lenin pointed out, "is meant first of all the permanent army, police and the officers" (Collected Works, Vol. 21, page 256). It was necessary to organise in place of the old army headed by the reactionary generals and officers, a new genuinely people's army, to liquidate the police which had used violence against the toiling people, to change the old bureaucracy which served the interests of the bourgeois-landlord clique. It was necessary to create a new State apparatus capable of defending the interests of the working class and all the toiling people.

Removal of the old and creation of the new State apparatus took place in a situation in which the hostile elements put up overt and covert resistance. However, the firm and consistent policy of the working class and its party, support of the new power by the people, vigilance and activity of the toiling people upset the calculations of reaction about bringing back the pre-war, anti-popular power by preserving the old State apparatus. Creation of the new State apparatus was one of the big victories of the People's Democracies, which ensured consolidation of the people's power.

An important condition for consolidating the people's power was the creation of a new army. The partisan units form the core of these armies. The new commanding cadres were selected mainly from the leaders of the partisan detachments and other anti-Fascists who had distinguished themselves. An apparatus was created for the political education of the soldiers. The reactionary generals and officers were removed from the army. The old apparatus of police and gendarmerie was abolished and on the initiative of the masses of the people, the people's militia was created for maintaining the freedom and the rights of the people. The most important cadres of the people's militia were recruited from the anti-Fascist patriots.

As a result of the democratic changes which have been carried out, a number of countries of People's Democracy are marching on the road to Socialism.

The profound changes in the social and political order of the countries of People's Democracy require the adoption of new constitutions. New

constitutions were adopted in Albania (March 1946), Bulgaria (December 1947), Rumania (April 1948), and Czechoslovakia (May 1948). A law about the structure and competence of the higher organs of the Polish Republic and a Declaration of civil rights and freedom was established in Poland in February 1947 and a law about the State structure was made in Hungary in February 1946.

In working out the draft of the constitution of the countries of People's Democracy representatives of all progressive social organisations took part. The People's Republics avail themselves of the positive experience of the discussion of the draft of the Stalin Constitution of the USSR by the entire people. The draft constitutions of these countries were published for discussion by the entire people. In this discussion broad masses of the working people participated. In this especially was manifested the real democratic character of the power in the people's republics.

The constitutions of these people's republics set the basic principles of the new social and State system, organisation and functions of the organs of State power, of State administration and justice, as well as formulate the fundamental rights and duties of the citizen. They characterise the people's republic as the State of a new type in which power lies in the hands of the toiling people with the working class at their head. The State power in the countries of People's Democracy is designed to serve the purpose of suppressing the resistance of the exploiting classes who have been overthrown and of all the attempts to restore the capitalist order and rule of the bourgeoisie. It is designed to serve the purpose of defending the country from the foreign imperialists, to serve the purpose of building Socialist economy.

In the people's republics the strategic sections of national economy are in the hands of the State. But the economic roots of capitalism have not still been liquidated, the capitalist elements still remain and continue to grow; by making use of the support of international reaction, they strive to restore the old capitalist forms.

The people's democratic State is the direct outcome of the historic victory of the Soviet Union over German Fascism. In a situation of military defeat of the Fascist aggressors' State, in conditions of a rapid sharpening of the general crisis of capitalism, of the tremendous increase of the might of the Soviet Union and alongside the close collaboration between the U.S.S.R. and the people's democratic States, an opportunity has opened up for the countries of People's Democracy to carry out the transition from capitalism to Socialism by means of the people's democratic system.

Thus People's Democracy is a special historical form of the revolutionary power of the masses of the people with the working class at their head, which

accomplishes the transition to Socialism. The regime of People's Democracy successfully carries out the functions of the dictatorship of the proletariat: suppression of the resistance of the exploiting classes which have been overthrown, drawing in of the toiling masses for the task of Socialist construction through the leadership of these masses by the working class through its State and building up of Socialist society.

In the process of stabilisation and development of the States of People's Democracy, the Communist Parties have become the core of power, have become the ruling parties.

Up to 1948 alongside the Communist Parties in the countries of People's Democracy, with the exception of Albania, Social Democratic parties also existed. In the struggle for the development of People's Democracy the unity of the working class was consolidated. The merger in 1948 of the Communist and Social Democratic Parties into one party of the working class on the basis of Marxism-Leninism is an expression of the strengthening of the political, ideological and organisational unity of the working class. The throwing out of the right-wing reactionary elements from the Social Democratic Parties was the condition precedent to their unification.

Marxism-Leninism constitutes the Ideological basis for the unification of the working-class party. The Parties are built up on the principle of democratic centralism. All these parties, though they are called differently, the Communist Party, Workers' Party, the Party of the Working People, are the parties of a new type, the parties of the working class, In their programmes and organisational structure they start from the Leninist Stalinist teachings about the Party.

The unification of the working-class parties signifies the consolidation of the forces of the working class as it puts an end to the division in its ranks and wields its power. Moreover there is no doubt that the unification of the working class parties signifies a further consolidation of the leading role of the working class In the States of People's Democracy.

The new constitutions have been adopted and are being carried out in practice under the leadership of the Communist Parties in the countries of People's Democracy.

The constitutions of the people's republic first of all contain the chapters and articles devoted to the social organisation of the countries of People's Democracy. The starting point of the constitutions of the countries of People's Democracy is that there are In these countries at the present time three most Important economic systems: Socialist (State and Co-operative), private capitalist, and that based on small commodity production. Accordingly the constitutions set down that the means of production are: (1) Social property, that, is the property of the State; (2) The property of the people's co-operative

organisations; (3) Property of the Individual. Thus the economy in the countries of People's Democracy is composed of more than one system.

The State property in these countries embraces the most Important means of production, thanks to which it constitutes the main basis of the development of people's economy, the material basis of the economic prosperity and independence of the people's republic.

The State property is a higher form of socialist property, the basis of the socialist system—a leading one, but, as yet not a predominant one in the entire people's economy of the republics. The big private capital has no place in the people's republics. Capitalist monopolies (trusts, cartels and concerns) are prohibited by the constitutions. Private property within limits is permitted by the law, the right of inheritance and private economic initiative are allowed. However, it is pointed out in the constitutions that none can make use of the right of private property to the detriment of the society. Thus the constitutions openly proclaim the priority of social and popular well-being. The constitutions of the people's republics reject the principle of the inviolability of private property, which is characteristic of the bourgeois constitution. They set down that the means of production owned privately can become the property of the State, if the interest of the people demands this. In that case the owner may be given compensation in a proportion fixed by the Law.

The constitutions of the people's republics affirmed the basic principles of the agrarian reform: "Land belongs to those who till it." Large-scale private land ownership has been abolished, the amount of land which can be owned by individual persons has been fixed by law. The State of People's Democracy gives grants to the labour peasant economies by the organisation of machine and tractor stations, granting long term credits and sowing materials. It helps the development of co-operation in all its forms and especially the development of labour co-operative agricultural forms. They are the first to be given help and granted concessions.

In Bulgaria, according to the law of land reform, priority, in allotment of land, is given to those peasants who have combined in labour co-operative agricultural farms. These co-operative farms have been exempted for three years from all direct taxes and receive credit from the co-operative banks at concession rates. As a result of these and other measures there are today in one-fourth of all the villages of Bulgaria agricultural productive co-operatives. Altogether in the country there are estimated to be more than 1,000 such co-operatives with a membership of 76,000, cultivating 300,000 hectares of land. Every peasant who joins the labour agricultural co-operative, while giving away to the cooperative the whole of his arable land, cattle and agricultural implements, at the same time preserves his

proprietary rights in the land. The agricultural productive co-operative in the countries of People's Democracy is the primary form of the productive joint farms of the peasants and of the collective cultivation of the land. For further development of productive co-operation the Government of Bulgaria grants big credits; more than 70 state machine tractor stations have been created in the country.

The new principles of the socio-economic organisation of the countries of People's Democracy create conditions for planning the economic development of these countries. The State of People's Democracy directs economic life through a single economic plan, relying upon the state and co-operative sector of the economy and exercising general control over the private sector. The transfer of the most important means of production and banks to social ownership is the precondition of planning. Thanks to this, the State possesses the most important levers of influencing, in a planned way, the entire national economy. The State having at its disposal the most important means of production, guides the economic and cultural life of the countries of People's Democracy ensuring the growth of productive forces and strengthening of the defensive capacity of these countries, safeguarding and strengthening their national sovereignty.

The countries of People's Democracy already in 1946-1947 embarked upon long-term planning. In Poland and Hungary 3-year plans were adopted while in Bulgaria and Czechoslovakia, 2-year national economic plans were adopted. In Hungary the 3-year plan was to be completed by December 31, 1948, i.e., within 2 years and 5 months. In Czechoslovakia the 2-year plan has been completed as a result of which the industrial production has exceeded the pre-war level by 10 per cent at the end of 1948 and the standard of living of the population also has risen. In 1948 a 5-year plan of development of the national economy has been adopted in Czechoslovakia and a 2-year plan in Albania. In Bulgaria a 5-year plan has been prepared. It was discussed at the 5th Congress of the Bulgarian Workers' Party (Communist). In Poland a draft of a 6-year plan has been worked out. It was examined at the unification Congress of the Workers' Party of Poland.

The conditions for the successful realisation of the national economic plans in the countries of People's Democracy are the organisation and solidarity of the working class, leadership of the Communist Party, the policy of restricting and displacing private capital, steady growth and expansion of the Socialist form of economy. The most important role in the realisation of the national economic plan is played by the increased labour activity of the masses of the people who look upon the realisation of the plan as the cause of the entire people. The plans are fulfilled in active collaboration with the trade unions of the workers and employees, co-operatives and other organisation of the toiling

people. Paragraph 164 of the Constitution of Czechoslovakia reads: "Everyone who has been assigned any task must while executing and carrying out the one economic plan, fulfil it conscientiously and economically, as far as it is possible."

The transfer of political power into the hands of the toiling people and of the most Important means of production into State property change the character of labour in these countries. Labour in the people's republics is recognized as the most Important socio-economic factor, a matter of honour for and duty of every able-bodied citizen. The constitutions of the people's republics ratified the universal juridical and moral obligation to work and the right to Just payment for labour in accordance with its quantity and quality.

The new principles of socio-economic structure are already giving their beneficial result. The State sector of industry has become the leading one, the co-operatives are developing with State support, long-term planning (two year, three year, five year, etc.) ensures the high tempo of economic development and the rise in the material and cultural level of the peoples, while the great and noble object of building Socialism unites the toiling people in a common enthusiasm expressed in the extensively growing labour emulation and shock-work.

The radical changes in this sphere of economy have led to changes in the class structure and in the correlation of class forces. As a result of the nationalisation of big industries and banks the big capitalist in the town has been liquidated, but the small capitalist still remains in industry and trade. The fulfilment of the task of complete liquidation of the capitalist elements in the towns is related to the further development and consolidation of State industry, to the development of State and co-operative trade.

The agrarian reform has led to the liquidation of the class of landlords and has given land to the toiling peasantry, but it has not put an end to the class differentiation in the village and the growth of kulaks. The nationalisation of land in people's republics has still not been carried out. "We however think", said Com. Dimitrov, "that gradually by drawing the poorest and middle peasant into the labour co-operative agricultural farms, by increasing the number of Machine-Tractor stations, by prohibiting the renting of land, by restricting and prohibiting the purchase and sale of land, we at the same time have created conditions so that the question of nationalisation of land will be solved in practice; moreover, the whole land will be given over to the toiling peasant for permanent use." As regards the kulaks—the most numerous exploiting class—at present a policy of restricting and displacing them is being carried out. Liquidation of kulaks as a class can be carried out, as the experience of the USSR tells us, only on the basis of mass collectivisation of the peasant farms. The task of mass collectivisation of agriculture, i.e., its transfer into large-scale Socialist agriculture, however, demands a large amount of preparatory work as regards the restriction and displacement of

the capitalist elements in the village, strengthening of the alliance between the working class and the toiling peasantry under the leadership of the working class, as regards the development of Socialist industry which produces the machines for large-scale agricultural production, as regards educating the peasantry and explaining to it the advantages of the collective economy,

The most important classes in the countries of People's Democracy are the working class and the toiling peasantry—poor and middle peasants who are the allies of the working class, with the leading role of the working class in this alliance. The alliance of the working class with the peasantry is cemented by the joint struggle against German Fascism and its allies inside these countries, by the common labour in laying the foundations of the new social and State system, in consolidating people's power, At present this alliance has been directed against the capitalist elements of the town and the village; its task is to carry on the struggle against the capitalist elements, to increase the productive forces to help the labour peasant farms and in proportion to the development of conditions in the respective countries, to develop the productive cooperative organisation of the peasant farms.

The leading force of the alliance between the workers and the peasantry is the working class. The present working class of the people's republics is not a class exploited and suppressed by capitalism. The working class jointly with the toiling people now owns the most important means of production. It carries out the State leadership of the society. Further strengthening of the leading role of the working class with the Communist Party at its head in all spheres of the State, socio-political, economic and cultural life, is one of the most important tasks of People's Democracy.

The more the power of the toiling people develops and deepens democracy and the Socialist changes, the more the class struggle sharpens. The Communist Parties of the countries of People's Democracy foster vigilance and a fighting readiness among the toiling masses, by arming them to overcome difficulties in building Socialism.

“So long as the economic roots of capitalist exploitation are not completely destroyed”, said Com. Beirut at the unification Congress of the workers' parties of Poland, “the capitalist elements will strive their utmost to restore the whole system of capitalist economy. Therefore the working class must carry on an irreconcilable struggle with the capitalist elements, must strive to liquidate completely all the forms and economic sources of capitalist exploitation.”

The exploiting elements deprived of political power and losing their economic position have recourse to sabotage, espionage, wrecking, terrorist acts, diversions, and try to destroy the people's power and the democratic achievements of the toiling people.

The remnants of the internal reaction in the countries of People's Democracy work at the direct bidding of the Anglo-American imperialists. The trials of Manius in Rumania, of the groups of Petkov and Lulchev in Bulgaria and of other reactionaries in the countries of People's Democracy have irrefutably shown that the threads of anti-state conspiracies lead to the Anglo-American imperialists, who support and inspire these remnants of internal reaction.

The new socio-economic structure of the countries of People's Democracy is the material basis of the wide democratic rights and freedom of the toiling peoples. The constitutions of the countries of People's Democracy grant such rights and liberties to the toiling peoples as they never had before and do not have in the capitalist countries even today.

Among the rights of the citizens the socio-economic rights, that is, the rights, in which the toiling masses are above all interested, occupy the first place. By the constitutions of the countries of People's Democracy the citizens enjoy the right to work, to have rest, to have help in old age and sickness.

The right to work is guaranteed by the democratic character of the State power, by the existence of a considerable and ever growing Socialist sector in the economy and by the corresponding planning of the national economy.

In the conditions of the countries of Eastern Europe, where before the war an extremely low percentage of literacy existed, the right to education granted to the working people acquires a special significance. The Constitution of Albania (Article 28) states: "... The State guarantees to all strata of the population the opportunity to attend schools and other cultural institutions.... The schools are conducted by the State.... Primary education is compulsory and free. Schools are independent of the church." In Albania where before the war 85 per cent of the population was illiterate, today there are more than 450 primary schools, 16 middle schools, and a wide network of courses for the liquidation of illiteracy is in operation.

In Bulgaria ever since the establishment of the people's power considerable successes have been achieved in the sphere of public education. 907 new primary schools have been opened and the number of middle schools has doubled compared to before the war. In the Republic over 200 vocational schools, 69 primary, and 38 middle schools for adult workers and employees have been started. In prewar Bulgaria there was only one University; today there are four. 15 hundred students receive stipends from the State.

One of the characteristic features of People's Democracy is the solution of the national problem in the spirit of real democracy and equal rights of the people. The constitutions set down the equal rights of the citizens regardless of their nationality and race. Direct or indirect restrictions on the rights, or

conversely granting of privileges on account of nationality, as well as propagation of national hatred, are punishable by law. The national minorities have the right to unrestricted development of their national culture and free use of their mother tongue.

In Rumania where the national minorities were looked upon before as “inferior”, and were deprived of elementary citizen’s rights, national inequality and oppression have now been ended for good. Transylvanian Hungarians have the same rights as the Rumanians. About 2,000 primary, 250 middle and many higher schools have been opened for Hungarians. Over 30 newspapers and journals are being published in the Hungarian language. There are also schools for other national minorities (Serbs, Greeks, Armenians, Germans, etc.), in these schools the medium of education is their own mother tongue.

In Bulgaria the national minorities (Turks, Macedonians, etc.) also have the right to receive education in their own mother tongue, while the people’s power makes this practicable by opening schools for these nationalities and training cadres for these schools, In Albania in regions with Greek population, schools for the Greek people have been started and also a newspaper in the Greek language is being published.

The principles of equal rights of all nationalities find expression also in the organisation and formation of State organs in the countries of People's Democracy.

According to the Constitution of Czechoslovakia the legislative and executive power on the territory of Slovakia is exercised by the Slovakian national organ—Slovakian National Council and Collegium of Representatives. Being the expression of the national interests of Slovakian people they are called upon to guarantee equal rights of the Slovaks and Czechs within the system of the one State. The representatives of Slovakia are included in the National Assembly and the Government of Czechoslovakia.

In other countries of People’s Democracy where there is no need to create special national organs of power, representation of national minorities in the general State organs is ensured. Thus in Rumania there are 30 Hungarian Deputies in the National Assembly. In the National Assembly of Bulgaria there are representatives of the Macedonian and Turkish population. In Albania where the Greek national minority forms altogether only 2.4 per cent of the population, there are 3 Greek Deputies out of a total of 84 Deputies in the National Assembly.

For the first time in the history of these States the toiling people possess the political freedoms: Freedom of speech, of the press, of assembly, of meetings and of demonstrations, right of combination and organisation. The .

citizens of national republics are guaranteed freedom of conscience and religion, right to perform religious worship, inviolability of personal residence and privacy of correspondence.

The constitutions of the countries of People's Democracy have as a starting point that all the rights and freedom conferred on the citizens of these States must help to strengthen the people's democratic regime, the growth of organisation and political self-activity of the masses of the people. The utilisation of the rights conferred by the constitutions for anti-democratic purposes is recognised as a crime and punishable by law. They can never have freedom who are enemies of the people's power, who fight against the people's democratic order.

The constitutions of the countries of People's Democracy besides granting wide democratic rights and freedom also impose obligations upon the citizens; to abide by the Constitution and observe the laws, to work according to their capacities, to defend the fatherland and conscientiously perform public duties.

The constitutions of people's republics are based on real democratic foundations and real sovereignty of the people.

The entire power in the people's republics comes from the people and belongs to the people. The people exercise their power through the representative organs elected by them, beginning with the local and ending with the highest State organs.

The electoral right ensures real free expression of the will of the people and at the same time real representation of the people in the organs of State power. The right to elect and be elected to the organs of State power is enjoyed by all adult citizens regardless of their sex, nationality, race, religion, education and place of residence.

In Bulgaria and Albania all citizens who have reached the age of 18 have the right to vote and are eligible for election. In Czechoslovakia all citizens who have reached the age of 18 have the right to vote and all those who have reached the age of 21 are eligible for election. In Rumania all the citizens who have reached the age of 18 have the right to vote and those who have reached the age of 23 are eligible for election. In Hungary, according to the provisional electoral law, all the citizens who have reached the age of 20 have the right to vote and are eligible for election. In Poland, according to the law of elections to the legislative Seim all citizens who have reached the age of 21 have the right to vote while all those who have reached the age of 25 are eligible for election.

In the countries of People's Democracy the elections are equal, direct and by secret ballot. Political parties, social organisations as well as groups of voters have the right to nominate candidates. Political parties can nominate

candidates independently as well as jointly in an electoral bloc. Broad masses of the people participate in nominating the candidate. The people's deputies are obliged in their work, to act according to the mandate of their voters, to report to them on their work and can be recalled before the expiry of their term. Thus a constant control by the broad masses of the people over the work of the state organs is provided for, which constitutes one of the most important conditions of a real democracy.

The real democratic character of the electoral right in the countries of People's Democracy is clearly evident not only from the constitutional provisions which determine it, but also from its application in actual practice. General elections were held in Bulgaria in 1945 and 1946, in Albania in 1945, in Rumania and Czechoslovakia in 1946 and 1948, in Poland in 1947 and in Hungary in 1945 and 1947. The general characteristic features of all these elections were: active participation of the people in the preparations, organisation and holding of the elections, as well as in the control over the latter; the really free character of the elections which exclude any kind of pressure on the voters; participation of almost every working man in the voting. In the countries of Peoples' Democracy from 80 to 90 per cent voters have taken part and in even greater numbers in individual cases in contrast to the USA where in the 1946 elections to the Congress only 37.5 per cent of the voters took part in the voting.

The elections in the countries of People's Democracy led to still further rallying of the working people around the Communist Party, as the ruling party—the most important directing force of the development of People's Democracy.

In contrast to the bourgeois countries where people cannot exercise any influence on the administration of the State, in the countries of People's Democracy it is the people who are in power. who exercise their sovereignty by participating in the administration, in working out and putting into effect important laws and State measures through various social organisations.

The constitutions of the countries of People's Democracy provide for holding a referendum, which was actually held in Poland and Bulgaria.

On June 30, 1946, a referendum was held in Poland on the question of the principles of the future constitution and of the most important changes in the State, economic and political structure. Over 90 per cent of the voters took part in the referendum. The people approved the reforms already carried out, expressed in favour of the abolition of the senate which was a centre of reaction in pre-war Poland, and greeted the restoration of the historic frontiers of Poland passing along the rivers Oder and Neiss.

In Bulgaria the people's power provided an opportunity to the people to express by means of referendum their will on the question of the form of the

State administration. In contrast to Greece, where the referendum on the question of the return of King George, whose hands were stained by fascist crimes, took place in conditions of a reign of monarchical terror and where the people had no chance to express freely their will, in Bulgaria the referendum on September 8, 1946, passed off in conditions of complete freedom, without any kind of compulsion; out of a total of 4,500,042 voters 4,129,534 or 91.67 per cent took part in the referendum. Out of these 3,832,001 or 92.72 persons voted for a People's Republic.

"Comparing the two countries", said Com. V. M. Molotov, "we see that in Bulgaria the Republic has been established in such a way as fully corresponds with the universally recognised principles of democracy, and on the other hand in Greece the monarchy restored by such methods as have nothing in common with the honest attitude towards the principles of democracy" ("Problems of Foreign Policy", Page 180, Russian Edition).

The representative institutions in people's republics are the higher and local organs of the State power. The higher organs of the State power in Bulgaria and Albania are the National Assembly; in Rumania—the great National Assembly; in Poland—the Seim; in Czechoslovakia and Hungary—the National Assembly. These are not only legislative organs but also supreme organs with full powers. All other organs of power and State administration, all higher officers get their authority from those to whom they are responsible, to whom they must report and by whom they can be recalled at any time. The members of the higher representative organs not only pass laws, but also guarantee the putting of such laws into effect.

The higher representative organs of the countries of People's Democracy do not have the so-called Upper Chamber. The Upper Chamber (the senates in Poland, Czechoslovakia, and Rumania), which under the old regime served as the bulwark of reaction and hampered the carrying out of all in any way progressive measures, have been liquidated according to the will of the peoples of these countries as not corresponding to democratic principles.

The Upper (second) Chambers in the bourgeois countries are usually centres of reaction and hampered the march forward. "As we know," said Com. Stalin, "the second chamber is not infrequently granted more rights than the first chamber, and, moreover, as a rule the second chamber is constituted undemocratically, its members not infrequently being appointed from above." (Problems of Leninism, p. 564, Moscow 1947)

Thus in France the second chamber—the Council of the Republic—is elected indirectly. Moreover, with the object of countering the electoral rights of the workers, preference is shown to the agricultural districts as compared with the industrial ones. According to the new electoral law, ratified by the Government majority in 1948, the old system under which the election to the

pre-war French Senate used to take place is being practically revived: general voting has been abolished; the right to elect the electors, who in their turn elect the members of the Council of the Republic, is granted only to the municipal councillors. In Italy the Second Chamber—the Senate—is elected on the basis of higher qualification and more restricted electoral rights, than the lower chamber—the Chamber of Deputies.

The higher representative institutions of the people's republics are the only legislative organs. Law making is their exclusive competence.

In the bourgeois countries the legislative initiative belongs to the government alone. In the countries of People's Democracy, however, the legislative initiative belongs in addition to the government also to the deputies of the higher representative institution, its Presidium and other organs.

Finally, the important thing is that the citizens of the people's republics exercise the real (and not the sham as in bourgeois countries) control over the activity of the government. In those people's republics where the institution of the Collegiate of the government is established (Bulgaria, Albania, Rumania), the higher representative organs themselves directly form the governments and have the right to revoke their decisions.

Similarly the local organs of State power (in Bulgaria, Rumania and Albania—the People's Soviet, in Czechoslovakia—the People's, or National Committee, in Poland the Rada Narodovas) are really representative and having full power (within the limits of their competence). The local organs of State power are elected directly by the voters and are responsible to them; must report to them and can be changed according to their will. They direct the local economy and cultural constructions, ensure the maintenance of public order, law and rights of the people, ratify local budget and decide other local affairs. Administering the affairs of local importance, the local organs of State power also participate in carrying out the general task on their territory on the basis of the decisions of the higher organs of State power.

In their work the local organs of State power rely upon the initiative and activity of the masses and the organisations of the working people. The broad strata of the working people are drawn into the work of local organs of State power. Here they pass through the school of administration of State affairs. For this purpose permanent commissions formed of representatives of the working people are set up within the Soviets and the Committee; these commissions give their conclusions on questions placed before them for examination by the organs of power, show the demands of the population, verify the work of the establishments and departments, collaborate in carrying into effect the decisions of the Soviet and the Committee.,

The local organs of State power are responsible to their electors; together

with them they are responsible to the higher organs and must fulfil their orders. This means that they are organised on the principle of democratic centralism and double subordination.

The organs of the State power in the countries of People's Democracies are composed in overwhelming majority of the representatives of the workers, peasants and labour intelligentsia. Thus the Supreme National Assembly of Bulgaria, elected on October 27, 1946, is composed of 73 workers, 90 peasants, 3 engineers, 15 cooperative workers and other representatives of the people. The majority of the deputies of the Supreme National Assembly is composed of the active participants from the resistance movement. Out of them 54 persons were sentenced to death by the Fascists during their regime, 17 persons were sentenced to life imprisonment, 23 persons to 15 years imprisonment and 107 persons to smaller terms of imprisonment.

The Supreme National Assembly of Rumania which was elected on March 28, 1948, is composed of 177 workers, 66 peasants and representatives of the intelligentsia. It would be interesting to place these figures side by side with the social composition of the pre-war Rumanian Parliament. In the House of Deputies elected in 1928, out of 347 seats, 261 belonged to big capitalists and landlords. There was not a single worker or peasant or artisan in the whole House of the Deputies. Thus the article in the pre-war Rumanian Constitution, which hypocritically stated: "The people are the source of all power", appears today in practice,

The head of the State in the people's republic is either a collegiate organ, elected by the supreme representative institution of the people (Presidium of the National Assembly in Bulgaria and Albania, Presidium of the Supreme National Assembly in Rumania), or the president who is also elected by the supreme representative institution (in Poland, Czechoslovakia and Hungary). The collegiate head of the State in the people's republics is elected from among the Deputies for the same term as the representative institution itself, whereas in bourgeois countries the president as a rule is not a deputy of the representative institution and is elected for a longer term.

In the people's republics where there is no collegiate head of the State, the President is elected also by the supreme representative institution of the people, and not by a special election, as in certain bourgeois countries, where this leads to the creation of a strong presidential power which is utilised by the reactionary elements for the fascisation of the country (for instance, in the USA).

In Poland and Czechoslovakia where the post of the President exists there is also a collegiate organ (the supreme Soviet in Poland, Presidium of the National Assembly in Czechoslovakia), together with whom the President

decides the most important matters.

The collegiate head of the State in the people's republic in all his activities is responsible to the supreme representative institution, elected by the people. As is pointed out by Com. Stalin the institution of the collegiate head of the State "is the most democratic, and safeguards the countries against undesirable contingencies" (Problems of Leninism, Page 564-65, Moscow 1947).

The supreme executive and administrative organs of State power of the people's republics are the governments—the Councils of Ministers. In people's republics which have a collegiate head of the State (Bulgaria, Rumania and Albania), the Government is formed by the supreme representative institutions. When this institution is not in session the changes in the composition of the government can be made by its Presidium, to be subsequently submitted to the supreme organ of power for ratification. Where the governments are appointed by the President (as in Poland, Czechoslovakia and Hungary) the composition and programme of the government must be approved by the people's representatives.

The government in all people's republics is responsible to the supreme representative institution and has to make reports to the latter, while in those countries where the institution of the collegiate head of the State is established, it is responsible to it.

In bourgeois parliamentary States the governments are formally considered to be responsible to the parliament but in practice they are not only independent of the parliament but they predominate over them and push the parliament into the background, Even the basic function of the bourgeois parliament—legislation—is to a considerable extent usurped by the government.

In the people's republics the governments direct the whole State administration. They direct and coordinate the activity of the ministers, commissions, committees and other institutions, including the organs which manage the economic, socio-cultural affairs and the problems of planning. For ensuring the regular control over the State departments the organs of State control have been created.

The leading role in the governments of the people's republics belong to the Communist Parties. In the majority of the people's republics the representatives of the Communist Party occupy the post of Prime Ministers and most important ministerial posts. The Governments of the people's republics as a rule include in their composition the representatives of the Parties who have participated in the joint organisation of all the people—national patriotic front.

The Constitutions of the people's republics provide for the democratic

principles of organisation and activity of the organs of justice: the judges are elected and conduct trials with the participation of the people's assessors. The judges are independent and are subordinate only to the law. The judicial proceedings take place on the basis of collective principle and are conducted in public unless otherwise provided by law. The accused is guaranteed the right to defence in the court as well as the right to acquaint himself with the material of the case through interpreters and to use his own language or avail himself of the services of an interpreter. A central organisation of the procurators is organised which guarantees the observance of the revolutionary democratic laws.

In the principle of the national sovereignty of the people's republics, in the basic principles of organisation and functioning of their state organ, in the system of rights and duties of the citizens, established by the constitutions of the countries of People's Democracy, one cannot but see the beneficial influence of the Stalin Constitution.

The experience of the State structure of the USSR, the first Socialist State in the world, expressed in the Stalin Constitution, is utilised by the countries of People's Democracy. This testifies to the words of Com. Stalin that the Soviet institution is a programme of action for the peoples of other countries.

The Stalin Constitution of the USSR is the constitution of victorious Socialism; it consolidates its basic achievements. The starting point of it is the liquidation of exploitation and the exploiting classes in our country and the fact that the Soviet Society is composed of two friendly classes—the workers and the peasants.

. The Constitutions of the people's republics reflect the achievements of the working people which make it possible to lay the foundation of Socialism in these countries; they are based on the fact that the society is composed of not only the toiling classes who are in power, but that there are also exploiting classes in relation to whom at a given stage, a consistent policy of restricting and displacing is being carried out.

The path along which the countries of People's Democracy are marching and approaching Socialism is fundamentally the path traversed by the USSR; through Socialist industrialisation and collectivisation, through class struggle and liquidation of the exploiting classes. The weapon of the toiling classes in building Socialism in the countries of People's Democracy is the People's Democratic State which constitutes the power of the working people with the leading role of the working class led by the Communist Party.

“In accordance with Marxist-Leninist principles”, said G. M. Dimitrov in his concluding remarks at the 5th Congress of the Bulgarian Communist Party, “the Soviet regime and the people's-democratic regime are the two

forms of one and the same power, namely the power of the working class in alliance with the toiling people of the town and the village. Both of these regimes are the two forms of the proletarian dictatorship”.

The path of the countries of People’s Democracy to Socialism has certain special features within the framework of general laws. These special features are determined above all by the fact that the People’s Democratic States-in their struggle for building Socialism rely upon the mighty support of the country of the Soviets, the land of Socialism;

The struggle for the triumph of Socialism in every one of the countries of People's Democracy can successfully develop only under the slogan of internationalism, in fighting friendship with the USSR and all the countries of People's Democracy. The departure from internationalism and going over to the path of bourgeois nationalism, like the treacherous activity of the national group of Tito in Yugoslavia testifies, inevitably leads to the breaking away from the camp of democracy and Socialism to the subordination to imperialism.

People’s Democracy is strong because of its loyalty to the principles of internationalism. Nationalism is incompatible with People’s Democracy.

The peoples /of the countries of People’s Democracy possess in the USSR, the loyal defender of their sovereignty, a powerful bulwark of their economic prosperity, a disinterested friend and helper in the cause of Socialist construction.

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