



Soviet Democracy *and* Bourgeois Democracy

The question of democracy, of how it is to be correctly understood, of the fundamental distinction between Soviet socialist democracy and bourgeois democracy is a highly important question of our time.

Since the Great October Socialist Revolution there have been revealed to the full the great advantages possessed by Soviet socialist democracy, and the decay, crisis and utter decline of bourgeois democracy.

The Great Patriotic War of the Soviet Union against Hitler Germany showed the invincible strength of the Soviet social and state system. The war showed that "...the Soviet social system is a better form of organization of society than any non-Soviet social system."* The war showed that the Soviet system of state is the best state system ever known to history.

The Soviet State, Soviet socialist democracy emerged from the war stronger than ever. And now, after the close of the war, Soviet democracy is blossoming forth anew, is achieving new successes.

In a number of European countries – Bulgaria, Czechoslovakia, Poland, Albania, Rumania, and Hungary – the system of People's Democracy has been established. The peoples of these countries displayed self-sacrifice and heroism in the struggle against the fascist oppressors. Having, with the aid of the Soviet Army, secured their liberation from the Nazi yoke, they set about building a democratic order in their countries, but in a new fashion, in a way that rejected the old models of bourgeois-parliamentary democracy. The democracy that arose in these countries assumed new forms, of a higher type than those of the old bourgeois-parliamentary democracy. In these countries democracy is being extended and developed on a scale that indicates that the workers and peasants are really being involved in the administration of the State and that is making the blessings of

* *J. V. Stalin*, Speech Delivered at an Election Meeting in the Stalin Election District, Moscow, February 9, 1946. *Moscow 1946*, p. 10.

democracy actually available to the wide masses of the people. New forms of organization of the State have thus arisen which constitute a big advance on the bourgeois democratic states and are opening up the possibility for further progress by these countries on the road to Socialism.

The war also revealed tremendous defects in the old bourgeois-parliamentary forms of democracy. The course of historical development had proved irrefutably that the bourgeois-democratic states, as a result of their flirting with fascism, and their concessions to fascism during the period that preceded the second world war, were in fact – at the beginning of the war – helpless to meet the danger that threatened all the achievements of civilization and democracy, and the free national existence of these countries. The war showed that it was only thanks to the Soviet Union and to the decisive part it played in routing the Nazi aggressors that European civilization was saved from destruction.

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The basic feature of bourgeois democracy, as has been repeatedly noted in the works of the classics of Marxism-Leninism is the fact that it is democracy for the exploiting minority and is directed against the majority. Speaking of bourgeois democracy, Lenin and Stalin pointed out that it undoubtedly constituted progress as compared with feudalism and mediaevalism. The working class has used and endeavours to use the framework of bourgeois democracy so as to develop the class struggle, to set up and consolidate its class organizations. But while Lenin and Stalin pointed to this significance of bourgeois democracy for the working class, they also constantly indicated that bourgeois democracy, based as it is on the dominance of private ownership of the means of production, is formal, false and truncated democracy. "Bourgeois democracy," wrote Lenin, "although a great historical advance in comparison with mediaevalism, always remains – and under capitalism cannot but remain – restricted, truncated, false and hypocritical, a paradise for the rich and a snare and a delusion for the exploited, for the poor."*

Those who uphold bourgeois democracy use fine phrases about "equality," "liberty" and "fraternity" in an endeavour to hide the actual

* V. I. Lenin, *Collected Works*, 3rd Russ. ed., Vol. XXIII, p. 346.

domination of the exploiters over the exploited, which is based on the private ownership of the means of production.

Lenin pointed out that general phrases about liberty, equality, democracy are in fact nothing more than the blind repetition of concepts copied from the relations of commodity production. "From the point of view of the proletariat," wrote Lenin, "the question can be put only in the following way: freedom from being oppressed by which class? equality between which classes? democracy based on private property, or on the struggle for the abolition of private property? – and so forth."*

Employing all the rigour of Marxist analysis, Lenin and Stalin unmasked bourgeois democracy and placed the issue on the only correct and scientific basis.

Comrade Stalin, in his report on the Draft Constitution of the U.S.S.R. said the following: "They speak of the equality of citizens, but forget that there cannot be real equality between employer and workman, between landlord and peasant, if the former possess wealth and political weight in society while the latter are deprived of both – if the former are exploiters while the latter are exploited. Or again: they speak of freedom of speech, assembly, and the press, but forget that all these liberties may be merely a hollow sound for the working class, if the latter cannot have access to suitable premises for meetings, good printing shops, a sufficient quantity of printing paper, etc."†

When elucidating the specific features of the history and traditions of bourgeois democracy in each country, the classics of Marxism-Leninism pointed out at the same time that "... the most *democratic bourgeois* republic is a machine for the oppression of the proletariat by the bourgeoisie."‡

What distinguishes the epoch of imperialism from the preceding period, the epoch of free competition, is the fact that under imperialism state activity is marked by a turn, all along the line, to political reaction. In both foreign and home policy imperialism strives to violate democracy and establish reaction. These reactionary strivings of imperialism are being displayed more and more glaringly

* V. I. Lenin, *Selected Works*, Two-Vol. ed., Vol. II, Moscow 1947, p. 535.

† J. V. Stalin, *Problems of Leninism*, Moscow 1947, p. 551.

‡ V. I. Lenin, *Collected Works*, 3rd Russ. od., Vol. XXIII, p. 220.

in the political life of present-day England and the U.S.A. This, however, does not prevent those who defend imperialism from talking without end about all the different "freedoms" that are supposed to be part of bourgeois democracy.

Let us, for example, take the question of the so-called "freedom of the press" in bourgeois countries. The fact that a multitude of newspapers of various trends is published in foreign countries, that arguments ensue among these papers on various secondary problems, that different viewpoints are expressed, that criticism is occasionally levelled in these newspapers at those who captain the bourgeois ship of state – all this is lauded to the skies by the advocates of bourgeois democracy. They bring these points forward as evidence of the freedom of the press that is supposed to exist in the bourgeois countries.

Actually, however, the so-called "freedom of the press" in bourgeois society means nothing more than freedom for the capitalists to control the press and to "shape" public opinion to suit their own interests. "Freedom of the press in capitalist society," said Lenin, "means freedom to trade in the press and in influencing the masses of the people. Freedom of the press means maintaining the press, a most powerful instrument for influencing the masses of the people, at the expense of capital."* Such is the real worth of bourgeois freedom of the press.

The false character of the so-called freedoms, particularly freedom of the press, has even had to be admitted by many publicists and sociologists who defend bourgeois democracy.

Or let us take the so-called "freedom of elections" which is lauded in every way by the apologists of present-day bourgeois democracy. The fact that different parties participate in elections, that a struggle takes place among them, and that these parties advance different programs is extolled by the apologists of bourgeois democracy as evidence of the existence of a supposedly genuine democratic system in these countries. Yet if we delve into the essence of bourgeois "freedom of elections," so-called, we will see that this boasted "freedom of elections" is as much a fraud as is "freedom of the press."

Marx, in his work *The Eighteenth Brumaire of Louis Bonaparte*, already characterized bourgeois constitutions as follows: "...each

* V. I. Lenin, *Collected Works*, 3rd Russ. ed., Vol. XXVI, p. 423.

paragraph of the Constitution contains its own antithesis, its own Upper and Lower House, namely, liberty in the general phrase, abrogation of liberty in the marginal note."*

Basing himself on later historical experience, Lenin continued this characterization of bourgeois liberties as follows: "... under bourgeois democracy the capitalists, by a thousand and one tricks – which are the more artful and effective the more "pure" democracy is developed - – *debar* the masses from a share in the work of administration, from freedom of the press, the right of assembly, etc... . For the toiling masses, participation in bourgeois parliaments (which *never decide* important questions under bourgeois democracy; they are decided by the stock exchange and the banks) is *hindered* by a thousand and one obstacles, and the workers know and feel, see and realize perfectly well that the bourgeois parliaments are institutions *alien* to them, *instruments for the oppression* of the proletarians by the bourgeoisie, institutions of a hostile class, of an exploiting minority."†

Numerous restrictions exist, both in Great Britain and the United States, that prevent the suffrage being universal. There are restrictions of various kinds on the suffrage, in the shape of literacy qualifications, a poll tax and so on and so forth. In the U.S.A. Negroes possess the formal right to vote and be elected, but in actual practice on only one occasion in fifty years was a Negro elected to Congress. When elections are about to take place in the U.S.A., Negroes have to undergo quite a meticulous examination to establish their ability to read and write, and frequently their "political knowledge." This is done so as to deprive the overwhelming majority of the Negro population of the suffrage.

Facts of this kind – proof that the freedom of elections is in fact restricted – are quite well known. A wealth of material exposing the sham of "freedom of elections" in bourgeois countries is to be found in the publications and statements of many, even loyal, upholders of bourgeois democracy.

In 1944, a book appeared in the U.S.A. entitled *Democracy Begins at Home* by Jennings Perry. The author, editor of the newspaper *Tennessean*, devotes this work to the problem of the poll tax in the

* K. Marx, *The Eighteenth Brumaire of Louis Bonaparte*, Moscow 1948, p. 34.

† V. I. Lenin, *Selected Works*, Two-Vol. ed., Vol. II, Moscow 1947, p. 374.

State of Tennessee and in the Southern States in general. The book discloses a highly interesting picture of the morals characteristic of present-day American democracy. It turns out that in the U.S.A. the years 1889 to 1908 saw the gradual introduction in all the states of something in the nature of a tax on the right to vote. It became the rule that citizens could not participate in the elections unless they paid this tax.

What effect did this tax have on the elections? In 1936 there took place the election of the Governor of the State of Tennessee. Of a total of 1,200,000 electors only 352,000 voted. A certain adventurer and racketeer by the name of Crump controlled a solid block of between 60,000 and 70,000 votes and so had the entire State of Tennessee in his grip. Here is an eloquent description of him, given in 1939 by the United Press correspondent, John Parris: "Edward Hull Crump can lift the telephone in his insurance and real estate company office and with one command send 60,000 sovereign Democrats to the secret polls to do his bidding."

The author of the above-mentioned book cites facts to show how democracy has gradually disappeared in Tennessee. "We," he writes, "have retrogressed toward government by a chosen few at a rapid rate," democracy has turned into oligarchy.

An idea of the system and character of general elections in Great Britain is given in the book of the Liberal Party leader, Ramsay Muir, entitled *How Britain Is Governed*. In this book the British election system is called outright "in the highest degree unjust, unsatisfactory and dangerous." This system, wrote Muir, "actually disfranchises a large majority of the electors. If we could estimate the total of those whose votes are of no avail because they have voted for unsuccessful candidates; of those who have refused to use their votes because there was no candidate with whom they agreed; and of those who have voted reluctantly for somebody who did not represent their views merely because he was less objectionable than the available alternatives: we should probably find that something like 70 per cent of the total electorate had either been unable to exercise any influence upon the course of events by the use of their votes, or had been compelled to give their support to some doctrine or policy with which they disagreed."*

* Ramsay Muir, *How Britain Is Governed*, p. 168.

In the British General Election of 1945, over 8 million electors, or 25 per cent of the total, did not vote. In the 1946 Congressional elections in the U.S.A., only 39 per cent of the electors voted, a fact that was considered by the entire American press to be indicative of very great activity on the part of the electors.

That is how matters stand as regards the so-called "General Elections" in Great Britain and the U.S.A. All these data provide the clearest and most convincing proof that the elections in bourgeois-democratic countries are not general at all and that bourgeois democracy is a hypocritical, truncated, and false affair.

What bourgeois democracy really is and how the bourgeoisie of today understand political liberty was shown by the elections to the legislature held in Italy in April 1948. In order to ensure that the forces of bourgeois reaction should achieve victory over the People's Front parties in Italy, international imperialist reaction, headed by the U.S.A., openly threatened to resort to armed intervention, should the People's Front parties be the victors.

The U.S. State Department declared that if the People's Front were victorious all aid to Italy in the shape of food and manufactured products would be stopped. Atom bombs, wrote the American press, would be dropped on those towns where People's Front candidates were elected. American warships carrying troops were anchored in Italian ports. French troops were brought up to the Italian frontier. In violation of the peace treaty with Italy, the De Gasperi government set up powerful police forces, equipped with American tanks, armoured cars, and artillery. Terror was employed openly and on a mass scale against people, against the progressive forces; so too were intimidation, threats, blackmail and plain deception, in a word, all possible means were brought into action in order to ensure victory for Italian reaction. The Vatican, too, with its black army of a million and a half priests, monks and nuns – in violation of all the laws forbidding the Vatican to interfere in political life – joined in the election campaign on the side of Italian reaction.

Reaction, lay and spiritual, threatened to withhold absolution, to bring down all the torments of Hades on the heads of those who refused to vote for the parties of bourgeois reaction. But, neither open terror, violence, deception, increased ideological pressure, nor the blatant and impudent intervention of the American Government in Italy's internal affairs succeeded in bringing victory to reaction.

Whereupon the De Gasperi government and its minister Scelba proceeded to falsify the election results by every possible means.

The Italian elections of April 1948 will go down in the history of bourgeois democracy as a most abominable and disgusting mockery of democracy and freedom.

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The war of 1914-18, Lenin pointed out, made clear even to backward workers the real character of bourgeois democracy as being the dictatorship of the imperialist bourgeoisie. The war tore the false trimmings from bourgeois democracy, and showed that it was the thirst of the imperialist powers for conquest that was responsible for millions of people being killed. During the post-war period the real countenance of bourgeois democracy was still more clearly revealed. In a number of European countries, and first and foremost in Germany and Italy, bourgeois democracy actually paved the way there for the victory of fascism. The fascists began to kindle a new world war. As to the ruling circles of the "democratic" countries, particularly the ruling Conservative circles of Great Britain, they pursued a policy of "appeasing" the fascists, of pleading with the fascist "führers," a policy of concessions to the fascists, of inciting the fascist aggressors to attack the U.S.S.R. The ruling circles of the U.S.A., on their part, financed the re-armament and further armament of imperialist Germany. As a result, the fascist aggressors let loose a new world war, which cost tens of millions of lives and threatened the freedom and independence of the nations of Europe and the whole world, and the democratic gains of the working people.

However, even the second world war taught little to the ruling circles of the present-day bourgeois-"democratic" countries, who still continue to connive with fascist elements. The reactionary groups in the U.S.A. are conducting an anti-popular domestic policy, one directed against the workers' organizations, against progressive social ideas and progressive public figures. The governments of the imperialist states are pursuing a policy of supporting the reactionary elements all over the world, a policy of suppressing the movement for national liberation in the colonial countries. Militarization on an enormous scale is taking place in the countries of old, bourgeois democracy which at one time, in the epoch of pre-monopolist capitalism, were distinguished, among other things, by the fact that militarism and military cliques were little developed there.

In January 1947, the American liberal weekly *The New Republic* published an article by Henry Wallace, former Vice-President of the U.S.A. This article, in which he disclosed the growth of militarist tendencies in the U.S.A., caused a tremendous uproar in that country. Army and militarist circles, declared Wallace, dominate in the sphere of scientific research, and control scientists. The military buy science and scientists. Many American universities derive more funds from the War Department than from all other sources put together.

Wallace wrote that prior to the war the U.S.A. expended almost 50 million dollars annually on research work. In 1946 they expended almost one billion dollars, 90 per cent of which was for war purposes. Science – he said – was degenerating to the brute level of Nazism, when it expended the greater part of its time working out methods of destroying human life.

The military outlook, continued Wallace, must not be permitted to dominate over science in peacetime. If we permitted the present situation to continue, things would finally reach a point where a semi-military police state would be established in the U.S.A.

Similar reproaches were levelled at bourgeois democracy by Stafford Cripps, in a book published in England comparatively recently and entitled *Democracy Up-to-Date*. The author speaks of the decline of democracy in Great Britain. Proof of this, he states, is to be found in the apathy of the electors, in the lack of interest in the House of Commons and its work. Cripps admits that the system of British democracy suffers from grave defects "arising out of the advantages which wealth can give to one or other side in an electoral contest."

Now that Cripps has become one of the leading figures in the British Labour Government, he is exerting no little effort to ensure that the profits of the capitalists go up, and that the standard of living of the workers goes down.

Such are the fundamental defects of present-day bourgeois democracy, as admitted even by supporters and upholders of the bourgeois system.

The real rulers of American "democracy" are the oil, chemical, steel and other magnates, the bosses of the huge monopolies and trusts; they include Herbert Hoover, ex-president of the U.S.A., Du Pont, member of the board of the chemicals and explosives company that is playing a leading part in the production of atom bombs, the Rockefeller-Morgan group, the banker Eugene Meyer, the owners of

the majority of the shares of General Motors and General Electric, the Fords and Whitneys, the Mellons, Harknesses and others.

In 1946 there was republished in the U.S.A. Lundberg's *America's 60 Families*, a book that describes the financial oligarchy of present-day America which is made up of approximately 60 of the wealthiest families and is the unofficial, invisible, behind-the-scenes but actual government, the "money government." "The outstanding American proprietors of today," writes Lundberg, "tower historically over the proud aristocracy that surrounded Louis XIV, Czar Nicholas, Kaiser Wilhelm, and the Emperor Franz Joseph, and wield vastly greater power. The might of cardinal Richelieu, Metternich, Bismarck, or Disraeli was no greater than that of private citizens, undistinguished by titles, like J. P. Morgan, Andrew W. Mellon, John D. Rockefeller, Henry Ford and the Du Ponts." They it is who are the uncrowned kings of America. They it is who exert enormous influence over the line of government policy, they it is who pursue the policy of fighting the workers and the trade unions within the country. They, the uncrowned kings, are the power behind the scenes, and the official organs of government pay careful heed to their instructions, to their desires.

Present-day American democracy is in fact "democracy" for suppressing the working-class movement within the country, "democracy" for supporting the most reactionary elements throughout the world, "democracy" for unbridled imperialist expansion. The anti-labour Truman- Case and Taft-Hartley Acts, the effort of reaction to destroy the workers' organizations and deprive the workers of their rights, the campaigns of mass terror directed against the Negroes, the incitement of anti-Semitism, and the persecution of Communists – all these are glaring illustrations of the organic defects of present-day American "democracy."

With ever growing frequency the demand is being raised in the columns of the reactionary press and on the floor of Congress that the activities of the Communist Party be banned. Thus, at the Congress session of January 23, 1947, the Republican Dirksen raised the demand that the government take measures against Communist Party activity in the U.S.A.; McCormack went still further and demanded not only that the Communist Party be banned but also that a crusade be conducted against Communism in Europe. He called on the U.S. Government to render more energetic and active support to the reactionary elements in France, Italy, Spain and other countries. In

March 1947, the Secretary of Labour of the United States, Schwollenbach, speaking before the House Committee on Labour and Education, declared in favour of the Communist Party being outlawed. Schwollenbach demanded that Communists be dismissed from public bodies of every kind, and that they be deprived of the right to hold office in the trade unions. The whole of this campaign was crowned by the arch-reactionary Mundt Bill, directed against the elementary civil rights of the industrial workers and working people in general.

The ultra-reactionaries in the U.S.A. are openly driving the country to fascism. Numerous government bodies resort to unconstitutional practices in conducting an organized ideological and political campaign against the Communists and the entire labour movement. Many reactionary newspapers call for the summary liquidation "here and now," of the Communist Party, trade union and other progressive organizations; they demand that active members of the labour movement be ruthlessly dealt with. This "crusade" of the reactionary press in the U.S.A. brings back to mind the "famous" campaigns conducted by the German fascists in the years preceding their advent to power.

Thomas, then chairman of the notorious Committee to Investigate Un-American Activities made the statement in Congress that: "Our job for the next two years shall be to rout them [the Communists] out." (*The New York Times*, Nov. 27, 1946.)

On the insistence of Thomas and Hoover a special committee was appointed at the end of November 1946 to investigate "officials under suspicion" and to purge government institutions of the "reds."

The New York *P. M.* in an item dealing with the commencement of the operations of this Committee wrote that the attempt to replace the Civil Service Commission by the Federal Bureau of Investigation constituted a great danger. Should such a replacement take place it would be one more step, and a very disastrous one, towards transforming the Federal Bureau of Investigation into a political police force, and the United States into a police state. This would be a "disruptive" act of far greater dimensions than anything any official could commit.

In March 1947 Truman issued an order, that went into immediate effect, for all civil servants to undergo investigation and for the dismissal of all "subversive" persons, i.e., of those suspected of adherence to or sympathy with the Communist and other democratic organizations. With a view to covering up the fact that the drive was

aimed at democratic organizations, Truman's order placed the Communist and other democratic organizations on a level with fascist organizations. The order required 2,300,000 U.S.A. civil servants to undergo examination by the Federal Bureau of Investigation.

Needless to say, this order will least of all affect the fascist and semi-fascist elements, who often occupy quite important posts in the U.S.A. It will be directed and wholly operated against the progressive and democratic elements in the country.

Such are the facts that supply us with a picture of the state of present-day American "dollar democracy." Formally the democratic freedoms are exalted and propagated. Actually they exist merely for those who have the dollars. Formally the praises are sung, in a hundred and one different ways, of "freedom of speech," "freedom of the press," and "freedom of assembly." Actually these freedoms are enjoyed, and enjoyed without limit, by the reactionary circles and organizations that are supported by the magnates of finance capital. As to the progressive organizations, personalities, and press, every possible obstacle is raised to prevent them developing their activity.

And what can be said of the reactionary and expansionist policy that is being conducted by American imperialism behind a smoke screen of talk about democracy? The American imperialists are giving every possible support to the reactionary elements in Japan; the imperialists of the U.S.A. and Great Britain are lending their aid to all the reactionary elements in Europe, the Near and Middle East, Greece and Turkey. The American imperialists are actively assisting Chiang Kai-shek's fascist clique in their war on the Chinese people. The troops of "democratic" Holland, supported by the British and Americans, are suppressing the struggle for national liberation in Indonesia.

In November 1918, Lenin pointed out, in an article entitled "Valuable Admissions of Pitirim Sorokin," that "... Anglo-American imperialism, which is reinstating reaction all over the world and has perfectly learned how to use the form of the democratic republic"* is stifling the small and weak nations.

This characterization, as given by Lenin, is fully applicable today to the policy of the reactionary circles of the U.S.A. and Great Britain.

With the connivance of the Labour Government the fascist organizations in England are freely extending their disruptive

* V. I. Lenin, *Collected Works*, 3rd Russ. ed., Vol. XXIII, p. 293.

activities. Mosley, one of the leaders of British fascism, has his own publishing establishment. In 1946 he published his book *My Answer*, which even the Conservative Lord Elibank compared to Hitler's *Mein Kampf*. A number of fascist organizations, like the Duchess of Atholl's British League for European Freedom, have been established and are operating in England. This latter organization gathers together the fascist and Whiteguard dregs from the People's Democracies. Other fascist organizations, like the British People's Party, the League of Christian Reformers, and the Imperial Fascist League openly and systematically propagate racial theories of the wildest type. All these organizations have combined in a fascist "congress." At a meeting held in London on December 10, 1946, and convened by the fascist "congress," John Beckett cynically and brazenly extolled the Nazi Party and its bandit policy.

And such statements are being made openly now, after all freedom-loving mankind has seen that fascism means the enslavement and extermination of nations, the destruction of the world's culture!

The fascist elements are openly renewing their activity in South Africa, where the machinery of state is being fascised, racial discrimination is practised, raids are made on workers' organizations, and their leaders are arrested. All these things are being done by the South African Government, which is headed by fascist, racialist politicians.

The fascist party has been legalized in Canada. The leader of this party, Adrien Arcand, recently declared that fascism in Canada was stronger now than ever before. He maintains contact with the fascists in Great Britain, the Union of South Africa, New Zealand, and elsewhere.

The historical experience of the bourgeois-democratic countries teaches us that to give the fascists a free hand means to doom the working people to oppression of the worst kind, to threaten the very existence of the peoples. To give the enemies of democracy a free hand is not democracy but the negation of it. To give a free hand to the enemies of democracy is to create favourable conditions for the growth of fascism.

The time has passed when the doors of Great Britain were open to revolutionary refugees from various countries, when such men as Marx, Engels, Herzen, Kossuth, and Mazzini could conduct their activities relatively unhindered. On the contrary, England – the very England where the Labour Party, which considers itself to be a

veritable buttress of democracy, is in power – gives sanctuary to the most reactionary fascist and pro-fascist elements, who have been flung out of their countries by the regimes of People's Democracy.

The Chetniks of Yugoslavia, and the Rumanian, Polish and Bulgarian Whiteguards have found a haven and a "pleasant reception" in Great Britain. This fascist scum, these worst enemies of the people are given facilities in England to hold meetings, to publish their filthy newssheets, to engage in provocative machinations, to stir up trouble and to conduct disruptive work. And all this is done supposedly in pursuance of the principles of democracy, in the name of "freedom of speech," "freedom of the press," etc. Is any more obvious proof required of the deep deficiencies and cankers of present-day bourgeois democracy?

The defeat of the Conservatives and the advent to power of the Labour Government were a reflection of the fact that the working masses of England had moved considerably to the left. In voting down the policy of Churchill and the Tories, the British working class hoped that with the Labour Party in power a considerable change in government policy would result. Such change, however, did not ensue. The actual fact is that Great Britain, where the Labour Party is in power, is engaged in suppressing the movements for national liberation in India, Egypt, Indonesia, Palestine and other countries, in supporting the forces of reaction in Europe – in Greece, Spain, the western zone of Germany, Austria and other countries.

The Labour Party leaders consider theirs to be a socialist government, but they have kept intact the old, bourgeois machinery of state which is unable to conduct anything other than an imperialist policy. They have kept intact the economic system of capitalism. The nationalization of the mining and certain other industries in England does not abolish the domination of British monopoly capital, while the imperialist policy of the British Government is a sufficiently clear indication of the character of present-day bourgeois democracy in Great Britain.

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Soviet democracy differs fundamentally from bourgeois democracy.

Born in October 1917, Soviet socialist democracy has proved to be a great, vital and transforming force. The victory of the Great October Socialist Revolution meant that the epoch of the

parliamentarism of the capitalists had been replaced by an epoch of Soviet institutions of state.

What are the specific features of Soviet democracy?

Firstly, its economic basis is the predominance of the social ownership of the means of production. The victory of Socialism in our country, the absence of exploiting classes – such is the basis on which socialist democracy is flourishing. It is a democracy that differs in principle from bourgeois democracy. Socialist democracy is democracy of a higher type.

For the first time in history there has grown up and acquired strength a Socialist State in which the entire population has been drawn into active participation in the country's political life; for the first time a political system has developed and become firmly established under which the widest masses of the people really, and not in words alone, take part in administering the State.

Secondly, Soviet democracy is not ordinary democracy, but socialist democracy. The specific feature of the Constitution of the U.S.S.R. is that it does not limit itself to registering the formal rights of citizens, but places the main emphasis on the question of guaranteeing these rights. In the U.S.S.R. not only is the equality of the rights of citizens proclaimed – this equality of rights is guaranteed by the fact of the abolition of the exploitation of man by man. In the U.S.S.R. not only has the right to work been proclaimed – this right is guaranteed in fact. Socialist democracy has put an end, once and for all, to formal bourgeois democracy.

Thirdly, Soviet democracy is now based on the complete moral and political unity that has been achieved in Soviet society. The moral and political unity of the Soviet people – the result of the elimination of the exploiting classes in our country and of the enormous amount of educational work done by the Bolshevik Party – is a supreme achievement of our time. Under capitalism, where society is split into warring classes, the unity of society is unthinkable. The moral and political unity of the people, which came into being as a result of the victory of Socialism in our country, is a motive force of the development of Soviet society, an expression of genuine socialist democracy and a condition of its further vigorous growth.

Fourthly, a specific feature of Soviet socialist democracy is that the leading force in our country, the vanguard of the people, is the Bolshevik Party, the Party of Lenin and Stalin. The fact that a single, united Party exists which is leading forward the peoples of the Soviet

Union and giving best expression to their interests is a subject of countless attacks on Soviet democracy by bourgeois publicists. In the view of the apologists of bourgeois democracy, the existence in a given country of a number of parties and the struggle that goes on between them constitute one of the fundamental features of democracy, whereas the absence of such a struggle in the Soviet Union and the existence of only one party prove, so they aver, that our democracy is defective. But these upholders of bourgeois democracy deliberately gloss over the fact that in bourgeois society, split, as it is, into classes with their antagonistic class interests, and torn by the struggle between various social groups, the existence of a number of warring parties is inevitable. These individuals, moreover, maintain silence about the fact that there is no difference in principle between the Republican and the Democratic parties in the U.S.A. They are actually one party. They are two factions of the bourgeoisie, which take turns in oppressing the people.

In Soviet society, which is free of class antagonisms, there is no basis for a number of parties; there is one party and it best reflects the interests of the people. The Bolshevik Party is a party that deservedly enjoys the undivided confidence of the people, for it has proved in practice its self-sacrificing devotion to the people and its ability to lead them in their great historical enterprise.

As far back as the year 1936, Comrade Stalin said: "As to freedom for various political parties, we adhere to somewhat different views. A party is a part of a class, its most advanced part. Several parties, and, consequently, freedom for parties, can exist only in a society in which there are antagonistic classes whose interests are mutually hostile and irreconcilable – in which there are, say, capitalists and workers, landlords and peasants, kulaks and poor peasants, etc. But in the U.S.S.R. there are no longer such classes as the capitalists, the landlords, the kulaks, etc. In the U.S.S.R. there are only two classes, workers and peasants, whose interests – far from being mutually hostile – are, on the contrary, friendly. Hence, there is no ground in the U.S.S.R. for the existence of several parties and, consequently, for freedom for these parties. In the U.S.S.R. there is ground only for one Party, the Communist Party. In the U.S.S.R. only one party can exist, the Communist Party, which courageously defends the interests of the workers and peasants to the very end. And that it defends the interests

of these classes not at all badly, of that there can hardly be any doubt.”*

In the shape of the Soviet State we have a political organization of society that is millions of times more democratic than the most democratic bourgeois republic. "Only Soviet Russia" – wrote Lenin – "has given the proletariat, and all working folk – the overwhelming majority of the people of Russia – a *freedom and democracy* unparalleled, impossible and unthinkable in any bourgeois-democratic republic; it has done so by, for example, depriving the bourgeoisie of palaces and mansions (without this, freedom of assembly is hypocrisy), by depriving the capitalists of the printing presses and newsprint (without this freedom of the press for the working majority of the nation is a fraud) and by replacing bourgeois parliamentarism by the democratic organization of *the Soviets*, which are *a thousand times* closer to the 'people,' more 'democratic' than the most democratic bourgeois parliament."†

Already on the eve of the October Revolution, when elaborating the theoretical principles of the Soviet State, Lenin pointed out that the Soviets, as the state form of the dictatorship of the proletariat, constitute a new type of state machinery, an apparatus providing an indissoluble, close, easily tested and renewed link with the popular masses such as the former state apparatus never possessed in the remotest degree. "Compared with bourgeois parliamentarism," said Lenin, "this represents an advance in the development of democracy which is of historical and world-wide significance."‡

The Soviet state system best serves to defend and guarantee the interests of the peoples of the U.S.S.R. That is why the masses of the people have so great a love for the Soviet system, why they are so devoted to their Socialist Motherland, which inspires them to perform deeds of heroism. Soviet patriotism is one of the great motive forces of the development of Soviet society. During the Great Patriotic War, the patriotism of the workers, peasants and intelligentsia was displayed in all its titanic might.

* J. V. Stalin, *Problems of Leninism*, Moscow 1947, p. 557.

† V. I. Lenin, *Collected Works*, 3rd Russ. ed., Vol. XXIII, p. 221.

‡ V. I. Lenin, *Selected Works*, Twelve-Vol. ed., Vol. VI, Moscow-Leningrad, p. 264.

In his report on the occasion of the 27th anniversary of the Great October Socialist Revolution, Comrade Stalin gave the following classic definition of the essence and the strength of Soviet patriotism:

"The strength of Soviet patriotism lies in the fact that it is based not on racial or nationalistic prejudices, but upon the profound devotion and loyalty of the people to their Soviet Motherland, on the fraternal cooperation of the working people of all the nations inhabiting our country. Soviet patriotism is a harmonious blend of the national traditions of the peoples and the common vital interests of all the working people of the Soviet Union."*

The proposition advanced here by Comrade Stalin, which generalizes the very rich experience of the friendly cooperation among the nations of the Soviet Union, and of the development of their statehood and culture, is one of the outstanding discoveries made in the development of Leninist theory and is of the greatest importance as regards the political education of the people, as regards their education in the spirit of Soviet patriotism.

Soviet patriotism has grown and blossomed forth under Soviet democracy. Just as Soviet socialist democracy is a higher type of democracy differing fundamentally from the old forms of bourgeois democracy, so Soviet patriotism is a new and higher type of patriotism. Its source is the victory of the Great October Socialist Revolution, the construction of Socialism in our country. Soviet patriotism develops on a new social and economic foundation, on the basis of new social relations.

The Soviet State has shown, and continues to show, itself to be a tremendous transforming force. The transformations that have been effected in the U.S.S.R. and that have, in a brief historical period, turned our native land into a mighty industrial and kolkhoz power, show how great are the forces that Soviet socialist democracy can rouse, mobilize and direct for creative endeavour. Soviet democracy showed itself to be a great force in the building of socialist society, in the defence of the Socialist Homeland against the fascist invaders, and is a powerful factor facilitating the further onward march of Soviet society, towards Communism.

The entire system of organization of the Soviet State is adapted to raising the creative energy of the popular masses to the maximum

* *J. V. Stalin, On the Great Patriotic War of the Soviet Union, Moscow 1940, p. 165.*

degree for the solution of the tasks of socialist construction. In the U.S.S.R., for the first time in human history, millions upon millions of the common people have been drawn into conscious political activity, into the building of the new, Communist society, and the mighty energy of the people has been aroused. "The living creative work of the masses," Lenin said, "is what constitutes the main factor of the new social order."*

Gorky, in his novel *Mother*, makes one of his characters say the following words: "Russia will be the finest democracy in the world." This dream of the great proletarian writer has found its living embodiment in our country.

One of the basic illustrations of the genuinely popular character of Soviet democracy is the fact that the masses of the people play a real part in administering the State, that no barrier exists in our country between the machinery of state and the people. The creative initiative of the masses, the pulsating activity of public organizations, the ever new forms of participation by the working people in economic and cultural development, the political activity of the people – all these are remarkable indexes of the great Soviet democracy existing in the U.S.S.R. It is the popular masses – those who in the most democratic bourgeois republics formally possess equal rights but actually are prevented from participating in the administration of the State – who under the Soviet system are drawn "unfailingly into constant and, moreover, decisive participation in the democratic administration of the state."† The main process taking place in our country in the upbuilding of the Soviet State is that of the constantly growing political activity of the popular masses, of the continuous promotion from the very midst of the people of new individuals possessed of organizing capacity, new men of talent, outstanding statesmen.

Since the adoption in 1936 of the Stalin Constitution, elections in the U.S.S.R. to the organs of supreme power have taken place on four occasions, viz.: twice to the Supreme Soviet of the U.S.S.R., and twice to the Supreme Soviets of the Union Republics.

In 1937, in the elections to the Supreme Soviet of the U.S.S.R., 96.8 per cent of the electors recorded their votes, and the candidates

* V. I. Lenin, *Collected Works*, 3rd Russ. ed., Vol. XXII, p. 45.

† V. I. Lenin, *Selected Works*, Twelve-Vol. ed., Vol. VII, Moscow-Leningrad, p. 231.

put forward by the bloc of Communists and non-Party people received 98.6 per cent of the total votes cast. Almost 90 million people voted solidly at that time for the bloc of Communists and non-Party people.

In 1938, in the elections to the Supreme Soviets of the Union Republics, the bloc of Communists and non-Party people received the votes of 99.4 per cent of electors who voted.

In 1946, in the elections to the Supreme Soviet of the U.S.S.R., 99.7 per cent of the electors recorded their votes, and the candidates put forward by the bloc of Communists and non-party people received 99.18 per cent of the total votes cast. Over 100 million electors voted as one man for the Bolshevik Party, and for the further consolidation of the Soviet State.

In the early part of 1947 there took place the elections to the Supreme Soviets of the Union Republics. The results constitute a further splendid victory for Soviet democracy, as the following figures will show:

	Electors voting	For Candidates of bloc of Communists and non-Party people – Percentage of votes
Russian Soviet Federative Socialist Republic	99.95%	99.29%
Ukrainian Soviet Socialist Republic	99.96%	99.47%
Byelorussian S.S.R.	99.97%	99.57%
Azerbaijan S.S.R.	99.98%	99.79%
Georgian S.S.R.	99.97%	99.94%
Armenian S.S.R.	99.99%	99.81%
Uzbek S.S.R.	99.99%	99.86%
Kazakh S.S.R.	99.97%	99.70%
Kirghiz S.S.R.	99.95%	99.62%
Tajik S.S.R.	99.99%	99.90%
Turkmen S.S.R.	99.96%	99.77%
Moldavian S.S.R.	99.92%	99.69%
Karelo-Finnish S.S.R.	99.96%	99.26%
Latvian S.S.R.	99.75%	99.13%
Lithuanian S.S.R.	97.91%	98.05%
Estonian S.S.R.	99.33%	96.17%

What do these figures show?

Firstly, that in the Soviet Union practically all the electors, with absolutely insignificant exceptions, exercise their voting rights. This is testimony to the high level of civic consciousness, to the tremendous political activity of the masses of the people. The working folk of the Soviet Union take part in the elections as in some great festive event. Such a state of affairs is absolutely unthinkable in bourgeois society; it is the product of the victory of Socialism, and of that alone.

The entire system of organization of the elections – from the consistent, thoroughly democratic method by which our public organizations nominate candidates, and the method by which candidatures are discussed, to the provision of all the conditions necessary to enable each elector to fulfil his civic duty, wherever he may be when the elections take place – this entire system of organization of the elections is marked from beginning to end by genuine Stalinist love for the working people, by concern for their interests and requirements, by the striving to ensure that the masses are drawn to the maximum degree into the actual administration of the State.

Secondly, that with absolutely insignificant exceptions, all the electors who record their votes cast them for the bloc of Communists and non-Party people. This complete unanimity displayed in the voting is an expression of the *complete moral and political unity of the people*, a unity of the people such as is created and consolidated by the socialist system of society. The people stand forth as a single whole, in the real sense of the term.

In the Stalin constituency of Moscow where on February 9, 1947, the candidate in the election of the Deputy to the Supreme Soviet of the Russian Soviet Socialist Republic was J. V. Stalin, 100 per cent of the electors recorded their votes. Not a single one of the ballot papers was invalid, neither did a single one of them register rejection of the candidate. J. V. Stalin was unanimously elected Deputy. The working people of all the Union and Autonomous Republics unanimously nominated Comrade Stalin as their No. 1 candidate in the elections of Deputies to their Supreme Soviets. Comrade Stalin is the elected representative of the entire Soviet people, a fact that splendidly reflects the unity of will and purpose of the Soviet people.

The name of Comrade Stalin is the symbol and banner of this unity. All our victories are bound up indissolubly with the name of Comrade Stalin. It is characteristic that as Soviet electors voted for Comrade Stalin, they wrote on the ballot papers messages full of

ardent love for their leader and teacher. They voted for the man who is leading the Soviet people on to Communism, who is the embodiment of the hopes and strivings of all the nations of the U.S.S.R.

During the elections the Soviet people showed with renewed vigour that they stand solid behind the Party of Lenin and Stalin, that they are supremely devoted to the interests of the Socialist Motherland.

Only in the Land of Socialism, where socialist democracy prevails, where the gains we have achieved are inscribed in letters of gold in the Stalin Constitution is there such a manifestation of civic consciousness and patriotism. Such unity in voting, such a manifestation of organization and unanimity in the election of candidates are possible only in Soviet society, where the people are free from all forms of exploitation whatsoever. Only the complete moral and political unity of the people renders possible such unanimity as is displayed in the voting during the elections to the supreme organs of the Soviet Union.

The Communist Party – the force that inspires, guides and directs the Soviet State – comes to the masses with a clear program for the development of the country, and in clear-cut terms defines the tasks facing the people. This program best expresses the interests of the people, their hopes and strivings. The Communist Party does all it can to ensure that every elector acquires a better and more profound understanding of its policy, which is the living basis of the Soviet system, that every elector takes an active part in discussing problems of State, and votes with full understanding for the bloc of Communists and non-Party people. As Lenin said: "In our view a state is strong in so far as the masses are conscious. It is strong when the masses know everything, can form an opinion of everything, and do everything consciously."*

In his historic speech delivered on February 9, 1946, Comrade Stalin said: "I regard the election campaign as the voters' judgment of the Communist Party as the ruling party. The result of the election will be the voters' verdict."† The elections in the Soviet Union are a repeated indication of the love felt by the masses for the Bolshevik

* V. I. Lenin, *Collected Works*, 3rd Russ. ed., Vol. XXII, pp. 18-19.

† J. V. Stalin, *Speech Delivered at an Election Meeting in the Stalin Election District, Moscow, February 9, 1946. Moscow 1946, p. 10.*

Party. The masses of the people in the Soviet Union, to whom the Bolshevik Party is near and dear, voluntarily entrust their destinies to it, for practical experience has convinced them that the Party of Lenin and Stalin has no interests other than those of the people, and has no tasks other than those of leading the people onward, towards an ever better life, to Communism. The Bolshevik Party gives scientific expression to the fundamental, vital interests of the masses of the people, and this is the necessary condition that ensures it the leading role it plays in the Soviet State. Comrade Stalin has spoken of the "subtle moral threads" that bind the Party to those outside its ranks, of the profound trust in the Party and its leadership felt by the popular masses of the Soviet Union. This, it is, that finds expression in the bloc of Communists and non-Party people at the elections to the organs of the Soviet State. Comrade Stalin has said: "There is not, nor has there ever been in the world such a powerful and authoritative government as our Soviet government. There is not, nor has there ever been in the world such a powerful and authoritative Party as our Communist Party."*

The elections in the Soviet Union are a great schooling in political activity, a manifestation of supreme political activity on the part of the people. Hundreds of thousands of active workers, agitators and propagandists, many tens of thousands of members of Ward and Constituency Electoral Commissions, and of electors' representatives take part in the election campaigns. The elections are the occasion for a countrywide review by the people of achievements and successes and also for a criticism of the defects of the work of the various parts of the machinery of state. Countless meetings take place at which affairs of state, and candidatures, are discussed. In the political work it conducts in preparation for the elections the Communist Party reaches every single elector. As a result we can say that there has developed a new form of political life, unthinkable in bourgeois countries, a form of *participation by the entire people in the discussion of affairs of state, in the solution of most important problems of state*. Socialism has elaborated such forms as enable all the working people easily to be drawn into the administration of the State.

Such facts as the solid vote of over 99 per cent of the electors for the candidates of the bloc of Communists and non-Party people, for the policy of the Party of Lenin and Stalin, are events of the greatest

* J. V. Stalin, *Problems of Leninism*, Moscow 1947, p. 438.

historical importance. In events and facts such as these we see the remarkable results of the work done by the Bolshevik Party.

Much energy has been expended by bourgeois students of law and statecraft to prove the thesis that "real government by the people" is altogether impossible, that it is inevitable for representative bodies to lose touch with the people, that even the very best representative bodies in the last analysis degenerate. It has been asserted that it is impossible to give effect to democracy in a large country. Rousseau, as is well known, upheld in his *Contrat Social* the thesis that real democracy is only possible in a small country where all citizens can take a personal part in discussing affairs of state.

Under the bourgeois system, where a struggle takes place between antagonistic classes, real government by the people is impossible. But that which is unthinkable and impossible under capitalism, is thinkable, possible and actually effected under Socialism.

In his works preliminary to *The State and Revolution* Lenin, even before the victory of the Great October Socialist Revolution, wrote that under Socialism there would be complete, universal and unlimited democracy. This, he said, would be "the sort of new type of 'direct popular legislation' that Engels rejected under capitalism."*

These views of Lenin about a new type of democracy based on the predominance of the social ownership of the means of production, have been fully implemented in the actual life of our country.

One of the striking indexes of the majesty of Soviet democracy is the complete equality of rights exercised by women in the Soviet State. Lenin said that woman's position in society shows particularly clearly the difference between bourgeois and socialist democracy.

There is not a single bourgeois-democratic country in the world where women enjoy full equality of rights. In bourgeois countries women either play no part at all, or participate to a limited degree, in public and political life; female labour there is exploited and counted as the very cheapest. The proportion of female labour employed in the more important branches of industry, in the leading professions and in the different branches of culture, is negligible. Not a single bourgeois republic has given women equality with man, either formally or in fact.

* V. I. Lenin, *Marxism About the State*, Russ. ed., Moscow 1934, p. 77.

The picture is absolutely different in the U.S.S.R. In the Soviet State women enjoy all rights to the full, on a par with men. They take a most active part in the economic, political and cultural life of the country, and fully and comprehensively display their creative abilities in the most diverse spheres of socialist construction. The history of the development of the Soviet State has shown what an enormous number of talented people, and of individuals with a capacity for organization are to be found among the masses of working women. Women occupy a place of honour everywhere in our country – in the kolkhozes and in industry, in all spheres of culture and science, in political and public organizations – and side by side with the menfolk are fulfilling the tasks facing the Soviet Land. "The unprecedented labour heroism," said Comrade Stalin on November 6, 1944, in characterizing the part played by the women during the war, "displayed by our Soviet women and our valiant youth, who have borne the brunt of the burden in our factories and mills and in our collective and state farms, will go down in history for ever."*

An index of the genuinely socialist character of our democracy is the fact that the national question has been successfully solved in the U.S.S.R. For the first time in the history of multinational states, the national question and the problem of cooperation among nations have been solved in the Soviet Union – the Land of Socialism. As is well known, the national question is an exceptionally complicated one. Under capitalism it is impossible to solve the national question. The existence of capitalism without the suppression of nationalities, without national oppression is just as impossible as is the existence of Socialism without the abolition of national oppression, without national freedom. The experience of Austria-Hungary, and of Turkey, and the instability of the present British Empire are the most palpable evidence of how unstable are bourgeois multinational states.

The solution of the national question in the U.S.S.R. is one of the supreme achievements of our age. The results of the October Socialist Revolution have shown themselves not only in the abolition of national oppression in our country, but also in the fact that there have been elaborated the forms of state which solve the national question, forms which unite the various nationalities into a single multinational Soviet State, distinguished by its stability and invincibility.

* *J. V. Stalin, On the Great Patriotic War of the Soviet Union, Moscow 1946, pp. 164-65.*

The beneficent influence of the October Socialist Revolution and of Soviet democracy has also been expressed in the fact that they have awakened to life and brought into the historical arena a number of formerly backward nations and nationalities, given them new life and new development. Formerly nations arose and became consolidated under the supremacy of the bourgeoisie. This resulted in two national cultures existing within each nation, and lent the dominant national culture an exploiting, nationalistic character.

The inexhaustible strength of the Soviet system and of Soviet democracy is expressed in the fact that many nationalities in our country are being consolidated as nations not under the aegis of the bourgeois order, as was formerly the case, but under the aegis of Soviet rule. Comrade Stalin has described this as a fact unexampled in history, but a fact nonetheless. It is a new process, never known before to history, and one that it could not know. It is a new phenomenon, one that has developed under the Soviet order, on the basis of the Soviet system, in the new social and political conditions where there is no exploitation or oppression. These are nations that have been revived by the conditions of the Soviet system. The culture being developed by these nations is – as is the case with all the nations of the Soviet Union – a culture national in form and socialist in content.

The experience of the construction of Soviet socialist society shows, therefore, that Socialism does not at all imply the immediate dying-off of nations, as many vulgarizers of Marxism would have had us believe, but the development to the full of the inner potentialities of nations on a basis quite different from that of the conditions of the bourgeois system.

The majesty of Soviet democracy is mirrored in the fact that previously-backward nationalities are being raised economically and culturally to the level of the more advanced ones. For the first time in the history of multinational states the central authority has resolutely and consistently carried through a system of measures aimed at achieving real equality among nations, thereby doing away with the previous economic, political and cultural backwardness of the formerly oppressed nations and nationalities, and raising them to the level of the advanced nations. In this regard, too, is there manifested the fundamental difference between Soviet democracy and bourgeois democracy.

Under capitalism the line is systematically pursued of keeping the oppressed nations backward, of artificially holding up their industrial and cultural development, of ruthlessly exploiting them. Under Soviet

democracy a planned system of measures is operated, aimed at raising the formerly oppressed and backward peoples to the level of the advanced ones. It is hard to appraise fully the world-historic significance of this fact. The formerly oppressed nationalities have seen the practical application of the great emancipatory principles of Bolshevik policy in the sphere of the national question. Soviet democracy means that the national oppression that has existed for centuries has been replaced by the great amity among the peoples of the U.S.S.R., an amity that marks a new era in the development of inter-national relations.

The Russian people, said Comrade Stalin, "is the most outstanding of all the nations that constitute the Soviet Union." As a consequence of the great part played by the Russian people in October 1917, and then during the war against the foreign interventionists and Whiteguards, and during the years of peaceful construction; as a consequence of the epoch-making role played by the Russian nation during the Great Patriotic War of 1941-1945, it earned general recognition among all the other nations of our country as the leading force of the Soviet Union.

Characterizing the bourgeois federations and diverse states that exist under capitalism, Comrade Stalin has pointed out that in the main they took shape as a result of violence and oppression, that the course of their development was marked by repeated acts of violence and oppression. Even the revolutionary French bourgeoisie of the end of the XVIII century, who in their Declaration of Rights of Man and of the Citizen proclaimed that all men are born equal and hence should enjoy equal rights – even they considered it necessary to record the point in the Constitution of 1791 that "the present Constitution does not apply to French colonies and possessions in Asia, Africa, and America, although they constitute part of the French Empire." And such a federal state as the United States of America, which boasts of the freedom possessed by its states, took final shape not as a result of voluntary union at all, but of the application of numerous measures for the forcible consolidation of the Union, for the forcible incorporation of many states.

In 1803 the United States of America purchased Louisiana from France, in 1819 it purchased Florida from Spain, and in 1845, as a result of war with Mexico, forcibly incorporated Texas, and so on. All this has little in common with the voluntary union of states to which such loud references are made by the apologists of American

democracy. James Bryce, the well-known authority on the American republic, once wrote that while the victory won by the North in the war of 1861-1865 was progressive in the sense that it did away with slavery, it was at the same time a warning against any attempt by the states to secede from the Union, so that it was not even considered necessary to introduce in the U.S.A. constitution clauses denying the right of the states to secede from the Union.

A fundamentally different principle on which a federal state is based – that of genuinely voluntary federation – is expressed in the Stalin Constitution. To enable the reader to understand the essence of socialist democracy, the great importance of the principles followed by the Bolshevik Party in the building of our multinational Soviet State, it is important to indicate the thesis developed by Comrade Stalin concerning the reservation of the right of the Union Republics freely to secede from the U.S.S.R. In his speech on the Constitution, where he rejected amendments the purpose of which was to delete from the Constitution the article dealing with this point, Comrade Stalin stated: "The U.S.S.R. is a voluntary union of Union Republics with equal rights. To delete from the Constitution the article providing for the right of free secession from the U.S.S.R. would be to violate the voluntary character of this union."* As Comrade Stalin pointed out, there is not a single republic in our country that would want to secede from the U.S.S.R., but inasmuch as the U.S.S.R. is based on a voluntary union of the peoples, a clause is recorded in the Constitution stressing this voluntary character of the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics.

Comrade Stalin pointed out further that not only should formal proclamation be made of the right to secede from the Union, but matters should be so arranged that this right is not turned into an empty, meaningless scrap of paper. That is why one of the three qualifications for an Autonomous Republic to be transferred to the category of Union Republic is that it is situated along the country's borders. Comrade Stalin said that "...the Republic concerned must be a border republic, not surrounded on all sides by U.S.S.R. territory. Why? Because since the Union Republics have the right to secede from the U.S.S.R., a republic, on becoming a Union Republic, must be in a position logically and actually to raise the question of secession

* J. V. Stalin, *Problems of Leninism*, Moscow 1947, p. 561.

from the U.S.S.R. And this question can be raised only by a republic which, say, borders on some foreign state, and, consequently, is not surrounded on all sides by U.S.S.R. territory."*

There is no republic in our country desirous of seceding from the U.S.S.R. Only as component parts of the U.S.S.R. have our national republics secured the conditions requisite for their development on an unparalleled scale. Only with the aid of the entire Union have the different republics risen to enormous heights and secured the most extensive facilities for their prosperous growth. The principles proclaimed in the Constitution regarding the voluntary character of the union and the equality of the rights possessed by the Union Republics are guaranteed by the conditions that actually exist for this voluntary union and enjoyment of equal rights.

Is a clearer expression required of the principles of socialist democracy embodied in the Stalin Constitution?

Only socialist democracy fully and thoroughly solves the problem of fraternal collaboration among nations in a single multinational Soviet State. It is only such a solution of the problem that has created the stability and steadfastness, the firmness and might which distinguish the Soviet multinational State.

The Tenth Session of the Supreme Soviet of the U.S.S.R., which took place from January 28 to February 1, 1944 – when the Patriotic War was at its height – adopted decisions of exceptionally great importance, which constituted a new advance in the development of our multinational Soviet Socialist State. The Session adopted laws for the establishment of military formations of the Union Republics, and in this connection for the transformation of the People's Commissariat of Defence from an all-Union into a Union-Republican People's Commissariat (now Ministry); and for the endowment of the Union Republics with the right to enter into direct relations with foreign powers and to conclude treaties with them; and in this connection for the transformation of the People's Commissariat of Foreign Affairs from an all-Union into a Union-Republican People's Commissariat (now Ministry). All this became possible and necessary as a result of the political, economic and cultural development of the Union Republics. These new achievements in the development of the Soviet State were, by decision of the Third Session of the Second

* J. V. Stalin, *Problems of Leninism*, Moscow 1947, p. 562.

Convocation of the Supreme Soviet of the U.S.S.R. held in 1947, embodied in the Stalin Constitution.

* * *

Such are the most important and characteristic features of Soviet socialist democracy. The strength and vitality of Soviet democracy have been tested by experience. A great and leading role has been played by Soviet democracy in the struggle against fascism. Now, in the post-war period, Soviet socialist democracy is in the van of all the progressive forces in the world waging the struggle against the reactionary elements, against the new warmongers, against those who wish to maintain and revive fascism. That is why Soviet socialist democracy meets with such sympathy, endorsement and admiration among all the progressive forces of the world.

Having emerged with honour from all the difficulties and trials of the Great Patriotic War, the Soviet people are now engaged in a self-sacrificing struggle to rehabilitate and further develop the economy of the U.S.S.R., to fulfil and overfulfil the new Stalin Five-Year Plan. One of the clearest indexes of the strength and vitality of Soviet socialist democracy is the fact that Soviet people, led by the Bolshevik Party, are making a reality of the task set by Stalin, namely, that of bringing about a rapid rise of the national economy.

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