
IN evaluating the 26th Congress Report, we are acting in the belief that it is the right and the duty of every communist party to criticise the mistakes and shortcomings (particularly if these affect the activity of all communist parties) it recognises in another communist party, in an open and comradely manner. This attitude is, in our view, a requirement of *proletarian internationalism*.

The Soviet Union is the mighty liberated zone of the world revolution, it is the world revolutionary centre. The CPSU is the leader party of the international workers' and communist movement. The shortcomings and defects it has, *directly* affect the world revolution in an unfavourable way. Overcoming these shortcomings and defects will provide a tremendous impetus to the world revolution.

LIVING SOCIALISM

R. Yürükoğlu

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**An evaluation of the
26th Congress of the
CPSU**
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Proletarians of all countries unite!

Living socialism

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Preface to the English edition

Criticism of socialist society as it exists on one third of the globe was, until quite recently, the exclusive domain of bourgeois writers. As such, it has been an all-important weapon in the hands of that class against the world working class movement.

The mould was broken in the last decade with the emergence of the trend known as 'Eurocommunism' within the world communist movement. This development had some positive consequences. For the first time, the problems of living socialism began to be discussed within the movement without fear of anathematisation. However, criticism levelled by Eurocommunist writers, although often directed at correct targets, has been largely off the mark in its conclusions and, more importantly, has been made from opportunist positions. Thus, objectively, the criticism has complemented the assault of the bourgeois "critics".

Unfortunately, self-criticism by the communist movement, particularly by those parties which are in power, has long been almost purely nominal. The standard retorts to both bourgeois and Eurocommunist criticism has been to deny the problem, rather than make a

searching evaluation whereby something good may come of something wrong.

Comrade Yürükoğlu's approach is dramatically different from both the antagonist and the "protagonist" approaches. Written from a Leninist position, it is more "pro-Soviet" than any official propaganda and more scathing in its criticism than any bourgeois or opportunist "analysis" could ever be. There is a Turkish proverb which says: "A friend speaks harshly, but speaks the truth". A happy result of Comrade Yürükoğlu's work is that he presents us with more than just a critique of living socialism. In doing so he reaches into some long forgotten theoretical treasure stores, destroys a few die-hard illusions, and comes up with some important theoretical conclusions in their own right.

We believe that this book will arouse as much interest among English-speaking readers as it already has among Turkish-speaking readers.

Preface to the Turkish Edition

This book by Comrade Yürükoğlu which is based on the *Report* to the 26th Congress of the CPSU contains some extremely important observations and evaluations in regard to various aspects of living socialism.

When talking about living socialism today undoubtedly the easiest course is to list only its successful aspects, passing over its shortcomings in a spirit of "official optimism", or to shake off responsibility by ignoring them altogether. In the end both roads yield the same result: they both undermine living socialism and the world communist movement. However difficult it may be, communism requires that, under the guide of Marxism-Leninism, one direct oneself to shortcomings and mistakes, point them out openly, and indicate solutions. This book successfully performs this difficult task and, in doing so, presents several important theoretical advances.

While discussing living socialism, Comrade Yürükoğlu is, from the point of view of both the general characteris-

tics of the epoch and the specific characteristics of the present day, also dealing with several urgent political questions facing the communist movement of the world, and of Turkey.

Firstly, we are living in such an epoch that, in any case, we cannot consider politics in general within the narrow framework of state borders. Within the broader international context, however, living socialism is always one of the most important political focal points. Its development and its problems are always on the political agenda of this epoch.

Secondly, this is of special importance today. We always emphasize world revolution, which is the process whereby the revolutionary centre becomes strengthened qualitatively and quantitatively and becomes dominant. The strengthening of living socialism and its augmentation by revolutions are two inseparable aspects of the world revolution. Today, revolution is needed. If, despite this, stagnation appears even in revolutions which have taken place or could take place (Afghanistan, Iran, Turkey), this is also connected with some shortcomings of living socialism.

We would especially like to mention here one of the important topics on which Comrade Yürükoğlu has made theoretical advances. That is the topic of socialist democracy.

Comrade Yürükoğlu very clearly explains the unbreakable tie between socialism and democracy, why socialist democracy must be more than a democracy of voting or of consent, and why it must be active mass democracy. All that he explains is summed up in this idea: "In the first stage of communism, the ever broader application of democracy in the full sense of the word, is a *necessary* condition for society being able to move *forward*

from this stage and advance to the higher stage of communism.”

The *fundamental economic law* of socialism is the fulfilment of the people's rising objective and cultural needs. Socialist democracy is a necessary mechanism to ensure that the majority reflects these needs and thus protect the operation of socialism from subjective mistakes. The state is the concentrated form of the economy. The dictatorship of the proletariat reflects in its form the economic content of the transition from capitalism to communism. If subjective mistakes present an obstacle to this, life, as we have seen in Poland begins to reflect this in a negative way.

Since Comrade Yürükoğlu brought up the question of socialist democracy, whether in regard to Poland or the 26th Congress, a rather strange criticism has come from the opportunists. A few months ago the “*Our Radio*” (not “*Voice of the TKP*”) station said: “In his views regarding the period up to the revolution, Yürükoğlu is a left sectarian. In his views regarding the period after the revolution, he is a Euro-communist”. The strangeness of this criticism reflects once again the opportunists' own mentality.

The opportunists' understanding of democracy is shallow and rightist. They find us left sectarian(!) up until the revolution, but Euro-communist(!) when we talk about socialist democracy. In fact, what *İşçinin Sesi* proposes for the pre- and post-revolution periods are both part of one and the same understanding. The strength of this book is that it presents the logical consequences of that “frightening” revolutionary understanding which the mensheviks find “left sectarian”(!) in regard to the period after the revolution, together with

their theoretical explanation.

The working class is the only consistent and devoted fighter for democracy in our epoch. It defends democratic procedures which will ensure the most direct and active participation of and control by the masses in political life before the revolution. From this point of view, revolution itself is, in any case, a *most democratic* phenomenon. The authority of the masses destroys the old state authority. This same understanding is applied to the process of transition to communism through active mass democracy. As the higher stage of communism is approached with the greatest possible development of this democracy, the state, and thus democracy, are rendered unnecessary and wither away. The concept of active mass democracy which Comrade Yürükoğlu explains in this book will prolong the opportunists' nightmare until communism!

One last point on the opportunists, *İşçinin Sesi* and democracy: we are the section of the TKP which raised the banner for the application of democratic centralism in the party. We believe in putting our views into practice by *winning over* the hearts and minds of the majority... this on every level, in mass organisation work, in party work... The two party conferences which were held after the inner-party struggle came out into the open and the *first* provincial conferences seen in party history since the 1920's are confirmation of this.

In *Atılım* (central organ of the opportunist wing of the TKP — trans.) the opportunists say, "protecting moral superiority depends firstly on ideological soundness" In the same *Atılım*, the "... Regional Committee" says "we expect *Atılım* to publish articles that will boost the cadres' morale". On this request, however, *Atılım's* morale-boosting publications all spread demoralisation, reflecting

their ideological "soundness". Faced with the fascist junta, opportunism is writhing in demoralisation, not because of personal weaknesses, but because of ideological weakness.

With this book, *İşçinin Sesi*, on the other hand, is further developing and integrating its understanding which stretches from the party to society, from the pre-revolutionary period to communism.

Long live communism!

Emine Engin

Introduction

Living socialism

Congresses of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union, the party of Lenin, have always been of primary significance for the world communist movement. So too with the 26th Congress.

The Leninist organisation of the TKP cannot afford an approach laced with "official optimism." It is faced with the task of developing its theory and practice in a most difficult period in Turkey and is determined to fulfil this task. We will approach the 26th Congress too, primarily with the aim of furthering the fulfilment of this task.

Each individual or organisation determines its own place under the sun essentially through its differences with other individuals or organisations. Within the past 15 years in particular, the world communist movement has assumed a great deal of variety, witness the Euro-communist parties, the Albanian Party of Labour, the Communist Party of China, the Communist Party of

Japan, our "official" communists, etc. Evaluating the 26th Congress is important for the TKP, not only from the point of view of learning about the accomplishments and problems of the CPSU, but also as a means of advancing its own understanding. For this reason, and taking encouragement from Comrade Brezhnev's statement in the congress report that the CPSU always welcomes comradely criticism, we will dwell mainly on those aspects of the report with which we disagree.

Thus we shall be unable to dwell on each and every view expressed in the report. Among those that we have omitted are some with which we are in agreement and some with which we are not. We will attempt to deal only with the most important of them.

I. The international policy of the CPSU

The first main section of the report is entitled "*The International Policy of the CPSU.*" The first subsection under this heading is entitled "*Development of the World Socialist System and the Cooperation of the Socialist Countries.*"

1. Development of the world socialist system and the cooperation of the socialist countries

The following countries are listed as countries of the "*socialist community*": The USSR, the GDR, Bulgaria, Hungary, Vietnam, Cuba, Laos, Mongolia, Poland, Rumania and Czechoslovakia. Yugoslavia, the Korean Democratic People's Republic, China and Cambodia are treated as those *socialist countries* outside the socialist community. Although the report fails to mention Albania,

the evaluation of China as a socialist country is a positive attitude. This is the first point to which I would like to draw attention.

Still in the same section, we find the interesting idea (an idea we dealt with in *Socialism Will Win* and for which the opportunists in our own party have often attacked us) of a "single world market". The report does not speak of this explicitly, but the idea is implicit in the following remark:

"It should be noted in general that in recent years our countries have had to deal with their constructive tasks in more complicated conditions. The deterioration of the world economy and spiralling prices have played their part." *

The third point I would like to deal with is the evaluation of the Polish question. This evaluation is to a great extent similar to the views we expressed in *Socialism Will Win*. The 26th Congress report states:

"The imperialists and their accomplices are systematically conducting hostile campaigns against the socialist countries. They malign and distort everything that goes on in them. For them the main thing is to turn people against socialism.

"Recent events have shown again and again that our class opponents are learning from their defeats. Their actions against the

* All quotations are from *Documents and Resolutions, The 26th Congress of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union, Moscow, February 23 — March 3, 1981*. Novosti Press Agency Publishing House, Moscow 1981.

socialist countries are increasingly refined and treacherous.

“And wherever imperialist subversive activity is combined with *mistakes* and *miscalculations* in home policy, there arise conditions that stimulate elements hostile to socialism. This is what has happened in fraternal Poland, where opponents of socialism supported by outside forces are, by stirring up anarchy, seeking to channel events into a counter-revolutionary course. As was noted at the latest plenary meeting of the Polish United Workers’ Party Central Committee, the pillars of the socialist state in Poland are in jeopardy. (...)

“The events in Poland show once again how important it is for the Party, for the strengthening of its *leading role*, to *pay close heed to the voice of the masses*, *resolutely to combat all signs of bureaucracy and voluntarism*, actively to develop *socialist democracy*, and to conduct a well-considered and realistic policy in *foreign economic relations*.” (Our italics)

As can be seen, the report says that whenever imperialist subversion is combined with mistakes and miscalculations in domestic policy, a situation will arise in which elements hostile to socialism will be stimulated and in which they can develop and flourish. It says that this is what is happening in Poland, in fraternal Poland, and that the country is on the path of counter-revolution. We are largely in agreement with this interpretation. I am somewhat doubtful as to whether or not we agree on the

actual mistakes which have been committed, but we clearly agree on where the blame lies. The responsibility, the blame, lies with the party. It is impossible to escape this blame by lamenting that the enemies of socialism are attacking with every means at their disposal. This is how we expect the enemies of socialism to behave. Without a doubt, we must look to ourselves.

"The events in Poland show"! The implication is that the events in Poland show that the Party has failed to do certain things. In what has it failed? It has failed to strengthen its leading role; it has failed to eradicate bureaucratism; it has failed to eradicate voluntarism. (We shall return to this term below. The term voluntarism has great significance in the 26th Congress Report). It has failed to develop socialist democracy and it has failed to pursue a realistic foreign policy. These are views to which we subscribe.

The fourth point with which we should deal is the remarks concerning China. In connection with China's Cultural Revolution, the report states the following:

"The present Chinese leaders themselves describe what happened in the period of the so-called cultural revolution in their country as 'a most cruel feudal-fascist dictatorship'. We have nothing to add to this assessment."

This is an ugly piece of sophistry. Surely, what is important is not what the cliques in China have to say about each other, but what actually happened. Those who are at each others' throats, who are trying to dethrone each other, are bound to say anything. But what should the CPSU conclude? That the Cultural Revolution was a most cruel feudal-fascist dictatorship, or that it was a petty-

bourgeois revolutionary initiative which became totally derailed? The Cultural Revolution may have been anything, but it cannot have been a feudal-fascist dictatorship. Even assuming that it was, how then can China be a socialist country?

These four points are the ideas in the first section which are particularly worthy of attention. The rest are well-established general truths.

2. Development of relations with the newly-free countries

The second subsection is entitled "*Development of Relations with the Newly-Free Countries*" (another new expression). The vague, imprecise language pervading the entire report, here reaches a peak. A closer reading reveals that the term "newly-free countries" is used in place of the term "underdeveloped countries". The fact that a later section bears the heading "*relations with capitalist countries*" is further evidence of this.

The concept of "newly-free countries" is one which fails to reflect economic-social-historical development, one which indeed incorrectly reflects this development. Its use is totally inappropriate.

The newly-free countries are subdivided in the same vague way, into countries following the capitalist path and "*socialist-oriented states*". The socialist-oriented countries (Angola, Ethiopia, Mozambique, Yemen and Syria (!) are listed as such), are defined as "states that have opted for socialist development." This concept supplants the previously employed one of the "non-capitalist path of development."

The remaining group of newly-free countries consists of Algeria, Guinea, Iran, India, Iraq, Egypt and the non-aligned countries. India, we are told, is a newly-free country. The inappropriateness of the concept is all too evident. Such is the composition of this group of "newly-free" countries, that among them are the newly-free, as well as some previously free, and some which have always been free. Of course, we employ the term "free" in the sense of being a sovereign state. In fact, all the countries of this second group are within the axis of imperialism.

The final point we will discuss in this section is Afghanistan, a subject the treatment of which we find quite deplorable. First let us read the relevant passage:

"Imperialism launched a real undeclared war against the Afghan revolution. This also created *a direct threat to the security of our southern frontier*. In the circumstances, we are compelled to render the military aid asked for by that friendly country." (Our italics)

As can be seen, two reasons of equal consequence are given for the Red Army intervention in Afghanistan: the undeclared war launched by imperialism and the security of the southern Soviet frontier. The former we accept. How utterly meaningless is the principle of "non-interference in the internal affairs of other countries". So-called "international law" consists in general of a number of unenforceable rules which change according to the balance of power. So too with the principle of non-interference.

However, the second reason is totally unacceptable. What sort of logic would this be? Who was in power before

the Afghan revolution? Which countries are on the other Soviet frontiers? Sweden, Finland, the USA, Japan, Pakistan, Iran, Turkey. Do these not constitute a threat to Soviet frontiers? Does the fascist dictatorship in Turkey not represent a far greater threat on a frontier of far more vital significance? What is the criterion of a "threat to frontier security"? It is possible with such a generalisation to become the most aggressive country in the world.

3. The CPSU and the world communist movement

The third subsection is entitled "*The CPSU and the World Communist Movement*". The first idea we will discuss in this section is one with which we entirely agree and which coincides with the views we expressed in *Socialism Will Win* and in the article "*Anti-Sovietism and İçinin Sesi*." The report read by Comrade Brezhnev says the following in regard to relations among communist parties:

"As the influence of the Communist parties grows, the tasks facing them are becoming more and more complex and diverse. And sometimes that gives rise to divergent appraisals and differences in approach to concrete issues of the class struggle, and to discussions between parties.

"As we see it, this is completely natural. Communist parties have had dissimilar opinions on some issues in the past as well. The facts have proved convincingly that even in the presence of differences of opinion it is possible

and necessary to cooperate politically in the fight against the common class enemy. The supreme arbiter in resolving problems is time and practice. Lenin was absolutely right when he said that many differences 'can, and unfailingly will, vanish; this will result from the logic of the joint struggle against the really formidable enemy, the bourgeoisie...'. (*Collected Works*, Vol.30, p.89)"

This is a unifying attitude which leaves no room for excommunications. Differences of opinion are possible, the important thing is not to split the front in the struggle against the common enemy. We sincerely agree and, in fact, take this one step further: time and practice have already to a great extent performed their role of arbiter and this is accelerating.

The second point we will touch upon concerns the attitude of the CPSU to criticism from within the world communist movement. Let us read from the report:

"Critical judgements of *separate concrete aspects* of development in our country are sometimes voiced in some Communist parties. Far be it from us to think that everything we had was ideal. In the USSR, socialism was built in incredibly difficult conditions. The Party hewed its way through virgin land. And nobody know better than we do what difficulties and shortcomings occurred along the way, and which of them have still to be overcome.

"We pay close heed to comradely, constructive criticism. But we are *categorically*

opposed to 'criticism' which *distorts the socialist reality* and, wittingly or unwittingly, does a good turn thereby to *imperialist propaganda*, to our class opponent." (Our italics)

In Turkish, such an approach is called "feeding with the handle while taking it back with the spoon". Criticism is only permissible if it concerns "*separate concrete aspects of development in the country*". Any generalisations made on the basis of these "separate concrete aspects" presumably do not qualify as acceptable criticism.

But what is more important and unacceptable is the criterion attached to acceptable criticism: that it must not distort socialist reality or provide fuel for imperialist propaganda.

In the first place, the arbiter of whether or not any criticism distorts socialist reality, cannot be the person or institution at which this criticism is directed, but is the relationship between science and practice. A criticism may be incorrect or it may be correct. In the former instance, the thing to do is to show that it is incorrect and explain the truth. To categorically prohibit incorrect criticism cannot be reconciled either with socialist democracy or democratic centralism. How can you stipulate that criticism be correct?

The other criterion, that criticism "must not provide fuel for imperialist propaganda", is equally meaningless. Any criticism directed against the socialist countries, justified or unjustified, correct or incorrect, will provide fuel for imperialist propaganda. That is what imperialism is there for. In that case, there must be no criticism! In our opinion, such an understanding reveals, at the very least, a flaw in logic. Whether correct or incorrect, every criticism

will provide such fuel, but the mark that unfounded criticism will make will be as superficial as itself. In fact, if the truth is shown, it will even backfire. Imperialism cannot for long make use of something which does not exist. What provides imperialist propaganda with more lasting fuel is not criticism, or those who criticise, but the actual shortcomings of living socialism.

Let us read a third passage:

“Take the GDR or Poland, Hungary or Cuba, Mongolia or Yugoslavia — all the socialist countries, in fact, carried out the revolution in their own way, using forms that were dictated by the correlation of class forces in each of these countries, by the national distinctions and the external situation.

“There had been armed struggle and *peaceful forms* of passage to the new social system.” (Our italics)

As can be seen, this passage contains a serious distortion, a distortion which cannot, however, be pinpointed with a particular sentence in quotation marks, but which becomes evident on a closer inspection of two successive paragraphs. What is being discussed is the *revolutions* which were carried out in the socialist countries and these are said to have been carried out in different ways. Immediately after this, it is said that the *passage to the new social system* has been peaceful in some countries, while involving armed struggle in others. It is not said that some *revolutions* were carried out peacefully. In this way, the report avoids having to say that revolutions were carried out through peaceful forms. But the impression it

wishes to leave in the reader's mind is obvious. All Soviet textbooks state that the possibilities for the peaceful way are growing, that these exist. Examples must be given of this. But no such example exists on the face of the earth, so, even if a particular country in which the former oppressive class was unable to resort to civil war has carried out its revolution through armed struggle, through the decisive contribution of the Red Army, the passage to the new social system has been "peaceful"! If the democratic revolution has been carried out by force and then socialism achieved through the process of uninterrupted revolution, this is supposed to have been the "peaceful way"!

This is one point with which we disagree and which we consider to be a distortion.

Now let us proceed to the most vital fallacy in this section:

"As our Party sees it, differences of opinion between Communists can be overcome, unless, of course, they are fundamental differences between revolutionaries and reformists, between creative Marxism and dogmatic sectarianism or ultra-Left adventurism. In that case, of course, there can be no compromises — today just as in Lenin's lifetime. But when Communists fight for the common revolutionary cause, we believe that patient comradely discussion of differing views and positions serves their common aims best of all.

"The *great unifying principle*, a powerful factor furthering cohesion and enhancing the prestige of the world communist movement, is the Communists' *unremitting struggle for peace*,

against imperialism's aggressive policy, and the arms race that carries with it the danger of a nuclear disaster." (Our italics)

Thus we learn about the *great unifying principle* of the world communist movement. If the differences of opinion among communists have not grown into differences of opinion between reformists or ultra-leftists and communists, if they are all working for the common revolutionary cause, these differences are surmountable. What is this common revolutionary cause? It is the struggle for peace. The struggle for peace is the great unifying principle of the world communist movement.

This is precisely the surrender of ideology to politics. This point was reached step-by-step. First, the right-wing tendencies in the communist movement were given small concessions on the condition of preserving ideological unity within the framework of Marxism-Leninism and proletarian internationalism. But it did not stop there, because the concessions served only to strengthen the right-wing tendency. Subsequently, when many a party rejected the fundamental propositions of Marxism and proletarian internationalism, this concept was withdrawn at the meeting of European communist parties. The subject of peace came to the fore as the most expedient basis upon which to bring the European communist parties together. That is how this great unifying principle was arrived at.

Because the topic of peace appeared as a kind of common denominator, and as the opportunist parties rejected world revolution, socialist revolution, the proletarian dictatorship, the hegemony of the proletariat, internationalism, etc., it is only to be expected that peace

would not receive a proper treatment either. Thus, peace, one of the fundamental demands of the peoples, began to be treated in a pacifist, and not a communist manner. The connection between war and imperialism, between peace on the one hand and revolution and socialism on the other, came to be passed over in silence at meetings and congresses of communist parties, leave aside negotiations between states.

At least on platforms among communists what ought to be said should be something like this:

“Is there a way to peace without an exchange of annexations, without the division of spoils among the capitalist robbers?

“There is: through a workers’ revolution against the capitalists of the world.” (Lenin, *Collected Works*, vol.25, p.55)

Because just such an understanding is demanded on communist platforms, article 6 of the *Terms of Admission to the Communist International* formulated this understanding as follows:

“...It is the duty of any party wishing to belong to the Third International to expose, not only avowed social-patriotism, but also the falsehood and hypocrisy of social-pacifism. It must systematically demonstrate to the workers that, without the revolutionary overthrow of capitalism, no international arbitration courts, no talk about a reduction of armaments, no ‘democratic’ reorganisation of the League of Nations will save mankind from new imperialist wars.”

(Lenin, *Collected Works*, vol.31, p.208)

Disregarding for a moment our disagreement with the way in which the subject of peace is dealt with in the section of the Report entitled "*The CPSU and the World Communist Movement*", even if it were dealt with correctly, peace could still not be regarded as the "*great unifying principle of the world communist movement*". Peace is a most fundamental demand of the peoples and, like everything else, a just and lasting peace can only be achieved through the victories of socialist revolutions. Moreover, these parties are *communist* parties. For this reason, the great unifying basis (principle, etc.) of the world communist movement is not the struggle for peace, but Marxism-Leninism and proletarian internationalism.

4. Relations with the capitalist states Countering the forces of aggression The policy of peace and cooperation

This is a section devoid of theoretical analyses, one in which technical subjects such as arms reduction, military spending and bilateral negotiations predominate.

Turkey is dealt with in this section, the evaluation made here being more correct than that of the 25th Congress. In addition, the order in which Turkey is dealt with also shows the importance which the Soviet Union attaches to Turkey. Turkey is mentioned in the following order among the capitalist countries: the USA, France, Germany, Italy, Finland and Turkey. This is because of its position as a neighbouring country.

5. To strengthen peace, deepen detente and curb the arms race

The following evaluation is made in this section:

“Comrades, the central direction in the foreign policy of our Party and Government is, as it has always been, to lessen the danger of war and to curb the arms race.”

It could be argued that it would be wrong to draw a conclusion from this quotation alone. However, taken in conjunction with all that was said in the sections on the communist movement, relations with the capitalist states and detente, the incorrect emphasis on peace is most apparent. The fact that not once in the report is the concept of world revolution used, while pages and pages are devoted to practical proposals, strengthens this emphasis: *“Everything for peace”!*

To say that “the central direction in the foreign policy of our Party and Government” is the struggle for peace, is to say: “everything for peace”. The communists are the most active fighters for peace, but not everything is for peace. The central direction of the foreign policy of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union and of the Soviet state is, at least in the present period, active aid, in proportion to its own strength, to the world revolution, which progresses in the form of revolutions in single countries, and, directly related to this, the collective security of the socialist community. Peace is an indispensable focal point of struggle because and insofar as it closely serves these aims. It would be unimaginable, for instance, to forsake open and active aid to a revolution

which began in one of the great imperialist countries with a high probability of success, in the name of peace. Or let us suppose that the imperialists were to demand Moscow. ... Moreover, we are not against all wars either. We are not opposed to just wars.

“Finally, our ‘peace programme’ must explain that the imperialist powers and the imperialist bourgeoisie *cannot* grant a democratic peace. Such a peace *must* be sought for and fought for, not in the *past*, not in a reactionary utopia of a *non-imperialist* capitalism, ... but *in the future*, in the socialist revolution of the proletariat.” (Lenin, *CW*, vol.22, p.167)

We wholeheartedly subscribe to the appeal and proposals for peace in the report read by Comrade Brezhnev. We understand and accept the great significance the struggle for peace has in the world. Nevertheless, these are proposals which any bourgeois pacifist could also accept. This is not a communist peace programme. It too could be presented. For example, in his draft directives to the Soviet delegation to the Geneva peace negotiations, Lenin suggests that just such a bourgeois pacifist programme be proposed and says the following:

“This programme should be a bourgeois-pacifist programme with the reservation, timely and clearly expressed by our delegation, that we do not put forward here a communist programme — the only one that is in keeping with our views — (set forth briefly) because we wish to put before the other delegations, who

hold fundamentally different views, a number of palliatives and measures of a reformist type ... Under certain conditions this programme of palliatives could serve to mitigate the present difficult situation." (Lenin, *Collected Works*, Vol.42, pp.396-397)

(The reformist measures here mentioned comprise measures against inflation, the establishment of an international gold reserve, mutual arms reduction, etc.)

Yes, this too may be presented. Communists may put forward a bourgeois pacifist peace programme. However, the meeting in question is the congress of the leading party of the world communist movement, the CPSU. If Lenin, even while negotiating with the bourgeois, even while proposing a pacifist programme, says that the communist peace programme should be explained, for the congress report to limit itself to this level is not correct.

The communist peace programme formulated by Lenin and equally valid today, may, if somewhat schematically, be summarised as follows:

1. Exposure of the demagogies of the bourgeoisie, the social-chauvinists and social pacifists.

2. Opposition to annexation; to work for the acceptance of the rights of nations, the right to secede included.

3. To seek a truly democratic and lasting peace in socialist revolutions.

II. The economic policy of the CPSU in the period of developed socialism

The second major chapter of the Report of the Central Committee to the 26th Congress of the CPSU, bears the title "*The Economic Policy of the CPSU in the Period of Developed Socialism*". This chapter is also divided into various sub-sections, but because of the close interconnection between subjects, we will deal with the various sub-headings as the subject crops up, and not in the order contained in the report.

1. Basic strategic formulations

Cutting down on waste

The report begins with a presentation of the results of the 10th Five-Year Plan period and deals with its successes and shortcomings. The significant successes achieved in the Soviet economy are clearly discernible from this information. For example, in terms of *volume of*

production. the Soviet Union has outstripped the other countries of the world in the areas of steel, cement, chemical fertilizers, wheat, cotton, and electrical and diesel locomotives. The Soviet Union has the highest inventory of machine tools of any country in the world; it has the greatest number of machines.

These are very pleasing developments. They are further proof of what socialism can achieve even in an underdeveloped country. However, due to the fact that, when the revolution took place in the Soviet Union, capitalism had not fully absorbed the country from one end to the other, and because the new man is not bred so easily, the insufficient level of development of labour discipline means that this great number of machines are not utilised with a corresponding efficiency. In the words of the Report, "compared with the best indicators in the world (which should be read as the advanced capitalist countries — R.Y.), we use more raw materials and energy per unit of the national income." In other words, the Soviet economy utilises more energy and more raw materials than these countries to create the same proportion of value. The economy is less efficient, more wasteful...

Moreover, the Soviet Union comprises one-sixth of the world. Conclusions about the Soviet economy cannot be drawn simply on the basis of this great quantity of machinery, without taking into account the *technology* employed and the efficiency derived from this machinery. A 100-acre orchard will naturally have more apple trees than a 10-acre orchard.

Yet none of this can overshadow the great achievements of socialism in the Soviet economy. The path traversed by an economy which, when the revolution was

carried out, could not send nails to the first electricity plant under construction, to its present level only proves the superiority of socialism. Of the shortcomings, the Soviet communists are also aware. The report puts forward as *"the most important principle in the economic strategy of the CPSU for the coming period"* that "the economy must be economical". Cutting down on waste, thrift, is called for:

"Big potentialities are inherent in making better use of production plant — machinery, equipment and transport facilities. Our efforts should be concentrated on reducing idle time, raising the shift index, and developing energy- and material-saving technological processes.

"A thrifty, economical attitude to labour resources is particularly important in the conditions of the eighties. This is a complicated matter, which calls for solving many problems of an economic, technical, social and educational nature. ...

"The Central Committee of the Party calls on the Congress delegates to approve this conclusion as a most important principle in the economic strategy of the CPSU for the coming period.

"An economy must be economical — that is dictated by the times."

To raise the quality of production

The report stresses the need to raise the quality of production in every relevant section, for industry in

general, for durable consumer goods and for agriculture. The following passages show the importance this has for the Soviet economy:

"Another point is the level of requirements to the quality of products. It seems to me, these ought to be the highest requirements. We cannot and must not accept anything less than conformity to the highest world and domestic standards. We must get ourselves accustomed to this and work for this, firmly brushing aside anything outdated, obsolescent, anything that life has shown to be substandard."

"Prime significance in the Party's efforts to raise the standard of living should be attached to *expanding* the production and improving the *quality* of consumer goods, and extending public services.

"We have achieved successes in this, and they are substantial. But at a Party congress it is important to concentrate on something else. For it is a fact that year after year plans for the production of many consumer goods have remained unfulfilled, especially in textiles, knitwear, leather footwear, furniture, and television sets. And the quality, finish, and assortment are not improved as they ought to be. In all these matters things must be put right without delay." (Our italics)

What is said at all is said openly. The quality of production in the Soviet Union is inferior to that in the

advanced capitalist countries. This must be rectified, from the technological level employed, to variety and quality of packaging of goods. This too is an approach we welcome. The world has long since left behind the outlook of vulgar socialism still being propounded by our mensheviks. According to that outlook, the variety, model and packaging of goods are ploys for capitalist profit, they are wasteful. It is sufficient for a product to be useful. This outlook raised to the level of a theoretical principle, a stage which the socialist countries were compelled to go through because of economic difficulties. But these are now being left behind. The fact that socialism is a form of organisation which can provide for the happiness of people in every respect, including the aesthetic, in a way that capitalism cannot, is becoming much clearer.

However, a certain amount of time is always necessary between the diagnosis of a shortcoming and its rectification. In our opinion, for the Soviet Union in this respect, it is a matter of several generations. There are many historical, economic, social and political reasons for this. The fact that, in any case, the same objectives have been cropping up in successive congress reports, indicates just how long this will take.

A greater say to trade

Together with an appeal to raise the quality of production, a further idea is advanced:

“Trade must have a bigger say in determining the variety and quality of goods.”

This question of raising the variety and quality of durable consumer goods has come up at successive congresses, but improvement has been at a much slower pace than that to be desired. There is a need for mechanisms which will ensure this improvement. It would be foolish to think that socialism will renounce capitalism in all its aspects. The *consumer* must have a say in determining the variety and quality of goods. Production should regulate itself according to consumer choice. As the medium through which this right of say finds expression, trade is undoubtedly an important aspect of this mechanism. However, for trade to live up to what is required of it in a rapid and meaningful way, would require electronic data processing centres on a nationwide scale. It would require communications link-ups between the outlets where the consumer and producer meet up, and between central planning and the factories. The Soviet economy has not yet reached such a level. In addition, this requires a financial system capable of shifting the direction of production to one or another product at a moments notice.

There can be little progress in raising the variety and quality of production without *consumer reaction* being given a say. It is correct, at the lower stage of communism, to organise trade in such a way that it reflects consumer reaction.

Priority to 'B' group

First let us read the relevant passage from the report:

“As you know comrades, the draft Guidelines

for the next five-year plan envisage a *certain* acceleration of group 'B' production — its growth rate will *somewhat* exceed that of group 'A'. That is a good thing." (Our italics)

Group 'A' production is machine-producing machine industry, previously called heavy industry. Group 'B' is the consumer goods industry, or light industry as it was previously called. The question of group 'B' production exceeding group 'A' production is a point of great controversy in the Soviet Union, for, in the socialist model, group 'A' always takes the lead, acting as a powerhouse for the whole economy. And it has always been so in the Soviet Union as well.

However, looking at the present concrete situation, we see that a considerable gap has opened between the two. Restricted economic possibilities have meant that the development of group 'A' could not be harnessed to develop group 'B'. The limited possibilities that did exist were, due primarily to the existence of imperialism and the threat it poses, channelled into 'A' group, particularly the military industry. The variety and quality of consumer goods were thus restricted. For this reason, the last two congresses have been attaching great importance to group 'B' production. The 11th Five-Year Plan envisages a higher growth rate of group 'B' production over that of group 'A'. In general, this should not be the case. But in the concrete situation in the Soviet Union, it must be so in actual fact.

Actually, the phrase in the report that the growth rate of group 'B' production will "somewhat exceed" that of group 'A', does not tell us much. Let us say that group 'A' is producing 1000 goods, while group 'B' is producing

only 100. If a 100% growth rate were envisaged for group 'B' production, this would bring it to 200. But with a mere 20% growth in group 'A', this would come to 1200. Even with such enormously differing growth rates, the gap would require 4 or 5 five-year plans (25 years) to be closed.

2. The agrarian question

Increasing the food supply

The first point we should like to deal with concerning the field of agriculture is the objective stated in the report of *raising the food supply*.

When, in a seminar held in 1976, I said that in many regions of the Soviet Union meat, milk and eggs were in short supply, many comrades could not believe it. The report corroborates this fact. Despite the constant increase in the production of foodstuffs over the past 10-15 years, "the Party's Central Committee and Political Bureau of the CPSU Central Committee, being well aware of the situation in each republic and each region, see that *difficulties in supplying the population with food still exist.*" (Our italics)

Khrushchev declared at one point that "the Soviet Union will reach communism in 1980", that "our country will reach the communist stage when we outstrip the USA in milk and steel production". The date 1980 was even inscribed in the Programme of the CPSU. 1980 has come and gone. The Soviet Union has outstripped the USA in steel production. But there is still a long way to go before it reaches communism.

The 26th Congress Report lists the measures already taken and still to be taken to overcome the food shortage.

A *food programme* has been formulated which will assure a considerable increase in the output of farm produce. This programme is called upon to ensure a closer integration of agriculture with the industries concerned with storing and processing farm produce.

The Congress places the main emphasis among foodstuffs on such animal products as meat, milk, eggs and butter:

“The first job is to increase the output of those agricultural products whose shortages are causing particularly disturbing interruptions in supplies. I refer above all to *meat and other animal products*.

“...The message of the Central Committee of the CPSU ...is this: livestock farming is today the main front in agriculture.” (Our italics)

Developing the infrastructure of agriculture

The second subject we will deal with is one which reflects both the general situation in Soviet agriculture and, related to this, the general level of development in the country as a whole. The report singles out as one of the main links in achieving the objectives set out, *developing the infrastructure of agriculture*. This also is most correct.

Raising agricultural production, as well as the efficiency and quality of production, depends directly on the infrastructure in the country as a whole, and in agriculture in particular. The realisation of these aims, together with getting the produce to the people, requires in the first place, to quote the report, a “road network”.

Again, that alone is insufficient. What is also needed, again in the words of the report, is "dependable transportation", that is, rapid, regular, refrigerated transportation. Grain elevators, storehouses, refrigerators and packing and crating stations are needed. Reaching the level of advanced capitalist countries in agriculture demands that all of this be done in the most efficient manner. And the ability to do so is precisely and closely connected with the general level of development in the country.

Allow me to illustrate the point by way of comparison with a randomly chosen village in England. Now, I have a fair knowledge of Soviet villages, as well as of villages in Turkey. England is an economically regressing imperialist country with a slow growth rate and is going through a fairly serious crisis. Its general level of development and standard of living are lower than those of many other countries. This notwithstanding, the village I have in mind has one main road and five minor roads, i.e., six all told, all of which are paved. It has electricity, gas, sewage, telephone, television, daily deliveries of milk and newspapers to homes, a post office, three grocery stores, a greengrocer, an abattoir supplying frozen meat to homes, a primary school, a secondary school, a petrol station, a large agricultural chemicals factory, and two pubs. Reaching this level in a socialist country which began as an underdeveloped country is a matter of correct policy, concentrated effort, social consciousness and *time*.

Let us now see what the report says on this question:

"Even today the volume of agricultural production makes possible an appreciable improvement in the supplies of many types of

food products to the population. In the past five-year period, for instance, *the average annual consumption of fruit and vegetable per head of the population rose much more slowly than their production. This was mainly due to losses.*" (Our italics)

What does this mean? It means, just as in our own country, that fruit is rotting under the trees and vegetables are rotting in the fields, before they can be transported to the market, i.e., to the people. The use of the words "much more" is significant, since such clear terms are not used frequently. This is a serious problem and one which has nothing to do with capitalism or socialism as such. This allows us to better appreciate what is meant when we speak of underdevelopment. The country is building the material and technical foundations of communism, yet the fruit and vegetables grown in the Caucasus are not available in Moscow. This is the sort of backwardness from which the Soviet Union is emerging. It is no mean task and this historical backwardness leads to a multitude of shortcomings, defects and distortions. But what matters is the general direction of development. The 64 years of development behind the Soviet Union show that these areas will also develop and the problems be overcome.

Material and moral incentives

This subject brings us to a whole realm of topics which, according to the way they are treated and used, may give rise to very different developments. The question of material and moral incentives is one such topic. The report

begins by saying that greater weight will be given to material and moral incentives in developing agriculture. There can be no question of disagreement here. Indeed, very little remains if we take away material and moral incentives (under socialism, not communism).

The report outlines three measures designed to develop the system of material and moral incentives. The first of these is found in the following passage:

“The CPSU Central Committee and the Council of Ministers of the USSR recently took a detailed decision on this matter. *It censures the practice of unwarranted interference in the activities of collective and state farms by certain Party and government officials.*” (Our italics)

Party and government officials will desist from unnecessary interference in the economic activities of farms. Although this measure is designed to counteract bureaucratic intervention, it inevitably carries with it the tendency towards decentralisation. In many parts of the report it is proposed to increase the powers of managers of enterprises in relation to the central state and planning authority and also in relation to the workforce. This creates a development with two (opposing) tendencies: Decentralisation in the relations between managers and the central bodies on the one hand, and a tendency towards centralisation, by virtue of the increased powers of the managers in their relations with the workforce, on the other. The latter tendency would necessitate a corresponding increase in the powers of the trade unions, whose specific task it is to guard the interests of the working class against the state “which may make mistakes” (Lenin).

However, the report envisages no such innovation at this level. We shall return to this subject.

As far as relations between managers and the central bodies are concerned, this measure could, since the general atmosphere at work is an important factor influencing economic efficiency, foreseeably act as a significant moral incentive for enterprise management by eliminating unfortunate and unwarranted attitudes.

The second measure proposed in the system of material and moral incentives is contained in the following somewhat lengthy passage:

"The collective and state farms were and continue to be the mainstay of socialist agriculture. But this certainly does not mean that the potentialities of subsidiary individual holdings may be neglected. Experience shows that such holdings can be a substantial asset in the output of meat, milk, and certain other produce. Individually-owned vegetable and fruit gardens, poultry and cattle are part of our common wealth.

"The CPSU Central Committee has deemed it necessary to take a decision on supplementary measures to develop subsidiary individual holdings. It provides for establishing conditions — both material and moral — that would make citizens more interested in subsidiary farming and, above all, in raising livestock and poultry. Collective farmers and state-farm workers should be helped with young stock and fodder. This applies both to those who own livestock and those who are prepared

to raise livestock belonging to collective or state farms. There is experience of this in a number of republics and regions, and it deserves to be spread." (Our italics)

Here we have a case of a situation which theoretically should exist versus that which actually does exist in practice. The direction dictated by theory is obvious. The incentives (or rather concessions) offered to privately-owned smallholdings are incompatible with the theoretical model. If it is a mistake to forget the distinction between the *kolhoz*, i.e., collective farm (which is a form of cooperative), and state farms, it would be a far graver error to forget the distinction between privately-owned land and socially-owned property at this or that level. Private smallholdings belong to their owners, collective farms to the cooperatives, but state farms or factories belong to the *whole people*. They differ in respect to the property relations in each. The direction of development must be towards exclusive state ownership in agriculture. However, this is the general theoretical model, a stage that may be reached via an indirect path, by resolving the various contradictions and dilemmas posed by reality en route, sometimes by acting in a manner contrary to the theoretical model, at other times slowing down. Therefore, what must be considered here is, not whether the proposed measures are faithful to the "letter" of Marxism, but rather whether they are an aid to reaching the aim set by Marxism.

The meaning that it is attempted to convey by the term "voluntarism", frequently encountered in the report in meaningful contexts, here becomes evident, historically 50 years after the event. In the capitalist state, cooperatives

(in agriculture, collective farms, as well as various forms of cooperative in industry or in branches which do not produce value) are *collective capitalist* forms of organisation. However, under the conditions of the dictatorship of the proletariat, under which the state belongs to the working class, cooperatives, whose land and basic means of production belong to the state, i.e., to the whole of society, "do not differ from socialist enterprises" (Lenin, *Collected Works*, vol.33, p.473). Under such conditions, cooperative farm property "nearly always coincides fully with socialism" (*Ibid*).

The reason for the coexistence of cooperative property, as a slightly different, more backward form of socialism, is the existence under capitalism of the simple commodity producer (the rural and urban petty producer), together with the bourgeoisie and the proletariat. We can safely predict that, at the present level of social development, these two forms of property will exist for every country making the transition to socialism, until communism has been reached. For example, there will probably not be any collective farms in England when it passes to socialism, since agriculture there is carried out by a small section of the population on large farms using advanced techniques. However, there are also those who make their living out of the extremely numerous small enterprises existing in the service and trade sectors, not to mention artisans as well. Their transition to socialism will again take place through cooperatives.

Under socialism these two forms of social property can and do coexist, but under the control of state property. State property is the higher, the more mature form of property, it is the one envisaged in the model. It is where time must eventually lead. To lose sight of this aim is

equivalent to renouncing a planned economy and can lead to economic disintegration, in the end, to anarchy in production.

Under communism, these two forms of property will merge into a single form as state property, that is, as the property of the whole of society. However, as long as different classes exist (and under socialism different classes do exist), the relations of these classes to the means of production will also differ. This manifests itself as two different types of social property.

After this somewhat lengthy diversion, let us now return to the term "voluntarism". Collective farms are, under the dictatorship of the proletariat, the "simplest, easiest and, from the point of view of the peasantry, the most acceptable" means of drawing the small producer into socialist production (Lenin). This process can only be *voluntary* and *gradual*. The progress and success of this process depends, together with an active struggle against recalcitrant forces, primarily on the development of the *consciousness* of the population engaged in agriculture.

The collectivisation of Soviet agriculture was carried out at a rate which considerably outpaced the development of this consciousness. The principle that collectivisation should be voluntary and gradual was not strictly adhered to. The looming prospect of a world war in the 1930's played an important role in this accelerated development. As a result of objective conditions and subjective choices, socialist production relations were effected in agriculture and industry long before the requisite technological level of the economy had been reached. *We are not saying this transition should not have been effected.* We are merely trying to understand the sources of today's problems. During the period of the construction of socialism in the

Soviet Union and *even today*, the relations of production went beyond and go beyond the level of the productive forces. The production relations are pulling the forces of production forward. In a sense, first the tent was erected, and, under its protective shade, the interior began to be filled.

This is the inescapable path of socialism as established in underdeveloped countries. However, it brings with it enormous difficulties as well. For example, in the latter half of the 1970's, *40% of industrial workers* and a much greater proportion of those employed in agriculture and the construction sector, were still engaged in *manual labour!* The conclusion we must draw is that there is still a long way to go before a fully mature, developed socialism is reached. By the same token, the development of socialist consciousness on such a technological level will inevitably display serious weaknesses.

Let us give another example to illustrate the point with reference to private smallholdings. The relative backwardness of the technological level of the means of production and of production itself on the one hand, and the weakness in socialist consciousness on the other, are most clearly visible on the question of *private subsidiary holdings*. These private subsidiary holdings are plots of land which collective farmers and workers are permitted to own and the size of which is controlled. They comprise only a small percentage of the total arable land. Despite this, in 1965 these small private holdings provided *17% of the total real income of the entire Soviet population!* Inherent in this large percentage are, in addition to the shortage of agricultural products, the understanding and habits of private ownership. There has been no development in later years which would allow us to think

that this percentage has dropped. On the contrary, the 26th Congress envisages an even greater role for these plots of land.

Encouraging agriculture and animal husbandry carried out on these small private holdings through incentives and state support will, at best, do nothing in the way of eradicating the source of individualism, while it may have a negative effect on the productivity of state and collective farms. It will make central control over the economy more difficult. Nevertheless, within the bounds of my present knowledge, I am not inclined to oppose such support. The meaning of the word "voluntarism" can also be gleaned in this context. Experience has shown that one cannot simply say "I will do so and so" and that it can be done. Ending production on the private smallholdings today could well mean a famine.

Socialism is built, within its own theoretical logic, on the foundations developed by capitalism. It represents a more advanced stage of development of the productive forces and production relations. Thus, although there is nothing to stop the working class in a medium-level developed country from seizing state power under favourable political conditions, it cannot build the socialism envisaged by Marxism for a historically long period of time. It can merely lay the foundations insufficiently laid by capitalism, fill the tent, so to speak, more rapidly. It is for this reason that Lenin says it is easier to carry out the revolution in a medium-level developed country than in an advanced capitalist country, but more difficult to establish socialism there.

Consciousness! Consciousness is something propaganda and education alone cannot provide. That is only part of the problem. The other part is an economic and

social foundation upon which consciousness can flourish. If this foundation is insufficient, then one is faced with a very difficult task. The agrarian problem in the Soviet Union can only be solved given time and a genuine increase in the technological level, and, closely allied to this, through ideological education.

Picture it for yourselves: A man keeps a cow in his backyard. The cow's head is constantly gazing at him through the kitchen window. He must feed it every evening and milk it before going to work every morning. Is it conceivable that he would keep this cow if he could find as much milk as he wanted whenever he wanted, at a price which works out cheaper than his expenditure for the cow? He would slaughter the wretched beast then and there and that would be the end of it.

The dearth of production forces and culture truly suited to socialism, and an insufficient concentration of social relations, has been preventing socialism from exhibiting its superiority over capitalism *to the full* today. It fell to the lot of the revolution and socialism in the Soviet Union to realise the very historical developments which themselves call forth socialism: Industrialisation, conversion of agricultural labour into a form of industrial labour, electrification and automation in production and consumption, eradication of illiteracy, urbanisation on a nationwide scale; a widespread and modern communications network, centralised accounting on a nationwide scale, etc. All of these are problems which, historically, capitalism is called upon to solve, and which have in fact been solved in the advanced capitalist countries. In the Soviet Union, these problems were solved by socialism, which in a sense "filled in the gap" for capitalism. This alone, for those with eyes to see, is sufficient proof of the

superiority of socialism.

The measures proposed by the report are hardly likely to endanger socialist agriculture in a society which is surrounded on all sides by a planned economy. However, this much they do make clear: building socialism in an underdeveloped country is a daunting task.

The third measure proposed in the system of material and moral incentives for agriculture is as follows:

“Maximum support should also be given to farms run by industrial enterprises to supply their personnel.”

Again, this measure represents, not what ought to be, but that which is feasible. The goods produced in the factory are not the property of the workers of that factory, whereas the produce from the factory farm shall feed them. If a neighbouring factory has no farm, its workers shall not eat. This, in a sense, means carrying the cooperative ownership in agriculture into the property of the whole people in industry. If we were to take this to lengths which the Soviet economy is, however, highly unlikely to follow, we should arrive at something entirely different, at a variant of the Yugoslav model, at something which Marx and Engels mocked as “municipal socialism”. “The aim of socialism”, says Lenin, “is to turn all the means of production into the property of the whole people, and that does not at all mean that the ships become the property of the ship workers or the banks the property of the bank clerks. If people take such paltry things seriously, then we must do away with nationalisation, because the whole thing is preposterous.” (Lenin, *Collected Works*, vol.42, p.63)

These then are the three measures proposed in the report for the system of material and moral incentives in agriculture. The common, and positive, feature of all three is that they provide a respite during which the true solution can be found.

3. Democratic centralism in the economy

Raising discipline and responsibility

The question of democratic centralism in the economy is one of the key problems of socialism. The first idea we shall deal with in this context is the need to raise discipline and personal responsibility in the economy. First let us read two passages:

“The importance of *discipline*, the importance of *personal responsibility* have increased many times over in present-day conditions. This is especially true of the responsibility of the leading economic, government and party personnel.” (Our italics)

The second passage concerns the efforts to sustain the tempo of work and illuminates another aspect of the problems facing the Soviet economy:

“The first point I want to speak about is responsibility for state plan fulfilment. The Party has always regarded the plan as law. And not just because it is approved by the Supreme

Soviet. The plan is law because only its observance assures the harmonious functioning of the national economy. Let us speak frankly: this axiomatic truth has begun to be forgotten. The practice of downward plan revision has become widespread. Such a practice disorganises the economy, demoralises personnel, and accustoms them to irresponsibility.

“I am least of all inclined to adopt a formal posture. There may be, and do occur, the odd occasions when plan amendment is necessary. But this has to be precisely an odd occasion, an exception. When, however, exceptions crop up more and more often, this gives rise to understandable concern. Is it not too often that we follow the lead of those who would like to make their lives easier — be listed as leading workers and receive bonuses without actually fulfilling plans.”

It is correct to stress the need to raise discipline and personal responsibility in order to further develop the economy: “At any rate, and under all circumstances without exception, collegiate management must be accompanied by the precisest definition of the personal responsibility of *every* individual for a *precisely* defined job. To refer to collegiate methods as an excuse for irresponsibility is a most dangerous evil.” (Lenin, *Collected Works*, vol.29, p.437)

The quotation is self-explanatory.

Greater powers to managers

The final point in the section, "The Economic Policy of the CPSU" and "Democratic Centralism in the Economy", which we shall discuss, is one which in a sense reveals the entire direction of the CPSU's present economic policy:

"I would like to speak *specifically of management* at the amalgamation and enterprise level. Different variants and different schemes have, as you know, been tried out. A great deal of diversified experience has been accumulated. This experience makes it clear that the quest has to be continued. The overall trend of this quest, it seems, is *towards greater independence of the amalgamations and enterprises, and greater powers and responsibility of economic managers.*' (Our italics)

As can be seen, the report characterises the trend which should be continued as follows: increasing a) the independence, and b) the power and responsibility of enterprise managements.

This is a truly complex subject and one which concerns the operation of democratic centralism in socialist society and the distinction between it and bureaucratic centralism. Before going into our views on this subject, let us add one more thing. The above passage immediately precedes the paragraphs complaining of non-fulfilment of plan targets. This indicates to us that a further, more pragmatic worry, in addition to the points mentioned above, is playing a role in increasing the powers of enterprise managements: i.e., not to fall behind plan

targets.

Let us immediately make a digression here and try to explain something which concerns us regarding communist propaganda. Going for simplifications in propaganda, simple stock answers, may serve some purpose for a limited period, but, once circumstances change, they come back to haunt the propagandist as a further problem. Let us illustrate the point by means of two examples of propaganda which have been used at various times in the past.

First example: "The country with the fewest road accidents in the world is the Soviet Union. This is because socialism is humanitarian and thoughtful." *Answer:* The increase in cars on the road! As the number of vehicles on the road increases, the accident rate is rising at a horrific pace. Few accidents are likely to take place on empty roads. An increase in accidents, therefore, does not mean that socialism is not humanitarian, but that social consciousness and the cultural level are backward. For accidents on congested roads are primarily related to the cultural level.

Second example: "The high growth rate achieved by the Soviet Union since the revolution will always continue and is a structural characteristic of socialism." *Answer:* In view of the fact that the growth rate has been steadily declining in the Soviet Union in recent years, the above logic should lead us to conclude that socialism is useless. Is that so! In a medium-level developed country with an already low production output, even further depressed by war, mobilisation of social dynamism can raise the growth rate to great heights. But when, with the passage of time, the economy has grown and life has become more monotonous, these rapid rates are bound to fall. (A 100%

increase on 10 units of production increases it by 10 units. But a 1% increase on 1000 units of production again increases it by 10 units.) In the process, all the elements of under-developedness will make themselves felt to a greater degree. It is one thing for some element to exist in a particular slice of time, and quite another for it to be a structural feature of socialism. If these had been properly explained yesterday, the decline in the growth rate would not occupy the inordinate space in people's minds it does today.

What is the connection between increasing the authority and independence of enterprise managements, and the anxiety to maintain and raise further the quantity and quality of production? The Soviet Union is a vast country producing millions of tonnes and employing a central plan. From the Baltic to the *taiga*, how much of what each enterprise will produce, and at what quality and price, is predetermined. Central planning may work well enough through postal correspondence while the country's economy is small and the world-wide economic tempo is slow. But as production increases in scale and diversifies, as quality comes to the fore and the competition of imperialism on the world market acquires an importance influencing every home in every country, as the scientific-technological revolution flourishes, implementing a central plan successfully requires, *first and foremost*, a sophisticated technology. It requires electronic communications and a computer system on a nationwide scale. The Soviet economy has yet to reach such a level. Photocopy machines have only recently acquired any widespread use. In our opinion, one of the chief reasons behind the shortcomings in plan fulfilment is this technological backwardness.

The leadership seizes hold of the relaxation in the implementation of the plan. What does it propose to counter this with? Greater independence and wider power and responsibility for enterprise managements, i.e., decentralisation. If I am not mistaken, Khrushchev had a similar proposal.

Returning to the question of the centralisation-decentralisation of the socialist economy and democratic centralism, what can be said? In the first place, we are perfectly aware that "communism requires and presupposes the *greatest possible centralisation* of large-scale production throughout the country". "To deprive the all-Russian centre of the right of direct control over all the enterprises of the given industry throughout the country... would be regional anarcho-syndicalism, and not communism." (Lenin, *Collected Works*, vol.42, p.96). (Our italics)

However, this "greatest possible centralisation" necessitated by the horizontal and vertical development of the production process is not the same thing as *bureaucratic centralism*. Bureaucratic centralism arranges everyone and everything, except for a few authorities at the centre, like matchsticks and ignores individual or regional distinctions. The discipline of bureaucratic centralism is at all times formal and imposed. It leaves no room for individual initiative and is subjectivist. The resultant monster is a nauseating, insurmountable and impenetrable bureaucrat like those in Kafka's novels.

The centralism of socialist society and socialist economy falls into the framework of *democratic centralism*:

"We are for democratic centralism. And it must

be clearly understood how vastly different democratic centralism is from bureaucratic centralism on the one hand, and from anarchism on the other.(...)

“There is nothing more mistaken than confusing democratic centralism with bureaucracy and routinism. Our task now is to carry out democratic centralism in the economic sphere, to ensure absolute harmony and unity in the functioning of such economic undertakings as the railways, the postal and telegraph services, other means of transport, and so forth. At the same time, centralism, understood in a truly democratic sense, presupposes the possibility, created for the first time in history, of a full and unhampered development, not only of specific local features, but also of local inventiveness, local initiative, of diverse ways, methods and means of progress to the common goal.(...)

“Local distinctions, specific economic formations, forms of everyday life, the degree of preparedness of the population, attempts to carry out a particular plan — all these are bound to be reflected in the specific features of the path to socialism of a particular labour commune of the state. The greater such diversity — provided, of course, that it does not turn into eccentricity — the more surely and rapidly shall we ensure the achievement of both democratic centralism and a socialist economy.”(Lenin, *Collected Works*, vol.27, pp.207-208)

We have already mentioned above that the centralism of socialist society and its economy must not be understood as a mass of people without clearly defined authority and duties, who, with the exception of a few individuals, hide behind a curtain of collectivism. Under socialism, the duties of each official must be clearly defined, as must the power and responsibility he may exercise within those clearly defined boundaries. This also applies to managers.

Finally, as the influence of the central authority, i.e., centralisation, increases parallel to the development of the socialist economy, so too must the influence of the rank and file, i.e., democracy, develop: "*Creative activity at the grass roots is the basic factor of the new public life... Socialism cannot be decreed from above. Its spirit rejects the mechanical bureaucratic approach: living, creative socialism is the product of the masses themselves.*" (Lenin, *Collected Works*, vol.26, p.288) (Our italics)

From all that we have seen above, the important shortcoming of the report becomes clear. Providing enterprise managers with greater independence and wider powers and responsibilities in respect to the central authority is understandable, as long as it conforms to the framework set out by Lenin. It may be interpreted as a return to the norm and a counteraction to the excessive and unnecessary centralism and bureaucratic practices left over from the days of the civil war, the difficult period of construction, and the anti-fascist war years. Whether this is indeed the case can only be determined by closer inspection. However, the report includes not a single *concrete measure* to ensure more active, more effective and more authoritative intervention by the masses in *economic life*. This, in our opinion, is the most important

shortcoming of the 26th Congress Report. An increase in the powers of enterprise managements should make a corresponding increase in the rights, powers and control of the rank and file much more *compulsory*. The participation of workers' collectives and the trade unions in the economy with creative influence and authority should be ensured. Concrete measures should be taken to ensure that these organisations and communities become genuine class organisations and not merely showpieces. Democratic centralism can operate properly, socialist democracy can develop, only if such a balance is created. Only such a balance will ensure that the workforce is not left defenceless in the face of the increased powers of managements. Only through such a balance will the millions be able to participate with a genuine interest in the fulfilment of plan targets and in building the material and technical foundations of communism.

Let us conclude our evaluation of this section of the report by drawing attention to one final point. As can be seen, the report clearly lists many shortcomings, e.g., waste, inefficiency, poor quality of production, an insufficient output of foodstuffs, a shortage of infra-structural establishments, bureaucratic intervention in the economy, etc. Here is your criticism which provides imperialism with material! If we had said all this, the charges against us would be even worse. The same may be said if Comrade Brezhnev points them out.

III. Soviet society's socio-political development

The third section of the Report of the Central Committee to the 26th Congress of the CPSU is entitled, "*Soviet Society's Socio-Political and Cultural Development and the Tasks of the Party*", and consists of various subsections.

In evaluating this section we shall depart from the practice of previous chapters and devote our attention mainly to two ideas encountered in the report. This is because the ideas in question are of paramount importance for the communists of all countries in understanding both living socialism and their own revolutions, as well as the world revolution. The first of these ideas is the thesis of "achieving a classless society under socialism". The second is the concept of "the state of the whole people".

Before we proceed to discuss these ideas, let us briefly deal with a few points of interest from the section as a whole.

1. Brief evaluations

The understanding permeating the entire report, of socialism as a harmonious state of affairs without contradictions or conflicts, becomes particularly pronounced in this section.

* The report rightly states that the classes and social groupings in Soviet society are gradually drawing closer to each other, and that this is an objective, but not spontaneous, process which depends on the policy which is being pursued.

* According to the figures given in the report, the total working population of the Soviet Union today stands at 120 million, of which 80 million are workers (two-thirds of the working population). The section known as the intelligentsia makes up what is termed "one quarter of the working population". Neither a percentage nor a figure is given for collective farmers, but from the aforementioned we deduce that they number somewhere in the region of 10 million. This proportion, i.e., 1/12th of the working population, seems grossly underestimated! Other figures given in the report on various subjects are also somewhat suspect.

* The report recognises the existence, not of antagonisms or contradictions, but merely, of *essential distinctions* between the various classes and strata in the Soviet Union.

* The process of abolishing the "essential distinctions" between the working class and the collective farmers is explained in the report in the following words:

"With the industrialisation of agriculture far-reaching changes are taking place in the life of the *collective-farm peasantry*. Step by step their labour is drawing closer to that of factory

workers. The number of machine operatives and other workers servicing advanced technology is growing in the countryside. It is not surprising, therefore, that the proportion of collective farmers with a secondary (complete or incomplete) or higher education has grown from 39 to over 60 per cent within ten years.

"The countryside's social structure is greatly influenced by the drawing together of the two forms of socialist property and by the development of mixed economic organisations involving collective farms and state enterprises."

* After stating that "the abolition of the distinctions between classes sets social policy new tasks", the report sets out these tasks as follows: to even out social distinctions on a territorial plane; implementing an effective demographic policy to solve population problems that have lately grown acute; and eradicating national distinctions by developing the fraternal friendship and fusing together of the nationalities inhabiting the Soviet Union.

* The following paragraph is contained in the report:

"We have no unemployment. The right to work is recorded in our Constitution and ensured in real terms. However, on the recommendation of many people the Constitution also records that shirking socially useful work is incompatible with the principles of socialism. This implies that all organisational, fiscal, and juridical levers should be used to close once and for all every opening for parasitism, bribery, profiteering, unearned incomes, and infringements upon

socialist property."

Whether there can be unemployment under socialism or not is a different matter, but clearly there cannot be open unemployment in a country like the Soviet Union where there are complaints of a manpower shortage and too slow a rate of population growth. But the extensiveness of latent unemployment is a known fact.

Under socialism, everyone must engage in socially useful labour. There is no room for parasitism in socialist society. Marx's slogan for socialism, "from each according to his ability, to each according to his labour" expresses precisely this necessity. For some reason, the report puts forward this truth in an apologetic way.

2. "Classless society" in the period of socialism

After stating in the report that classes are drawing closer together, that the "essential distinctions" between town and country are rapidly being eradicated, that mental and physical labour are rapidly fusing, that, in a word, the classless society is approaching, Comrade Brezhnev says:

"In evaluating the experience of our society's development over the past few decades, I think we can assume that a classless society will take shape mainly within the historical framework of mature socialism."

Due to the fact that similar ideas have constantly been repeated since Stalin's day, they no longer receive the

deserved, nay, necessary, reaction from the world communist movement. But since habit does not constitute a correct yardstick for the truth, and since we find this idea wrong from both the theoretical and practical viewpoint, we shall put forward our views on this point at some length.

To do so we must first look at what classless society is, then return to consider socialist society, and then see what is meant by the transition from socialism to classless society and how this is to be realised.

Classless society — communism

The distinction between classless society and homogeneous society

Claims that "classless society is being born in Soviet society", or that "classless society will be reached within the period of socialism" are to be found in many Soviet books on economics. These claims are based on the supposition that "classless society" and "homogeneous society" are not identical.

According to this understanding, classes are basically abolished once the private ownership of the means of production has been abolished. It is not necessary for the contradiction between mental and physical labour to disappear for classless society to take shape. Homogeneous society, on the other hand, is achieved by the abolition of the division of labour.

Such a view would be a distortion. Property obviously has an important place in the definition of classes, which historically appeared together with the appearance of a division of labour, surplus-product and private ownership

of the means of production. But this is not the sole criterion. In his article, *A Great Beginning*, Lenin cites the following four elements in defining a class: first, the place they occupy in the system of production; second, their relation to the means of production; third, their role in the social organisation of labour; and fourth, the dimensions of the share of social wealth of which they dispose and the mode of acquiring it. A line of thought which fails to take into account these four criteria in conjunction, which reduces the definition of classes exclusively to the property element, is, in this sense, confining itself to a legal framework. For, taken in isolation, property is a matter of law.

We cannot understand classes if we divorce ownership of the means of production from the social division of labour. Historically, and at each living moment, that which is constantly reproducing both private property and classes is this social division of labour.

Without the disappearance of the contradiction between town and country, and, what is most important, between mental and physical labour, without the disappearance of the state and its bureaucracy, the social division of labour cannot disappear. *Before* such a stage has been reached, to say, on the basis of the fully established socialised ownership of the means of production, that classes have disappeared, would be arbitrary indeed. The establishment of social ownership of the means of production before the stage when the social division of labour disappears, is merely a measure designed to eradicate the exploiting classes and to ensure that new class formations do not take shape before classless society has been reached, while the existing

classes become ever more closely fused on the basis of the developing forces of production. "*Classless society*" is *communist society*.

If we do not accept this as correct, the following question must be asked: Today in the Soviet Union, owners of cooperative property comprise 15-20 % of the working population. If *kolhoz* property, already such a small fraction, were to be abolished by decree, would this then signify that a classless society had been reached?

When Marx, Engels and Lenin spoke of "classless society", they always understood it in the sense of "homogeneous society". In his article *A Great Beginning*, Lenin puts forward the disappearance of the distinction between mental and physical labour as a criterion of the disappearance of classes. Let us read:

"And what does the 'abolition of classes' mean? All those who call themselves socialists recognise this as the ultimate goal of socialism, but by no means all give thought to its significance. Classes are large groups of people differing from each other by the place they occupy in a historically determined system of social production, by their relation (in most cases fixed and formulated in law) to the means of production, by their role in the social organisation of labour, and, consequently, by the dimensions of the share of social wealth of which they dispose and the mode of acquiring it. Classes are groups of people one of which can appropriate the labour of another owing to the different places they occupy in a definite system of social economy.

“Clearly, in order to abolish classes completely, it is not enough to overthrow the exploiters, the landowners and capitalists, not enough to abolish *their* rights of ownership; it is necessary also to abolish *all* private ownership of the means of production, *it is necessary to abolish the distinction between town and country, as well as the distinction between manual workers and brain workers. This requires a very long period of time.*” (Lenin, *Collected Works*, vol.29, p.241) (Our italics)

When the 26th Congress report says that “classless society will take shape mainly within the historical framework of mature socialism”, is it actually proceeding from a “distinction” between classless society and homogeneous society? No, the report displays the correct understanding that classless society and homogeneous society are one and the same thing. In the first place, shortly before the sentence under discussion, the report speaks of the gradual disappearance of the distinctions between mental and physical labour and between town and country. A little further on, the tasks listed under “new tasks in eradicating class distinctions” again show that classless society and homogeneous society are regarded as identical concepts. What lies behind this “correct” understanding, we shall come to later.

What is meant by classless society?

The socialism established in an underdeveloped country, on the territory of tsarism, is, despite all its shortcomings

and deficiencies, a great achievement, in the first instance, by virtue of its mere existence. It is further a great achievement in that it was able to propel the Soviet Union to its present world status, all the while battling with the most difficult conditions. To cite the achievements of socialism in that country is surely the most genuine compliment one can pay to both socialism, and to the Soviet worker. But to exaggerate the development of the Soviet Union, does it nothing but harm. The harmful effects are most clearly visible in the working class of the advanced capitalist countries. An approach which, instead of considering the Soviet Union as a *concrete* socialism established in an underdeveloped country (with its shortcomings and deficiencies, but without losing sight of where it *began*), portrays it as *the* theoretical model, as a paradigm, one which, moreover, is rapidly approaching the classless society (i.e., "paradise on earth"), only results in alienating the working class of these countries from communism. It makes them say, "if that is the promised land, no thank you". It is for this reason that it is important to understand what sort of a stage of development classless society or communism represents.

We shall refer to three sources in defining classless society or communism.

Marx describes communism as follows in *Capital*:

"Thus it (capitalism — R.Y.) gives rise to a stage, on the one hand, in which coercion and monopolisation of social development (including its material and intellectual advantages) by one portion of society at the expense of the other are eliminated; on the other hand, it creates the material means and embryonic conditions,

making it possible in a higher form of society to combine this surplus-labour with a greater reduction of time devoted to material labour in general. For, depending on the development of labour productivity, surplus-labour may be large in a small total working-day, and relatively small in a large total working-day. If the necessary labour-time=3 and the surplus-labour=3, then the total working-day=6 and the rate of surplus-labour=100 %. If the necessary labour=9 and the surplus-labour=3, then the total working-day=12 and the rate of surplus-labour only=33¹/₃ %. In that case, it depends upon the labour productivity how much use-value shall be produced in a definite time, hence also in a definite surplus labour-time. The actual wealth of society, and the possibility of constantly expanding its reproduction process, therefore, do not depend upon the duration of surplus-labour, but upon its productivity and the more or less copious conditions of production under which it is performed. *In fact, the realm of freedom actually begins only where labour which is determined by necessity and mundane considerations ceases; thus in the very nature of things it lies beyond the sphere of actual material production.* Just as the savage must wrestle with Nature to satisfy his wants, to maintain and reproduce life, so must civilised man, and he must do so in all social formations and under all possible modes of production. With his development this realm of physical necessity expands as a result of his wants; but, at

the same time, the forces of production which satisfy these wants also increase. Freedom in this field can only consist in socialised man, the associated producers, rationally regulating their interchange with Nature, bringing it under their common control, instead of being ruled by it as the blind forces of Nature; and achieving this with the least expenditure of energy and under conditions most favourable to, and worthy of, their human nature. But it nonetheless still remains a realm of necessity. *Beyond it begins that development of human energy which is an end in itself, the true realm of freedom, which, however, can blossom forth only with this realm of necessity as its basis. The shortening of the working-day is its basic prerequisite.*" (*Capital*, Vol.3, sec.48) (Our italics)

Marx and Engels, in the *Communist Manifesto* (2nd section) say the following:

"When, in the course of development, class distinctions have disappeared, and all production has been concentrated in the hands of a vast association of the whole nation, the public power will lose its political character. Political power, properly so called, is merely the organised power of one class for oppressing another. If the proletariat during its contest with the bourgeoisie is compelled, by the force of circumstances, to organise itself as a class, if, by means of a revolution, it makes itself the

ruling class, and, as such, sweeps away by force the old conditions of production, then it will, along with these conditions, have swept away the conditions for the existence of class antagonisms and of classes generally, and will thereby have abolished its own supremacy as a class.

“In place of the old bourgeois society, with its classes and class antagonisms, we shall have an association, in which *the free development of each is the condition for the free development of all.*” (Our italics)

Again, Marx, in the famous passage in his *Critique of the Gotha Programme*, says:

“In a higher phase of communist society, after the enslaving subordination of the individual to the *division of labour* and therewith also the antithesis between *mental and physical labour*, have vanished; after labour has become not only a means of life but life’s *prime want*; after the productive forces have also increased with the all-round development of the individual, and all the springs of co-operative wealth flow more abundantly — only then can the narrow horizon of bourgeois right be crossed in its entirety and society inscribe on its banners: from each according to his ability, to each according to his needs!” (Our italics)

At the first stage of communism (which we call socialism), “to each according to his labour”, at the higher

stage (which we call communism), "to each according to his needs". These are the sloganised expressions of the dominant *modus operandi* of these two stages of development. But to try to understand and define communism within the context of the *literal meaning* of the phrase, "to each according to his needs", would be a gross error. All Soviet leaders since Stalin have presumably been committing this error to some degree since they are able to speak of the country nearly approaching communism. Of course it is getting closer, but there still lies a vast distance between the present position and communism.

Under communism, each will receive according to his needs, and these needs themselves will constantly grow, parallel to economic and social development. However, this development will proceed hand in hand with the gradual reduction of the working day. This requires an extraordinary increase in the productivity of labour, on the basis of technological development. This increase cannot be measured in terms of the level reached by this or that capitalist country at any particular time. It is an increase which can be achieved only after the *highest* stage capitalism can possibly reach has been achieved. The period of transition to communism will effect this increase by taking this highest labour productivity under capitalism even further under the common ownership of the means of production.

We should like to give an example of the kind of increase in productive forces which approaches the extraordinary increase we have been talking about and which throws some light on the kind of level of progress communism represents. In terms of the relations of production, the socialist countries obviously represent an historically more advanced stage than the capitalist

countries. However, in terms of the level of development of the productive forces and of economic development in general, the imperialist countries are still in the lead. Hence, our example concerns a development in one such imperialist country.

Last October, the Japanese firm of "Yamazaki Iron Works" launched a new factory, entirely operated by computers and robots. The factory, which produces lathes and various engineering machines, works on the basis of three 8-hour shifts. Each shift is manned by only six technicians, in a factory which would normally employ 250 workers per shift. Moreover, the technicians are only present during the two day shifts. Six technicians arrive for the 8 o'clock shift and another six for the next shift. Nobody has to turn up for the midnight shift, during which the factory continues production by itself. If one of the machines breaks down, the computers dispatch robots to attend to repairs. If the repairs cannot be carried out, the machine takes a "break" until help arrives in the morning. Because the robots are able to work in the dark, the lights are also switched off at night.

In Japan, where the means of production are in private hands, the factory we have just described means another 738 unemployed workers. Nevertheless, this is the kind of level which is absolutely necessary as a basis for advancing to communism. Of course, development will not abate at this level. Factories which require absolutely no human labour, which repair every breakdown themselves, are bound to be built. Now, begin thinking at this level and extend this development to *every sphere* of social life, and we begin to think about communism.

The extraordinary technological level thus reached will result in what is called "abundance", whereby each

will receive according to his needs. We can briefly summarise the other consequences of this exceptional technological level as follows: since everyone will be receiving according to their needs, commodity production, money circulation, trade, the operation of the law of value will also cease. The distinction between mental and manual labour and the division of labour, which condemns man to a single occupation all his life, will disappear. As a result, classes will disappear, women and children will be fully emancipated and the antithesis between the individual and society will likewise disappear. Conditions under which everyone will be able to fully develop their own potential, the realm of *true freedom* will arise. The state, states and boundaries will all disappear.

"... in communist society, where nobody has one exclusive sphere of activity but each can become accomplished in any branch he wishes, society regulates the general production and thus makes it possible for me to do one thing today and another tomorrow, to hunt in the morning, fish in the afternoon, rear cattle in the evening, criticise after dinner, just as I have a mind, without ever becoming hunter, fisherman, shepherd or critic." (Marx, *The German Ideology*)

Communism in one country

We mentioned above that the 26th Congress Report regards "classless society" as homogeneous society. Then we saw what classless society actually means. Now let us look at what is meant by the statement: "we will achieve a

classless society within mature socialism”.

If, by classless society, we understand communism, the view that “we will achieve a classless society within the period of socialism” is merely a *different way* of phrasing what was originally formulated by Stalin, and even further caricaturised by Khrushchev.

Stalin held the view that the transition to communism could take place in a single country, under the conditions of the existence of imperialism in the world. Under these circumstances, the state, which would cease to have any functions internally, would nevertheless maintain its existence against imperialist aggression. In other words, the state would continue to exist at this higher stage of communist society.

Stalin put forward this view at the 18th Party Congress, which met in 1939. He spoke as follows:

“We are going ahead, towards communism. Will our state remain in the period of communism also?”

“Yes, it will, unless the capitalist encirclement is liquidated, and unless the danger of foreign military attack has disappeared.”

The view that communism is possible in a single country, moreover, that the state will not cease to exist, betrays an insufficient grasp of what is required for communism as an economic-social-historical stage, and is thus un-internationalist. The propaganda that “the Soviet Union is rapidly approaching communism” (and that it would shortly arrive there) became particularly widespread during the last years of Stalin’s life. The Khrushchev period which followed, while “repudiating” Stalin,

indeed, even erasing him from history, good and bad, right and wrong, raised this propaganda to unprecedented heights. The view that "*we will reach communism in 20 years*" did not just remain on the propaganda plane, but actually found its way into the *party programme* adopted in 1961. It is instructive to read a few passages from this programme, which is *still in effect* today, and thus binding (!) on all Soviet communists:

"In the current decade (1961-70) the Soviet Union, in creating the material and technical basis of communism, will surpass the strongest and richest capitalist country, the USA, in production per head of population; the people's standard of living and their cultural and technical standards will improve substantially; everyone will live in easy circumstances; all collective and state farms will become highly productive and profitable enterprises; the demand of Soviet people for well-appointed housing will, in the main, be satisfied; hard physical work will disappear; the USSR will have the shortest working day.

"The material and technical basis of communism will be built up by the end of the second decade (1971-80), ensuring an abundance of material and cultural values for the whole population; Soviet society will come close to a stage where it can introduce the principle of distribution according to needs, and there will be a gradual transition to one form of ownership — public ownership. Thus, a communist society will in the main be built in the

USSR. The construction of communist society will be fully completed in the subsequent period." (*Programme of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union*, Foreign Languages Publishing House, Moscow, 1961. p.61-62)

"With these aims in view, the CPSU plans the following increases in *total industrial output*:

"Within the current 10 years, by approximately 150 per cent, exceeding the level of US industrial output;

"Within 20 years, by not less than 500 per cent, leaving the present overall volume of US industrial output far behind.

"To achieve this, it is necessary to raise *productivity of labour* in industry by more than 100 per cent within 10 years and by 300-350 per cent within 20 years. In 20 years' time labour productivity in Soviet industry will exceed the present level of labour productivity in the USA by roughly 100 per cent, and considerably more in terms of per-hour output, due to the reduction of the working day in the USSR." (p.64)

"...The rural population will ultimately draw level with the urban population in cultural and living conditions.

"*Elimination of socio-economic and cultural distinctions between town and country and of differences in their living conditions will be one of the greatest gains of communist construction.*" (p.79)

"The Party solemnly proclaims: the present generation of Soviet people shall live in communism!" (p.128)

What right has anyone to put such unscientific nonsense in the programme of a party of the country which is the world revolutionary centre, a party which is the vanguard force of the international workers' and communist movement. How is it that, although the Soviet Union possesses the cadres best acquainted with Marxism, such banalities can find their way into the party programme? Does this not indicate that there is something terribly wrong with inner-party life?...

In *Socialism Will Win* we pointed out that "communist parties, even the party of a socialist country, can make grave errors". We continued:

"It has happened many times in history, is happening today, and will happen tomorrow. No person, organisation or place is infallible. Such being the case, it is clear that our tasks are multiplying. Whatever the level may be, there is no crutch, no comforting idea that 'they are thinking for us'."

The view that, due to the existence of imperialism, the stage can still exist at the communist stage, and the view that classless society is feasible at the socialist stage, are identical. The only difference is that in the latter formulation, "communism", to which many objections were raised, has been replaced by "classless society", thus relieving another headache.

As we have previously stated, we do not find these views correct. In the *first* place they assume the possibility of classless society in the conditions of the existence of the state, forgetting that, for the duration of its existence, the state represents coercion, applied both outside and within

the country. *Secondly*, as a logical extension of this understanding, they assume that communism in one country is possible. Hence they perceive communism through a *blinker*ed field of vision, no matter how large the country may be geographically. *Thirdly*, they postulate that classless society will be reached in the stage of socialism. We will discuss our first objection and partially our second objection below. The third objection constitutes one of the two major topics we wish to discuss in this section, and hence will be dealt with at some length.

The international framework for the disappearance of the state and the establishment of classless society

Proletarian dictatorships established on one part of the globe cannot be successful on their own, without there taking place a definite tip in the world balance of power, which rises on the foundation of economic superiority, in favour of socialism. Under present-day conditions, the most important guarantee of success is for the existing proletarian dictatorships to form a tightly knit, monolithic bloc among themselves and with the working class of other countries. For the established proletarian dictatorships are only *partial victories*. Not until such time as the system of world economic and political relations weighs in favour of the socialist countries and their worldwide allies, will a definite, complete, and not merely partial, result have been achieved. In all probability, this point will be reached, not by the sudden and total collapse of imperialism all at once, but through revolutions in single countries. This is the process of the gradual formation of the *world dictatorship of the proletariat*. The materialisation of the world

dictatorship of the proletariat will signify the *final victory of socialism*.

The *world dictatorship of the proletariat* constitutes the irreversible moment of domination of the existing and newly-founded socialist countries, having triumphed over imperialism in every sphere. For this very reason, the world dictatorship of the proletariat will in general also constitute the *beginning* of the process of self-negation, the withering away of the dictatorship of the proletariat (historically the final form of the state). There can be no talk of the disappearance of the state in any country before such a stage has been reached. On the contrary, until such a stage has been reached, all the workers' states must necessarily strengthen themselves against the global enemy, the bourgeoisie. Herein lies the *external* reason for the existence of the state (the proletarian dictatorship).

The establishment of the world dictatorship of the proletariat will usher in a new historical era, an era in which capitalism-imperialism will have collapsed as a system, in which the economic source of the threat of war will have been removed, in which the principle "to each according to his needs" can begin to be inscribed on the banners of mankind. The era of transition from capitalism to socialism will draw to a close, and the *era of communism* will begin. Armies, weapons, the machinery of force, the nature of labour based on compulsion, borders, will all disappear in this era. The forces of production will begin to develop to proportions nobody dreamt of under capitalism. For the egotistical, blind obstacle which national boundaries represent before the proper utilisation of these productive forces will have been removed and economic benefit on a world scale will have become the determining factor. Classes too can only disappear at *this*

stage, on the basis of this phenomenal expansion of the productive forces.

In *The German Ideology* Marx and Engels give a wonderful description of the kind of world-wide development of the productive forces which must take place as an objective premise for communism, and consequently also of how communism can only develop on a world scale:

"This 'estrangement' (to use a term which will be comprehensible to the philosophers) can, of course, only be abolished given two *practical* premises. For it to become an 'intolerable' power, i.e., a power against which men make a revolution, it must necessarily have rendered the great mass of humanity 'propertyless', and produced, at the same time, the contradiction of an existing world of wealth and culture, both of which conditions presuppose a great increase in productive power, a high degree of its development. And, on the other hand, this development of productive forces (which itself implies the actual empirical existence of men in their *world-historical*, instead of local, being) is an absolutely necessary practical premise because without it *want* is merely made general, and with *destitution* the struggle for necessities and all the old filthy business would necessarily be reproduced, and furthermore, because only with this universal development of productive forces is a *universal* intercourse between men established, which produces in all nations simultaneously the phenomenon of the 'pro-

pertyless' mass (universal competition), makes each nation dependent on the revolutions of the others, and finally has put *world-historical*, empirically universal individuals in place of local ones. Without this, (1) communism could only exist as a local event; (2) the *forces* of intercourse themselves could not have developed as *universal*, hence intolerable powers: they would have remained home-bred 'conditions' surrounded by superstition; and (3) each extension of intercourse would abolish local communism. Empirically, communism is only possible as the act of the dominant peoples 'all at once' and simultaneously, which presupposes the universal development of productive forces and the world intercourse bound up with them.

"Moreover, the mass of *propertyless* workers... presupposes the *world market* through competition. The proletariat can thus only exist *world-historically*, just as communism, its activity, can only have a 'world-historical' existence. World-historical existence of individuals, i.e., existence of individuals which is directly linked up with world history."

In short, to conceive of communism within the boundaries of one country, is to commit a methodological error, at the very least. *There cannot be communism in one country.* (Nor can there be "classless society" in one country!)

One can speak of the external and internal conditions for the removal of the state and indeed there are external and internal conditions for the transition to the higher

stage of communism. However, these "internal and external" conditions *together* determine whether the transition to communism can take place (and the withering away of the state). They cannot be separated in practice. As a development on a world scale, communism is determined, not by the "internal and external" conditions separately, but in their *totality*. The distinction between "internal" and "external" is merely to facilitate comprehension. *Together*, the "external" and "internal" conditions create the premises for the transition within the country to classless society.

Socialism — the period of transition to communism

What is socialism?

Socialism is generally defined as "the rule of the working class, social ownership of the means of production and a planned economy". This definition is not wrong, insofar as it presents the main features which distinguish socialism from the preceding exploitative system. But that is not all there is to it. Indeed, these are not really those factors which constitute the essence of socialism. For these features merely explain the specific place occupied by socialism in the history of class struggle.

We find the finest explanation of the first stage of communist society (socialism) in Marx's *Critique of the Gotha Programme*. First let us read the relevant passage:

"What we have to deal with here is a communist society, not as it has *developed* on its own foundations, but, on the contrary, just as it

emerges from capitalist society; which is thus in every respect, economically, morally and intellectually, still stamped with the birth marks of the old society from whose womb it emerges. Accordingly, the individual producer receives back from society — after the deductions have been made — exactly what he gives to it. What he has given to it is his individual quantum of labour. For example, the social working day consists of the sum of the individual hours of work; the individual labour time of the individual producer is the part of the social working day contributed by him, his share in it. He receives a certificate from society that he has furnished such and such an amount of labour (after deducting his labour for the common funds), and with this certificate he draws from the social stock of means of consumption as much as costs the same amount of labour. The same amount of labour which he has given to society in one form he receives back in another.

“Here obviously the same principle prevails as that which regulates the exchange of commodities, as far as this is exchange of equal values. Content and form are changed, because under the altered circumstances no one can give anything except his labour, and because, on the other hand, nothing can pass to the ownership of individuals except individual means of consumption. But, as far as the distribution of the latter among the individual producers is concerned, the same principle prevails as in the exchange of commodity-equivalents: a given

amount of labour in one form is exchanged for an equal amount of labour in another form.

"Hence, *equal right* here is still in principle— *bourgeois right*, although principle and practice are no longer at loggerheads, while the exchange of equivalents in commodity exchange only exists *on the average* and not in the individual case.

"In spite of this advance, this *equal right* is still constantly stigmatised by a bourgeois limitation. The right of the producers is *proportional* to the labour they supply; the equality consists in the fact that measurement is made with an *equal standard*, labour.

"But one man is superior to another physically or mentally and so supplies more labour in the same time, or can labour for a longer time; and labour, to serve as a measure, must be defined by its duration or intensity, otherwise it ceases to be a standard of measurement. This *equal right* is an unequal right for unequal labour. It recognises no class differences, because everyone is only a worker like everyone else; but it tacitly recognises unequal individual endowment and thus productive capacity as natural privileges. *It is, therefore, a right of inequality, in its content, like every right.* Right by its very nature can consist only in the application of an equal standard; but unequal individuals (and they would not be different individuals if they were not unequal) are measurable only by an equal standard in so far as they are brought under an equal point of

view, are taken from one *definite* side only, for instance, in the present case, are regarded *only as workers* and nothing more is seen in them, everything else being ignored. Further, one worker is married, another not; one has more children than another, and so on and so forth. Thus, with an equal performance of labour, and hence an equal share in the social consumption fund, one will in fact receive more than another, one will be richer than another, and so on. To avoid all these defects, right instead of being equal would have to be unequal.

“But these defects are inevitable in the first phase of communist society as it is when it has just emerged after prolonged birth pangs from capitalist society. Right can never be higher than the economic structure of society and its cultural development conditioned thereby.”

As can be seen, socialism is the transitional society between capitalism and communism, the transitional phase. “Socialism”, as a separate socio-economic formation, a mode of production occupying a place peculiar to itself in history, does not exist. Therefore, socialism can only be defined as a *transitional stage, with reference to communism*. Lenin, when he says, “Theoretically, there can be no doubt that between capitalism and communism there lies a definite transition period which must combine the features and properties of both these forms of social economy”, is referring to this fact. (Lenin, *Collected Works*, vol.30, p.107)

The concept which Marx calls “bourgeois right”, i.e., the understanding of what people have the right to do, to

ask for and to acquire (bourgeois, because, under capitalism, these are determined by the bourgeoisie), persists under socialism due to the insufficient level of economic development. Everybody has a right to only as much as he gives to society. And because he has a right to only that much (and no more) this is a restricted right. *Right is made conditional on contribution.* Overcoming this restriction depends on the increase in labour productivity and therefore on producing more, and better of it, in less time. Right and law under socialism regulate the relation of the worker to the means of production and to the product of his labour.

Socialism is *not* a kind of "stage" which, under all circumstances, must be experienced, "completed", and then superseded by another stage. The transition from socialism to communism is a constantly progressing and broadening *transformation*. The one does not follow the other, there is no such thing as the socialist mode of production. *Socialism is communism which carries within it the remnants of capitalist society.* These remnants are those relations which find concrete expression in the *existence of the state* and in *commodity production*.

Socialism is a period which exists within the process which leads to the disappearance of commodity production, but which nevertheless itself rests on commodity production. The existence of commodity relations signifies a constant tendency within the system towards the restoration of relations of exploitation. At the same time, this tendency also acts as a stimulant to the development of the still existing class distinctions.

The other remnant which the first stage of communism inherits from capitalist society as represented in the continued existence of the state, may be considered

in three aspects.

The *first* relates to the fact that the very existence of the state, which is at all times an *organ of coercion*, is itself a vestige of capitalist society. Lenin expresses this truth in the following words:

"In its first phase, or first stage, communism *cannot* as yet be fully mature economically and entirely free from traditions or vestiges of capitalism. Hence the interesting phenomenon that communism in its first phase retains 'the narrow horizon of *bourgeois law*'. Of course, bourgeois law in regard to the distribution of *consumer goods* inevitably presupposes the existence of the *bourgeois state*, for law is nothing without an apparatus capable of *enforcing* the observance of the rules of law.

"It follows that *under communism there remains for a time not only bourgeois law, but even the bourgeois state, without the bourgeoisie!*

"This may sound like a paradox or simply a dialectical conundrum, of which Marxism is often accused by people who have not taken the slightest trouble to study its extraordinarily profound content.

"But in fact, remnants of the old, surviving in the new, confront us in life at every step, both in nature and in society. And Marx did not arbitrarily insert a scrap of 'bourgeois' law into communism, but indicated what is economically and politically inevitable in a society emerging *out of the womb* of capitalism." (*The State and Revolution*) (Our italics)

Secondly, the remnants of capitalist society are further present in the distinction between mental and physical labour as represented by the state. The intelligentsia, political cadres, managers, etc. Lenin says that these sections will not disappear until communism. The aspect of the question which is forgotten today is the formation of economic and political relations which arises from the relations between these sections and the working class. And this formation is not one that can be "abolished" as property relations can, involving as it does an entire system of education and "profession".

Thirdly, even state ownership of the means of production relates to the fact that elements of capitalism and communism coexist under socialism. State property is the decisive form of property at the stage of the proletarian dictatorship, ensuring the most consistent and rapid development, the most rapid transformation to communism. However, it does not itself represent an element of communism, but of *capitalism*. It is an element which communism has taken over from capitalism, an element of capitalism most conducive to its purposes. The form of "property" under communism (I write property in quotation marks because at that stage this concept will also lose its meaning) is not state property, but the common property of the associated producers, in which each individual is engaged in productive labour.

Let us recall what Lenin wrote in *The Impending Catastrophe and How to Combat It*: "For socialism is merely the next step forward from state-capitalist monopoly. Or, in other words, socialism is merely state-capitalist monopoly *which is made to serve the interests* of the whole people and has *to that extent* ceased to be capitalist monopoly."

Clearly, Lenin says everything that has to be said in this little quotation. However, since the 1920's, communists have been emphasizing only one aspect of the meaning of these words. They have been saying that state-monopoly capitalism signifies the complete maturation of the objective conditions for socialism. "Socialism is now gazing at us from all the windows", etc. But they forget the other aspect, the aspect which explains what socialism is *once it has been established*, how it is a stage of transformation which, in the transition to communism, rests on the elements of capitalism. Lenin is saying in these words that, under the dictatorship of the proletariat, state property has ceased to be capitalist property because it serves the whole people, but only to that extent. The words "to that extent" mean nothing else but that state property has not *completely* forfeited its capitalist character. The *complete* eradication of the capitalist character of property will only be achieved with the disappearance of the division of labour, i.e., when all individuals engage in productive labour, with the transition to communism and the disappearance of the state.

State property is not an end in itself. It is the most consistent form of property of the transition stage, one which the proletariat, having taken it from capitalism, makes to serve its own purposes in the transition to the true common property of the whole people, i.e., to communism. But for this very reason it represents, at the socialist stage, the *struggle* between receding capitalism and advancing communism.

What are the extremes or poles of this struggle? As we know, under socialism, state property represents the property of the whole people. But it cannot completely eradicate the gap between the workforce and the means of

production. The worker has, in effect, turned over the ownership of the means of production to his state, to be used in his name.

If the state, which is in any case an institution standing above society, becomes bureaucratised, if it alienates itself from the working class, the unity between the working class and the state may, to that extent, become nominal, recorded on a piece of paper only. This is the pole of the struggle which faces the past. It can be remedied by steadily deepening the unity of the working class and the state through democracy, and this not a democracy of *consent*, but *active* democracy exercised by the masses.

The objective basis for this unification exists under socialism. For the first time in history, the passing into the hands of the proletarian dictatorship of the means of production, has created the possibility of closing the gulf which exists between the masses and the state. It has welded together the realm of labour and the realm of politics. Moreover, it has welded together the political question of the withering away of the state and the economic question of the removal of the division of labour. This then is the pole of the struggle which faces the future, which faces communism.

What we have said leads to the following conclusion: the democratisation of social life, the *broadening of the democratic experience* of the people, is one of the *conditions* for the transformation of socialism, i.e., the dictatorship of the proletariat, into communism, i.e., into a stateless and classless society.

In conclusion, socialism is a *transitional period* between capitalism and communism, a period embodying contradictions peculiar to itself. *Socialism is the dictatorship of the proletariat*. It is a period during which

classes, and hence the class struggle *persist*. However, one cannot understand this class struggle by looking at the class struggle under capitalism. This is a struggle, peculiar to the period of socialism, between classes whose characters are continually changing in the process of advancing to communism. Lenin explains this fact in the following words:

“Classes have remained, but in the era of the dictatorship of the proletariat *every* class has undergone a change, and the relations between the classes have also changed. The class struggle does not disappear under the dictatorship of the proletariat; it merely assumes different forms.” (Lenin, *Collected Works*, vol.30, p.115)

This class struggle peculiar to the period of socialism permits three possible outcomes, which are dependent on the international and internal balance of forces and on the *class policy being pursued*: to return to capitalism; to stand in the same place; or to advance to communism. The advance from the first stage of communism, i.e., from socialism, to communism is not a spontaneous development. It is, on the contrary, directly dependent on the political line being pursued and on whether *active* mass democracy is being cultivated. For the state ownership of the means of production under the dictatorship of the proletariat has, for the first time in history, welded together the realm of labour and the realm of politics. Without developing the one, development in the other is impossible.

All Soviet books, as well as the 26th Congress Report, dismiss this character of socialism as a transition period

with contradictions. Instead, they portray it as a harmonious period devoid of contradiction and conflict.

The law of value under socialism

Under socialism, the entire system of production relations undergoes a change. The means of production are no longer in private hands, but are subject to social ownership. However, commodity production does not cease under socialism. Goods are produced as commodities in accordance with a central plan and enter consumption through money-exchange.

Such things as economic incentives, economic accounting, money, credit and trade, are all elements of commodity production.

What are the reasons for the existence of commodity production under socialism?

At one time, notably by Stalin, this was put down entirely to the existence of two forms of socialist property (state and cooperative) and, *for this reason*, to the social division of labour. This is, in fact, an important reason, for as long as two forms of property exist, the natural form of economic intercourse between them will be through commodity relations. But it is not the exclusive reason. The task entrusted to socialism of developing the forces of production and taking them towards communism, necessitates taking advantage of commodity relations within the state sector too. That is the meaning of state enterprises operating on a profit-loss basis.

The productive forces of socialist society represent a level which prohibits the implementation of the principle, "to each according to his needs". The differences

in the content of labour have not yet disappeared. Because this differentiation of labour (into mental and physical, etc.) continues, social labour cannot be measured in units of socially necessary labour-time.

The various forms of labour can only be regulated through a specific measure: *socially necessary labour*. Thus, the value of a product is determined by the socially necessary average labour which has gone into its production. And this in turn is determined by the average labour productivity of society.

In short, the *law of value* operates under socialist society. The slogan of socialism reads, "to each according to his labour". This labour can only be measured through the law of value. Let us say that an automobile factory and a shoe factory are to buy each other's goods. What will be the measure? One can, as is often the case in the Soviet Union, forget the objective nature of economic laws and arbitrarily proclaim that 200 shoes are equivalent to one automobile. But perhaps it is 2000 shoes which are actually equivalent to one automobile. Without recourse to the law of value, the exchange-rate of goods under socialism cannot be found.

The necessity of commodity production under socialism in turn determines the need for money. Commodity relations require a general medium. Money too is a commodity. In socialist society, money is, in the first place, a *measure of value*, i.e., a measure of the socially necessary labour embodied in a product.

The law of value will disappear, together with all its attendant paraphernalia, when social labour begins to be measured directly in terms of *labour-time* expended, that is, under communism. Commodity-money relations will disappear when the transition to communism has been

completed. Things that are produced will then lose the characteristics of commodities. Production will yield products of labour which are produced solely for social consumption and will cease to be goods which are bought and sold. Let us also add that, under socialism, commodity relations exhibit a special character based on social property, operate within a planned economy, and show no sign of spontaneity.

Class distinctions in the Soviet Union

The criteria for defining classes which Lenin cites in his article *A Great Beginning*, are also to a great extent valid for classes in socialist society. Classes under socialism are separate classes precisely *because* they exhibit differences in the place they occupy in a historically determined system of social organisation of labour, and in the forms through which they appropriate a share of the social wealth.

Under socialism, classes undergo a change with the transfer of the ownership of the means of production into the hands of the proletarian state. Together with this change, the appearance of the criteria which determine them also begins to change, and excess features begin to be filed down. However, this state of affairs should not and cannot lead one to deny, as is the case with many Soviet authors, the existence of classes, or to underestimate the importance of class differences. It should and can lead only to a new and vitally important theoretical problem for socialism and communism: an in depth study of the change in the mode of existence of classes during the transition period to communism. This problem is no less

important, no less far reaching and no easier, in terms of the present stage of world development, than the problems which Marx, Engels and Lenin took upon themselves to solve in their day. Unfortunately, this question seems not even to have been included in the "five-year plan," let alone to have been given an answer.

It is wrong to regard the class differences in the Soviet Union as insignificant distinctions. For example, the distinction between the worker and the collective farmer does not merely stem from the different content of their labour, industrial and agricultural respectively. They differ more in respect to their relation to the means of production, which, as we recall, is a fundamental aspect of the existence of differing classes.

At its present level of development, the Soviet Union has yet to reach the moment when society *as a whole* stands in an *entirely* equal relation to the means of production. *In the first instance*, there exist two different forms of property: state property and cooperative (or group) property. Cooperative property, if we were to abstract it from the socio-economic system in which it exists, is not social property, but private property with an expanded base. That which makes it a form (albeit a more backward form) of socialist property in the Soviet Union is the economic conditions within which it exists. *Secondly*, state property too, although it is owned by the whole of society, is not all of one piece. Investment in economic and social programmes, the distribution of incomes, social funds, etc., all involve significant differences.

In short, the existence of different classes in socialist society lies, firstly, in the different forms of ownership of the means of production. Secondly, it also lies in the different roles played in the social organisation of labour, and third

(although this feature is steadily diminishing), in the differences in the modes of acquiring wealth.

But, most important of all, it lies in the place occupied by classes in the historically determined system of social production. The truth of what has been said can best be observed in the *relationship between the workers and the intelligentsia*. (Let us remind the reader that the section which is termed the "intelligentsia" in Soviet statistics, comprises both the "intellectuals" proper and the state bureaucracy (military and civilian).)

The intelligentsia in the Soviet Union is growing rapidly, in relative as well as in absolute terms. This is only natural. At the same time, the general cultural and educational level of the working class is also rising. However, the business of organising and administering society is still a matter for *specialists*. Thus, the intelligentsia conducts the business of administration in the name of the working class, as its agent. The existence of such a specialist stratum is inevitable until such time as the whole of society can carry out all its functions. This effectively means that *the distinction between those who produce and those who administer* will persist until communism. And this in turn means different places in the historically determined system of social production.

The disappearance of class differences is only possible through a massive development of the forces of production. Khrushchev was claiming back in 1961 that the Soviet Union would outstrip the USA many times over in labour productivity by 1980 and arrive at the communist stage. Leaving aside the assumption of outstripping the USA "many times over" in labour productivity within such a short period, let us assume for a moment that this wish was fulfilled, that they did outstrip the Americans.

Would this result in the disappearance of classes? Would the communist stage have been reached? The USA has also not been standing idle since the 1960's, it too has increased its labour productivity. How is it that the millions-strong CPSU, the thousands of scholars, did not raise their voices against the introduction of such a "criterion" for reaching communism as outstripping the labour productivity of the USA in the 1960's? For the question is not one of outstripping the most advanced level imperialism has achieved yesterday or today, or in any concrete slice of time, but of outstripping the *highest level* capitalism can *possibly achieve*.

The period of socialism is the period of transition from capitalism to communism. It harbours various features of the capitalist system from whence it sprang. The *division of labour*, which manifests itself in the contradictions between town and country and between mental and physical labour, still persists in the Soviet Union. On this basis, classes and strata, territorial differences and national distinctions, continue to exist. All these signify the existence of various different *interests* in society, and different interests means *contradictions*. However, under socialism, these contradictions are not of the antagonistic kind. Nevertheless, those who accept the existence of classes in the Soviet Union (for example, the Congress report), for some reason do not accept the existence of contradictions among these classes. They claim that there are no longer contradictions, merely *essential distinctions*. Lenin, in his marginal notes to Bukharin's book, *Economics of the Transition Period*, clearly points out that "antagonism and contradiction are definitely not the same thing. The former disappears under socialism, while the latter continues."

Under socialism, there exist contradictions between classes on the basis of different interests. The socialist system has, however, created the objective basis for resolving these contradictions in a manner which will speed up development. Nevertheless, this objective basis does not operate spontaneously. Contradictions, which will come to the fore from time to time, must be recognised well in advance and resolved through a *correct policy*.

Now, in order to examine more closely the differing interests among classes in the Soviet Union, let us consider the relationship between the working class and the collective farmers.

The differing interests between the working class and the collective farmers (inexplicably termed "peasantry") have their roots in the different forms of property and in the different levels of economic and cultural development between town and country. It is possible to glimpse these differing interests in every sphere of life: in economic relations, in the social and cultural field, even at the political level.

We do not find it necessary to mention here the general points at which the interests of the working class and of the cooperative farmers converge under socialism. These are general knowledge and, in any case, our aim here is to draw attention to those aspects of the question which, for one reason or another, have been forgotten.

The domination of state ownership of the means of production in the economy as a whole is the single most important factor harmonising the interests of the working class and the collective farmers. However, interestingly enough, this factor is at the same time a source of definite divergences in the interests of the two. State property is the property of the whole of society and not merely of the

working class. It comes into being through the joint contribution of all productive labour. In order to meet the requirements of society, the state must also use a certain amount of the surplus-product created by the collective farmers, and not just that created by the working class. Here, the amount, as determined by the state purchasing price, is most important. For many years in the Soviet economy, the prices of many agricultural products have been held down below their production costs. Of course this method, which effectively means the *transfer of resources* from agriculture to industry, does result in a proportion of the accumulated resources eventually finding its way back into agriculture in the form of infrastructural development. Nevertheless, for many years, capital investment in agriculture has been insufficient.

Another point is that the distribution of income between the working class and the cooperative farmers also depends on the relation between the sale price of industrial goods and the purchase price of agricultural products.

In connection with the economic interests of the *kolhozhnik*, mention must also be made of the private subsidiary holdings. The produce from these holdings is sold at *kolhoz* markets where the cooperative farmer is the seller and the worker is the customer.

Today in the Soviet Union the income levels of workers and cooperative farmers are still quite uneven due to the relative backwardness and low labour productivity in agriculture.

The contradictions between town and country can also be seen in the differing social and cultural lifestyles: the way of life, cultural opportunities, health services, the

housing situation, recreation and entertainment facilities, restaurants, etc. In all these areas, the disappearance of the differences between town and country will require a great deal of time.

The inequalities between those engaged in mental and those engaged in physical labour, will similarly gradually disappear on the basis of the developing forces of production.

In socialist society, as under capitalism, the most concentrated expression of the interests of classes and strata is to be found in the political sphere. But here again, this takes place within the framework of the characteristics of socialism.

Today, the state in the Soviet Union (i.e., the proletarian dictatorship) absolutely must take into account the specific interests of the various classes and strata existing in society in the political sphere as well. This requires a proper combination of centralisation with *mass initiative* at every level (regional, organisational or social), in a way which precludes either falling into the pit of central hypertrophy or local autarchy. The specific interests of the various classes and strata can only be satisfied by developing *socialist democracy* in society.

As can be seen, we again arrive at the question of expanding democracy as a necessary precondition for the growing over of socialism into communism.

Developed socialist society

In evaluating the view that classless society will be reached within developed socialist society, mention must be made of the concept of the "stage of developed socialist society",

a concept which has gained total acceptance in the socialist countries in recent years.

Let us first of all say that we accept that socialism and communism, which comprise a long historical period, may, indeed will, experience a variety of stages of maturation. However, what is at issue here is not the question of accepting stages in the abstract, but the question of the concrete stage which is supposed to exist in the Soviet Union *today*. To disagree on this question would not therefore mean refuting possible stages of development in general.

In the theoretical model, socialist relations of production are built upon forces of production suited to them. We can best see what kind of economic foundation is presupposed by socialist relations of production in this famous section of *Capital*:

“From that moment (Marx begins with the dissolution of feudal society — R.Y.) new forces and new passions spring up in the bosom of society; but the old social organisation fetters them and keeps them down. It must be annihilated; it is annihilated. Its annihilation, the transformation of the individualised and scattered means of production into socially concentrated ones, of the pigmy property of the many into the huge property of the few, the expropriation of the great mass of the people from the soil, from the means of subsistence, and from the means of labour, this fearful and painful expropriation of the mass of the people forms the prelude to the history of capital. It comprises a series of forcible methods, of which

we have passed in review only those that have been epoch-making as methods of the primitive accumulation of capital. The expropriation of the immediate producers was accomplished with merciless Vandalism, and under the stimulus of passions the most infamous, the most sordid, the pettiest, the most meanly odious. Self-earned private property, that is based, so to say, on the fusing together of the isolated, independent labouring-individual with the conditions of his labour, is supplanted by capitalistic private property, which rests on exploitation of the nominally free labour of others, i.e., on wage-labour.

“As soon as this process of transformation has sufficiently decomposed the old society from top to bottom, as soon as the labourers are turned into proletarians, their means of labour into capital, as soon as the capitalist mode of production stands on its own feet, then the further socialisation of labour and further transformation of the land and other means of production into socially exploited and, therefore, common means of production, as well as the further expropriation of private proprietors, takes a new form. That which is now to be expropriated is no longer the labourer working for himself, but the capitalist exploiting many labourers. This expropriation is accomplished by the action of the immanent laws of capitalistic production itself, by the centralisation of capital. One capitalist always kills many. Hand in hand with this centralisation, or this

expropriation of many capitalists by few, develop, on an ever-extending scale, the cooperative form of the labour-process, the conscious technical application of science, the methodical cultivation of the soil, the transformation of the instruments of labour into instruments of labour only usable in common, the economising of all means of production by their use as the means of production of combined, socialised labour, the entanglement of all peoples in the net of the world-market, and with this, the international character of the capitalistic regime. Along with the constantly diminishing number of the magnates of capital, who usurp and monopolise all advantages of this process of transformation, grows the mass of misery, oppression, slavery, degradation, exploitation; but with this too grows the revolt of the working-class, a class always increasing in numbers, and disciplined, united, organised by the very mechanism of the process of capitalist production itself. *The monopoly of capital becomes a fetter upon the mode of production, which has sprung up and flourished along with, and under it. Centralisation of the means of production and socialisation of labour at last reach a point where they become incompatible with their capitalist integument. This integument is burst asunder. The knell of capitalist private property sounds. The expropriators are expropriated.*" (K. Marx, "The Historical Tendency of Capitalist Accumulation," *Capital*, vol. I) (Our italics)

The relation of production established through the abolition of the private ownership of the means of production is a *form*. The level of productive forces suitable to this form is machine production.

On the concrete plane, we encounter a great variety of levels of development of the productive forces. The "form" we mentioned above, i.e., socialist production relations, can be established given a definite *minimum* of the requisite forces of production. They can be made to operate without there existing a truly suitable "infrastructure". What is thus built will be like a tent with very few furnishings. With the correct methods, this tent can be suitably filled, and quite quickly at that.

This divergence between the model and practice, requires that we look, not to any particular kind of socialisation, in order to distinguish the socialism envisaged in the theoretical model, but to the degree of *genuine socialisation*. The measure of this "genuineness" is the country's level of development: The level of industrialisation, the scientific and technological level, the predominance of machine production over manual labour.

Pre-1917 Russia was a country which was medium developed in terms of the level of industrial development, but backward in terms of the level of development of the country as a whole. The establishment of the dictatorship of the proletariat in such an underdeveloped country, confronted the Soviet people with a situation not envisaged by Marx and Engels: the need to create the forces of production required by the socialist stage.

To lose sight of this specific task encountered by the Soviet Union, would be the shortest route to subjectivism and voluntarism. It is possible, after the revolution, to

enact a decree and engage in a bit of arm-bending and thus to abolish private property throughout society and institute socialised property, "socialist relations of production". But socialist relations of production only have meaning if they are considered *in conjunction with* the forces of production suited to socialism. Otherwise, we would end up with something like the Maoist vision of passing to communism through village communes. Or, to give another example, the single village grocer possesses a "monopoly" by virtue of his unique position and can impose high prices, but is he a monopoly?

For these reasons, the following approach we have been listening to from Soviet authorities since the 1930's does not tell us much. They say: "The socialist transformation has been completed in terms of the property relations, so when *kolkhoz* property disappears as well we will have arrived at a *classless society*".

To "abolish" collective farms, which today comprise only one-fifth of the population, is a matter of a single decree. But the classes thus "abolished" would not truly be abolished. The only force capable of removing classes, is the level of the forces of production which ensures this.

If we examine the development of Soviet society, we see that the abolition of private property and the institution of social property has brought the production relations into harmony only with a *section* of the forces of production existing in society. That section consists of the area which already employed capitalist machine production. For the remainder of the urban economy and for the rural areas, the establishment of social property has not meant the harmonisation of the forces of production with the relations of production. On the contrary, it has meant the relations of production surpassing the level of the

forces of production. And, for the Soviet Union, the historical problem has not been to establish the relations of production, but to develop the forces of production without which those production relations cannot truly exist. The transition to social property was not a *result* — in the sense we have spoken of here — of the level of development of the forces of production, but rather a *prerequisite* for developing those forces.

For this *formal* socialisation to become *genuine* socialisation through industrialisation (which is what the report for some reason calls “developed socialist society”) is a matter of time. One would do well to steer clear of subjective terms like “making history” or “bypassing stages” in this context.

According to the approach which dominates in the report, as well as in all Soviet textbooks on economics, the *indicators* of developed socialist society are listed as follows: An efficient industry, large-scale farming; the ever-increasing transformation of science into a factor of production; a qualified labour force; qualified specialists and managers; the diversification of social needs; the earmarking of more funds for technological investment and for science and education; the steady obliteration of class differences. Clearly these are indicators, not of a “stage of developed socialist society”, but of *socialism* proper, as envisaged in the theoretical model. All the indicators essentially describe, not the formal, but the *genuine socialisation* of labour.

Due to the backwardness of the country, the Soviet Union experienced a stage not envisaged by theory. We may refer to this stage for the country as a whole, as the “*stage of formal socialism*” *

This stage was taken up with the fight to create the

forces of production which constitute a condition for socialism. Today, the Soviet Union is gradually achieving the requisite level of forces of production, they are filling up the tent. This they have termed the "stage of developed socialism". We do not find it correct to call, with the kind of arbitrariness often encountered in the history of the CPSU, this stage developed socialism, when it is in fact a stage which is just beginning to be socialism proper.**

The transition from socialism to communism

Marx and Engels defined the higher stage of communism as a condition of *general freedom*, to be reached on the basis of the development of social production. This transition would mainly depend on technological progress which would raise labour productivity. Only in this way could "abundance" arise, and the need to share out the products according to the labour of each disappear.

* What we have termed the "stage of formal socialism" and what the Soviets call the "stage of transition to socialism" are not the same thing. Both begin at the same time, with the proletarian revolution, but the former far outlasts the latter. The stage which is called the "stage of transition to socialism" lasts from the revolution until the abolition of private ownership of the means of production throughout society, and thus until the removal of the capitalist class, and is accompanied by a certain degree of industrialisation. Thus, the fundamental criterion observed in defining the "stage of transition to socialism" is a change in the *legal property relations*.

The "stage of formal socialism", on the other hand, again begins with the revolution, but continues right through to the present day, and even into the future. The fundamental criterion observed in defining this stage, is the level of development of the *forces of production* suited to socialism.

** Today the "stage of formal socialism" is to a great extent giving way to "genuine socialism". However, this process has yet to be completed. Let us recall an example from a previous chapter. The Soviet Union is still lagging behind the present (let alone the future) level of labour productivity of the imperialist countries. A not inconsiderable proportion of agricultural production is carried out on private subsidiary holdings. And, most striking of all: "In the latter half of the 1970's, 40% of industrial workers and a considerably greater proportion of those employed in the agricultural and construction sectors were still engaged in *manual labour*".

The concept of "abundance" should not be taken merely in the sense of a quantitative increase in production. The abundance accruing from scientific-technological progress must be created with "the least expenditure of energy", and in conditions most befitting man. An accompanying *decrease in the working day* is a fundamental prerequisite of communism.

The transition from socialism to communism is not a transition from one socio-economic formation to a different, higher formation, as in, for example, the transition from feudalism to capitalism. On the contrary, once the economic foundations of socialism have been established, all that remains is to ensure an economic development within this structure whereby the vestiges of capitalism can gradually be eliminated. This "transition" is one from a situation in which people are as yet unable to enjoy genuine freedom in conditions truly befitting man, to just such a condition. Socialism and communism are both forms of the same mode of production, the communist mode of production.

Today, the majority of Soviet workers are at a lower cultural and technical level than engineers and officials. At the same time, the general progress of the economy and the rising level of mechanisation and automation are forcing up the educational-cultural level of both workers on the one hand, and engineers and officials on the other. The tremendous increase in labour productivity necessary to effect the transition to communism will be provided by precisely this process. Also implicit in it is the *objective necessity* of the abolition of the distinction between mental and manual labour.

As the distinction between mental and manual labour diminishes, the productivity of labour will increase, and as

the productivity of labour increases, the distinction between mental and manual labour will diminish. The increase in the productivity of social labour will create the economic conditions for the gradual shortening of the working day. Since the revolution, the average working week in the Soviet Union has fallen from 58.5 hours to 40.7 hours, a drop of approximately 18 hours. World standards have thus been matched. The transition to communism, however, involves fundamentally different figures.

The shortening of the working day will provide an atmosphere in which individuals can develop their full potential in every direction. The old division of labour, which condemns the worker to a lifetime in a single occupation, will disappear. In this way, the higher stage of communism will be realised.

At this higher stage of communism, together with the disappearance of commodity production, the various forms of value, as well as the law of value, will also disappear. The amount of labour expended in producing something will no longer be measured indirectly, in terms of value, as was the case during commodity production, but directly, in terms of the amount of labour-time expended in production.

"Labour-time, even if exchange value is eliminated, always remains the creative substance of wealth and the measure of the cost of its production." (K. Marx, *Theories of Surplus Value*, Vol.3, p.257.)

At this stage, the whole concept of labour will also undergo a fundamental change:

“Communist labour in the narrower and stricter sense of the term is labour performed gratis for the benefit of society, labour performed not as a definite duty, not for the purpose of obtaining a right to certain products, not according to previously established and legally fixed quotas, but voluntary labour, irrespective of quotas; it is labour performed without expectation of reward, without reward as a condition, labour performed because it has become a habit to work for the common good, and because of a conscious realisation (that has become a habit) of the necessity of working for the common good — labour as the requirement of a healthy organism.” (Lenin, *Collected Works*, Vol.30, p.517)

A proper understanding of how the transition period, as communism bearing remnants of capitalist society, advances (or does not, as the cause may be) step by step to the higher stage of communism, will bring us to the following very important idea expounded by Marx and Engels:

“Communism is for us not a *state of affairs* which is to be established, an idea to which reality will have to adjust itself. We call communism the real movement which abolishes the present state of things. The conditions of this movement result from the premises now in existence.” (*The German Ideology*)

So far, we have examined in turn, socialism, classless

society — communism, and the features of the transition between the two stages of communism. In the light of this examination, it becomes clear that classless society cannot emerge within either “developed” or underdeveloped, “mature” or immature socialism. This, then, is the theoretical aspect of the question.

On the practical side, it should suffice to recall the distinguishing features of classless society and all that we have written thus far about the 26th Congress. In addition, let us quote an article which appeared in the 13th October 1981 edition of the *Financial Times*, entitled “Tax Threat to Man’s Best Comrade”, by David Satter in Moscow:

“The Soviet Government plans to impose a tax on dogs in a bid to conserve dwindling supplies of meat, save gas and bath water and bolster state revenues.

“The proposed levy is so high that hundreds of thousands of meat-eating pets are expected to be destroyed.

(...)

“A draft law on ‘The Regulation of Maintenance by the Population of Unproductive Household Animals’ calls for a limit of one dog or cat in each household and an annual tax of 200 roubles (£154) for a large dog and 120 roubles for a lapdog.

“It is expected to come into force early next year.

“In a country where the average monthly salary is about 140 roubles and pensions start at around 40 roubles, the new regulation is expected to lead to the destruction of hundreds

of thousands of pets.

"The official explanation for the law is that it is a response to a wave of complaints over the lack of supervision of pets.

"The true motivation, however, is understood to be the need to free more meat supplies for human consumption, to provide the Government with a further explanation for declining meat supplies, and to increase state revenues without taking the politically sensitive step of raising meat prices.

"*Pravda*, the Communist Party newspaper, recently reminded readers that meat was sold in state stores for half its actual cost and said that studies had shown that dogs consumed meat worth 1.5bn roubles every year.

"The paper also noted that pets ate subsidised bread and milk products and put pressure on supplies of gas and water provided by the state, because of the need to wash them."

Although the truth or falsehood of this report cannot change our conclusions, let us hope that it is all a "bourgeois propaganda lie"!

3. The state of the whole people and its profoundly democratic character

The report speaks of "*the profoundly democratic character of the state of the whole people*" which today exists in the Soviet Union. These words bring us to the second

fundamental idea we shall discuss in connection with this section of the report.

However, before passing on to the subject of democracy, we must briefly examine such concepts as the state, dictatorship and the state of the whole people.

The state — the dictatorship of the proletariat

The question of the state is a truly difficult and complex one. The most correct approach within the scope of the present work would be to limit ourselves to that which has been tested by history, albeit at the risk of simplification.

It will be instructive in trying to understand how and when the state will disappear, to recall how it first arose. Therefore, let us first cast our attention to the origins of the state.

With the genesis of mankind, there *first* emerged *consciousness* and, as a concrete vehicle for consciousness, language. At first this consciousness was more "sheep-like", a sort of tribal consciousness. It later developed with an increase in *productivity*, in *needs*, and, fundamentally, in *population*. Accompanying these developments, we see the appearance of a *division of labour*. At first, this is nothing more than a division of labour between the sexes and later "natural" divisions of labour as between weak and strong. Only later, with the appearance of the distinction between *mental and manual labour* on the basis of increased labour productivity, does it become a genuine division of labour. Private property, classes and the state, all arose as a consequence of this social division of labour. (Just as the division of labour first appeared as a "natural division of labour" within the family, women and children appeared

as the slaves of the men of the family. Consequently, it can be said that the first objects of private property in history were women and children in the family.)

There is a close connection between the social division of labour and private ownership of the means of production. The division of labour is a relation between people creating property, while property is a consequence of the division of labour.

Together with the appearance of the division of labour, there appears a contradiction between the interests of individuals or individual families, and the *common interest* of all individuals. For the division of labour *forces* certain individuals to perform a certain work, and, although the common interest does not concern itself with the specific work which must be performed by specific individuals, it is concerned with the perpetuation of the division of labour. The common interest is by now enshrined in the relations of mutual dependence between individuals who have divided the labour process among themselves, it exists in real life.

The German Ideology describes the contradiction between the common interest and individual interests, and what follows from it, as follows:

“Just because individuals seek *only* their particular interest, which for them does not coincide with their communal interest (in fact the general is the illusory form of communal life), the latter will be imposed on them as an interest ‘alien’ to them, and ‘independent’ of them, as in its turn a particular, peculiar ‘general’ interest or they themselves must remain within this discord, as in democracy. On

the other hand, too, the *practical* struggle of these particular interests, which constantly *really* run counter to communal and illusory communal interests, makes *practical* intervention and control necessary through the illusory 'general' interest in the form of the State."

The most important form of the social division of labour, of the distinction between mental and manual labour, from the point of view of the origin of the state, has been the differentiation of town and country. The development of towns in turn necessitated such municipal developments as administration, policing and taxation. These imply the appearance of politics in society, the appearance of the state.

As can be seen, the state appeared on the stage of history when the individual interest entered into conflict with the common interest. Marx and Engels explain this development in the following words:

"And out of this very contradiction between the interest of the individual and that of the community the latter takes an independent form as the *State*, divorced from the real interests of individual and community, and at the same time as an illusory communal life, always based, however, on the real ties existing in every family and tribal conglomeration — such as flesh and blood, language, division of labour on a larger scale, and other interests — and especially, as we shall enlarge upon later, on the classes, already determined by the division of labour, which in every such mass of men separate out, and of

which one dominates all the others. It follows from this that all struggles within the State, the struggle between democracy, aristocracy, and monarchy, the struggle for the franchise, etc., etc., are merely the illusory forms in which the real struggles of the different classes are fought out among one another." (*The German Ideology*)

The state, representing the "general interest", which is a distorted-illusory reflection of the common interest existing in society, serves to perpetuate the division of labour within which that society operates, and the property relations arising from it. In other words, it serves to perpetuate the privileges of the ruling class. Consequently, the state, to quote from *Anti-Dühring*, is "the official representative of society as a whole, its concentration in a visible corporation". Yet, for the same reason, and again in the words of *Anti-Dühring*, in every period, the state, "is an organisation of the particular exploiting class, for the maintenance of its external conditions of production".

For this reason, *the state means dictatorship*. If one accepts the existence of classes and the struggle of classes, one must also accept this truth, since the one follows logically from the other.

Consequently, every democracy, as a form of the state, is also a dictatorship. Bourgeois democracy is the dictatorship of the bourgeoisie and proletarian democracy is the dictatorship of the proletariat. The former is the dictatorship of a minority over the majority, while the latter is the dictatorship of the majority over the minority. The proletarian dictatorship established through the

victory of proletarian revolution, is *not* something dictated by the manner in which power is won. Revisionist views to the effect that workers' states which come into being through armed revolution and civil war are necessarily dictatorships, whereas the power established by peaceful means need not be a dictatorship, are meaningless drivel.

Lenin gives the following definition: "Dictatorship is that rule which is based directly on force and is unrestricted by any laws." The revisionists show great indignation over the phrase "unrestricted by any laws", but that is how matters stand. Of course, there will be laws. Of course, there will be organised legal systems. Every state *protects* its rule over society through a definite legal system. But, precisely by admitting this, we are also admitting that the *source* of that rule is neither laws nor legalities. The source of state power is the *correlation of class forces* existing in society.

The correlation of class forces can only be preserved through institutionalised coercion, though not exclusively through this. For this reason, it is necessary to make use of every area (and the institutions corresponding to these areas) of the class struggle.

All that we have said thus far, is equally valid for the state of the proletariat, that is, the dictatorship of the proletariat.

The state of the whole people

In order to gain a better understanding of what the report means by "the state of the whole people", which it treats as a form of the state *distinct* from the dictatorship of the proletariat, let us refer to the programme of the CPSU:

"...Having brought about the complete and final victory of socialism — the first phase of communism — and the transition of society to the fullscale construction of communism, the dictatorship of the proletariat has fulfilled its historic mission and has ceased to be indispensable in the USSR from the point of view of the tasks of internal development. The state, which arose as a state of the dictatorship of the proletariat, has, in the new, contemporary stage, become a state of the entire people, an organ expressing the interests and will of the people as a whole...

"The Party holds that the dictatorship of the working class will cease to be necessary before the state withers away. The state as an organisation of the entire people will survive until the complete victory of communism. Expressing the will of the people, it must organise the building up of the material and technical basis of communism, and the transformation of socialist relations into communist relations, must exercise control over the measure of work and the measure of consumption, promote the people's welfare, protect the rights and freedoms of Soviet citizens, socialist law and order and socialist property, instill in the people conscious discipline and a communist attitude to labour, guarantee the defence and security of the country, promote fraternal co-operation with the socialist countries, uphold world peace, and maintain normal relations with all countries."

(Programme of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union, p.91-92)

We will not dwell on the various misconceptions concerning socialism and communism in the above passage. But the passage clearly reveals that, according to the programme, there *no longer exists* a proletarian dictatorship in the Soviet Union. According to the Marxist theory of the state, *every* state is in its essence the dictatorship of a class, but in the Soviet Union, although there are still classes, the state is not a dictatorship.

First, let us examine Lenin's views on the disappearance of the dictatorship of the proletariat through two brief quotations and then let us see where this understanding of "the state of the whole people" springs from.

The first quotation is from *A Great Beginning*:

"If we translate the Latin, scientific, historico-philosophical term 'dictatorship of the proletariat' into simpler language, it means just the following:

"Only a definite class, namely, the urban workers and the factory, industrial workers in general, is able to lead the whole mass of the working and exploited people in the struggle to throw off the yoke of capital, in actually carrying it out, in the struggle to maintain and consolidate the victory, in the work of creating the new, socialist social system and in the entire struggle for the complete abolition of classes.

"... the dictatorship of the proletariat is also a period of class struggle, which is inevitable as

long as classes have not been abolished, and which changes in form, being particularly fierce and particularly peculiar in the period immediately following the overthrow of capital. The proletariat does not cease the class struggle after it has captured political power, but continues it until classes are abolished — of course, under different circumstances, in different form and by different means.” (Our italics)

The second quotation is from *The State and Revolution*:

“So long as the state exists there is no freedom. When there is freedom, there will be no state.

“The economic basis for the complete withering away of the state is such a high stage of development of communism at which the antithesis between mental and physical labour disappears, at which there consequently disappears one of the principal sources of modern *social* inequality — a source, moreover, which cannot on any account be removed immediately by the mere conversion of the means of production into public property, by the mere expropriation of the capitalists.”

It is perfectly clear from what Lenin says that the dictatorship of the proletariat comprises the *entire* period of transition from capitalism to communism. In contradistinction to the present understanding prevalent in the Soviet Union, this period still involves the class struggle, however, the *mode of existence* of classes is

undergoing a change. Lenin drew attention to this change in many of his articles. It is through no coincidence or forgetfulness that the new modes of existence exhibited by the classes and strata in the Soviet Union at the present level of economic development, and their mutual relations, are not sufficiently dealt with today. It is the result of continued faithfulness to the framework expounded by Stalin when he first formulated the *understanding* of a "state of the whole people" in his report to the 18th Congress. According to this understanding, since the exploiting classes have been abolished, the class struggle has ceased and the coercive role of the state within the country has disappeared. This understanding is the source of the idea of the "state of the whole people".

In his speech to the 18th Congress, Stalin says the following:

"Lenin was absolutely right when he said:

'The forms of bourgeois states are extremely varied, but in essence they are all the same; in one way or another, in the final analysis, all these states are inevitably the *dictatorship of the bourgeoisie*. The transition from capitalism to communism will certainly create a great variety and abundance of political forms, but in essence there will inevitably be only one: *the dictatorship of the proletariat*.' (Lenin, *The State and Revolution*)

"Since the October Revolution, our socialist state has passed through two main

phases in its development.

“The first phase was the period from the October Revolution to the elimination of the exploiting classes. The principal task in that period was to suppress the resistance of the overthrown classes, to organize the defence of the country against the attack of the interventionists, to restore industry and agriculture, and to prepare the conditions for the elimination of the capitalist elements. Accordingly, in this period our state performed two main functions. The first function was to suppress the overthrown classes inside the country. In this respect our state bore a superficial resemblance to previous states whose functions had also been to suppress recalcitrants, with the fundamental difference, however, that our state suppressed the exploiting minority in the interests of the labouring majority, while previous states had suppressed the exploited majority in the interests of the exploiting minority. The second function was to defend the country from foreign attack. In this respect it likewise bore a superficial resemblance to previous states, which also undertook the armed defence of their countries, with the fundamental difference, however, that our state defended from foreign attack the gains of the labouring majority, while previous states in such cases defended the wealth and privileges of the exploiting minority. Our state had yet a third function: this was the work of economic organisation and cultural education performed by our state bodies with

the purpose of developing the infant shoots of the new, socialist economic system and re-educating the people in the spirit of socialism. But this new function did not attain to any considerable development in that period.

“The second phase was the period from the elimination of the capitalist elements in town and country to the complete victory of the socialist economic system and the adoption of the new Constitution. The principal task in this period was to establish the socialist economic system all over the country and to eliminate the last remnants of the capitalist elements, to bring about a cultural revolution, and to form a thoroughly modern army for the defence of the country. And the functions of our socialist state changed accordingly. *The function of military suppression inside the country ceased, died away; for exploitation had been abolished, there were no more exploiters left, and so there was no one to suppress.* In place of this function of suppression the state acquired the function of protecting socialist property from thieves and pilferers of the people's property. The function of defending the country from foreign attack fully remained; consequently, the Red Army and the Navy also fully remained, as did the punitive organs and the intelligence service, which are indispensable for the detection and punishment of the spies, assassins and wreckers sent into our country by foreign espionage services. The function of economic organisation and cultural education by the state organs also remained,

and was developed to the full. Now the main task of our state inside the country is the work of peaceful economic organisation and cultural education. As for our army, punitive organs, and intelligence service, their edge is no longer turned to the inside of the country but to the outside, against external enemies.

“As you see, we now have an entirely new, socialist state, without precedent in history and differing considerably in form and functions from the socialist state of the first phase.”

Stalin's quotation from Lenin at the beginning of the passage momentarily leads one to think: is Stalin actually saying that this new state is a new form of the dictatorship of the proletariat? However, a closer examination reveals that this is not the case and that Stalin does not at all understand the new state in the sense that Lenin does. He is using the reference to Lenin merely as a tactical bridgehead from which to retreat from his position should the need arise. For Stalin plainly says that the *coercive role* of the state has *ended* internally, that it has been reduced to the level of punishing thieves and con-men. He relates the coercive role of the state, not to the *existence of classes*, but to the existence of a *capitalist class*.

To relate the coercive role of the state, of the proletarian dictatorship in the country, solely to the existence of a bourgeoisie, one would either have to be committing a conscious distortion, or to have understood nothing from Marxism.

The transformation of the relations between individuals into material relations through the social

division of labour, and the "regulation" or coercion which this necessitates, cannot be done away with through any voluntarist discoveries. They can only be done away with by way of individuals once again exercising their control over the material forces and relations and *abolishing the division of labour*.

As long as the social division of labour, commodity circulation, wages, classes, and the distinction between mental and physical labour persist in the Soviet Union, as long as work has not become the prime enjoyment of life, the need for the state (i.e., its coercive role) must remain. Laws, labour legislation, the courts, labour discipline, etc., are all manifestations of this coercive role, of force. To say "to each according to his work" is to say, "he who does not work will go hungry". Is this not *compulsory, enforced labour*? Does not the persisting concept of right express this force?

Furthermore, to regard the state as a means of coercion against only opposing classes is also a primitive way of thinking. This is so in essence and in the final analysis. But, on the other hand, the state constitutes an abstraction *vis a vis* the whole of society, all the individuals which make up society. It is an illusory "consensus" standing over and above all individuals and classes. Consequently, the state also represents a coercive force over the members of the ruling class whose state it is.

Let us briefly delay here and mention a point which we should perhaps have made earlier under the subheading dealing with the state. The social division of labour arising from the development of the forces of production and the increase in labour productivity, brings with it various contradictions. What are these contradictions? Without explaining their content, let us try to

classify them: society x class, society x family, society x the individual, class x class, class x family, class x the individual, family x family, family x the individual, individual x individual. Moreover, each contradiction has more than one reflection on each of the planes of economics, society and politics. The state exists to "regulate", to suppress, these contradictions, those between classes first and foremost.

In conclusion, the view that the dictatorship of the proletariat has been replaced by "the state of the whole people" is a distortion of the Marxist theory of the state. If it were possible to register "progress" in real life by abolishing the *actual* problems of socialism on paper, this could conceivably be of some practical value. But, as things stand, one could adopt thousands of congress resolutions to the effect that the dictatorship of the proletariat had "disappeared", and nothing would change. Let us recall Marx's famous words:

"The question then arises: what transformation will the state undergo in communist society? In other words, what social functions will remain in existence there that are analogous to present state functions? This question can only be answered scientifically, and one does not get a flea-hop nearer to the problem by the thousandfold combination of the word people with the word state.

"Between capitalist and communist society lies the period of the revolutionary transformation of the one into the other. Corresponding to this is also a political transition period in which the state can be nothing but *the revolutionary*

dictatorship of the proletariat." (Critique of the Gotha Programme)

* * *

At this point we must make a self-criticism. The need for this arises not so much from having incorrectly defined the state in the period of socialism, but from having interpreted the formulations of Soviet authorities in a way *they had not meant*, thus falling into a measure of confusion.

The first article to appear in *İşçinin Sesi* dealing with the topic of "the state of the whole people", was published in issue no: 71 of 2nd July 1977. In that article it was stated: "With the exclusive domination of socialism in all fields, and with the acceptance by all sections of the population of the ideological and political positions of the working class, *the dictatorship of the proletariat grew, opened into, the state of the whole people.*"

The second article on the subject appeared in issue no: 132 of 7th June 1980. This article contained the following passage: "*The dictatorship of the proletariat encompasses the entire period from the appropriation of the means of production in the name of the whole society, to communism. It undergoes changes within this period. The Soviet Union is a living expression of this period. The form of the state in the Soviet Union today is still the dictatorship of the proletariat and will remain so until communism has been established. However, during this process, the function of the proletarian dictatorship also changes in accordance with the development of the class struggle inside and outside the country. The socialist state undergoes changes. (...) The 'state of the whole people' is a stage in the process of the withering away of the state. It will grow into further*

stages with the collapse of imperialism on a worldwide scale."

As can be seen from these examples, *İşçinin Sesi* does not evaluate the 'state of the whole people' as an entity distinct from the dictatorship of the proletariat, but as a more democratic form assumed by that dictatorship in the conditions of the absence of a bourgeoisie. The dictatorship of the proletariat will continue until communism and, when it disappears, the state will also have disappeared. Its disappearance only comes onto the order of the day with the "collapse of imperialism on a worldwide scale". This understanding of *İşçinin Sesi* is correct.

Nevertheless, this is not the understanding of the Soviet authorities. Neither is it the understanding first expounded by Stalin when he defined the "state of the whole people" at the 18th Congress, nor of all subsequent administrations. It is not the understanding of the CPSU programme, or of the 26th Congress report. According to these sources, the "state of the whole people" has replaced the dictatorship of the proletariat.

İşçinin Sesi's error on this point is identical to the error it committed in regard to its approach to the opportunist wing of the TKP before the inner-party struggle came out into the open: interpreting erroneous statements correctly, filling up mistakes with a correct content. This approach, which could perhaps have had favourable consequences had there been "equal forces" in play, or had those who were interpreting wrong material correctly been the stronger, was essentially a wrong attitude which served to obscure the differences and to hide from the party cadres and the masses, who stood where.

The profoundly democratic character of the "state of the whole people"

As regards the "profoundly democratic character of the state of the whole people", here too one must tread warily. (As the state in the period of socialism is the dictatorship of the proletariat, we will employ this expression rather than "the state of the whole people" in this section as well.)

What is democracy? Democracy is a form of the state which is ruled through the submission of the minority to the majority.

"Democracy is the rule of the majority. Only universal, direct and equal elections can be called democratic. Only such committees are democratic as have been elected by the *entire* population on the basis of universal suffrage." (Lenin, *Collected Works*, vol.18, p.282)

"... full development of democracy, i.e., the genuinely equal and genuinely universal participation of the *entire* mass of the population in all *state* affairs and in all complex problems of abolishing capitalism." (Lenin, *Collected Works*, vol 23, p.25)

It follows from the above definitions that the dictatorship of the proletariat and democracy are not *identical*, but that they are concepts which imply one another in their logical extensions. Consistent democracy, i.e., rule by the majority, requires the dictatorship of the proletariat, which is the rule of the exploited majority. By the same token, the proletarian dictatorship, as the rule of the exploited majority, requires democracy, which is the

rule of the majority. For this reason, the political form most suited to the dictatorship of the proletariat is *mass democracy*. It is the ever broadening application of democracy to its very limits, where it negates itself and disappears. The proletarian dictatorship, as the state of the majority, is in essence a thousand times more democratic than the most democratic bourgeois dictatorship.

However, one cannot limit oneself to the democracy inherent in the proletarian dictatorship. It is absolutely necessary to institute and develop the genuine rule of the majority, i.e., democracy, in every sphere of life.

Why is democracy necessary under socialism? In the first place, socialism is a class and class conflict-ridden society. Democracy, on the other hand, means organising precisely the class struggle more freely, more openly and more widely. The specific interests of the various classes and strata which exist under socialism can only be satisfied through socialist democracy.

Secondly, state ownership of the means of production has not completely obliterated the gap between labour and the means of production. To the extent that the state becomes bureaucratised, that the working class loses active control over it, the fusion of the labour force with the means of production may become *nominal*. The countermeasure for this is for the working people to actually become masters of the affairs of state.

Thirdly, the passing into the hands of the proletarian state of the means of production has, for the first time in history, bound together the sphere of labour and the sphere of politics. Development in the sphere of labour or economics, and development in the sphere of politics, have become mutually dependent. And both require the active participation of the people in order to develop.

Fourthly, the organisation and administration of society and production under socialism is still a matter for specialists. Consequently, although it is gradually diminishing, the divergence between those who produce and those who administer still persists. Active application of socialist democracy is thus necessary to prevent the bureaucracy from becoming a privileged section and to prevent the state from becoming alienated from the mass of workers.

Clearly, an ever-expanding application of democracy in the first stage of communism, is a *necessary* condition for it to advance *beyond* this stage to the higher stage of communism.

Lenin has the following to say on this subject:

“Transition through the Soviet state to the gradual abolition of the state by systematically drawing an ever greater number of citizens, and subsequently *each and every* citizen, into direct and *daily* performance of their share of the burdens of administering the state...” (Lenin, *Collected Works*, vol.27, p.156)

How can democracy, the rule of the majority, be implemented under socialism? If we try to explain briefly, first and foremost, by smashing the bourgeois state, which through various intrigues keeps the working man or woman away from administration and acts as a vehicle of oppression against them, replacing it by the state of the proletariat. To establish the state of the majority is, on its own merits, the most democratic gain in the world.

But the matter does not end there. Since the aim is not the rule of a group (the bureaucracy) in the name of the

people, but rather the rule of the majority itself, war is declared on the former state bureaucracy on all fronts. Not merely to destroy the old bureaucracy, but also to prevent the new one from turning against the people. To this end, two measures must be taken which were practised by the Paris Commune and in the first years of Soviet power: 1) The election of all officials (administrative, educational and legal) by universal suffrage of all concerned and subject to instant recall by the electorate. 2) All officials to receive a salary equal to that of the rest of the workers. Thus, the state bureaucracy is stripped of its position of "masters of society" and made into "servants of society".

Democratisation in the legal system is effected by, 1) participation by popular representatives (through juries, etc.) in the business of the courts, 2) election of judges by the people.

Democratisation of the army is effected by smashing the old army and organising a new people's army, and by taking measures to prevent this army from becoming a force divorced from the people.

A further important factor of democracy is direct elections to government bodies.

In addition to these, all the democratic rights which have been won throughout the history of mankind, eg., freedom of the press, freedom of association, etc., are presented for popular exercise to an extent bourgeois democracy could never provide. This democracy, as the rule of the majority, creates the opportunities for *minority views to become majority views*. A democracy which fails to provide this opportunity, which lacks platforms where different views can be expressed, which has not institutionalised open debate, is, at the very least, a lame democracy.

The dictatorship of the proletariat is a thousand times more democratic than the most democratic bourgeois state, both because it represents the interests of the majority, and because it envisages democracy in its full extent.

However, in this, as in all fields, one must take into account discrepancies between theory and practice and not be too hasty. Lenin says, "In Russia the dictatorship of the proletariat must inevitably differ in certain particulars from what it would be in the advanced countries, owing to the very great backwardness and petty-bourgeois character of our country." (Lenin, *Collected Works*, vol.30, p.108.) This applies to democracy as well.

In the Soviet Union, the democratic aspect has, for various historical-cultural-economic-social-international reasons, lagged behind. An important indication of this lagging behind is the feebleness of *civic society*

The efforts to develop civic society with its diverse organisations, and hence also social control, are similarly feeble. In fact, the majority of efforts which may be construed as such are directed, not towards developing social control, but rather towards developing the operation of the state. This also is very necessary. It is correct. But we are talking about something else.

As regards improving the state, the report mentions the People's Control Inspectorate, the Ministry of Justice, the courts, the militia and the state security agencies.

However, after these it lists only *two* mass organisations as worthy of mention: the trade unions and the Young Communist League (Komsomol).

On the trade unions, the report has this to say:

"Comrades, the Constitution of the USSR has

greatly enhanced the role of public organisations in the development of our democracy. The largest of these are the *trade unions*. Now that they have enrolled the millions of collective farmers, the trade unions embrace practically all the working people. They have exceedingly broad tasks and rights. They protect the interests of working people, take part in resolving economic, social, and cultural problems, and do much to foster socialist emulation, invention, and innovation.

“Still, I think I’ll be making no mistake if I say that our trade unions sometimes lack initiative in exercising their broad rights. They do not always act with perseverance in questions concerning the fulfilment of collective agreements and the rules on labour safety, and still poorly react to cases of violations of labour legislation, to bureaucratic practices, and red tape.

“This means that the trade unions and work collectives should tighten their control of decision-making concerning all questions of the work and life of people and take a larger part in planning and managing production, selecting and placing personnel, and effectively utilising the funds at the disposal of enterprises and organisations.”

As can be seen, the report has a correct approach to the trade unions. From our point of view, this approach also vindicates *Socialism Will Win*: “The trade unions should defend the interests of the workers”. (Against

whom? Against the state, against the economic decision-making bodies, against the party, all of which can make mistakes.)

Some nice things are also said about the Young Communist League (we learn, for example, that it has some 40 million members), and the subject is concluded. Apart from some correct statements regarding the trade unions which events in Poland have literally shoved under our noses, the rest are general platitudes. Even women's organisation does not merit a mention.

This attitude indicates that the organisation of civic society is not receiving much attention. Yet there should be thousands, tens of thousands, of organisations. And these organisations should play an ever-increasing role in the affairs of the state and in *all areas* of social life. Only in this way can socialist democracy be put into practice and developed. Only in this way can the fine provisions, rights, etc., which exist on paper be put into practice, with the active participation of and control by the masses. *Civic society, economic progress and cultural development*. Only this trinity can together speed proletarian democracy in the Soviet Union onto the level envisaged in the theoretical model. Let us take the woman question. The section of the report dealing with this question reads as follows:

"... an effective *demographic policy*, to population problems that have lately grown acute. The principal way to resolve these problems is to show more concern for the family, for newly-weds and, chiefly, for women. Everyone will appreciate that in many cases it is not easy to combine the duties of a mother with work in production and active participation in public

life.”

The woman question arises in the report within the above context. The question of the emancipation of women, which is one of the conditions for achieving classless society, is dealt with, not as the woman question, but as a *demographic* question, within the context of increasing the population. This approach is in itself a manifestation of the fact that the woman question has *yet to be resolved*. The woman question cannot be fully resolved under socialism even in the theoretical model, let alone under the socialism established in an underdeveloped country. This question will be fully resolved under communism. In the meantime, it is necessary to act in awareness of this question and to wage a constant struggle against male chauvinism.

However, in addition to the inappropriateness of the context within which the woman question is discussed, the report also does not seem to be conscious of this question in what it does say. In this society in which “classes will disappear before the advent of communism”, it is said that “everyone will appreciate that it is not easy to combine” giving birth and raising children with the active participation of women in public life.

Returning to our point of departure concerning the “profoundly democratic character of the state of the whole people”, the dictatorship of the proletariat is, in the general and in the abstract sense, a thousand times more democratic than the dictatorship of the bourgeoisie. For the one is the dictatorship of the toiling majority, while the other is the dictatorship of the exploiting minority. All this is very true, but what is pertinent here is not a general, abstract comparison between the respective states of two

classes, but the situation obtaining in the state of a particular country at a definite moment.

Lenin's comparisons in the first years of the revolution, between bourgeois dictatorships and the proletarian dictatorship in Russia, are also a different matter. That period was one still ablaze with the fire and chaos of revolution. A *revolution* had taken place, the masses were on their feet. This in itself provided the most democratic atmosphere. Furthermore, the need to replace the old state which had been destroyed with a new one, constituted the most important objective necessity for perpetuating democracy. A vast state could be built only with the *active* initiative of hundreds of thousands of people. Furthermore, Lenin was still alive. But once society, which had been in a state of eruption, began to settle down to the daily routine of a new order, as it became more established, the grave effects of underdevelopment, of cultural backwardness and the imperialist encirclement, began to make themselves felt. The bureaucracy resurrected itself. Lenin mercilessly criticised this development in his article "*Better Fewer But Better*" (which was also one of his last).

Every state faced with difficult circumstances tends to jettison its democratic aspects and fortify its authoritarian side. When conditions return to normal, it once again retracts naked violence and increases its democratic aspect. If conditions worsen, it may do away with democracy altogether, leaving only the naked dictatorship. But, whatever the conditions, every state is a dictatorship.

In evaluating the democracy of the state in a specific socialist country, one must take into account *long-term period differences* in addition to the short and medium-

term *differences* in regard to *period* we have referred to above. Long-term differences can be done away with only through efforts spanning several generations. These are differences of underdevelopment and a high level of development. Socialism can be established in an underdeveloped country, but because of the difference in the level of development, the state may possess a far more *nominal* democratic *modus operandi* than should be the case.

The socialism established in the Soviet Union is socialism which has been established in an underdeveloped country. Despite the profusion of democratic rights and guarantees in its Constitution and laws, for these to be properly implemented requires a level of development which permits them to be applied: economic progress, cultural development, civic society. And their mutual interaction.

The democratic aspect has lagged behind in the USRR. But this is not a feature of socialism, merely the *reality* of that country. We previously had the following to say on the subject:

“The socialism that was established in the Soviet Union, as in every concrete application, embraces two distinct sets of characteristics. The first of these are the universal characteristics of socialism, those characteristics which must appear wherever socialism is established and fully reflect theory. The second are the *temporary* characteristics rooted in the specifics of the development of Soviet society itself. These characteristics need not be found in any other socialism. For these are determined by the

realities of that society.

(...)

"Shortcomings and distortions which I have touched upon briefly cannot be reduced to the attitudes of leading cadres or general secretaries. Naturally, personal mistakes or abilities play a role in determining the overall structure. However, there is one point that cannot be disputed: if socialism in the Soviet Union had been established and led up to today under the leadership of Marx, it could not have gone far beyond this framework. Socialism in the Soviet Union was born of the combination of the concrete characteristics of that country and the universal characteristics of socialism. And for Soviet society, this is a *genuine* (what our mensheviks call "real") system. It is an historically drawn framework which will develop parallel with the development of the productive forces, the maturing of the mode of production, and the raising of the cultural level, and through the conscious and active efforts of the party." (R. Yürükoğlu, *Socialism Will Win, İçinin Sesi* Publications, September 1980, p.27-28.)

The democratic level, the democratic understanding of Soviet society, has not developed to the extent required by socialism, let alone for the advance to communism. It will improve and rise subject to development. For *the expansion of democracy to such an extent that it finally negates itself*, is an indispensable prerequisite of the transition to communism.

The type of democracy which is possible in pre-socialist societies, has always been one form or other of *democracy by consent*. Through various intrigues, the support of the working people has always been enlisted for one or other representative of the ruling class, while it has been deprived of any part in the administration of the state. The democracy of socialism must be different, it must be *active democracy*. For:

“Creative activity at the grass roots is the basic factor of the new public life... Socialism cannot be decreed from above. Its spirit rejects the mechanical bureaucratic approach; living, creative socialism is the product of the masses themselves.” (Lenin, *Collected Works*, vol. 26, p.288)

The 26th Congress brings no systematic insights to these subjects.

IV. The party — vanguard of Soviet society

The fourth and final chapter of the 26th Congress report bears the heading *The Party — Vanguard of Soviet Society*.

1. The growing role of the communist party as the party of the whole people

The fundamental idea in the section of the report on the party, is that "the role of the party is increasing under developed socialism". The report expresses this idea in the following words:

"Comrades, at the 25th Congress the conclusion was drawn that under developed socialism the role of the party grows in society. The past five years have borne this out."

The justification for this idea runs as follows: The contradictions between classes and strata have given way, under "developed socialism", to "essential distinctions". These classes and strata are all now engaged in a joint, friendly effort on the path of communist construction. For this reason, the cooperative farmers and the intelligentsia have now fully adopted the ideological and political positions of the working class. Thus, the Communist Party has become "the party of the whole people". However one must not counterpose being the "party of the whole people" to being the party of the working class, since the working class is still the vanguard of society, as the best organised and most developed class. With the entire people having adopted the positions of the working class, the role of the party in society has grown further!

Let us leave aside the sophistries in this justification and concentrate on the main idea, that is, as class distinctions erode, the role of the party in society grows.

The Programme of the CPSU expresses this idea in the following words:

"As a result of the victory of socialism in the USSR and the consolidation of the unity of Soviet society, *the Communist Party of the working class* has become the vanguard of the Soviet people, *a Party of the entire people*, and extended its guiding influence to all spheres of social life." (*Programme of the CPSU*, pp.122-123) (Our italics)

As with the "state of the whole people", this proposition is in itself a contradiction in terms. On the one hand, they are aware of the growing role of the party; on the other hand, they are devoted to an erroneous

framework on the subject of the dictatorship of the proletariat and the abolition of classes. Relief is thus sought in crossing apple with pear and saying that the *role of the party grows as class differences fade*. Was it not the same with "the state of the whole people"? On the one hand, the dictatorship had been lifted(!) but, on the other hand, this strange remnant of a state was steadily becoming stronger.

If the role of the party were to grow in proportion to the fusing together of the classes, the point at which the party would have the greatest role would be at the higher stage of communism, when classes had ceased to exist! In truth, the existence and role of the state and the party as an element of the state, are related to the existence of classes. As class differences are eroded and society advances on the road of self-administration, the need for the state and the party declines and finally disappears.

It is true that the role of the party is today growing in the Soviet Union, but not for the reason given and not as the totally erroneous concept of the "party of the whole people" suggests. The party and the state are gaining strength in the Soviet Union, they must gain strength. Until such time as the *world dictatorship of the proletariat* has been established, the proletarian state and party in the parts of the world where partial victories have been achieved, must gain in strength for the simple reason that the dominance of imperialism has not been broken and the objective conditions for the disappearance of classes have not been created.

The Communist party is the party of the working class and it defends the interests of the whole working people. The moment when it will become the party of the whole people, is the moment when the whole of society has

entered the working class, when the working class has enveloped the whole of society. However, at such a stage, political parties will also disappear, because that stage constitutes communism itself.

2. Party membership

The report gives the following figures in connection with party membership:

“In the period under review the membership of the CPSU grew by 1,800,000. Today it has 17,480,000 members. Of these 43.4 per cent are factory workers, 12.8 per cent are collective farmers, and 43.8 per cent are members of the technical, scientific, and creative intelligentsia, workers in education, medicine and culture, people working in the administrative apparatus, and members of the Armed Forces.

“During the past five years the CPSU has been joined by more than 1,500,000 of the finest members of the working class: this comprises 59 per cent of the newly admitted members. Of the new members over 10 per cent are collective farmers. The influx of members of the Soviet intelligentsia continued.”

It is difficult to make head or tail of these figures. The net increase in membership is 1.8 million. A few paragraphs further on, the report gives the number of candidate members whose membership has been rejected and those who have been expelled as 91 thousand and 300

thousand respectively. This means that some 2.2 million people have been accepted into membership in the past five years. 1.5 million (59%) of these are quoted as workers. On the other hand, a short calculation from the figures given, gives the proportion of workers accepted into membership as 68%.

Subtracting the workers, the remainder of new members totals 700 thousand. 10% of new members are quoted as collective farmers, which yields 220 thousand. The remaining 480 thousand comprise intellectuals, which then account for 22% of the new membership.

These discrepancies aside, we learn the following regarding the class composition of the party membership: Workers 43.4%; collective farmers, 12.8%; intelligentsia and bureaucracy, 43.8%. The breakdown of the working population, on the other hand, had been given as follows: 67% workers, 25% intelligentsia. In this case, the proportion of workers in the party lags far behind their position in society as a whole. This presumably has something to do with being a "party of the whole people".

Expulsion from the party and monolithicism

According to the report, 300 thousand people have been expelled from party membership since the 25th Congress. The number of people rejected during their candidacy is apparently 91,000.

Immediately after these figures, the report states the following:

"It must be stated categorically that our attitude to people who comport themselves unworthily

and violate the Party Rules and the norms of Party ethics was, is, and will be irreconcilable. Nobody can expect indulgence where it is a matter of the honour and prestige of our party, of the purity of its ranks.

"This strict approach is what ensures the monolithic unity of the CPSU, its ability to head Soviet society, and confidently lead the Soviet people along the road to communism."

This too is one valid method of ensuring the monolithicism of the communist party. It is necessary to expel those who do not conform to party norms. However, to state the matter in this fashion, to say that "it is this strict approach which ensures the monolithic unity of the CPSU" reflects a bureaucratic approach. The things which actually guarantee party unity are not these.

3. Party leadership

Under a subheading entitled "*Improvements of the Methods of Party Leadership*", the following figures are given for the meetings of higher party bodies in the five years since the 25th Congress: 11 Plenary meetings of the Central Committee (approximately once every six months), 236 meetings of the Politbureau and 250 meetings of the Central Committee secretariat. The great difference between the number of Central Committee meetings and the number of meetings of the Politbureau, should give some idea of the general democratic *modus operandi* in the party.

The report refrains from quoting any figures relating

to the social composition of the party leadership. However, it does say some interesting things:

“In accordance with the instructions of the 25th Congress, many specialists working in the economy were assigned to Party work. At present *three out of every four secretaries of the Central Committees of the Communist Parties of the Union republics and of territorial and regional committees and two out of every three secretaries of city and district Party committees* have a technical, economic, or agricultural education. This is gratifying. But it must be taken into account that a segment of the specialists who have come into the Party apparatus from industry do not have sufficient political experience and, in some cases, bring economic management methods into Party organs”. (Our italics)

These words indicate that intellectuals carry great weight in the party leadership. These intellectuals may have originally hailed from the working class; their fathers or they themselves may have been workers at some point. But as regards their position in the social division of labour, they fall into the category of “specialists — as a separate social stratum, which will persist until we have reached the highest stage of development of communist society”. (Lenin, *Collected Works*, vol.42, p.384)

Naturally, these specialists carry into the party leadership their own social characteristics, outlooks and style of work. The report cautions against this danger. This is a warning to which we wholeheartedly subscribe.

As far as the participation of women in the party leadership is concerned, the situation is, in a word, grave. The report says:

“I feel that special mention must be made of the participation of women in executive work — Party, local government, economic, and other work. It has to be acknowledged that so far not all the possibilities are being used to promote women to executive posts. This must be corrected.”

A small, lone paragraph. Neither a figure, nor a percentage is quoted. It is all too obvious that the reference is merely for the sake of “appearances”. Yet Soviet propaganda books devote pages and pages to how women participate in public life and in the administration of society. No one can deny the gains in regard to the position of women won by the October revolution and socialism. The percentage breakdown in various professions is proof. However, the problem does not end there. What is pertinent here is a change in the roles ascribed by women and men *to themselves and to the opposite sex*. This requires a high level of technological development, which can obliterate distinctions of physical strength, a high cultural level, and constant ideological struggle. In view of these conditions, which require a prolonged period of time, and because we are aware that the woman question will be *fully* resolved only under communism, no one expects this question to be solved in the Soviet Union today.

However, what we are discussing is not Soviet society, but the communists, the communist party. A party whose leadership has been exclusively male for the past 65 years is

inexcusable. There are women delegates in the Soviets, as there must certainly be at local committee level. There are always a token number of women communists among the hundreds of Central Committee members (for example, Comrade Tereshkova). But, perhaps I am mistaken, I do not know of a single woman having served in the truly authoritative organ of the party, the Politbureau, since 1917. Taken in conjunction with the way the woman question is dealt with in other sections of the report, how can this be explained as anything other than male chauvinism.

4. Questions of party life

This section of the report deals with the question of genuine debate, publicity, criticism and self-criticism.

Calling for party meetings to be rescued from being for show only and from boredom, by providing for them to become centres of genuine debate, the report says:

“The work of Party organisations cannot be really effective if members attend meetings solely in order to sit them out and hear the speakers listed beforehand.”

The second gratifying remark, with which we also agree, concerns publicity, although this is expressed in a somewhat hesitant fashion:

“A very important matter is to keep all Soviet citizens informed of Party affairs. Publicity in the work of Party organisations is an effective

means of strengthening the Party's ties with the masses. We are doing much in this respect, but there are certain things that could probably be improved."

And on the subject of criticism and self-criticism:

"The instructions of the 25th Congress of the CPSU stimulated the extension of *criticism and self-criticism* in the Party. Everything should be done to continue fostering this positive trend, to assert in all Party organisations a spirit of self-criticism and irreconcilability to shortcomings."

These are truly correct ideas. They are part and parcel of the question of the democratic practice of society and the party. However, in organisms which lack power centres empowered to exercise mutual control and restraint upon each other, the specific mechanisms which enable these practices to be implemented are bound to be equally weak. One must practice what one preaches.

5. The party's work in ideology and political education

This section of the report containing the most open and severe criticism is the section in which the work of the ideological section is reviewed:

"Are all these new developments and circumstances being taken fully into account? Are the

huge potentialities of our propaganda used to the hilt? There is only one answer to this and it is: Not yet.

"In view of this the Party's Central Committee has formulated the *tasks to improve ideological work and political education*. These are spelled out in the CPSU Central Committee's decision of April 26, 1979. This is a long-term document.

"In fact, it is a question of restructuring — yes, this was not a slip of the tongue, I said restructuring — many sectors and areas of ideological work. Its content should be more topical and its forms should fall in line with the present-day requirements and needs of Soviet people.

"It is very important that propaganda should not shun sensitive issues and should not be afraid to deal with what are termed difficult questions. Our Party's policy is clear. We are prepared to answer any questions that Soviet people want to ask. This must be done with more initiative, bearing in mind that if we do not answer them the enemies of our country will try to take advantage of this to smear socialism.

"And another thing. Ideological education must be conducted in a vivid and interesting manner, without stereotype phrases and a standard set of ready-made formulas. The Soviet citizen is an educated and intelligent person. When he is spoken to in a thoughtless, bureaucratic language, when general verbiage is invoked instead of concrete living reality and

actual facts, he simply turns off his TV or radio, or sets aside his newspaper." (Our italics).

The above passage contains a highly interesting remark: to *restructure* many sections and areas of ideological work! To wipe the slate clean and start afresh. We agree totally. Propaganda should not shun sensitive issues, scientific research should be open-minded, bold and free from stereotyped clichés. We are all aware that not much pleasure can be derived from the uniform Soviet books published in recent years.

But, like all the other fine sentiments and intentions, this too is a question of organisation, of establishing the proper machinery, and of democratisation. Mayakovsky is quoted as saying: "I want the State Planning Committee to sweat (!) in debates setting yearly assignments for me." Then what? Then he committed suicide. Our aim is not to judge the circumstances of that period, or Mayakovsky. But this is not the way to go about things. It is very difficult for writers, researchers and scholars to come up with creative works with this mechanism, within the rigid framework of the annual topics set out in the five-year plan. Of course, *general* guidance must be provided to ensure concentration on the areas of the enemy's assault or in the areas brought to the fore by life itself. But to predetermine everything down to subject headings is a different matter altogether. An important source of the bottleneck in ideological work is precisely this policy.

Let us assume that a researcher or an author is fortunate enough to land the topic of his choice. In the event, what is to be written, what *can* be written, is predetermined by the political attitude of the day. To produce creative, dynamic, open-minded works in this

kind of atmosphere would require a superhuman effort and probably would never see the light of day. This is a further reason underlying the stagnation in ideological work.

The report says the following on the same subject:

“Have not forms of our mass political work become too *fossilised*? After all, it was one thing to address people who were inadequately trained and had little education, and another — to speak to the present-day Soviet citizen. (...)

“To this day theoretical training at many Party schools and seminars is not adequately tied in with the pressing social and production problems worrying people. Formalism and scholasticism, which reduce people’s interest in theoretical study, have not been entirely extirpated. (Our italics)

The reason for these is the same as that we have pointed out above: Fossilisation, formalism, stagnation. These point to the need to accelerate democratisation, as in all areas of society, in the party too. It is necessary to develop socialist democracy, to transform it into an objective mechanism independent of the good will of the leadership cadre. This constitutes the *main link* to be grasped if the Soviet Union is to be able to advance from its present position.

Having made these criticisms in the areas of ideological work, propaganda, agitation and education, does the report grab the bull by its horns? Does it go into the real source of the shortcomings and mistakes. No, it does not. Let us now see what it says.

The report vaguely distinguishes between theoretical work on the one hand and agitation and propaganda on the other, in terms of apportioning criticism.

We glean from the following passage that theoretical work is considered to be in better shape:

“Comrades, the Marxist-Leninist party cannot fulfil its role if it does not give due attention to putting into proper perspective all that is taking place, to generalising new phenomena, to *creatively developing Marxist-Leninist theory*. We have always regarded this a task of supreme importance and have given it considerable attention in the period under review as well.

“Since the 25th Congress the Party’s theoretical armoury has been augmented with a number of significant generalisations and conclusions. Of what has been accomplished in the field of theory, mention must be made, in the first place, of the elaboration of the conception of developed socialism. (...)

“In short, extensive work has been accomplished and it merits acknowledgement. But far from everything in the sphere of social science is satisfactory. The inclination towards scholastic theorising, mentioned also at the 25th Congress, has not been entirely surmounted. Instead of trying to get to the bottom of new developments quite a few philosophers seek to prove what has already been proved. Many unresolved problems have accumulated in the political economy of socialism. More attention should be given to the social effects of the

scientific and technological revolution. Developments in society's political life must be analysed more profoundly and with greater courage. Little is still being done to study public opinion."

True there are many problems still to be solved. The political life of society in particular requires much bolder examination. But, as can be seen, no mention is made of the reasons for the shortcomings and defects in theoretical work. The report merely pinpoints a couple of mistakes and makes a few suggestions.

On the other hand, agitators, propagandists and education workers receive the following admonition:

"... a more considered approach to the *selection, training, and prompt briefing* of our propagandists.

"The propagandist is, after all, the principal figure in the system of Party education. It is on him that what seminars, political schools, and universities will be like depends in many ways: whether they will be a place where, more often than not, boredom reigns and people merely sit out the hours designated for them or, on the contrary, they will everywhere become effective centres of live Party thought and word. *The attitude of people to Party education depends primarily on the Party's ideological and propaganda activists.*" (Our italics)

When it comes to propagandists, the source of the

mistakes is found: Not selecting the right people, not training them properly and not briefing them about political attitudes promptly! Leave aside grasping the bull by its horns, this attitude requires that one be ignorant of the very existence of the bull. Either that, or a reluctance to face up to these problems.

6. The proposal to redraft the Party Programme

Cloaked in masterly generalisations, the 26th Congress Report proposes the objective of drawing up a new programme. In this way it envisages being rid of the more embarrassing aspects of the programme adopted during the Khrushchev administration in 1961.

The report expresses the desire for a new programme in the following words:

“In the period under review all the changes in our country and all our actions on the world scene were put into effect in accordance with the Party’s programme provisions. On the whole, the present Programme of the CPSU correctly mirrors the laws of social development. But 20 years have passed since it was adopted.

“In that time extensive experience has been accumulated of socialist and communist construction in the USSR. This experience incontrovertibly demonstrates that our advance to communism is being accomplished through the stage of a developed socialist society. This, as it has already been noted, is a necessary, natural,

and historically long period of the formation of the communist system. This conclusion was drawn and elaborated by the Party in recent years and, unquestionably, it should be duly recorded in the Party Programme.”

As we have already dealt with the questions of developed socialism, communism and “communism by 1980” in the previous chapter and at some length, we do not feel it is necessary to reiterate our views here. But let us say this much, that everyone knew perfectly well that the Soviet Union would not reach communism by the 1980’s. Therefore, grand phrases to the effect that “experience and scientific work have shown that communism will be reached through a long process” are not really necessary.

Thus, the 26th Congress Report is concluded.

Conclusion

The 26th Congress Report, with its good points and its bad, is a mature report. Its language is free from crude claims. However, it has not relinquished an air of "official optimism". On many subjects it contains a common-sensical pragmatism which reflects a great deal of accumulated experience. While we often agree on the symptoms of the problems, our views differ over diagnosing and curing their source. We have tried to present the solutions we believe to be correct as the occasion arose in the course of the evaluation.

In concluding our evaluation of the 26th Congress Report we shall not draw a conclusion which summarises the more important points from all that we have said and which ties them all together. For such a conclusion already exists, running like a crimson thread through the entire evaluation. It is a conclusion which is itself the cornerstone in overcoming all the aspects and shortcomings we have criticised: *Proletarian democracy must be developed.*

The socialism established in the USSR is socialism which has been established in an underdeveloped country. For various historical-cultural-economic-social-international reasons, the practice of active mass democracy has lagged behind. The numerous democratic rights and guarantees provided by the Constitution and in law have not been able to be properly implemented. The economic progress, cultural development and civic society, and their mutual interaction, required for the implementation of these rights and guarantees, are only now taking shape.

Let us illustrate what we mean by an example: The 5th article of the Soviet Constitution states:

“Major matters of state shall be submitted to nationwide discussion and put to a popular vote (referendum).”

Despite the fact that sending the Red Army into Afghanistan must rank as one of the most important of these “important affairs of state”, the debate and referendum stipulated by the Constitution were never held. *A constitutional crime was committed in the USSR.* That it could be committed so easily is evidence of the absence of control mechanisms and centres of power on the level of political organisation. On the social plane, it shows that the exercise of democratic rights has yet to become a habit, as well as showing the backwardness in cultural development.

Nonetheless, the development of society is at the same time proceeding in all directions. The old outlooks, the old organisational forms and the old practices are rapidly being outgrown. In a short period of time, democratisation will become the *main problem* facing the Soviet Union.

Even today, the many difficulties that are being encountered point in this direction.

The institutionalisation of democracy in the Soviet Union and its democratic understanding will necessarily grow parallel to the development of society. The party must march in the van of this movement, it must not fear this development. For *proletarian democracy, as active mass democracy, is the necessary condition for being able to advance from socialism to communism.*

The 26th Congress, in failing to provide any perspectives on this subject, a subject which represents the future of the Soviet Union, is, in this respect, conservative and stagnant. In this general approach to the topics (particularly those concerning international relations, peace and the socialist economy) it stands to the right of the 25th Congress.

In evaluating the 26th Congress Report, we are acting in the belief that it is the right and the duty of every communist party to criticise the mistakes and shortcomings (particularly if these affect the activity of all communist parties) it recognises in another communist party, in an open and comradely manner. This attitude is, in our view, a requirement of *proletarian internationalism.*

The Soviet Union is the mighty liberated zone of the world revolution, it is the world revolutionary centre. The CPSU is the leader party of the international workers' and communist movement. The shortcomings and defects it has, *directly* affect the world revolution in an unfavourable way. Overcoming these shortcomings and defects will provide a tremendous impetus to the world revolution.

Long live the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics!
Long live the glorious Communist Party of the Soviet Union!

The future belongs to communism!

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