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The struggle of ideas in the contemporary world

**Western falsifications of
socialist economic principles ●**

**Conservatism: the theory and
practice of "social revenge" ●**

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**SOCIALISM:
THEORY AND PRACTICE**

The struggle of ideas in the contemporary world

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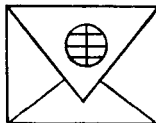
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I've lived a long life and witnessed the events you write about. Therefore I can say that your information is true. It makes people influenced by Western propaganda change their views on many events, for instance, on the causes of World War II.

Robert Langevin, France

By reading your publications I've realized that socialism is the only path to mankind's development. I denounce the slanderous attacks of Western politicians who allege that socialism deprives people of their rights, hinders progress, etc. I think that imperialism alone is to blame for all negative events in the world. Lenin's teachings bring freedom and justice to peoples throughout the world.

Husein Athumani Mwangao,
teacher, Tanzania

I fully support and share the Soviet Union's aspiration to avert a new world war which can be unleashed through the fault of the USA. African peoples side with the USSR. They condemn the USA. We Ghanaians are against war.

H. Soshiah, Ghana

My friends and I adhere to socialist ideology. We believe that socialism will triumph in our country. But to achieve this it is necessary that socialist ideology prevail among workers and peasants. And this is where your publications come in.

N. Aduwa, Nigeria

● **Abridged articles are marked with an asterisk (*)**

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REAL SOCIALISM AND ITS CRITICS

LOOK INTO THE SCRIPTURES BEFORE TOOTING YOUR HORN

(Socialist Economy and Its Critics)

by Dmitry VALOVOI

The greater socialism's success the fiercer the attacks on it. The enemies of the new system have been particularly lavish in slandering and vilifying the economy, the major area of competition between the two world systems.

Bourgeois ideologists assert that effective economic growth of socialist nations is a thing of the past. They do not say, of course, that the national revenue derived by the USSR from 1971 to 1983 went up by 82 per cent, industrial output, by 98 per cent, and the productivity of social labour, by 61 per cent, while the respective figures for the US were 42, 37 and 22 per cent. Hushing up these successes they are harping on a "crisis" in the socialist economy with persistence worthy of a better cause.

Whenever socialist nations step up the process of perfecting the relations of production to match the steady growth of productive forces, vociferous critics join in declaring it to be a "departure from the basic principles of Marxism-Leninism". That was what they did at the time of the economic reforms of the 60s, that is what they are doing now that the socialist

● **Prof. D. VALOVOI, D. Sc. (Econ.), studies economic problems of advanced socialism.**

countries are further improving the system of economic management, with account of scientific and technological progress and the gained experience.

All sorts of concoctions are cooked up. It is alleged, for instance, that the communist countries "are revising the Marxist economic principles", "departing from the Marxist goal of universal equality", "jettisoning the holy dogmas of Marxism" and "adopting the methods of free enterprise". These inventions would make Baron Munchausen burst with envy.

APROPOS OF PROFIT

Profit is the stainless baton of the conductors of the anti-communist chorus. A whole army of scientists and "specialists" of every stripe are busy cultivating the "public" opinion in the West that profit is the brainchild of capitalism. Therefore, to obtain profit is "contrary to the Marxist-Leninist economic theory" and a "planned economy is hostile to profit". We cannot of course agree with this. Profit is known to be a monetary expression of surplus product which had in various forms existed in the slave-owning and feudal societies. As commodity and money relations developed, profit became the basic form of expression of the surplus product.

The necessity for surplus product in communist society was scientifically proved by Marx and further elaborated by Lenin. In his work "The State and Revolution", he wrote: "In the 'Critique of the Gotha Programme', Marx goes into detail to disprove Lassalle's idea that under socialism the worker will receive the 'undiminished' or 'full product of his labour'. Marx shows that from the whole of the social labour of society there must be deducted a reserve fund, a fund for the expansion of production, a fund for the replacement of the 'wear and tear' of machinery, and so on. Then, from the means of consumption must be deducted a fund for administrative expenses, for schools, hospitals, old people's homes, and so on."¹ Therefore, such economic categories as "necessary" and "surplus" labour and product are inevitably present in the handbooks of the political economy of socialism.

Marxist-Leninist classics have proved with conclusive evidence that surplus product will exist under full communism as

¹ V. I. Lenin. *Collected Works*, vol. 25, p. 469.

well, only it will then be measured directly by working time, like the aggregate social product. Since commodity-money relations exist under socialism, profit is an important form of surplus product. The organization of cost-accounting and profitable operation of socialist enterprises was treated in Lenin's works reviewing the opening process of socialist construction in the Soviet Republic, as one of the most important objectives.

The role of profit as an indicator of the growing efficiency of production is rising all the time in the context of intensified economic activity. Therefore, profit is a subject of great concern in the Soviet Union and other socialist countries improving the forms and methods of national economic management. But there is a fundamental difference between capitalist profit and the profitable operation of socialist enterprises.

The process of production is known to be organized in order to obtain consumer values which are the actual means of subsistence. Consumer values form the material content of wealth, whatever its social form. However, the production of actual commodities interests a capitalist only if it brings him profit. The immediate aim of capitalist production, Marx wrote, is to produce not commodities but a surplus value or profit in its advanced form; not a product, but a surplus product.

Without profit, capitalists go bankrupt. So for the sake of profit they resort to all expedients: collusions to push up monopoly prices, bribes, ruin of their rivals, spying and blackmail. The *Wall Street Journal*, the mouthpiece of American monopolies, bluntly wrote, for example, that the official position of American business (not only American, in fact—D.V.) is to secure maximum profit.

The aim of socialist production is the fullest possible satisfaction of the working people's needs within the limits of production at its present level. Back in 1902, Lenin, when drafting the first Party Programme, proposed laying it down that the social revolution of the proletariat would replace private ownership by public ownership and introduce a planned organization of social production not merely "to satisfy the needs of its members, but with the object of ensuring full well-being and free, all-round development for all the members of society".² Since the victory of the Great October Revolution in Russia this point has keynoted Party and

² V. I. Lenin. *Collected Works*, vol. 6, p. 52.

government documents. It was pointed out at the extraordinary Plenary Meeting of the CPSU Central Committee last March that the Party would unfailingly pursue its social policy. Everything for the sake of man, everything for the benefit of man—this programme provision must carry more and more constructive substance.

Therefore, the immediate concern of production collectives under socialism is to produce consumer values. Profit is an important matter, but it cannot be the aim of production, still less an end in itself.

ACCORDING TO THE QUANTITY AND QUALITY OF WORK

Another common argument used in support of allegations about a "revision" of Marxist-Leninist economic principles and "deviation from the Marxist goal of universal equality" results from the fact that the socialist countries are **looking for new, more effective forms and methods of material incentive**. Western propaganda-makers are going out of their way to make people believe that according to Marxist-Leninist economic theory, egalitarian distribution of material benefits is practised in the communist world. According to Marxism, they allege, people can be forced to work like soldiers or saints. And further: "The development of economic incentives means the renunciation of centralized planning."

True, payment according to one's work is not a communist principle. The main principle of communism is "From each according to his ability, to each according to his needs". However, one should look into the scriptures before tooting one's horn. None other than Marx resolutely criticised egalitarianism at the first stage of communist society and scientifically proved the need of distributing material benefits at this stage according to the quantity and quality of work. "**Equal right here is still in principle—bourgeois right**", he wrote. "The equality consists in the fact that measurement is made with an **equal standard, labour**."³ According to Marx, right can never be above the economic system and the cultural level of society resulting from it.

Elaborating on the Marxist principles of distribution of material benefits under communism, Lenin wrote that the first phase of communism could not ensure justice and equality in this sphere. "Differences, and unjust differences, in wealth will still persist, but the **exploitation** of man by man will

³ K. Marx and F. Engels. *Selected Works*, vol. 3, p. 18.

have become impossible," he said. "And so," he concluded, "in the first phase of communist society (usually called socialism) 'bourgeois law' is **not** abolished in its entirety, but only in part, only in proportion to the economic revolution so far attained, i.e., only in respect of the means of production."⁴

During the transition from War Communism,⁵ a forced measure prompted by the historical conditions of that time, to the New Economic Policy (NEP)⁶ the principle of distribution according to one's work became a major principle of the socialist economic system. Summing up the experience of building a new society on the eve of the fourth anniversary of the October revolution, Lenin wrote that socialism should be built "not directly relying on enthusiasm, but aided by enthusiasm ... and on the basis of personal interest."⁷ Lenin's thesis that it was an utopian dream to think that people would "work for society **without any rules of law**"⁸ in the first phase of communism is still true.

The experience of the socialist countries has shown that the egalitarian principle of distribution is alien to socialism.

Acceleration of scientific and technological progress requires more profound use to be made of the law of distribution according to the quantity and quality of work. It is quite natural therefore that the socialist countries, taking into account their specific conditions and individual distinctions, are searching for new, more effective forms of individual and collective incentive of highly productive work. The Plenum of

⁴ V. I. Lenin, *Collected Works*, vol. 25, pp. 471-472.

⁵ War Communism—the economic policy the Soviet state pursued in the period of economic ruin and the Civil War (1918-1920). The Soviet government nationalized all industry, centralized the management of production and distribution, obliged peasants to sell grain and other surpluses to the state at fixed prices (in excess of the established quotas for their personal and economic needs), and banned private trade. It was compelled to introduce the egalitarian principle in labour remuneration, as a temporary measure. After the Civil War, War Communism was superseded by the New Economic Policy—Ed.

⁶ The New Economic Policy (NEP) was pursued during the transitional period from capitalism to socialism—from 1921 to the second half of the thirties. Peasants could freely market their farm product surpluses; private trade was allowed, as well as small capitalist enterprises; state capitalism was permitted to exist in the form of concessions, and the renting of small industries and land under strict state control; public industry was switched over to the cost-accounting system; payment in kind was replaced by payment in cash according to the quality and quantity of work; state trusts connected with the market were set up, etc. NEP strengthened the working class-peasantry alliance on an economic basis, thus involving the latter in socialist construction. It helped establish links between socialist industry and the petty commodity peasant economies by using commodity-money relations and the economic levers of running the national economy. NEP allowed for a certain development of the capitalist element, but the state held the key positions in the economy.—Ed.

⁷ V. I. Lenin, *Collected Works*, vol. 33, p. 58.

⁸ *Ibid.*, vol. 25, p. 472.

the CPSU Central Committee held in April 1985 proposed "working out concrete and effective measures of eliminating from the distribution mechanism the practice of egalitarianism, unearned incomes, and everything that runs counter to the economic norms and moral ideals of our society and ensuring that the material position of each worker and each work collective should depend directly on the results of their work".⁹

VAIN EXERTIONS

Now a few words about "dogmas". To seek for them in the socialist countries is altogether useless, first, because the classics of scientific communism set forth the essence of their doctrine with utmost clarity which rules out any ambiguous interpretations or reservations. The "Manifesto of the Communist Party" says: "... The theory of the Communists may be summed up in the single sentence: Abolition of private property."¹⁰ That is why the answer to the question of who owns the basic means of production (factories, mines, railways and so on) and in what direction the process is developing is at the same time an answer to the question of involvement of some specific country in the construction of a communist society.

Second, in their analysis of the laws governing the development of the capitalist mode of production and of the objective necessity of replacing it by a more progressive system—the communist one—the classics of Marxism-Leninism outlined only the most general principles and features of a new society. They noted more than once that their doctrine is not a dogma but a guide to action. "We are **advocates of constant, continuous development**, and we do not intend to dictate any final laws to mankind," Frederick Engels said. "Are there any ready-made opinions of details of the organization of the future society? No! You will not find even a hint of them in what we said or wrote. We shall be quite satisfied when we succeed in turning over the means of production into the hands of society as a whole."¹¹

The classics of Marxism-Leninism did not leave any recipes of concrete forms or methods of management. In his speech at the First Congress of Economic Councils, Lenin

⁹ *Pravda*, April 24, 1985.

¹⁰ K. Marx, F. Engels, *Collected Works*, vol. 6, p. 498.

¹¹ K. Marx, F. Engels, *Collected Works*, vol. 22, p. 563 (Russian edition).

said referring to the organization of a new society that when we took power for the purpose of proceeding with socialist reorganization, we knew that private ownership of the means of production was doomed by history, that the exploiters would inevitably be expropriated, but we could not know the forms of transformation, or the rate of development of the concrete reorganization. As Lenin figuratively put it, while the bourgeoisie, having come to power, received "a ... tested vehicle, a well-prepared road and previously tested appliances", the proletariat who took power had "no vehicle, no road, absolutely nothing that had been tested beforehand".¹²

Hence, the search for concrete forms and methods of managing the national economy began only after the triumph of the socialist revolution and the liquidation of private ownership of the means of production. This was done sometimes with the use of the method of "trial and error", a normal creative process. But each time such measures for improving the economic mechanism have spawned in the West heaps of invention about the renunciation of Marxism! True, each time they burst like soap-bubbles.

The second and rather massive series of false "dogmas" results from counterposing methods of economic management, adopted in various socialist countries. These "dogmas" are concocted on the basis of the following principle: if some forms and methods of managing the national economy in a socialist country differ from those applied in the Soviet Union this is declared to be evidence of "divergence from the traditional Marxist recipes". They try to create the impression that communism must allegedly be built by following a single pattern. For example, the search for more effective methods of running the economy in some socialist countries has been exploited as an "argument" for the conclusion that these countries "diverge from the traditional Marxist aim of universal equality". Yet nobody has ever set such an aim.

The economic management systems in Bulgaria, Hungary, the GDR, Czechoslovakia and other socialist countries are now being improved with due account for their specific conditions and achievements.

At the same time, in the context of the great diversity of the national specific features and traditions which must be taken into consideration in building socialism, practice has fully confirmed the correctness of the Marxist-Leninist idea

¹² V. I. Lenin, *Collected Works*, vol. 33, p. 205.

that socialist construction is based on a number of fundamental laws which are intrinsic to all countries taking the road of building communism. As the experience of the socialist system's development has shown disregard of these laws cannot but produce adverse effects.

THE "BOONS" OF CAPITALISM

Finally, about the "temptations" of free enterprise. To get things straight, it should be noted here that free enterprise with its concomitant epoch of free competition has long sunk into oblivion. Just as predicted by Lenin, it has been replaced with the domination of monopolies. In its chase after higher profits, capital spreads its tentacles abroad. As long as it remains capitalism, it uses surplus capital not to raise the people's living standards in his home country, for this would mean less profit for the capitalists, but to boost profit through the export of capital to underdeveloped countries.

Export of capital can be compared to pumping blood out of a human body. The more capital is exported in the drive for super-profits, the more acute the problems of inflation and unemployment which are already chronic in the Western countries.

So, what sort of "temptations" can really exist under capitalism? Well, compared to the earlier times, there are some "nice points" indeed. For example, in the Middle Ages homeless and jobless in England were branded and hanged. Under capitalism there is no danger of that. They are free to die of hunger or commit suicide. One of the great Utopian socialists Charles Fourier (1772-1837) wrote at the dawn of capitalism: "The servants of capital keep talking about man's rights, but forget to establish the principle of the right to work without which the boons of capitalist civilization become useless or are brought to naught."

Speaking in the West German Bundestag, the leader of the Social Democratic parliamentary faction, H.-J. Vogel, qualified the results of the recent meeting of the Big Seven in Bonn as a "failure" and added that the 35 million jobless in the seven major Western countries were by no means encouraged by the results of that meeting. Thirty-five million! With even just one dependent per unemployed, as many as 70 million people have no regular means of subsistence. This means a whole state of redundant people! Temptations, indeed!

This was what C. Madden, the former chief economist of

the US Chamber of Commerce, had to say about the "temptations" of capitalism. While becoming richer, America is using its wealth less and less, he confessed. Inflation and growing taxes devour all the real rises in the incomes of industrial workers and ethnic minorities. Our wealth, he continued, has not prevented us from rolling down to the 15th place in the world in terms of literacy and advancing to the 10th place in terms of child mortality. And the unemployed are really in dire straits.

In the socialist countries the popular welfare standard is steadily rising. Even Western scholars and politicians cannot but recognize this fact. After his visit to the Soviet Union last year, well-known American economist J. Galbraith wrote in the *New Yorker* magazine that the Soviet economy has achieved vast material progress in recent years as confirmed both by statistics and by the general picture of life. There is certainly no idle class in the Soviet Union, he granted. The success of its system is explained by the fact that, in contrast to the Western industrial economies, the Soviet system fully utilizes all labour resources. The same idea was voiced by Senator C. Mathias. It is absolutely obvious, he said, that over the past ten years since my last trip to the USSR the living standard in that country has risen. No comment needed, as they say.

* * *

The attempts by socialism's ill-wishers to prove that because of mishaps in their economies the socialist countries are now trying to apply the capitalist methods of economic management have nothing to do with reality. As noted at the CMEA Economic Summit in 1984, socialism can tackle the most complicated national and international problems. The socialist countries have overcome many difficulties and have made great headway in the economy, culture, education and health care, in promoting the equality and friendship of the peoples and in creating favourable conditions for the all-round development of the individual.

Pravda, June 7, 1985*

CONSERVATISM: THE THEORY AND PRACTICE OF "SOCIAL REVENGE"

by Alexander GALKIN

The major ideology in the countries of developed capitalism has undergone substantial changes. If in the past years marked by a steady economic growth in the West in the forefront were bourgeois liberalism and its twin social-reformism, today, with the aggravation of capitalism's economic and, consequently, social and political problems, conservatism has gained currency to take dominant positions in official social science. Conservative ideas prevail in the political documents of right-wing as well as centrist bourgeois parties. Moreover, some traditional conservative views filtered into the system of values of that part of the community which for a long time leaned towards the left wing and rejected conservative postulates.

CONSERVATIVE CRITICISM

The conservatives' approach to social problems implies economic, social and political inequality. The conservatives advocate the creation of social institutions which would maintain inequality by providing controlling positions for some "select minority".

The class implications of this approach are particularly manifest in analysing the conservatives' economic, social and political programmes.

Theoreticians of conservatism criticize the economic situation in capitalist countries. They attack the evils of the capitalist economy so evident in the last years and often absolutize the economic difficulties.

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What is the primary target of conservative criticism?

The whole trouble, in their view, is that for several decades the developed capitalist countries lived beyond their means. As a result, they ran into huge debts which created a threat to the economic, including financial, stability. High taxation substantially weakened the incentives for investment and the social security system in its present form caused a decline in labour morale. In turn, the rise of the economic role of state institutions with their spreading bureaucratization sapped the ability of economic mechanisms to adapt to the rapidly changing world economic situation.

The blame for this is, naturally, put on political rivals: centre-left, bourgeois-reformist or social-reformist parties, depending on the country. Their policy of social manoeuvring aimed at mitigating class confrontation by means of concessions to the working people is described as impermissible softness.

Many conservative characterizations of the capitalist economy are fully justified. It is gripped with difficulties graver than those of the postwar period—the fact recognized not only by the consistent opponents of capitalism. So there is nothing new in the conservative criticism of the economic situation in the capitalist countries. Nor are the conservatives original in their attempts to attribute the evils of capitalism as a social system to incompetence, misjudgement, etc. Where the conservatives' stand becomes clear when they begin to talk about measures to be taken to lead the economy out of its present impasse.

THE CONSERVATIVES' RECIPES

Their recipes boil down to the so-called "economy of supply". Its central thesis is that capitalists form the active component of society. They perform major economic functions and, above all, invest a large part of their incomes into production. Therefore the main task of a rational economic policy should be the protection of wealth from any encroachments, including those in the form of taxes. As the latter are unavoidable, they accept only a regressive taxation system in which tax rates are the lower the higher the income level. Encouraging the formation of free capital, such a system stimulates the "supply of capital" and, consequently, contributes to economic growth.

In the same way the "economy of supply" conception demands an end to government price controls and state control over the environment, repeal of the law-guaranteed minimum wage, etc.

The guideline on the reduction of taxes on high incomes creates particular difficulties for the conservatives when it comes to the question: what should be done with the huge government debt which they qualify as the biggest threat to the economic and political stability. Some of them propose slashing social spending. Since military spending, in the conservatives' view, must not be lowered but should be even increased, the axe must fall on expenditures on social needs (pension schemes, unemployment insurance, education, medical care and the like).

The other variant is as follows. Cuts in taxes on large fortunes will stimulate investment and, consequently, the growth of production, causing not a reduction but an increase in total budget revenues, because the lower tax rates would be levied on a larger mass of income.

And what is the position of the masses in this "economy of supply"? It is merely a function of the development of capital. If capital gets into its stride, if investments expand and the volume of output grows, the greater part of the population will be involved in the production process thus deriving direct material gain. This gain will ultimately recoup the losses incurred through the austerity policy, cuts in social spending, social subsidies, etc. Those who for some reason or other remain outside the sphere of production should be seen as an impediment to enterprise and initiative. And the care of them should be left to private charity.

THE POLICY OF "SOCIAL DISMANTLING"

The consequences of the conservative economic policy were particularly destructive in the social sphere. The dividing line between the privileged and underprivileged groups has become more distinct and the gap between the wealthy and the poor greater. The position of the populations living below the official poverty line has deteriorated. Some social gains of the past years on which the working class prided itself were eroded to one degree or another.

In other words, the implementation of the conservative economic policy, even effected in limited form, was "social revenge" on the part of the propertied classes for the concessions made in the first postwar decades.

No less tangible was the psychological damage suffered by the working people. The economic "modernization" carried out in disregard of its social consequences imparted particular pungency to the employment problem. Joblessness

became a way of life for substantial sections of society leading to the division of wage workers into two categories: those included and not included into production. To this was added the division into those working in promising and unpromising industries—from capital's viewpoint. The competition arising from this between different contingents of working people weakened their position in the confrontation with capital.

Growing insecurity, the fear of losing jobs affected the militancy of labour, put them on the defensive and forced them to make more concessions than was dictated by the economic situation, the level of social wealth and the real balance of forces. Material privations of the jobless, only partly offset by the system of social benefits, were accentuated by profound moral strains, the loss of self-confidence, the weakening and dissolution of the social nexus. Such strains had a particularly harmful effect on the young generation whose participation in social production became impossible.

Disillusionment in the bourgeois-liberal and social-reformist models of economic development universally associated with the image of the "social state", "general welfare state" which can ensure a high and constantly rising standard of living for all citizens, resulted in the disorientation of large sections of the population. They harboured illusions that the austerity course suggested by the conservative forces would open the road to subsequent revival. This made the socially underprivileged population groups more tolerant than they would have otherwise been towards the conservatives-proposed measures.

The record of the conservative economic policy in those countries where it was applied consistently (USA, Britain) is depicted by its advocates as a testimonial of its success—partial if not full. But this appraisal is unwarranted. Despite all its efforts, the ruling class failed to nullify the working people's main economic and social gains. The conservative governments did not have sufficient political backing to drive a horse and coach through the pensioning system, to substantially cut unemployment benefits, scrap the medical service, etc. And when they did succeed, in part, the adverse consequences for the propertied classes far outweighed the anticipated gains.

The redistribution of the social product through the social security system carried out in industrialized capitalist countries on a comparatively broad scale in the postwar decades

was not at all a willing gift of the powers that be to the peoples. Won by the working people in hard struggles, it simultaneously served as an important social moderator which alleviated the surface manifestations of the class confrontation, as an instrument of the social and political "consensus" so eagerly sought by the ruling class. To act against such redistribution means to act against the "consensus" itself.

Indeed, as the "social dismantling" advanced under the conservative economic policy, the "consensus", tenuous as it was, began to show more and more cracks. The decline of the strike movement and other forms of class struggle which began in the early 1980s was superseded, from 1984, by the growth of open forms of resistance to the conservative economic policy. And this resistance is the more stout the more strenuous the efforts to press forward with the "social dismantling".

Theoreticians of conservatism anticipated this likelihood. Hence their heightened attention to the political means of countering the people's resistance to the "social revenge" policy. The core of it all is the idea of "hamstringing democracy". It is present in different forms in all conservative models and the political documents based on them.

RENUNCIATION OF DEMOCRATIC INSTITUTIONS OF POWER

It is from this point of view that we should treat the conservatives' call for a "strong state". At first glance, this call may seem strange. After all, the conservatives are known to fulminate against government institutions accusing them of the unlawful arrogation of power, of bureaucratization. But at a closer look it becomes evident that in reality a different kind of state is meant here. They attack the state interfering in the economic sphere and competing with private capital. But even in this case their antipathy of the state is not absolute. They leave the state a chance to come to the aid of private capital if the latter gets into a fix. But in the political field the state's activity does not arouse any negative emotions. On the contrary, it is expected to provide conditions for the smooth functioning of capital. And since the state must have power for this, the conservatives are unreservedly in favour of the state having it.

The conservatives see a major evil of the existing state system in its engendered "crisis of management", in the inability to fully attain the economic and social aims set

before society by the conservative advocates of "social revenge".

All their recommendations come down to one thing—special emphasis should be placed on the function of direct coercion as the main form of exercising power.

According to the conservatives, this function of the state should be reinforced above all through dismantling the democratic institutions of power. This idea is embodied in the theory of "democratic elite rule", which is nothing but a direct apology for anti-democratic elitist omnipotence.

Of course, far from all ideologists of conservatism share this treatment of the problems of democracy characteristic of the supporters of the theory of "democratic elite rule". But their divergences do not prevent them from acting together when it comes to the main push. All of them agree that the present range of democratic rights people enjoy in developed capitalist countries is "too wide". All of them strive to restrict the people's participation in the political process to a one-time electoral act. They brush aside or dismiss as ruinous all proposals aimed at expanding this participation through the use of elements of direct democracy. They call for concentrating efforts on widening as much as possible the gap between the "electoral mass" and representative institutions.

One of the most effective means suggested for this is the strategy of "depoliticizing political relations". Political decision-making is reduced to the choice between two vendors of the political merchandise whose differences are rated as secondary. Accordingly, the political system appears as a free market on which vendors of the political merchandise, using commercial advertisements, palm it off to the consumer. The day is won by those who can do it more adroitly. The use of this mechanism is thought to alienate the masses from the political process. And indeed, in the United States where this model has been applied for a long time and in the most undisguised form the level of mass political activity is the lowest in the capitalist world.

As this strategy is spreading to other Western countries, the interest in the electoral process there is falling as well. This is a welcome development for the ideologists of conservatism.

Of late, the supporters of the dismantling of democratic institutions have been drawn to certain tendencies in state-monopoly development which in their view offer additional opportunities for limiting the political influence of the lower social strata.

It is common knowledge that the steep growth of state intervention into the social, economic and other non-political spheres of social life gave rise to the objective necessity of substantially extending—beyond the bounds of the traditional political system—the legal channels of interaction between civil society and the state. Already at the stage of “early” state-monopoly capitalism, there arose, parallel to representative institutions, a fundamentally different system of relations between the government and the governed, based on functional rather than territorial representation. The exponents of “public interests” in it were not parties uniting their members on the basis of identity of their political views and aims, but non-party organizations uniting people on the basis of either similarity of the social functions performed by them or some specific interest.

There arose a whole system of functional representation consisting of institutions which differ in their importance, status and the range of duties invested in them. This system became the “meeting place” for representatives of the respective groups and the authorities.

The most important difference of functional representation from the traditional party political system consists in the fact that while in the latter elective institutions are formed wholly or chiefly from representatives of political parties and winning parties form the government and other executive bodies, the functional representation institutions are formed from the top, by decrees in fact. The state fixes their composition and prerogatives, formulates their tasks and finances them and, as a rule, appoints its representatives to them. It also defines the “rules of the game”, can at any moment suspend their activity, form new institutions, and so on.

Obviously the above said may well lead to the functional system turning into an important factor opposing the representative system and rendering it less democratic.

The rise, development and consolidation of the functional system of government brought forth a spate of works which support it under the banner of neo-corporativism. Not all of its advocates can be described as stalwart conservatives. There is an influential liberal wing among neo-corporativists who view the functional system not as a counter-weight but, rather, as a complement to parliamentary representative institutions. And yet the largely conservative character of the neo-corporativist theories is beyond doubt. Conservative theoreticians even from the very beginning saw in the neo-corporativist tendencies an additional real chance for reducing the democratic

influence brought to bear on state structures through parliamentary institutions. Historical kinship of conservatism and corporativism played its role too.

THE TARGETS OF CONSERVATIVE ATTACKS

Conservatism’s attitude to trade unions is rather indicative of its social meaning. At the time of “free competition” capitalism right-wing liberals were the main opponents of trade unions. Today the conservatives have outstripped their liberal rivals in this respect. Trade unions are said to be a mortal enemy of the modern capitalist state. They are held responsible for all economic and social woes of capitalism. The taming, weakening and, if possible, disbandment of trade unions are proclaimed by the conservatives as a major aim.

Lately, the conservatives have directed their fierce attacks against new democratic and alternative movements. And this despite the fact that on some questions (environmental protection, the tendency to restrain technical progress) the views of conservatives and some supporters of alternative movements converge. This only gives more bite to conservative attacks on alternative movements.

In dismantling democratic structures the conservatives in office have smaller gains to their credit than in implementing their economic policy. Non-acceptance of their aims in this field by the public was more resolute than expected. However, in this field too neo-conservative politicians have partly carried their plans into effect. In a number of countries tougher legislative sanctions were introduced for “breaches of public order”. The powers of the police were broadened. It now has more leeway in applying extreme forms of violence. Serious blows were dealt to the trade union movement. More and more widely practised is discrimination against those who oppose the policy of “social revenge” and dismantling of democratic institutions.

These tendencies are dangerous because, among other things, they clear the ground for a further offensive on the people’s democratic rights, for an authoritarian reorganization of social institutions.

Of course, to what extent these plans will be implemented depends on the alignment of political forces in the developed capitalist countries and, first of all, on how effective will be the resistance offered to conservatism in the ideological field and in practical politics.

HYPOCRITES AS "DEFENDERS OF HUMAN RIGHTS"

Human rights and freedoms... It is difficult to find any other two concepts that are subjected to such mutations. Near and dear to the heart of every man, they appear at first glance to be embraced by the intellect. Yet mankind's history testifies that this is not always the case. Today too we see their outspoken opponents among the most zealous advocates of human rights and freedoms. This is vividly demonstrated by the example of the USA which is held up by its leaders as a model of true democracy and freedom, as a champion of human rights, as an international arbiter who has the moral right to lecture other peoples and countries and interfere in their internal affairs. This brings to mind the American saying: "Democracy begins at home." So what about the home? The US domestic scene is described in the book *Human Rights, American Style* by Vladimir Bolshakov, a journalist writing on international topics. The book was put out by the APN Publishers in English and French in 1985. On the basis of rich

factual material the author shows that systematic violation of human rights, undisguised discrimination and hounding of many millions of people are components of the American ruling circles' policy.

It is paradoxical, the author writes, that a country which poses as a "model of democracy, freedom and human rights" to this day refuses to ratify or even sign the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights, the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights, the Convention on the Prevention and Punishment of the Crime of Genocide, the International Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination, the International Convention on the Suppression and Punishment of the Crime of Apartheid, the International Convention on the Non-Applicability of the Statutory Limitations to War Crimes and Crimes Against Humanity, the Convention for

the Suppression of the Traffic in Persons. The list could be continued, for the USA has not ratified 30 out of the 40 international covenants and agreements on human rights now in operation. The US either abstained or voted against all major resolutions on human rights moved in the UN.

Why does the US government refuse to ratify the above covenants? Its spokesmen say, for instance, that the United States cannot be a party to the International Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination because it finds unacceptable the articles prohibiting the propaganda of racism and binding the states to ensure the equality of citizens in the economic, social and cultural fields, in the exercise of the right to work, to protection against unemployment and equal pay for equal work. The same arguments are invoked against the ratification of the covenants on human rights. When the Convention on the Prevention and Punishment of the Crime of Genocide, adopted back in 1948, was submitted for approval by US Congress, Bolshakov points out, the supreme legislative body of that country refused even to discuss it. This refusal was motivated by the fact that if the USA acceded to the convention, it would interfere with the traditional policy towards the Black and Indian populations and provide a pretext for foreign intervention

into its internal affairs.

The refusal of the United States to ratify international agreements on human rights is not accidental. The ideals and principles proclaimed in them still remain on paper for millions of people in that country, where social, economic and civil and political rights are violated systematically.

The US constitution, the author says, in fact makes no mention of such basic social and economic rights of citizens as the right to work, free education and medical care, and to housing. Instead, it speaks grandiloquently of "freedom and the pursuit of happiness"—the right denied, in fact, to millions of Americans. Here are some figures. Over 35 million US citizens live below the poverty line. By official statistics, 8.5 million are out of work, while the trade unions put the figure at 16 million. There are three million homeless. Forty-seven million people suffer from chronic malnutrition, 23 million are functionally illiterate. One in four children leaves school never completing his secondary education. Among Black children the proportion is even higher: every other Black child does not finish school. Over nine million children, one in every seven, are deprived of medical treatment or medical care.

The Western media describe the USA as a "country of equal opportunities", as a "general welfare society". How can one

speak of "equal opportunities", the author queries, if, according to the American *Forbes* magazine, 400 richest Americans have fortunes estimated at 125 billion dollars, while all others have 126 billion dollars between them on their bank accounts. The privileged super-minority enjoys all human rights and freedoms proclaimed by the US Constitution.

American economists estimated that in 1983, 10 per cent of the most affluent American families accounted for 33 per cent of the aggregate income (compared with 29 per cent in 1969). These families control 51 per cent of all finances, 50 per cent of property in terms of value, 78 per cent of all private enterprises. Two per cent of the richest Americans draw 15 per cent of all incomes and control 30 per cent of financial resources, 20 per cent of property and 33 per cent of private enterprises. They hold a half of all shares, more than two-thirds of bonds and other securities and one-fifth of the total land property in the USA. These figures debunk the myth about "equality" created by bourgeois propaganda-makers.

Inequality of women, national oppression and racial discrimination have always been concomitants of imperialism, its disgrace. The United States posing as the "model of democracy, freedom and human rights" and assuming the role of an international arbiter who establishes

the limits of rights and registers departures from them, has not still ensured real equality for women who today make up 51.4 per cent of the total population. And this despite the fact that the majority of countries have recognized de jure the equality of men and women before the law, despite the fact that women's equality is recorded in such international legal acts as the UN Charter, the Resolution and Convention on the Political Rights of Women and also the UN Declaration on the Elimination of Discrimination Against Women. US women's pay averages 59 per cent of men's—and this difference keeps growing. Moreover, all manner of restrictions stop women's access to professions requiring high qualifications. Among engineers, for example, they constitute just 5.8 per cent. And out of the 534 members of the Congress only 24 are women.

The position of the national minorities in the USA, the author says, is a real tragedy. Unemployment among Blacks is more than twice as high as among Whites. From 60 to 70 per cent of Black youths are jobless. The average income of a Black family barely reaches 58 per cent of a White family income. Forty-two per cent of all Black children live in poverty. Forty per cent of Black under-seventeens remain functionally illiterate because of the racial segregation practised in the

USA. A half of the "coloured" children in the USA under 14 years of age do not get the required number of polio vaccinations and 40 per cent vaccinations against measles. The USA, the world's richest state, has the same infant mortality rate among "coloured" newborns as the developing countries.

The plight of Indians, the indigenous population of the USA, is still worse. Throughout its history, the author writes, the US government has pursued a policy of their systematic extermination. Before the White colonists came to the country about 14 million Indians lived on the present US territory. The policy of genocide practised by the American authorities for more than 200 years has reduced the Indian population to just above one million today. Unemployment in the Indian reservations into which the former masters of America are driven today stands at 80 per cent. Two-thirds of the housing are substandard. More than 75 per cent of the Indians suffer from hunger, malnutrition and indigence. The average income of an Indian family is only one-tenth of the national average. One in three Indian children lives less than six months. The life expectation of the American indigens is 44 years, the lowest in the country.

These figures, the author writes, make one recall the provisions of the Convention on

the Prevention and Punishment of the Crime of Genocide and also the International Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination which has not been ratified by the US.

Perhaps we can say that civil and political rights fare better in the USA? Not at all. Officially they are recognized, but are not observed in practice. Almost all restrictions placed on FBI and CIA actions against Americans after the Watergate scandal, limited as they were, have been virtually annulled. In December 1981 the President signed an executive order, which did not require the approval of Congress, enabling the US special services to spy on Americans even if they are not suspected of breaking the law. It lifted the earlier restrictions placed on the conduct of secret operations by the CIA inside the country.

Official government agencies open citizens' mail, engage in telephone tapping, bribe informers to make trumped-up charges against undesirable persons, incite the mafia to assassinate radicals. The FBI keeps files on 34 million "suspects" and 78 million fingerprints. Combating "dissidents", the US Supreme Court passed a decision contravening the elementary juridical principles: it permits the use of testimonies which the police get from searches without a warrant, by wire tapping and reading private correspondence. The fe-

deral administration runs 6,723 systems recording citizens' conduct stocked by 3.9 billion information entries: an average of 18 control files on each US citizen.

Back in use are "black lists" compiled by American "patriots" from reactionary organizations.

An offensive is being made on the rights of trade unions. In 1981 the Professional Air Traffic Controller Organization was disbanded. Of the 11,400 dismissed air traffic controllers only six were reinstated with the payment of wage arrears. On September 23, 1982, President Reagan signed a bill passed by Congress under his pressure, which rendered illegal the national strike of the Brotherhood of Locomotive Engineers. Under the bill, locomotive engineers were forced to resume work immediately and, moreover, were deprived of the right to strike for the next 21 months.

So much for the social, economic, civil and political rights in the "citadel of democracy and human rights", as the United States styles itself. The above quoted facts give more food for thought than dozens of myths about the "oppression of the individual in socialist society", which fill the columns of the

Western press. One wonders why the sponsors of the propaganda campaign for "protecting human rights in socialist countries" do not examine the situation in their own society in the first place. But this is the paradox of the "human rights" campaign: its architects set out to teach others and let terror and violence rage in their own country, police outrages are encouraged, citizens are spied upon and progressives persecuted.

Fanning the ideological campaign for "protecting human rights in socialist countries", the author points out, the ruling circles of the United States try to divert public attention from the sore problems of their internal policy, to wipe out the impression produced by the violation of democracy and human rights in the United States.

There are numerous facts showing that social equality remains but a dream for the overwhelming majority in capitalist society. Imperialism is waging an open and systematic offensive on citizens' rights. It is a society of injustice, rightlessness and poverty for broad masses of working people. Such is the conclusion Vladimir Bolshakov draws in his book *Human Rights. American Style*.

Gennady KOPYAKOV

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