

**FROM THE PEOPLE'S DAILY:
"BOURGEOIS AND SOCIALIST DEMOCRACIES COMPARED"
(MARCH 1990)**

Introduction

The Democracy Movement of 1989 was a sharp wake-up call for the Communist Party leadership. They had never expected the incident to get so seriously out of hand. One of the lessons that the Party leadership drew from the events of that spring was that they needed to do far more to teach the people, and particularly the young people, about patriotism and loyalty to the Party and the government. To begin with, they needed to refute the ideas about democracy that the students, workers, and other protestors had been discussing. The editorial below was published in the Party newspaper, *People's Daily*, in March 1990, as a part of that project of education (or indoctrination).

Document Excerpts with Questions (Longer selection follows this section)

From *Chinese Civilization: A Sourcebook*, edited by Patricia Buckley Ebrey, 2nd ed. (New York: The Free Press, 1993), 501-503. ©1993 The Free Press. Reproduced with the permission of the publisher. All rights reserved.

From the People's Daily:
"Bourgeois and Socialist Democracies Compared" (March 1990)

A small number of people who obstinately stick to bourgeois liberalization have made efforts to advocate bourgeois liberal democracy and distort China's socialist democracy in an evil attempt to overthrow the CPC leadership and sabotage the socialist People's Republic of China. ...

... Since mankind entered class society, there has never been equality between the ruling class and the classes that are ruled, or in the distribution of rights. ... In this sense, all forms of freedom, democracy, and human rights are abstract and practiced on conditions that the fundamental interests of the possessing class should be protected or left unharmed. This is class democracy, class freedom, and class human rights.

...

... Is it true that the American proletarians have mixed with the bosses of financial groups, enjoy the right of equal distribution and possession, and have equal democratic rights? The answer is negative.

...

Primary Source Document with Questions (DBQs) on

FROM THE PEOPLE'S DAILY: "BOURGEOIS AND SOCIALIST DEMOCRACIES COMPARED" (MARCH 1990)

The nature of the socialist democracy is that people act as the masters of their own country. The socialist system is the state system under which laborers and citizens are allowed to manage the state, administer society, and act as the masters of their country in the history of mankind for the first time. It is because of this reason that the socialist country is the most advanced form of democratic country in the history of mankind. ...

...

The PRC Constitution stipulates in explicit terms that all powers in the People's Republic of China belong to the people. ...

...

... Take the citizen's right to vote for example; our country instituted the universal suffrage system as early as 1953. Since then, the Chinese people have been able to elect their own deputies, hold people's congresses at all levels, form people's governments at all levels, and exercised state power. ...

Questions:

1. What purpose is served by characterizing the 1989 demonstrators as "a small number of people"?
2. On what grounds does the editorial criticize bourgeois (particularly American) democracy? Do the arguments have any merit?
3. How would you refute the arguments that the editorial makes about the superior nature of China's socialist democracy?

Longer Selection

From *Chinese Civilization: A Sourcebook*, edited by Patricia Buckley Ebrey, 2nd ed. (New York: The Free Press, 1993), 501-503. ©1993 The Free Press. Reproduced with the permission of the publisher. All rights reserved.

From the People's Daily: "Bourgeois and Socialist Democracies Compared" (March 1990)

A small number of people who obstinately stick to bourgeois liberalization have made major efforts to advocate bourgeois democracy and distort China's socialist democracy in an evil attempt to overthrow the CPC leadership and sabotage the socialist People's Republic of China. In their minds, the capitalist system is more democratic than the socialist system instead of the other way round, and only with the establishment of the capitalist system can there be genuine democracy. These bourgeois liberal fallacies must be exposed and criticized. ...

In a class society, democracy bears a class nature. Since mankind entered class society, there has never been equality between the ruling class and the classes that are ruled, or in the

distribution of rights. Democracy is equal power distribution in the possessing class. The classes that are ruled can only obtain a part of democratic rights that serve the power distribution in the ruling class. In this sense, all forms of freedom, democracy, and human rights are abstract and practiced on conditions that the fundamental interests of the possessing class should be protected or left unharmed. This is class democracy, class freedom, and class human rights.

A small number of people who obstinately hold to bourgeois liberalization, including Fang Lizhi and Wang Ruowang, have made energetic efforts to beautify American democracy. They asserted that this democracy "is genuine democracy for the entire people." In their opinions, exploitation of the majority by the capital-possessing minority has been over long ago. They said Marx wished to proletarianize the capitalists and turn them into self-supporting laborers, but Western society has capitalized the proletarians. Some Americans in power have also asserted that "America is the beacon of the world."

Is it true that the American bourgeoisie are so kind-hearted, "do not exploit," "do not exercise dictatorship," and have become the "beacon of world democracy"? Is it true that the American proletarians have mixed with the bosses of financial groups, enjoy the right of equal distribution and possession, and have equal democratic rights? The answer is negative.

In the present-day world, capital is still characterized by exploitation, oppression, and dictator. This is a historical definition provided for capital by the law governing human history. Similarly, the United States, where "capitalists are the personalization of capital," cannot exclude itself from this definition.

In the United States capitalists still dominate everything. A look at the nature of American democracy will make it easy to draw a conclusion that corresponds to historical facts.

First, U.S. democratic elections are actually the trials of capital and wealth.

As everyone is aware, U.S. elections are the "elections of money." Each U.S. presidential election costs about \$1 billion. During their presidential campaign, Reagan and Carter spent \$45 million each. Even the expenditures for the election of a senator are as high as \$500,000. At least \$500,000 to \$600,000 are required for the election of a state senator. Undoubtedly, only the rich can afford such huge expenditures, whereas the American workers and other laborers, even the middle class, do not dare to inquire about the elections. Statistics suggest that the per capita assets of U.S. Senators amount to \$5 million, and seventeen percent of them have assets worth over \$5 million. No wonder the American working people call the U.S. Congress the "club of the rich." According to relevant statistics compiled by the U.S. authorities, people in power in the United States control fifty percent of the assets in the industrial, transportation, and telecommunications field, in public enterprises, and in banks, but these people account for only three percent of the country's population. Since the end of World War II, nine U.S. presidents and vice-presidents have been either members of monopoly capital groups or supported by huge financial organizations; they are representatives of these organizations.

True, the American people do enjoy universal suffrage at present. Again, the government waived restrictions on the property of voters and on women and black people.

Democratic as all this looks, it cannot prove that the democracy practiced in the United States is no sham. I should like to ask: What benefits can laborers, women, and black people gain from such a universal direct election, which is held under the influence of the "contest of property and capital"? In the history of the United States, which worker has been elected as president? How many workers have been elected as congressmen or congresswomen? ...

With regard to human rights, the world monopoly capital has also made every possible endeavor to advertise to the whole world that it is the one that truly "respects" and "safeguards" human rights. Nonetheless, out of its own class interests, the monopoly capital has not only trampled upon human rights at home but has also frequently acted as the world military police by sending troops to directly interfere with the internal affairs of other countries and practice power politics in the whole world. For instance, the United States recently invaded Panama and carried out wanton and indiscriminate bombings and killings in Panama. The United States seriously violated basic norms governing international relations. Comrade Deng Xiaoping once laid bare the true nature of the bourgeois human rights. Comrade Deng Xiaoping sharply pointed out: "What are human rights? How many people now enjoy human rights? Do human rights mean the rights of the majority of the people or the rights of the minority of the people or the rights of the people of the whole country? The so-called human rights as advocated by the Western countries fundamentally differ from the human rights we are talking about. On this question, our views do differ." Andrew Young, former U.S. ambassador to the United Nations, once said: In the United States, "a lot of people have been imprisoned because they are poor, not because they are bad." In so saying, Andrew Young gave a true picture of the human rights situation in the United States.

*The Socialist Democracy is the People's Democracy
Enjoyed by the Majority of the People*

The socialist democracy means the democratic rights enjoyed by the broad masses of the workers, peasants, intellectuals, and all the people who love their socialist motherland.

The nature of the socialist democracy is that people act as the masters of their country. The socialist state system is the state system under which laborers and citizens are allowed to manage the state, administer the society, and act as the masters of their country in the history of mankind for the first time. It is because of this reason that the socialist country is the most advanced democratic country in the history of mankind. "The proletarian democracy is a million times more democratic than any types of bourgeois democracy." (*Selected Works of Lenin*, Volume 3, page 634).

During the period when turmoil and the counterrevolutionary rebellion broke out in Beijing, a handful of people who stubbornly adhered to the stand of bourgeois liberalization flaunted the banner of "Striving for Democracy" in an attempt to confuse and poison people's minds. These people denounce our country as a despotic state in which there is no democracy to speak of. This is an out-and-out distortion of the realities in our country. What is true is that

since the founding of the New-China, the CPC and the People's Government have made unremitting efforts to build the socialist democracy in China. Although China's socialist democratic system is still far from perfect, China has after all established a comprehensive democratic system under which people can participate in the administration and management of the state.

The PRC Constitution stipulates in explicit terms that all powers in the People's Republic of China belong to the people. The organs through which people exercise state power in a unified way are the National People's Congress and the local people's congresses at various levels. The National People's Congress is the supreme state organ which formulates and ratifies the constitution and the laws, elects and removes from office the state president, vice-president, elects the Central Military Commission, elects the president of the Supreme People's Court and the procurator general of the Supreme People's Procuratorate, and, in accordance with the relevant procedures, appoints the premier and vice-premier of the State Council, the state councilors, and ministers, and examines and ratifies the national economic and social development plans, the state budget, and so on. This is the basic socialist democratic system instituted in our country.

The CPC-led Multiparty Cooperation and Political Consultation System has remained an important channel for the evolution of socialist democracy in China. The CPPCC has remained an important political and organizational form through which the CPC-led Multiparty Cooperation and Political Consultation System has been realized in China. Over the past few decades, the CPPCC committees at all levels, the various democratic parties, people's organizations, and public figures of all nationalities and all walks of life have played an important role in making China's state decision-making process more scientific and more democratic and in promoting the building of socialist modernization in China. ...

There is no denying the fact that our country is still at the initial stage of socialism and our country's socialist people's democratic system and socialist legal system are still in a historical process of establishment, improvement, development, and perfection. Nevertheless, it is also an undeniable basic fact that the Chinese people have already become the masters of their country and are currently enjoying wide-ranging and real democratic rights. Take the citizens' right to vote, for example; our country instituted the universal suffrage system as early as 1953. Since then, the Chinese people have been able to elect their own deputies, hold people's congresses at all levels, form people's governments at all levels, and exercise the state power. Since 1979, China has several times revised her electoral law and instituted the system under which the electorate can directly elect their deputies to the people's congresses at county and township levels. The revised PRC "Electoral Law" stipulates that apart from the fact that political parties or people's organizations can either jointly or individually nominate candidates for the people's congress elections held at various levels, the voters or the deputies can also jointly nominate candidates for the people's congress elections held at various levels. In the revised "Electoral Law," the election system under which equal numbers of candidates run for

an equal number of deputy seats has been substituted with the election system under which more candidates run for fewer seats, thus gradually enlarging the citizens' right to vote.

Given the basic realities in China, the building of socialist democracy in China can only be a gradual and accumulated process. Since the founding of the PRC, we have done a lot of work, made much headway, and achieved marked results in building the people's democratic system. However, as a comprehensive system, our country's people's democratic system has yet to be further developed and perfected. In his speech addressed to a Beijing rally in celebration of the fortieth anniversary of the founding the PRC, comrade Jiang Zemin pointed out that it is necessary to make continued efforts to improve and perfect our country's people's congress system and CPC-led Multiparty Cooperation and Political Consultation System, establish and perfect a democratic decision-making and supervision procedure and system, expand the existing links and channels of dialogue between the CPC and the broad masses of the people, raise the citizens' consciousness in participation in the political and state affairs, and guarantee the full realization of both the will and the interests of the broad masses of the people in the state life and social life. This is the orientation for building socialist democracy in our country at the current stage. In this analysis, those who blindly worship the democratic system of the Western countries and try to transplant the parliamentary system and multiparty system of the Western countries to China are doomed to failure.