

Ernest Mandel

Marxist theory of the state

(October 1969)

With an introduction by George Novack.
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Foreword

Every branch of knowledge has a central concept that expresses the fundamental feature or function of the sector of reality it investigate and deals with. The pivotal category of political science is the state.

The political thought of the various social classes and groupings throughout civilization is above all characterized by their attitude toward the state and their definition of its essential nature. Thus the ancient Greek aristocrat Aristotle conceived of the state – or, more precisely, the city-state of his time – as “an association for the good life”, based on the family and village; excluded from the rights and benefits of citizenship, however, were laborers and artisans, women, foreigners, and slaves.

The bourgeois philosopher Hegel, like his idealist precursor Plato, asserted that the nation-state was a product of the Objective Mind, best governed by a constitutional monarchy.

Middle-class liberals nowadays – and the reformist socialists and Stalinists who trail in their wake and mimic their ideas – believe in the existence of a state that stands as an impartial arbiter above the selfish contention of classes and deals justly with the respective claims of diverse “interest groups”. This exalted notion of a classless state presiding over a pure democracy, based on the consent of the people, rather than engaged in the defense of the property, rights of the ruling class, is the core of bourgeois-democratic ideology.

Historical materialism takes a more realistic view of the nature of the state. The state is the product of irreconcilable class conflict within the social structure, which it seeks to regulate on behalf of the ruling class. Every state is the organ of a given system of production based upon a predominant form of property ownership, which invests that state with a specific class bias and content. Every state is the organized political expression of the decisive class in the economy.

The principal factor in determining the character of the state is not its prevailing form of rule, which can vary greatly from time to time, but the type of property and productive relations that its institutions and prime beneficiaries protect and promote.

In antiquity, monarchical, tyrannical, oligarchical, and democratic forms of the state rose upon the slave mode of production. The medieval feudal state in Western Europe passed through imperial-monarchical, clerical, absolute monarchical, plutocratic, and republican regimes.

In the course of its evolution, bourgeois society, rooted in the capitalist ownership of the means of production, has been headed and governed by various kinds of monarchical sovereignties (from the absolute to the constitutional),

republican and parliamentary regimes, and military and fascist dictatorships.

The twelve workers' states in the post-capitalist societies, which have arisen from the socialist revolutions in the half century since the founding of the Soviet republic, have already exhibited two polar types of rule. One is more or less democratic in character, expressing the power, and guarding the welfare, of the workers and peasants. The other is despotic and Bonapartist, bent on defending the privileged positions of a commanding caste of bureaucrats who have succeeded in usurping the decision-making powers from the masses.

At the dawn of the bourgeois era, long before Marx, Engels, and Lenin, that astute political scientist Machiavelli had expounded the view that the state was the supreme, organized, and legitimate expression of force. "Machiavelli's theory," wrote the German historian Meineke, "was a sword which was plunged into the flank of the body politic of western humanity, causing it to shriek and rear up."

Similarly, the teaching of the Marxists, elaborated by Lenin and the Bolsheviks, that the state was based upon the principle of force, has caused the whole of bourgeois society – to shriek and rear up – at its alleged cynicism and inhumanity. However, it would seem that the colossal arsenals used in two world wars and the preparations for a third, the destructiveness of the US military machine in Vietnam, as well as the barbarous reprisals taken by the bourgeois classes – from the Germany of 1933 to the Indonesia of 1965 – against their own citizens, should have amply validated that proposition by now.

Marxism added a deeper dimension to Machiavelli's observation by exposing and explaining the organic bond between the existence and exercise of state force and the property system that constituted the fabric of the

socioeconomic structure. The coercion exercised by the state was the ultimate resort for maintaining the material interests of the strongest section of the exploiters.

It should not take much perspicacity to see that the industrialists and bankers, who own and operate most of the resources of the United States and control the major political parties, likewise direct the employment of the military machine and other repressive agencies of the federal government. The use of police, state guards, and federal troops to put down the ghetto uprisings testifies to the openly repressive function of the capitalist state apparatus. Yet liberal Americans find it difficult to generalize from these quite flagrant facts and thus to accept the sociological definition of state power offered by Marxism.

They are blinded or baffled by three misconceptions: (1) that there are no clearly defined class formations in American society; (2) that there are no serious or irreconcilable conflicts between classes; and (3) that the government is not “the executive committee” administering the general affairs and furthering the aims of the capitalist exploiters, but that it is – or can be made into – the supreme agency for taking care of the welfare of the whole people, rather than serving the interests of the minority rich. The analysis of the evolution and essence of state power given by Ernest Mandel in these pages should do much to dispose of such false views....

George Novack
October 1, 1969

I. Origin and Development of the State in the History of Societies

A. Primitive society and the origins of the state

The state did not always exist.

Certain sociologists and other representatives of academic political science are in error when they speak of the state in primitive societies. What they are really doing is identifying the state with the community. In so doing, they strip the state of its special characteristic, i.e., the exercise of certain functions is removed from the community as a whole to become the exclusive prerogative of a tiny fraction of the members of this community.

In other words, the emergence of the state is a product of the social division of labor.

So long as this social division of labor is only rudimentary, all members of the society in turn exercise practically all its functions. There is no state. There are no special state functions....

...But to the extent that social division of labor develops and society is divided into classes, the State appears – and its nature is defined: The members of the collectivity as a whole are denied the exercise of a certain number of functions; a small minority, alone, takes over the exercise of these functions.

Two examples will illustrate this development, which consists in taking away from a majority of the members of the society certain functions they formerly exercised (collectively

in the beginning) in order to arrogate these functions to a small group of individuals.

First example: **Arms.**

This is an important function. Engels said that the state is, in the final analysis, nothing other than a body of armed men.

In the primitive collectivity, all male members of the group (and sometimes even all adults, male and female) are armed. In such a society the concept that the bearing of arms is the particular prerogative of some special institution called army, police, or constabulary, does not exist. Every adult male has the right to bear arms. (In certain primitive societies, the ceremony of initiation, which marks coming of age, confers the right to bear arms.)

It is exactly the same in societies that are still primitive but already close to the stage of division into classes. For example, this holds true for the Germanic peoples at about the time they attacked the Roman Empire: all free men had the right to bear arms and they could use them to defend their person and their rights. The equality of rights among free men that we see in primitive Germanic societies is in fact equality among soldiers.

In ancient Greece and Rome, the struggles between patricians and plebeians often revolved about this question of the right to bear arms.

Second example: **Justice.**

In general, writing is unknown to primitive society. Thus there are no written codes of law. Moreover, the exercise of justice is not the prerogative of particular individuals; this right belongs to the collectivity. Apart from quarrels decided by families or individuals themselves, only collective assemblies are empowered to render judgments. In primitive

Germanic society, the president of the people's tribunal did not pass judgment: his function consisted in seeing that certain rules, certain forms, were observed.

The idea that there could be certain men detached from the collectivity to whom would be reserved the right of dispensing justice, would seem to citizens of a society based on the collectivism of the clan or the tribe just as nonsensical as the reverse appears to most of our contemporaries.

To sum up: At a certain point in the development of society, before it is divided into social classes, certain functions such as the right to bear arms or to administer justice are exercised collectively – by all adult members of the community. It is only as this society develops further, to the point where social classes appear, that these functions are taken away from the collectivity to be reserved to a minority who exercise these functions in a special way.

What are the characteristics of this “special way”?

Let us examine our Western society at the period when the feudal system begins to be the dominant one.

The independence (not formal, not juridical, but very real and almost total) of the great feudal estates can be shown by the fact that the feudal lord, and only he, exercises throughout his domain all the functions enumerated above, functions that had devolved on the adult collectivity in primitive societies.

This feudal lord is the absolute master of his realm. He is the only one who has the right to bear arms at all times; he is the only policeman, the only constable; he is the sole judge; he is the only one who has the right to coin money; he is the sole minister of finance. He exercises throughout his domain all the classic functions performed by a state as we know it today.

Later, an evolution will take place. As long as the estate remains fairly small, its population limited, the “state” functions of the lord rudimentary and not very complicated, and as long as exercising these functions takes only a little of the lord’s time, he can handle the situation and exercise all these functions in person.

But when the domain grows and the population increases, the functions for which the feudal lord is responsible become more and more complex and more and more detailed and burdensome. It becomes impossible for one man to exercise all these functions.

What does the feudal lord then do?

He partially delegates his powers to others – but not to free men, since the latter belong to a social class in opposition to the seignorial class.

The feudal lord delegates part of his power to people completely under his control: serfs who are part of his domestic staff. Their servile origin is reflected in many present-day titles: “constable” comes from *comes stabuli*, head serf of the stables; “minister” is the *serf ministrable*, i.e., the serf assigned by the lord to minister to his needs – to act as his attendant, servant, assistant, agent etc.; “marshal” is the serf who takes care of the carriages, the horses, etc. (from *marah scalc*, Old High German for keeper of the horses).

To the extent that these people, these non-free men, these domestics, are completely under his control, does the seigneur partially delegate his powers to them.

This example leads us to the following conclusion – which is the very foundation of the Marxist theory of the state:

The state is a special organ that appears at a certain moment in the historical evolution of mankind and that is condemned to disappear in the course of this same evolution. It is born from the division of society into classes and will disappear at the same time that this division disappears. It is born as an instrument in the hands of the possessing class for the purpose of maintaining the domination of this class over society, and it will disappear along with this class domination.

Coming back to feudal society, it should be noted that state functions exercised by the ruling class do not only concern the most immediate areas of power, such as the army, justice, finances. Also under the seigneur's thumb are ideology, law, philosophy, science, art. Those who exercise these functions are poor people who, in order to live, have to sell their talents to a feudal lord who can take care of their needs. (Heads of the church have to be included in the class of feudal lords, inasmuch as the church was the proprietor of vast landed estates.) Under such conditions, at least as long as dependence is total, the development of ideology is controlled entirely by the ruling class: it alone orders "ideological production"; it alone is capable of subsidizing the "ideologues".

These are the basic relationships that we have to keep constantly in mind, if we don't want to get lost in a tangle of complications and fine distinctions. Needless to say, in the course of the evolution of society, the function of the state becomes much more complex, with many more nuances, than it is in a feudal regime such as we have just very schematically described.

Nevertheless, we must start from this transparently clear and obvious situation in order to understand the logic of the evolution, the origin of this social division of labor that is brought about, and the process through which these different functions become more and more autonomous and begin to seem more and more independent of the ruling class.

B. The modern bourgeois state

Bourgeois origin of the modern state

Here, too, the situation is fairly clear. Modern parliamentarism finds its origin in the battle cry that the English bourgeoisie hurled at the king, “No taxation without representation!” In plain words this means: “Not a cent will you get from us as long as we have no say in how you spend it”.

We can immediately see that this is not much more subtle than the relationship between the feudal lord and the serf assigned to the stables. And a Stuart king, Charles I, died on the scaffold for not having respected this principle, which became the golden rule all representatives, direct or indirect, of the state apparatus have had to obey since the appearance of modern bourgeois society.

The bourgeois state, a class state

This new society is no longer dominated by feudal lords but by capitalism, by modern capitalists. As we know, the monetary needs of the modern state – the new central power, more or less absolute monarchy – become greater and greater, from the fifteenth to sixteenth century onward. It is the money of the capitalists, of the merchant and commercial bankers, that in large part fills the coffers of the state. Ever since that time, to the extent that the capitalists pay for the upkeep of the state, they will demand that the latter place itself completely at their service. They will make this quite clearly felt and understood by the very nature of the laws they enact and by the institutions they create.

Several institutions which today appear democratic in nature, for example the parliamentary institution, clearly

reveal the class nature of the bourgeois state. Thus, in most of the countries in which parliamentarism was instituted, only the bourgeoisie had the right to vote. This state of affairs lasted in most Western countries until the end of the last century or even the beginning of the twentieth century. Universal suffrage is, as we can see, of relatively recent invention in the history of capitalism. How is this explained?

Easily enough. In the seventeenth century, when the English capitalists proclaimed “No taxation without representation”. It was only, representation *for the bourgeoisie* that they had in mind; for the idea that people who owned nothing and paid no taxes could vote, seemed absurd and ridiculous to them. Isn't parliament created for the very purpose of controlling expenditures made with the taxpayers' money?

This argument, extremely valid from the point of view of the bourgeoisie, was taken up and developed by our Doctrinaire bourgeoisie at the time of the demand for universal suffrage. For this bourgeoisie, the role of parliament consisted in controlling budgets and expenditures. And only those who pay taxes may validly exercise this control; because those who do not pay taxes would constantly have the tendency to increase expenditures, since they are not footing the bill.

Later on, the bourgeoisie regarded this problem in another way. Along with universal suffrage was born universal taxation, which weighs more and more heavily on the workers. In this way the bourgeoisie reestablished the inherent “justice” of the system.

The parliamentary institution is a typical example of the very direct very mechanical bond that exists – even in the bourgeois state – between the domination of the ruling class and the exercise of state power.

There are other examples. Let us look at the *jury* in the judicial system. The jury appears to be an institution eminently democratic in character, especially when compared to the administration of justice by irremovable judges, all members of the ruling class over whom the people have no control.

But from what social layer were – and still in very large measure today, are – the members of a jury chosen? From the bourgeoisie. There were even special qualifications, comparable to property-holding requirements for voting, for being able to sit on a jury – a juror had to be a homeowner, pay a certain amount of taxes, etc. To illustrate this very direct link between the machinery of the state and the ruling class in the bourgeois era, we can also cite the famous Le Chapelier law, passed during the French Revolution, which, under pretext of establishing equality among all citizens, forbids both employers' organizations and workers' organizations. Thus, under pretext of banning employers' corporations – when industrial society has gone beyond the corporation stage – trade unions are outlawed. In this way the workers are rendered powerless against the bosses, since only working-class organization can, to a certain extent (a much too limited extent), serve as a counterweight to the wealth of the employers.

II. The Bourgeois State: the Face of Everyday Reality

Through the struggle waged by the labor movement certain institutions of the bourgeois state become both more subtle and more complex. Universal suffrage was substituted for suffrage for property-owners only; military service has become compulsory; everybody pays taxes. The class character of the

state then becomes a little less transparent. The nature of the state as an instrument of class domination is less evident than at the time of the reign of the classical bourgeoisie, when the relationships between the different groups exercising state functions were just as transparent as in the feudal era. The analysis of the modern state, therefore, will also have to be a little more complex.

First, let us establish a hierarchy among the different functions of the state.

In this day and age, nobody but the most naive believes that *parliament really does the governing*, that parliament is master of the state based on universal suffrage. (That illusion is, however, more widespread in those countries in which parliament is a fairly recent institution.)

The power of the state is a permanent power. This power is exercised by a certain number of institutions that are isolated from and independent of so changeable and unstable an influence as universal suffrage. These are the institutions that must be analyzed if we are to learn where the real power lies: “Governments come and governments go, but the police and the administrators remain”.

The state is, above all, these permanent institutions: the army (the permanent part of the army – the general staff, special troops) the police, special police, secret police, the top administrators of government departments (“key” civil servants), the national security bodies, the judges, etc. – everything that is “free” of the influence of universal suffrage.

This executive power is constantly being reinforced. To the extent that universal suffrage appears and a certain democratization, albeit completely formal, of certain representative institutions develops, it can be shown that real

power slips from those institutions towards others that are more and more removed from the influence of parliament.

If the king and his functionaries lose a series of rights to parliament during the ascending phase of parliamentarism, on the contrary, with the decline of parliamentarism (which begins with the winning of universal suffrage), a continuous series of rights are lost by parliament and revert to the permanent and irremovable administrations of the state. This phenomenon is a general one throughout Western Europe. The present Fifth Republic in France is presently the most striking and most complete example of this phenomenon.

Should this turnabout, this reversal, be seen as a diabolical plot against universal suffrage by the wicked capitalists? A much deeper objective reality is involved: the real powers are transferred from the legislative to the executive; the power of the executive is reinforced in a permanent and continuous fashion as a result of changes that are also taking place within the capitalist class itself.

This process began at the time of World War I in most of the belligerent countries and has since continued without interruption. But the phenomenon often existed much earlier than that. Thus, in the German Empire this priority of the executive over the legislative appeared concomitantly with universal suffrage. Bismarck and the Junkers granted universal suffrage in order to use the working class to a certain extent as a lever against the liberal bourgeoisie, thus assuring (in that already essentially capitalist society) the relative independence of the executive power exercised by the Prussian nobility.

This process shows full well that political equality is more apparent than real and that the right of the citizen-voter is nothing but the right to put a little piece of paper in a ballot box

every four years. The right goes no farther, nor, above all, does it reach the real centers of decision-making and power.

The monopolies take over from parliament

The classical era of parliamentarism was the era of free competition. At that time the individual bourgeois, the industrialist, the banker, was very strong as an individual. He was very independent, very free within the limits of bourgeois freedom, and could risk his capital on the market in any he wished. In that atomized bourgeois society, parliament played a very useful, and even indispensable, objective role in the smooth functioning of everyday affairs.

Actually, it was only in parliament that the common denominator of the interests of the bourgeoisie could be determined. Dozens of separate capitalist groups could be listed, groups opposed to one another by a multitude of sectional, regional, and corporative interests. These groups could get together in an orderly fashion only in parliament. (It's true that they did meet on the market too, but there it was with knives, not words!) It was only in parliament that a middle line could be hammered out, a line that would express the interests of the capitalist class as a whole.

Because that was then the function of parliament: to serve as a common meeting place where the collective interests of the bourgeoisie could be formulated. Let us recall that in the heroic era of parliamentarism it was not only with words and votes that this collective interest was hammered out; fists and pistols were used, too. Didn't the Convention, that classical bourgeois parliament during the French Revolution, send people to the guillotine by the slimmest of majorities?

But capitalist society is not going to remain atomized. Little by little, it can be seen organizing itself and structuring itself in

a more and more concentrated, more and more centralized way. Free competition fades away: it is replaced by monopolies, trusts, and other capitalist groupings.

Capitalist power is centralized outside parliament

Now a real centralization of finance capital, big banks and financial groups, takes place. If the **Analytique** of parliament expressed the will of the Belgian bourgeoisie a century ago, today it is above all the annual report of the Société Générale or of Brufina, prepared for their stockholders' meetings, that must be studied to know the real opinions of the capitalists. These reports contain the opinions of the capitalists who really count, the big financial groups who dominate the life of the country.

Thus, capitalist power is concentrated outside parliament and outside the institutions born of universal suffrage. In the face of so high-powered a concentration (we need only remember that in Belgium a dozen financial groups control the economic life of the nation), the relationships between parliament and government officials, police commissioners and those multimillionaires is a relationship burdened very little by theory. It is a very immediate and practical relationship: and the connecting link is the payoff.

The bourgeoisie's visible golden chains – the national debt

Parliament and, even more, the government of a capitalist state, no matter how democratic it may appear to be, are tied to the bourgeoisie by golden chains. These golden chains have a name – the *public debt*.

No government could last more than a month without having to knock on the door of the banks in order to pay its current expenses. If the banks were to refuse, the government would go bankrupt. The origins of this phenomenon are twofold. Taxes don't enter the coffers every day; receipts are concentrated in one period of the year while expenses are continuous. That is how the short-term public debt arises. This problem could be solved by some technical gimmick. But there is another problem – a much more important one. All modern capitalist states spend more than they receive. That is the long-term public debt for which banks and other financial establishments can most easily advance money, at heavy interest. Therein lies a direct and immediate connection, a daily link, between the state and big business.

The hierarchy in the state apparatus ...

Other golden chains, invisible chains, make the state apparatus a tool in the hands of the bourgeoisie.

If we examine the method of recruiting civil service people, for example, we see that to become a junior clerk in a ministry, it is necessary to pass an examination. The rule seems very democratic indeed. On the other hand, not just anyone can take any examination at all for any level whatsoever. The examination is not the same for the position of secretary general of a ministry or chief of the army general staff as it is for junior clerk in a small government bureau. At first glance, this too would seem normal.

But – a big *but* – there's a progression in these examinations that gives them a selective character. You have to have certain degrees, you have to have taken certain courses, to apply for certain positions, especially important positions. Such a system excludes a huge number of people

who were not able to get a university education or its equivalent, because equality of educational opportunity doesn't really exist. Even if the civil service examination system is democratic on the surface, it is also a selective instrument.

... mirror of the hierarchy in capitalist society

These invisible golden chains are also found in the remuneration received by members of the state apparatus.

All government agencies, the army included, develop this pyramidal aspect, this hierarchical structure that characterizes bourgeois society. We are so influenced by and so imbued with the ideology of the ruling class that we tend to see nothing abnormal in the fact that a secretary general of a ministry receives a salary ten times higher than that of a junior clerk in the same ministry or that of the woman who cleans its offices. The physical effort of this charwoman is certainly greater; but the secretary general of the ministry, he *thinks!* – which, as everyone knows, is much more tiring. In the same way, the pay of the chief of the general staff (again, someone who *thinks!*) is much greater by far than that accorded to a second-class private.

This hierarchical structure of the state apparatus leads us to emphasize: In this apparatus there are secretaries general, generals of the army, bishops, etc., who have the same salary level, and therefore have the same standard of living, as the big bourgeoisie, so that they are part of the same social and ideological climate. Then come the middle functionaries, the middle officials, who are on the same social level and have the same income as the petty and middle bourgeoisie. And finally, the mass of employees without titles, charwomen, community workers, who very often earn less than factory workers. Their standard of living clearly corresponds to that of the proletariat.

The state apparatus is not a homogeneous instrument. It involves a structure that rather closely corresponds to the structure of bourgeois society, with a hierarchy of classes and identical differences between them.

This pyramidal structure corresponds to a real need of the bourgeoisie. They wish to have at their disposal an instrument they can manipulate at will. It is quite obvious why the bourgeoisie has been trying for a long time, and trying very hard, to deny public service workers the right to strike.

Is the state simply an arbiter?

This point is important In the very concept of the bourgeois state – regardless of whether it may be more or less “democratic” in form – there is a fundamental premise, linked, moreover, to the very origin of the state: By its nature the state remains antagonistic, or rather non-adaptive, to the needs of the collectivity. The state is, by definition, a group of men who exercise the functions that in the beginning were exercised by all members of the collectivity. These men contribute no productive labour but are supported by the other members of society.

In normal times, there is not much need for watchdogs. Even in Moscow, for example, there is no one in charge of collecting fares on buses: passengers deposit their kopeck on boarding, whether or not anyone is watching them. In societies where the level of development of the productive forces is low, where everyone is in a constant struggle with everyone else to get enough to live on for himself out of a national income too small to go around, *a large supervisory apparatus becomes necessary.*

Thus, during the German occupation [of Belgium], a number of specialized supervisory services proliferated (special police

in the railway stations, supervision of printshops, of rationing, etc.). In times like that, the area of conflict is such that an imposing supervisory apparatus proves indispensable.

If we think about the problem a bit, we can see that all who exercise state functions, who are part of the state apparatus, are – in one way or another – watchdogs. Special police and regular police are watchdogs, but so are tax collectors, judges, paper pushers in government offices, fare-collectors on buses, etc. In sum, all functions of the state apparatus are reduced to this: surveillance and control of the life of the society in the interests of the ruling class.

It is often said that the contemporary state plays the role of arbiter. This statement is quite close to what we have just said: “surveillance” and “arbitrating” – aren’t they basically the same thing?

Two comments are called for. First, the arbiter is not neutral. As we explained above, the top men in the state apparatus are part and parcel of the big bourgeoisie. Arbitration thus does not take place in a vacuum; it takes place in the framework of maintaining existing class society. Of course, concessions to the exploited can be made by arbitrators; that depends essentially on the relationship of forces. But the basic aim of arbitration is to maintain capitalist exploitation as such, if necessary by compromising a bit on secondary questions.

The watchdog-state, testimony to the poverty of society

Second, the state is an entity created by society for the surveillance of the everyday functioning of social life; it is at the service of the ruling class for the purpose of maintaining the domination of that class. There is an objective necessity for this watchdog organization, a necessity very closely linked to

the degree of poverty, to the amount of social conflict that exists in the society.

In a more general, historical way, the exercise of state functions is intimately connected with the existence of social conflicts. In turn, these social conflicts are intimately, connected with the existence of a certain scarcity of material goods, of wealth, of resources, of the necessary means for satisfaction of human needs. This fact should be emphasized: *As long as the state exists, it will be proof of the fact that social conflicts (therefore the relative scarcity of goods and services as well) remain. With the disappearance of social conflicts, the watchdogs, rendered useless and parasitical, will disappear – but not before!* Society, in effect, pays these men to exercise the functions of surveillance, as long as that is in the interests of part of society. But it is quite evident that from the moment no group in society has a stake in the watchdog function being exercised, the function will disappear along with its usefulness. At the same time, the state will disappear.

The very fact that the state survives proves that social conflicts remain, that the condition of relative scarcity of goods remains the hallmark of that vast period in human history between absolute poverty (the condition during primitive communism) and plenty (the condition of the future socialist society). As long as we are in this transitional period that covers ten thousand years of human history, a period that also includes the transition between capitalism and socialism, the state will survive, social conflicts will remain, and there will have to be people to arbitrate these conflicts in the interest of the ruling class.

If the bourgeois state remains fundamentally an instrument in the service of the ruling classes, does that mean that the workers should be indifferent to the particular form that this

state takes parliamentary democracy, military, dictatorship, fascist dictatorship? Not at all! The more freedom the workers have to organize themselves and defend their ideas, the more will the seeds of the future socialist democracy grow within capitalist society, and the more will the advent of socialism be historically facilitated. That is why, the workers must defend their democratic rights against any and every attempt to curtail them (anti-strike laws, institution of a “strong state”) or to crush them (fascism).



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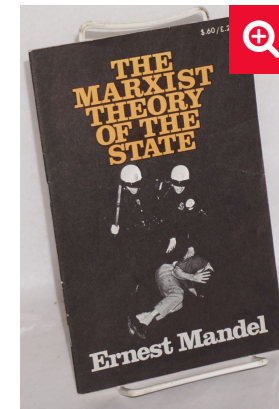
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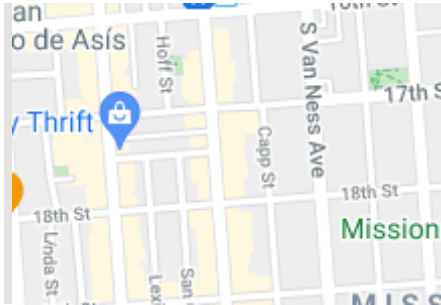
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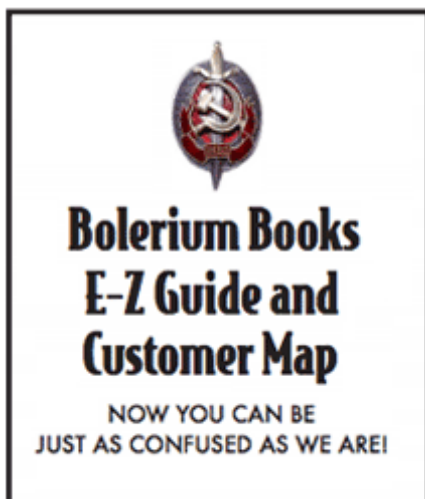
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