***The political system of the USA.***

The United States of America is the greatest capitalist country in the world. The USA is the President republic. It means that the president is the head of the country. The President is elected for four years, together with the Vice-President, chosen for the same term. He cannot be younger than 35 years old and he must have lived in the USA for at least 14 years, and be a civilian. He must do his job according to the Constitution. The President cannot serve more than two terms.

The legislative branch of the US Government, or the Congress, represents all of the American states. The Congress was created by Article I of the constitution, adopted in 1787. It consists of two parts: the House of Representatives and the Senate.

The Senate made up of 100 members (2 from each state), elected for a term of 6 years. One third of the Senate is elected every 2 years. To be elected a Senator, a person must be a least 30 years old and have been a citizen of the USA for at least 9 years.

The House of Representatives comprises representatives from each state, elected for a two-years term. The number of representatives from each state depends on its population, but every state is represented. To be elected a representative, a person must be at least 25 years of age and have been a citizen of the country for at least 7 years.

In general, Senators are better known than Representatives because they are fewer in number and serve for a longer time. Many American Presidents served in Congress before they became President. Presidents John Kennedy, Lyndon Johnson, and Richard Nixon were all Representatives and then senators before becoming President of the United States.

The presiding officer of the Senate is the Vice-President of the USA. The presiding officer of the House of Representatives, the Speaker, is elected by the house. The work of preparing and considering laws is done by the committees of both Houses. There are 15 standing committees in the Senate and 19 in the House of Representatives.

The job of the Congress is to make laws. The President can veto a bill. The Congress can pass the law anyway if it gets a two-thirds majority vote. The Congress can also declare the war. The House of Representatives can also impeach the President. This means that the House can charge the President which a crime. In this case, the Senate will put the President on trail. The Senate votes to approve the justices that the President appoints to Supreme Court. The Congress assembles at least once a year.

The executive branch of the government puts the country’s laws into effect. It consists of the president, the Vice-President and the Cabinet. The President is the head of the executive branch of the government; he appoints the members of the Cabinet. When the president receives a bill from the Congress, he must sign it, and then the bill becomes a law. The Cabinet advises the President on many matters and is composed of the heads of ten executive departments: Secretary of Senate, Secretary of Treasury, Secretary of Defence and others.

The judicial branch of the government is the system of courts in the United States. Its job is to enforce laws. The Supreme Court is the highest court in the country. It consists of 9 justices: one Chief Justice and 8 associate justices. The President appoints the justices, but the Senate must approve them. The justices are appointed for life. The Supreme Court makes sure people obey the laws. The Supreme Court can also decide if a law is constitutional, that is, if it is in agreement with the Constitution. The judicial branch works together with the legislative and executive branches to protect the Constitution and the rights of people.

There are two main bourgeois political parties in the USA. They are the Democratic Party (was organized in the 1820s) and the Republican Party (was organized in the 1850s). They defend monopoly capital. The only party that defends the interests of the working people is the Communist Party. It was formed in 1919 in Chicago. The Communist Party struggles for better way of life for the working people and it fights for the interests of Negroes and coloured people, against all kinds of discrimination. The Communist Party stands for peaceful coexistence with the socialist countries.

***The basis of the American republic.***

The Constitution of the United States is the central instrument of American government and the supreme law of the land. For 200 years, it has guided the evolution of governmental institutions freedom, economic growth and social progress.

The American Constitution is the world’s oldest written constitution in force, one that has served as the model for a number of other constitutions around the world. The Constitution owes its staying power to its simplicity and flexibility. Originally designed to provide a framework for governing four million people in 13 very different colonies along the Atlantic coast, its basic provisions were so soundly conceived that, with only 26 amendments, it now serves the needs of more than 240 million people in 50 even more diverse states that stretch from the Atlantic to the Pacific Ocean.

The path of the Constitution was neither straight nor easy. A draft document emerged in 1787, but only after intense debate and six years of experience with an earlier federal union. The 13 British colonies, strung out along the eastern seaboard of what is now the United States, declared their independence from England in 1776. A year before, war had broken out between the colonies and Great Britain, a war for independence that lasted for six bitter years. While still at war, the colonies — now calling themselves the United States of America — drafted a compact, which bound them together as a nation. The compact, designated the “Articles of Confederation and Perpetual Union”, was adopted by a Congress of the states in 1777, and formally signed in July 1778. The Articles became binding when they were ratified by the 13th state, Maryland, in March 1781.

It was under these inauspicious circumstances that the Constitution of the United States was drawn up. In February 1787, the Continental Congress, the legislative body of the republic, issued a call for the states to send delegates to Philadelphia to revise the Articles. The Constitutional, or Federal, Convention convened on May 25, 1787, in Independence Hall, where the Declaration of Independence had been adopted 11 years earlier on July 4, 1776. Although the delegates had been authorized only to amend the Articles of Confederation, they pushed the Articles aside and proceeded to construct a charter for a wholly new, more centralized form of government. The new document, the Constitution, was completed September 17, 1787, and was officially adopted March 4, 1789.

The 55 delegates who drafted the Constitution included most of the outstanding leaders, of Founding Fathers, of the new nation. They represented a wide range of interests, backgrounds and stations in life. All agreed, however, on the central objectives expressed in the preamble to the Constitution:

*We the people of the United States, in order to form a more perfect union, establish justice, insure domestic tranquility, provide for the common defense, promote the general welfare, and secure the blessings of liberty to ourselves and our posterity, to ordain and establish this Constitution for the United States of America.*

***The Bill of Rights.***

The Constitution has been amended 26 times since 1789, and it is likely to be further revised in the future. The most sweeping changes were made within two years of its adoption. In that period, the first 10 amendments, known collectively as the Bill of Rights, were added. They were approved as a block by the Congress in September 1789, and ratified by 11 states by the end of 1791.

Much of the initial resistance to the Constitution came not from those opposed to strengthening the federal union, but from statesmen who felt that the rights of individuals must be specifically spelled out. One of these was George Mason, author of the Declaration of Rights of Virginia, which was a forerunner of the Bill of Rights. As a delegate to the Constitutional Convention, Mason refused to sign the document because he felt individual rights were not sufficiently protected. Indeed, Mason’s opposition nearly blocked ratification of Virginia. As noted earlier, Massachusetts, because of similar feelings, conditioned its ratification on the addition of specific guarantees of individual rights. By the time the First Congress convened, sentiment for adoption of such amendments was nearly unanimous, and the Congress lost little time in drafting them.

These amendments remain intact today, as they were written two centuries ago. The first guaranties freedom of worship, speech and press, the right of peaceful assembly, and the right of petition the government to corrects wrongs. The second guarantees the right of citizens to bear arms. The third provides that troops may not be quartered in private home without the owner’s consent. The fourth guards against unreasonable searches, arrests and seizures of property.

The next four amendments deal with the system of justice: The fifth forbids trial for a major crime expect after indictment by a grand jury. It prohibits repeated trails for the same offence; forbids punishment without due process of law and provides that an accused person may not be compelled to testify against himself. The sixth guarantees a speedy public testify for criminal offences. It requires trial by an unbiased jury, guarantees the rights to legal counsel for the accused, and provides that witnesses shall be completed to attend the trial and testify in the presence of the accused. The seventh assures trial by jury in civil cases involving anything valued at more than 20 U.S. dollars. The eighth forbids excessive bail or fines, and cruel or unusual punishment.

The last two of the 10 amendments contain very broad statements of constitutional authority: The ninth declares that the listing if individual rights is not meant to be comprehensive; that the people have other rights not specifically mentioned in the Constitution. The 10th provides that powers not delegated by the Constitution to the federal government nor prohibited by it to the states are reserved to the states or the people.

***State and local government.***

Each of the fifty states of the USA has a constitution patterned after the national Constitution, with its three divisions of power: legislative, executive and judicial. The head of each state is the governor, elected for four or two years. The office of the governor is one of considerable prestige and political power and has been steadily growing in influence. The governor is assisted by Secretaries. The state legislatures consist of two houses (except Nebraska, which has a single-chamber legislature,) and they collect taxes, elect their officers, approve state government officials, and pass state laws. No state, however, may pass a law contrary to the Constitution or the United States’ laws and treaties.

Each state creates of local government. The chief unit of local government is the county, of which there are more than 3000. The counties maintain public order through the sheriff and his deputies; in many states the counties maintain the smaller local highways. The sheriff is the chief law enforcement officer of the county. He is also officer of the court, serves papers, enforces orders, maintains the jail, and collects taxes, with particular functions varying from state to state. The sheriff’s deputy is appointed by the sheriff. He assists the sheriff in law enforcement, and in some states may act in place of a sheriff. He is usually paid in fees. Most large cities have an elected mayor as head of the local government and an elected council to help him. Some smaller cities have a commission form of the government. Five men are elected to take care of the city’s services and its money problems.

The mayor-council system is the most popular kind of local government and the city manager type is the second most popular. In this kind if government an elected council hires a professional city manager to administer and watch over the city’s business. The elected council keeps the legislative power.

***Congressional elections.***

The Congress of the United States is composed of two houses, the Senate and the House of Representatives. The Senate represents the states and the House represents the population according to its distribution among the states. Each state is guaranteed at least one representative in the House. The remainder are apportioned among the states according the population. There is now, roughly, one representative for every 380000 people, but no two congressional districts have exactly the same population.

The Senate of the United States is composed of one hundred members, two being elected from each state. Senators are chosen for six years, one-third retiring or seeking re-election every two years. Two senators from the same state never finish their terms at the same time, one of them called “Senior Senator” and the other — “Junior Senator”. Theoretically all citizens of both sexes over 21 years of age have the right to vote, but in fact this is not so.

An estimate of the number of American legally barred from voting by the residence laws based on 1960 Census figures on population mobility, indicates that 5.4 million, or five per cent of adult Americans were unable to vote in 1960 because the residence requirements in some states the payment of taxes (called “poll-taxes”) is necessary for getting the right to vote. In some southern states voters are required to give a reasonable explanation of what they read. In some states the ability to read (usually an extract from the Constitution) is required. In Alabama the voter must take an “anti-Communist oath” and fill in a questionnaire to the satisfaction of the registers. As a result of this millions of people are deprived the right to vote. At the same time it is well known that Americans are less disposed to exercise their right to vote than just about any other nation. The percentage of voters in the potential electorate (the adult citizenry) is about sixty-five per cent. One of reasons for nonvoting, is the two-party system. In the United States there are two major bourgeois political parties, the Democratic and the Republican (also called G.O.P. — “the Grand Old Party”). Both of them represent the interests of monopoly capitalists and there is no clear-curt difference between the two parties, between their policies and their party machines, but there is a difference between their bosses and their rank and file members, common people who lacking a third choice have to vote either Democratic or Republican. For many years, the mainstay of the Republican Party was a block of industrialists and financiers of the Northeast and midwestern farmers. The membership of the Democratic Party was no less curious, for two of its most important components were southern landowners and northern industrial workers — two factions apparently irreconcilable because of differing economic and social objectives.

The area in which one lives is still considered an important factor in determining one’s vote, though sectionalism appears to be of decreasing importance. Until recent years, the South was “solid” for the Democrats, while New England was “rock-ribbed” for the Republicans.

The great cities of the United States show a strong tendency to vote Democratic while suburban areas have become Republican bastions in many parts of the nation.

Blue-collar workers and racial minority groups are concentrated in cities. Since this groups tend to vote Democratic, the party they support has great strength in cities. On other hand, those who belong to the high-income groups and usually vote Republican are concentrated in suburban areas.

The party machines of both Republican and Democratic parties are run by party bosses closely associated with different monopoly groups and these two main political parties in the USA are parties of the monopoly capitalists. The Republican and Democratic parties have monopolized political life in the USA. Their monopoly of political power creates difficulties in the struggle for democracy. While the reactionary groups operate easily within each of this two main parties of capitalism, promoting their interests, the working class and the mass movements are denied such an opportunity. This is especially felt in the elections. The American big business and progressive forces in the country and isolate the Communist Party.

The Communist Party of the USA was denied its rights as a political party by legal and extralegal means. Anti-Communist “loyalty oaths” by candidates required by some state laws were used as an additional against the Communist Party and other progressive organizations. Because of the bipartisan system of the elections the majority of the nation, its working class, poor farmers and seasonal workers have no other choice but to vote either for the Democrats or the Republicans. Though major sections of the working class, the Black people and other popular forces, still remain in the political grip of the Democratic Party, there is little doubt that many voters see nothing to choose between the Tweedledeeism of the Democrats and the Tweedledeeism of the Republicans. Lacking a third choice, they fail to choose at all. The central objective towards which all forces of the Left are striving is an independent electoral policy, and the Communist Party of the USA calls for united effort of labour membership, civil rights movement, advocates of peace, so that they could present meaningful alternatives to labour and minority of their needs and interests.