

Leonid Ilyich Brezhnev

A Short Biography



“The Soviet country and our people have travelled a difficult but glorious path. I think that every one of us Communists, asked whether he would choose any other path, would say ‘No’. Our path is the path of truth, the path of freedom, it is the path of the people’s happiness.”

Leonid Brezhnev

Leonid Ilyich Brezhnev
Moscow, 1977



Leonid Ilyich **Brezhnev**

**General Secretary
Central Committee of the Communist Party
of the Soviet Union,
President
Presidium of the Supreme Soviet
of the USSR**

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Novosti Press Agency
Publishing House
Moscow, 1977

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Printed in USSR

Leonid Ilyich Brezhnev was born into a Russian worker's family on December 19, 1906, in the village of Kamenskoye, now Dneprodzerzhinsk, a large iron and steel centre in the Ukraine. His grandfather and his father both worked for many years at the local iron and steel plant. And there Leonid Brezhnev also worked, first as a worker and then as an engineer and a shop superintendent. His brother and sister were also employed there. The family of L. I. Brezhnev put in a total of almost a hundred years of work at that enterprise.

Leonid Brezhnev began to work in the early years of the Soviet state, born of the October Socialist Revolution in 1917. Those were hard years. Hunger, economic dislocation, poverty and ignorance were the legacy the young Soviet republic received from the tsarist regime. The nation was faced with the task of bringing the economy out of the havoc wrought by the First World War, the Civil War and the foreign military intervention. With great dedication the Soviet people, led by the party founded by V. I. Lenin, set about transforming old and backward Russia into a new and socialist state. They rebuilt factories, erected power stations and organised the first collective farms. They began eagerly to study and seek knowledge. This was the period which saw the emergence in the land of the Soviets of a fine generation of pioneers of socialist construction, and Leonid Brezhnev was among them.

Leonid Brezhnev is bound with the people by strong and close ties. At each sharp turn in the history of the Soviet Union he was invariably in the front ranks where perseverance and fortitude were called for.

At the age of 17, Leonid Brezhnev joined the Young Communist League in whose ranks, as he himself put it, he learned the difficult science of life, of class struggle and of building the new society. It was there that he found a source of energy and optimism which stood him in good stead for many years to come. When he was 25 he joined the Communist Party whose cause he has faithfully served ever since.

During the first five-year periods the entire nation was engaged in building new projects, in studying and acquiring knowledge. As a young Communist Leonid Brezhnev was a front-rank worker and made excellent progress in his studies. It was a difficult and at the same time a heroic period for the country, a period of vital importance. It was then that the question of what the world's first socialist country would be like was being decided. A new society could not be built on an obsolete economic foundation. The Communist Party has therefore concentrated efforts on building an

advanced industry in the USSR. Industrialisation alone could bring about fundamental changes in the social structure of the country, ensure prosperity for all its citizens, help establish a highly productive socialist agriculture and ensure reliable defence of the country which was surrounded by hostile capitalist forces.

The collectivisation of farming, that is, putting it on a socialist basis, which was necessitated by life itself, proceeded in the face of fierce resistance on the part of the kulaks, the rural exploiters. They stopped at nothing, including terror and arson, in their attempts to prevent collectivisation. Such was the epoch which the Soviet land lived through and such were the complicated tasks the Communist Party and the people had to tackle. And Leonid Brezhnev was among those who at the bidding of their hearts and conscience spared no efforts to accomplish those tasks, fully aware of the great responsibility they had taken upon themselves.

In 1927, after graduation from a land management and reclamation technical school in Kursk (Central Russia), Leonid Brezhnev went to work in Byelorussia and then to the Kursk province and the Urals, where he took part in organising the proper use of land in the new countryside. In 1935 he graduated from a metallurgical institute and started to work at a plant in his native town. Living and working in the midst of the people, among factory workers, sharing their thoughts and aspirations, and working in the plant's Party organisation, have all left an indelible imprint on Leonid Brezhnev and were decisive factors in the forming of his outlook. What took shape then has, in Leonid Brezhnev's own words, remained with him to this day. As a young engineer Leonid Brezhnev worked hard and with a singleness of purpose which distinguished him among his fellow workers, and he was also active in social work. As the plant's newspaper **Znamya Dzerzhinki** noted at the time, "he is made of strong metal."

In 1939 Leonid Brezhnev was elected Secretary of the Party Committee of the Dnepropetrovsk Region, one of the largest industrial centres in the country. In those years the Soviet people were aware of the real threat of an aggressive war coming from Nazi Germany. The defence of the country became a matter of concern for the whole people and one of the prime objectives for the Communist Party. It was then that the Dnepropetrovsk Regional Committee received an urgent assignment from the Party's Central Committee to gear some of the plants to war production. To supervise that production the post of Secretary of the Regional Party Committee for the Defence Industry was created. The assignment was extremely important and could not be delayed. At an urgently called meeting of Party officials S. B. Zadionchenko, at that time First Secretary of the Regional Party Committee, said the following:

"For the post of Secretary for the Defence Industry we need an energetic man, one with a technical education and a good background of production experience, and, most important, one who enjoys great respect among our workers, foremen and engineers.

In short, we need a man possessing all these qualities in equal measure, and I believe that only one such person can be found among us, the present Secretary for Propaganda, Comrade Brezhnev. I therefore propose that he should be appointed to the new post."

The motion was adopted unanimously.

To preserve the plants and factories of the Dnepropetrovsk Region and to make the best use of them for the needs of the front became a primary concern of the Regional Committee's Secretary for the Defence Industry from the early hours of June 22, 1941 when Nazi Germany treacherously attacked the Soviet Union. Less than a month after the invasion of the Soviet Union by fascist troops Leonid Brezhnev joined the army and fought in the war to the very end.

The path of Commissar Leonid Brezhnev lay through the flames of battles, from the first fierce engagements to the final victory. Soldiers and commanders who fought shoulder to shoulder with him firmly believed in their victory; that faith was instilled in them by our Party, by Communists, commanders and political officers such as Leonid Brezhnev. They respected him for his self-control and calmness, courage, his ability to act in a difficult situation, to sense the mood of people, to raise their morale and inspire them to acts of heroism.

Colonel Leonid Brezhnev, who was with the 18th Army, took an active part in many military operations, including the Battle for the Caucasus, which is one of the glorious chapters in the history of the war. He participated in the heroic marine operation in the area of Novorossiisk. Launching a sudden attack Soviet landing troops captured from the Nazis a small bridgehead on the Black Sea coast—it became known as Minor Land—and resisted fierce enemy attacks for 225 days.

There were more battles ahead. This is what Ivan Kravchuk, a veteran soldier who fought together with Leonid Brezhnev, recalls: "Early in the morning on December 12, 1943 from the front-line of defence came a telephone message warning that the Nazis were attempting to break through at the village of Stavishche (only about 40 kilometres from Kiev). We all picked up our arms and rushed out. With us was Colonel Brezhnev, Chief of the Political Department of the 18th Army. He got into his jeep. I followed him... By the time we reached the trench it had become the frontline position. We were swept with German machine-gun fire, and the enemy infantry rose to attack. We had only one heavy machine gun left and as ill luck would have it, even it went dead after a few seconds. Brezhnev made a dash for the silent machine gun along the trench. I ran after him. We stepped over several motionless bodies. Brezhnev turned and said to me: 'Ivan, see if anyone is alive, you've got a first-aid kit, go and help them!' I stopped, felt two or three bodies and found all of them were dead. After covering their faces with their fur hats, I ran toward Brezhnev and at that instant heard our only machine gun come to life with a staccato of

1942. A. Malov, a Red Army soldier, receives his Party card from Brigade Commissar Leonid Brezhnev.

1942. Brigade Commissar Leonid Brezhnev with the men of the Black Sea Army Group.



loud bursts. When I reached it, I saw Brezhnev in the place of the machine gunner, who lay in a pool of blood... The Nazis were tearing their way forward, and they only had to cover another thirty or forty metres before reaching our trench... Brezhnev responded by firing short bursts carefully aimed at the advancing enemy. His usual self-control had not left him, but in the heat of the moment he had thrown off his fur hat and gloves..."

Marshal of the Soviet Union K. S. Moskalenko recalled the following, also referring to December 1943: "I first met Brezhnev when we were transferring part of our sector of advance to the 18th Army which had arrived from the Caucasus... I liked his simple, unaffected ways, the bold and resolute manner in which he acted and made decisions. In a word, we saw that in Leonid Brezhnev we had an excellent organiser of Party political, ideological and educational work, a man who also had a sound grasp of military matters. He also proved to be a good comrade and an intelligent man, one interesting to talk with."

Having driven the invaders from the Soviet land, the Soviet Army went on to liberate the peoples of many European countries from the fascist yoke. And among the soldiers who fought for the liberation of Poland, Hungary, and Czechoslovakia was Major-General Leonid Brezhnev, Chief of the Political Department of the 4th Ukrainian Front. He had earned the right to be among the bravest Soviet fighting men who took part in the Victory Parade in the summer of 1945—a triumphant march-past through Moscow's Red Square. "The scars of the war," Leonid Brezhnev once said, "prevent us from forgetting our duty, the duty of the living to those who are no more, and to those who are to come after us..."

After the war ended the Soviet people devoted their efforts to repairing the vast damage done by the Nazi invaders: more than 1,700 cities and towns, 70,000 villages and thousands of plants and factories were in ruins. Heading the Party organisation of the Zaporozhye and then the Dnepropetrovsk Region in the Ukraine, Leonid Brezhnev worked with great dedication for the economic rehabilitation of the regions. The scale of the work accomplished can be seen from the following facts: the huge "Zaporozhstal" iron and steel works, where the Nazis had destroyed all blast and open-hearth furnaces, began to produce steel within two years after the end of the war. Also within two years workers repaired what was then one of the country's largest hydro-electric stations, the famous Dneproges named after Lenin, a project which captured the imagination of the Soviet people and to whose construction the entire nation contributed during the pre-war five-year plan periods. Leonid Brezhnev's work in those years fully revealed his gifts as an organiser, Party leader and statesman.

As leader of the Communist Party of Moldavia in 1950-52 Leonid Brezhnev directed the important work of developing the industry, farming and culture of Moldavia, one of the 15 republics of the Soviet Union. At the 19th CPSU Congress in 1952, Leonid Brezhnev was elected to the Party's Central Committee. After the





**June 1945.
The Victory Parade
in Red Square.
Major-General
Leonid Brezhnev
(second from right)
was Commissar
of the regiment
representing
the 4th Ukrainian
Army Group.**

In May 1976 Leonid Brezhnev was made Marshal of the Soviet Union.

May 1970, Moscow. A reunion of veterans of the 18th Army. Leonid Brezhnev was in charge of the political department of the 18th Army during the war.



Congress he became an Alternate Member of the Presidium and Secretary of the CPSU Central Committee.

In 1954, when the CPSU Central Committee took a decision to develop the virgin lands in the eastern part of the country on a mass scale in order to build up Soviet agriculture, Leonid Brezhnev was assigned to a Party post in Kazakhstan. Twenty years later D. A. Kunayev, Member of the Politbureau of the CPSU Central Committee and First Secretary of the Central Committee of the Communist Party of Kazakhstan, said: "In the memorable years of the development of the virgin lands, Leonid Brezhnev was at the head of the Central Committee of the Communist Party of Kazakhstan, and we all know how much effort, labour and energy he put into the opening up of the virgin and long-fallow lands... And it will not be wrong to say that the reclaimed virgin lands have become a symbol of our remarkable age! A portrayal of the socialist epoch would be incomplete without mentioning the development of virgin lands, just as it would be incomplete without mentioning the great victories of the Leninist nationalities policy."



1946. First Secretary of the Dnepropetrovsk Regional Committee of the Communist Party of the Ukraine, in his study.



opening up the lands which man had never used before, said: "Veterans of the virgin lands remember well that time: the biting wind from the steppe, blizzards and frosts, tents pitched in the snow, the first furrows in the fields and the first streets in new community centres, days completely filled with work, and often sleepless nights. Two decades have passed since then... But we cannot forget how we ploughed our first hectares of virgin land and how we obtained from it our first tons of grain. One does not forget what one has put one's heart and soul into."

In the years that followed, Leonid Brezhnev held leading Party posts in Moscow and was concerned with questions relating to the development of Soviet heavy industry and the building and strengthening of the country's defence potential. The world's first manned space flight (1961) by a Soviet citizen, Yuri Gagarin, vividly testifies to the achievements of Soviet industry, science and technology. In those years, as Secretary of the CPSU Central Committee, Leonid Brezhnev was directly concerned with the organisation of space research projects in the Soviet Union.

14 In June 1957, Leonid Brezhnev was elected Member of the Presidium of the CPSU Central Committee, the highest guiding

October 1974. Celebration of the 50th anniversary of the Moldavian Soviet Socialist Republic in Kishinev. Leonid Brezhnev came to Kishinev to take part in the event.



body of the Party between plenary meetings of its Central Committee (in 1966 this body was reorganised and became the Politbureau of the CPSU Central Committee). At the same time Leonid Brezhnev took an active part in the work of the highest bodies of state power of the Soviet Union. For twenty-five years he has been a member of the Soviet Parliament, the Supreme Soviet of the USSR. Between 1960 and 1964 he was President of the Presidium of the Supreme Soviet of the USSR, the country's collegiate president. In this top state post Leonid Brezhnev was concerned with questions of improving the work of the Soviets of Working People's Deputies, developing socialist democracy, and strengthening the rule of law. He paid great attention to expanding friendly ties between the Soviet Union and other states.

At the October 1964 Plenary Meeting of the CPSU Central Committee Leonid Brezhnev was elected First Secretary (General Secretary from 1966 on) of the Central Committee of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union. But after being elected to the highest Party post he has continued to participate in the work of the USSR Supreme Soviet as a member of its Presidium.

In June 1977, Leonid Brezhnev was once again elected Pre-

August 1961. As President of the Presidium of the USSR Supreme Soviet Leonid Brezhnev presents the badge "Pilot-Cosmonaut of the USSR" to the world's first spaceman Yuri Gagarin.



sident of the Presidium of the Supreme Soviet of the USSR. In recommending him for this post on behalf of the Central Committee of the CPSU and the Presidium of the Supreme Soviet of the USSR, Mikhail Suslov, a member of the Political Bureau of the Central Committee of the CPSU, said: "An enhancement of the leading and guiding role of the Communist Party in the life of our country, in the formulation and conduct of the domestic and foreign policy of the Soviet state, and the outstanding personal qualities of Leonid Ilyich Brezhnev and the selfless work he carries out for the good of the country have naturally led to a situation in which Comrade Brezhnev has, already for many years now, come out on both the world and domestic scene as the foremost representative of the Communist Party and the Soviet socialist state."

Leonid Brezhnev's work in the leading Party and state posts is many-sided and strenuous, having to do with a wide range of questions of state importance. In accordance with the principle of collective leadership accepted in the Soviet Union, Leonid Brezhnev, together with his associates, works out the basic principles and directions of the country's domestic and foreign policy, initiating major decisions which are adopted with the approval and support of the entire people. He supervises the solving of many practical issues pertaining to economic development and progress in science, technology and culture. Always in the focus of his attention is concern for the good of man and the well-being of the people—the supreme meaning and goal of the activity of the Communist Party. The name of Leonid Brezhnev is indissolubly linked with all the successes that the Soviet people have achieved over the past ten years under the leadership of the Communist Party. The Party's policy and its practical activities, says Leonid Brezhnev, have always been and remain a genuine expression of the vital requirements of socialist society.

At the 23rd CPSU Congress (March-April 1966) the Report of the Central Committee delivered by Leonid Brezhnev outlined the path for the country's further socio-economic development and the main tasks of the Eighth Five-Year Economic Development Plan of the USSR for 1966-1970, and further elucidated the important questions of the theory and practice of communist construction.

The 24th Congress, which met in the spring of 1971, was a great event in the life of the Party and the whole Soviet people. The Report of the CPSU Central Committee, which was delivered by Leonid Brezhnev, summed up the experience gained by the Party and the country since the previous Congress and dealt with the basic and long-term questions of the economic and social policy of the Soviet state in conditions of developed socialism. These questions were further elucidated in the decisions of the 25th CPSU Congress. The Peace Programme, advanced in the Report and approved by the 24th CPSU Congress, contained a series of proposals for translating the policy of peaceful coexistence into practice in present-day conditions and clearly defined the tasks



in the struggle to avert the danger of war and bring about peaceful co-operation among nations.

In the period between the 24th and 25th Congresses of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union its Central Committee, the Politbureau of the Central Committee and Leonid Brezhnev personally carried out a truly gigantic amount of organisational and political work for the social and economic development of the country. A new major step was taken in strengthening its material and technical base and in raising the living standards of the people.

The Communist Party of the Soviet Union, under the leadership of its Leninist Central Committee, headed by Leonid Brezhnev, was stronger and more united than ever before as it prepared for its 25th Congress, held in February-March 1976. In the history of the highest forums of Soviet Communists it occupies an outstanding place as a congress of great achievements, one which was distinguished by a realistic and businesslike approach to questions and confidence in the country's strength. The soul of the Congress and its standard-bearer, in the general opinion of the delegates and numerous foreign guests (the Congress



was attended by 103 delegations of Communist, Workers', National-Democratic and Socialist Parties from 96 countries), was Leonid Brezhnev, General Secretary of the CPSU Central Committee. His report was the main event of the Congress and made an indelible impression on the listeners. The Soviet and world public justly assessed it as a policy document of historic significance, a manifesto of developed socialism.

The Report of the Central Committee, imbued with optimism and confidence in the correctness of the chosen path, clearly manifested the creative character of the Leninist Party, its collective will and reason. The Report is marked by a great profundity and scope; it contains broad generalisations and is at the same time of highly concrete nature.

The Report gives a detailed description of the economic and political system of the Soviet Union and of the present-day social relations and cultural life of Soviet society. Formulated in the Report and unanimously approved by the Congress is the economic strategy of the CPSU and the Soviet state. This strategy is fused with the Party's social policy and is aimed at ensuring a further steady improvement in the material and cultural stan-

August 1972. It was harvest time in Barnaul, Altai Territory. The traditional Russian "bread and salt" ceremony.



dards of the people. The core of the economic strategy, as formulated by Leonid Brezhnev, is a policy directed at raising the efficiency of production and the quality of work. This emphasis on quality and efficiency is one of the main features of the Soviet Tenth Five-Year Plan. The accomplishment of the tasks set should create fresh possibilities for further improving the well-being of the Soviet people, for bettering their working and living conditions, and achieving greater progress in the field of public-health service, education, science and culture. The Report outlines the directions in which socialist democracy is to be further developed and perfected.

The principles of Soviet foreign policy, as defined at the 23rd, 24th and 25th Congresses of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union, are known to the whole world. It is a policy of strengthening the fraternal unity of the countries of the socialist community, a policy of consolidating the alliance of the Soviet Union and peoples fighting for national liberation and social emancipation, a policy of peaceful coexistence between states with different social systems, a policy of determined struggle against aggression. It is a policy of active and honest diplomacy

and of strict and undeviating observance of the obligations assumed. By his activities Leonid Brezhnev is making a great and multifaceted contribution to the implementation of this policy.

The Report by Leonid Brezhnev to the 25th CPSU Congress contains a profound analysis of the problems of modern world development and international relations.

The Soviet Union attaches primary importance to the development of its relations with other countries of the socialist community, which it regards as an alliance of an entirely new type, one that embodies fraternal friendship and equal co-operation of the peoples. Joint actions by the countries of this alliance have led to closer ties between them and to the appearance of more and more common elements in their political, economic and social life. The implementation of the long-term programme for socialist economic integration has helped to establish the socialist community as the most dynamic economic force in the world.

The Soviet Union renders principled and disinterested support to the just struggle waged by the developing countries to strengthen their political and economic independence. Recent years have seen profound social changes in many of these countries and a noticeable growth of their influence on world affairs. At the 25th CPSU Congress Leonid Brezhnev again stressed that the Soviet Union fully supported the legitimate aspirations of the young states and their determination to be full masters of their national wealth. The consistent position of the Soviet Union and its support for the national-liberation struggle of the peoples who have shaken off the colonial yoke, have immeasurably enhanced the prestige of the world's first socialist state, and the prestige of the CPSU and of the General Secretary of its Central Committee, Leonid Brezhnev, in the developing countries.

The role of the Soviet state in altering the general climate of international relations in recent years is now recognised all over the world, and detente has become the dominant feature of the development of the international situation. It is with persistence and energy that the Soviet Union is working for a further development of the positive processes and for the materialisation of detente. A tremendous personal contribution to this work is being made by Leonid Brezhnev.

Over the past few years the General Secretary of the CPSU Central Committee has paid visits of friendship and peace to many countries, including a trip to the United States in June 1973. His trips have done much to eliminate the cold-war effects in the USSR's relations with many Western countries.

Leonid Brezhnev took a most active part in preparing and holding the historic Conference on Security and Co-operation in Europe. He initiated a whole set of constructive proposals for the limitation of armaments and for disarmament which were welcomed by all peace-loving people and have become a subject for

October 1973. Explaining a point.



international negotiations. Adopted by the 25th CPSU Congress, the programme of further struggle for peace and international co-operation, and for the freedom and independence of the peoples gives a new major impetus to the struggle for a continuation and development of the process of radical improvement of the world situation.

Among the tasks of primary importance set forth in this historic document is one which accords with the principles of peaceful coexistence, namely, the task of developing, now and in the future, long-term mutually advantageous co-operation in the political, economic, scientific and cultural fields, with the United States and other capitalist countries.

Speaking at the 25th Congress of the CPSU, Leonid Brezhnev said: "There are good prospects for developing our relations with the United States in future as well—to an extent which will make it possible to continue to develop these relations on this jointly created realistic basis, when, despite the obvious difference between the class nature of the two states and between their ideologies, there is a firm intention to settle differences and disputes not by force, not by threats or sabre rattling, but by peaceful political means."

In spite of the complications that arise in the international arena, the Soviet Union has unswervingly followed the path chartered at the 25th Congress of the CPSU. In his message to President Carter on Independence Day, Leonid Brezhnev said: "It is my hope that we will be able to use the positive experience accumulated over the last few years to ensure a stable development of relations between the USSR and the USA by way of co-operation and joint efforts to achieve a lasting peace and to promote detente."

Leonid Brezhnev's untiring efforts in the cause of peace have won due recognition. In 1973 he was awarded the International Lenin Prize "For the Promotion of Peace Among Nations", and in 1975 he received the highest award of peace champions—the F. Joliot-Curie Gold Medal of Peace. "The foreign policy of the Soviet Union," says Leonid Brezhnev, "is the fruit of the collective thinking and effort of our Communist Party. I therefore regard the award of the Lenin Prize to me as an honour conferred on the entire Party for its work, as international recognition that the policy pursued by its Central Committee is correct. And I am happy that, as a member of the Party and as one who has been reared and steered by the Party, I have been able to participate in the struggle for the great goals of bringing about a durable peace and lasting security of nations—goals toward which working people everywhere are striving."

On December 19, 1976 Leonid Brezhnev turned 70. He was in the prime of his creative strength and energy.

This important date in the life of Leonid Brezhnev was an event of importance for the whole nation. He received many congratulatory messages from state and public organisations in the Soviet Union, from Soviet workers, collective farmers, and

July 1973, Moscow. Leonid Brezhnev is awarded the International Lenin Prize For the Promotion of Peace Among Nations.

November 1975. Leonid Brezhnev receives the Frederic Joliot-Curie Gold Medal of Peace, the highest award of the World Peace Council, from Romesh Chandra, the Council's General Secretary.



July 30, 1975. Leonid Brezhnev, who headed the Soviet delegation, addresses the Conference on Security and Co-operation in Europe, held in Helsinki.



intellectuals, from the leaders of the socialist countries, from the heads of government of capitalist and developing countries, from the leaders of communist and national-liberation parties, international public organisations and from private citizens in many countries.

L. Kuzmin, a worker from Kamyshin, in Volgograd Region, wrote: "I would like to tell L. I. Brezhnev this on his birthday —our people love their Party and they love him as an outstanding leader of the Leninist Party, also as a very kind and very humane

1973, the Crimea. A traditional meeting of the leaders of the Communist and Workers' Parties of the fraternal socialist countries. Left to right: Todor Zhivkov, Nicolae Ceausescu, Edward Gierek, János Kádár, Gustáv Husák, Leonid Brezhnev, Erich Honecker, Konstantin Katushev, Yumzhagiin Tsendenbal, and Andrei Gromyko.



person. We feel this humaneness in literally everything. I am confident that under L. I. Brezhnev's leadership our country will become still richer, still stronger and still more beautiful."

Statesmen and public leaders in other countries expressed their appreciation to Leonid Brezhnev for his outstanding services in promoting detente, in strengthening world peace and security, in consolidating friendship between the peoples. They expressed their confidence that the CPSU, the Soviet state and Leonid Brezhnev personally would consistently and with unflagging energy work for peace on earth.

1977, the year of the sixtieth anniversary of the victory of the Great October Socialist Revolution, saw another important event—the adoption of a new Constitution of the USSR. The new Soviet Constitution is the result of tremendous work, and a thorough study of the history of the Soviet nation which has built an advanced socialist society in this country.

The Constitution Commission was headed by Leonid Ilyich Brezhnev who took a most active part in the formulation of the new fundamental law of the Soviet Union, the draft of which was discussed with enthusiasm and deep interest and approved by the broadest sections of the Soviet people, all the big and small

Washingtonians greeting Leonid Brezhnev during the official welcoming ceremony in front of the White House in June 1973.



April 1976. A meeting in an assembly shop
of the Likhachev Automobile Works in Moscow.



nationalities and ethnic groups of the Soviet Union, all strata of Soviet society.

"Under the leadership of the Communist Party, the Soviet people are making use of results already achieved to accomplish new tasks: to create the material and technical base of communism, gradually to transform the socialist social relations into communist relations, to educate people in the spirit of communist consciousness," said Leonid Brezhnev.

The new Constitution is essentially directed towards an expansion and deepening of socialist democracy. Thus, the democratic principles in accordance with which the Soviets, the sole bodies of power of the USSR, are formed and function, have been further developed. Their role in the solution of the key problems of the life of our society has been enhanced.

In the new Constitution the rights of Soviet citizens are more fully stated. The famous words from the Communist Manifesto—"the free development of each is the condition for the free development of all"—have in actual fact become the fundamental principle of the Soviet state. The Constitution sums up the gains of socialism in such vital areas as the equality of rights of men

June 1975, Moscow. On the day of elections to the Supreme Soviet of the Russian Federation and the local Soviets of Working People's Deputies.



and women, the equality of rights of all citizens regardless of nationality or race.

The material guarantees of the rights proclaimed in the Constitution have grown in scope and content. For example, the previous Soviet Constitution guaranteed the right to work, whereas the new Constitution also guarantees the right to choose a trade or profession in accordance with one's inclination, abilities, professional skill and education. The previous Constitution guaranteed the right to material support in case of sickness or disability, whereas the new Constitution guarantees the broader right to health protection.

The new Constitution fully guarantees political rights and freedoms to the citizens of the USSR. The Constitution proclaims the right of every Soviet citizen to participate in the management of the affairs of state and society, and the freedoms of speech, the press, assembly, street processions and demonstrations, which were guaranteed in the past, have been reaffirmed. The new Constitution proceeds from the premise that the rights and freedoms of citizens must not be used by anyone against the Soviet social order, to the detriment of the interests of the Soviet state and other citizens.

Thus the new Constitution broadens the scope and content of socialist democracy. It sums up Soviet constitutional historical experience and enriches it with new meaning in keeping with the requirements of our time.

The new Soviet Constitution incorporates, for the first time in history, a special chapter on the country's foreign policy. In conformity with the Leninist peace-loving foreign policy, the Constitution of the USSR proclaims the principles of mutual renunciation of the use or threat of force, sovereign equality, inviolability of frontiers, territorial integrity of states, peaceful settlement of disputes, non-interference in internal affairs, respect for human rights and basic freedoms, equality of the nations and their right to decide their own destiny, co-operation between states, and faithful fulfillment of commitments arising from international law. The proclamation of these principles in the form of law clearly demonstrates the peaceful character of the foreign policy of the USSR and it also accords with the most cherished desires of all mankind.

Leonid Brezhnev is a recognised theoretician of Marxism-Leninism. His fundamental work **Following Lenin's Course** has been published in the Soviet Union and many other countries (five volumes have come out in the USSR). It is a clear and concise expression of the collective thinking and practical activities of the Communist Party, a party which is a tried and tested political leader of the working class and all working people. At the same time the work **Following Lenin's Course** bears the clear imprint of the outstanding personal qualities of the General Secretary of the CPSU Central Committee as a Party leader and statesman and as a greatly respected leader in the world com-

unist movement. In the works of Leonid Brezhnev we find everything that characterises a truly Leninist approach to the phenomena of social life: strictly scientific assessments, clarity of thought and sincerity of feeling, typical of all working people, and carefully weighed and well-considered judgements about the most important political issues.

The speeches and addresses by Leonid Brezhnev give a profoundly substantiated and vivid picture of a society the like of which mankind has not known up to now. This is a new society which is at that stage of development where the advantages of socialism as a social system and way of life and its humanistic essence and its force of attraction are revealed in full. Addressing the Conference of Communist and Workers' Parties of Europe on June 29, 1976, Leonid Brezhnev pointed out with justifiable pride: "We have built a society in which people are equal in the broadest sense of the word, and know neither class, property, racial nor any other such privileges, a society which not only proclaims human rights, but creates the conditions under which they can be exercised. We have built a stable, dynamic and united society."

In describing the specific features of the Party's economic strategy in conditions of developed socialism, Leonid Brezhnev shows that the decisive factor in the Tenth Five-Year Plan period (1976-80) and in long-term development prospects is a further build-up of the USSR's economic strength and the ensuring of the steady growth of heavy industry—the backbone of the economy. At the same time the supreme aim of the economic strategy naturally remains one of steadily raising the material and cultural standards of the people.

Leonid Brezhnev has put forward the extremely important thesis of the Soviet nation as a new historical community of people. "And this means," he says, "that common features of behaviour, character and world outlook of Soviet people, which are independent of social and national distinctions, are becoming ever more marked."

In his speeches and statements Leonid Brezhnev explains the basic questions of the Marxist-Leninist theory and practice of people's power from clear-cut class positions and shows the content and forms, criteria and principles of socialist democracy and its qualitative distinctions from, and fundamental advantages over, bourgeois democracy. The main line of development of democracy in the Soviet state of the whole people, which has grown out of the state of the dictatorship of the proletariat, consists, as is shown in Leonid Brezhnev's works, in the ever greater and more direct involvement of the broadest sections of the working people in the administration of all the affairs of society.

The works of Leonid Brezhnev contain a profound substantiation of the principle of proletarian internationalism—one of the main principles of Marxism-Leninism. It is not accidental that representatives of the numerous delegations of fraternal parties

to the 25th CPSU Congress expressed gratitude to Leonid Brezhnev for his contribution to the cause of the unity and solidarity of Communists throughout the world based on the principles of Marxism-Leninism and proletarian internationalism.

Among Leonid Brezhnev's various duties and activities the work he carries out as Chairman of the Defence Council occupies an important place. No essential question relating to increasing the defence potential of the Soviet state and developing and improving the Soviet Army and Navy is resolved without Leonid Brezhnev's most active participation. In May 1976 Leonid Brezhnev was given the country's highest military rank of Marshal of the Soviet Union in recognition of his outstanding services in the defeat of fascism, in the building up of the combat capability of the Soviet Armed Forces and in the strengthening of world peace and the security of the peoples.

For his distinguished services during the war and in the years of peace Leonid Brezhnev has been decorated with high awards of the Motherland. He has been awarded the titles of Hero of the Soviet Union (twice) and Hero of Socialist Labour, six Orders of Lenin and other orders and medals.

Leonid Brezhnev has been decorated with the highest national awards of many countries.

Leonid Brezhnev is linked with the people by close bonds. He often meets with workers, farmers, intellectuals and servicemen and has a profound knowledge of their life, interests and aspirations. Speaking of the determining influence in his life, Leonid Brezhnev said: "The most important thing in my life, its leitmotif, has been the constant and close contact with working people, with workers and peasants." In dealing with any question, in any post to which the Communist Party appointed him, he has always proceeded first of all from the consideration of what significance this question is for the working people, what impact it will have on their life, how it will affect them.

That is why Leonid Brezhnev enjoys such high prestige among the people.

