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Introduction

A year ago, in the first issue of INQABA, we pointed out that the Stalinist regime in Poland could not co-exist with genuine workers' organisation. The rise of Solidarity, in which 10 million workers were organised, threatened the continued existence of the bureaucratic dictatorship. If the working class did not take power, abolish the bureaucracy, and establish its own democratic rule, counter-revolution would inevitably follow.

Now the military repression of Solidarity, the mass detention of worker activists, the shootings and beatings, provide the tragic confirmation of this analysis. They refute in the starkest way the false idea that the Polish regime, or any other totalitarian bureaucracy, is socialist.

Without democratic workers' rule, there can be no socialism.

The vicious anti-working-class measures taken in Poland have the whole-hearted support of the rulers of the Soviet Union and are in fact welcomed by every other Stalinist regime. Yet all these regimes call themselves "socialist" and are hailed as such by 'Communist' Parties around the world.

This is the standpoint also of those who have criticised so-called "errors" and "shortcomings" of the Polish "communist" leadership of the past.

Well before Jaruzelski's declaration of martial law, the South African Communist Party published such commentaries on Poland, which endorsed in advance any measures by the Polish, or indeed the Russian, bureaucracy to "save socialism"—i.e. crush the movement of the Polish working class!

How should workers in South Africa regard the regimes which exist in Poland, Russia, and similar states? What lessons can our movement draw from the temporary defeat now being suffered by our Polish brothers and sisters?

In Poland and Russia, as throughout the Stalinist world, the power of the capitalist bosses has been destroyed. Their economies are based on nationalised production and economic planning—the

economic framework of workers' states. How is it that the rulers of these states have come to be enemies of workers' democracy? What is the way forward to the re-establishment of workers' democracy and to the real construction of socialism?

These are vital questions for all those involved in the struggle which is unfolding in our country for national liberation, democracy, and socialism. By its position on the Polish events, the SACP leadership gives notice that "socialism", so far as it is concerned, includes the forcible suppression of the movement of the working class.

Russian Revolution

To assist in the discussion of these questions in the ranks of the trade unions and the ANC, among the workers and the youth, INQABA republishes here two chapters from *The Revolution Betrayed*, by Leon Trotsky, first published in 1936.

In the historic Russian Revolution in 1917, the working class took state power for the first time in history and established its own democratic rule. The 1917 Revolution was a first giant step in the world socialist revolution.

In 1917 Leon Trotsky stood shoulder to shoulder with Lenin in the leadership of the Bolshevik Party, the instrument through which the working class organised its capture of state power. Trotsky organised and headed the Red Army, which held off and defeated the counter-revolutionary invasion of the infant workers' state by twenty-one imperialist armies.

Through the establishment of workers' rule, the 1917 Revolution provided the basis for the abolition of capitalism, the nationalisation of industry, and economic planning. At the same time the conditions in which the Soviet workers' state came to exist produced, from the first years, tendencies towards the bureaucratisation of the regime.

Both Lenin and Trotsky became aware of these dangers. In fact Lenin's last political struggle, while on his sick-bed, was launched together with Trotsky against the bureaucratic deformation which was affecting the state and the Bolshevik Party.

Following the Marxist method, Lenin looked for an explanation of this not in terms of patterns of individual behaviour, mistakes, excesses, etc, but as a social phenomenon with definite causes. He explained the rise of bureaucracy as a parasitic growth on the organism of the workers' state, arising out of the isolation of the Russian revolution and the exhaustion of the working class in a backward, largely illiterate, peasant country.

It is this method, and this explanation, which Trotsky develops systematically in *The Revolution Betrayed*. For reasons of space, it is possible to publish only two chapters of this work here, though comrades who have access to it will find the whole text full of vital lessons.

The Revolution Betrayed is, on the one hand, an uncompromising defence of nationalised production and economic planning, the gains of the October Revolution, against the criticism of capitalists and their apologists. On the other hand, it is an uncompromising defence of the interests of the working class, and the method of Marxism, against the falsifications of the bureaucracy that had come to power in the Soviet Union.

Deformation

For by 1936, as Trotsky explains, the question was no longer that of a danger of deformation. In fact, a political counter-revolution had already occurred. While this left intact the economic framework established after 1917, it meant the usurpation of power in the state by a bureaucratic caste, which had

decisively crushed all organs of workers' democracy, and consolidated its own position of privilege.

In this process the Bolshevik Left Opposition, which fought within the degenerating Communist Party for the maintenance of workers' democratic rule, for an economic programme in the interests of the workers and poor peasants, and for internationalism, was smashed by the bureaucracy. Tens of thousands of worker activists were imprisoned and murdered. Trotsky himself was jailed, forcibly deported from the Soviet Union, and, four years after publication of *The Revolution Betrayed*, murdered by Stalin's secret police.

Yet, as Trotsky himself explained, even under bureaucratic rule the framework of nationalised production and planning in Russia has shown its superiority to the anarchy of the capitalist profit system. Growth rates of 20-30% in the 1930s, and 8-10% in the 1950s, meant that the backward economy of 1917 developed into the second most powerful industrial economy on earth.

This has brought huge advances in the living standards of the Russian working people, and the absorption into the working class of the peasantry who formed nine-tenths of the population in 1917.

E. Europe

After World War II, capitalism was abolished throughout Eastern Europe. But the conditions in which this occurred resulted not in workers' democracy (as in the Soviet Union between 1917 and 1923), but the establishment of bureaucratic workers' states modelled on the Stalinist dictatorship of 1945.

World War II in Europe unfolded as a struggle to the death between Nazi Germany and Russia. Fighting to defend the remaining gains of 1917 against Hitler's invasion, the Russian working class, organised in the Red Army, was the decisive force in the defeat of German Fascism. The Red Army swept the Nazi occupation forces and their

puppets out of Eastern Europe—forcing into flight the capitalists who had overwhelmingly collaborated with the Nazis.

Conditions were ripe in E. Europe (and Western Europe too) for the working class to take state power. But this, encouraging the Russian workers to re-establish workers' democracy, would have been a mortal threat to the rulers in the Kremlin. Stalin, at conferences with the Western imperialist leaders, reached secret agreements which gave him a free hand in the East in exchange for renouncing any attempt to dislodge capitalism in the West.

In Eastern Europe, the capitalist collapse meant that production could be revived only on the basis of state ownership and planning. But, through the guns of the Red Army, the Moscow bureaucracy held back the advance of the working class and ensured the installation of bureaucratic regimes, modelled in their own image and exercising totalitarian control over the workers.

As in Russia, the abolition of capitalism in E. Europe brought rapid economic growth and rising living standards for the masses.

Yet, as anticipated by Trotsky in *The Revolution Betrayed*, the development of production within nationally-bounded economies (even those with as vast an internal market as Russia) comes up against its limits.

Through the 1960s and 70s growth rates in Russia and Eastern Europe have tended to slow: the mismanagement, waste and corruption inherent in the bureaucratic organisation of production are turning the regimes into an absolute fetter on the development of the forces of production.

In an attempt to overcome the limits of national isolation, the bureaucracies have turned to the capitalist world market for supplies of modern machinery and technique. Thus is hammered home the lesson—stressed by all the great teachers of Marxism—that the world economy becomes necessarily integrated into a single whole by the development of the productive forces under capitalism; and that the socialist revolution can be completed only on a world scale,

through the working class taking control of the commanding heights of world production.

Today the world capitalist economy, with which the nationalised economies of the deformed workers' states are interlinked, is an economy in crisis. Inflation and unemployment are exported to Eastern Europe and Russia; through bank loans the Western economy becomes dependent on that of the East.

In the West the burden of the capitalist crisis is loaded onto the back of the working class which, stronger than ever before, moves increasingly into struggle to defend its gains. Meanwhile in Eastern Europe the explosive rise of Solidarity showed the response of the workers to the impasse of the Polish economy. In Yugoslavia, Rumania, and even in the Soviet Union itself, there is a growing restlessness among the working class.

World Revolution

In the 1980s are re-emerging all the conditions for the overthrow of capitalism by the Western workers, and at the same time for the overthrow of the bureaucracy by the workers in the East. Together with the social revolution unfolding in the former colonial world, these form the components of an unfolding world revolution. The unfolding SA revolution is a part of this process.

By absorbing the lessons of Poland and the analysis offered in *The Revolution Betrayed* the activists of our movement will be better equipped to draw together the explosive ferment of the SA mass struggle into a united and unstoppable force led by the workers for the establishment of workers' rule in the interests of all the oppressed.

Linked with the struggle for social revolution in the West and political revolution in the East, this would mark a huge step forward in the world socialist revolution whose first breakthrough was in Russia in 1917.

I. THE TRANSITIONAL REGIME. Is it true, as the official authorities assert, that socialism is already realized in the Soviet Union? And if not, have the achieved successes at least made sure of its realization within the national boundaries, regardless of the course of events in the rest of the world? The preceding critical appraisal of the chief indices of the Soviet economy ought to give us the point of departure for a correct answer to this question, but we shall require also certain preliminary theoretical points of reference.

Marxism sets out from the development of technique as the fundamental spring of progress, and constructs the communist program upon the dynamic of the productive forces. If you conceive that some cosmic catastrophe is going to destroy our planet in the fairly near future, then you must, of course, reject the communist perspective along with much else. Except for this as yet problematic danger, however, there is not the slightest scientific ground for setting any limit in advance to our technical productive and cultural possibilities. Marxism is saturated with the optimism of progress, and that alone, by the way, makes it irreconcilably opposed to religion.

The material premise of communism should be so high a development of the economic powers of man that productive labor, having ceased to be a burden, will not require any goad, and the distribution of life's goods, existing in continual abundance, will not demand—as it does not now in any well-off family or "decent" boardinghouse—any control except that of education, habit and social opinion. Speaking frankly, I think it would be pretty dull-witted to consider such a really modest perspective "utopian."

Capitalism prepared the conditions and forces for a social revolution: technique, science and the proletariat. The communist structure cannot, however, immediately replace the bourgeois society. The material and cultural inheritance from the past is wholly inadequate for that. In its first steps the workers' state cannot yet permit everyone to work "according to his abilities"—that is, as much as he can and wishes to—nor can it reward everyone "according to his needs," regardless of the work he does. In order to increase the productive forces, it is necessary to resort to the customary norms of wage payment—that is, to the distribution of life's goods in proportion to the quantity and quality of individual labor.

Marx named this first stage of the new society "the lowest stage of communism," in distinction from the highest, where together with the last phantoms of want material inequality will disappear. In this sense socialism and communism are frequently contrasted as the lower and higher stages of the new society. "We have not yet, of course, *complete* communism," reads the present official Soviet doctrine, "but we have already achieved socialism—that is, the *lowest* stage of communism." In proof of this, they adduce the dominance of the state trusts in industry, the collective farms in agriculture, the state and co-operative enterprises in commerce. At first glance this gives a complete correspondence with the *a priori*—and therefore hypothetical—scheme of Marx. But it is exactly for the Marxist that this question is not exhausted by a

consideration of forms of property regardless of the achieved productivity of labor. By the lowest stage of communism Marx meant, at any rate, a society which from the very beginning stands higher in its economic development than the most advanced capitalism. Theoretically such a conception is flawless, for taken on a *world scale* communism, even in its first incipient stage, means a higher level of development than that of bourgeois society. Moreover, Marx expected that the Frenchman would begin the social revolution, the German continue it, the Englishman finish it; and as to the Russian, Marx left him far in the rear. But this conceptual order was upset by the facts. Whoever tries now mechanically to apply the universal historic conception of Marx to the particular case of the Soviet Union at the given stage of its development, will be entangled at once in hopeless contradictions.

Russia was not the strongest, but the weakest link in the chain of capitalism. The present Soviet Union does not stand above the world level of economy, but is only trying to catch up to the capitalist countries. If Marx called that society which was to be formed upon the basis of a socialization of the productive forces of the most advanced capitalism of its epoch, the lowest stage of communism, then this designation obviously does not apply to the Soviet Union, which is still today considerably poorer in technique, culture and the good things of life than the capitalist countries. It would be truer, therefore, to name the present Soviet regime in all its contradictoriness, not a socialist regime, but a *preparatory regime transitional* from capitalism to socialism.

There is not an ounce of pedantry in this concern for terminological accuracy. The strength and stability of regimes are determined in the long run by the relative productivity of their labor. A socialist economy possessing a technique superior to that of capitalism would really be guaranteed in its socialist development for sure—so to speak, automatically—a thing which unfortunately it is still quite impossible to say about the Soviet economy.

A majority of the vulgar defenders of the Soviet Union as it is are inclined to reason approximately thus: Even though you concede that the present Soviet regime is not yet socialistic, a further development of the productive forces on the present foundations must sooner or later lead to the complete triumph of socialism. Hence only the factor of time is uncertain. And is it worth while making a fuss about that? However triumphant such an argument seems at first glance, it is in fact extremely superficial. Time is by no means a secondary factor when historic processes are in question. It is far more dangerous to confuse the present and the future tenses in politics than in grammar. Evolution is far from consisting, as vulgar evolutionists of the Webb type imagine, in a steady accumulation and continual "improvement" of that which exists. It has its transitions of quantity into quality, its crises, leaps and backward lapses. It is exactly because the Soviet Union is as yet far from having attained the first stage of socialism, as a balanced system of production and distribution, that its development does not proceed harmoniously, but in contradictions. Economic contradictions produce social antagonisms, which in turn develop their own logic, not awaiting the further growth of the productive forces. We have just seen how true this was in the case of the kulak who did not wish to "grow" evolutionarily into socialism, and who, to the surprise of the bureaucracy and its ideologues, demanded a new and supplementary revolution. Will the bureaucracy itself, in whose hands the power and wealth are concentrated, wish

to grow peacefully into socialism? As to this doubts are certainly permissible. In any case, it would be imprudent to take the word of the bureaucracy for it. It is impossible at present to answer finally and irrevocably the question in what direction the economic contradictions and social antagonisms of Soviet society will develop in the course of the next three, five or ten years. The outcome depends upon a struggle of living social forces—not on a national scale, either, but on an international scale. At every new stage, therefore, a concrete analysis is necessary of actual relations and tendencies in their connection and continual interaction. We shall now see the importance of such an analysis in the case of the state.

2. PROGRAM AND REALITY. Lenin, following Marx and Engels, saw the first distinguishing feature of the proletarian revolution in the fact that, having expropriated the exploiters, it would abolish the necessity of a bureaucratic apparatus raised above society—and above all, a police and standing army. "The proletariat needs a state—this all the opportunists can tell you," wrote Lenin in 1917, two months before the seizure of power, "but they, the opportunists, forget to add that the proletariat needs only a dying state—that is, a state constructed in such a way that it immediately begins to die away and cannot help dying away." (*State and Revolution*.) This criticism was directed at the time against reformist socialists of the type of the Russian Mensheviks, British Fabians, etc. It now attacks with redoubled force the Soviet idolators with their cult of a bureaucratic state which has not the slightest intention of "dying away."

The social demand for a bureaucracy arises in all those situations where sharp antagonisms require to be "softened", "adjusted", "regulated" (always in the interests of the privileged, the possessors, and always to the advantage of the bureaucracy itself). Throughout all bourgeois revolutions, therefore, no matter how democratic, there has occurred a reinforcement and perfecting of the bureaucratic apparatus. "Officialdom and the standing army—" writes Lenin, "that is a 'parasite' on the body of bourgeois society, a parasite created by the inner contradictions which tear this society, yet nothing but a parasite stopping up the living pores."

Beginning with 1917—that is, from the moment when the conquest of power confronted the party as a practical problem—Lenin was continually occupied with the thought of liquidating this "parasite." After the overthrow of the exploiting classes—he repeats and explains in every chapter of *State and Revolution*—the proletariat will shatter the old bureaucratic machine and create its own apparatus out of employees and workers. And it will take measures against their turning into bureaucrats—"measures analyzed in detail by Marx and Engels: (1) not only election but recall at any time; (2) payment no higher than the wages of a worker; (3) immediate transition to a regime in which *all* will fulfill the functions of control and supervision so that *all* may for a time become 'bureaucrats', and therefore *nobody* can become a bureaucrat." You must not think that Lenin was talking about the problems of a decade. No, this was the first step with which "we should and must begin upon achieving a proletarian revolution."

This same bold view of the state in a proletarian dictatorship found finished expression a year and a half after the conquest of power in the program of the Bolshevik party, including its section on the army. A strong state, but without mandarins; armed power, but without

the Samurai! It is not the tasks of defense which create a military and state bureaucracy, but the class structure of society carried over into the organization of defense. The army is only a copy of the social relations. The struggle against foreign danger necessitates, of course, in the workers' state as in others, a specialized military technical organization, but in no case a privileged officer caste. The party program demands a replacement of the standing army by an armed people.

The regime of proletarian dictatorship from its very beginning thus ceases to be a "state" in the old sense of the word—a special apparatus, that is, for holding in subjection the majority of the people. The material power, together with the weapons, goes over directly and immediately into the hands of workers' organizations such as the soviets. The state as a bureaucratic apparatus begins to die away the first day of the proletarian dictatorship. Such is the voice of the party program—not voided to this day. Strange: it sounds like a spectral voice from the mausoleum.

However you may interpret the nature of the present Soviet state, one thing is indubitable: at the end of its second decade of existence, it has not only not died away, but not begun to "die away." Worse than that, it has grown into a hitherto unheard of apparatus of compulsion. The bureaucracy not only has not disappeared, yielding its place to the masses, but has turned into an uncontrolled force dominating the masses. The army not only has not been replaced by an armed people, but has given birth to a privileged officers' caste, crowned with marshals, while the people, "the armed bearers of the dictatorship," are now forbidden in the Soviet Union to carry even nonexplosive weapons. With the utmost stretch of fancy it would be difficult to imagine a contrast more striking than that which exists between the schema of the workers' state according to Marx, Engels and Lenin, and the actual state now headed by Stalin. While continuing to publish the works of Lenin (to be sure, with excerpts and distortions by the censor), the present leaders of the Soviet Union and their ideological representatives do not even raise the question of the causes of such a crying divergence between program and reality. We will try to do this for them.

3. THE DUAL CHARACTER OF THE WORKERS' STATE. The proletarian dictatorship is a bridge between the bourgeois and the socialist society. In its very essence, therefore, it bears a temporary character. An incidental but very essential task of the state which realizes the dictatorship consists in preparing for its own dissolution. The degree of realization of this "incidental" task is, to some extent, a measure of its success in the fulfillment of its fundamental mission: the construction of a society without classes and without material contradictions. Bureaucracy and social harmony are inversely proportional to each other.

In his famous polemic against Dühring, Engels wrote: "When, together with class domination and the struggle for individual existence created by the present anarchy in production, those conflicts and excesses which result from this struggle disappear, from that time on there will be nothing to suppress, and there will be no need for a special instrument of suppression, the state." The philistine considers the gendarme an eternal institution. In reality the gendarme will bridle mankind only until man shall thoroughly bridle nature. In order that the state shall disappear, "class domination and the struggle for individual existence" must disappear. Engels joins these two

conditions together, for in the perspective of changing social regimes a few decades amount to nothing. But the thing looks different to those generations who bear the weight of a revolution. It is true that capitalist anarchy creates the struggle of each against all, but the trouble is that a socialization of the means of production does not yet automatically remove the "struggle for individual existence." That is the nub of the question!

A socialist state even in America, on the basis of the most advanced capitalism, could not immediately provide everyone with as much as he needs, and would therefore be compelled to spur everyone to produce as much as possible. The duty of *stimulator* in these circumstances naturally falls to the state, which in its turn cannot but resort, with various changes and mitigations, to the method of labor payment worked out by capitalism. It was in this sense that Marx wrote in 1875: "Bourgeois law . . . is inevitable in the first phase of the communist society, in that form in which it issues after long labor pains from capitalist society. *Law can never be higher than the economic structure and the cultural development of society conditioned by that structure.*"

In explaining these remarkable lines, Lenin adds: "Bourgeois law in relation to the distribution of the objects of consumption assumes, of course, inevitably a *bourgeois state*, for law is nothing without an apparatus capable of compelling observance of its norms. It follows (we are still quoting Lenin) that under Communism not only will bourgeois law survive for a certain time, but also even a bourgeois state without the bourgeoisie!" This highly significant conclusion, completely ignored by the present official theoreticians, has a decisive significance for the understanding of the nature of the Soviet state—or more accurately, for a first approach to such understanding. Insofar as the state which assumes the task of socialist transformation is compelled to defend inequality—that is, the material privileges of a minority—by methods of compulsion, insofar does it also remain a "bourgeois" state, even though without a bourgeoisie. These words contain neither praise nor blame; they merely name things with their real names.

The bourgeois norms of distribution, by hastening the growth of material power, ought to serve socialist aims—but only in the last analysis. The state assumes directly and from the very beginning a dual character: socialistic, insofar as it defends social property in the means of production; bourgeois, insofar as the distribution of life's goods is carried out with a capitalistic measure of value and all the consequences ensuing therefrom. Such a contradictory characterization may horrify the dogmatists and scholastics; we can only offer them our condolences.

The final physiognomy of the workers' state ought to be determined by the changing relations between its bourgeois and socialist tendencies. The triumph of the latter ought *ipso facto* to signify the final liquidation of the gendarme—that is, the dissolving of the state in a self-governing society. From this alone it is sufficiently clear how immeasurably significant is the problem of Soviet bureaucratism, both in itself and as a symptom!

It is because Lenin, in accord with his whole intellectual temper, gave an extremely sharpened expression to the conception of Marx, that he revealed the source of the future difficulties, his own among them, although he did not himself succeed in carrying his analysis through to the end. "A bourgeois state without a bourgeoisie" proved inconsistent with genuine Soviet democracy. The dual function of the state could not but affect its structure. Experience revealed what theory was unable clearly to fore-

see. If for the defense of socialized property against bourgeois counterrevolution a "state of armed workers" was fully adequate, it was a very different matter to regulate inequalities in the sphere of consumption. Those deprived of property are not inclined to create and defend it. The majority cannot concern itself with the privileges of the minority. For the defense of "bourgeois law" the workers' state was compelled to create a "bourgeois" type of instrument—that is, the same old gendarme, although in a new uniform.

We have thus taken the first step toward understanding the fundamental contradiction between Bolshevik program and Soviet reality. If the state does not die away, but grows more and more despotic, if the plenipotentiaries of the working class become bureaucratized, and the bureaucracy rises above the new society, this is not for some secondary reasons like the psychological relics of the past, etc., but is a result of the iron necessity to give birth to and support a privileged minority so long as it is impossible to guarantee genuine equality.

The tendencies of bureaucratism, which strangles the workers' movement in capitalist countries, would everywhere show themselves even after a proletarian revolution. But it is perfectly obvious that the poorer the society which issues from a revolution, the sterner and more naked would be the expression of this "law", the more crude would be the forms assumed by bureaucratism, and the more dangerous would it become for socialist development. The Soviet state is prevented not only from dying away, but even from freeing itself of the bureaucratic parasite, not by the "relics" of former ruling classes, as declares the naked police doctrine of Stalin, for these relics are powerless in themselves. It is prevented by immeasurably mightier factors, such as material want, cultural backwardness and the resulting dominance of "bourgeois law" in what most immediately and sharply touches every human being, the business of insuring his personal existence.

4. "GENERALIZED WANT" AND THE GENDARME. Two years before the Communist Manifesto, young Marx wrote: "A development of the productive forces is the absolutely necessary practical premise [of Communism], because without it want is generalized, and with want the struggle for necessities begins again, and that means that all the old crap must revive." This thought Marx never directly developed, and for no accidental reason: he never foresaw a proletarian revolution in a backward country. Lenin also never dwelt upon it, and this too was not accidental. He did not foresee so prolonged an isolation of the Soviet state. Nevertheless, the citation, merely an abstract construction with Marx, an inference from the opposite, provides an indispensable theoretical key to the wholly concrete difficulties and sicknesses of the Soviet regime. On the historic basis of destitution, aggravated by the destructions of the imperialist and civil wars, the "struggle for individual existence" not only did not disappear the day after the overthrow of the bourgeoisie, and not only did not abate in the succeeding years, but, on the contrary, assumed at times an unheard-of ferocity. Need we recall that certain regions of the country have twice gone to the point of cannibalism?

The distance separating tsarist Russia from the West can really be appreciated only now. In the most favorable conditions—that is in the absence of inner disturbances and external catastrophes—it would require several more five-year periods before the Soviet Union could fully as-

simulate those economic and educative achievements upon which the first-born nations of capitalist civilization have expended centuries. The application of *socialist* methods for the solution of *pre-socialist* problems—that is the very essence of the present economic and cultural work in the Soviet Union.

The Soviet Union, to be sure, even now excels in productive forces the most advanced countries of the epoch of Marx. But in the first place, in the historic rivalry of two regimes, it is not so much a question of absolute as of relative levels; the Soviet economy opposes the capitalism of Hitler, Baldwin and Roosevelt, not Bismarck, Palmerston or Abraham Lincoln. And in the second place, the very scope of human demands changes fundamentally with the growth of world technique. The contemporaries of Marx knew nothing of automobiles, radios, moving pictures, aeroplanes. A socialist society, however, is unthinkable without the free enjoyment of these goods.

"The lowest stage of Communism," to employ the term of Marx, begins at that level to which the most advanced capitalism has drawn near. The real program of the coming Soviet five-year plan, however, is to "catch up with Europe and America." The construction of a network of autoroads and asphalt highways in the measureless spaces of the Soviet Union will require much more time and material than to transplant automobile factories from America, or even to acquire their technique. How many years are needed in order to make it possible for every Soviet citizen to use an automobile in any direction he chooses, refilling his gas tank without difficulty en route? In barbarian society the rider and the pedestrian constituted two classes. The automobile differentiates society no less than the saddle horse. So long as even a modest "Ford" remains the privilege of a minority, there survive all the relations and customs proper to a bourgeois society. And together with them there remains the guardian of inequality, the state.

Basing himself wholly upon the Marxian theory of the dictatorship of the proletariat, Lenin did not succeed, as we have said, either in his chief work dedicated to this question (*State and Revolution*), or in the program of the party, in drawing all the necessary conclusions as to the character of the state from the economic backwardness and isolatedness of the country. Explaining the revival of bureaucratism by the unfamiliarity of the masses with administration and by the special difficulties resulting from the war, the program prescribes merely political measures for the overcoming of "bureaucratic distortions": election and recall at any time of all plenipotentiaries, abolition of material privileges, active control by the masses, etc. It was assumed that along this road the bureaucrat, from being a boss, would turn into a simple and moreover temporary technical agent, and the state would gradually and imperceptibly disappear from the scene.

This obvious underestimation of impending difficulties is explained by the fact that the program was based wholly upon an international perspective. "The October revolution in Russia has realized the dictatorship of the proletariat. . . . The era of world proletarian communist revolution has begun." These were the introductory lines of the program. Their authors not only did not set themselves the aim of constructing "socialism in a single country"—this idea had not entered anybody's head then, and least of all Stalin's—but they also did not touch the question as to what character the Soviet state would assume, if compelled for as long as two decades to solve in isolation those economic and cultural problems which advanced capitalism had solved so long ago.

The post-war revolutionary crisis did not lead to the victory of socialism in Europe. The social democrats rescued the bourgeoisie. That period, which to Lenin and his colleagues looked like a short "breathing spell", has stretched out to a whole historical epoch. The contradictory social structure of the Soviet Union, and the ultra-bureaucratic character of its state, are the direct consequences of this unique and "unforeseen" historical pause, which has at the same time led in the capitalist countries to fascism or the pre-fascist reaction.

While the first attempt to create a state cleansed of bureaucratism fell foul, in the first place, of the unfamiliarity of the masses with self-government, the lack of qualified workers devoted to socialism, etc., it very soon after these immediate difficulties encountered others more profound. That reduction of the state to functions of "accounting and control", with a continual narrowing of the function of compulsion, demanded by the party program, assumed at least a relative condition of general contentment. Just this necessary condition was lacking. No help came from the West. The power of the democratic Soviets proved cramping, even unendurable, when the task of the day was to accommodate those privileged groups whose existence was necessary for defense, for industry, for technique and science. In this decidedly not "socialistic" operation, taking from ten and giving to one, there crystallized out and developed a powerful caste of specialists in distribution.

How and why is it, however, that the enormous economic successes of the recent period have led not to a mitigation, but on the contrary to a sharpening, of inequalities, and at the same time to a further growth of bureaucratism, such that from being a "distortion", it has now become a system of administration? Before attempting to answer this question, let us hear how the authoritative leaders of the Soviet bureaucracy look upon their own regime.

5. THE "COMPLETE TRIUMPH OF SOCIALISM" AND THE "REINFORCEMENT OF THE DICTATORSHIP." There have been several announcements during recent years of the "complete triumph" of socialism in the Soviet Union—taking especially categorical forms in connection with the "liquidation of the kulaks as a class." On January 30, 1931, *Pravda*, interpreting a speech of Stalin, said: "During the second five-year period, the *last relics* of capitalist elements in our economy will be liquidated." (Italics ours.) From the point of view of this perspective, the state ought conclusively to die away during the same period, for where the "last relics" of capitalism are liquidated the state has nothing to do. "The Soviet power," says the program of the Bolshevik party on this subject, "openly recognizes the inevitability of the class character of every state, so long as the division of society into classes, and *therewith* all state power, has not completely disappeared." However, when certain incautious Moscow theoreticians attempted, from this liquidation of the "last relics" of capitalism taken on faith, to infer the dying away of the state, the bureaucracy immediately declared such theories "counterrevolutionary."

Where lies the theoretical mistake of the bureaucracy—in the basic premise or the conclusion? In the one and the other. To the first announcements of "complete triumph", the Left Opposition answered: You must not limit yourself to the socio-juridical form of relations which are unripe, contradictory, in agriculture still very unstable, abstracting from the fundamental criterion: level of the productive forces. Juridical forms themselves have

