

# **inqaba**

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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

an essentially different social content in dependence upon the height of the technical level. "Law can never be higher than the economic structure and the cultural level conditioned by it." (Marx) Soviet forms of property on a basis of the most modern achievements of American technique transplanted into all branches of economic life—that would indeed be the first stage of socialism. Soviet forms with a low productivity of labor mean only a transitional regime whose destiny history has not yet finally weighed.

"Is it not monstrous?"—we wrote in March 1932. "The country can not get out of a famine of goods. There is a stoppage of supplies at every step. Children lack milk. But the official oracles announce: 'The country has entered into the period of socialism!' Would it be possible more viciously to compromise the name of socialism?" Karl Radek, now a prominent publicist of the ruling Soviet circles, parried these remarks in the German liberal paper, *Berliner Tageblatt*, in a special issue devoted to the Soviet Union (May 1932), in the following words which deserve to be immortal: "Milk is a product of cows and not of socialism, and you would have actually to confuse socialism with the image of a country where rivers flow milk, in order not to understand that a country can rise for a time to a higher level of development without any considerable rise in the material situation of the popular masses." These lines were written when a horrible famine was raging in the country.

Socialism is a structure of planned production to the end of the best satisfaction of human needs; otherwise it does not deserve the name of socialism. If cows are socialized, but there are too few of them, or they have too meager udders, then conflicts arise out of the inadequate supply of milk—conflicts between city and country, between collectives and individual peasants, between different strata of the proletariat, between the whole toiling mass and the bureaucracy. It was in fact the socialization of the cows which led to their mass extermination by the peasants. Social conflicts created by want can in their turn lead to a resurrection of "all the old crap." Such was, in essence, our answer.

The 7th Congress of the Communist International, in a resolution of August 20, 1935, solemnly affirmed that in the sum total of the successes of the nationalized industries, the achievement of collectivization, the crowding out of capitalist elements and the liquidation of the kulaks as a class, "the final and irrevocable triumph of socialism and the all-sided reinforcement of the state of the proletarian dictatorship, is achieved in the Soviet Union." With all its categorical tone, this testimony of the Communist International is wholly self-contradictory. If socialism has "finally and irrevocably" triumphed, not as a principle but as a living social regime, then a renewed "reinforcement" of the dictatorship is obvious nonsense. And on the contrary, if the reinforcement of the dictatorship is evoked by the real demands of the regime, that means that the triumph of socialism is still remote. Not only a Marxist, but any realistic political thinker, ought to understand that the very necessity of "reinforcing" the dictatorship—

that is, governmental repression—testifies not to the triumph of a classless harmony, but to the growth of new social antagonisms. What lies at the bottom of all this? Lack of the means of subsistence resulting from the low productivity of labor.

Lenin once characterized socialism as "the Soviet power plus electrification." That epigram, whose one-sidedness was due to the propaganda aims of the moment, assumed at least as a minimum starting point the capitalist level of electrification. At present in the Soviet Union there is one third as much electrical energy per head of the population as in the advanced countries. If you take into consideration that the soviets have given place in the meantime to a political machine that is independent of the masses, the Communist International has nothing left but to declare that socialism is *bureaucratic power plus one third of the capitalist electrification*. Such a definition would be photographically accurate, but for socialism it is not quite enough! In a speech to the Stakhanovists in November 1935, Stalin, obedient to the empirical aims of the conference, unexpectedly announced: "Why *can* and *should* and necessarily *will* socialism conquer the capitalist system of economy? Because it *can* give . . . a higher productivity of labor." Incidentally rejecting the resolution of the Communist International adopted three months before upon the same question, and also his own oft-repeated announcements, Stalin here speaks of the "triumph" of socialism in the *future* tense. Socialism will conquer the capitalist system, he says, when it surpasses it in the productivity of labor. Not only the tenses of the verbs but the social criteria change, as we see, from moment to moment. It is certainly not easy for the Soviet citizen to keep up with the "general line."

Finally, on March 1, 1936, in a conversation with Roy Howard, Stalin offered a new definition of the Soviet regime: "That social organization which we have created may be called a Soviet socialist organization, still not wholly completed, but at root a socialist organization of society." In this purposely vague definition there are almost as many contradictions as there are words. The social organization is called "Soviet socialist", but the Soviets are a form of state, and socialism is a social regime. These designations are not only not identical but, from the point of view of our interest, antagonistic. Insofar as the social organization has become socialistic, the soviets ought to drop away like the scaffolding after a building is finished. Stalin introduces a correction: Socialism is "still not wholly completed." What does "not wholly" mean? By 5 per cent, or by 75 per cent? This they do not tell us, just as they do not tell us what they mean by an organization of society that is "socialistic at root." Do they mean forms of property or technique? The very mistiness of the definition, however, implies a retreat from the immeasurably more categorical formula of 1931-35. A further step along the same road would be to acknowledge that the "root" of every social organization is the productive forces, and that the Soviet root is just what is not mighty enough for the socialist trunk and for its leafage: human welfare.



**1. WHY STALIN TRIUMPHED.** The historian of the Soviet Union cannot fail to conclude that the policy of the ruling bureaucracy upon great questions has been a series of contradictory zigzags. The attempt to explain or justify them by "changing circumstances" obviously won't hold water. To guide means at least in some degree to exercise foresight. The Stalin faction have not in the slightest degree foreseen the inevitable results of the development; they have been caught napping every time. They have reacted with mere administrative reflexes. The theory of each successive turn has been created after the fact, and with small regard for what they were teaching yesterday. On the basis of the same irrefutable facts and documents, the historian will be compelled to conclude that the so-called "Left Opposition" offered an immeasurably more correct analysis of the processes taking place in the country, and far more truly foresaw their further development.

This assertion is contradicted at first glance by the simple fact that the faction which could not see ahead was steadily victorious, while the more penetrating group suffered defeat after defeat. That kind of objection, which comes automatically to mind, is convincing, however, only for those who think rationalistically, and see in politics a logical argument or a chess match. A political struggle is in its essence a struggle of interests and forces, not of arguments. The quality of the leadership is, of course, far from a matter of indifference for the outcome of the conflict, but it is not the only factor, and in the last analysis is not decisive. Each of the struggling camps moreover demands leaders in its own image.

The February revolution raised Kerensky and Tseretelli to power, not because they were "cleverer" or "more astute" than the ruling tzarist clique, but because they represented, at least temporarily, the revolutionary masses of the people in their revolt against the old regime. Kerensky was able to drive Lenin underground and imprison other Bolshevik leaders, not because he excelled them in personal qualifications, but because the majority of the workers and soldiers in those days were still following the patriotic petty bourgeoisie. The personal "superiority" of Kerensky, if it is suitable to employ such a word in this connection, consisted in the fact that he did not see farther than the overwhelming majority. The Bolsheviks in their turn conquered the petty bourgeois democrats, not through the personal superiority of their leaders, but through a new correlation of social forces. The proletariat had succeeded at last in leading the discontented peasantry against the bourgeoisie.

The consecutive stages of the great French Revolution, during its rise and fall alike, demonstrate no less convincingly that the strength of the "leaders" and "heroes" that replaced each other consisted primarily in their correspondence to the character of those classes and strata which supported them. Only this correspondence, and not any irrelevant superiorities whatever, permitted each of them to place the impress of his personality upon a certain historic period. In the successive supremacy of Mirabeau, Brissot, Robespierre, Barras and Bonaparte, there is an obedience to objective law incomparably more effective than the special traits of the historic protagonists themselves.

It is sufficiently well known that every revolution up to this time has been followed by a reaction, or even a counter-revolution. This, to be sure, has never thrown the nation all the way back to its starting point, but it has always taken from the people the lion's share of their conquests. The victims of the first reactionary wave have been, as a general rule, those pioneers, initiators, and instigators who stood at the head of the masses in the period of the revolutionary offensive. In their stead people of the second line, in league with the former enemies of the revolution, have been advanced to the front. Beneath this dramatic duel of "coryphées" on the open political scene, shifts have taken place in the relations between classes, and, no less important, profound changes in the psychology of the recently revolutionary masses.

Answering the bewildered questions of many comrades as to what has become of the activity of the Bolshevik party and the working class—where is its revolutionary initiative, its spirit of self-sacrifice and plebeian pride—why, in place of all this, has appeared so much vileness, cowardice, pusillanimity and careerism—Rakovsky referred to the life story of the French revolution of the eighteenth century, and offered the example of Babeuf, who on emerging from the Abbaye prison likewise wondered what had become of the heroic people of the Parisian suburbs. A revolution is a mighty devourer of human energy, both individual and collective. The nerves give way. Consciousness is shaken and characters are worn out. Events unfold too swiftly for the flow of fresh forces to replace the loss. Hunger, unemployment, the death of the revolutionary cadres, the removal of the masses from administration, all this led to such a physical and moral impoverishment of the Parisian suburbs that they required three decades before they were ready for a new insurrection.

The axiomlike assertions of the Soviet literature, to the effect that the laws of bourgeois revolutions are "inapplicable" to a proletarian revolution, have no scientific content whatever. The proletarian character of the October revolution was determined by the world situation and by a special correlation of internal forces. But the classes themselves were formed in the barbarous circumstances of tzarism and backward capitalism, and were anything but made to order for the demands of a socialist revolution. The exact opposite is true. It is for the very reason that a proletariat still backward in many respects achieved in the space of a few months the unprecedented leap from a semifeudal monarchy to a socialist dictatorship, that the reaction in its ranks was inevitable. This reaction has developed in a series of consecutive waves. External conditions and events have vied with each other in nourishing it. Intervention followed intervention. The revolution got no direct help from the west. Instead of the expected prosperity of the country an ominous destitution reigned for long. Moreover, the outstanding representatives of the working class either died in the civil war, or rose a few steps higher and broke away from the masses. And thus after an unexampled tension of forces, hopes and illusions, there came a long period of weariness, decline and sheer disappointment in the results of the revolution. The ebb of the "plebeian pride" made room for a flood of pusillanimity and careerism. The new commanding caste rose to its place upon this wave.

The demobilization of the Red Army of five million played no small role in the formation of the bureaucracy. The victorious commanders assumed leading posts in the local Soviets, in economy, in education, and they persistently introduced everywhere that regime which had en-

ured success in the civil war. Thus on all sides the masses were pushed away gradually from actual participation in the leadership of the country.

The reaction within the proletariat caused an extraordinary flush of hope and confidence in the petty bourgeois strata of town and country, aroused as they were to new life by the NEP, and growing bolder and bolder. The young bureaucracy, which had arisen at first as an agent of the proletariat, began now to feel itself a court of arbitration between the classes. Its independence increased from month to month.

The international situation was pushing with mighty forces in the same direction. The Soviet bureaucracy became more self-confident, the heavier the blows dealt to the world working class. Between these two facts there was not only a chronological, but a causal connection, and one which worked in two directions. The leaders of the bureaucracy promoted the proletarian defeats; the defeats promoted the rise of the bureaucracy. The crushing of the Bulgarian insurrection and the inglorious retreat of the German workers' party in 1923, the collapse of the Estonian attempt at insurrection in 1924, the treacherous liquidation of the General Strike in England and the unworthy conduct of the Polish workers' party at the installation of Pilsudski in 1926, the terrible massacre of the Chinese revolution in 1927, and, finally, the still more ominous recent defeats in Germany and Austria—these are the historic catastrophes which killed the faith of the Soviet masses in world revolution, and permitted the bureaucracy to rise higher and higher as the sole light of salvation.

As to the causes of the defeat of the world proletariat during the last thirteen years, the author must refer to his other works, where he has tried to expose the ruinous part played by the leadership in the Kremlin, isolated from the masses and profoundly conservative as it is, in the revolutionary movement of all countries. Here we are concerned primarily with the irrefutable and instructive fact that the continual defeats of the revolution in Europe and Asia, while weakening the international position of the Soviet Union, have vastly strengthened the Soviet bureaucracy. Two dates are especially significant in this historic series. In the second half of 1923, the attention of the Soviet workers was passionately fixed upon Germany, where the proletariat, it seemed, had stretched out its hand to power. The panicky retreat of the German Communist Party was the heaviest possible disappointment to the working masses of the Soviet Union. The Soviet bureaucracy straightway opened a campaign against the theory of "permanent revolution," and dealt the Left Opposition its first cruel blow. During the years 1926 and 1927 the population of the Soviet Union experienced a new tide of hope. All eyes were now directed to the East where the drama of the Chinese revolution was unfolding. The Left Opposition had recovered from the previous blows and was recruiting a phalanx of new adherents. At the end of 1927 the Chinese revolution was massacred by the hangman, Chiang-kai-shek, into whose hands the Communist International had literally betrayed the Chinese workers and peasants. A cold wave of disappointment swept over the masses of the Soviet Union. After an unbridled baiting in the press and at meetings, the bureaucracy finally, in 1928, ventured upon mass arrests among the Left Opposition.

To be sure, tens of thousands of revolutionary fighters gathered around the banner of the Bolshevik-Leninists. The advanced workers were indubitably sympathetic to the Opposition, but that sympathy remained passive. The

masses lacked faith that the situation could be seriously changed by a new struggle. Meantime the bureaucracy asserted: "For the sake of an international revolution, the Opposition proposes to drag us into a revolutionary war. Enough of shake-ups! We have earned the right to rest. We will build the socialist society at home. Rely upon us, your leaders!" This gospel of repose firmly consolidated the *apparatchiki* and the military and state officials and indubitably found an echo among the weary workers, and still more the peasant masses. Can it be, they asked themselves, that the Opposition is actually ready to sacrifice the interests of the Soviet Union for the idea of "permanent revolution"? In reality, the struggle had been about the life interests of the Soviet state. The false policy of the International in Germany resulted ten years later in the victory of Hitler—that is, in a threatening war danger from the West. And the no less false policy in China reinforced Japanese imperialism and brought very much nearer the danger in the East. But periods of reaction are characterized above all by a lack of courageous thinking.

The Opposition was isolated. The bureaucracy struck while the iron was hot, exploiting the bewilderment and passivity of the workers, setting their more backward strata against the advanced, and relying more and more boldly upon the kulak and the petty bourgeois ally in general. In the course of a few years, the bureaucracy thus shattered the revolutionary vanguard of the proletariat.

It would be naïve to imagine that Stalin, previously unknown to the masses, suddenly issued from the wings full armed with a complete strategical plan. No indeed. Before he felt out his own course, the bureaucracy felt out Stalin himself. He brought it all the necessary guarantees: the prestige of an old Bolshevik, a strong character, narrow vision, and close bonds with the political machine as the sole source of his influence. The success which fell upon him was a surprise at first to Stalin himself. It was the friendly welcome of the new ruling group, trying to free itself from the old principles and from the control of the masses, and having need of a reliable arbiter in its inner affairs. A secondary figure before the masses and in the events of the revolution, Stalin revealed himself as the indubitable leader of the Thermidorian bureaucracy, as first in its midst.

The new ruling caste soon revealed its own ideas, feelings and, more important, its interests. The overwhelming majority of the older generation of the present bureaucracy had stood on the other side of the barricades during the October revolution. (Take, for example, the Soviet ambassadors only: Troyanovsky, Maisky, Potemkin, Suritz, Khinchuk, etc.) Or at best they had stood aside from the struggle. Those of the present bureaucrats who were in the Bolshevik camp in the October days played in the majority of cases no considerable role. As for the young bureaucrats, they have been chosen and educated by the elders, frequently from among their own offspring. These people could not have achieved the October revolution, but they were perfectly suited to exploit it.

Personal incidents in the interval between these two historic chapters were not, of course, without influence. Thus the sickness and death of Lenin undoubtedly hastened the denouement. Had Lenin lived longer, the pressure of the bureaucratic power would have developed, at least during the first years, more slowly. But as early as 1926 Krupskaya said, in a circle of Left Oppositionists: "If Ilych were alive, he would probably already be in prison." The fears and alarming prophecies of Lenin

himself were then still fresh in her memory, and she cherished no illusions as to his personal omnipotence against opposing historic winds and currents.

The bureaucracy conquered something more than the Left Opposition. It conquered the Bolshevik party. It defeated the program of Lenin, who had seen the chief danger in the conversion of the organs of the state "from servants of society to lords over society." It defeated all these enemies, the Opposition, the party and Lenin, not with ideas and arguments, but with its own social weight. The leaden rump of the bureaucracy outweighed the head of the revolution. That is the secret of the Soviet's Thermidor.

**2. THE DEGENERATION OF THE BOLSHEVIK PARTY.** The Bolshevik party prepared and insured the October victory. It also created the Soviet state, supplying it with a sturdy skeleton. The degeneration of the party became both cause and consequence of the bureaucratization of the state. It is necessary to show at least briefly how this happened.

The inner regime of the Bolshevik party was characterized by the method of *democratic centralism*. The combination of these two concepts, democracy and centralism, is not in the least contradictory. The party took watchful care not only that its boundaries should always be strictly defined, but also that all those who entered these boundaries should enjoy the actual right to define the direction of the party policy. Freedom of criticism and intellectual struggle was an irrevocable content of the party democracy. The present doctrine that Bolshevism does not tolerate factions is a myth of the epoch of decline. In reality the history of Bolshevism is a history of the struggle of factions. And, indeed, how could a genuinely revolutionary organization, setting itself the task of overthrowing the world and uniting under its banner the most audacious iconoclasts, fighters and insurgents, live and develop without intellectual conflicts, without groupings and temporary factional formations? The farsightedness of the Bolshevik leadership often made it possible to soften conflicts and shorten the duration of factional struggle, but no more than that. The Central Committee relied upon this seething democratic support. From this it derived the audacity to make decisions and give orders. The obvious correctness of the leadership at all critical stages gave it that high authority which is the priceless moral capital of centralism.

The regime of the Bolshevik party, especially before it came to power, stood thus in complete contradiction to the regime of the present sections of the Communist International, with their "leaders" appointed from above, making complete changes of policy at a word of command, with their uncontrolled apparatus, haughty in its attitude to the rank and file, servile in its attitude to the Kremlin. But in the first years after the conquest of power also, even when the administrative rust was already visible on the party, every Bolshevik, not excluding Stalin, would have denounced as a malicious slanderer anyone who should have shown him on a screen the image of the party ten or fifteen years later.

The very center of Lenin's attention and that of his colleagues was occupied by a continual concern to protect the Bolshevik ranks from the vices of those in power. However, the extraordinary closeness and at times actual merging of the party with the state apparatus had already in those first years done indubitable harm to the freedom and elasticity of the party regime. Democracy

had been narrowed in proportion as difficulties increased. In the beginning, the party had wished and hoped to preserve freedom of political struggle within the framework of the Soviets. The civil war introduced stern amendments into this calculation. The opposition parties were forbidden one after the other. This measure, obviously in conflict with the spirit of Soviet democracy, the leaders of Bolshevism regarded not as a principle, but as an episodic act of self-defense.

The swift growth of the ruling party, with the novelty and immensity of its tasks, inevitably gave rise to inner disagreements. The underground oppositional currents in the country exerted a pressure through various channels upon the sole legal political organization, increasing the acuteness of the factional struggle. At the moment of completion of the civil war, this struggle took such sharp forms as to threaten to unsettle the state power. In March 1921, in the days of the Kronstadt revolt, which attracted into its ranks no small number of Bolsheviks, the tenth congress of the party thought it necessary to resort to a prohibition of factions—that is, to transfer the political regime prevailing in the state to the inner life of the ruling party. This forbidding of factions was again regarded as an exceptional measure to be abandoned at the first serious improvement in the situation. At the same time, the Central Committee was extremely cautious in applying the new law, concerning itself most of all lest it lead to a strangling of the inner life of the party.

However, what was in its original design merely a necessary concession to a difficult situation, proved perfectly suited to the taste of the bureaucracy, which had then begun to approach the inner life of the party exclusively from the viewpoint of convenience in administration. Already in 1922, during a brief improvement in his health, Lenin, horrified at the threatening growth of bureaucratism, was preparing a struggle against the faction of Stalin, which had made itself the axis of the party machine as a first step toward capturing the machinery of state. A second stroke and then death prevented him from measuring forces with this internal reaction.

The entire effort of Stalin, with whom at that time Zinoviev and Kamenev were working hand in hand, was thenceforth directed to freeing the party machine from the control of the rank-and-file members of the party. In this struggle for "stability" of the Central Committee, Stalin proved the most consistent and reliable among his colleagues. He had no need to tear himself away from international problems; he had never been concerned with them. The petty bourgeois outlook of the new ruling stratum was his own outlook. He profoundly believed that the task of creating socialism was national and administrative in its nature. He looked upon the Communist International as a necessary evil which should be used so far as possible for the purposes of foreign policy. His own party kept a value in his eyes merely as a submissive support for the machine.

Together with the theory of socialism in one country, there was put into circulation by the bureaucracy a theory that in Bolshevism the Central Committee is everything and the party nothing. This second theory was in any case realized with more success than the first. Availing itself of the death of Lenin, the ruling group announced a "Leninist levy." The gates of the party, always carefully guarded, were now thrown wide open. Workers, clerks, petty officials, flocked through in crowds. The political aim of this maneuver was to dissolve the revolutionary vanguard in raw human material, without experience, without independence, and yet with the old habit of

submitting to the authorities. The scheme was successful. By freeing the bureaucracy from the control of the proletarian vanguard, the "Leninist levy" dealt a death blow to the party of Lenin. The machine had won the necessary independence. Democratic centralism gave place to bureaucratic centralism. In the party apparatus itself there now took place a radical reshuffling of personnel from top to bottom. The chief merit of a Bolshevik was declared to be obedience. Under the guise of a struggle with the Opposition, there occurred a sweeping replacement of revolutionists with *chinovniki*. The history of the Bolshevik party became a history of its rapid degeneration.

The political meaning of the developing struggle was darkened for many by the circumstance that the leaders of all three groupings, Left, Center and Right, belonged to one and the same staff in the Kremlin, the Politburo. To superficial minds it seemed to be a mere matter of personal rivalry, a struggle for the "heritage" of Lenin. But in the conditions of iron dictatorship social antagonisms could not show themselves at first except through the institutions of the ruling party. Many Thermidorians emerged in their day from the circle of the Jacobins. Bonaparte himself belonged to that circle in his early years, and subsequently it was from among former Jacobins that the First Consul and Emperor of France selected his most faithful servants. Times change and the Jacobins with them, not excluding the Jacobins of the twentieth century.

Of the Politburo of Lenin's epoch there now remains only Stalin. Two of its members, Zinoviev and Kamenev, collaborators of Lenin throughout many years as émigrés, are enduring ten-year prison terms for a crime which they did not commit. Three other members, Rykov, Bukharin and Tomsky, are completely removed from the leadership, but as a reward for submission occupy secondary posts. And, finally, the author of these lines is in exile. The widow of Lenin, Krupskaya, is also under the ban, having proved unable with all her efforts to adjust herself completely to the Thermidor.

The members of the present Politburo occupied secondary posts throughout the history of the Bolshevik party. If anybody, in the first years of the revolution had predicted their future elevation, they would have been the first in surprise, and there would have been no false modesty in their surprise. For this very reason, the rule is more stern at present that the Politburo is always right, and in any case that no man can be right against the Politburo. But, moreover, the Politburo cannot be right against Stalin, who is unable to make mistakes and consequently cannot be right against himself.

Demands for party democracy were through all this time the slogans of all the oppositional groups, as insistent as they were hopeless. The above-mentioned platform of the Left Opposition demanded in 1927 that a special law be written into the Criminal Code "punishing as a serious state crime every direct or indirect persecution of a worker for criticism." Instead of this, there was introduced into the Criminal Code an article against the Left Opposition itself.

Of party democracy there remained only recollections in the memory of the older generation. And together with it had disappeared the democracy of the soviets, the trade unions, the co-operatives, the cultural and athletic organizations. Above each and every one of them there reigns an unlimited hierarchy of party secretaries. The régime had become "totalitarian" in character several years before this word arrived from Germany. "By means of

demoralizing methods, which convert thinking communists into machines, destroying will, character and human dignity," wrote Rakovsky in 1928, "the ruling circles have succeeded in converting themselves into an unremovable and inviolate oligarchy, which replaces the class and the party." Since those indignant lines were written, the degeneration of the regime has gone immeasurably farther. The G.P.U. has become the decisive factor in the inner life of the party. If Molotov in March 1936 was able to boast to a French journalist that the ruling party no longer contains any factional struggle, it is only because disagreements are now settled by the automatic intervention of the political police. The old Bolshevik party is dead, and no force will resurrect it.

Parallel with the political degeneration of the party, there occurred a moral decay of the uncontrolled apparatus. The word "sovbour"—soviet bourgeois—as applied to a privileged dignitary appeared very early in the workers' vocabulary. With the transfer to the NEP bourgeois tendencies received a more copious field of action. At the 11th Congress of the party, in March 1922, Lenin gave warning of the danger of a degeneration of the ruling stratum. It has occurred more than once in history, he said, that the conqueror took over the culture of the conquered, when the latter stood on a higher level. The culture of the Russian bourgeoisie and the old bureaucracy was, to be sure, miserable, but alas the new ruling stratum must often take off its hat to that culture. "Four thousand seven hundred responsible communists" in Moscow administer the state machine. "Who is leading whom? I doubt very much whether you can say that the communists are in the lead . . ." In subsequent congresses, Lenin could not speak. But all his thoughts in the last months of his active life were of warning and arming the workers against the oppression, caprice and decay of the bureaucracy. He, however, saw only the first symptoms of the disease.

Christian Rakovsky, former president of the Soviet of People's Commissars of the Ukraine, and later Soviet Ambassador in London and Paris, sent to his friends in 1928, when already in exile, a brief inquiry into the Soviet bureaucracy, which we have quoted above several times, for it still remains the best that has been written on this subject. "In the mind of Lenin, and in all our minds," says Rakovsky, "the task of the party leadership was to protect both the party and the working class from the corrupting action of privilege, place and patronage on the part of those in power, from *rapprochement* with the relics of the old nobility and burgherdom, from the corrupting influence of the NEP, from the temptation of bourgeois morals and ideologies. . . . We must say frankly, definitely and loudly that the party apparatus has not fulfilled this task, that it has revealed a complete incapacity for its double role of protector and educator. It has failed. It is bankrupt."

It is true that Rakovsky himself, broken by the bureaucratic repressions, subsequently repudiated his own critical judgments. But the seventy-year-old Galileo too, caught in the vise of the Holy Inquisition, found himself compelled to repudiate the system of Copernicus—which did not prevent the earth from continuing to revolve around the sun. We do not believe in the recantation of the sixty-year-old Rakovsky, for he himself has more than once made a withering analysis of such recantations. As to his political criticisms, they have found in the facts of the objective development a far more reliable support than in the subjective stout-heartedness of their author.



The conquest of power changes not only the relations of the proletariat to other classes, but also its own inner structure. The wielding of power becomes the specialty of a definite social group, which is the more impatient to solve its own "social problem", the higher its opinion of its own mission. "In a proletarian state, where capitalist accumulation is forbidden to the members of the ruling party, the differentiation is at first functional, but afterward becomes social. I do not say it becomes a class differentiation, but a social one . . ." Rakovsky further explains: "The social situation of the communist who has at his disposition an automobile, a good apartment, regular vacations, and receives the party maximum of salary, differs from the situation of the communist who works in the coal mines, where he receives from fifty to sixty rubles a month." Counting over the causes of the degeneration of the Jacobins when in power—the chase after wealth, participation in government contracts, supplies, etc., Rakovsky cites a curious remark of Babeuf to the effect that the degeneration of the new ruling stratum was helped along not a little by the former young ladies of the aristocracy toward whom the Jacobins were very friendly. "What are you doing, small-hearted plebeian?" cries Babeuf. "Today they are embracing you and tomorrow they will strangle you." A census of the wives of the ruling stratum in the Soviet Union would show a similar picture. The well-known Soviet journalist, Sosnovsky, pointed out the special role played by the "automobile-harem factor" in forming the morals of the Soviet bureaucracy. It is true that Sosnovsky, too, following Rakovsky, recanted and was returned from Siberia. But that did not improve the morals of the bureaucracy. On the contrary, that very recantation is proof of a progressing demoralization.

The old articles of Sosnovsky, passed about in manuscript from hand to hand, were sprinkled with unforgettable episodes from the life of the new ruling stratum, plainly showing to what vast degree the conquerors have assimilated the morals of the conquered. Not to return, however, to past years—for Sosnovsky finally exchanged his whip for a lyre in 1934—we will confine ourselves to wholly fresh examples from the Soviet press. And we will not select the abuses and so-called "excesses", either, but everyday phenomena legalized by official social opinion.

The director of a Moscow factory, a prominent communist, boasts in *Pravda* of the cultural growth of the enterprise directed by him. "A mechanic telephones: 'What is your order, sir, check the furnace immediately or wait?' I answer: 'Wait.'" The mechanic addresses the director with extreme respect, using the second person plural, while the director answers him in the second person singular. And this disgraceful dialogue, impossible in any cultured capitalist country, is related by the director himself on the pages of *Pravda* as something entirely normal! The editor does not object because he does not notice it. The readers do not object because they are accustomed to it. We also are not surprised, for at solemn sessions in the Kremlin, the "leaders" and People's Commissars address in the second person singular directors of factories subordinate to them, presidents of collective farms, shop foremen and working women, especially invited to receive decorations. How can they fail to remember that one of the most popular revolutionary slogans in czarist Russia was the demand for the abolition of the use of the second person singular by bosses in addressing their subordinates!

These Kremlin dialogues of the authorities with "the

people", astonishing in their lordly ungraciousness, unmistakably testify that, in spite of the October revolution, the nationalization of the means of production, collectivization, and "the liquidation of the kulaks as a class," the relations among men, and that at the very heights of the Soviet pyramid, have not only not yet risen to socialism, but in many respects are still lagging behind a cultured capitalism. In recent years enormous backward steps have been taken in this very important sphere. And the source of this revival of genuine Russian barbarism is indubitably the Soviet Thermidor, which has given complete independence and freedom from control to a bureaucracy possessing little culture, and has given to the masses the well-known gospel of obedience and silence.

We are far from intending to contrast the abstraction of dictatorship with the abstraction of democracy, and weigh their merits on the scales of pure reason. Everything is relative in this world, where change alone endures. The dictatorship of the Bolshevik party proved one of the most powerful instruments of progress in history. But here too, in the words of the poet, "Reason becomes unreason, kindness a pest." The prohibition of oppositional parties brought after it the prohibition of factions. The prohibition of factions ended in a prohibition to think otherwise than the infallible leaders. The police-manufactured monolithism of the party resulted in a bureaucratic impunity which has become the source of all kinds of wantonness and corruption.

**3. THE SOCIAL ROOTS OF THERMIDOR.** We have defined the Soviet Thermidor as a triumph of the bureaucracy over the masses. We have tried to disclose the historic conditions of this triumph. The revolutionary vanguard of the proletariat was in part devoured by the administrative apparatus and gradually demoralized, in part annihilated in the civil war, and in part thrown out and crushed. The tired and disappointed masses were indifferent to what was happening on the summits. These conditions, however, important as they may have been in themselves, are inadequate to explain why the bureaucracy succeeded in raising itself above society and getting its fate firmly into its own hands. Its own will to this would in any case be inadequate; the arising of a new ruling stratum must have deep social causes.

The victory of the Thermidorians over the Jacobins in the eighteenth century was also aided by the weariness of the masses and the demoralization of the leading cadres, but beneath these essentially incidental phenomena a deep organic process was taking place. The Jacobins rested upon the lower petty bourgeoisie lifted by the great wave. The revolution of the eighteenth century, however, corresponding to the course of development of the productive forces, could not but bring the great bourgeoisie to political ascendancy in the long run. The Thermidor was only one of the stages in this inevitable process. What similar social necessity found expression in the Soviet Thermidor? We have tried already in one of the preceding chapters to make a preliminary answer to the question why the gendarme triumphed. We must now prolong our analysis of the conditions of the transition from capitalism to socialism, and the role of the state in this process. Let us again compare theoretic prophecy with reality. "It is still necessary to suppress the bourgeoisie and its resistance," wrote Lenin in 1917, speaking of the period which should begin immediately after the conquest of power, "but the organ of suppression here is now the majority of the population, and not the minority as has heretofore always been the case. . . . In that sense the state is beginning to die



away." In what does this dying away express itself? Primarily in the fact that "in place of special institutions of a privileged minority (privileged officials, commanders of a standing army), the majority itself can directly carry out" the functions of suppression. Lenin follows this, with a statement axiomatic and unanswerable: "The more universal becomes the very fulfillment of the functions of the state power, the less need is there of this power." The annulment of private property in the means of production removes the principal task of the historic state—defense of the proprietary privileges of the minority against the overwhelming majority.

The dying away of the state begins, then, according to Lenin, on the very day after the expropriation of the expropriators—that is, before the new regime has had time to take up its economic and cultural problems. Every success in the solution of these problems means a further step in the liquidation of the state, its dissolution in the socialist society. The degree of this dissolution is the best index of the depth and efficacy of the socialist structure. We may lay down approximately this sociological theorem: The strength of the compulsion exercised by the masses in a workers' state is directly proportional to the strength of the exploitive tendencies, or the danger of a restoration of capitalism, and inversely proportional to the strength of the social solidarity and the general loyalty to the new regime. Thus the bureaucracy—that is, the "privileged officials and commanders of a standing army"—represents a special kind of compulsion which the masses cannot or do not wish to exercise, and which, one way or another, is directed against the masses themselves.

If the democratic soviets had preserved to this day their original strength and independence, and yet were compelled to resort to repressions and compulsions on the scale of the first years, this circumstance might of itself give rise to serious anxiety. How much greater must be the alarm in view of the fact that the mass soviets have entirely disappeared from the scene, having turned over the function of compulsion to Stalin, Yagoda and company. And what forms of compulsion! First of all we must ask ourselves: What social cause stands behind this stubborn virility of the state and especially behind its policification? The importance of this question is obvious. In dependence upon the answer, we must either radically revise our traditional views of the socialist society in general, or as radically reject the official estimates of the Soviet Union.

Let us now take from the latest number of a Moscow newspaper a stereotyped characterization of the present Soviet regime, one of those which are repeated throughout the country from day to day and which school children learn by heart: "In the Soviet Union the parasitical classes of capitalists, landlords and kulaks are completely liquidated, and thus is forever ended the exploitation of man by man. The whole national economy has become socialistic, and the growing Stakhanov movement is preparing the conditions for a transition from socialism to communism." (*Pravda*, April 4, 1936.) The world press of the Communist International, it goes without saying, has no other thing to say on this subject. But if exploitation is "ended forever", if the country is really now on the road from socialism, that is, the lowest stage of communism, to its higher stage, then there remains nothing for society to do but to throw off at last the straitjacket of the state. In place of this—it is hard even to grasp this contrast with the mind!—the Soviet state has acquired a totalitarian-bureaucratic character.

The same fatal contradiction finds illustration in the

fate of the party. Here the problem may be formulated approximately thus: Why, from 1917 to 1921, when the old ruling classes were still fighting with weapons in their hands, when they were actively supported by the imperialists of the whole world, when the kulaks in arms were sabotaging the army and food supplies of the country,—why was it possible to dispute openly and fearlessly in the party about the most critical questions of policy? Why now, after the cessation of intervention, after the shattering of the exploiting classes, after the indubitable successes of industrialization, after the collectivization of the overwhelming majority of the peasants, is it impossible to permit the slightest word of criticism of the unremovable leaders? Why is it that any Bolshevik who should demand a calling of the congress of the party in accordance with its constitution would be immediately expelled, any citizen who expressed out loud a doubt of the infallibility of Stalin would be tried and convicted almost as though a participant in a terrorist plot? Whence this terrible, monstrous and unbearable intensity of repression and of the police apparatus?

Theory is not a note which you can present at any moment to reality for payment. If a theory proves mistaken we must revise it or fill out its gaps. We must find out those real social forces which have given rise to the contrast between Soviet reality and the traditional Marxian conception. In any case we must not wander in the dark, repeating ritual phrases, useful for the prestige of the leaders, but which nevertheless slap the living reality in the face. We shall now see a convincing example of this.

In a speech at a session of the Central Executive Committee in January 1936, Molotov, the president of the Council of People's Commissars, declared: "The national economy of the country has become socialistic (applause). In that sense [?] we have solved the problem of the liquidation of classes (applause)." However, there still remain from the past "elements in their nature hostile to us," fragments of the former ruling classes. Moreover, among the collectivized farmers, state employees and sometimes also the workers, "petty speculators" are discovered, "grafters in relation to the collective and state wealth, anti-Soviet gossips, etc." And hence results the necessity of a further reinforcement of the dictatorship. In opposition to Engels, the workers' state must not "fall asleep", but on the contrary become more and more vigilant.

The picture drawn by the head of the Soviet government would be reassuring in the highest degree, were it not murderously self-contradictory. Socialism completely reigns in the country: "In that sense" classes are abolished. (If they are abolished in that sense, then they are in every other.) To be sure, the social harmony is broken here and there by fragments and remnants of the past, but it is impossible to think that scattered dreamers of a restoration of capitalism, deprived of power and property, together with "petty speculators" (not even *speculators*!) and "gossips" are capable of overthrowing the classless society. Everything is getting along, it seems, the very best you can imagine. But what is the use then of the iron dictatorship of the bureaucracy?

Those reactionary dreamers, we must believe, will gradually die out. The "petty speculators" and "gossips" might be disposed of with a laugh by the super-democratic Soviets. "We are not Utopians," responded Lenin in 1917 to the bourgeois and reformist theoreticians of the bureaucratic state, and "by no means deny the possibility and inevitability of excesses on the part of individual

persons, and likewise the necessity for suppressing such excesses. But . . . for this there is no need of a special machine, a special apparatus of repression. This will be done by the armed people themselves, with the same simplicity and ease with which any crowd of civilized people even in contemporary society separate a couple of fighters or stop an act of violence against a woman." Those words sound as though the author had especially foreseen the remarks of one of his successors at the head of the government. Lenin is taught in the public schools of the Soviet Union, but apparently not in the Council of People's Commissars. Otherwise it would be impossible to explain Molotov's daring to resort without reflection to the very construction against which Lenin directed his well-sharpened weapons. The flagrant contradiction between the founder and his epigones is before us! Whereas Lenin judged that even the liquidation of the exploiting classes might be accomplished without a bureaucratic apparatus, Molotov, in explaining why *after* the liquidation of classes the bureaucratic machine has strangled the independence of the people, finds no better pretext than a reference to the "remnants" of the liquidated classes.

To live on these "remnants" becomes, however, rather difficult since, according to the confession of authoritative representatives of the bureaucracy itself, yesterday's class enemies are being successfully assimilated by the Soviet society. Thus Postyshev, one of the secretaries of the Central Committee of the party, said in April 1936, at a congress of the League of Communist Youth: "Many of the saboteurs . . . have sincerely repented and joined the ranks of the Soviet people." In view of the successful carrying out of collectivization, "the children of kulaks are not to be held responsible for their parents." And yet more: "The kulak himself now hardly believes in the possibility of a return to his former position of exploiter in the village." Not without reason did the government annul the limitations connected with social origin! But if Postyshev's assertion, wholly agreed to by Molotov, makes any sense it is only this: Not only has the bureaucracy become a monstrous anachronism, but state compulsion in general has nothing whatever to do in the land of the Soviets. However, neither Molotov nor Postyshev agrees with that immutable inference. They prefer to hold the power even at the price of self-contradiction.

In reality, too, they cannot reject the power. Or, to translate this into objective language: The present Soviet society cannot get along without a state, nor even—within limits—without a bureaucracy. But the cause of this is by no means the pitiful remnants of the past, but the mighty forces and tendencies of the present. The justification for the existence of a Soviet state as an apparatus of compulsion lies in the fact that the present transitional structure is still full of social contradictions, which in the sphere of *consumption*—most close and sensitively felt by all—are extremely tense, and forever threaten to break over into the sphere of production. The triumph of socialism cannot be called either final or irrevocable.

The basis of bureaucratic rule is the poverty of society in objects of consumption, with the resulting struggle of each against all. When there is enough goods in a store, the purchasers can come whenever they want to. When there is little goods, the purchasers are compelled to stand in line. When the lines are very long, it is necessary to appoint a policeman to keep order. Such is the starting point of the power of the Soviet bureaucracy. It "knows" who is to get something and who has to wait.

A raising of the material and cultural level ought, at first glance, to lessen the necessity of privileges, narrow

the sphere of application of "bourgeois law", and thereby undermine the standing ground of its defenders, the bureaucracy. In reality the opposite thing has happened: the growth of the productive forces has been so far accompanied by an extreme development of all forms of inequality, privilege and advantage, and therewith of bureaucratism. That too is not accidental.

In its first period, the Soviet regime was undoubtedly far more equalitarian and less bureaucratic than now. But that was an equality of general poverty. The resources of the country were so scant that there was no opportunity to separate out from the masses of the population any broad privileged strata. At the same time the "equalizing" character of wages, destroying personal interestedness, became a brake upon the development of the productive forces. Soviet economy had to lift itself from its poverty to a somewhat higher level before fat deposits of privilege became possible. The present state of production is still far from guaranteeing all necessities to everybody. But it is already adequate to give significant privileges to a minority, and convert inequality into a whip for the spurring on of the majority. That is the first reason why the growth of production has so far strengthened not the socialist, but the bourgeois features of the state.

But that is not the sole reason. Alongside the economic factor dictating capitalistic methods of payment at the present stage, there operates a parallel political factor in the person of the bureaucracy itself. In its very essence it is the planter and protector of inequality. It arose in the beginning as the bourgeois organ of a workers' state. In establishing and defending the advantages of a minority, it of course draws off the cream for its own use. Nobody who has wealth to distribute ever omits himself. Thus out of a social necessity there has developed an organ which has far outgrown its socially necessary function, and become an independent factor and therewith the source of great danger for the whole social organism.

The social meaning of the Soviet Thermidor now begins to take form before us. The poverty and cultural backwardness of the masses has again become incarnate in the malignant figure of the ruler with a great club in his hand. The deposed and abused bureaucracy, from being a servant of society, has again become its lord. On this road it has attained such a degree of social and moral alienation from the popular masses, that it cannot now permit any control over either its activities or its income.

The bureaucracy's seemingly mystic fear of "petty speculators, grafters, and gossips" thus finds a wholly natural explanation. Not yet able to satisfy the elementary needs of the population, the Soviet economy creates and resurrects at every step tendencies to graft and speculation. On the other side, the privileges of the new aristocracy awaken in the masses of the population a tendency to listen to anti-Soviet "gossips"—that is, to anyone who, albeit in a whisper, criticizes the greedy and capricious bosses. It is a question, therefore, not of specters of the past, not of the remnants of what no longer exists, not, in short, of the snows of yesteryear, but of new, mighty and continually reborn tendencies to personal accumulation. The first still very meager wave of prosperity in the country, just because of its meagerness, has not weakened, but strengthened, these centrifugal tendencies. On the other hand, there has developed simultaneously a desire of the unprivileged to slap the grasping hands of the new gentry. The social struggle again grows sharp. Such are the sources of the power of the bureaucracy. But from those same sources comes also a threat to its power.

# Explanatory Notes

## Page 4

**Sidney and Beatrice Webb**—Leading members of the middle-class Fabian Society, established round the turn of the century as a 'think-tank' for reformism in the labour movement. Open supporters of imperialism, the Webbs also became ardent admirers of Stalinist Russia in the 1930s.

## Page 5

**Samurai**—Japanese feudal warriors, paid in land, money or kind by a feudal lord.

**Gendarme**—policeman (French).

## Page 7

**Stanley Baldwin**—British Tory Prime Minister (1923, 1924-9, 1935-7) who crushed the General Strike of 1926; **F.D. Roosevelt**—US President, 1933-45, of the capitalist Democratic Party, forced by the pressure of the labour movement to introduce the reforms of the "New Deal".

**Bismarck, Palmerston, Abraham Lincoln**—Nineteenth century capitalist politicians in, respectively, Germany, Britain and the US.

"Liquidation of the kulaks as a class"—For the overwhelmingly peasant population of the Soviet Union, Lenin and Trotsky advocated a programme of gradual collectivisation of agriculture, by the example of voluntary model collectives established on the basis of industrial development and provision of tractors. From 1920-1 the Bolsheviks adopted the New Economic Policy (page 10), giving concessions to private peasants, because of extreme food shortages: this, Lenin conceded, was a "temporary retreat". The emerging Soviet bureaucracy perverted the NEP, against the warnings of the Left Opposition, and encouraged the kulaks to "enrich themselves". Then, panicking at the danger of creating a social base for the restoration of capitalism, Stalin and his henchmen switched overnight to an adventurist policy of enforced collectivisation of agriculture ("liquidation of the kulaks")—on the basis of the existing primitive plough. The peasants resisted, destroying livestock and crops: in the ensuing famine 10 million died.

## Page 8

**Stakhanovist**—To increase productivity, the Stalinist bureaucracy not only massively increased wage differentials, but singled out especially 'productive' workers for publicity, medals, etc. These were the "Stakhanovists", named after one such coalface worker, Stakhanov. This policy divided the workers, and ignored the collective nature of large-scale production.

**Karl Radek**—"Written before the arrest of Karl Radek in August 1936 on charges of a terroristic conspiracy against the Soviet Union." (Note in original text).

## Page 9

**Thermidor**—The French bourgeois Revolution of 1789 brought eventually to power Robespierre's government of Jacobins, radical petty bourgeois democrats, supported by the urban masses. Among other measures, this government abolished the old calendar in favour of one with different months. This government was overthrown, in the new month of Thermidor, by a political counter-revolution led by Barras, which nevertheless preserved the capitalist property relations established by the revolution. Trotsky used these events to explain the political counter-revolution in the Soviet Union which preserved the economic framework of the workers' state.

**Kerensky, Tseretelli**—Reformist leaders of the Provisional Government brought into being by the February Revolution which overthrew the Russian Tsar in 1917. Remaining on a capitalist basis, this government was impotent: it was overthrown by the workers led by the Bolsheviks in October.

**Mirabeau, Brissot, Robespierre, Barras**—Leading figures in successive governments of the French revolution, 1789-95.

**Bonaparte**—Napoleon I, who came to power in 1799 as the culmination of the political counter-revolution which followed the French revolution.

**Babeuf**—A revolutionary, and utopian communist, in the period of the French bourgeois revolution.

## Page 10

German and Austrian defeats of

1933-4—In 1933 Hitler became German Chancellor and the Nazis consolidated their power. In 1934 Dolfuss led a Fascist coup in Austria, consolidated by Nazi invasion in 1936. The leaders of the workers' parties bore a huge responsibility for allowing these defeats. In 1933 the German Social Democrats and Communists polled 12 million votes between them, but were not mobilised in armed resistance to Hitler. The Communist leaders, rather than organising united action with rank and file Social Democratic workers, denounced them as "social" fascists". These mistaken policies, leading to the most serious defeats ever suffered by the workers' movement, were a decisive indication of the degeneration of the Third International.

**apparatchiki**—bureaucrats.

## Page 11

**Kronstadt revolt**—In March 1921 Kronstadt naval base sailors revolted against the Soviet government, because of the huge privations suffered during 1917-20 as a result of the defence of the 1917 Revolution against imperialist invasion. The revolt created a danger of renewed imperialist intervention to provoke counter-revolution. The Kronstadt sailors who had been in the forefront of the revolution in 1917 had largely died in the 1917-20 war and been replaced by peasants etc; the leadership of the 1921 revolt fell into the hands of anarchists (though some Bolsheviks sympathised). It was crushed, though in its wake economic policy was relaxed in the form of the NEP.

## Page 12

**Chinovniks**—"Professional government functionaries" (Note in original text).

**Rykov, Bukharin, and Tomskey**—"Zinoviev and Kamenev were executed in August 1936 for alleged complicity in a 'terroristic plot' against Stalin; Tomskey committed suicide or was shot in connection with the same case; Rykov was removed from his post in connection with the plot; Bukharin, although suspected, is still at liberty." (Note in original text). In fact Bukharin also was tried and executed in 1938.

**GPU**—The secret police of the bureaucracy, headed for a while by H. Yagoda. Yagoda did not escape the purges which were the price of bureaucratic consolidation: he was executed in 1938.

## Page 15

**epigones**—disciples who distort the teachings of their master.

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