

#### EDITOR'S NOTE

Leonard E. Read, author of *Students of Liberty*, *Outlook for Freedom*, *Two Ways to Stop Strikes*, and other books and articles, is a Foundation staff member.

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## VICTIMS OF SOCIAL LEVELING



THE MARXIAN IDEAL is: "From each according to his abilities, to each according to his needs."\* This standardizing process was to be accomplished by governmental action. That is, the individual's need was to be determined *for* him rather than *by* him. These "needs" were to be fulfilled through the confiscation of privately owned property, plus governmental control and distribution of future production. True, Karl Marx said he hoped for the eventual withering away of the state; but in the meantime, his "proletariat" was to assume the police powers necessary to bring about the desired leveling of society.

The "meantime" appears to be quite a stretch in Russia, where the advertised goal was to put these Marxian ideas into practice. The Russian state shows no signs of withering away; nor does compulsion, the essential ingredient of state action, seem to be on the decline. On the contrary, reliance upon the compulsory powers of govern-

\*"In a higher phase of communist society . . . society can inscribe on its banners: From each according to his abilities, to each according to his needs!" Karl Marx, *Capital and Other Writings* (Modern Library, Inc.: New York, 1932), p. 7.