

Marxism versus Stalinism



2005

[NEW YORK LABOR NEWS](#)

P.O. Box 218, Mountain View, CA 94042-0218

PRINTING HISTORY

Published 1950 by Socialist Labour Press,
39 South Bridge, Edinburgh

Online Edition

December 2005

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Proofread by Mary and Frank Prince
Uploaded by Donna Bills

INTRODUCTION.

THE publication by the Socialist Labour Press of this pamphlet needs no apology. The wonder is that such a booklet was not published years ago. Soviet distortion of the principles of Marx and Engels, the falsification of their writings and the interpolation of matter that Marx and Engels never wrote, has become so flagrant that the Socialist Labour Party regards it as an imperative duty to challenge Stalinist pretensions with the authoritative written words of the two great founders of Scientific Socialism themselves. That is the purpose of this booklet.

Since the Russian Revolution of November 1917, the Russian Communist Party has managed to deceive most sections of the Labour Movements of the world with the false claim that it is the sole heir and executor of the principles of Marxism. This claim, though easily refuted, has never been seriously contradicted and exposed as fraudulent by any large section of what is called the Labour Movement.

It will not, of course, cause surprise, that the leaders of the British Labour Movement have never challenged the Russian claims. British Labour leaders and politicians know so little of Marxism that they could not distinguish it from the thirty-nine articles of faith of the Church of England. Indeed, that leader of weight, Mr Ernest Bevin, has told the world from the greatest rostrum of the country that his attempts to study Marx gave him headaches and nothing more. Knowing the Right Hon. Gentleman as we do, we can quite believe it.

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He should never attempt studies that are beyond his intellectual capacities.

But if British Labour Leaders are incompetent to oppose or refute the false claims of Stalinism, the same can surely not apply to those spokesmen of King Capital, the political economists and their trumpeters, the hired writers of the Press. Yet these too, have accepted without question the Stalinist claims to Marxism.

Is it because these capitalist spokesmen do not know the principles of Marxism? Assuredly, no. On the contrary, we shall show that they know their Marx very well.

On the occasion of the 20th anniversary of the Bolshevik Revolution, the London *Times* published a series of articles on Russia under the Bolsheviks. We shall quote from these articles, not merely to show that the writer was well acquainted with Marxism, but also, because they provide additional evidence for the charges we ourselves have made against the Stalinists, and because they show that the principles of Marxism and of Stalinism are wide as the poles asunder.

In the issue of *The Times*, 5th July, 1937, the writer makes the point:—

“The central and fundamental fact about contemporary Russia is that the country is in the throes of an industrial revolution comparable with that which transformed Western Europe 100 years ago.”

A Marxist could not have put it better. It is a conclusion derived from the application of the Marxist method of historical investigation to a particular stage of development.

The article shows that what the Stalinists are build-

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ing is not Socialism but a social form of industrial organisation based upon the exploitation of wage-labour with many objectionable features practiced by Nazis, Fascists and the British Labour Parties alike.

An absolute necessity for Socialism is a highly developed industry and industrial technique. That *necessary development of industry* was carried out by capitalism between 1775 and 1900, that is to say, the period of the industrial revolution. But the same industrial stage had not been reached by Russia in 1917. In any case, therefore, Socialism could not have been established there at that time. The Bolsheviki had to set to work to develop Russia's industry as a matter of compulsion. The system they have built up is, in fact, better described as a form of industrial feudalism.

In the next issue of *The Times*, 6th July 1937, the writer sets out to show that the Soviet practice was at fisticuffs with Marxist theory. We quote again:—

“When Lenin seized power in Russia in November 1917, his views on the nature of the State were unimpeachably Marxist. The State, being in its very essence an instrument for the oppression of one class by another, was therefore an evil which could have no place in the classless Communist society.”

And:—

“The dictatorship of the proletariat,” wrote Lenin, “was not an organisation of order but an organisation of war. Once the bourgeoisie had been extinguished or rendered impotent, the State would become a meaningless institution (since there would be nobody left to oppress) and would, in the classic formula of Marx and Engels, ‘wither away.’”¹

¹ See footnote on page 14.

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Perfectly correct again.

“And the odd thing is that this conception still figures in the official creed of the Soviet rulers of today. It is one of the most curious paradoxes that M. Stalin who has constructed the most powerful and the most arbitrary State yet known in history is compelled from time to time (though more and more rarely nowadays) to affirm that his real aim is the abolition of the State. ‘The highest possible development of the power of the State with the object of preparing the conditions for the dying out of the State’ is now M. Stalin’s declared policy. The highest possible development of the power of the State is the *practice*, the dying out of the State is the *theory*. And what is the good of dialectical materialism if it cannot prove in case of need that black means white and white black. The withering away of the State plays much the same role in Soviet dogma as the Second Advent in Christian theology. It occupies an essential place in every confession of faith, but since the days of the primitive Church the prospect has not been regarded as imminent or allowed to affect day to day practice.”

NATIONALISATION.

In Great Britain we have heard very much from the pillars of Stalinism, to the effect that Socialism has been established in Russia because the industries have been nationalised. As recent as the British General Election in February 1950, the Stalinist candidates ran on a programme of “More Nationalisation.” Our *Times* writer has a word on that subject. He continues from the end of the last quotation as follows:—

“Things in the Soviet Union have not gone quite so easily. It has become of late increasingly difficult, even in a country where the suppression of free thought is carried to the pitch of perfection, to disguise the fact that this ‘highest possible development of the power of the State’ has knocked Marx-

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ism sideways. The State, it is true, retains the ownership and control of industrial production. But in this respect the Soviet State has only carried to its logical conclusion a development which has also made gigantic strides in many capitalist countries. If (as Engels acutely observed) the taking over of industries by the State is Socialism, then Napoleon, who nationalised the tobacco industry in France must count as one of the founders of Socialism. In that sense M. Stalin may be permitted to rank with Napoleon. In any other sense *his claim to be regarded as a Socialist requires careful scrutiny.*" (Italics ours throughout.)

Indeed it does require careful scrutiny.

There is a great deal more in these *Times* articles which throws a searching light upon Soviet claims to Marxism, and which one would like to quote. Our concern, however, is merely to show that capitalist writers are not quite so simple on the subject of Marx as they sometimes pretend to be, and that they know very well they are lying when they attribute to Marx the totalitarian practices of the Soviet State.

MILITARISM

The founders of Scientific Socialism, whilst avoiding the utopianism of sentimental pacifism, stood firmly on the ground of revolutionary anti-militarism. Wherever elected to parliament their adherents regularly voted against supplies of funds for military purposes. Socialist parties in all countries kept the demand for Peace in the forefront of their programmes. In 1889, the International Socialist and Trades Union Congress instituted May-Day as a special occasion for demonstrations in support of the revolutionary aspirations of the working class, and the demand for international peace held a prominent place in those aspirations. For more than thirty years

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these conditions remained. In all May-Day demonstrations the workers' demand for peace was emphasised from one end of the world to the other.

It was the advent of the Soviet State that brought a change. The rulers of Soviet Russia transformed May-Day from its original purpose into a day of military propaganda, military exhibitions and a glorification of nationalism. Year by year, May-Day in Moscow became a veritable debauch of militarism, warlike marches, still more warlike speeches and vast displays of every kind of diabolic instruments of war and mass murder upon an increasingly monstrous scale.

And even whilst this still goes on, it has become the fashion among the yes-men of Soviet Russia in all countries to play up the idea that Russia, with the countries she has forced to surrender to her control, are the devoted apostles of the Goddess of Peace in a rude world of imperialist bandits and scoundrels bent on fomenting a third world war. Such is the hypocritical pose. Let us compare that pose with the actual policies of Soviet Russia and her vassals. During the British General Election of 1950, Mr H. Pollitt, a leading Stalinist, gave an explanation of his Party's programme over the radio. Once again we heard the old tale of Russia, the lily-white dove of peace, vainly offering the olive branch to the imperialist blackguards and warmongers of all other countries.

Unfortunately for Mr Pollitt's fairy-tale, it so happened that Russia also was staging a General Election; still more unfortunate that the Russian Communist Party chose the very day of Pollitt's radio talk to publish its Election Manifesto. Both the Manifesto and Pollitt's speech appeared in the press of the following day. And

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what do you think was the burden of the Russian Communist Party's proposals? The essential feature of the Manifesto was this:—

“The Communist Party of the Soviet Union sets itself the task of steadily strengthening the armed forces of the U.S.S.R.”

Oh, Consistency, thou art a very jewel.

Take note, too, of the following. On 2nd May the press reported the May-Day celebrations in Moscow. This is what we read:—

“Stalin, flanked by the Politburo and the Army Chiefs stood by Lenin's tomb in Red Square yesterday for seven and a half hours to review the miles long parade of paratroopers, heavy tanks, cavalry, infantry, motorised units and A.A. batteries. They were followed by hundreds of thousands of civilians marching 80 abreast through the beflagged, crowded Red Square, brilliant in spring sunshine.

“Stalin's son, Major-General Vassili Stalin, piloted the first 'plane in the huge Soviet air-fleet which flew over the square. The latest type jet-fighters flew in formation and then a new light jet-bomber whistled across the sky at 600 miles per hour.”

And then, and then:—

“Massed bands struck up and the square echoed with cheers as Army General Shtemenko, Chief of the General Staff, mounted the rostrum to denounce ‘warmongers, aggressive blocks and military provocations’.”

It must not be forgotten that, in August 1939, the Nazi Government of Germany were hesitating about their land-grabbing invasion of Poland. Their hesitation was due to the fear lest they might have Britain and France fighting them on the west, and Russia doing the

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same on their eastern frontiers. They approached Soviet Russia in the hope of getting an agreement of friendship with Stalin so that their eastern frontier would be secure while they could turn their full strength upon Britain and France. And they got what they wanted. Soviet Russia made an agreement with the Nazis which expressed friendship and peace between the two countries. Not only did Soviet Russia make this Pact of peace and friendship with Hitler, but also agreed to supply him with materials of which he stood in need. Within a few hours of Russia's signature to that infamous agreement, Hitler's legions were marching on to Poland and the second world war was on.

It must not be forgotten either that Soviet Russia kept to that foul Pact. Not only so, but she joined in with the Nazi armies in the attack and destruction of Poland, took a large part of Polish territory as her own share of the loot, and held it for nearly two years until the Nazi armies drove her out. Let it be remembered that it was not Russia, but Germany that put an end to that Alliance. As proof of that we may cite no less a witness than Stalin's right hand man, Molotov. In the issue of *The Socialist* for August 1940, we dealt with a speech made by Molotov a few days earlier. We quote from that article in *The Socialist* as follows:

“ ‘ The Soviet Pact with Germany,’ he (Molotov) said, ‘ was still in force and all British efforts to weaken it had failed. The pact was not only of economic significance, but is also an assurance of German security in the East.’ ”

Yes, indeed. The Soviet Union had given Germany security from attack in the East. The gift was the match that set light to the conflagration in Europe, and Mr

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Molotov seems proud of it. He added to the above:

“We can only re-iterate that the good neighbourly and friendly relations between Russia and Germany are based on the fundamental interests of both.”

In those few words Mr Molotov justified all that we have said about it. The “friendly relations between Russia and Germany *were based* on ‘the fundamental interests of both.’”

To our readers we pose the question: Would Marx or Engels have ever put their signatures upon such a damnable document, or enter into such an agreement with the vile and unspeakable agents of German plutocracy, the Nazi government of Germany?

THE NATIONAL EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE,
SOCIALIST LABOUR PARTY OF GREAT BRITAIN.

October, 1950.

Marxism *versus* Stalinism

FROM its birth at the end of the second decade of this century the Communist Party of Russia has proclaimed itself THE simon pure and chosen Party of Marxism, endowed by some mysterious right to interpret the teachings and writings of Marx and Engels, to dictate the policies of all other parties, and against whose decisions there could be no appeal.

Socialist Labour Parties never accepted these claims. Whilst willing to suspend judgment until the Russian Party had had time to justify its claims to Marxism, Socialist Labour Parties were unwilling to accept the divine right of the Bolsheviks to transform Marxism into a new Church, with ritual and dogmas all complete, and with the Bolsheviks as a new hierarchy of high priests.

On the contrary, when the Bolsheviks, regardless of the stages of evolution attained in different countries, demanded that we should all adopt the tactic of their dictatorship and go underground into secret parties, the S.L.P. held that in countries where workers had won the right to proclaim their revolutionary aims in the open light of day it would be sheer madness to go down into the dark holes of secret conspiracy.

In 1921, when the parties affiliated to the Third International were agitating for the adoption of the long-outdated tactic of insurrection and "seizing power," the Socialist Labour Party of America effectively punctured that nonsense by publishing, under the title of *The Revolutionary Act*, the Preface written by Engels, for the

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Class Struggles in France, 1848–1850, by Karl Marx. In that preface, Engels demonstrated conclusively that after 1848, the tactic of street battles and insurrections had become obsolete and in face of modern development of military technique and equipment would be, as he called it, “lunacy.”

The effect of this S.L.P. publication was a smashing blow to the tactic of insurrection which the Bolsheviks could not ignore. In America and in Britain they circulated the baseless story that Engels had repudiated the Preface before he died. The S.L.P. refutation of that tale was so complete that the insurrectionary bravoos of the Third International dropped it immediately. But they were still faced with the fact that this Engels preface kicked their insurrectionary tactic in the face. Their next attempt to get out of the difficulty was the publication of the fantastic story in a French Communist journal, *Cahiers de Bolshevism*, that Engels himself had falsified his own Preface at the request of his friends in Berlin, who were afraid of persecution under the Anti-Socialist Laws then in force in Germany. This second fable completely knocked the bottom out of the first one. But this new story was also easily refuted by the S.L.P.

Among further attempts to discredit this Engels' Preface was one by Mr Palme-Dutt, theorist in chief of the British Stalinist Party and editor of the Party's monthly magazine. Mr Dutt boldly asserted that the Engels preface had been foully mutilated and every revolutionary statement in it had been cut out, and that this mutilated version had been circulated in all countries. As the only version circulated in English-speaking countries was that of the S.L.P., *The Revolutionary Act*, it was clear that the charges of mutilation and falsification were in-

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tended for the S.L.P. and its translation. The S.L.P. was not likely to allow such charges to pass without refutation, and the *Weekly People* (official organ of the S.L.P. of America) published an irrefutable exposure of Mr Dutt's fabrication. It showed from documentary evidence and from a letter written by Engels to Karl Kautsky, in which he enclosed one of his own corrected proofs for Kautsky to publish in the *Die Neue Zeit*. It was from this text that Henry Kuhn translated the version published by the S.L.P.

Meantime the Third International dispelled any doubt of its complicity by fathering the publication of the Preface, *into which they had interpolated many passages which were definitely not in the proof copies supplied to Kautsky by Engels himself*. Those interpolations constituted a falsification of the text.

Finally, Henry Kuhn published in the *Weekly People* a further exposure of a real falsification of the Preface published by two communists in London. After that, the Stalinists adopted a convenient silence. *The Revolutionary Act* stands out clearly as the only correct translation in the English language.

The Third International, always in a permanent state of reorganisation, adopted "a new line" and established their dictatorship upon what they called a "democratic" basis, and later to a "people's democracy." But whether it changes from open dictatorship to a "democratic" one, or to a "people's democracy," matters little. It remains just what it was from the first, a dictatorship of one class of citizens over another; a denial of that social and personal liberty of the individual citizen which prevailed only in primitive society and can only appear again in a system

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of Industrial Socialism.

With the above as background, we may now take up our investigation of the Soviet claims to be practising Marxian Socialism. We propose to examine the policies of the Stalinist Party in the light of Marxist writings, taking first the pivotal attitude towards the State and comparing them with the definite statements of Marx and Engels. There can be no dispute on subjects which the founders of Scientific Socialism have shown their view point in explicit terms.

THE STATE

“The existence of the State proves that the class antagonisms are irreconcilable.”—LENIN.

BEFORE going further, it is necessary to say that by the State we mean an institution divorced from the mass of the people, supposedly being above and impartial towards all classes, and armed with public powers of coercion over all. In reality, the State can only take a tangible form in the machinery of government. As that machinery is always under the control of the existing ruling class, it is administered by that class in its own interest and becomes what Engels called it when he wrote: “But in reality the State is nothing else than a machine for the oppression of one class by another class.”

As early as 1847, Marx and Engels had reached the point at which they could declare the State to be “. . . an executive committee for administering the affairs of the whole capitalist class.” Later came their well-known

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viewpoint that the working class “cannot simply lay hold of the ready-made State machinery and wield it for its own purposes.” It is thus clear that in their early days Marx and Engels regarded the State as a class institution incompatible with the existence of Socialism. We need not speculate on that; they made it so clear as to be beyond the peradventure of a doubt. “The first act by virtue of which the State really constitutes itself the representative of the whole of society—the taking possession of the means of production in the name of society—this is, at the same time, its last independent act as a State. State interference in social relations becomes, in one domain after another, superfluous *and then dies out of itself.*” (Italics ours.)²

Writing on the Paris Commune, Marx says:—

“In reality, the Communal Constitution brought the rural producers under the intellectual lead of the central towns of their districts, and there secured to them in the working men the natural trustees of their interests. *The very existence of the Commune involved, as a matter of course, local municipal liberty, but no longer as a check upon the now superseded State power.*” The last sentence, which we have italicised, gives emphasis to the view of Marx that, as a matter of course, the victory of the Communards automatically put an end to the State. Again, Marx says: “The Com-

² It may, and has been, claimed that Engels wrote that the State would wither away, and that the withering might take a long time. It is a specious argument that ignores the fact that “to wither away” does not fit the idea Engels was propounding. Let us be clear at once about it. Engels did not say “wither away.” He used the word “Absterben” and that means to “die out.” And it was correctly translated as “die out” both by De Leon and by Aveling. And, it should be remembered that Engels himself assisted Aveling in the translation and saw the book printed.

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mune made that catchword of bourgeois revolutions, cheap government, a reality, *by destroying the two greatest sources of expenditure—the standing army and State functionalism.*”

“It” (The Commune) was essentially a working class government, the product of the struggle of the producing, against the appropriating class, the political form at last discovered under which to work out the economic emancipation of labour.

“Except upon this last condition, the Communal Constitution would have been an impossibility and a delusion. *The political rule of the producer cannot co-exist with the perpetuation of his social slavery.*”

We have italicised the last sentence because of its pivotal importance to our subject. We have here the unmistakable declaration of Marx that the political rule of the producer (which is Socialism) cannot co-exist with his social slavery (which is the wages system). In short, Socialism cannot exist alongside of the wages system. And it follows, too, that the wages system now prevailing in Soviet Russia is not, and cannot be, Socialism as understood by Marx.

Let us quote again from Marx:—

“Imperialism is, at the same time, the most prostitute and ultimate form of the State power which nascent middle class society had commenced to elaborate as a means of its own emancipation from feudalism, and which full-grown capitalist society had finally transformed into a means for the enslavement of labour by capital.”

In the *Origin of the Family*, after a complete examination of the State, Engels says:—

“We are now rapidly approaching a stage of evolution in production in which the existence of classes has not only

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ceased to be a necessity, but becomes a positive fetter on production. Hence these classes must fall as inevitably as they once arose. *The State* must irrevocably fall with them. The society that is to reorganise production on the basis of a free and equal association of the producers will transfer the machinery of State where it will then belong: into the Museum of Antiquities by the side of the spinning wheel and the bronze axe.”

In his Introduction to the *Civil War in France*, Engels puts his view of the State even more definitely:—

“According to the conception of philosophy, the State is the ‘realisation of the Idea,’ or the philosophic equivalent of the Kingdom of God upon Earth—the sphere in which eternal truth and righteousness are, or ought to be, realised. There follows from this a superstitious reverence for the State and all its adjuncts, a superstition that is all the more natural, since from our very childhood we have grown up in the idea that the affairs and interests common to the whole of society could not be provided for in any other way than had been the practice hitherto, namely, through the State and its highly paid functionaries . . . *but in reality the State is nothing else than a machine for the oppression of one class by another class.* And that no less so in the democratic republic than under the monarchy.”

Readers who are interested will find many similar statements in the writings of Marx and Engels and at all periods of their lives. Above, we have given enough to justify our claim that, on the subject of the State, the Stalinist viewpoint is diametrically opposed to that of Marx and Engels. Of course, it may be that the Stalinists are right, and that Marx, Engels and the rest of us are all wrong. We are not discussing that aspect at the moment. But we are demonstrating from the writings of Marx and Engels that they consistently regarded the State as an instrument of class rule, as a machine for

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oppressing subject classes, as an instrument for the enslavement of labour to capital, and as an institution whose function would end with a working class revolution. For these two founders of Socialism the existence of the State excludes Socialism and the existence of Socialism would definitely exclude the State. A Socialist State is a contradiction in terms. It would be as meaningless as to talk of Christian Atheism.

DEMOCRACY.

BEFORE we can intelligently discuss the question of Marxian democracy *versus* that of Stalinism, it is necessary to understand what is meant by democracy. The word has been so abused and misused that, of itself, it is meaningless. The Russian Stalinists may send a plug-ugly to Mexico to batter to death one of their enemies. And, they call that *democracy*. Or, a British Minister, in the secrecy of his office, and without consulting the citizens of the country, can concoct a new law compelling citizens of both sexes to labour when and where that Minister orders them. (Of course he puts upon his law the false label of "Direction.") And that system, also, is called *democracy*. Again, the Argentinean hero, Peron, can imitate Hitler & Co. to his heart's content, and calls his dictatorship a *democracy*. It would appear that there is no system of government prevailing in the world today, that is not a perfect form of *democracy*, if we are willing to believe its sponsors. We hope to prove to our readers that neither the Russian nor the British self-styled democracies are anything more than spurious counterfeits. Certainly, they have nothing in common

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with Marxian democracy.

Let us examine briefly the viewpoint of our national philosophers, men who contributed to the formulation of a conception of democracy antagonistic to that of the British and Russian rulers. We will take John Locke, a philosopher revered in Britain for over three hundred years. He said:—

“Man being born, as has been proved, with a title to perfect freedom and an uncontrolled enjoyment of all the rights and privileges of the law of Nature, equally with any other man, or number of men in the world, hath by Nature a power not only to preserve his property—that is, his life, liberty and estate against the injuries and attempts of other men, but to judge of and punish the breaches of that law in others, as he is persuaded that the offence deserves”—(*Two Treatises on Civil Government*).

And Locke goes on to show that in political societies, the liberties of the individual remain the same, but the punishment of the offences becomes the duty of the civil government, but always on the understanding that the government can make no law *without the consent of the individuals united within it*.

That insistence upon the fact that the validity of laws depends upon the consent of those who are to be governed by them, recurs again and again in these early champions of liberty and democracy. Note, for instance, the learned Hooker, when he says: “Laws, therefore, of what kind soever, *are available by consent*” (*Eccl. Pol.*, Book 1, sect. 19). And he adds: “Laws they are not, therefore, which public approbation hath not made so.” We wonder what he would have said to Mr Geo. Isaac’s law, the Direction of Labour?

We will now give the view of one of the greatest scien-

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tists of the Victorian period, and a courageous fighter for democracy, Herbert Spencer. He says: "What is essential to the idea of a slave? We primarily think of him as one who is owned by another. To be more than nominal, however, the ownership must be shown by control of the slave's actions—a control which is habitually for the benefit of the controller." That does not seem to fit with the "controls" of labour by the Labour Government.

On this subject one is always tempted to draw liberally from that other Victorian champion of liberty, John Stuart Mill. The difficulty with Mill, however, is that once one begins to quote from him, one cannot stop without losing many gems of his thought. Here is one on the representation of citizens in a democratic community.

"In a really equal democracy, every or other section would be represented, not disproportionately, but proportionately. A majority of the electors would always have a majority of the representatives, but a minority of the electors would always have a minority of the representatives. Man for man, they would be as fully represented as the majority. Unless they are, *there is not equal government*, but a government of inequality and privilege: one part of the people rule over the rest; there is a part whose fair and equal share of influence in the representation is withheld from them, contrary to all just government, but above all, contrary to the principle of democracy, which professes equality as its very root and foundation."

A careful consideration of that passage will satisfy one that the system of representative election developed in Britain during the last century would not satisfy Mill's requirement for a democracy. To make his point still more clear, Mill says: ". . . there is not equal suffrage where every single individual does not count for as much as any other single individual in the community." That

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is very far from being the case in Britain to-day.

We shall give just one more quotation to illustrate Mill's conception of the personal rights of individual citizens.

"If all mankind minus one, were of one opinion, and only one person of the contrary opinion, mankind would be no more justified in silencing that one person, than he, if he had the power, would be justified in silencing mankind." . . . "the peculiar evil of silencing the expression of an opinion is, that it is robbing the human race; posterity as well as the existing generation; those who dissent from the opinion, still more than those who hold it. . . ." (*On Liberty?* Walter Scott edit., pp. 30–31).

Finally, we take another definition of democracy, from John Locke. He defines it thus:—

"The liberty of man in society is to be under no other legislative power *but that established by consent* in the commonwealth, nor under the dominion of any will, or restraint of any law, but what that legislative shall enact according to the trust put in it. . . . This freedom from absolute, arbitrary power is so necessary to, and closely joined with, a man's preservation, that he cannot part with it but by what forfeits his preservation and life together." (*Two Treatises on Civil Government*, Book 2, chap. 4.) Italics ours.

Bearing in mind the insistence we have already spoken of, that all laws must have the approbation of the citizens before becoming valid, which is stressed by all these writers, and many more besides, the above is about as near a definition of democracy as could be obtained in a class-divided society. It will also be clear that no existing country has attained that advanced stage of democracy; certainly neither Britain nor Russia has done so.

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Great and authoritative as were the names of the men we have quoted, it must be remembered that their outlook on the subject was limited to the stage social evolution had reached in their time. In their days it would have been almost inconceivable for them to have visualised a community from which The State was banished, and a self-governing classless body of citizens managed their own administration. Consequently, their conception of democracy was restricted to the boundaries of the Political State. But, within the confines of the Political State, democracy, sincere as its advocates may be, cannot ripen to full fruition. The class struggle, becoming ever fiercer, leads the ruling class to determined efforts to suppress the democratic liberties of the people, and the always increasing numbers of the State bureaucracy tends to strangle democracy, and to destroy liberty by, first, totalitarian methods, such as industrial Conscription and Direction of Labour, and similar liberty-destroying laws and regulations; and, second, by the trick of delegating legislative powers from one body to another, until it is well-nigh impossible to get at the responsible offender in the case of any sort of tyranny. No. Democracy cannot develop fully in any community governed by the Political State.

It was not the least of the merits of Marx and Engels, that they fashioned for us the highest form of democracy yet known, a democracy based upon the conditions and needs of a Stateless and classless society freed, once and for all, from exploitation of man by man. It is a democracy in which the only restrictions upon the liberty of the individual are those necessary to secure the social rights of other individuals. Examination of that Marxian democracy will show fully that it is wide as the poles asun-

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der from the system in practice inside the Soviet Union. Just as the Russian system regarding the State is clearly opposed to that held and approved by Marx and Engels, so, also, is the Russian attitude upon democracy definitely anti-Marxist.

That will be all the more clearly seen if we compare the actions of governments with the actions approved in the writings of Marx and Engels along with the actual practice of Bolsheviks in the Soviet Union.

We turn to *The Paris Commune* in which Marx goes into the subject of democracy fairly thoroughly. One of the first actions of the working men and women of Paris after the reactionary government had shown Paris a clean pair of heels and left the workers in control, was to elect a new governing body for the city. That was done by the elections, on the 26th March 1871. Compare the democratic method of those elections in Paris with the methods of the elections in Soviet Russia. In Russia only one party, that of the Bolsheviks, is allowed to put up candidates at all. Only the Bolshevik Party are allowed to carry on propaganda, and only the same Bolshevik Party is allowed to be seated or elected. But, what a difference in Paris. That Parisian election was carried out by universal suffrage of all citizens irrespective of whether they were workers or reactionaries. All had an equal vote. The capitalist reactionaries had the right, and exercised it, of putting up their own candidates, some of which were elected. There were no restrictions placed upon any section. That was Marxian democracy.

On page 74, Marx writes: "The Commune was formed of the Municipal Councillors, chosen by universal suffrage in various wards of the town, responsible and revo-

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cable at short terms. The majority of its members were naturally working or acknowledged representatives of the working class . . . the police was at once stripped of its political attributes and turned into responsible and at all times revocable agent of the Commune.”

The last item is in direct antagonism with the policy of the Soviet Union, in which the police are definitely given “political attributes,” and very sinister attributes at that.

Marx continues: “From the members of the Commune downwards, the public service had to be done at *workmen’s wages*. The vested interests and the representation allowance of the high dignitaries of the State disappeared along with the high dignitaries themselves. . . . The judicial functionaries were to be divested of that sham independence which had but served to mask their abject subserviency to all succeeding governments, to which in turn, they had taken, and broken, the oaths of allegiance. Like the rest of the public servants, magistrates and judges were to be elective, responsible and revocable.”

That is the way Marx showed his approval of the democracy of the Commune. We shall see further that that same democracy was more complete, more thorough, and based upon a vastly higher plane, than any the world has yet seen. It is also an immeasurable distance above the Police State of the Soviet Union.

THE COMMUNE AT WORK.

FOUR days after its election, the Paris Commune confirmed the election of foreigners as eligible to

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become members, since "The flag of the Commune is that of the Universal Republic." By that decision the Commune declared its international solidarity with all peoples and nations. . . . Democracy with them was world-wide in its scope. Their conception of democracy was upon a far higher plane than capitalist and nationalist democracy.

Shortly afterwards, the Commune decided to pull down the Vendome Column, a monument constructed with the cannon taken in the wars of the first Napoleon, a monument the very existence of which was a glorification of war and militarism. That was destroyed in the name of the Universal Republic. It signified that democracy and peace were indivisible in the minds of the Communards. That was the democracy of Marx and Engels, both of whom put their testimony of the fact into writing. The capitalist democracy and bourgeois pacifism of our time is a thousand miles behind the healthy democracy and anti-militarism as supported and praised by Marx. We leave it to our readers to judge what Marx would have written of the great military shows of Soviet Russia; what he would have said of their turning the May Day Demonstrations into a glorification of militarism, a show of military strength and a propagandist effort for imperial expansion and national glory.

"The first decree of the Commune," said Marx approvingly, "was the suppression of the standing army, and the substitution for it of the armed people."

"The unity of the nation was not to be broken; but, on the contrary, to be organised by the Communal Constitution, and to become a reality by the destruction of the State power which claimed to be the embodiment of that unity in-

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dependent of, and superior to, the nation itself, from which it was but a parasitic excrescence.”

“Having once got rid of the standing army and the police, the physical force elements of the old government, the Commune was anxious to break the spiritual force of repression, the ‘parson-power,’ by the disestablishment and disendowment of all churches as proprietary bodies. The priests were sent back to the recesses of private life, there to feed upon the alms of the faithful in imitation of their predecessors the Apostles. The whole of the educational institutions were opened to the people gratuitously, and at the same time cleared of all interference of Church and State. Thus, not only was education made accessible to all, but science itself freed from the fetters which class prejudice and governmental force had imposed upon it.”

Space forbids further quotations from Marx, though they are there in plenty. Engels wrote: “From the very outset the Commune had to recognise that the working class, having once attained supremacy in the State, could not work with the old machinery of government; that this working class, if it was not to lose the position which it had just conquered, had, on the one hand, to abolish all the old machinery of oppression that had hitherto been utilised against itself, and, on the other hand, to secure itself against its own representatives and officers by declaring them to be removable, without exception and at all times.” (From “Introduction” to *The Civil War in France*.)

From the above it is clear that the democracy they actively propagated, was far and away in advance of any so-called democracy in any of the great capitalist countries, including Soviet Russia. As example, let us take the closing statement of Engels quoted above. What great State Power, including Russia, gives to the citizens

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the right of removing an objectionable State officer or servant from office without exception and at all times?

Unquestionably, just as Soviet Russia fails completely to justify its stand on the Political State to accord with Marxian principles, so, also, it fails lamentably to establish any sort of claim to act in accordance with Marxian Democracy.

DICTATORSHIP OF THE PROLETARIAT.

OF all the slogans put forward by the Stalinist Parties that of the dictatorship of the proletariat has received most attention. And, of all the falsely alleged Marxian policies the Stalinists have advocated, none is more anti-Marxian than this.

What is the "Dictatorship of the Proletariat?" It may mean several things. In the mouth of the Stalinist it means a seizure of governmental powers, if necessary by force, in the fashion of the French Blanquists of a century ago. Having succeeded in that, the power must be retained by a ruthless dictatorship. Further, the Stalinists claim that this dictatorship is the necessary first step toward emancipation of the workers in all countries, irrespective of the stage of social evolution any given country has reached. China or India, Burma or Britain, Timbuctoo or the United States of America, the dictatorship is the first and urgent policy to adopt everywhere. Further still, the Stalinists allege that this policy of dictatorship was fathered and sponsored by Karl Marx. The basis for this last is an isolated remark made by Marx in the *Gotha Program*. Right here, we draw attention to the

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following facts—(1) Marx did not write the *Gotha Program* for publication; (2) he never did publish it; (3) no part of it was ever published in his lifetime; (4) it never has been published in full;³ (5) a part of it was published after his death; (6) it was written specifically for a circle of friends. These facts have been conveniently and systematically ignored by Stalinist spokesmen.

In order to avoid misunderstanding, we say at once that we do not suggest for a moment that the *Gotha Program* is not a genuine and a valuable piece of Marxian writing. It is both. But we point out the facts above in order to draw attention to the claim that, if Marx had regarded the reference to the dictatorship of the proletariat as a fundamental part of his scientific conclusions, he would most certainly have published it to the world, instead of burying it in a document that he had no intention of publishing.

In view of the amount of noise the Stalinists have made about it, most people will be surprised when we say that Marx published only one reference to the dictatorship in the whole of his life, and that was away back in 1850, and it was even more off-hand than that in the *Gotha Program*. In the subsequent 33 years of his life he never again made any public reference to it. The truth is

³ [This is an error. According to the editors of the *Marx-Engels Collected Works*, “The *Critique* was published in English for the first time, according to the text in *Die Neue Zeit*, in *The Socialist Series*, number one, under the title: ‘The Socialist Programme. By Karl Marx,’ Socialist Labour Press, Glasgow [1918.] (See footnote 107, volume 24, page 604.) The author of this SLPGB pamphlet presumably was not aware or had forgotten about this SLPGB publication. However, the oversight does not negate the argument regarding the “dictatorship of the proletariat.”—R.B.]

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that it was Lenin, and not Marx, who erected this dictatorship theory into a basic principle applicable in all countries.

We are not, however, going to rely upon this negative evidence alone for refutation of the Stalinist claims. We shall expose the falsity of the claim by more solid and unquestionable evidence.

According to M. Lucien Laurat, *Marxism and Democracy*, p. 40,⁴ Marx is known to have spoken of the dictatorship only three times in his life, once for publication and twice in private correspondence. In order to have the record clear we shall give these three references in the order in which they were uttered. The first appeared in *The Class Struggles in France, 1848-50*, p. 174. Here it is:—

“ . . . the proletariat groups itself more and more around the revolutionary Socialism, around Communism, for which the bourgeoisie itself has invented the name Blanqui. This Socialism is the declaration in permanency of the revolution, the class dictation of the revolution, the class dictation of the proletariat as the needful transition-point toward the abolition of class divisions as such, toward the abolition of all the conditions of production upon which they rest, toward the abolition of all the social relations conforming to these conditions of production, toward the transformation of all ideas that proceed from these social relations.”

Two years later, in 1852, writing on theoretical questions to his friend Weydemeyer, Marx wrote:—

“What I did that was new was to prove (1) that the existence of classes is only bound up with the particular, historic phases in the development of production; (2) that the

⁴ [Laurat, Lucien. *Marxism and Democracy*. Translated by Edward Fitzgerald. London: Victor Gollancz ltd, 1940.]

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class struggle necessarily leads to the dictatorship of the proletariat; (3) that this dictatorship itself constitutes the transition to the abolition of all classes and to a classless society.”

We come now to the well-known and last utterance of Marx to the subject, the reference made in the *Gotha Program*:—

“Between capitalist and communist society lies the period of the revolutionary transformation of the one into the other. There corresponds to this also a political transition period in which the State can be nothing but the revolutionary dictatorship of the proletariat.”

There we have all that Marx is known to have written about the dictatorship. In passing we want to emphasise the fact that, in every one of them, Marx specifically insists upon the transitory nature of the dictatorship. In dealing with the Soviet State it is well to bear that in mind.

WHAT DID MARX MEAN BY THE DICTATORSHIP?

WE now take up another angle of the subject, an angle that Stalinists are exceedingly shy of dealing with. What did Marx and Engels mean by the phrase, “Dictatorship of the Proletariat?” Stalinists are not only shy of the question, but seek to evade it by the trick of assuming without proof that Marx held the same definition of the dictatorship as that adopted and practised by Lenin. It is just that unsupported assumption that we are challenging. M. Lucien Laurat, in the book from which we have already quoted, says even if Marx

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had made many more references to the dictatorship—

“ . . . we should still affirm one thing without fear of contradiction: neither Marx nor Engels ever fully explained what this phrase actually meant, but whenever the context is more explicit it is quite clear that for them this ‘dictatorship of the proletariat’ was synonymous—with democracy.”

That M. Laurat is correct in this claim we shall show by the testimony of Engels himself. We have many times referred to the admiration and approval Marx and Engels expressed for the complete democracy of the Paris Communards while Paris was under their rule. In closing his eulogy, Engels said:—

“The German Philistine invariably falls into a holy terror at the words, dictatorship of the proletariat. Do you want to know, gentlemen, what that dictatorship really means? *Take a look at the Commune of Paris. That was the dictatorship of the proletariat.*”—(Italics ours)

That statement is clear and unmistakable. It makes it clear that when Marx and Engels spoke of the dictatorship, they did NOT mean the sort of dictatorship set up in Russia; they did not mean the suppression of free newspapers, free speech, the freedom to form opposition parties. And they did not mean the secret liquidation of enemies, the building up of a huge State apparatus and the creation of a terrifying military machine, the grabbing of territory from weaker countries, the domination of other countries by force and threats of force. None of these things was envisaged by Marx and Engels when they spoke of the dictatorship. They meant by it the recognised forms of democracy, the setting up of parties, the contest for power with the enemies of the working class,

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and the winning of majorities at the polling booths, etc. That was the method of the Paris Commune; and the Commune, said Engels, was the dictatorship of the proletariat.

In contrast to that democratic method of convincing and mobilising the mass of the people to work and to vote for the emancipation of labour, the Stalinist method is that of conquest and ruthless force. The peoples of the world are not to be convinced, they are to be conquered. Instead of winning supporters with intellectual arguments, they are to be conquered by military force. Instead of the working class winning its own salvation, as Marx put it, by their own conscious and intelligent efforts, they are to be forcibly subdued by a junta of professional politicians in Moscow. And the parentage of this rule by force they seek to attribute to Marx and Engels.

THE MATERIALIST CONCEPTION OF HISTORY.

ONE aspect of Marxism which Stalinists are never tired of rolling off their tongues, is that of the Materialist Conception of History. Yet, there could hardly be one which so flatly contradicts and kicks in the face the theory of the dictatorship of the proletariat as this. In order to keep the record clear and to leave no room for doubt as to what that historical conception is, we reproduce here the description written by F. Engels just after the death of Marx. It is taken from the second preface to the *Communist Manifesto* and dated 26th June 1883.

“The pervading and basic thought of the Manifesto is,

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that in every historical epoch, the prevailing mode of economic production and exchange, and the social organisation necessarily following from it, form the basis upon which is built up, and from which alone can be explained, the political and intellectual history of that epoch: that, consequently the whole history of mankind (since the dissolution of primitive tribal society, holding land in common ownership) has been a history of class struggles, contests between exploiting and exploited, ruling and oppressed classes: but that this struggle has nowadays reached a stage of development in which the exploited and oppressed—the proletariat—cannot attain its emancipation from the sway of the exploiting and ruling—the bourgeoisie—without, at the same time and once and for all, emancipating society at large from all exploitation, oppression, class distinctions and class struggles.”

Stated in that form it may appear to the ordinary reader difficult to understand. We might try to make it easier to grasp by saying that the methods by which man produces his food, clothing and shelter constitutes the chief factor in the determination of his social, political and intellectual development. As an example we give the following passage from *A Short History of Politics*, by Edward Jenks, page 27.

“Slavery arises from the practice of keeping alive captives taken in war, instead of putting them to death. In savage days, wars are usually the result of scarcity of food, and, as we pointed out previously, result in the killing and eating of a stranger ‘pack.’ But, with the increasing certainty of food supply, resulting among other benefits from pastoral pursuits, cannibalism becomes unnecessary, and captives are carefully kept alive, in order that they may labour for their captors. It may sound odd to speak of slavery as a beneficent institution, but one of the first lessons which the student of history has to learn is, that things which seem *to us now* very wicked, may have really been *at one time* improvements on something much worse. Slavery is an ugly thing,

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but it is better than cannibalism. Again, however, we notice that the upward step was due, not to exalted morality, but to practical convenience. Morality is the result, not the cause, of social amelioration.”

That passage should help readers to grasp the truth that the intellectual development of man is predicated upon the degree of progress he has attained in supplying himself with his means of subsistence. Take note, however, that we said it was the chief, not the only, factor. We shall supplement the case with an example from a modern stage of development. It is taken from F. Engels’ *Socialism: Utopian and Scientific*.

“Before capitalistic production, *i.e.*, in the Middle Ages, the system of petty industry obtained generally, based upon the private property of the labourers in their means of production: in the country, the agriculture of the small peasant, freemen or serf; in the towns, the handicrafts organised in guilds. The instruments of labour—land, agricultural implements, the workshop, the tool—were the instruments of labour of single individuals, adapted for the use of one worker, and, therefore, of necessity, small, dwarfish, circumscribed. But for this very reason they belonged, as a rule to the producer himself. . . . The individual producer had, from raw material belonging to himself, and generally his own handiwork, produced it with his own tools, by the labour of his own hands or of his family. There was no need for him to appropriate the new product. It belonged wholly to him as a matter of course. His property in the product was, therefore, *based upon his own labour*.”

Our quotations give a clear picture of two distinct historic stages of social evolution. From them it will be clear that, for the purpose of making social changes, the tactics and policies must differ in every stage in accordance with the material, social and intellectual conditions of the epoch. At the risk of over-emphasis we shall illus-

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trate this by an example. Reformist Labour Parties, of all kinds, ranging from the British Labour Party down to Stalinist Parties, all stand on the same theoretic foundation, that of the State, and State-owned, or, nationalised industry. That is the political expression of their spurious socialism.

Keeping that point in mind, we turn to our last quotation from Engels, which reveals that in the petty, undeveloped industry of the Middle Ages, individual production was the rule.

“ . . . the individual producer had, from raw material belonging to himself, and generally his own handiwork, produced it (his commodity) with his own tools, by the labour of his own hands or of his family.”

That means all commodities, boots and shoes, for example, which are to-day produced on mass scale, in huge factories and with mammoth machinery, were, in the Middle Ages, made by thousands of individual workers all working in single rooms of their own homes. One can easily see that the policy of the Reformists of nationalising industries, while possible in conditions of to-day, would have been sheer madness in the Middle Ages, because no one could have nationalised thousands of little cottage front rooms.

That example should make it patent to all that revolutionary policies cannot be stereotyped into fixed and unchanging rules, but must be adapted to fit the ever-changing economic conditions of society.

The Leninist theory of the dictatorship of the proletariat, for all countries, irrespective of the stage of development, and always “leading up to the armed struggle for power,” is just that kind of madness we mentioned

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just now in relation to nationalisation of individual production. To frame one set policy for application to all stages of historic development displays a complete lack of understanding of the Marxian theory of historic evolution. To-day, for instance, the Stalinists have sought with some success to organise supporters and communist parties in such areas as India, Burma, Malaya, and similar places. Here is to be set up the dictatorship of the proletariat. All we can say is that, first of all, they will need to transport proletarians to these areas before they can organise the dictators, or provide the proletarians to be dictated to. And, as to “leading up to the armed struggle for power” about which we were wont to hear from the great theorist, Mr Palme Dutt, it can only be what it is now, driving the unfortunate natives into a battue.

WHAT IS MARXISM?

THE question may be raised whether our own conception of the Marxian theory is a correct one. We will welcome investigation. Let us turn to the *Communist Manifesto*. The first Preface to the *Manifesto*, written by Marx and Engels in 1872, has this to say:—

“However much the state of things may have altered during the last twenty-five years, the general principles laid down in this Manifesto are, on the whole, as correct to-day as ever. Here and there some detail might be improved. *The practical application of the principles will depend as the Manifesto itself states, everywhere and at all times, on the historical conditions for the time being existing.*”

We ask our readers to take particular note of the pas-

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sage we have placed in italics. It completely cuts the ground from under the claim of the Leninist theory of the dictatorship of the proletariat. Still further, in support of our position, we shall give further documentary evidence that our attitude on the subject is that of Marx and Engels themselves, as will be seen by the following unquestionable statements they have left on record. The first of these is a continuation of our last quote from the *Communist Manifesto*. It emphasises even more strongly the fact that revolutionary policies can never be fixed and immutable, but must depend upon historical conditions.

“ . . . and, for that reason *no special stress is laid on the revolutionary measures proposed at the end of Section II. That passage would, in many respects, be very differently worded to-day.* In view of the gigantic strides of modern industry since 1848, and of the accompanying improved and extended organisation of the working class, in view of the practical experience gained, first, in the February revolution, and then, still more, in the Paris Commune, where the proletariat for the first time held political power for two whole months, *this programme has in some details become antiquated.* One thing especially was proved by the Commune, viz., that ‘the working class cannot simply lay hold of the ready-made State machinery and wield it for its own purposes.’ Further, it is self-evident that the criticism of Socialist literature is deficient in relation to the present time because it comes down only to 1847; *also that the remarks on the relations of the Communists to the various opposition parties (Section IV) although in principle still correct, yet in practice are antiquated, because the political situation has been entirely changed,* and the progress of history has swept from off the earth the greater portion of the political parties there enumerated.”

Clearly, Marx and Engels did not hold the view that any policy could be drafted for all times and circum-

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stances. Now, we will take the well-known speech of Marx at Amsterdam in 1873. Speaking of the emancipation of labour he said:—

“We do not claim that the means necessary for bringing about this aim will be the same everywhere. We know that we must take account of the institutions, customs and traditions of the various countries, and we do not deny that there are countries, such as the United States and Great Britain—and if I knew your institutions better I should perhaps add Holland—where the workers will be able to achieve their aims by peaceful means.”

In face of these clear and definite declarations by the founders of Scientific Socialism, can there still remain the slightest ground for the Stalinist claim of the support of Marx for their reactionary policy of dictatorship?

The foregoing chapters on this subject have shown that Marxism and Stalinism are not merely two different things, but that they are definitely in contradiction with each other. We have shown that on such essential principles as the attitude towards Democracy, towards the State, and towards Historic Evolution, Marx and Engels were in declared opposition to the policies of the Stalinists.

As to the State. In referring to the attainment of political power by the working class, and their use of it to transform the means of production into State property, Engels said:

*“But, in doing this, it abolishes all class distinctions and class antagonisms, abolishes also the State as State. Society, thus far, based upon class antagonisms, had need of the State. That is, of an organisation of the particular class which was *pro tempore* the exploiting class, an organisation for the purpose of preventing any interference from without with the existing conditions of production, and therefore,*

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especially, for the purpose of forcibly keeping the exploited classes in the condition of oppression corresponding with the given mode of production (slavery, serfdom, wage-labour).”

To Marx and Engels then, the State, no matter what its form or what class happens to be dominant, is an institution designed and fashioned to aid the dominant class by forcibly keeping the robbed and oppressed classes in order. And that characteristic is one of the chief attributes of the State in every form it may take from its first appearance onwards. The Soviet State is no exception. The chief difference between the Soviet State and the Czarist State is the substitution of a new class, the bureaucratic class, in the place of the old Czarist ruling class.

We emphasise this definition of Engels because certain interested supporters of Stalinism have invented a claim that Engels, in speaking of the ending of the State, referred only to the capitalist State. This claim is false, and at the same time, fantastic, in face of the mass of evidence against it. But there are plenty of people ready to swallow avidly any old sort of yarn provided it is sponsored by the Marx and Engels Institute in Moscow. We ask readers to read again the Engels definition of the State we have just given. They will then see that it cannot honestly be twisted into anything less than the demand for the abolition of all forms of the State.

For example, Engels says the transformation of the means of production into State property “. . . *abolishes also the State as State.*” He does not say it abolishes only the capitalist State, but THE State. That is as a State of whatever kind, Soviet or otherwise. If further evidence on that is needed there are more such statements, for

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instance, “The proletariat, the lowest stratum of existing society, cannot stir, cannot raise itself up without the whole of the higher strata forming official society being sprung into the air” (*Communist Manifesto*).

Or this, “The proletarians cannot become masters of the productive forces of society without abolishing their own previous mode of appropriation, and with it every other previous mode of production. The proletarians have nothing of their own to secure. They must destroy all previous securities for, and insurances of, individual property” (*Communist Manifesto*).

Has the Soviet Republic done that? No.

The constant repetition by Stalinists of their devotion to, and their pretence that their policies are in accordance with, Democracy, have become a sort of international joke among diplomatists, and arouse feelings of disgust among people who know the history of the Bolsheviks. Some of their antidemocratic actions and policies have been exposed in our indictment but space compels us to reduce these to a minimum.

THE FIRST WRONG STEP.

IT is well known that the so-called Bolshevik Party arose from a split in the Russian Social Democratic Labour Party at a conference held in London in 1903, but few people know just what the split was about. We give here the explanation made by Lucien Laurat, in his *Marxism and Democracy*.

“The Menshevists, together with Rosa Luxemburg and Trotsky, believed that Russian Social Democracy should be a party with a democratic structure, and that its leadership

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should be determined by the collective will of its adherents freely expressed. Lenin, on the other hand, the spokesman of the Bolsheviks, declared himself in favour of an authoritarian structure which would give a Central Committee all power, including the power to dissolve and reconstitute, without possibility of repeal, all the local organisations, so that, in the last resort, as Rosa Luxemburg pointed out, ‘the Central Committee would be able to determine at will the composition of the highest authoritative body of the party, its national Congress.’”

Thus the split was caused by the demand of the Leninist section for a complete dictatorship of the Central Committee over the entire membership of the party. This was opposed by the so-called Menshevists who, strictly in accordance with Marxism, demanded the party be constructed upon the democratic basis of majority control, whilst the Bolsheviks wanted to destroy that democratic basis in favour of the Central Committee dictatorship. And Bolshevik policy has been one of undemocratic dictatorship ever since. It is simply amazing that they should have the nerve to describe themselves as democrats, and talk of other people not conforming to the principles of democracy.

Lucien Laurat quotes in this connection the statement of the *Communist Manifesto*, that “The first stage in the working class revolution is the constitution of the proletariat as the ruling class, the *conquest of democracy*.” And, as Laurat adds: “Those who set up the ‘dictatorship of the proletariat’ against democracy have no right to call themselves Marxists.”

As to the conflict between the dictatorship of the proletariat of Stalinism and the Materialist Conception of Marx little more need be said for the moment. The Materialist Conception, showing the constant change in

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conditions, has as a consequence the necessity for constant change in revolutionary policies. But the consequence of the policy of the dictatorship claimed by the Stalinists all over the world, is that revolutionary tactics must be static in accordance with the dictatorship. Further, that dictatorship is no longer spoken of by Soviet leaders as a transitory affair. It is now assumed to be permanent, and is defended as such. Indeed, after thirty years of building up and strengthening the dictatorship, one can hardly regard it as a temporary affair to last only until the extinction of the bourgeois should be completed.

But the strongest condemnation of the dictatorship of the Stalinists is that written by Marx and Engels in 1872, in the first Preface to the *Communist Manifesto*. We give it again here:

“The practical application of the principles (of the *Manifesto*) will depend, as the *Manifesto* itself states, everywhere and at all times, on the historical conditions for the time being existing.”

Even if Marx and Engels had never written that, it would still have been implicit in the entire body of doctrine they formulated. How can that declaration be squared with the Stalinist claim that the “dictatorship of the proletariat, must be the first step towards working-class emancipation in all countries?” We have put that question to many Stalinists, but we have never found one ready or willing to attempt an answer. Sometimes we have been met by silence, sometimes by evasions, and quite often we have been met with the potent argument—“Yah: Social Fascist.” And this seems to be one of the most powerful and convincing arguments in the Sta-

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linists' book of words.

Another Marxian principle must be mentioned here. Marx claimed that the emancipation of the working class can be achieved only by the conscious and intelligent effort of the workers themselves. That he regarded this of importance is shown by the fact that he inserted it as the first article of the Statutes of the International Working Men's Association (The First International).

Coupled with and supplementary to it, we have the declaration, "The proletariat of every country naturally must first settle accounts with its own bourgeoisie."

Stalinists, through all the long list of their conquests of small and helpless nations, from Georgia to Czechoslovakia, have regularly violated this fundamental principle of Marx. Stalinist policy in all countries is clandestine conspiracy, wire-pulling, lying propaganda, distrust of the rank and file, formation of Fifth Columns, and finally, of pitiless brute force. These methods may be seen at work in most European and Asiatic countries, in France and Italy; they are the only policies of Stalin's Yes-men.

When, by means of these tactics Stalinist minions do get control in any country, they begin with a period of terrorism, and this is followed by a nicely planned plebiscite, which shows that ninety per cent. or more of the victims are simply longing to have the Stalinist shackles fettered upon their limbs. In fact such unanimity has not been seen before since the Gadarene swine⁵ gave their

⁵ [St. Mark (5:13) "And forthwith Jesus gave them leave. And the unclean spirits went out, and entered into the swine; and the herd ran violently down a steep place into the sea, (they were about two thousand,) and were choked in the sea."]

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thrilling display of the United Front in their wild rush to destruction.

This is the very opposite of the workers achieving their emancipation by their own conscious and intelligent efforts, and this interference and conquest by a foreign country does not accord with the Marxist declaration that, "The proletariat of every country naturally must first settle accounts with their own bourgeoisie."

This analysis of Soviet doctrines and policies in the light of the actual written words of Marx and Engels reveals the fact that the Russian Sovietists have perpetrated a monstrous hoax upon the peoples of the world. And, what is even worse, the spurious caricature they have substituted for genuine Marxian principles has gratuitously given to the beneficiaries and spokesmen of the plutocratic exploiting class a needed excuse for distorting and misrepresenting the real doctrines of Marx, to say nothing of the piling up of their vilifications of Marx himself. The harm done to the international working-class movement by this alone is incalculable. It constitutes a crime against the working-class movement the results of which are beyond conception.

APPENDIX

We propose here to supplement the text on the subject of “Democracy,” with the following extract from the Italian writer on Marxism, A. Labriola. The italics are ours.

“Just as in view of the improvement of modern weapons the tactic of street riots has become inopportune, and just as the complexity of the modern State shows the insufficiency of a sudden capture of a municipal government to impose upon a whole people the will and the ideas of a minority, no matter how courageous and progressive, even so, on its side, the mass of the proletarians no longer holds to the word of command of a few leaders, nor does it regulate its movements by the instructions of captains who might upon the ruins of one government raise up another. The labouring mass where it has developed politically has made and is making its democratic education. It is choosing its representatives and submitting their action to its criticism. It examines and makes its own the idea and the propositions which these representatives submit to it. *It already knows, or it begins to understand according to the situation in the various countries, that the conquest of political power cannot and should not be made by others in its name, and especially that it cannot be the consequence of a single blow. In a word it knows or it is beginning to understand that the dictatorship of the proletariat which shall have for its task the socialization of the means of production cannot be the work of a mass led by a few and that it must be, and that it will be, the work of the proletarians themselves when they have become in themselves and through long practice a political organisation.*

“. . . Its political education takes each day a new step toward the conquest of political power. The rebellion of the productive forces against the form of production, the struggle of living labour against accumulated labour, becomes every day more evident. The capitalist system is henceforth

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upon the defensive and it reveals its decadence by this singular contradiction: the peaceful world of industry has become a colossal camp in which militarism develops, the peaceful period of industry has become by the irony of things the period of the continuous invention of new engines of war.”

PRINTED FOR THE SOCIALIST LABOUR PRESS, 39 SOUTH BRIDGE,
EDINBURGH, 1
BY JOHN WILSON, 66 HIGH STREET.