

Dictatorship of the Proletariat

SIR,—Mr. Sid Scott (*Listener*, April 10) and "Paderewski" (March 27) each seems anxious to find an orthodox definition of "The Dictatorship of the Proletariat" which will accord with his point of view.

When I was in Moscow I bought two books which seem to me to be authoritative. One is *V. I. Lenin: Selected Works, in Two Volumes*, and published by the Foreign Languages Publishing House, Moscow, in 1947. The other is *The Teachings of Lenin and Stalin on Proletarian Revolution and the State*, written by A. Y. Vyshinsky and published by the Soviet News, London, in 1948. In *Lenin* I read on p. 365, Vol. 2: "He (Kautsky) ought to have had recourse to his memory and extracted from his 'pigeon holes' all these instances in which Marx speaks of Dictatorship. Had he done so he would certainly have arrived at the following definition or at one, in the main, coinciding with it. Dictatorship is rule based directly on force and unrestricted by any laws."

Vyshinsky in *Teachings of Lenin and Stalin*, p. 64, says: "Lenin points out that 'Scientific dictatorship means nothing else than unrestricted power, absolutely unimpeded by laws or regulations and relying directly upon force.'" (He says he quotes this from Lenin: *Selected Works* (English Edition, Vol. 2, p. 254.)

Mr. Scott reads into this "a dictatorship of an overwhelming majority over a tiny minority." That is interesting and deserves examination. Vyshinsky (p. 65) quotes Lenin again: "Dictatorship means not only force, although it is impossible without force; it also means an organisation of Labour on a higher level than on the previous forms." This takes us back to *V. I. Lenin: Selected Works*, Vol. 2, p. 327, where we read in an article, *Raising the Productivity of Labour*: "We in Russia must study the Taylor system and systematically try it out and adapt it to our purposes. At the same time we must take into account the specific features of the transition period from Capitalism to Socialism, which, on the one hand, require that the foundations be laid of the Socialist organisation of competition, and on the other hand the application of coercion, so that the slogan of 'Dictatorship of the Proletariat' shall not be desecrated by the practice of a jelly-fish proletarian government."

Again on p. 767, discussing the role of the Trades Unions under the Dictatorship of the Proletariat, he says that "while the Trade Unions' principal method of operation is that of persuasion and education, they cannot refuse to participate in coercion. They must protect the interests of the working people, but they cannot refuse to exert pressure on them." Are the working people the "tiny minority" to which Mr. Scott refers? It would seem so, for if we revert to Vyshinsky (p. 65) we read: "We know the classical formula of Stalin on the three main aspects of the Dictatorship of the Proletariat." He goes on to

quote the three, the second one reading: "The utilisation of the power of the proletariat to detach the toiling and exploited masses from the bourgeoisie, to consolidate the alliance of the proletariat with these masses in the cause of Socialist construction and to ensure the State leadership of these masses by the proletariat." If the above means anything, it means that the masses and the proletariat are two separate entities, the masses being led or dictated to by the proletariat.

Vyshinsky continues: "Stalin also demonstrates 'the mechanism of the dictatorship of the proletariat,' 'the levers,' 'the directing force,' the sum total which constitutes the system of the dictatorship of the proletariat of which Lenin speaks." Here we see the Party (the main guiding force in the system of the Dictatorship of the Proletariat), and here we see a Party of six millions being "the transmission belts, the levers, the directing force" of over two hundred millions of Soviet citizens. Is this so? Vyshinsky goes on (p. 67): "The vanguard of the Proletariat must be the teacher, guide, leader of all who work and are exploited, in arranging their social life without the bourgeoisie and against the bourgeoisie." Here he reveals the position: (1) The vanguard of the Proletariat, i.e., the Communist Party, does the dictating; (2) he admits the workers are still exploited; (3) they are "without the bourgeoisie," so the bourgeoisie cannot be Mr. Scott's "small minority," and (4) they are to be led against the bourgeoisie. To find these, surely they must look beyond the "Curtain." The Dictatorship of the Proletariat means the dictatorship of the Soviet people by the Communist Party.

Let us examine this. On p. 70 Vyshinsky writes: "Stalin wrote in his work, *The Foundation of Leninism*, 'This special form of alliance' (the alliance of the Proletariat with the millions of working people) 'consists in the fact that the guiding force of the alliance is the Proletariat. This special form of alliance consists in the fact that the leader in the State, the leader in the system of the dictatorship of the proletariat, is one Party, the Party of the Communists, which does not and cannot share that leadership with other Parties.'" And again (p. 71), "Lenin explained that the concept of the dictatorship of the proletariat includes the assumption of power by the proletariat alone, and the wielding of power by it alone. Here there is not and cannot be any question of the power of the whole of the people in the sense the Mensheviks and Social Revolutionaries conceived of it."

It seems then that the "tiny minority" subject to dictation is "the whole of the people," less the Communist Party: it is indeed the many millions of working people who, as Vyshinsky shows, are not included in the dictating proletariat, a body, which in its turn, must submit to the guidance of "its vanguard," the Communist Party.

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