

THE NEWSLETTER

Edited by Peter Fryer, 180 Clapham High St, London, SW4. Subscription 9s. for 12 issues, post free.

a service to socialists

Vol. 1, No. 15

August 17, 1957

THE DOCKERS DON'T LET FELLOW-WORKERS DOWN

By Hugh Scannell, Portworker at West India Docks

I WANT to explain to readers of The Newsletter why thousands of London portworkers have taken their stand this week at the side of the Covent Garden market men.

And why, moreover, the dock section committee of the National Amalgamated Stevedores and Dockers, representing 'blue' union men in London, Liverpool, Birkenhead, Manchester and Hull, declared its support for the dockers' solidarity action.

Briefly, the dockers see the action of the Covent Garden employers as an all-out attack on trade unionism.

In the past the Covent Garden men have always given financial support to the dockers in their struggles. We were therefore bound to help them—particularly as a defeat for the market men would be only the prelude to an attack on conditions in the ports.

We already have pooled labour, which they were being asked to accept, and we know its disadvantages.

At Tooley Street, where the refusal to handle produce that was destined to cross a picket line sparked off the strike, there is a tradition that nothing is done that would damage the cause of trade unionism.

Two weeks ago, at the Canary Wharf, a fruit ship was declared black, and the employers had to take her to Oslo. The dockers would not touch her. Up in Leith the dockers 'blacked' Covent Garden produce.

Incensed by blackleg labour

On thing above all that has incensed the dockers is the employers' use of blackleg labour to handle crates of fruit even while discussions were taking place.

This happened at the Butler's Wharf Extension. They tried to tell us the fruit was condemned. But the crates were as clean as a whistle. And all the time they were being taken off, discussions were proceeding. This really got our backs up in the West India Docks.

Most of the Transport and General Workers' Union officials are so discredited in the eyes of the men that they have not shown themselves at meetings—all except one, who told us he did not care whether we were working or starving.

This official tried to talk about the possibility of the owners of fruit and vegetables issuing writs against the Port of London Authority.

But he was jeered at. As Tommy Walker, who is leading the strike at Butler's Wharf, pointed out, the only documents we are interested in are not legal writs but union cards, and the obligations they impose on loyal trade unionists.

(Garston Strike: overleaf)

'NO' TO TEACHERS' £20 A MONTH CLAIM

The Southern Rhodesia Prime Minister and Minister of Native Education, Mr. Garfield Todd, has rejected a plea from Native teachers for a wage increase, says The Federation of Rhodesia and Nyasaland Newsletter.

Mr. Todd told a delegation from the African Teachers' Association that there was no money available to meet the demands.

The teachers had asked him to reconsider their salary scales, 'bearing in mind that the lowest salary on which the professional man can subsist is £20 a month, with a possible minimum of £15'. Their appeal was supported by a family budget.

WHY WE FOUGHT—AND WILL FIGHT AGAIN

By a Covent Garden Porter

EVEN after years of successful struggle, our working conditions are still among the worst in Britain.

Most of us begin work at 6 a.m. and finish at 3.30 to 4 p.m. We have to pull, for long distances, barrows and trolleys of ancient design (which we hire ourselves), laden with anything up to three-quarters of a ton of produce.

Some of us have to walk as many as twenty miles a day.

This arduous labour is carried on even in the wettest weather. Yet there is hardly an employer who provides adequate drying facilities for our clothes.

In the whole of Covent Garden there are only three public lavatories provided for more than 3,000 men who regularly attend the market.

Some firms do provide toilet facilities, but these are usually kept in such a dirty state that most workers prefer not to use them.

But what of the chaotic and archaic system of fruit and vegetable distribution? It is a paradise for the parasite!

Forty per cent of the produce that goes through Covent Garden is reconsigned to other parts of the country. Quite often goods will come down from Liverpool, be inspected by a commission agent, and be sent back to Liverpool!

In other words, highly perishable commodities have to be siphoned through London. And somebody in that market is all the time getting his cut on fruit and vegetables which are never even unloaded.

Distribution takes over half

According to H. D. Walston's 'Our Daily Bread', published by the Labour Party in 1952, over fifty per cent of the price the housewife pays for her fruit and vegetables goes on transport and distribution.

After four weeks of struggle many of the lads have come to the conclusion that only the nationalization of the fruit and vegetable wholesale trade can finally solve the problem—with the workers playing a full part in the running of the markets.

This is the only way to improve their working conditions.

Meanwhile the Covent Garden men are determined not to let the bosses smash trade union organization. That is why we put up the fight we did. We are ready to fight again if need be.

HIS WHITE TERROR WAS 40 YEARS AGO

The only real White Terrorist to be discovered in Hungary since the outbreak of the revolution last October 23, Mihaly Kiss (69) has been executed, reports Budapest Radio. His crimes were committed in 1919.

DEPARTMENT OF PIPING HOT NEWS

'No CP National Congress Next Year?'—The Newsletter, June 22.

'1958 Communist Congress Off'—Daily Telegraph, August 10.

COMMENTARY

11-10: 509-432

BOTH Mr. Frank Cousins and Mr. Donald Mack will be studying these figures very carefully. When the terms for a resumption of work were first put by the former to the Covent Garden branch committee of his union they were accepted by 16 votes to 3. After the committee had had time to consider their implications, however, it was decided by 11 votes to 10 to recommend that the strike go on. An hour of Mr. Cousins's oratory could not over-persuade 432 of the market men that the terms he had secured afforded them proper protection against the employers' offensive.

This substantial minority seem to have felt that Mr. Cousins had let them down. They shouted 'Judas' at him and 'You sold us down the river' and 'Sling him out' and 'Get back to your holiday'. And indeed, those who opposed a return to work may turn out in the long run to have been the wiser and more far-sighted. The employing class is clearly determined to weaken trade union organization by every possible means. The splendid solidarity action of the portworkers shows that they understood the significance of the Covent Garden fight, and that they are determined not to retreat.

TEAR GAS AT LODZ

YOU cannot correct the mistakes of twelve years by using tear gas and fixed bayonets against strikers. The news from Lodz is deeply disturbing. Who ever heard of strikers freely admitting that their strike was 'wrong and unjust'? Mr. Gordon Cruickshank's dispatches in the *Daily Worker* would have been more convincing if they had been datelined 'Lodz' instead of 'Warsaw'. Was he refused permission to go to Lodz? If so, why? If the Polish Government wishes to allay the anxiety of workers abroad about the way this affair has been handled, it will invite a delegation of rank-and-file trade unionists to visit Lodz, interview transport workers freely, and find out on the spot what caused this strike and whether unnecessary violence was used in breaking it.

THE TAINTED SEAS

ON another page our Science Correspondent discusses some of the recent discoveries with which a rational society will ease and enrich the lives of its citizens. No doubt efficient sewage disposal will be a feature of such a society. Certainly the inefficiency of capitalist society is summed up in the startling revelations of *The Times* about the discharge of untreated sewage into the sea around our coasts. According to the secretary of the Institution of Public Health Engineers 'no public health engineer would ever think of bathing in the sea who has special knowledge of sewage disposal'. Discoloration of the sea along much of the coast, with human excrement floating off and settling on bathing beaches, can easily be seen from the air. *Municipal Engineering* suggests that this may be causing the spread of poliomyelitis. The seaside local authorities cannot afford to spend between £100,000 and £250,000 each to keep the sea unpolluted. The Government say it is not a matter for them; any Minister who gave permission for the huge outlay necessary for sewage purification works would be 'frightfully unpopular'. *The Times* calls it 'a filthy business'. But if there was any profit to be made out of it, the seas would soon be swept and sweetened.

GARSTON DOCKERS DEFEND UNION RIGHTS

By Our Industrial Correspondent

PORTWORKERS at the Mersey port of Garston have gone back to work. They came out in defence of the rights of Mr. H. R. Sappa, a member of the National Amalgamated Stevedores and Dockers—the 'blue' union.

The men have agreed to leave the matter in the hands of the NASD Executive for the time being.

Mr. Sappa, a crane driver, has been denied a place on the permanent register, although, according to custom and practice, his turn came two years ago.

When a vacancy arises on the register it is filled by the next senior man from the daily register.

In March 1955 there was a vacancy, and Mr. Sappa was at the top of the list for up-grading. But he received a letter from the local Transport and General Workers' Union secretary, Mr. A. Hardman, informing him that 'all men employed in this department must be members of the TGWU'.

Mr. Sappa insisted on his right to belong to the union of his choice. The matter hung in abeyance for two years, and the two men below Mr. Sappa on the list refused to be up-graded over his head.

On August 8 the Transport Commission tried to fill the vacancy. The workers' reaction was instantaneous. Dockers and permanent crane drivers streamed off the ships in protest.

Mr. Joe Hooley, Garston branch secretary, told me: 'The men of both unions are determined to fight against this attack on what for years has been a recognized procedure.'

Mr. Bill Johnson, area secretary of the NASD, said: 'The matter is not closed but will be resolved some time.'

The Week at a Glance

INDONESIA: With 90,000 votes, the Communist Party won control of the municipal council in Bandung, capital of Western Java.

USA: A strike of three hundred packers, who are demanding higher wages, stopped publication of six newspapers in Boston (pop. 800,000).

KENYA: Police made a baton charge on crowds which welcomed Mr. Tom Mboya and Mr. Ronald Ngala, African members of the Kenya Legislative Council, on their return from Britain.

OMAN: Following the capture of Nizwa the Sultan of Muscat sent Air Vice-Marshal Sinclair a message expressing special appreciation of the RAF's 'magnificent offensive action' and hoping that British troops were not suffering too greatly from the severe heat and hard conditions.

FRANCE: Though newspapers other than *Libération* and the communist *Humanité* avoided the word 'devaluation' the French Government has in fact devalued the franc. These measures to ease the financial crisis have been taken:

- 1) A surcharge of 20 per cent is imposed on all imports other than of raw materials;
- 2) Exporters are given a bonus of 20 per cent of the value of their sales abroad;
- 3) Foreign tourists can buy francs at 20 per cent below the official rate; and
- 4) The Bank Rate is increased from 4 per cent to 5 per cent—the highest since 1937.

* * *

BACK TO WORK AT LODZ

AFTER fights between transport workers armed with iron bars and soldiers with fixed bayonets the strike at Lodz has ended.

The Polish Government has agreed to increase the wages of tramway workers throughout the country.

Strikers were twice ejected from tram depots they occupied at night, and tear gas was used. Government and party buildings were guarded by armed men.

Warsaw radio claims that the workers themselves admitted that their strike was 'wrong and unjust'. They had 'lent their

cars to irresponsible elements' and put forward 'unrealistic demands'.

The strikers' three main demands were:

- 1) Higher pay;
- 2) Restoration of a one-month's bonus pay at the end of every twelfth month (the thirteenth wage, as it is called). This was at one time granted, but later the concession was cancelled;
- 3) A change in the system of wages, which they say is unjust.

One woman, waving a tear-gas cartridge in the face of the Minister of Local Government, Stanislas Sroka, is reported to have asked him: 'Is this what you use against women?'

Workers on long-distance buses serving Lodz—an old centre of revolutionary socialism—declared their solidarity with the municipal transport workers.

MAO'S POLISH TRIP AGAIN POSTPONED?

Informed sources in Warsaw are saying that Mao Tse-tung's visit to Poland has again been postponed, and will not now take place till after the Polish United Workers' Congress in December or January.

Mao was first expected in Warsaw last month and then in November.

NEW AMERICAN CP LEADERSHIP ELECTED

From Our New York Correspondent

THE National Committee of the U.S. Communist Party has approved the appointment of nine secretaries to serve as the party's collective leadership.

They replace the temporary eleven-man administrative committee which was established following the party's convention last February.

They are: Eugene Dennis (national affairs); Sid Stein (organization); Benjamin Davis (Negro affairs); James Jackson (Southern affairs); Hy Lumer (education and publications); Fred Fine (labour affairs); John Gates (public affairs); Earl Durham (youth work); and Carl Ross (farm work).

The first seven will comprise the party's administrative committee. Of the committee's eleven temporary members, William Z. Foster, George Blake Charney, Doxie Wilkerson and Charles Lohman were dropped.

Most of the new committee are not committed to either the Foster or Gates wings of the leadership, and some of them are known as supporters of Eugene Dennis.

HEALTH

AN ANTI-TOBACCO CAMPAIGN IS URGENT

By Our Medical Correspondent

SEVEN weeks have passed since the Medical Research Council published its statement associating lung cancer with tobacco smoking. Yet little or nothing is being done or planned to make use of this knowledge in combatting a great and growing threat to the nation's health.

Just how great this threat is (with all due respect to Sir Compton Mackenzie) may be judged from some of the known facts. Among all the men dying during the current twelve months, more than one in twenty will succumb to lung cancer.

If you have eight friends who each smoke twenty to twenty-five cigarettes a day, it is almost certain that, if the laws of chance operate equally over the population, one of these friends will die of lung cancer.

Most important of all, the general trend of the disease throughout the population shows a continuing increase, not a diminishing incidence. In 1955 lung cancer killed at more than twice the rate recorded ten years before—388 deaths per million population compared with 188 in 1945.

Inevitably the conclusions of the Medical Research Council have been subjected to criticism—and not only by the vested interests of the tobacco industry.

These interests established a Standing Committee in 1956

which published its first annual report in June this year, and announced its proposal to set up a new fund to promote research on any problem relating to smoking and health.

Meanwhile it had appointed its own scientific consultants, who offered some criticisms of the statistical surveys on which the relationship between tobacco smoking and lung cancer is established by the MRC.

The gist of the Standing Committee's criticism is that the suggestion of cause and effect cannot be convincingly deduced solely from observation, but must be derived from strictly controlled experiment on random populations; moreover the relationship is unsupported by convincing laboratory evidence.

Reviewing this criticism, the *Lancet* recalls the events of 1854, when the last great outbreak of cholera occurred in this country.

Purely observational data at that time convinced Dr. John Snow of the responsibility of the Broad Street pump in spreading the disease.

He would have had to wait thirty years for laboratory evidence comparable to that demanded by the Tobacco Manufacturers' Standing Committee—the discovery by Koch in 1883 of the *Vibrio Cholerae*, the organism responsible for the disease.

He could scarcely be expected to wait so long before 'persuading Londoners not to drink their own sewage'. It is similarly unreasonable to hold back from positive action against lung cancer.

While the relationship with lung cancer remains the most dramatic and least curable of the effects of cigarette smoking, other important illnesses are being found to have well-defined connections with the consumption of tobacco.

Tuberculosis and bronchitis

Respiratory tuberculosis has been shown to be activated by increased smoking (*Low. Brit. Med. J.* 1956).

Coronary artery disease is related to it in a report to the World Health Organization, as well as in the research carried out by Doll and Bradford Hill among doctors.

And the great killer in Britain, chronic bronchitis, though more difficult to estimate, has almost certainly resulted in part from increased smoking. (*Edwards. Brit. J. Prev. Soc. Med.* 1957).

The latter concluded that deaths from the most important respiratory diseases in this country would be halved if cigarette smoking ceased.

Faced with a body of evidence so convincingly condemnatory of the tobacco habit, the Government has handed responsibility to the local authorities, without giving them any statutory instructions.

This is hardly surprising since the Government relies on the innocent tobacco smoker to the extent of nearly £700 million a year of its income.

Nor is it surprising that the tobacco manufacturers should be fighting hard against any measures liable to reduce their profits. But what about the medical profession and the organized Labour movement?

In 1956 the British Medical Association set an example at its annual conference by invoking its existing standing orders which forbade smoking during the proceedings.

No organized education

Individually, few doctors are so inconsiderate or so ill-mannered as to smoke while being consulted. But there remains a singular absence of any organized attempt to educate the general public out of the smoking habit.

Without this education, smoking will continue and lung cancer will increase; and who better than the doctors to convince the public of the dangers of the cigarette?

The record of the Labour movement in face of this urgent threat is even more deplorable. The Socialist Medical Association, much to its credit, passed an emergency resolution at its annual conference in 1956, demanding a 'national educational campaign, paying special emphasis to school leavers and young people'.

Later in the same year, the Medical Practitioners' Union moved a resolution at the Trades Union Congress calling on the Government 'to take all reasonable steps to discourage young people from smoking'. Thanks to the uncompromising

(Continued at foot of next page)

How Science Will Lighten Our Labour

The pioneers of socialism used to paint an inspiring, but imaginative picture of the future society. Science has now brought the elimination of much unnecessary or unpleasant labour within sight, and the 'gleam' of Morris, Blatchford and Tressell can be put in practical terms, as this account by our Science Correspondent, J. H. BRADLEY, shows.

IT is now possible to discuss in detail how a rational society will abolish or mechanize many of the boring, unpleasant and dangerous jobs.

Refuse collection is being cut down in the USA by sink-grinders, which use stainless steel pulverizers to reduce nearly all household waste—including tin cans—to a powder. This is automatically fed down the drain.

Tin cans are likely to be replaced by plastic containers, so problems of metal recovery can be abolished.

Britain has advanced only as far as rubbish chutes in the best flats, and we still endure unsightly rubbish tips and incinerators.

Food will be mostly fresh-frozen, as this gives far better quality and less risk. Waste will be further reduced, and cooking times cut substantially.

Household solid fuel will be replaced by electricity or gas. Underground gasification of coal will cut down the number of mines, and solid coal will be extracted only for use as a chemical raw material.

After a few more decades even this will be given up, gas being used for chemical work, at rather greater expense.

Oil will be reserved for the manufacture of chemicals such as detergents and plastics, and fuel for ships and aeroplanes.

SUBSTITUTE FOR PETROL. Petrol will, however, be largely replaced by fuel alcohol, which can be made in unlimited quantities in the tropics. An efficient storage battery would probably lead to electric cars, which are quieter and give no objectionable fumes.

Coal and oil will be delivered by pipeline, including the huge amounts of natural gas now burnt to waste in the Middle East. All powders and liquids will be treated similarly in bulk.

Shop assistants can be replaced by vending machines in all cases where the customer knows what he wants, thus providing twenty-four hour service. Britain is far behind Denmark in this respect.

Delivery services will either disappear, or be centralized by a super-Supermarket, where the goods are assembled by machine in response to a punched card, teleprinter, or other coding device.

Local public transport will go over to the one-charge system common in Canada and the USA, and inspection of long-distance tickets can be by turnstiles worked by code marks on the ticket.

Eventually automatic steering will make drivers unnecessary, and roads will probably tend to be replaced by railways, as the guidance problems are simpler.

PIPELINES AND COMPUTERS. Goods transport will be severely cut down by the use of pipelines and by the expansion of local production.

Especially in light engineering, automatic machines will make short runs of articles nearly as cheap as long ones.

The instructions for any particular article can be sent by

teleprinter, or as a roll of magnetic or punched paper tape, ready to feed the controlling electronic computer.

The use of pallets and containers will be carried to the logical conclusion of vehicles which travel from factory to destination, with automatic cranes and guidance devices worked by instructions on the packages as needed.

Buildings will be factory-made, plastic-coated against corrosion, and readily washable. Every attention will be paid to reducing the manual labour involved.

Clothes will be made of plastic sheet or cloth, in order to abolish farming methods, after a stage of mechanization of crop-tending.

PLASTIC CLOTHES CHEAPER. Plastic clothes can eventually be far cheaper than wool or cotton, and porous plastic sheet reinforced by un-spun plastic threads may become common.

Most farm work will be replaced by hydroponics—growing plants in tanks—since this is cleaner, more easily mechanized, and readily controlled. Animal husbandry will need much attention, and may quite possibly be given up as intractable.

These possibilities are not all Utopian. Everything mentioned is technically feasible. Not many of these methods are yet 'economic', if by economic we mean just cheap.

Much more attention will be paid to genuine economy, but no resource will be stinted for any desirable purpose.

In capitalist society, men are replaced by machines only when machines are cheaper, or when a product is desired which cannot be made of the required quality by hand methods. High wages are the best spur to technical progress under such conditions.

The abolition of dirty, dangerous, boring and unhealthy jobs is desirable for its own sake. The necessary work will take several decades, and cost thousands of millions of pounds.

DAWN OF HISTORY. No fall in our living standards need result, despite the huge capital invested, because of the large increase in productivity now possible.

A rational rethinking of our whole way of life—in every detail affecting each individual and factory, but even more in basic methods—is indispensable.

When productivity is high enough to be able to distribute goods free of charge, the dawn of rational human history will be breaking, and unending social evolution is to be expected.

The few vague phrases scattered in socialist literature about ending the contrast between town and country, between manual and intellectual work, can now be given substance.

Every human being will be able to choose work requiring the full use of his abilities. Many scientists love work, which is still to them the creative craftsman's pleasure, and the pursuit of leisure is likely to be less important when it is not in such short supply.

HEALTH (Continued from previous page)

opposition of the Tobacco Workers' Union, the resolution was defeated.

And the resolutions for the Labour Party conference this year include 127 on the H-bomb, several on free chiropody services, and one on the abolition of blood sports, but the nearest approach to the problem of lung cancer is a resolution on smoke abatement. And not cigarette smoke, either.

Shaw pointed out the insanity of giving surgeons a vested interest in removing people's limbs.

Perhaps we are just as unrealistic in expecting a population

made up predominantly of drug addicts (which after all is what tobacco smokers are, however unpleasant the term may seem) to carry out a campaign to cure itself of that addiction.

As the epidemic grows it is becoming more than ever essential that some means be found to help the addict give up his drug and the non-smoker—particularly the young one—never to acquire the craving.

Fashions change, and smoking is as much a question of fashion as hats and hair styles. Nevertheless we all have a responsibility to understand why we must change our current fashions, and how it is possible to do so.

All our propaganda agencies must be used to characterize smoking for what it is—a dirty, anti-social, disease-producing addiction, engaged in only by the irresponsible and the spineless.

The sale of cigarettes to young people below the age of eighteen should be forbidden, with severe punishment for those who break this law.

USSR And Now Salsberg Sums up

THE JEWS AND SOVIET DEMOCRACY

By J. B. Salsberg

(This is the last in the series of articles, 'Talks with Soviet Leaders on the Jewish Question')

HERE are some other conclusions at which I have arrived.

1. *The Jewish Question is part of the general question of socialist democracy in the Soviet Union.*

A general conclusion to which I have come is that the rise and fall of Jewish cultural and communal life in the Soviet Union coincides with the rise and fall of democracy—socialist democracy—in the USSR.

A graph showing the level of Jewish cultural activity and Soviet democracy would indicate a strikingly parallel development.

The new socialist democracy created by the Russian Revolution ushered in an era of sweeping growth in the cultural life of all the Soviet peoples, large and small, formerly oppressed under reactionary tsarism.

Among Soviet Jews there developed an all-sided flowering of secular culture that played an important role in the socialist transformation of the status of the Jewish poor and that raised the cultural level of the Jewish population.

Schools, all manner of educational institutions, scientific institutes, theatres, dramatic circles, newspapers, magazines, publishing houses, blossomed everywhere. There grew up and matured a whole new generation—a socialist generation—of Jewish poets, novelists, artists, singers, critics, research workers, etc.

Of course it is impossible to leave out of account a whole number of objective factors which contributed to this cultural outpouring. Neither can we ignore the damaging effect of some of the wrongly oriented leaders of the former Jewish Committee of the Communist Party (Yevsekstia). But this is a subject in itself.

What I think is most important and was largely responsible for the gradual decline of Jewish cultural life in the USSR in the middle thirties was the Stalinist suppression of socialist democracy.

The wholesale charges of 'bourgeois nationalism' that were levelled at many innocent people in those years played havoc with and weakened those forces that had a healthy and positive approach to Jewish culture.

It strengthened the hand of the assimilationist elements and of those who argued that it was their revolutionary duty to speed up the 'historical process' of national integration. The more socialist justice was violated, the faster Jewish cultural activity declined.

The period 1948-53 was the blackest for Jewish culture and its creators. These were the bitter years when Yiddish cultural institutions were crushed, when the writers and activists in the Jewish field were arrested and when the tragic doctors' plot was initiated.

This dark period coincides with the worst years of Stalin's one-man rule. Democracy was undermined more than ever before.

It was at this time that the criminal frame ups were organized against the Rajks in Hungary, the Slansky in Czechoslovakia and their opposite numbers in several other countries.

With the death of Stalin new winds began to blow. They began to melt the ice that had hardened over Jewish culture.

To the extent, however, that the Stalin heritage has continued, to that extent has the national question in general

Above all, our health services must turn their attention from the cure to the prevention of illness, so that doctors can engage in their proper role of health educationalists.

It's never too late, by the way. However much you've smoked, you'll reduce your chances of succumbing to the disease if you stop NOW. And your example will help someone else to stop too.

and the Jewish question in particular not yet been satisfactorily resolved.

From this we can conclude that the struggle for the full revival of all-sided Jewish cultural activity in the Soviet Union is part of the general struggle to return to socialist democratic norms in all spheres of Soviet life; and that every step in the direction of democratization is at the same time a contributing factor to the revival of Jewish cultural life.



2. *Do the Soviet Jews need or want Jewish cultural and communal activity?*

Many prominent Soviet Jewish personalities and many important party leaders (non-Jews) either questioned the contention that many Soviet Jews want and need distinctive Jewish cultural expression or they completely denied the existence of such a need.

This position in my opinion is false. It does not correspond to reality and merely expresses the subjective desires of those who give voice to these opinions.

And it makes no difference whether these desires stem from a 'class' approach, or from a general political approach or from an inferiority complex of an assimilationist.

I am convinced that at this very moment there are very large numbers of Soviet Jews who desire and need—and even crave—Jewish cultural and communal expression.

It is impossible to ignore or deny that the process of language assimilation exists in the USSR. The same process can be seen in our own country, in the United States, France, England and in other lands where the Jews are in a minority.

For a number of specific reasons this process has developed more rapidly in the Soviet Union. Included among the latter is the fact that for a number of years no Jewish schools have existed in the country.

But despite the foregoing considerations there are still many Yiddish speaking people—young as well as old—in the USSR. Many of those who attended the Jewish schools up to the middle thirties still thirst for a 'Jewish word'.

(In addition, who can say that creative Jewish cultural values cannot be digested in the Russian language; or that the establishment of Jewish educational institutions would not broaden the base of Jewish cultural and communal activity in the USSR?)

Not only representatives of the bourgeois and social-democratic press but also representatives of Left-wing newspapers who have visited the Soviet Union all agree that there exists a widespread desire for Jewish culture.

The Jewish writers whom I met, without exception, believe that a Jewish publishing house could sell Jewish books today in numbers not smaller than the volume turned out by some of the smaller republics.

As one writer told me: 'People speak Yiddish in Vilna as a matter of principle, in Bobruisk because it's natural, and at the beaches of the Black Sea and the Baltic Sea—because it's a pleasure.'

The Yiddish concerts—and they are expanding in number—are sold out everywhere.

I also spoke with dozens of Jews in the streets of Moscow and practically all of them gave the same positive reply, both in regard to the desire to have Jewish books, a paper, a theatre, a club, etc., and to the readiness to give their children a Jewish education.

Some were quite positive in their personal desire for Jewish social life, but were doubtful whether their children would be

interested. True, I spoke to people in the streets, but it was not too difficult to find people to speak with.

Yes, there are many people who need and want Jewish cultural and social life. What's needed is to create the possibilities and a free atmosphere for their expression.



3. *The question of 'integration'.*

The official line goes as follows. Since integration is progressive and separation is reactionary, therefore no progressive person, especially not a communist, should demand anything which would disturb the progressive process.

The consequence of such an approach is: first, that people who demanded Jewish schools, clubs, a newspaper, theatre, books, etc., are asking for things which would delay if not continue separatism and therefore are reactionary. And who wants to be a reactionary?

Second, if integration is a progressive thing, why not move in that direction more quickly? Why not speed up the process and create a short cut?

I believe that such a placing of the question, and especially when one demands a priori declarations that integration is progressive, amounts to placing the question in an abstract way and not in a concrete manner, in the way Marxists should place questions.

It means doing away with the possibilities for immediate work, and robbing large sections of a people of their people's culture.

You could just as logically argue, for example, that since socialism is progressive and will in the long run abolish classes and even parties, including socialist ones, that we should give up these parties now.

We are here dealing with a historical process of long duration, with 'a time that will come' (the prophets also dreamed of the emergence of one people the world over).

But we are not obliged to speculate as to how many years or generations this will take or whether it will turn out because we are products of our time and our consciousness reflects present-day reality and not that of the future.

Indeed, objective reality in the Soviet Union is the fact that there are between two and three million Jews there. They have a generations-old history and cultural inheritance. This has not disappeared overnight.

They—that is, those that wish it—need, and I believe that eventually they will be given, the unbounded rights and opportunities for the fullest educational, cultural and social activity in the framework of socialist institutions.

I believe that this can and will be achieved, because I am convinced that we are here confronted with an ideological distortion which, in the new period, cannot continue forever.



4. *Our task is not anti-Sovietism but a friendly and persistent fight.*

My final conclusion is that we need not despair but that, on the contrary, the conditions for Jewish cultural development in the USSR can and will be changed.

My assumption is based not on subjective desire, but on a number of objective conditions.

First, despite all the Stalinist distortions and injustices, the Soviet Union remains a socialist land. There is no class there that can benefit from oppressing or limiting the rights of any other nation, nationality or people.

What has happened until now is not the result of socialism but rather of serious distortions of socialist theory and morality which cannot long continue.

The fact is that the bitter period that lasted for some twenty years would have had to end in any case. Stalin's death only hastened the process of the deep-going revision and gradual elimination of the bitter legacy.

Second, the international situation, which played a significant role during the Stalin regime, has become and is continu-

ing to become more stabilized.

Of course there is still the danger of war, but the great strength of the USSR and the evergrowing desire for peace by all humanity is leading to peaceful co-existence between the two parts of the world and this will still further hasten the process of democratization in the Soviet Union itself. This will eventually improve the situation for Soviet Jews as well.

Third, the de-Stalinization process is far from over. You can't rid yourself of such a legacy overnight.

I agree with Tito that there remain in the Soviet party and government many who find it hard to break completely with the approach and methods which reigned for such a long time.

But the process of doing away with the distortions and evils of the Stalin period cannot and will not be stopped; this is because both the internal and external conditions have radically changed since the pre-war period.

The sole fact that socialism is now a world system, taking in a whole series of states, including gigantic China, simply forces the abandonment of the idea that the exclusive forms

STALIN ON ANTI-SEMITISM

National and racial chauvinism is a vestige of the misanthropic customs characteristic of the period of cannibalism. Anti-semitism, as an extreme form of racial chauvinism, is the most dangerous vestige of cannibalism.

Anti-semitism is of advantage to the exploiters as a lightning conductor that deflects the blows aimed by the working people at capitalism. Anti-semitism is dangerous for the working people as being a false path that leads them off the right road and lands them in the jungle. Hence communists, as consistent internationalists, cannot but be irreconcilable, sworn enemies of anti-semitism.

In the USSR anti-semitism is punishable with the utmost severity of the law as a phenomenon deeply hostile to the Soviet system. Under USSR law active anti-semites are liable to the death penalty.

January 12, 1931.

J. Stalin.

(J. V. Stalin, Works, vol. 13, p. 30)

and methods used in the Soviet Union over a long period of time are universal.

The national peculiarities and varied conditions in every country demand particular approaches, and this must inevitably also influence the Soviet Union in its approach to the various nationalities and peoples in its own country.

No individual in the Soviet leadership, great or small, will be able to resist for a long time the new socialist influences and experiences coming from the other socialist countries.

From this point of view, the experiences of China, the recent events in Poland, and even the tragic developments in Hungary, will influence and speed up changes in the USSR, which must of necessity affect the approach to the national question and to the Jewish question in particular.

Fourth, I have confidence in the stubborn will of the majority of Soviet Jews and their creative forces to endure the temporary restrictions and rejuvenate their social-cultural life. I do not despair of them.

On the contrary, I regard their cultural re-emergence as one that will have vital effects on the life of Jews everywhere.

And fifth, I am convinced that we can play an important part in the rehabilitation of Jewish social-cultural life in the Soviet Union.

I mean we who believe in socialism, who were always the friends of the first socialist state in the world, as we were and remain vitally concerned about Jewish culture and all Jewish people's problems.

Of course, we should not let ourselves become partners with the enemies of socialism, of those who use the Soviet Jewish problem as an excuse for their anti-Sovietism.

But we should also recognize that the time has long passed for us to be extremely reserved in our approach to events in

the USSR.

We should carry on a stubborn but friendly ideological and political struggle in a whole number of countries to influence the Soviet leaders to radically change their present approach to the national question in the Soviet Union.

This must be done with an approach and methods which have not been utilized sufficiently until now. The detailed plan for such a political-organizational approach is an immediate necessity. This is being studied by the progressive Jewish movement in some countries.

MALENKOV 'VULGAR' AS AUTHORS' MENTOR

THE editorial in *Literaturnaya Gazeta* of July 23 seeks to convince writers that the changes in Soviet Communist Party leadership are to their advantage.

'No harm was done to the development of literature by the vulgarizing statements of Malenkov about "the typical", taken from a dubious source.'

(This must refer to the much-quoted passage about literature in Malenkov's report to the Nineteenth Congress of the CPSU in 1952, spoken in Stalin's presence.)

'Kaganovich demagogically accused good Ukrainian poets of nationalism.'

As for Shepilov, he was guilty of liberalism and failure to stamp hard enough on 'unhealthy phenomena'.

What Molotov was doing in that galley is not specified.

A reviewer in the same issue, surveying a year's numbers of the magazine *Molodaya Gvardia*, seems to refer obliquely to the Chinese doctrine of many flowers and divers schools when he comments that Soviet literature has not grown strong in conditions of an 'idyllic harmony of all writers', but in 'fierce struggle' against 'slanderers of Soviet life' such as Pilnyak.

He also deplores the tendency shown by certain of today's writers to depict party officials as resembling members of the ruling class under the old regime (whereas in reality they are people who 'place above everything else the well-being and

happiness of the people and the cause of building communism').

And he rebukes those critics who call for more attention to be given to portraying characters taken from the rank-and-file workers.

Such critics evidently lack knowledge of the history of Soviet literature, the reviewer says, or they would realize that this is a mistake that was overcome long ago.

ESPERANTO GROUPS IN USSR NEED HELP

AFTER enjoying wide popularity and official backing during the twenties, Esperanto came under Stalin's frown and faded out in the USSR for a period of two decades.

David Zaslavsky, the dictator's favourite journalist (once described by Lenin as 'that political prostitute') wrote that Russian was becoming the international language of modern times, just as Latin had been that of the Middle Ages.

But life increasingly contradicted him. Russian made progress, but English made even greater progress as an international medium of communication.

After Stalin's death active official disapproval of Esperanto ceased. Many groups have been formed in recent years in the USSR for the study of this artificial auxiliary language.

But, as an article in *Literaturnaya Gazeta* of July 18 points out, no organized measures have been taken by the authorities to help Esperanto students, and textbooks have to be sought by them in second-hand bookshops, where moreover they are now rarities.

The absence of any positive encouragement of Esperanto is perhaps connected with that 'sometimes quite hostile' attitude to it, as 'a harmful cosmopolitan phenomenon', which the writer mentions as still to be encountered.

This article urging help to Soviet Esperantists was inspired by the World Youth Festival and the practical problems of communication with their guests which it raised for Soviet citizens.

LETTERS Reform, Revolution, Ritual and . . . Rothstein

LET'S DROP STALINIST RITUAL THINKING

INTO the discussion on political parties is being injected a great deal of argument which dates from the time when Stalinist assumptions greatly influenced our thinking.

Harold Reynolds mentions three dates of betrayal—1914, 1926 and 1931. I think it is fair to say that support given to the Liberal Government by socialists at the outbreak of the 1914-18 war was a betrayal of previously agreed decisions of the Socialist International, but the other two dates need closer examination.

The whole period of the General Strike requires thorough re-examination by Marxist historians.

The account given by Allen Hutt in his *Post-War History of the British Working Class*—in spite of the author's agreement with the theory of betrayal—seems to me to suggest that the Labour leaders were caught up in a situation beyond their competence to manage.

Only a minority betrayed

There may be an element of betrayal in this situation but this is a point requiring neat assessment. By contrast the Tory leaders showed a skill in their management of events which requires equal study.

In 1931 the small circle round Macdonald did a deal with the Tories. Even Arthur Henderson, mercilessly criticized by Lenin as a Right-wing social-democrat in an earlier period, remained with the Labour Party.

The betrayal here was that of a small number of opportunists within the leadership, but not the leadership as a whole.

The whole jargon of 'betrayal by the Right-wing social-democratic leaders' belongs to the polemics of the World War One period, separated from us now by four decades.

One aspect of Stalinism is the ossification of this jargon into time-honoured ritual thinking.

It is important that new Labour Party members should not enter with the object of working 'to overthrow the reformist leadership and instal a real socialist one', as Beatrix Tudor-Hart advises.

Any move which tends to divide the Labour Party into sections is contrary to the spirit of the post-Stalin era.

The distinction between reform and revolution belongs to the World War One era. Properly contracted social reform in the era of atomic power can be most electrifying in a socialist sense.

Opportunist elements will have to be checked by the combined efforts of 'reformists' and 'revolutionaries' alike.

There are others who are not politicians and will not join the Labour Party. There is socialist work to be done in fields such as journalism, the arts, history and economics, to mention only a few.

Each type of work requires its own type of socialist organization. Let us create them.

Bushey (Herts)

Peter Roe

[From now on contributions to this discussion should be limited to two hundred words; preference will be given to readers who have not already taken part in it.—Editor]

THEIR FATE IS IN OUR HANDS

THE NEWSLETTER misses my point. I entirely agree that the Communist Party Executive should intervene on behalf of Rose Cohen.

Perhaps Gollan did act. Significantly he has never officially claimed to have done so. We can be certain that he was a party

CINEMA

CURRENCY SNAGS LIMIT FILM EXCHANGES

From a Correspondent lately at the Karlovy Vary Film Festival

GOING the rounds of the European film festivals for non-competitive showing has been a wonderfully moving Hungarian film, a 1914 love story called *In Private's Uniform*.

Reason for its not being entered for competition, where success would have been assured, is the fact that the leading man, Ivan Darvas, is in prison awaiting trial for 'counter-revolutionary activities' last October when he let people out of jail.

For the same reason this film is not being shown in Hungary.

* * *

Prizes at Karlovy Vary were to some degree political but on the whole the winning of all major prizes but one by communist-made films was a true reflection of the merit of these films.

The most underestimated film was the Polish *Man on the Rails* which was only awarded half of a best direction prize.

LETTERS (Continued from previous page)

to concealing the facts of Wincott's imprisonment for years. I remain sceptical.

Undeniably neither Gollan nor the Communist Party want Wincott home again. Nor do they wish Rose Cohen or any other victims of the purge brought back to life.

The fate of these people is in our hands. Unless working class opinion can be roused in their defence nothing at all will be done. And we may be sure that in such a task Gollan will be one of our most bitter opponents.

London, S.W.19.

H. Kendall

THE BOOKS IN MR. ROTHSTEIN'S CUPBOARD

D. DESMOND comments that the library at Marx House has a crypt for forbidden books. The same practice prevails at the Society for Cultural Relations library, where a 'poison' cupboard of 'unsuitable' books is kept hidden from members' sight.

Perhaps this coincidence is explained in that Andrew Rothstein is both chairman of the Marx House library and the King Street appointed fraction leader for the SCR.

When appearing at Marx House Mr. Rothstein disguises himself as a Marxist. At the SCR he turns up dressed as a 'non-political'.

Marx's favourite motto was 'doubt everything'—Rothstein's is obviously 'trust Moscow, doubt everyone else'.

As Stalinist thinking flies from truth, objectivity and scholarship the books on the shelves of libraries under Stalinist control will no doubt diminish while the crypts and poison cupboards overflow.

Facts must be jettisoned

As the facts do not fit the theories, clearly the facts must be jettisoned.

And should not the works of Stalinists be banned also in the interests of Stalinism?

What is more likely to undermine faith in Stalinism than the re-reading now in the light of events of the writings of Dutt, Klugmann, Rothstein and Co.?

When one day the tombs are opened and these libraries re-organized and brought into line with their declared objectives, should not Rothstein be honoured by placing his works in their rightful place on the shelves marked 'fairy stories'?

Esher (Surrey)

Donald Veall

and which had the most human and sincere outlook about the effect of bureaucracy in the Polish railways on an honest but obstinate old man.

The placing of the East German *Lissy* above this on the prize list was regarded by many as the most political of the prize awards—in fact the only one at which this accusation could almost certainly be levelled.

Increasing trade between the Eastern and Western countries in films is reported, but a recent snag is that most of these countries are running into foreign exchange difficulties.

It is reported that Czechoslovakia has cut the foreign currency allowance for cultural purposes, book translations, etc., presumably including films, by seventy-five per cent. Some reversion to attempting to trade films on a barter basis is therefore evident.

* * *

In Prague they tell the story of how a middle-aged man was looking at a magnificent new car and said to a passer-by: 'Isn't this a wonderful Russian car—look at all those chromium fittings and luxury inside.'

The second replied: 'Are you such a fool that you can't see that it is an American car?'

'Fool yourself,' replied the first, 'of course I know what sort of car it is, but do I know who you are?'

ECONOMICS

PROFITS GO UP AND UP AND UP

By Our Economic Correspondent

THE 2,279 public companies which published their reports in the first seven months of 1957 have done very well for the shareholders, despite the aftermath of Suez, the strikes and the inflation.

The total profits have risen by 5.6 per cent from £1,940,527,000 to £2,047,217,000.

Some groups of companies have done better than others. Shipping, for example, has done very well for its shareholders.

Despite the panic about the 'catastrophic' fall in tramp shipping rates they have been able to help themselves to an increased 22.6 per cent.

The food industry has also done well: its total take has jumped from £103,718,000 to £121,996,000—or an 18.5 per cent increase in its slice of the cake.

How about that, Mr. Thorneycroft? Don't you think cheaper food prices would be of more help in the 'battle' against inflation than 'three wise men'?

Some groups actually made a loss. 'Motors, Cycles and Aircraft', 'Rayon', and 'Electrical and Radio' for example.

However, there is no need for despondency. The 377 companies which published their accounts in July have done much better than those whose accounts were published earlier in the year.

These companies showed increased profits of 6.7 per cent against the average of 5.6 per cent, and the Financial Times is confident that the figures will improve in the months to come.

These increases in the level of profits are all the more interesting when it is remembered the profits of public companies rose from £2,883 million in 1955 to £2,968 million in 1956. The 1955 figure was an all time record, £298 million above the 1954 figure—the previous highest ever.

GUIANA VOTES ANTI-IMPERIALIST AGAIN

Less than four years after the British Government staged its coup d'état in British Guiana, suspending the Constitution and overthrowing the elected People's Progressive Party Government, the PPP has won eight out of the 14 seats on the Legislative Council.

But the Governor has the power to pack the Council with appointed members.