

THE NEWSLETTER

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RUSSIAN YOUTH, LOYAL TO SOCIALISM, SEEKS WAYS OF ENDING THE 'BOSS MEN'S' GRIP

By MAURICE PELTER

ALL the governments have good reason to be highly disturbed at the results of the Sixth World Youth Festival in Moscow. Youth met at all levels on their own terms, and the resultant ferment bodes ill to all officialdoms.

One British Embassy official was heard to say during a party that each delegate met more Russian people in a single day and had more—and franker—discussions than any Embassy official had been able to do in five years!

The frank discussions I had with many Russian people have led me to believe that the Russians divided the foreign delegations into three natural groupings and presented a different face to each group.

First there was the openly anti-Soviet grouping, which received little or no real information.

Secondly there was the starry-eyed 'communist' group which could see nothing amiss and made no criticisms. These people received the entire gamut of 'official' information and left thoroughly satisfied.

Thirdly there was the group of people seriously and sincerely searching for the Soviet 'reality'. These people contacted

Maurice Pelter is a 28-year-old supervisor in a London engineering factory, a member of ASSET and a shop stewards' convener.

He resigned from the Communist Party last November after ten years' membership in protest at the party leaders' attitude to the Hungarian events.

Russians and asked serious questions. The answers were given with a directness, frankness and openness that was most surprising.

The fact that I had recently resigned from the Communist Party and so held no party card at first embarrassed me. But from my first conversations I soon found that my new status, 'ex-party member', was the open sesame to the minds and hearts of many Soviet party members.

For they had followed the recent controversies in the Communist Parties outside Russia and our conversations began to develop a pattern.

First would be the 'peace and friendship' opening, followed by a general discussion on our work and impressions of the Festival and Moscow.

RESIGNED? Come for a talk

Then one would say to me 'What is your political position, are you a party member?' 'I am a communist but I resigned from the party some months ago.' A polite silence, then:

'Were you expelled? Was there any pressure? Perhaps you had personal reasons?'

'I resigned on political grounds, following the Twentieth Congress, following Hungary....' Again a silence, then the Russian would say:

'Resigning is a luxury. Here it is impossible. Many of us have our personal opinions. Look, could you find time to come home to my rooms? I would very much like to have a talk with you.'

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PRESS

NEWS CHRONICLE IS TO STAY AFTER ALL: NATIONAL PAPERS TO COST MORE SOON

By a Pressman

GOOD NEWS travels round Fleet Street more sluggishly than bad, as a general rule. But there are exceptions. Items which affect the jobs and bank balances of editors, executives and scribes have been known to beat even a good train smash in a race round the bars.

One such flyer came last week. Before you could say 'hot chocolate', word had flashed round that the News Chronicle would be staying in business after all.

The news arrived on The Street almost at the very moment when the drinkers were raising their glasses for an obituary toast to the 'NC'. It had been leaked ('I got it hard, old boy') that the Chronicle was to slip into oblivion at the beginning of September. And Fleet Street had taken it to heart.

Why the sudden change? There is little doubt that the Chronicle was destined for the graveyard. But the wonders of 'free enterprise economics' came to the rescue.

For the Cadbury-liberals who mismanage the Chronicle's business affairs started to do some adding up after they had fixed the date for the funeral. And they made a horrifying discovery.

It would actually cost more to shut their ailing paper down than to keep it going.

The undertakers' bill—in the form of top-hat pensions and

(Continued on back page)

MOVE TO REHABILITATE SACCO, VANZETTI

The Governor of Massachusetts and the Mayor of Boston have been asked to support a move to clear Sacco and Vanzetti, the two anarchists who were electrocuted thirty years ago.

Efforts are being made to secure the erasure from State records of their conviction on the grounds that they were not guilty of the murder alleged against them, and that their trial was conducted during a period of hysteria about radicals.

HARRY CONSTABLE'S ARTICLE REPRINTED

In response to many requests the article by Harry Constable in last week's issue of The Newsletter has been reprinted as a twopenny pamphlet.

Copies of the pamphlet, 'The Lessons of the Covent Garden Defeat', can be obtained from The Newsletter, 180 Clapham High Street, London, S.W.4.

SAYING OF THE WEEK

'It is better now in the markets'—Daily Worker on Covent Garden, August 24.

COMMENTARY

DEEDS, NOT SPEECHES

THE Blackpool Trades Union Congress will disappoint the millions of organized workers in whose name it meets if it spends much time on speeches about the forty-hour week. Desirable though that would be, the workers know that it is not the real issue facing them. The Congress will assemble at a critical point in the employers' offensive against trade unionism. Prices go on rising, and many workers are facing a big concealed wage cut in the shape of rent increases. The movement looks to the TUC to do the following:

(1) Issue a call to every trade unionist in Britain to stand firm against the employers' attacks; (2) Encourage every manifestation of solidarity by sections of the working class not yet under fire, with those who find themselves in the front line; (3) Reject any variant of the idea of a 'supreme court' to fix wages; (4) Declare unambiguously that the time has come for a concerted effort to win wage increases, without any strings whatever, on a scale that will carry wages well ahead of rising prices; (5) Expose the Tory Government's attacks on working-class living standards and initiate a campaign for its speedy downfall.

The workers will judge the 89th TUC by whether it fulfils these tasks, not by how clever or how 'Left' the speeches are.

ROTHSTEIN REMEMBERS

WORLD NEWS of August 24 carried an article by Andrew Rothstein entitled 'Victims of Slander in the Stalin Era'. While welcoming the admissions it contains about the unjust victimization of a number of Bolshevik leaders and public men (limited and belated though these admissions are) we must point out a number of shortcomings in this article. There is no attempt to give any political explanation for these 'setbacks' other than that 'Beria . . . was able to take advantage of the cult of Stalin'. In fact the date given by Mr. Rothstein for the murder of seven out of the thirteen victims on his list is 1937—and Beria became Minister of Internal Affairs only in 1938! There is no mention of many old Bolsheviks who perished in the thirties and forties, men in comparison with whom the thirteen he names are scarcely front-rank figures. May it not turn out that Bukharin, Zinoviev, Kamenev and Trotsky were also 'victims of slander'—and of murder? Since Mr. Rothstein was among their slanderers, it is not surprising that his account of posthumous rehabilitations is confined to such names as the present Soviet leaders see fit to exculpate—and only a few of them, at that.

How little Mr. Rothstein has changed may be gauged from another article of his, this time in the current issue (No. 5) of *Voprosy Istorii* [*Problems of History*]. It is a survey of the study and teaching of the history of the USSR in British universities. From this the Soviet historian will learn, among other things, that the Glasgow University quarterly *Soviet Studies* publishes book reviews which are 'of a superficial character and impart little knowledge to students', and also that Professor E. H. Carr's four volumes on *The Bolshevik Revolution* contain 'dubious and erroneous passages giving a false evaluation of the history of the USSR'. Coming from Mr. Rothstein, these criticisms can only be called cool cheek.

RUSSIAN YOUTH (Continued from front page)

On separate occasions this conversation occurred with little variation. Yes, not having a party card in Moscow gave one a real edge on the common or garden party member in one's search for 'Soviet reality'.

All the people I spoke to, many of whom have become very good personal friends, said that I could use freely what they said but they nearly all made one request.

This was to reveal no details that could lead back to persons. As one, an engineer, said, 'The sentences are down from twenty to five years. But who wants to spend five years in a Siberian labour camp?'

All these Russian people were Communist Party members. Without exception they spoke of the bureaucracy as the 'boss men'.

This seemed to be the generally accepted term covering the leading politicians, the top party bosses, the Komsomol bosses, in fact all strata of the bureaucracy, including the factory managers and the cultural leaders; all were termed contemptuously the 'boss men'.

The Festival itself was a magnificent success. Moscow was gay, happy and colourful. It was a great pleasure wandering around the crowded streets, viewing the shops, being stopped by the people, talking, eating the tasty ice-cream, drinking the lemonade and fruit-juices so popular in Moscow.

MOSCOW: A beautiful city

For Moscow is a pleasant city, beautiful in its own way. We can learn much from the hygiene which is such a marked feature of Moscow life.

But the really outstanding fact on which all the British people agreed was the incredible friendliness shown to all foreign visitors by the Russian people. They were so warm and spontaneous!

This fact became apparent as soon as we reached the Soviet Union, on Brest-Litovsk station. From there, on every station on our way to Moscow, crowds of people waited for us to arrive.

They showered us with flowers, postcards of welcome, letters written neatly in English suggesting starting a correspondence—if I wished I could write to people from Brest, Minsk, Baranovich and Smolensk, all on the strength of such cards and letters.

Small conversations were started in English, French and German on many topics. This was to be the pattern of the Festival. The people were most anxious to see us, talk to us, show us hospitality in a number of ways, but with such warmth and spontaneity!

Throughout the Festival, but particularly the first week, the coaches taking us around were mobbed everywhere in Moscow. Wherever a coach stopped, at a crossing or traffic lights, the people rushed into the road to the coach to shake our hands, have a little talk, to hand us presents, even to hand us money.

EMBARRASSING: Three roubles over

This last was just a little embarrassing. I will give two examples of this.

First, I left my hotel one day with fifty roubles in my pockets. I spent a little while I was out. I returned later in the day and counted my money. I had just over 53 roubles!

Secondly, one lad was in the middle of Moscow talking to a crowd of people. During the talking he looked for his wallet but found he had lost it. The Russian people took an immediate collection for him on the spot and handed him 180 roubles, which was only 20 roubles short of what he had lost.

It was easy to talk to people. We would return home to our hotel in the early hours and find hundreds of Russians outside waiting for English-speaking people to talk to, to discuss with. How many Russians left their buses before or after their stop just to continue a conversation?

In the main we managed to go wherever we wished: the concerts, the dances, the shows. We visited factories, collective farms, other delegations, museums, the Kremlin, the Lenin-Stalin Mausoleum. The Festival was a huge success.

I have read since my return that the interpreters provided for us were 'ubiquitous', 'hard to get away from', and so forth. Whoever felt this lost a great source of help and information. I had a number of very interesting conversations with inter-

preters and eventually they provided me with very useful information.

As soon as I got to Moscow a political discussion developed among a group of us on the question of inner-party struggle and factional activity. An interpreter, a young man, said little but listened intently.

To the defence of the official position there leapt a delegate who forcibly put his standpoint, which was one of defending the interpreter. After an hour the argument subsided, the interpreter having asked only one question:

'Do you believe in free discussion or factional activity?'

Then he said to us: 'It was very interesting, seeing two communists arguing two different viewpoints. I have never seen this before in my life.' It was quickly pointed out to him that in fact I was not a party member any longer. He said nothing and we eventually went to bed.

OPPOSITION: To the whole apparatus

Next morning he took me aside, and said: 'I am in total agreement with your viewpoint. So much so that during yesterday's discussion I did not even put the official view, which I don't believe in.'

He continued: 'I know I am sticking my neck out, but I would like to ask you a number of questions'—and he did, and before I had been there a day, I had found a friend, a young Russian party member who bitterly opposed the whole bureaucratic apparatus that runs the Soviet Union.

He was particularly concerned with the lack of Marxist thought covering the last fifteen-year period in the capitalist countries, and questioned me closely on the economic set-up in Britain.

He had followed the struggle of the British party through the columns of the Daily Worker, and had started to reread his own party's history, particularly that of the twenties.

He took some of the magazines I had, Universities and Left Review, Labour Review and Forum, for discussion and circulation among his friends.

DUDINTSEV: The real picture

He urged me to read Dudintsev's 'Not by Bread Alone', as it showed honestly the real picture of Soviet life today.

He told me that he had been particularly incensed by the treatment received by the man and the novel in the party Press and had written letters to say so.

They had not been published, so he had circulated copies of his letters among his friends. His circle of friends had also had discussions on Marxism and political economy outside the party syllabus.

He told me that he knew that such things were happening in many, many places. He asked me:

'Please try to explain to me—why do such obviously intelligent men as Thorez and Togliatti support such a bloody and wrong policy? I can't understand such men. Nothing compels them to. They have no secret police behind them. I can't understand such people.'

With other interpreters I discussed the Tenth and Twentieth Party Congresses. No matter where we started—on literature, history or art—we eventually ended by discussing the course of

REED'S 'TEN DAYS' REISSUED IN USSR

John Reed's powerful eye-witness account of the October Revolution 'Ten Days that Shook the World', has been republished in the Soviet Union.

According to the New York Times the new edition has 'appropriate introductions, explanations and a "corrective" epilogue'.

It would be appropriate if the British Communist Party were to publish a new English edition in honour of the fortieth anniversary of the Revolution.

In 1937, at the time of the twentieth anniversary, the News Chronicle proposed to run the book as a serial; but King Street, which owns the copyright, refused to give permission unless all references to Trotsky were removed from the text.

party history, the struggles of the twenties, the Left Opposition, the need for a new approach to inner-party struggle.

One boy said: 'I wish you could meet my father. He agrees with you. So do I. He was an old Bolshevik. In 1936 he burnt his library, shut up and said nothing, and today he is alive. Do you understand? But he has taught me the old Bolshevik traditions.'

On one other occasion I went to a concert with another interpreter, a woman of about thirty years. We talked and she asked me for my impressions. I gave them, carefully. She was very surprised and asked me point-blank:

'Have Soviet people told you these things?'

'Yes.'

'But they hardly talk like that among themselves! Why are you so interested in the way we really live?'

So started yet another conversation, which extended over some days. It became franker and more honest until she eventually told me the following.

She no longer believed in people or the party. One of her best friends lost his life after being 'betrayed' by another
(Continued overleaf)

The Week at a Glance

FRANCE: Finance Minister Gaillard announced the immediate freezing of prices at the levels operating on August 15.

GERMAN FEDERAL REPUBLIC: Reinhold Ortman, former Gestapo official, was sentenced to two years' imprisonment for beating and torturing concentration camp prisoners.

USA: The Defence Department announced that the U.S. had fired a missile from its Florida base, but a spokesman declined to comment when asked if this was a reply to the USSR's claim that it recently successfully test-fired an inter-continental missile.

SINGAPORE: Thirty-nine people, including five members of the new central executive of the People's Action Party, fourteen other members of the party and fifteen trade unionists, were arrested under the emergency powers for the preservation of public security.

POLAND: Boleslaw Zaczek, secretary of the party committee at Zgierz, in the Lodz district, was expelled for misappropriating for his own use large quantities of cement and wire fencing from the local builders' co-operative. Zaczek also bought himself a television set out of party funds, sold it, bought a motor cycle with the proceeds.

HUNGARY: Budapest radio announced that the Russian language is again to become a compulsory subject in all Hungarian universities and colleges.

USA: Mr. Dulles authorized twenty-four American correspondents to go to China on an 'experimental basis'. People's Daily described the U.S. proposal as a 'clumsy deception', said it was completely unacceptable unless Chinese correspondents were allowed to visit the USA.

USSR: Defence Ministry newspaper Red Star criticized Soviet officers for lack of contact with the masses and for providing separate facilities for junior and senior officers. One officer addressed junior officers seeking audience with him through a microphone in his office without seeing his subordinates face to face.

SOUTHERN RHODESIA: A European woman, Mrs. Muriel Pardoe-Matthews, was sentenced to nine months' imprisonment on charges of unlawfully and voluntarily indulging in illicit sexual intercourse with an African. The magistrate said her 'guilt' was more serious than the African's, who was recently sentenced to six months' imprisonment for his part in the 'crime'.

RUSSIAN YOUTH (Continued from previous page)

friend to the secret police. She never told me why. She thought that the party bureaucracy were not interested in anything but themselves.

'They speak of developing communism, but all they do is bolster themselves. It makes me sick.'

Interpreter after interpreter. They speak the official words, but have their own private opinions. They are beginning to express them, if only in a limited way. One of the more political put the position of the young intelligentsia as follows:

'We are communists who want more personal liberty. Our Soviet system has developed a massive new intelligentsia, who have been taught to think for themselves.

'Now they are thinking for themselves, acting for themselves, but without any direction. We are in an impasse. In front of us lie new roads. Which one can we take? Which is the correct one? We have no articulate leadership.'

CIRCLES: Of personal friends

'We are split into little circles of personal friends with no contact between groups. I cannot see any answer. Perhaps in time a solution will be found.'

I think that this represents just how far the young party intelligentsia have travelled. They are in a ferment of discussion but can see no real solutions to their problems.

One evening I was invited to a party. Eventually I stayed at my host's two days and one night, engaging in discussions nearly the whole time! Once again I met honest Communist Party people.

The party was held in the single sub-let room in which Ivan and his wife Shura lived, ate and slept.

Officially the rent for the room and use of outside lavatories should have been no higher than twenty roubles a month.

In fact Ivan was paying 200 roubles a month. I was told that this was a widespread practice in Moscow. Many of the other people I met there were being similarly exploited.

WELCOMED: Vodka and brandy

I was heartily welcomed with vodka and brandy, and somebody started to play magnetotapes of jazz taken from foreign radio programmes.

I was physically collared by a huge man who tried desperately to talk to me in broken English. Ivan, who spoke very fluent English, translated for both of us during a conversation that lasted eight hours.

The man's name was Sasha. He was a mechanical engineer, a university graduate. First of all he wanted to know what good the Festival would do if it was not possible for people really to talk to each other.

'Mir and druzhba, peace and friendship. What comes after these words are spoken?'

Again I was asked whether I was a party member. Again the same pattern of conversation. Eventually they suggested that I go to Sasha's room some miles away with him and his wife and have a real discussion. I spent the rest of the night there.

KNOWLEDGE: Soviet party history

I was questioned very closely on my attitude to inner-party struggle. Sasha soon showed his keen knowledge of Soviet party history. He had read some of Trotsky's early speeches and was keenly interested in the Trotskyist writings published outside the Soviet Union.

I was pumped dry on all I knew of Marxist thought outside the Communist Parties in the Western world. The concept of the 'bureaucracy' and its role was completely accepted by this little group.

Sasha expounded at length the reasons why he felt Soviet power had not developed in the Soviet Union and why, in fact, the earlier bourgeois State apparatus had been used instead by the party, during the twenties.

He considered the last thirty years to be an inevitable historical period which had now come to an end.

'A change is needed—and a change is coming. Back to Leninism, back to the old traditions of the party.'

This was Sasha's cry. Then he developed a very interesting theory. He started talking of the new industrial working class

in the Soviet Union—'no longer with peasant roots, a real industrial class, with industrial traditions'.

He traced the development of this class and asserted that this was the most important factor which had changed in the Soviet Union during the last twenty years.

'These people are not politically conscious', he said, 'but they are giving the "boss men" plenty of trouble. They are a silent pressure from below. They have no political leadership—yet. They are making economic demands.

"Lower the norm", they ask; "increase our wage rates", they demand; "better houses, more houses, more food, cheaper food".'

Sasha paused, then said: 'Have you visited any engineering factories, Maurice?'

'Yes. I went round the Ordjonikidze engineering works.'

'Show me the figures and I will correct them for you. Did the factory manager tell you he had a two day "Italian strike" in his factory some months back?'

As a matter of fact I had asked the manager myself if he had ever experienced any labour troubles and had received a bland negative. There's no such animal (officially) in the Soviet Union!

Sasha explained that there had been a crop of labour troubles in the factories over the past year, in Moscow, Leningrad, Stalingrad, the Donbas, the Urals, and other large centres.

STRIKES: On Italian model

Nearly all were concerned with the high norms being worked. The troubles were described as 'Italian strikes', which seem to be approximately 'go-slows'. The workers go in but do no work or very little.

I had this confirmed by two other engineers on two other separate occasions. All spoke of 'Italian strikes' and the panic of the factory administrations and the Ministries concerned.

In the Ordjonikidze factory the go-slow continued for two days, until a high Ministry official came down, called in the factory administration and the trade union officials and within a few hours the whole issue had been settled. The norm had been lowered and the workers were back working normally.

Sasha told me that when Molotov, Kaganovich, Malenkov and Shepilov were dismissed, and the party members in the factories held meetings to discuss this news, there were demands from the older workers that the 'anti-party group' themselves should come down to give their own version. At one factory, he said, the demand was agreed to and Molotov went there to speak.

Sasha thought that the intellectuals, the students and the professional workers would be able to provide the ideological impetus but that the actual leadership would arise from the new industrial working class.

UNIVERSITY: Rebellion on Hungary

I told him that I hoped that such a struggle would take place within the framework of the party, otherwise the issues would become very confused. He agreed and stated that once again it was chiefly a question of inner-party struggle.

Ivan's job was translating foreign novels into Russian. He was about thirty years old, a charming, intelligent man.

He had been very critical of the party 'boss men' in their actions over Hungary and told me that there had been a bit of an organized rebellion in the Moscow University when the first news on Hungary filtered back to Moscow.

Students of some faculties had refused to attend the lectures for some period of time and the upshot was that a number of students had been expelled, both from the Komsomol and the University.

Ivan's wife Shura had been expelled. After a long battle with the University authorities, in the main the Komsomol organization, she had been reinstated. Over this period she had become very ill and could not find a job.

Remaining a communist in mind and heart, she had obviously undergone a change of what she herself termed 'priorities'. She put it this way:

'Maurice, I know my husband does not agree with me, and perhaps I think just like a silly woman, but this is what I think.

'First of all a man must be a man. Just that. He must walk the street and feel dignified. He must not be afraid of his

actions, or of his shadow. He must know that his political ideals and the reality of his society coincide, are joined as one.

'The aim of communism is the complete flowering of the human personality, the expansion of the human mind. Just look at us, wilted flowers, with all our capacities ill nourished in our society.'

'I demand for myself a certain measure of personal freedom, liberty to develop my own self. This is all I demand, but it is a crying need, for without it I shall die in this cramped, unnatural life.'

As far as I can remember these were the words she spoke to me.

While Ivan was at work, Shura and I spent the whole of the day in discussions about life in our countries.

During the talking she raised the question of Hungary. She had heard, she said, that the Soviet Army had shot down workers and students. Was this true?

SILENCE: Then flood of tears

I answered yes, and explained that it was communists like herself and her husband, engineers like Sasha, who had led the uprising and had been shot.

For one moment there was silence and then Shura burst into a flood of tears.

Still sobbing, she spoke of the Russian soldiers who had been killed, the complete stupidity of the action, her disbelief in the official version of what had happened. Such a thing must never occur again in the name of a socialist country, she said.

In the evening, when Ivan and Sasha returned, the discussion still went on, covering a wide range of topics—from the greatness of Soviet brandy and wines (which I contested) through views on modern art and music even to the courting habits of modern Soviet youth!

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On the journey to Moscow I met a charming middle-class girl who was very cynical about life in the Soviet Union. She was an attractive, elegantly dressed, luxury-loving girl who seemed a little out of place among the rest of us.

I saw little of her in Moscow but on the return journey she told me something of her holiday, and I feel what she had to say illuminates a particular side of Moscow life that not many of us had the chance of experiencing.

'Do you know', she said, 'I was utterly bored after the first few days. Moscow seems such a dull city. But it isn't really. At the end of the first week, I met such a charmer, owned his own car, 1954 Buick, cost him 30,000 roubles—and then my holiday really began.

'He was a jet test pilot, very high up, cynical as hell about life, believes nothing, a party member of course, Maurice.

'We roamed around the lanes outside Moscow listening to Radio Luxembourg on his car radio.

'He has a five-roomed flat, cocktail bar, fridge, television, huge radiogram—real luxury. We used to spend the evenings in all the finest restaurants—caviar and vodka in the "Prague", dinner in the "National", and coffee in the "Metropole". And the cuisine! The prices! It might have been Paris!

'We toured inside the Kremlin in his car. Red Square was cordoned off and no Russians were allowed in. But he spoke to the officer of the guard, who saluted and let him in.

'We wandered around in his car. It was a glorious time. We came out by the Spassky Gate, where all the leaders come out, and the bell went for us and the guards shot to attention as we passed them. He is a real big boy, this lad of mine.

'Do you know, he got us into the Bolshoi without tickets one evening, for a performance of "Cinderella". It was an almost impossible situation, but he had a few words with the manager and we were then shown straight to one of the best boxes. He knew how to go about things, my Russian lad...'

She seemed just a little regretful at returning to London, did my friend. Perhaps it is understandable?

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Coming home in the early hours of one morning a friend called John and I met two lads outside our hotel, Michael and Gregor. Still being wide awake, we chatted to them. They were engineers, they said, party members, would we like to talk to them?

The preliminaries were soon dispensed with and they asked us whether we had any, any English books and magazines to give them? I would try to obtain some for them, I said.

It was not long before they asked the usual question, 'Are you party members?' John still is and said so. Once again the conversation took the usual course and once again I found two more anti-boss-men Communist Party members.

ANXIOUS: To read foreign books

They were both very bitter about the things that had occurred in the past, but were very careful in their judgments on why such things had happened.

Once again they were keenly interested in the twenties and the questions of inner-party democracy and struggle.

Once again I heard of the industrial struggles which had taken place in the past year. This time particularly in the No. 2 Ballbearing works in Moscow.

These two lads were desperately anxious to contact life outside the Soviet Union and were willing to accept even comic books if we could give them any. Later I managed to find two copies of Universities and Left Review and a copy of Forum, which they took hungrily.

Gregor was a Jew and wished to emigrate to Israel. He told us of the 1948-53 period, which was so difficult for Soviet Jews. I had already had one other account given me by a Soviet Jew and Gregor's merely supplemented this account.

CAMPS: For two million Jews

I asked him why he did not contact the Israeli embassy. He laughed and said: 'I would get a trip all right. Straight to Siberia, let me tell you.'

He said that half a million Jews would emigrate to Israel at the first opportunity, if it were ever possible.

He said that it was well known in the party that just before Stalin died a decision had been taken in the top circle of the 'boss men' that would have affected the whole of Soviet Jewish life.

Camps had been built to accommodate over two million Jews, but after Stalin died this plan was abandoned. Gregor and Michael drew a huge map of the Soviet Union showing where the national minorities had been deported and where it was proposed to absorb the Jews.

Gregor said that when Stalin died he raised his hat in respect, drank some vodka and did not feel at all displeased. Michael agreed: 'He was a great man, Stalin, but it signalled a great change when he died.'

BERIA: Shot the 'shield-bearer'?

Michael then gave us an account of Stalin's death which he had obtained from one of the Kremlin Guard. It was a very interesting and very circumstantial account which ended with Beria arresting and shooting without trial many of Stalin's closest associates on the day of Stalin's death, including his secretary Poskrebyshyev (described by Khrushchev at the Twentieth Congress as 'his loyal shield-bearer').

Michael also gave us an account of an incident he had personally observed when he was working as an engineer in Siberia. He was registering some papers with the local militia when the regional Komsomol boss was marched in and accused of stealing three lorry-loads of wood for his own use. This is an offence which can carry a heavy sentence.

Michael told us he heard the 'boss man' and the militia-men have a little chat and away went the Komsomol boss as free as the air.

No report filed, no trial, just a little private discussion and that was the end of that.

Before I left Moscow, Michael and Gregor said goodbye to me in the following fashion.

Michael said to me: 'Maurice, I have a little souvenir to offer you, from myself and Gregor. We think that in translation it will prove to be very interesting to you.'

(Continued overleaf)

RUSSIAN YOUTH (Continued from previous page)

He called me over to the shadows, undid his shirt, and pulled out a number of Russian newspapers and cuttings, wrapped in a soiled copy of 'New Times'.

He handed them to me and said: 'They are Soviet accounts of the trial of Rajk and Kostov. I have saved the newspapers since 1949. Please look after them carefully. Don't show them to anybody until you are back in London!'

That was how I parted from Gregor and Michael. This has been an account of only a few of the conversations I had with young Russians while I was in Moscow.

I could not report all they said, for fear of exposing them to what they feel is a very real danger.

In all my many talks and conversations I never once met one anti-Soviet person. I cannot stress this too much.

For all the criticisms given to me, for all the terrible faults indicated, all my friends in Moscow are still supporters of Soviet society.

They are and will remain communists.

I found only one person who sincerely accepted, completely and without criticism, the official standpoint. Even he was opposed to Stalinist methods.

Uncritical support for all the actions of the Soviet Union has now become a most stupid anti-socialist stand. The members of the Soviet Communist Party know quite well the faults in their own society and are beginning the battle to overcome them.

PEOPLE: Support their social system

Any insistence from 'communists' outside the Soviet Union that no faults exist is a great hindrance and no help at all to Russian communists.

Here are some of the conclusions I would draw from my visit:

The Soviet Union has a socialist economy. The mass of the population, non-party and party, support their social system with varying degrees of enthusiasm and criticism.

The young intellectuals are finding their feet and are probing with keen minds below the façade of official fairy tales.

They are examining the structure of the bureaucratic apparatus which runs life in the Soviet Union, drawing their own conclusions and making specific demands for a more honest and critical approach to intellectual problems.

INDUSTRY**BIRKENHEAD 'HATCH BOSSES' STAND FIRM**

By Our Industrial Correspondent

Although Mr. H. R. Sappa has not yet been granted a place on the crane drivers' permanent register at Garston, following the strike there, the British Transport Commission has been compelled to withdraw its attempt to promote men over his head.

In Birkenhead, despite attempts by Transport and General Workers' Union officials to enforce a position whereby only their members would be eligible for jobs as 'hatch bosses' they have not succeeded in pushing National Amalgamated Stevedores and Dockers men out.

On August 15, out of the six new 'hatch bosses' made up, four were members of the NASD.

* * *

Liverpool No. 3 branch of the Amalgamated Union of Building Trade Workers is convening a special meeting to which it is suggesting inviting all union members in the area to discuss the recent dismissals of three stewards.

Although the dismissals all took place on different sites, each steward was oddly enough charged with the same alleged offence—'not working hard enough'.

In two cases the men on the jobs concerned took immediate strike action but were pressurized back to work by their officials. The line of the officials was that the cases should go to a national tribunal.

They appreciate that the bureaucracy is a fetter on the forward march of their society towards a communist future and they are working towards methods of struggle which will free them from the mud of the past.

But they are not too confident of their abilities as yet and present a somewhat pessimistic view of their own prospects.

The new industrial worker appears far less articulate, less political. The facts of industrial life crowd in and the inevitable economic demands are beginning to crystallize.

The Soviet worker finds himself with no machinery of struggle and has the task of building such an apparatus.

STRUGGLE: Pressure from below

This does not always seem a conscious task, but slowly methods of struggle have appeared and the 'silent pressure from below' has gradually begun to be focussed. It has culminated in the widespread 'Italian strikes' which have lately hit Soviet industry.

In view of this pressure the Soviet bureaucracy have given way a little. New stipends for some students, new norms in various factories for some workers.

Inside the party itself, an undercover struggle seems to have developed. This concerns itself with the questions of inner-party struggle and the question of what is a 'communist leadership'.

There is an overwhelming interest in the polemics of the twenties and how they relate to the problems of the party in the present period.

But it is still very difficult for members to obtain the relevant archives. In the factory branches members are openly raising many critical questions regardless of the hostility shown to such questions by the 'boss men'.

In general the Soviet party reflects the overall crisis of leadership which is the central problem of all the working-class movements in the world.

This is Soviet life, slightly below the official surface. Forty years after the October Revolution, many groups of Soviet people are being slowly drawn into the struggle for the realization of the Revolution's original aims.

They find themselves thinking anew, studying afresh and rediscovering the fundamental traditions of the party. This, surely, is the beginning of the most hopeful period in the history of the Soviet Union since the early twenties.

Feeling among local militants is running high. Many consider that these dismissals reflect a get tough attitude on the part of the employers against of building unions. The workers feel that direct and officially-backed action should be taken to protect stewards in such cases.

* * *

One Lancashire branch of the Electrical Trades Union that wrote to its Executive about the special Rules Revision Conference has received a direct and to the point reply. The EC say that no amendments to rules will be taken from branches; the only ones that will be dealt with are those that are being submitted by the EC itself.

SPAIN**A PROTEST AGAINST A SAVAGE SENTENCE**

THE following item appeared in *Pravda* on August 11:

'The military tribunal of the city of Barcelona has recently sentenced to thirty years' imprisonment the former leader of the United Socialist Party of Catalonia, Juan Comorera, who was arrested in June 1954.

'In connexion with the trial of Comorera and other anti-Francoites, the Political Bureau of the Communist Party of Spain and the Executive Committee of the United Socialist Party of Catalonia have issued a statement declaring:

'"Juan Comorera was expelled from the United Socialist Party of Catalonia several years ago for his attempt to split the party, to draw it on to the path of bourgeois nationalism and to oppose the Communist Party of Spain.

"But this does not prevent us from expressing at this moment our protest against this fresh crime which the Franco dictatorship intends to commit against this group of anti-Francoites."

The Spanish Communist Party's recognition that even someone expelled from the ranks of a Stalinist organization can be a genuine fighter against reaction, and should be supported against police persecution, is most welcome.

Ironically enough it was Comorera who, along with Jesus Hernandez, also later expelled, wrote 'Spain Organizes for Victory', a pamphlet widely used for anti-Trotskyist propaganda in this country in 1937.

HUNGARY

TWO KINDS OF HUNGARIAN WRITER

THE Soviet writer Lev Oshanin had a talk with some of the students attending the World Youth Festival, and wrote an account of his impressions in *Literaturnyya Gazeta* of August 1. One passage reads:

"Some of the questions that were put to us at the meeting show that far from all the young people who have come to the Festival have had the opportunity of forming an objective opinion about world events.

"For instance, a Swedish student asked me what I thought about the "Hungarian revolution" and whether I sympathized with the Hungarian writers who took part in the November events.

"The very way the questions were put revealed how topsy-turvy was the young Swede's conception of what really happened in Hungary.

"If he had in mind Tamas Aczel or Gyula Hay, I told him, then there could be no sympathy with them, for they are the sworn enemies of the Hungarian people.

"But if he was referring to those advanced Hungarian writers devoted to the people [no names given] ... these are real fighters for the freedom of Hungary and of course they have all our sympathy."

DOCUMENT

WHAT FOUR SCOTTISH MINERS WERE TOLD

MANY Scottish miners regard the report of their area's delegation to Hungary as a naive document.

Only one copy of the report has been sent to each National Union of Mineworkers branch in the area, and it is 'strictly internal business', for the time being, anyway.

The delegates were John Wood, general secretary, Alex Edgar, Executive member (Communist Party members), Michael Cook, of the Nellie and Jenny Gray pit, and Hugh Geddes, of the Kingshill No. 3 pit (Labour Party members).

Object of the visit, which lasted from April 18 to May 2, was 'to find out the facts' about 'the uprising in Hungary'. (p. 1)

The delegates were met on arrival by Bela Blaha, president of the Hungarian Miners' Union, and others, and were convinced that these were 'very sincere people'. (p. 1)



Mr. Blaha said that the Hungarians 'had over-reached themselves, wanting a quick development, and had overestimated their own strength.... On the basis of such swift industrial development they discovered that the standard of living could not be raised as planned'. (p. 1)

"The Government had taken steps to remedy the many faults, but had not done sufficient.... Student demonstrations began on October 23 but within two hours the character of the demonstrations changed and they were destroying red flags.... The counter-revolutionary forces had already taken control of these demonstrations...." (p. 2)

Mr. Blaha and his colleagues assured the Scottish delegates 'that 70 per cent of the workers in Hungary now accepted the correctness of the use of Soviet troops'. (p. 2)

Mr. Jolsvai, deputy head of the International Department of the Hungarian Trades Union Congress, informed them that 'Imre Nagy did, on the night of 23rd October, vote for the intervention of Soviet troops'. (p. 2)



The delegates visited the Dorog mining area, 46 km. from Budapest. They were told that 'on October 26 three truckloads of counter-revolutionaries arrived with arms and called on miners to strike and that all prisoners be released. None of these counter-revolutionaries were miners.

"By this action there was instituted a two-months strike. The so-called workers' councils tried to terrorize the miners but sixty per cent of the miners kept working." (p. 2)

They were told of 'a football match between Dorog miners and Soviet troops' on April 14 and a Soviet concert on February 18 attended by 3,000 people.

Joszef Molnar, foreman of the mining machine factory, and a communist, said 'they all agreed in Dorog that it was counter-revolution and that it was correct to use Soviet troops.' Another two young men in the factory (not communists) repeated this viewpoint. (p. 3)



On April 22 the Scottish delegates toured areas of Budapest where demonstrations and fighting took place. They visited Gem (sic) Square and saw the statue of the Polish General Gem (sic). People they stopped in the streets said 'Kadar was correct'. (p. 4)

In the mining town of Komlo, 200 miles from Budapest, 'the counter-revolutionary movement commenced from the hostels occupied by unmarried workers'. (p. 5)

When the Budapest Central Workers' Council called for a strike on December 12 and 13 the miners continued to work in three pits out of seven, despite the fact that 'the counter-revolutionaries had fled into the forests and carried out a reign of terror, shooting at those who tried to travel to the pits'. (p. 6)

At Tatabanya on October 27 'small armed groups appeared and called on the miners to stop work. Most were strangers; some belonged to Tatabanya; but not one of them was a worker. The leader was a dentist, who earned 30,000 forints a month.



"Prior to October 23 constant visits were made by persons from the British and American embassies to Tatabanya. There were 'partial stoppages' of the pits for two months, due to 'terrorism'.

They met a young 'counter-revolutionary', who 'now admitted he had been mistaken and misled'. (p. 10)

The delegates met the Minister of Justice, Ferenc Nezeval. He told them that the Government had not destroyed the strike weapon, but simply decreed the death sentence where a strike was used illegally for the purpose of overthrowing the Government.

They had found that many of the confiscated arms were of U.S., British and West German manufacture.

The May Day demonstration in Budapest was 'proof that the people had faith in the Kadar Government'.

"The workers' guard were there all armed with pistols. There are over 80,000 workers' guards all similarly armed. This point was put to us—if the Government had no basis among the workers would they have handed out all these pistols?" (p. 12)

This was 'not a conducted tour, but was planned in accordance with our wishes'.

"All the people we met agreed that there was no aggression by Soviet troops and that Kadar was correct to ask Soviet troops to intervene to crush the counter-revolution." (p. 14)

PRESS (Continued from front page)

contract pay-offs—would come to something in the region of £1 million. And the Cadbury fortunes could not cover that sort of money, it seems.

So the hearse was sent home. The mourners took off their weeds. And the rejoicing spread round Fleet Street in a flash.

What are the hopes for the invalid paper? Possibly not as bad as they had seemed. For liberal-minded business men seem to have rallied round with some advertising. Members of the paper's staff have been told, at any rate, that the advertising position is now better than it has been for many months.

Furthermore the rise in the price of all national newspapers

—for which the News Chronicle bosses have been pleading for some time—is now definitely on the way. The Newspaper Proprietors' Association is expected to authorize a rise to 2½d. or even 3d. very soon.

Why has it been so long a-coming? Another example of the wonders of free enterprise economics is at the root of it.

For virtually all the national dailies have wanted the rise for some time. Only one has consistently opposed it—the Daily Telegraph.

Why? Because its boss man is on the upper slopes of the surtax mountain. He is already paying so much in taxes that more money would be an embarrassment to him!

LETTERS | Two Views on Djilas's Book

WHY THE CAPITALISTS NEED THIS BOOK

I HAVE just read the extracts from Djilas's book *The New Class* which were published in the *Daily Telegraph*.

All that is true in these extracts—the picture of bureaucratic rule as it exists in the so-called socialist countries—was given us twenty years ago by Trotsky in 'The Revolution Betrayed', scientifically and in a balanced way.

Djilas treats the subject impressionistically, without historical analysis to show **how it developed**, and then in an arbitrary fashion tries to blame Lenin and the Bolshevik Party as such for the rise of Stalinism.

It seems to me that there is a special reason for the boost being given to Djilas in American and British capitalist papers.

The capitalists are no less afraid than the Stalinists of the current 'renaissance of Trotskyism'; they need Djilas's book as a sort of Anti-Trotsky to divert and confuse people who are moving away from Stalinism towards revolutionary Marxism.
Jersey (C.I.) P. Le Sueur

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THE EULOGY OF COUSINS SICKENS ME

THE 'TUC Pen Picture' of Frank Cousins in the *Daily Worker* of August 26 made me feel sick.

All about what a 'bogymen' he is to the employers and how there's 'no doubt' that 'this year will again see him reaffirming the right of trade unionists to press wage claims to improve their living standards'.

This immediately after the betrayal of the Covent Garden porters!

It's far too reminiscent of the sort of guff the King Street scribes were writing in praise of Swales, Purcell and the rest of the TUC pseudo-Lefts on the eve of the General Strike in 1926.

Wareham (Dorset) J. Williams

DEPARTMENT OF PIPING HOT NEWS

'Who is to edit this long-awaited successor to Modern Quarterly and Marxist Quarterly?... John Gollan is to be editor and James Klugmann assistant editor.'—The Newsletter, July 27.

'It was agreed that a monthly theoretical and discussion journal should be published. John Gollan was appointed editor, James Klugmann assistant editor. ...'—World News, August 10.

'Marxism Today... is the new theoretical and discussion journal of the Communist Party, and its editor will be the party's general secretary, John Gollan. ... The assistant editor of Marxism Today will be James Klugmann.'—Daily Worker, August 24.

WE SHOULD WELCOME AND STUDY IT

DJILAS'S BOOK *The New Class* should be welcomed and studied by socialists.

Too many critics of Stalinism exaggerate the differences for the better between Tito's Yugoslavia and the other countries of Eastern Europe.

Also, they deny that Stalinism was an inevitable development from Leninism.

After Djilas's book it will be harder to maintain either of these false positions. It clears the decks for unprejudiced examination of the problems of the international workers' movement, past and present.

London, N.W. K. Spencer

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THE BANS THAT SALSBERG IGNORED

J. B. SALSBERG'S articles on the Jews in Russia are like *Hamlet* without the Prince of Denmark.

The whole essence of Jewish history and culture has been one long search for intellectual freedom, and it is thanks to their successes in this struggle that, from Moses to Einstein, Jews have been able to benefit the whole of mankind by their fundamental discoveries.

Yet Salsberg ignores and implicitly supports the suppression of Jewish religious life in Russia, the bans on their criticizing the government, leaving the country, receiving books from abroad or forming organizations not controlled by the dictatorship.

The only flaw he finds in Stalin is that he made Jews use Russian instead of Yiddish.

What matters is the content of what one is allowed to say, write and read; the language used is a trifle in comparison.

As a final joke Salsberg accuses opponents of the Russian dictatorship of being 'anti-Soviet'; as though he did not know that genuine soviets (councils of **workers'** deputies) were destroyed long ago, the parodies that remain bearing the same relation to soviets that Hitler's Reichstag bore to Parliament.

Richmond (Surrey). Jan B. Gillett

SPECIAL ISSUE

An important announcement about a forthcoming special issue of The Newsletter will be made next week.

MALENKOV AS AUTHORS' MENTOR

The opening words of the quotation from *Literaturnaya Gazeta* which appeared on p. 105 of The Newsletter, August 17, should have read:

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