

# THE NEWSLETTER

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a service to socialists

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## LEADERS SAY 'FREEZE' - WORKERS SAY 'FIGHT'

### FORUMS

#### NOW THE USA HAS A SOCIALIST FORUM!

From our own Correspondent

NEW YORK

Now the USA has a Forum movement. A 40-member national committee of 'American Forum—for Socialist Education' has been set up here under the chairmanship of the well-known pacifist A. J. Muste.

The members include the managing editor of National Guardian, an editor of Liberation magazine, the national secretary of the Socialist Workers' Party (Trotskyists) and two Gates supporters on the Communist Party's National Committee.

The Statement of Purpose says American Forum seeks to promote 'study and serious unrammelled political discussion among all elements that think of themselves as related to historic socialist and Labour traditions, values and objectives however deep and bitter their differences may have been'.

Announcing the formation of American Forum, Mr. Muste said those who served on its national committee did so as individuals and not as delegated representatives of any group.

American Forum was not a membership organization and did not propose to promote united action by various groups, mergers or new organizations.

The simple aim of American Forum, says its Statement of Purpose, is to 'promote study and especially continuous discussion in a situation where many of the answers are not known and much division, confusion and consequent frustration exist'.

#### All individuals will be welcome

All individuals from all elements will be welcome to take part, 'provided they commit themselves to a free exchange of views in a spirit of inquiry'.

The statement goes on: 'American Forum holds that eventual socialist unity requires clarity on fundamental social issues, along with tolerance of differences on other matters and comradely discussion of them within a common forum.'

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Militant workers in the engineering shops up and down Britain are highly critical of the great retreat by the Right-wing leaders in the Confederation of Shipbuilding and Engineering Unions.

Even the usually less militant workers were—and remain—strongly opposed to a twelvemonth wage freeze, which they see as opening the way for management to attack established conditions and undermine workshop organization.

This, say prominent stewards in Manchester and Birmingham, is how the employers are bound to interpret the leaders' retreat—as a victory for themselves and a signal that they can go over to the offensive.

There are widespread fears that the employers will seek to use their year's grace to try weeding out militants. Stewards feel that such attempts must be resisted at all costs.

To the rank and file their movement has not for years looked so leaderless as it now appears. By accepting the 11s. with 'strings' the Right wing on the Amalgamated Engineering Union Executive has effectively split the Confederation, only a few weeks after a strike in which morale was splendid and the strikers were prepared to carry on the struggle.

Reaction of many shop stewards to this week's decisions is that factory organization must be strengthened and prepared-

### THIS WEEK'S RESIGNATIONS

This week's resignations from the Communist Party include W. J. Ellerby, secretary of the British-Polish Friendship Society and a member of the party since 1943; his wife Ann George, a member since 1940; Christopher Hill, the Oxford historian; Jack Berkovitch, a prominent member in Clapham North for many years; and Mary Gibson, of Beckenham, active in USDAW and the Co-operative movement and secretary of her local trades council until recently.

tions made for the struggle to defend conditions.

The rank and file has another task: to bring about as far as possible the replacement of those leaders who have deserted the fight at a critical stage, by leaders who have at heart the interests of the men on the workshop floor.

### COMMENTARY

CLOSE on the heels of Tito's appeal for the outlawing the H-bomb comes the appeal of Nehru and Bandaranaike to Russia, Britain and the USA to suspend their tests at once. It is good that prominent statesmen should warn of the madness of polluting the earth's atmosphere in a way that is causing the gravest anxiety to every reputable scientist.

But appeals, however timely, cannot of themselves change the mentality of those who gloat over 'Our Bang', and who refer with contempt to the 'Asiaties' on

whom the filth from Christmas Island is now falling. Action is needed as well as appeals. And it is the Labour movement which bears the major responsibility for initiating such action.

Ours is a powerful movement, which by a combination of political and industrial action could make impossible any further British tests and so give moral leadership to the world. The working class has a right to be heard. It has a right to protect the health and lives of its children. If the leaders do not seize the opportunities provided by Tory disarray, it is up to the rank and file to show them how to put an end to Tory rule—and to the menace of the tests.

**AMERICAN FORUM (continued from front page)**

It believes, therefore, that all important problems must be frankly and sharply discussed, but equally that this discussion should be oriented to the future and not the past and concentrate on discussion of the programme of a democratic socialist movement in the USA and how such a movement may be brought into being.

One aim of American Forum will be the formation of local groups or committees. Regional and national conferences will be called, and it is hoped to contribute 'not only to intellectual clarification but to the building of a new morale and ethic, a spirit of fair play, Labour militancy, determination and hope among the progressive and radical forces in this country'.

The US capitalist Press has already denounced the Forum and demanded a witch-hunt investigation of it.

**SOME EVENTS OF THE WEEK**

**THE SOVIET GOVERNMENT** depreciated the Polish zloty by 50 per cent in relation to the rouble.

**IN FRANCE** the Mollet Government was defeated on a vote of confidence in the National Assembly by 250 votes to 213.

**IN ALBANIA** Panajot Plyaku, Minister and member of the Communist Party's central committee, fled to Yugoslavia and asked for asylum.

**IN THE USSR** poet Nikola Bazhan, vice-premier of the Ukraine, appealed to writers to rehabilitate Stalin's good name in Russian literature.

**IN HUNGARY** eight men were put on trial at Dunapentele (now again called Szalinvaros) on charges of having organized resistance against Soviet troops.

**IN POLAND** General Stanislaw Radkiewicz, former security police Minister, Jacob Berman, former deputy Prime Minister, and Mietkowski, former deputy security Minister, were expelled from the party.

**WHY MICK BENNETT RESIGNED**

MEMBERS of the Daily Worker staff say that the real reasons for the resignation of Mick Bennett from the position of assistant editor were not given in his letter to the management committee, published in part in Wednesday's issue.

The basic reason why Bennett has been forced to resign, they say, is neither his 'woolly' writing nor his failure to give 'organizational and political leadership' to the staff—but his writing an editorial which included the words: 'We do not condone the Soviet H-bomb tests either'.

It is understood that this editorial, published the Monday after George MacDougall had resigned from the paper in protest at its failure to condemn Soviet H-bomb tests, led to a major row in the Communist Party's Political Committee.

Bennett was soon afterwards dropped from the Political Committee as unreliable. Another objection to him was that he spoke the truth too freely to members of the Daily Worker staff.

His replacement as assistant editor by George Matthews shows clearly that King Street will have nobody at the Daily Worker whom they cannot trust to toe the line. It is widely believed that J. R. Campbell's retirement as editor is only a matter of months. He is under fire for his 'liberal recruiting' to the paper's staff in the past.

**RANK-AND-FILE MINERS ON THE MOVE**

From our Industrial Correspondent

THE annual conference of the Lancashire National Union of Mineworkers, held last week at Blackpool, showed that the rank and file are coming more and more into opposition to the Right wing.

They are beginning to demand more militant policies from their leaders.

Widespread differences in pieceworkers' rates from one pit to another are a feature of the Lancashire area, and have

made it difficult to unite the various collieries in particular disputes.

A big step towards the solution of these two aspects of the National Coal Board's policy of divide and rule was contained in the Sutton Manor (St. Helens) resolution carried by the conference and referred to the union's National Executive for action.

The resolution calls for 'the removal of extra hours imposed on our surface workers at the inception of the 5-day week' and 'an immediate start to the compilation of a wages structure for pieceworkers.'

A resolution from Mossley Common (Manchester) personified the growing resentment of the miners at the way many of the Labour MPs talk socialism on the platform, and in practice prop up capitalism by taking jobs as directors to the giant monopolies.

The resolution calls for the non-acceptance as Parliamentary candidates of persons who become directors of '...a giant industrial undertaking, e.g. I.C.I., Ford's, Shell, etc.', adding that such people cannot 'possibly represent the workers in that industry nor can be expected to fight for socialism.'

**SCIENCE****THE ANSWER TO CHERWELL**

by J. H. Bradley

LORD CHERWELL's recent statements on the H-bomb are condemned by all responsible scientific opinion.

Cherwell says: 'A year or so ago the Medical Research Council, composed of the most eminent men in the profession, appointed a committee of doctors and scientists... Broadly they gave facts and figures showing that the tests will not harm any of us.'

But Professor S. C. Harland, of Manchester University, wrote: 'I wish to state categorically that, as a physicist with no knowledge of biology, Lord Cherwell may be classed with the Pope and Dr. Albert Schweitzer as not competent to express an opinion on radiation hazards. A similar comment might be made about some members of the MRC's committee.'

Anyone who has read the MRC report will hardly share Lord Cherwell's opinion about its conclusions: 'In view of the inadequacy of present knowledge, however, we do not feel justified in naming a specific figure as a limit for the average exposure of the whole population.'

Cherwell asserts: 'Doctors are rightly very cautious in all these things and I feel sure that this limit they have set is, if anything, on the low side.' No doubt that is why the American standard was recently reduced to one-third of the former value, and why the MRC was so alarmed about the danger of the whole population receiving one-tenth of the dose for a small group of professional workers.

'But even so, it is at least a thousand times higher than corresponds to the amount of strontium 90 which our bones contain as a result of all the tests up to date.' Yes—but only a hundred times higher than for young children—only ten times higher than for Welsh sheep—and so in danger of approaching the MRC limit, which some sheep have reached.

In any case, the amount will continue to increase for years even if the tests are stopped now, due to the strontium already piled up in the stratosphere.

The Manchester Guardian reported on April 29, 1957: 'A study of human-bone samples by three Columbia University scientists disclosed one sample in Western Canada which contained approximately the maximum permissible concentration of strontium 90 in 1955—and this could have come about, other scientists say, only as the result of nuclear explosions.'

Professor Haddow, one of the authors of the MRC report on which Lord Cherwell relies, said on February 27, 1957: 'Even in the nine months since the reports were published, however, new ideas had come forward which could render obsolete our ideas of what was genetically damaging.'

Lord Cherwell might have been warned by those who based their estimates on the *Drosophila* fruit fly—until mice turned out to be at least ten times more sensitive. Cherwell would not

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**CHERWELL (continued from previous page)**

be warned, and now his own authorities stand up and refute him.

It is true that we shall not be able to point to any one event and assert it is due to bomb tests and would not otherwise have happened—not one cancer, not one congenital idiot, not one deformed child, not one leukaemia, not one stillbirth, not one miscarriage—any more than we can assert any particular cancer to be due to smoking.

**THAT DOES NOT MEAN THEY WILL NOT EXIST!**  
Every one of those murders must be laid at the door of the men who have abandoned science to become the puppets of inhuman politicians.

**THE EFFECTS ON MAN OF H-BOMB TESTS**

by our Medical Correspondent

THE adverse effects on health of nuclear test explosions are due to the radioactive materials liberated by the explosions and diffused over the earth's surface.

If the plans to use nuclear weapons on a strategic scale ever mature, other effects on the health and well-being of the community will no doubt be apparent, resulting from flash burns, blast and locally concentrated intense radioactivity, all on a scale incommensurate with either experience or imagination.

The wider and heavier dissemination of radioactive material from such use would mean, to quote the Medical Research Council's Report (para. 361), that 'no part of the world would escape biologically significant degrees of exposure or the load of distress and suffering to individuals and society which such exposure would entail.'

Consideration of the ill-effects of such explosions can most usefully therefore be applied to those arising from the continued testing of nuclear weapons.

**Exposure to radioactivity**

Since life first made its appearance on the earth's surface it has been exposed to radioactivity, whose intensity over these eons of time has probably varied very little. It derives from naturally occurring radioactive material in the earth's crust, such as radium and uranium, from cosmic rays reaching us from outer space, and from the infinitesimally minute quantities of radioactive material absorbed into the living organism.

Only in recent years has any significant sustained rise in the intensity of this 'background radiation' been apparent. The effects on health of this increased radiation are the subject of profound concern and bitter dispute, since the origin of any increase lies predominantly in the testing of atomic and nuclear weapons.

It has long been known that exposure to radioactivity produces effects—most of them harmful, some beneficial—on the living organism. Exposure to radium, either in mining, industry or medicine, soon revealed its cancer-producing properties in man; and for many years experiments have been carried out to alter the genetic structure of plants and lower animals by irradiation of the germ cells in order to determine the laws governing the inheritance of their specific characteristics.

The levels of radioactivity involved in both these cases were, however, many times greater than those obtaining from background radioactivity even with the increase resulting from the tests.

The basis of the current disagreement among scientists lies in the difficulty of deciding whether or not a certain minimal level of radioactivity exists below which no adverse effects are induced.

If not—if any increase, however minute, in the level of radioactivity produces a corresponding increase in adverse effects on health—the responsibility for continuing the nuclear weapon tests is a grave burden for the public and private conscience.

**Effects on human health**

So far as is known, two important factors must be considered in trying to reach a decision. They are, firstly, the direct physical effects of the accumulation in bone of strontium 90, a radioactive chemical produced by nuclear explosions; and, secondly, the longer-term effects on the inherited characteristics of mankind.

The latter would result from any changes in the germ cells induced by the higher level of background radioactivity, due to all the radioactive substances produced by the explosions.

Strontium 90 is a chemical much like calcium in its behaviour. After its production by a nuclear explosion it is widely diffused over the earth's surface and drifts gradually to settle on the ground, and particularly on the leaves and around the roots of plants.

These absorb the element, which they pass on to the animal which consumes them—sometimes man, sometimes a dairy animal which concentrates the radioactive strontium in its milk and passes it on to man in this way.

**The particular danger of this method is the special hazard to children, since they drink more milk, take up more strontium than adults, and additionally are exposed before birth as well as for much longer afterwards.**

A recent statement by a special committee of the Atomic Scientists' Association explained the possible consequences of these effects:

'It is known that radioactive substances concentrated in bone may give rise to bone cancers and other damage, and that the irradiation of bone marrow may result in leukaemia [excess of white corpuscles in the blood]... In these cases, however, the amounts of radioactivity present in the bone were far greater than those that are likely to accrue from H-bomb tests. The question then arises how to apply these findings to very small doses.'

On the assumption that a directly proportional relationship connected the level of radioactivity with the amount of ill-health it produced the Committee went on to calculate that a 'Bikini' type H-bomb would produce 1,000 cases of bone cancer for every million tons of TNT-equivalent explosive power.

These cases would of course be spread throughout the entire world population and would certainly not make any dramatic impact on the world community; their individual tragedy would be none the less for that.

The potential genetic effects would take much longer to achieve reality, and would be probably even more difficult to determine in cold statistics of public health than the bone cancers mentioned above.

It is known that the mutation rate (roughly, the rate of production of germ material producing characteristics in the offspring markedly different from its parent) varies directly with variation in the radiation level.

If the mutation rate is doubled—which would be achieved by, roughly speaking, doubling the level of a background radiation—it might lead to an increase of one in a thousand (0.1 per cent) in the numbers of adversely affected children in the next generation.

In terms of the risks run by individual parents this is too small to be recognizable, and the MRC Report (para. 188) concludes that '... if a relatively small group of prospective parents receives a doubling dose of radiation, no noticeable effects will be produced on their immediate offspring or upon their descendants. For levels of radiation up to the doubling dose, and even some way beyond, the genetic effects... are appreciable only when reckoned over the population as a whole...'

Since the world population of 2,000 million is involved in this small calculation, it will be seen that the number of individual tragedies which may have resulted from tests already carried out cannot be as insignificant as the casual dismissal of the last sentence might seem to imply.

**Is there a proven case against the tests?**

The short and definite answer is: 'No. We can't prove anything definite against them.' But lack of proof by no means implies lack of suspicion.

Much turns on the acceptance or repudiation of the hypothesis assumed by the Atomic Scientists' Association in their calculations quoted above: is there a threshold level or a linear proportionality between radioactivity and the occurrence of bone cancer?

The opinion of Dr. J. F. Loutit is worth quoting, since he is head of the MRC Radiobiological Research Unit at Harwell, and presumably well screened against those unfortunate

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**H-BOMB TESTS (continued from previous page)**

taints noted by Mr. Selwyn Lloyd among opposers of nuclear tests. In a recent letter to the *British Medical Journal*, he stated:

'The correct conclusion in the present state of scientific knowledge is that a linear relationship sets the limit and indicates the worst possible conditions, so that it would be prudent to go easy until the real facts are ascertained.'

**USSR****CAMPS INTO COLONIES**

For many years the Stalinist leaders throughout the world denied vigorously the allegation that concentration camps and forced labour settlements existed in the land of socialism.

Now we have an official admission of this fact from Soviet sources—and the *Daily Worker* maintains an inscrutable silence.

'The further existence of corrective labour camps,' says *Soviet News* (May 13, 1957, p. 131), 'has been found to be unnecessary [!], and in view of this, it has been decided to reorganize them into corrective labour colonies.'

If these camps, which contain mainly political prisoners, have become unnecessary today, then why, when and how did they become necessary before? Or were they just another of Stalin's 'mistakes'?

Whatever the motives and meaning of this change the prisoners will continue to be deprived of political rights. They will still be treated as second-class citizens.

M.B.

**'NOT BY BREAD ALONE'**

THE NOVEL 'Not By Bread Alone', by Vladimir Dudintsev, shortly to be published here in an English version by Edith Bone, is certain to attract much attention.

At a discussion held among Moscow writers in March, the young author replied to attacks on his work as a 'libel on Soviet reality' by recalling the moment when he first thought of the idea for the story—which tells of an inventor obstructed and persecuted by selfish bureaucrats indifferent to the benefits his inventions could bring to the country's economy.

'I remember the first days of the Patriotic War,' he said, 'I was down in the trenches while an air battle was being fought out over my head.'

'Messerschmidts were shooting down our planes, despite their greater numbers. Something snapped in me, for until then I had had it drummed into me all the time that our planes were the best and fastest.'

'It is said that I am giving reign to "blackening" tendencies. That is not so. All I want is that what I saw should never be repeated, and I have the right to want this!'

The report of the discussion in *Literaturnaya Gazeta* [*Literary Gazette*] on March 19 comments: 'Many speakers who took the floor after V. Dudintsev justly criticized his arrogant and immodest stand as being out of keeping with the mission and duties of a Soviet writer.'

L.H.

**THE STORM BREAKS—1948**

(This is the second in the series of articles by J. B. Salsberg, 'Talks with Soviet Leaders on the Jewish Question'.)

THE OUTBREAK of the Second World War halted all plans to place the whole question of Jewish cultural-social life in the USSR before the highest bodies in that country.

With Hitler's invasion of the Soviet Union, however, the situation there changed radically and it appeared that outside intervention was no longer necessary.

The Soviet Union saved the lives of hundreds of thousands of Polish and other Jews who fled from Hitler. The Jewish Anti-Fascist Committee was established in Moscow.

The united voice of Soviet Jewry was heard throughout the world calling upon their brother Jews to join forces in the common struggle against the enemies of civilization, the worst enemies of the Jewish people.

Solomon Mikhoels and Itzik Feffer, never-to-be-forgotten Jewish people's artists of the USSR, arrived in North America as the official representatives of Soviet Jewry to the Jewish communities of the United States and Canada.

The belief was strengthened in all of us that after the defeat of Hitlerism a new glowing chapter of cultural and social activity of the Soviet Jews would begin.

We also believed that the new relationships established between the Soviet Union and the western States during the course of the war would at the same time lead to a permanent cultural and social relationship between Soviet Jews and the Jewish communities of other countries, or at least with progressive cultural forces and institutions in the capitalist countries.

After the war the Jewish Anti-Fascist Committee devoted itself to the restoration of Jewish cultural and social life destroyed and decimated by the Nazi invaders. But external relations again began to shrink.

**A fog seemed to descend**

Once again a fog seemed to descend over the perspectives for organized distinctive cultural activity for the USSR's two and a half to three million Jews.

A cloud appeared in the form of Ilya Ehrenburg's article denying that Jews in one country had anything to do with Jews of another. (During my visit to Europe in 1947 despite all my efforts I was unable to enter the Soviet Union.)

Then came the sudden blow at the end of 1948—the closing of all Jewish institutions, the complete end to all contact with Soviet Jewish writers and communal leaders and the growing reports of arrests, deportations, etc.

Most of us were astounded by these developments. We consoled ourselves with the hope that sooner or later there would arrive an official statement explaining the matter. For it was impossible to believe that such an event could be ignored by the Soviet government.

Days stretched into weeks, weeks into months and no statement came. As in other lands, we also began to knock on doors, send letters and make inquiries. But there was no response. Our hopes were deceptive.

And while both friends and foes kept accusing us that we, and the leading people particularly, knew what had happened but were refusing to divulge the truth, the fact is that we really and absolutely had no official or semi-official information about what had happened.

Those few activists, Jewish and non-Jewish, who did have an opportunity of visiting the Soviet Union during those years and who made it their business to inquire into this matter, returned with news which didn't make sense to me.

Readers will recall that in July 1956 (*Vochenblatt*, July 12) the Labour-Progressive Party of Canada adopted a resolution in this regard. It states among other things:

'Difference of opinion between J. B. Salsberg and the rest of the National Executive developed and persisted from 1949, when he first declared that the dissolution of Jewish cultural institutions in the USSR and action against prominent Jewish writers had been carried out by crude administrative means, without public discussion and in disregard of the interests and desires of Soviet Jewry.

'He therefore advocated intervention by the Labour-Progressive Party in the form of a direct inquiry to the Communist Party of the Soviet Union asking for an explanation.

'The Executive, and later the full National Committee, rejected Comrade Salsberg's proposal and supported the position that: Jewish citizens in the USSR had become such an integral part of the socialist society that there was no longer any real desire on their part for separate Yiddish language institutions; that the dissolution of those institutions was part of the normal process of development; that any measures

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**SALSBERG (continued from previous page)**

against individual Jewish citizens could only have resulted from infractions of the law and were taken under the law.

I could not accept this interpretation. The fact that most progressive people did accept it shows to what extent boundless trust in the USSR existed in our ranks. It was this trust that Stalin betrayed.

**Why did I not speak out?**

I should also point out that for several years I sought an opportunity of visiting the Soviet Union personally in order to investigate the matter. Unfortunately I did not obtain this opportunity until the summer of 1955.

Since the LPP statement of July, many people have approached me with the legitimate question: why did I not make public my difference of opinion with the party? Others have expressed anger at what they consider as silence when I knew what had occurred.

I would therefore like to make it perfectly clear that I never knew what actually happened.

My common-sense logic made me suspect what had probably occurred. But what I did do was reject the official explanation and request instead that the whole matter should be officially presented to the Communist Party of the Soviet Union. I also asked for the opportunity of making a personal visit. Hence there can be no question of hiding any facts from the public.

But there is legitimate ground for criticism in the fact that I did not make my own views—which differed from those of my party—public and defend them, and completely ceased to speak or to write about the question of Jews in the USSR.

So much for that. I remained with my opinions and defended them to such an extent that I ceased to be a member of the secretariat and later of the National Executive Committee of the LPP. But the truth is that I did not do this publicly. And here are the reasons.

Let us recall what was going on in those days. The cold war was at its height. The danger of a third world war hung over our heads. The anti-Soviet hysteria was very great.

**No one could influence Stalin**

Among Jewish people the question of the Jewish writers occupied a central place both among honest people whom it hurt and among those who utilized the issue as part of the general anti-Soviet chorus. And yet neither the well-intentioned nor the others were able to influence Stalin through their actions.

It was clear to me at that time that the only way to succeed was through the efforts of such parties as the LPP in Canada and through other Communist Parties. I exerted all my efforts in this direction.

Unfortunately this was not successful. The Stalin cult was too deeply implanted in the parties of most countries.

And I must admit that during my visit to Moscow in reference to the Jewish question in the summer of 1955, when the facts about the devastation were beginning to come out, I could not free myself from the gnawing feeling that, had the Communist Parties of other countries acted, they might have been able to save the executed writers—both Jewish and non-Jewish.

Perhaps. But they lacked that measure of real independent thinking in relation to the Soviet Union that was required.

(Next week: Moscow Talks, 1955 and 1956—Why No Soviet Statement?)

**DOCUMENT****A RESOLUTION ON JEWS IN THE USSR**

The following resolution on the Jewish question in the Soviet Union was adopted on March 31, 1957, by several hundred delegates to the New York Convention of the Communist Party. There were five dissenting votes and twelve abstentions.

**I** THE SOVIET UNION with three million Jews and the USA with five million Jews present the Communist Parties of these countries with the responsibility and opportunity to add to the scientific socialist analysis of the Jewish question.

One of the cornerstones of the historic achievements of the Soviet Union since the October Revolution was its implementation of Marxist-Leninist principles on the national question. This implementation was decisive in the welding of the political unity of the Soviet peoples.

This approach to the solution of the national question helped make possible the Soviet industrial and agricultural advances and helped the flowering of Soviet cultures—socialist in content, multi-national in form. On this anvil was smashed the Nazi cult of racial superiority and military invincibility.

The Soviet approach to the national question won for the Soviet Union the sympathy of oppressed peoples the world over and inspired the vast struggles for national liberation among colonial and semi-colonial peoples that have changed the face of the world and altered the international political climate.

For the Jewish nationality in the Soviet Union the Leninist policy on the national question produced unprecedented results. Anti-Semitism was outlawed and the Communist Party of the Soviet Union and Soviet Government waged an active struggle to stamp it out and to destroy its roots in the class relations of the tsarist social system. Jews as individuals won equal rights as citizens and unparalleled opportunity in all spheres of Soviet life.

Jews entered all phases of economic life, industrial, agricultural, professional, cultural and administrative.

On their merits under these new conditions of equality, Jews advanced rapidly and made extensive contributions in industry, the professions, the sciences, the arts and in the general cultural life of the Soviet Union, as well as in the fields of government and military work. Thousands have won the highest honours the party and government of the Soviet Union can award.

Simultaneously, the Leninist policy on the Jewish question encouraged the Jewish people to develop their Jewish culture in the Yiddish language (as well as in Russian and other languages), resulting in the establishment of Jewish educational institutions, of a Yiddish literature and Press, Yiddish theatres and other channels of expression, all of which won for the Soviet Union the admiration and devotion of millions of people throughout the world.

For those Jews who wished to attempt to build a Jewish State on socialist foundations, the Soviet Government set aside the area of Biro-Bidjan and late in the nineteen-twenties began to assist Jews who wished to undertake this project.

When World War II began in 1939, the Soviet Government took in many hundreds of thousands of Jewish refugees that flocked across its borders and rescued them from Hitler's extermination programme. In 1941, when Hitler attacked the USSR, Soviet authorities helped evacuate Jews from territories overrun and threatened by Nazi armies.

Despite great war-time losses, therefore, the Jewish population in the Soviet Union is now the largest in Europe, numbering more than two and a half million.

In 1947 the Soviet Union's policy and work in the United Nations was a decisive factor in the passing of the United Nations resolution providing for a Jewish State in Palestine.



**2** AT and after the Twentieth Congress of the CPSU it was revealed that the Leninist policy on the national question had been seriously distorted in the direction of Great Russian chauvinism.

Many peoples, nationalities and even nations in the USSR became the victims of this distortion. Hard hit was the Jewish nationality.

Administrative actions that go back so far as the mid-thirties led, after World War II, to the liquidation of all Jewish secular institutions, organizations and channels of cultural ex-

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**RESOLUTION (continued from previous page)**

pression, outside of Biro-Bidjan, whose Jewish cultural life, however, was also adversely affected by these administrative actions.

Jewish schools were shut down, Yiddish and Russian-Jewish newspapers ceased publication. The Yiddish publishing houses stopped functioning. The Yiddish theatres were disbanded.

The Jewish Anti-Fascist Committee was in 1948 abruptly ordered to disband. Jewish cultural figures, many of them with world-wide reputations and following, were unjustly and secretly executed. Many others were persecuted and imprisoned.

We who were incredulous when enemies of socialism rumoured such events, were horrified when unimpeachable communist sources since the Twentieth Congress corroborated them.



**3** HEARTENING amid the agony caused by the revelations at the Twentieth Congress was the fact that the CPSU had itself finally uncovered the errors and crimes, branded them as violations of socialism, and resolved to return to the Leninist policy on all questions, including the national question.

Even before the Twentieth Congress changes in some fields had begun to be made.

Shortly after Stalin's death the Soviet Government had itself revealed and condemned the attempt to frame-up the doctors' case and to use it for anti-Semitic purposes and severely punished those in government and party responsible for this crime.

After the Twentieth Congress signs of improvement began to be reported and were received by us with relief as confirming our confidence in the basic principles of socialism, and with eagerness for further news of the return to a Leninist policy on the Jewish question and the restoration of Jewish cultural life.

It was reported in the communist Press outside the Soviet Union that the reputations of those unjustly executed had begun to be rehabilitated.

Variety concerts of Jewish music and of dramatizations, recitations and readings of Jewish literary works were held in various cities and attracted capacity audiences that demonstrated their enthusiastic desire for the rebuilding of Jewish cultural institutions.

Translations of the poems of some of the executed writers began to appear in literary journals, sometimes with appreciative introductions, but with no indication of what had happened to the late authors.

In Vilna a Yiddish section was set up in the city library and an amateur Yiddish chorus and dramatic group have begun to rehearse Yiddish songs and sketches.

In the field of religion, it may be added, a rabbinical seminary with ten pupils has been opened in Moscow and the Hebrew Prayer-Book has been reissued.



**4** IN June, 1956, an American progressive Jewish cultural leader was informed by the head of the Union of Soviet Writers that there was a plan to (1) establish a Yiddish publishing house; (2) open a Yiddish theatre, to begin as a travelling company; (3) publish a bi-monthly literary periodical; (4) call a conference of Yiddish writers and cultural workers of the Soviet Union.

He was also assured that a government statement on the fight against anti-Semitism would soon be forthcoming. Some

of these plans were to be fulfilled in 1956; others not until 1957.

Thus far, by the end of March, 1957, not one of these projects had been carried to fruition. The fact that there was no publicly proclaimed programme for the restoration and re-establishment of Jewish cultural life, including the Jewish Press, publishing house, theatre and other educational and cultural institutions, has increased the anxiety of the Jewish people and other democratically minded Americans and sections of the working class.

More recently, official delegations of the Canadian and British Communist Parties, as well as French and American progressives, have visited the Soviet Union and held discussions on the Jewish question with authoritative bodies there.

They have publicly confirmed the fact that Jews are notably active in government positions, in all aspects of the economic, administrative, scientific, cultural and political work of the Soviet Union.

We reject the slander of the anti-Soviet elements accusing the Soviet Union of anti-Semitism. There is no official State policy of anti-Semitism. However, remnants of anti-Semitism, implanted by generations of former tsarist rule and revived to a certain degree among backward elements by the Hitlerite wartime occupation, apparently remain.

These delegations have also publicly expressed disappointment and dissatisfaction with the fact that Jewish cultural life has not yet been restored and with the lack of speed, energy and communist determination made necessary by the gravity of the situation, with which the CPSU and the government are tackling the expected reparation of damage done and the restoration of Jewish culture and cultural institutions.

One delegation was told by a spokesman of the Soviet party that Yiddish works would be published and translated into Russian and other languages. However the Yiddish newspaper and theatre would not be reinstated unless 'there is a specific demand for them from Soviet Jewry'.

Among the reasons given for this position is that integration has advanced so far as to make their revival unnecessary.

The delegations report that whatever the rate of language assimilation has been, there exists among Soviet Jews a substantial desire for the reconstruction of Jewish cultural life and institutions and increasing concern with the delay in this work.



**5** ENEMIES of socialism try to make capital out of both reporting and distorting the situation for their cold war purposes.

International attention has been fixed on the Jewish question in the USSR. All those in many lands concerned with the matter would be heartened by the Soviet Government's issuing a statement on what happened to Jewish culture and on how the errors on the Leninist policy on the question are being and would be overcome.

Such a statement would help release the initiative of those Soviet Jews who desire Jewish cultural expression to speak for it.

We are confident that the Soviet party, which is steadily correcting the errors of the Stalin period, will, in the process it has begun of examining the Jewish question and the Leninist solutions to it, give full expression to the cultural needs and desires of the Jewish people.

This would enhance the role of the Soviet Union as a beacon not only for the Jewish masses but for the Negro people and all the oppressed.

We believe that the historic role of the Soviet Union in outlawing anti-Semitism, the earlier encouragement of national and nationality group life, including that of the Jewish people and the whole vitalizing effect of the self-criticism initiated by the Twentieth Congress, give the basic guarantees that the CPSU will fully carry out the return to the Leninist policy on the Jewish question in which its contributions have been historic.

## POLAND

### PROSTITUTION IN POLAND

IN a survey of prostitution in Poland, and the authorities' 'ostrich-like policy' on this problem, Salomon Lastik reports in *Nowa Kultura* that half the prostitutes in Warsaw are below 25 years of age.

Of these one in three is not yet 18. This is 'a generation which has matured in the conditions of the People's Republic of Poland'.

According to Lastik the syphilis rate is more than twice what it was in Poland three years ago, mainly because 'after the official statement that prostitution had been liquidated a number of venereal disease dispensaries closed down'.

Of 310 women he interviewed 106 were homeless. On cold, wet nights they committed petty crimes 'for the purpose of being arrested and obtaining at least a temporary roof over their heads, a warm nook and a spoonful of warm food'.

In the provinces 'unfortunate women, who are homeless, covered with vermin and filth, are selling their bodies for five to 20 zlotys'. (11.20 zlotys equal £1)

Poverty has driven many husbands to encourage their wives to prostitute themselves, and Lastik complains of these men's 'impudence and shamelessness' because 'they are certain of immunity in Poland'.

Lastik concludes that Poland has so many prostitutes (230,000, according to Gdansk Radio) not only because of social misery but also because of socialist 'blindness and falsehood'.

The Polish Government has just released an anti-prostitution film. Paragraph Zero.

## CHINA

### JOURNALISTS DEMAND LESS INTERFERENCE

CHINESE JOURNALISTS are demanding the right to report freely. They want less interference from government officials and an end to what they call 'incorrect attitudes to journalists'.

These were the demands put forward, according to Peking Radio, at a forum in Shanghai attended by journalists from six newspapers, radio stations and news agencies.

They proposed that public organizations hold regular Press conferences to reply to reporters' questions.

In its report of this gathering the newspaper *Wen Wei Pao* mentioned the case of an Assistant Minister for Agriculture who used abusive language to a reporter at the Peking Agricultural Exhibition and ordered him to leave.

According to New China News Agency the journalists told how departments criticized in the Press telephoned the newspaper concerned and asked for the name of the writer.

## USA

### NAZI FLAG GREETES TEXAS COLOUR-BAR

From our own Correspondent

NEW YORK

A SWASTIKA flag with the words 'No Comment' on it hung from the flagpole in front of Texas University's main building when the College of Fine Arts staged Purcell's *Dido and Aeneas* last week.

This was the students' protest against the barring of a Negro girl, 19-year-old Barbara Smith, from playing the part of *Dido*.

Barbara had been rehearsing since last October. But threatening anonymous telephone calls came at the rate of three a week; and members of the State legislature objected to having a Negro girl play opposite a white boy—'mixing whites and blacks in an opera', as one of them put it.

Pressure was brought to bear on the university's president just before the legislature discussed its financial grant to the university. The president decided that *Dido* must be white.

But the racialists did not get it all their own way. Eight members of the legislature wrote a letter of apology to Barbara. Students hung up effigies of local segregationists.

'It makes me sick to my stomach,' said one of the many angry letters in the local paper. And when the performance took place the hall was more than half-empty.

## LETTER

### GREETINGS TO THE NEWSLETTER

DEAR PETER FRYER,

I am very glad to send greetings to The Newsletter. It promises to be a service of great value to Left socialists and communists.

In this difficult transitional period it is of the first importance that we hold fast to our internationalist outlook, and I am sure that your service here will be of real importance.

I hope that The Newsletter, in its coverage and in its commentary, will emphasize not only the sharp and profound disagreements within the movement but also the field where practical united activity is compatible with principle. I refer especially to disagreements on the communist Left.

We must remember that, over and above the particular issue of Stalinist ideology and practices, every faction-fight on the Left tends to assume bitter and emotionally-charged forms which can endanger the whole movement.

A sense of proportion can become lost, words can be written, irreconcilable positions adopted, which can leave serious scars upon the Left—the S.D.F.-Socialist League splits of the eighteen-eighties, the breach between Lenin and Trotsky in 1904, quarrels within our Minority Movement in the late nineteen-twenties.

Militant socialists are not so common in Britain today that we can afford to squander our energies in this way. I mention this because many, like myself, feel that certain of the positions and attitudes which are labelled 'Trotskyist' tend towards the petrification and perpetuation of sectarian division, not just in the field of theory, but also between people, between rank-and-file socialists.

You have had to endure the full force of hostility, calumny and 'character assassination' which are commonly found in all faction-fights (long before Stalin was born—remember the libel actions, slander and worse found among some Chartist leaders!), but which are accentuated by the corrupt practices of Stalinism.

### Intense loyalty to organization

But where you have met with ill-will from a part of the communist rank and file it springs less from 'Stalinism' than from intense loyalty to organization, from misinformation and confusion.

I doubt whether there are as many as one thousand Communists in Britain permeated beyond hope of change by Stalinist ideology; and of these scarcely two score have been personally involved in the worst corruptions of practice and deception.

The tragedy is that these few effectively control the written word and the administrative machinery of the C.P. But even today among the full-time workers of the party, district committee members, and so on, there are many comrades who are full of conflict between their loyalty to organization and their half-forgotten sense of socialist principle.

You remember the effect upon yourself of your first few hours in insurgent Budapest. There are many socialist comrades of ours in the C.P. who today may align themselves with the forces of corruption but who tomorrow may also meet their Budapest.

We can assist in developing a united forward movement of the socialist Left, not by denouncing whole sections of people as 'dupes', 'stooges', or 'Right-wing opportunists', but by extending reasoned analysis in a comradely spirit, and re-

(Continued on next page)

## RADIO | Marxism on the Air, by a Listener

THE BBC has always allowed discussions of Marxism by Christians, Moslems, Buddhists or virulent English Tories—by anyone, in fact, except avowed Marxists.

So it was a welcome departure from precedent when the Fifty-One Society, wanting to ask the question 'Has Marxism failed?' invited James Klugmann, head of the Communist Party's Central Education and Propaganda Department, to give them his answer. Most of what happened was broadcast on sound radio.

At first Mr. Klugmann seemed to be batting on a good wicket. 'If Marxism had failed,' he said, 'I doubt very much whether we would all be discussing it today.'

Marx, he said, had analyzed exploitation. 'Marx showed how the capitalists would always strive for the greatest profit possible... The engineering and shipbuilding employers are confirming Marxism admirably, though it would not be fair to refer to them as Marxists.'

So far so good. But Mr. Klugmann's attempts to cite every success of every Communist Party as a triumph of Marxism aroused great opposition.

'He has asked us to equate Marxism with Communist Parties,' said one speaker. 'I would quarrel with his suggestion that the Communist Parties of France and Italy have anything to do with Marxism.' The Communist vote in these countries, the speaker thought, was simply a vote of protest.

'Let us go to the Communist authorities, and first to Mr. Khrushchev,' said J. M. Cameron, who cited the Russian admissions of anti-Semitism, genocide, the deportations of whole peoples, the torture and murder of old Marxists.

Mr. Cameron, a Christian propagandist, certainly had some right to crow. In his book 'Scrutiny of Marxism', published in 1948, he wrote of 'the deportation in cattle trucks of hundreds of thousands of human beings from the Baltic States and Poland to Central Asia and Siberia.'

'Mr. Klugmann and his party staked their political lives on the truth of what is admitted to be lies,' he now reminded his hearers.

### 'Mistakes were made,' he cried

Arnold Kettle was there to give orthodox communist support to Mr. Klugmann. 'Terrible things have happened,' was his formula. '... But Marxists have never claimed that they were above humanity... Where errors have been made they have been frankly admitted.'

'Mistakes were made,' cried Mr. Klugmann, taking up the theme. 'Mistakes which have now been acknowledged and are being corrected.'

The interruption which this provoked did not come over clearly on the radio. Mr. Klugmann continued: 'No Marxist, least of all Marx himself, would have claimed to be infallible.'

'Marx would not!' exclaimed the anonymous interrupter. 'But I am not talking about that.'

Mr. Klugmann alleged that, even before the Khrushchev speech, Marxists had begun to comment on 'the mistakes'.

'Sotto voce!' the interrupter commented.

Asked whether he would say what mistakes he thought were being made in Eastern Europe, Mr. Klugmann said he would return to that subject later. If he did, his remarks were not broadcast.

The chairman appealed for other Marxists to speak.

'I do speak as a Marxist,' said John Saville, 'but as one who disagrees with the approach which Mr. Klugmann has made this evening.'

He pointed out that most Marxists had been members of the Communist Party, and that because the Communist Party had accepted without question and without comment every action of the Soviet Government, their Marxism had become a body of received dogma.

'What Marx and Engels provided has not been carried on,' he said. '... Mr. Klugmann and those who think like him have failed to provide any analysis of what had happened in Russia since 1917.' For such an analysis one had to go to people outside the Communist Party, including Isaac Deutscher and Trotsky.

When challenged to explain his own position as an intellectual, Mr. Klugmann said that as a student doing research in English literature he had found that Marxism opened out whole new realms of thought. Many distinguished men had found it helpful in their own fields.

'Many Marxists in this country have done excellent academic work,' agreed the next speaker, who paid tribute to Professor Gordon Child. 'But this happens particularly in those countries where the Marxists are exposed to the currents of free thought.'

No such stimulating research, he argued, had come out of the Soviet Union. 'The history written under Stalin was not history but myth.'

In moderate tones, E. P. Thompson said: 'I think we do very much confuse ideas and the parties that grow from them... You could judge Adam Smith by Mr. Gradgrind.'

He stressed the difficulties of rebuilding Eastern Europe after the devastation caused by the Nazis, and urged his hearers not to judge these countries too harshly.

'The form of revolt against the ruling bureaucracy in the Soviet Union is not a revolt against Marxism,' he added, 'but a return to reason.' He thought it could lead to 'a return to Marxism, plus a new form of moral idealism.'

Professor Costello, who had lived in the Soviet Union for six years, said it was just as unfair to judge Marxism by everything the Russians did as to judge Christianity by Franco Spain.

In his final reply, Mr. Klugmann said: 'I don't think you can separate Marxism and the Communist Party... Marxism is not a closed system... It has been developed since Marx died, by Lenin—'

'And by Stalin?' a voice inquired.

'Yes, Stalin too,' replied Mr. Klugmann. '... I would ask you to consider my proposition that the time is coming when the British people, looking for an answer, will come to Marxism—'

'And become members of the Communist Party?' asked another incredulous voice.

'Yes,' said Mr. Klugmann firmly.

The chairman concluded by quoting Milton: 'Who ever knew truth put to the worse, in a free and open encounter?'

### GREETINGS (continued from previous page)

serving our sharpest polemic for those actions or policies which are demonstrably anti-socialist and corrupt.

We must find out, through our forums, journals, and in other ways, how to develop a comradesly rank-and-file discussion alongside each other.

In 1956 there was a great turn in the international movement, opening new optimistic perspectives for revolutionary democratic socialism. As in all great turns, many of the old guard are too old and set in their ways to change their outlook or their methods.

Some of them have given real service to the movement in the past; abuse of the reactionary policies to which they cling should be tempered by an understanding of their pitiful dilemma.

Wholesale recriminations may—instead of isolating the source of corruption—cement the remaining Communist-Party-rank and file behind its leadership and serve to congeal deep and lasting divisions.

The historical context within which Stalinism arose has come to an end, and its last outposts in Britain will perish under the criticisms of life. It is time that we left King Street to stew in its own juice.

Our job is the positive one of finding new policies and forms of constructive united action between Left socialists, including members of the communist rank and file. I hope that The Newsletter will strengthen this work.

Yours fraternally,

Edward Thompson,  
Halifax.