

# THE NEWSLETTER

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a service to socialists

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## OFFICIAL TESTS MASK STRONTIUM PERILS

by our Science Correspondent, J. H. Bradley

Government experiments on the uptake of strontium 90 by plants could hardly have been designed to give a more unreliable and misleading picture of the dangers of H-bomb tests.

The results showed that 'less than one per cent' of the strontium present was taken up in a certain test. But the trials took place on chalk downland at Compton (Berks). Chalk is 99 per cent calcium carbonate—and it is precisely calcium which strontium can replace in a plant or an animal.

The result quoted may even indicate that some plants prefer strontium to calcium—only there is very little strontium

### 200 RUSSIANS HAVE H-TEST DISEASE

As Britain explodes her first H-bomb over the Pacific, comes news that there are at least 200 Russians suffering from exposure to radioactivity. This figure (writes our Bonn correspondent) is given in a letter from Professor Bagdazarov, of a Moscow research institute, to Dr. Siegmund Schmidt, of Vörden, near Osnabrück, a specialist in blood diseases. Dr. Schmidt has been advising the Russians on treatment.

compared to calcium in most soils. Certain shellfish have a definite preference for strontium in their shells, when they can get it.

Apart from this calculated unreliability, there are many uncertainties in the experiments. Not all types of plants behave alike; we are not told in what chemical combination or as how fine a powder the strontium was applied.

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## INDUSTRY

### WHITHER THE ETU?

by a correspondent

TO SAY the Electrical Trades Union is broke is far nearer to the truth than saying it is 'just in the red'.

At the end of 1956 the union had £497,000, of which £89,000 was political fund, leaving £408,000 in other funds and reserves.

In the recent engineering strike the ETU spent £200,000, and there is now less than £1 per member per head. If in the coming year there should be much unemployment in the electrical contracting industry—and this is quite possible—unemployment benefit could not be paid.

The rules of the union say that when there is less than 30s. per head in the kitty the Executive can authorize a levy of two shillings per member. To give the same purchasing power today that 30s. would have to be £4 10s. There has been less than that sum per head in the funds since 1951 (see table overleaf).

### Was the crisis unexpected?

Was the present crisis completely unexpected? By no means. It was apparent at the 1954 rules revision conference where the dues were increased.

It was still more apparent last year when the general secretary had to send out a circular to branches on the matter.

The ETU leadership is now proposing to hold another rules revision conference in September to consider raising dues, or a levy, or both.

The circular announcing this conference fails to explain how and why the union's resources have been depleted—with

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## COMMENTARY

LABOUR has proved its strength this week, and the Tories have revealed their weakness and disunity.

The net gain of 316 seats in the English and Welsh local elections shows that the tide has turned once and for all against Macmillan. The resignation of eight Tory MPs and a Tory peer shows how shifting are the sands on which his administration is built. The crisis within the Tory Party goes vastly deeper than these few defections indicate. There will be refusals to vote for the Government. There will be more resignations, including perhaps that of Lord Lambton as Parliamentary Private Secretary to Selwyn Lloyd. No one has much doubt that the next General Election will see the triumphant return of a new Labour Government. The question is: how soon?

The answer lies very largely in the hands of the active Labour Party workers in the constituencies. They see far clearer than some of their leaders in the Commons the urgent need to oust this employers' government. They are closer to those who suffer at its hands:

the lower-paid workers, the old-age pensioners, the mothers of children who are absorbing strontium 90 in their milk—absorbing it even in the womb, as our series of articles on the effects of H-bomb tests shows. This is a government that makes war on the aged and the unborn alike; as long as it stays in office our economic security and our health are menaced. It has got to go. And this week it is clear that one decisive push would do the job.

This is the time when local Labour Parties are discussing resolutions for submission to the party's annual conference. The agenda should be chock-full of resolutions urging the most bitter fight by every means—industrial as well as political—against the Tory Government. Brighton should be the climax of an unprecedented mobilization of Labour's forces. Labour must go over to the offensive all along the line.

But it is not enough merely to end the life of this government this year. The government that replaces it must be one whose horizons are not limited by Right-wing fear of mass activity and social change. It must have a clear-cut and thorough-going socialist programme—and the organized working class must make sure that it carries that programme out.

**WHITHER THE ETU? (Continued from page nine)**

something like one million pounds liquid assets in 1951, and with an income since then of some £400,000 a year.

As immediate steps the leadership has closed the union's college at Esher and its convalescent home, disaffiliated from the National Council of Labour Colleges and suspended the annual youth conference.

It is claimed that these so-called economy measures will save £57,000. But there are many members who challenge this. They want to know why they have not been consulted earlier.

They want to know why the many resolutions from area committees and branches that have been sent in over the past two years calling for an end to the drop in finances have not been acted on.

They want an end to the policy, adhered to since 1948, of keeping the total reserves steady even though the membership rises and the value of the pound drops.

Their view is that the leadership must be frank with the members—and that only by linking the question of finance with the union's entire industrial and political policy can bankruptcy be avoided. This means a fighting programme which inspires the membership, not one that is content with wage rates that only just keep pace with the official cost of living figures.

Members are not likely to be satisfied by a rules revision conference at which only those questions raised by the EC can be considered—and at which scarcely more than fifty delegates will represent over 220,000 members.

**Reserves per member, 1945-56**

(Note: the membership rose from 173,000 to 228,000 between 1945 and 1956)

	Reserves per head			Purchasing power cf. 1945		
	£	s.	d.	£	s.	d.
1945	5	7	3	5	7	3
1946	5	1	9	5	1	8
1947	5	0	0	4	14	0
1948	5	0	0	4	6	0
1949	5	0	0	4	6	0
1950	5	0	0	4	3	0
1951	4	9	6	3	9	0
1952	3	15	0	2	13	6
1953	3	1	0	2	3	6
1954	1	13	0	1	2	9
1955	1	14	0	1	2	6
1956	1	15	6	1	2	6
1957	under £1			13 9		

**BRIGGS WORKERS MAY STRIKE AGAIN**

by our Industrial Correspondent

A FRESH stoppage at Briggs, Dagenham, is likely within the next few weeks.

The workers are dissatisfied with the outcome of the case of Johnnie McLoughlin, the victimized shop steward.

The Amalgamated Engineering Union National Committee has decided to press for his reinstatement despite the refusal of the management to have him back.

It is hard to see how a showdown can be avoided unless one side capitulates.

If the Briggs workers do come out again they would undoubtedly have the support of rank-and-file trade unionists.

**TRADE UNION LEADERS SWING RIGHT**

THE ENGINEERS' wages strike has had at least one important effect on the trade union movement. A section of the leadership has swung right and is prepared to accept a compromise which would amount to a virtual wage freeze for a period.

This is clear from the behaviour of Mr. William Carron at the Amalgamated Engineering Union National Committee when he urged acceptance of 11s. 6d. a week as a basis for negotiation—knowing full well that this carries with it the employers' stipulation of a twelve months' ban on further wage demands.

Now the strike is over Sir Thomas Williamson, TUC chairman, publicly rebukes Ted Hill, the boilermakers' secretary, for denouncing the court of inquiry report as a travesty of justice.

**HOW THE USA EXPORTS SLUMP**

by our Economic Correspondent

EVER since 1929, when the first sign of the slump was overproduction of US agricultural produce and the collapse of the prices of these commodities, American politicians have been sensitive to the level of agricultural production and farm prices.

In January 1956 Eisenhower sent a Bill to Congress demanding the creation of a soil bank. He calls it a 'bank', presumably, because the soil will be 'saved' from use until required. Really this is just another bounty paid to farmers for not producing crops, and so maintaining prices and therefore income.

The crops not to be produced were wheat, maize, cotton and rice. Congress finally voted 1,200 million dollars to operate the scheme, which became law on May 11, 1956.

Another, supplementary, method of preventing the fall of farm prices is Government purchase of surpluses; the amounts of wheat, maize, cotton and rice held by the American Government have already become embarrassingly large.

Existence of these surpluses, even though the commodities have been withdrawn from the market, has a depressing effect on world prices. So the Eisenhower administration is doing its best to get rid of them.

On August 29, 1956, an agreement was signed in New Delhi for the purchase of 360 million dollars of US surplus agricultural products. Payment is made by crediting the US Government account in India with rupees to the value of that number of dollars. This fund is to be used in India in a number of ways.

Rs. 1,114 million is lent on a long-term basis to the Indian Government for economic development, and Rs. 260 million of this must be used for loan to private enterprise. Rs. 257 million is a direct grant to the Indian Government. The balance, approximately Rs. 500 million, is to be used in India by the US Government for various purposes, e.g. the development of new markets for US agricultural commodities.

Brazil, too, on December 31, 1956. Here the USA is dumping agricultural produce to the extent of 138,700,000 dollars, 85 per cent of the cost to be re-lent to cover long-term Brazilian Government development projects, and the balance reserved for American Government expenditure in Brazil.

The Argentine Republic, Brazil's main supplier of wheat, protested, as did Canada—but to no effect, for since then a similar agreement has been made with Greece, and now one is being negotiated with Poland, by which the USA will sell 18-36 million bushels on up to 20-30 years' credit.

Canada has protested again about the US-Polish wheat deal, on the ground that long-term credit deals of this kind can destroy the world wheat market. Exports of Canadian wheat fell from 6,169,000 bushels in the first week of April 1956 to 1,954,000 bushels in the corresponding week this year.

**SCR LEADERS UNDER FIRE**

by a correspondent

As a result of the demands of members a special general meeting of the Society for Cultural Relations is to be held on June 29 to discuss policy.

Members are very angry that an influential group in the leadership are using the Society for propagating the ideas of Stalinism instead of developing cultural relations between the USSR and this country. A number of well known actors, writers, scientists and professors have left the Society because of its political activities. Two members of the E.C., well known for their non-political outlook, H. Golombek and Professor Wrenn, left the E.C. at the end of last year and have not been replaced. They felt out of place with the Society's growing political propaganda. News of these resignations has

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been carefully concealed from the membership.

The chief policy-maker of the Society is Andrew Rothstein, editor of the Anglo-Soviet Journal. His many years of experience in the employ of the Soviet Government as a journalist have stood him in good stead as a painter of rosy Soviet-hued pictures.

The Anglo-Soviet Journal consists mainly of tedious translations of the official Soviet Government point of view. There is little news of de-Stalinization—the main hope for improved cultural relations from the Soviet side. Non-Soviet contributors are carefully vetted. The rigid unity of viewpoint results in a journal so dull that many members of the E.C. do not even read it. Book-reviewing policy is so distorted that many publishers do not now send in books for review.

Many members feel that the Society's leaders should be persons prominent in scientific and cultural fields, not 'Russia, right or wrong' politicians like D. N. Pritt, Rothstein, Commander Edgar P. Young, R.N. (ret.) and the Hon. Ivor Montagu.

### End bans and proscriptions

The critics consider that all who wish to promote cultural relations should be welcome in the Society and that those who formulate policy and contribute to the Anglo-Soviet Journal should no longer be required to approve uncritically all official Soviet policy. The bans and proscriptions on the movements of Soviet visitors should be lifted. The main work of the Society should be to encourage the maximum of contact between the British and Soviet peoples so as to develop mutual understanding. A reputable Society free from political propaganda would be able to put itself on a sound financial basis and broaden the scope of its activities.

There is little doubt that the special general meeting will be one of the liveliest and best attended general meetings in the Society's thirty-three years' history.

The move to change the policy of the Society is being organized by a group of SCR members, whose secretary is Donald Veall of 25 Couchmore Avenue, Esher (Surrey). He wishes to hear from all SCR members who support the proposed changes.

## FORUMS

### THE SOCIALIST FORUM MOVEMENT

by John St. John

POLITICAL organizers of all colours have for long been moaning about the poor average attendances at meetings.

TV, mid-week soccer, skills and the moral anaemia of the younger generation are among the reasons usually advanced for the all-prevailing political apathy. The appearance, therefore, during the past few months of what is becoming known as the 'Forum movement' is causing a good deal of puzzled scratching of heads.

So far some twenty-odd socialist discussion forums have been formed and reports of new ones mushrooming come in every week. Chief centres are Sheffield, Nottingham, Halifax, Hull, Fife, Tyneside and London, where they are flourishing in at least six boroughs.

Add to these the various groups connected with Tribune, with G. D. H. Cole's International Society for Socialist Studies, the weekly London meetings run by the Universities and Left Review Club, and it amounts, for these days, to a sidable total of speech-making and arguing.

Left Review Club, and it amounts, for these days, to a sizable thousand copies of its first issue and can draw 750 to hear Isaac Deutscher, that over 500 came to the first joint public meeting organized in March by the London Forums to hear John Sayille and Edward Thompson and that these two are launching The New Reasoner as a quarterly—all these developments, let alone the militancy shown in recent strikes and the campaign against the Rent Bill, are making people ask themselves if the long awaited renaissance of the Left is not already under way.

Most of us have been had too often to accept such a view

without considerable caution, though the reasons—quite apart from the fission bomb and other unsolved global problems—why the Left should feel the need just now for a bout of re-assessment and rethinking are not really very difficult to discover:

**Firstly**, the disillusion and frustration felt in so many local Labour parties, the uncertainties of Labour's 'New Thinking', the failure of Attlee's Government, are causing thousands to ask themselves what precisely Socialism is all about. They are tending to seek a way forward which has little to do with either Welfare Stateism or Stalinism.

**Secondly**, there has been the exodus of a fifth of the Communist Party's membership as a result of the Twentieth Congress and Hungary. This does not mean they will automatically want to embrace the Labour Party. The classical objections to reformism still seem valid. The ex-Communist Party is reckoned by some to be 200,000 strong, but in the past the large majority of these have probably dropped out of politics altogether or at best found satisfaction in some form of Lucky Jimism.

**Thirdly**, there are signs that the student population are in the move, that plenty of our young men and women are beginning to get angry to some purpose and to think in political terms.

The topics being discussed by some of the Forums give a clue to what is afoot. The three main sessions of the week-end school organized jointly by all the Forums at Wortley Hall, near Sheffield, at the end of April were devoted to discussions on 'Whether or not Marxism is unimpaired', 'Some Lessons of the Stalin Era', and 'Winning Socialists'.

Though ex-Communists, some of mature vintage, were preponderant, many were members of the Labour Party and there were also representatives of several Trotskyist and other Marxist groups and—whisper it in the parlous of Covent Garden—quite a few 'in-fighting' CP members.

It was heartening to see the extent to which past smears and antagonisms were forgotten in the attempt both to analyze the mistakes of the past and to apply the lessons to Britain's Labour movement today. A striking feature was the way in which many speakers showed that it was possible to criticize the Soviet Union and Communist policies without name-calling, without having to descend to personal abuse or clamber on the familiar anti-Soviet band-wagon.

Though with such an incohesive movement it is dangerous to generalize, the hope is that the Forums can provide a place where truth and a genuinely 'scientific' approach may operate free from the limitations imposed by party necessity.

Most of those who join probably consider themselves to be at least strongly influenced by Marxism, and there is a determination to avoid the inadequate and falsified analyses which have often passed for Marxism in the past two decades.

Here are a few of the subjects which I hope the forums will set out to study:

The changing nature of British capitalism as a result of the break-up of the Empire, the shifting balance of world forces, and the effect of technical and industrial changes (in particular nuclear energy) on its own laws of development.

The likelihood of another world slump and the relationship between war and economic needs and stresses.

What do we mean by Socialism? How to curb exploitation while at the same time maintaining and expanding Britain's present popular liberties. Parliamentary reform and changes needed in the character of State power.

### Eyebrows are seen to lift

The different roads to Socialism. How do Yugoslavia and Poland really differ from other Communist countries in Europe? The true relationship between the economic base and the superstructure in Socialist countries; also between leaders and the mass. Analysis of social forces and conflicts within Communist countries—an attempt to define the laws of Socialist development and their relation to historical conditions.

How far will the Forums go? Eyebrows have been seen to lift in several quarters and there is no doubt that some are beginning to ask if the Forums are the beginning of a new Left-wing party.

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## USA

## UNITED MAY DAY IN NEW YORK

by our New York Correspondent

A THOUSAND workers attended the united May Day rally in New York—the first of its kind for three decades—and another 500 had to be turned away for lack of space.

The Communist Party, the Socialist Workers' Party (Trotskyists) and other radical groups joined forces, and the rally was marked by a genuine spirit of solidarity.

But the diehard Stalinists—the Foster group within the Communist Party—organized their own meeting, seemingly in competition with the united rally. Less than 200 attended.

New York's May Day was the peak of a new and encouraging development among American communists—a readiness to discuss with other Left-wing trends and to take part in joint practical activities with them.

At numerous well-attended symposiums in New York, Los Angeles and other cities Communist Party spokesmen have joined in public discussion with spokesmen of other groups.

Membership of the American C.P., estimated at 75,000 ten years ago, is now under 20,000. Its recent convention has intensified rather than healed the divisions in the leadership. There are three warring camps.

One is headed by party chairman William Z. Foster, who demands continued blind subservience to the Kremlin.

Another is led by Daily Worker editor John Gates, who demands the right to criticize the Soviet bureaucracy. The Gates group has, however, withdrawn its proposal to replace the party by a more amorphous 'political association'.

Midway between the Foster and Gates factions stands party secretary Eugene Dennis.

The party convention revealed that the members viewed the entire leadership with distrust and were unwilling to hand control to any section of it.

For the rival factions all agree on a programme of support for the Democratic Party—the party which the Right-wing Labour leaders support—and a policy of no struggle against the AFL-CIO bureaucracy.

Since the convention there has been a steady exodus from the party, whose present state is illustrated by a recent fund-raising drive for the Daily Worker.

Last October a drive was started to raise 50,000 dollars by January 1. In the middle of March the drive was finally called off still several thousand dollars short of the goal.

On April 1 a new three-month drive was launched, this time for 100,000 dollars. By the end of the first month a bare 5,000 dollars had been collected.

## THE FORUM MOVEMENT

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The answer given by those responsible for organizing them is a categorical 'No'. The Forums are not envisaged as in any way rivalling the existing political parties. The weakness of being a mere talking-shop is realized but experience has always shown that hard-hitting Socialist discussion leads to increased political activity—though under what label it is carried out is each Forum member's individual concern.

A loosely knit national liaison committee is being set up, but discussion, research, education, and propaganda for the essential socialist principles are the Forums' chief reasons for existence.

Nothing resembling a political platform is therefore likely to emerge. At the most it will be a collection of ideas amounting to a recognizable point of view.

But ideas are as important as organization and, if they are good ones and well timed, they can sometimes shape the course of history. The Fabians influenced the Labour movement for several generations, the Left Book Club helped to set the tone of the late thirties and of the 1945 Labour Government. Perhaps the Socialist Forums can follow in this tradition? It is far, far too early even to guess, but the Forums are worth watching—and worth joining.

## USSR

## TALKS WITH SOVIET LEADERS ON THE JEWISH QUESTION

by J. B. Salsberg

(This series of articles first appeared in Yiddish in the Canadian weekly Vochenblatt. The author has been a communist for thirty years and was for long a member of the National Committee of the Canadian Labour-Progressive Party. From 1942 to 1954 he was a member of the Ontario Provincial Parliament.)

## I. BEGINNING OF THE PROBLEM—THE THIRTIES

It is a good many years since I have spoken publicly about the painful problem of Jewish life in the Soviet Union. This silence on my part about such a great and nagging question was a most painful experience.

It was a thousand times harder than speaking up because both friends and foes failed to understand and misinterpreted it. I therefore feel an obligation, before getting into the heart of my subject, to explain certain details about the past.

As long ago as the late thirties I became worried about several developments in Jewish social and cultural life in the USSR. At that time a number of cultural, educational and social institutions that were really flourishing, with fearful suddenness began to wither and disappear. The normal channels of contact between Jewish associations in the Soviet Union and their counterparts in the rest of the world became more and more clogged.

**It was clear that some kind of evil blight had descended and was devastating Jewish cultural achievements.**

Why such a bitter frost in midsummer? This question tormented a great many Jewish communists, Left activists and a great many others who had rejoiced in the development of Yiddish culture in a country building socialism. These persons, all loyal friends of the Soviet Union, became very uneasy about Birobidjan, which had already begun to wane.

We asked questions, demanded answers, but no clear reply was received by anyone.

## I discussed it with Dimitrov

In 1939—and I am saying this for the first time in public—I took upon myself to utilize my position as a member of the highest body of a Communist Party to pose this question in Moscow. I did this in July of that year at a meeting of the Communist International.

It is not essential to go into all of the details, all of the conversations, discussions, etc. Suffice it to say that Georgi Dimitrov, head of the International, exhibited the greatest sympathy, understanding and interest in the question.

He encouraged me to pursue the matter persistently. For hours at a stretch he and I privately discussed the question and it was decided that he would set up a small commission in Moscow. I for my part undertook to form a similar commission of Canadian and American political-cultural activists. The latter would prepare a basic document on the question which would serve as a basis for discussion and for a broader conference in a short time.

Shortly after my return I had a meeting in New York. Within a matter of weeks a document was prepared. But then the war broke out and the whole project was left hanging in the air.

The problem of Jewish cultural activity in the Soviet Union  
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## THEY MARCH FOR EQUAL RIGHTS

Thousands of Negroes and whites are staging a Prayer Pilgrimage for Freedom—a gigantic march on Washington—on May 17.

This will be America's greatest-ever demonstration against racial discrimination. Fifteen thousand are expected from the South alone, where the Rev. Ralph D. Abernathy, one of the leaders of the successful Montgomery bus boycott, is organizing the Pilgrimage.

**SALSBERG (Continued from page twelve)**

did not start in 1948 when the Jewish Anti-Fascist Committee was dissolved, the publishing house and newspaper *Ainikeit* closed and when the shocking arrests of Yiddish writers and leaders began. It started way back in 1934-35.

Second, I want to make it clear that it is false to think that people like myself in several Communist Parties were not concerned with or ignored the fact that Jewish cultural activity in the USSR seemed to be shrivelling even before the war.

Certainly there were many at that time who were infected with the cult disease (although unconsciously every one of us was somewhat infected) and believed that in the Soviet Union no deliberate wrong could be committed by that party or government.

But those of us who were already disturbed by the bitter doubt that developments in Jewish social-cultural life were not only unexpected but inexplicable in the framework of our concepts about the socialist approach to the cultures of nationalities and national groups, did do something about this process.

But lastly I recall the 1939 episode in order to provide a background explanation for the fact that I kept these suspicions and my activity out of the public eye. Perhaps, in retrospect, it would have been better if I had spoken out in 1939. But there were plenty of critics of the USSR then.

I am not referring to the imperialists and the fascists. I have in mind those Jewish writers and cultural workers who criticized and attacked the condition of Jewish cultural-social life in the USSR before the war. Some did it sincerely. Others did it insincerely. But critics were there and the chorus was loud.

I therefore decided for this reason, and because of many serious international problems of that period, to pursue my investigations quietly through available channels, the party and the Comintern.

Whether these investigations would have led to results is debatable. I certainly was confident. My hopes were shared by Paul Novick, editor of the *Morning Freiheit*; Rubin Saltzman, former head of the progressive Jewish fraternal movement in the USA; J. Gershman, editor of the *Canadian Vochenblatt*; Slovess and George Koenig of Paris, and a host of other Jewish writers and political figures.

(Next week: **The Storm Breaks—1948**)

**WHAT IS BEHIND THE KHRUSHCHEV PLAN?**

**GREAT INTEREST**—and a lot of speculation—has been aroused by Khrushchev's plan to reorganize the management of industry and construction in the USSR.

The capitalist Press alleges a crisis of planning. Khrushchev vigorously denies this. What is the real reason behind the plan? And will it work?

The development of productive forces under the Soviet Union's planned economy has been phenomenal. The volume of industrial production alone has increased thirty times over the pre-1917 figure.

In agriculture progress has not been half as spectacular—yet great changes have taken place, with the large-scale mechanization of agricultural economy.

But though gross production has multiplied, productivity of labour has not increased to anywhere the same extent. This is due in the main to bureaucratic methods of management and the persistence of enormous disparities in income.

There have been a tremendous waste of national resources, bottlenecks in production, non-fulfilment of plans (or the fulfilment of financial plans at the expense of production plans) and a far from complete utilization of industrial capacity.

In fact only 35 per cent of Soviet manpower is productively employed—in one of the most industrially advanced countries in the world!

The Khrushchev plan, however, does not go to the root of the problem. What is proposed is not a vertical decentralization giving power to the producers—but a horizontal decen-

tralization on a geographical and departmental basis. This is not the liquidation of bureaucracy, but its redistribution.

Almost every speaker at the Supreme Soviet who supported the scheme demanded greater powers for the managers and directors. There was very little mention of the rôle of the trade unions—and nothing was said about workers' councils.

Khrushchev specifically assailed the idea that the economic councils should be responsible to their respective soviets, and the Soviet Press denounced as 'anarcho-syndicalist' the suggestion that 'producers' unions' should be set up.

The main beneficiary of the plan will be—as Khrushchev made clear—the party bureaucracy of the republics, regions and territories.

So long as the working class does not have the power to make and revise the five-year and annual plans, and the power to distribute the national surplus product, Khrushchev's administrative changes will in the long run be nullified.

M.B.

**PROBLEMS OF SOVIET HISTORIANS**

'Aralov carefully unfolds documents grown yellow with age. Among them is a copy of a telegram from V. I. Lenin, the text of which has never been published ...'

Thus opens a story which appeared recently in the *Moscow Press*. It concerns the publication for the first time of a telegram from Lenin, in April 1919, to the Red Army commander-in-chief Vacetis and the member of the Revolutionary Military Council attached to his headquarters, S. I. Aralov, ordering them to send some troops into Galicia and Bukovina in order to make contact with the young Hungarian Soviet Republic.

The old Bolshevik Aralov had kept this telegram all through these years, and it had remained unknown to historians.

The reason was simple: under Stalin one of the official myths about the Civil War was that only 'Trotskyite wreckers and spies' ever advocated diverting any forces to the aid of the revolution in Central Europe.

A somewhat far-fetched effort has been made in recent months to equate the solidarity between the Soviet Government of today and its puppet Kadar with the solidarity between Soviet Russia and Soviet Hungary in 1919.

The periodical *Voprosy Istorii* [Problems of History] has published during the last two years a number of articles boldly de-Stalinizing the history of the Bolshevik Party; for this it was severely reprimanded by the Party organ *Kommunist* [The Communist] in its issue No. 4 of 1957.

The reprimand also referred to the periodical's failure to expose the historical and political links existing between the fascist putschists of 1956 and the bloody suppressors of the Hungarian Revolution in 1919.

L.H.

**CANADA****NO CHANGE AT LPP CONVENTION**

by our Toronto Correspondent

THE RECENT national convention of the Canadian Labour-Progressive Party was a victory for the Stalinist faction in the leadership, headed by Tim Buck.

Well over 400 had quit the party in Quebec alone even before the convention took place. Hundreds more are now leaving.

J. B. Salsberg's resolution calling for a meeting between Kadar, Imre Nagy and other Hungarian communists to discuss common problems and establish what really happened in Hungary was not voted on, but referred to the new national committee.

So was a resolution submitted by the party's Jewish Committee, pointing out that the Soviet leaders had not yet taken visible steps towards the full restoration of the rights of Soviet Jews to their cultural activities in the Yiddish language.

The only member of the opposition to be elected to the new national committee was Norman Penner.

**LETTER****WHERE DO EX-COMMUNISTS GO?**

WHERE INDEED? Inevitably they will argue among themselves on this point and split up even further. But I don't think this matters at all at the moment, as all will blend into one stream sooner or later.

To me the very first question has to be, do we join the Labour Party? I say yes, emphatically we do. Whether we like it or not it is the party that commands the respect of the mass of the people and gets their votes.

Having been through the wringer marked de-Stalinization one can begin to set to work. I have formed an anti-H-bomb-test committee, with representatives from local Labour and Liberal Parties, Quakers and youth organizations, and we are kicking off with a showing of 'The Children of Hiroshima'.

Next a Socialist Forum, which will be affiliated to the London Forum. I find more to do and more people to listen than I ever did in those frustrating years fighting bureaucracy, idealizing Stalin, handing my mind to the leadership to the extent of not even reading Trotsky, making excuses for shootings, and using my energy to keep Pollitt and Dutt in their jobs.

Jane Swinnerton,  
Herne Bay (Kent)

**JOURNAL****Who made that speech?**

So Khrushchev didn't make that 'Khrushchev speech' after all! The question is: who did make it? Or was it all concocted in some secret recess in the U.S. State Department, as Khrushchev now tries to hint?

Khrushchev's denial that he made the speech gives rise to some interesting speculations. Why did all the Communist Parties outside the Soviet Union accept the speech as authentic?

Harry Pollitt was at the Twentieth Congress. We know that he has often been silent about what was going on in the Soviet Union; but would he have kept silent on this occasion and allowed the British Communist Party and the Daily Worker to conduct a discussion which took it for granted that Khrushchev was correctly reported?

**Is Harry a 'revisionist'?**

And if he did keep silent, what was his motive? Is Harry at heart a 'revisionist' and a 'liquidationist'? Has the party leadership been nursing a Trotskyist viper to its bosom all these years?

But Khrushchev's (or somebody else's) speech was not the only criticism of Stalin which came out of the USSR at and after the Twentieth Congress.

There was Mikoyan's reference to Stalin's role in the Civil War and after. There were the numerous Stalin factories which had their names changed. The Stalin Peace Prize is now the Lenin Peace Prize. Even if the Khrushchev fire was never lit there certainly seems to have been a lot of smoke about.

**Standing on their heads**

Khrushchev has been very busy lately re-zoning Soviet industry. One of the biggest industries of the Stalin era was the lic factory. This still seems to be going full blast, and has been working overtime turning out material for the world communist Press.

There must be some queasy stomachs in the editorial rooms at the Daily Worker. Humanité and Unità as they contemplate the writing of yet another editorial to prove that black after all is white, that Khrushchev is Trotsky's ghost in disguise, that 'war is peace'... and bureaucracy is democracy.

**THE LAST TWO YEARS IN POLAND**

The first article in this series by our Warsaw correspondent, Stanislaw Kowalski, will be printed next week.

**STRONTIUM PERIL. (Continued from front page)**

Strontium is liable to be less soluble than calcium in alkaline soils, and the amounts of manure and water present could gravely affect the results. Most obviously, how deeply was the strontium dug in?

The bones of Welsh sheep, living on soils very poor in calcium, show that the 'tolerance' concentration has been reached in a small proportion of cases.

**Children under five show very much higher concentrations than adults at post-mortems, and, it is admitted by every scientist except Lord Cherwell, will reach 'tolerance' by 1970 if H-tests go on at the present rate.**

Unfortunately this high concentration in young children is unlikely to be due solely to their rapid growth at that age, for even in adults bone is being continually dissolved and re-formed.

Every child should therefore have a first class supply of calcium, but of the chief sources, bread has been handed back to private lack-of-enterprise, with consequent sharp reduction in its calcium content, and milk is contaminated by fall-out.

Why all this fuss, anyhow? Radioactivity in the bones has nothing to do with the genetic dangers which are also much discussed; it causes bone cancer and leukaemia. Because the red blood cells are formed in the bone marrow, and last only a few weeks, radioactivity in the bones easily interferes with their production.

Cells in the process of division are in any case much more radiation-sensitive than normal cells. Hence arises the chronic lack of red cells, called leukaemia, which is now killing many of the pioneers of radioactivity of 25 years ago, such as Marie Curie's famous communist daughter, Professor Irène Joliot-Curie.

Another grave bone danger could be plutonium 239, tens of kilograms of which are formed in any 'dirty' (fission-fusion-fission) bomb. Less than ten kilograms of Pu-239, taken up in bone, would kill the entire human race. Fortunately this does not seem to be happening, though a much stricter watch should be kept.

It is a sad reflection on the ignorance of science created by our educational system that the Government can defend H-tests on the grounds that they have no idea what they are doing. The Australian Government is under strong pressure not to be so foolish, following the rise in the frequency of leukaemia in that country.

★ In next week's Newsletter a medical correspondent writes on the effects of H-bomb tests on human health.

**STAN RUSHTON RESIGNS**

A member of the Merseyside Area Committee since 1948, Stan Rushton, has resigned from the Communist Party. In a statement to The Newsletter he lists his main disagreements as:

- 1) The leaders' uncritical attitude to such aspects of Soviet policy as restriction of democracy in the Soviet Union and the 'Big Brother' attitude to Poland, Hungary and Yugoslavia;
- 2) The leaders' sectarian approach to electoral tactics; and
- 3) Effective control of the party is in the hands of full-time officials, particularly at national level.

**'CHINESE WORKERS HAVE RIGHT TO STRIKE'**

Chou Yang, vice-director of the Chinese Communist Party's propaganda department, told foreign journalists that the Chinese people had the right to strike, and no leaders of strikes should be penalized.

Strikes 'could be regarded as the manner whereby people depose bureaucracy'. The main question was to satisfy the people's reasonable demands correctly and overcome bureaucracy.

**500,000 IN MAY DAY STRIKE**

Five hundred thousand workers on Ceylon's rubber and tea estates struck work on May Day at the call of their unions. The Ceylon Estate Employers' Federation has docked them a day's pay, which may lead to a further strike.