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Soviet Newsviews Digest

WEEKLY SUMMARIES OF CABLE AND PRESS ITEMS
FROM SOVIET SOURCES. ISSUED WEEKLY TO
MEMBERS AND SUPPORTERS OF THE S.A. SOCIETY
FOR PEACE AND FRIENDSHIP WITH THE SOVIET
UNION

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ELECTIONS in the USSR

From "SN"

All citizens of the USSR, who have reached the age of 18, irrespective of race or nationality, sex, religion, education, social origin, property status or past activities, have the right to vote in the election of Deputies to the Supreme Soviet, except insane persons and persons who have been convicted by a court of law and whose sentences include deprivation of electoral rights.

Every citizen who has reached the age of 23 is eligible for election to the Supreme Soviet, irrespective of race or nationality, sex, religion, education, social origin, property status or past activities.

Persons residing in the USSR, who are not citizens of the USSR but are citizens of foreign States do not have the right to take part in elections.

Expenses connected with elections are borne by the State. Candidates to the Supreme Soviet are nominated by election districts and the Soviet is elected by election districts formed according to quota - 300,000 of the population forms one district and one deputy is elected from each election district. The Soviet of Nationalities is elected by Union and Autonomous Republics, Autonomous Regions and National Districts.

The regulations for the elections establish the procedure of the work of the electoral commissions (which consist of representatives from trade unions, cooperatives, Party organisations, youth organisations, cultural, technical and scientific societies, representatives from meetings of workers, Army servicemen, meetings of peasants in collective farms, villages and rural districts and State farm workers.) The right to nominate candidates for Deputies to the Supreme Soviet is given to all these organisations, societies, and also to general meetings of workers, servicemen, peasants, etc.

Voting takes place on the stipulated day from 6 a.m. to 12 p.m. local time. On election day the Chairman of the District Election Commission, in the presence of its members, will at 6 a.m. check up on the ballot boxes and the list of electors, after which the ballot boxes will be sealed with the Commission's seal and voting will begin.

Special rooms are set aside or separate cubicles equipped at the polling station, where electors may fill in their voting papers. It is prohibited for any persons other than the elector to be present in these rooms or cubicles while the voter is filling in his voting paper. Every voter votes in person; and casts his vote by dropping his election paper in the ballot box. The elector deletes the names of the candidates for which he is not voting, leaving only the name of the person he chooses, goes to the ballot box and drops the election paper in it.

No election agitation is allowed in the polling station while votes are being cast.

Representatives of public organisations and societies and of the press, specially empowered, have the right to be present in the premises where the Election Commission counts the votes.

The candidate who obtains an absolute majority of votes, that is, more than half the total number cast in the district, is the one elected.

If the number of votes cast in the district is less than half the number of electors, the District Election Commission makes a minute of the fact and immediately informs the Central Election Commission which appoints new elections not later than within two weeks from the first elections.

Anyone who by violence, deception, threats or bribery hampers a citizen in the free expression of his right to elect and be elected is punished with deprivation of liberty for a period of up to two years.

An official of the Soviet or a member of the Election Commission who forges election papers or deliberately counts the votes incorrectly is punished with deprivation of liberty for a period of up to three years.

AMERICANISED JUSTICE in AUSTRIA

From "NT"

Four Austrian anti-fascists were recently tried at Innsbruck, in the French-occupied zone. This is the substance of the case:-

In the spring of 1945 when the Germans were retreating under the blows of the Soviet Army, Hitler's incendiaries tried to set fire to the Tyrolean village of Nauders. The four present accused prevented them from doing so and shot down two of the Hitler thugs. That is why they are now being tried.

The public prosecutor built up his case on the assertion that the Nazi order to burn the village was only a "joke". This gave the judge his cue, and he proceeded to "prove" that in general the Nazi troops never set fire to any villages and towns. Confronted with photographs submitted by the defence lawyers of villages the Nazis had in fact burnt down, the court had to drop its charge.

The judge, however, found another way of wreaking his rancour on the anti-fascists and sentenced one of the four to five months' imprisonment for "stealing from his landlord."

After all there is more than one way of trampling on the law, particularly in a country where real criminals land not in the dock, but in Parliament.

One example is Strachwitz, a notorious Nazi, whose case has been quashed; another is the Nazi Stuber, who was acquitted. Both of them are now members of Parliament, and so is Sepp Elsnitz, a former major of the Wehrmacht, who received a decoration for hoisting the swastika over the Acropolis in Athens.

But, not content with taking Nazis under their wing, the Austrian reactionaries want to make resistance to fascism a punishable crime. As far as its judicial system is concerned, the Marshallisation of Austria has, it appears, reached the stage of complete Americanisation.

20th ANNIVERSARY of the MORDOVIAN AUTONOMOUS SSR

From "SN"

Twenty years ago, on January 10th, 1930, the Soviet Government adopted a Decree on the formation of the Mordovian Autonomous Region, subsequently reorganised into an Autonomous Republic. For the first time in the course of the ir century-old history the Mordovian people rose to the level of statehood.

In the years of the Five-Year Plans hundreds of enterprises were built in Mordovia, including a hemp factory, a cannery and a plant for producing prefabs. The industry of the Republic now produces agricultural machinery, electrical equipment, cloth, paper, sewn goods, furniture, canned foods, etc.

Great changes have occurred in the country-side. Small disunited farms have given place to 1600 collective farms with up-to-date agricultural machinery. Last year machine and tractor stations cultivated 97 per cent of the sown area, and gross output of grain and industrial crops exceeded the pre-war level. Head of cattle have grown by 48.3 per cent, as compared with pre-war, while head of sheep and goats have grown 50 per cent and pigs 18 per cent.

Important achievements have also been made in education. There is not one single illiterate person in the republic, which formerly did not even have its own alphabet. There have been opened 1,344 schools, pedagogical and teachers' institutes and 17 technical colleges; 36 newspapers are published; over 800 cultural institutions, three theatres, a national opera now function.

THE TRUMAN-VOGT GARDEN OF EDEN

From "NT"

The Tigris and Euphrates, so the Bible tells us, were the rivers that watered the Garden of Eden. This was recalled recently in Washington, and an urgent desire was felt there, to make the valleys of these rivers a thriving paradise once more. Not only that, but the boundaries of this new biblical Eden are to be considerably extended, taking in the whole of Asia, Africa, Canada, South America and Australia..... No special effort is required of the population of the countries and continents in question: U.S. capital is prepared to bear all the expense and trouble of establishing this world-wide paradise.

All this was communicated by President Truman in an after-dinner speech at the Women's National Democratic Club. There is not much longer to wait, in the President's opinion: following the termination of the Marshall plan, the United States will find itself with enormous sums of idle capital, which should be invested in the "development of the immense resources within Asia, Africa, South America, Australia, Indonesia and the rest of the world, which has inexhaustible resources." In this way effect will be given to Truman's Point IV for "aid to the underdeveloped areas of the world." And then a very heaven on earth will supervene: "every man, woman and child in the world" will "have his fair share....."

Truman, and other supporters of his program, studiously omit to specify what is to be the "fair share" in store for the hundreds of millions in the projected neo-paradise. This omission has now been repaired by the "Saturday Evening Post" in a lengthy article by William Vogt, entitled "Let's Examine Our Santa Claus Complex".

In the prefatory note, the American weekly informs the public that the author of the article is best known for his book "Road to Survival", which it describes as a "forerunner of President Truman's bold new program to aid the backward peoples of the world."

"Road to Survival" has indeed brought Vogt notability, or, it would be truer to say, notoriety. Its main thesis is that the globe is overpopulated, that the cultivable area of the world cannot feed even half of its present population. From this he draws the conclusion, that the greater part of mankind are surplus mouths which cannot and should not be fed, and that accordingly scourging epidemic diseases such as cholera, smallpox and the plague are a blessing, and so are mass starvation and also, and especially, wars, which, by carrying off millions of lives, reduce the number of stomachs to be fed.

The "road to survival" according to Vogt, consists precisely in reducing the globe's population by every available means. This, needless to say, is to be done at the expense of the "backward" races and peoples, so that the appetites of the chosen - the Anglo-Saxon race - may be the more fully satisfied. It takes no great political acumen to see that Vogt's "road to survival" is in fact the conception of American fascism. While Malthus was the forebear of Vogt, Rosenberg and Haushofer were without question his elder brothers.

In his "Saturday Evening Post" article, Vogt translates Truman's honeyed poetic outpourings into the brutal prose of American realities. He reassures any American dull-witted enough to take at their face value the President's promises of showering boons on the "backward peoples." "President Truman's Point IV program will pay us large dividends" he writes.

With a few reservations, Vogt acknowledges it quite normal that Truman's "development plans" will "turn into a rape of foreign resources." Still looking in the same direction for the "road to survival", he feels the "greatest danger" is that, even when subjected to that rape, the population of the "underdeveloped areas" will not be exterminated and die out intensively enough. And so, his first stipulation - and elucidation - in regard to "Point IV" is that the living standard of Truman's Garden of Eden shall no account be raised, because if it is, "we must count on a more rapid increase in the number of men and women and children."

Vogt demands that even "mere token health measures" shall not be tolerated in the countries the American imperialists mean to invade, for even these measures "set the population spiraling upward." Vogt explains that, far from lowering the Asian and African death rate from "war, malaria and the tsetse fly," Truman's plan should rather increase that death rate, otherwise the efforts of

the Americans will "be drowned in a tidal wave of hungry mouths."

Such are the fundamentals of a sympathetic analysis of Truman's "Santa Claus complex". Vogt welcomes the President's program as a means for the plunder and wholesale extermination of "inferior, backward" peoples to the greater glory of the elite of the Anglo-Saxon race. Only one thing dismays him: despite his typically fascist arrogant contempt for all other peoples, whom he brands as "inferior", he fears that these people will not let themselves be fleeced and exterminated. He accordingly proposes tempering violence with circumspection, and not "spreading ourselves octoplasm-thin all over the map" right away.

This article by William Vogt, forerunner and interpreter of Truman's Point IV program, divests the bestial plans of the American monopolies of their verbal trappings and shows up their projected Garden of Eden for what it really is.

AMERICA ADMITS SOVIET NAVY PREPARING FOR DEFENCE

From "RT Newsletter"

Admiral Sherman, newly appointed Chief of Naval Operations of the United States, speaking to the Annapolis Naval Academy recently, said that Soviet naval strength "now approaches that of the United States."

Sherman described Soviet naval tactics as defence tactics, explaining their lack of aggressive intentions as due to the "unique geographical situation" of the USSR.

"A self-contained military Power, already in possession of the bulk of two continents and with the potential possibility to develop and occupy adjacent territory, has no need of extended lines of sea communications."

UNITED STATES aggressive intentions are not excused, but "explained" in these terms:

"Its (Soviet) naval problem differs radically from our own. Our business in a war with such a Power would be to get to the enemy with speed and strength, at the same time keeping open the sea lanes on which we depend."

Sherman adds that since the Soviet Union possesses more submarines - an essentially defensive weapon - the U.S. must possess "anti-submarine elements of great effectiveness."

"These must be so constituted as to permit the attacking of submarines by every possible means, not only in our coastal waters but in enemy coastal waters and bases themselves.

We do not today need to match the enemy naval force type for type, BECAUSE OUR PROBABLE FUNCTION IS NOT TO RESIST INVASION, BUT TO SUPPORT MILITARY OPERATIONS OVERSEAS".

ORTHOPEDIC EXAMINATIONS for BABIES

From "Bulletin"

All newborn babies in Kiev are given a thorough orthopedic examination in order to detect any deformities at birth which might otherwise go undiscovered until later. Introduced recently in all Kiev maternity homes, this system will be extended to all Soviet maternity homes.

The Ministry of Health has also instructed physicians of larger hospitals to make beds available for children requiring orthopedic treatment.

One of the most noted places for treatment of children with diseases of the spine and joints is the Professor Turner Institute in Leningrad, where 95 per cent of the children treated make complete recoveries.

ANCIENT KINGDOM EXPLORED

From "SN"

An archaeological expedition has returned to Moscow after conducting research in the area of the ancient kingdom of Bosphorous which existed in the 6th Century B.C. Scientists excavated the ancient town of Irat, where powerful stone walls and towers were found. Streets and a gutter drainage system were found preserved. A complete fish-preserving factory was discovered in the town Tiritaka. Several gold coins of the 2nd and 3rd centuries were found in Mirmoki.

WAVELL on GERMANY and RUSSIA

From "RT Newsletter"

A little-reported press interview with Field-Marshal Lord Wavell when he was visiting Ottawa is worth recording. He told journalists that he did not think there would be war in the near future.

"Although the Russians were anxious to spread their political ideas, he doubted whether they had physical aggression in mind. He believed they were looking for security in Europe against a resurgent Germany, and that fear of Germany was at the bottom of their attitude. They needed no territory, and, unlike the Germans, who had always believed that they had a mission to run other countries, the Russians probably did not feel that they had the power to administer Europe. Indeed, he added, Germany might well be more of a problem to the world than Russia." (The Times, 15.11.49)

The "Christian Science Monitor" comments on Lord Wavell's speech in a leading article on November 17:

"In the warm glow that surrounds the return of Secretary Acheson from a European visit which resulted in important gains for the West German Federal Republic, pardon us for opening a door to a rather chilly breeze (i.e. Wavell's remarks). Since something like that needed to be said at this moment, we are glad to hear it from a man of Lord Wavell's experience ... it offers needed perspective for Western policy towards Germany."

The "Christian Science Monitor" adds that in the U.S.A. "it should be remembered that the disposition to look upon Germany as a main source of Western strength can be explained to European victims of Nazi aggression only by reference to the Russian menace. And even then it leaves vast doubts unsolved among these victims who see Germany farther on the road back to economic and political eminence in Europe than it was five years after World War One."

UNIVERSITY STUDENTS in MOSCOW

From "SN"

A delegation of the International Students' Union (ISU) headed by its secretary, Tom Madden, is at present in Moscow as guests of the Anti-Fascist Committee of Soviet Youth.

The delegation visited the Moscow Lomonosov State University, the First Medical Institute, the Textile Institute and other institutions of higher learning. Everywhere the guests were accorded every opportunity of acquainting themselves with the studies, recreation, life and social activity of Soviet students.

TITO TERRORISES BULGARIAN POPULATION

From "FB"

Peasants from the region of Tsaribrod, who have recently crossed the border, tell how, on October 20th, in the vicinity of the village of Rakitovo (Tsaribrod county), about 10 inhabitants of the surrounding villages were murdered, and their bodies left unburied for three days.

At the same time about 80 people from different villages in Tsaribrod county were arrested.

KAZAKH FARMERS STUDY MICHURIN SCIENCE

From "SN"

Over 150,000 peasants have begun to attend Michurin schools and agro-technical circles functioning at Kazakh collective farms. The peasants study the ABC of Michurin science and the latest agro-technical methods for cultivation of grain and industrial crops.

WE NEED LOTS AND LOTS OF OLD CLOTHES. IF YOU HAVE SOME, LET US KNOW.

THE SOVIET CONSTITUTION (Part II)

From "SRT"

by Corliss Lamont

Individual rights are further defined in Article 7 regarding collective farms: "In addition to its basic income from the public enterprise, every household in a collective farm has for its personal use a small plot of land attached to the dwelling and, as its personal property, a subsidiary establishment on the plot, a dwelling house, livestock, poultry and minor agricultural implements."

Article 11 gives the key to the rapid economic development of the Soviet Union and to its general economic stability in war and peace:

"The economic life of the USSR is determined and directed by the state national economic plan with the aim of increasing the public wealth, of steadily improving the material conditions of the people and raising their cultural level, of consolidating the independence of the USSR and strengthening its defensive capacity."

In Article 12 we find the important statement:

"In the USSR work is a duty and a matter of honour for every able-bodied citizen, in accordance with the principle: 'He who does not work, neither shall he eat.'" This same thought was enunciated by St Paul in the second book of Thessalonians.

Whereas in the capitalist countries one of the major ideals is for a man to make enough money so that he can retire from business and live off dividends and interest, in the USSR this is considered an anti-social mode of existence and is rendered impossible by its economic structure. The new Soviet morality looks upon all forms of socially useful labour as ethically worth-while and praiseworthy. To win the award of "Hero of Socialist Labour" is an honour of highest repute.

At the same time the soviet system makes wide provisions for economic assistance to workers in case of accident or illness, and during old age, giving them throughout adulthood a sense of security that encourages psychological stability and devoted public service.

Chapters II-IX of the Constitution provide most of the essential information on how the Soviet State is organized. The USSR is a federal republic. It is made up of 16 different Soviet Republics, organized on the basis of nationality, and each possessing a large degree of autonomy and "its own Constitution, which takes account of the specific features of the republic and is drawn up in full conformity with the Constitution of the USSR." (Article 16)

The highest legislative body in the USSR, known as the Supreme Soviet, has two Chambers. These are the Soviet of the Union, which has 682 deputies, who are elected on the basis of one for every 300,000 of population; and the Soviet of Nationalities, which normally has 631 representatives, elected according to nationality from the Union Republics and from the national divisions of lesser size within them. Unlike the comparable American and British bodies, the two Chambers have equal rights. The Soviet of Nationalities, a unique institution in the history of parliamentary development, reflects the multi-national character of the Soviet commonwealth and the particular interests of the various national groups. The Constitution gives special recognition throughout to the many different minority groups and establishes ethnic democracy on a firm foundation.

The term of office for each house in the Supreme Soviet is four years. It meets twice annually. It names the Supreme Court of the USSR for a term of five years. It likewise elects a Presidium or Executive Committee of 33 members to carry on its functions when it is not in session.

The Supreme Soviet also chooses the Council of Ministers, which has about 60 members. This Council corresponds to the Cabinet in America and England and constitutes the Government of the USSR. The Council is responsible and accountable to the Presidium, which has the power to annul its decisions and others "in case they do not conform to law" (Article 49f). And the Presidium is in turn accountable to the Supreme Soviet, the final court of authority on legislation.

Many constitutional experts believe that placing ultimate power in the legislature is, other things being equal, a more democratic arrangement than the American system of checks and balances.

Whereas the American Cabinet administers only 9 separate departments, the Soviet Council of Ministers is responsible for 30. The Council of Ministers includes the chairman of the State Planning Commission, the Chairman of the Committee on Arts, heads of departments of foreign trade, railroads and communications, industries, geology, labour reserve, marine and river fleets, and so on.

(TO BE CONTINUED)



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TRYGVE LIE'S PRESS CONFERENCE in MOSCOW

Mr. Trygve Lie, Secretary General of the United Nations, made the following statement at a press conference for representatives of the Soviet and foreign press, held in Moscow on May 17th.

"I have been asked whom I have seen. I have seen Generalissimo Stalin, Mr. Molotov, Mr. Vyshinsky, Mr. Gromyko and Mr. Sobolov. I have been received in a most friendly way and the exchanges of views and ideas have been of a positive kind.

"I have been asked what we have been talking about. Well, our conversations were concentrated on the general international situation, the Chinese representation in the United Nations, and the so-called cold war. Among other matters discussed I can also mention the periodic meetings of the Security Council in conformity with Article 28-2 of the Charter, and the control of atomic energy.

"I have been asked how I am satisfied with the results of my discussions with the leaders of the States in the four capitals I have visited. To this I should only like to point out that a Secretary-General of the United Nations cannot be satisfied before the United Nations' machinery works normally, the cold war is brought to an end and friendly relations are established between the member nations.

"I have been asked how I am satisfied with the conversations in Moscow. I have no reason to be dissatisfied with them. A final judgment, however, cannot be made before two or three months from now, or even longer. In this connection I should like to repeat what I said before I started out on my trip. I do not expect any immediate results from my journey. It is more along the line of the groundwork which has to be done and which I have to do. I hope that something may result later. I believe that all decent people desire in their hearts that the cold war be ended, but it will take time."

In reply to a question, Mr. Lie recalled the recent statement he had made where he had expressed the hope that admittance to United Nations membership of the 9 European states that had submitted applications would make Europe's voice stronger in the UN. He recommended that these 9 States be admitted to UN membership.

In reply to another question, Mr. Lie said that he hoped to meet the Ministers of Britain and France and subsequently President Truman and Mr. Acheson.

Mr. Lie was asked what steps it was intended to take to secure to the representatives of the People's Government of China their rightful seats in the United Nations bodies. He replied that this matter awaited a decision from the Security Council.

One of the foreign correspondents asked: "During your conversations with the leaders of the Soviet Union, did they express aspirations for peace?" Mr. Lie replied: "this idea has been the keynote of all my conversations with the Soviet leaders." He further noted that during his talks in other capitals he also heard of aspirations for peace.

BRITISH DELEGATION in MOSCOW

From "SN"

At a press conference held on May 13, representatives of the Soviet press met the British workers' delegation which came to the Soviet Union for the May Day celebrations. The leader of the delegation, Mr. Fred Hollingsworth, speaking on behalf of the delegation, made the following statement on the impressions of the delegates of their stay in the USSR:-

(a) The trade unions here enjoy a responsibility and power unknown in the capitalist world. There is genuine democracy in the system of elections and organisation of the trade unions. There is every opportunity for men and women, whatever their origin, to rise to any position, provided they have the ability.

(b) The system under which the country is organised not only works, but works well. Great progress is being made in every direction. There is no limit to what workers may earn, except their own ability to produce. Every consideration is given to the worker, both men and women. They are provided with the most advanced machinery, wherever this is possible, and given the benefit of science to lighten their labour. Higher production is based on improved technique, not on sweated labour.

The Soviet trade unionists recognise their shortcomings, but apart from the obvious fact that many would have already been overcome were it not for the war, they will without any question disappear. We are convinced that the workers of this country are on the right road to achieve a sound economy, and that given peace there will be no limit to the abundance they will produce and the standard of life they will enjoy.

(c) We found the workers both in town and country intensely pre-occupied with problems of production, building, cultivation and husbandry, and cultural and educational developments. They have set themselves tasks of reconstruction requiring many years of quiet work.

We saw two of their war-torn cities. All the evidence we have gathered points unmistakably to the conclusion that there is a universal and passionate desire to live in peace, not only among the ordinary workers, but also among the leaders we have met. Anyone seeing Kiev and Stalingrad, as we have done, or who has talked to the people as we have, could not possibly imagine that this country has the slightest reason for wanting another war. Peace is a most vital necessity to them if they are to go ahead and reach the ambitious plans they have set themselves for the future.

We consider that their efforts to live at peace and to build their country deserve the support of every progressive person in our country. We look forward to closer cooperation between the Governments of both our countries for the purpose of eliminating the war tension in the world today.

(d) There is no animosity whatever towards the British people. We found great friendliness and kindness wherever we went and the widespread desire that our two peoples would come closer together. There is real understanding of what we in Britain suffered during the war and an understandable desire that we should recognise the enormous sacrifices that they have made.

(e) We realise now, at the end of our visit, that many of the questions we brought with us arose partly because of the sad lack of knowledge in our country of the state of affairs in the USSR, and partly because of the false picture painted in most of our press. We ourselves intend to give the widest reporting on what we have learned, because we understand that false stories about the USSR help to create an atmosphere of war, while the truth will help to maintain peace.

When asked whether the British delegation had free access to everything they wanted to see in the USSR, Mr. George Horbury, a worker in the aircraft industry, said that there was no "Iron Curtain" in the USSR, and that the delegation had been given the possibility of seeing everything they wanted.

PEACE WILL DEFEAT WAR by LEV NIKULIN

From "SN"

Spring 1933 found Maxim Gorky living in the little Italian town of Sorrento. That was the time that I had the pleasure of spending three weeks in Sorrento and seeing the great man of letters almost daily.

It was an ominous time, two months after the Hitlerites had seized power in Germany. The whole world had gasped at the monstrous provocation of the Reichstag fire; the brutal persecution of "non-Aryans" had begun, and even Fascist Italy was seeing its first refugees from Germany. They appeared, too, in picturesque Sorrento, and appealing to us they asked, in hope and plea of defence: Does Gorky know of the crimes of the Nazis? Would the world hear his voice in defence of the persecuted?

Gorky, of course, know all. In the morning, reading the latest news from Germany, he would say in low, agitated tones that the "monsters with the leaden brains" were plotting a stupendous blood-bath, that Hitlerism would lead to a war unmatched in the history of mankind.

These words of Gorky's rang in my ears when, continuing my journey, I arrived in France and England. They were memorable because, on meeting thinkers, writers and scientists and talking with them, I was amazed by their unwarranted optimism, more accurately called short-sightedness. How many times in speaking with some man of great intellect and talent in the west, did I hear him say:

"Nazism? Why, that's a bluff! It's blackmail, designed to wrest concessions from us and tear the peace treaties of 1918 to pieces. War? But such a thing is inconceivable! Who's going to start the war - that hysterical scaramouch, Corporal Schicklgruber, and his gang? No, I refuse to believe in the possibility of war"

Two years pass. Gorky was living in Moscow. This was the time when Il Duce Mussolini's conquistadores were dropping mustard-gas bombs on Abyssinian villages and unarmed Abyssinian shopkeepers. Gorky again emphasised that a "big war" was being unleashed, and that in substance this war had already begun.

I recalled a conversation I had shortly before with a professor of the Warsaw Conservatoire. He had argued: "You say Abyssinia - but that is an old account being settled, a question of Mussolini's vanity No, Europe is not in the least danger. There will not be a big war, certainly not ..."

Four years later Nazi bombs dropped on the streets of Warsaw.

Still another recollection comes before my mind's eye ... 1934.

A house near Moscow, on the terrace sit our guest H.G. Wells and his old acquaintance Maxim Gorky. Wells is saying that Soviet writers ought to join the "Pen Club", an international organisation of journalists and authors, of which he was President at that time. Gorky remarks: "So far as I know, the Pen Club has among its members writers from the Fascist countries." Wells is slow to reply. "Yes, according to the charter of our organisation, we had to accept them. We had no formal grounds for turning them down." Gorky scowls and says firmly: "Soviet writers cannot belong to an organisation which includes Fascists." "Perhaps we have reeducated them?" asks Wells, and this is said less in jest than in doubt that Fascism is a grave menace to humanity.

All these recollections come to mind at this time when millions of people throughout the world, from the simplest and most humble to famous scientists and writers are joining hands to curb the warmongers. Mankind has not lived through the gory lessons of the past and lost tens of millions of lives so that new pretenders to world domination might again plunge the world into calamity.

Fifteen years ago, Mussolini's out-throats staked their hopes on mustard-gas bombs. In 1941 Hitler banked on Guderian's notorious "wedges". Life dispelled such hopes. Today American businessmen are betting on the atom bomb and "super-bombs". But humanity has learned a great deal over these years.

Millions of voices throughout the world cry: "Down with the atomic weapon! The first to use the atomic weapon is a war criminal!" Those voices ring all over the globe - in China, Indonesia and America. We know that the people do not want to fight for the profits of Chicago and New York bankers. The great and organised peace front which did not exist in the past, grows tremendously, and today opposes the insidious schemes of the new war-mongers.

Peace will defeat war.

GREEKS APPEAL for GENERAL AMNESTY

From "SN"

To the United Nations, Governments of all countries, the Permanent Committee of the World Peace Congress, the World Federation of Trade Unions, Women's International Democratic Federation, World Federation of Democratic Youth, International Association of Democratic Lawyers and to the public opinion of the whole world :-

Representatives of trade union, social and other organisations of Greece, expressing the unanimous desire of our people, appeal to you by means of this statement and beg you to help our people in their endeavour to find a way out of the present tragic situation and once again to resume a peaceful, normal life.

The first step to achieve this aim must be the closing down of Makronisos, the declaration of a general amnesty and the liberation of all political prisoners.

We do not intend in this appeal to describe again the details of the ghastly drama which forms the life of the political prisoners. Many volumes would be required to write about the hundreds of persons who have lost their reason under terrible torture, about the thousands who have become disabled for life or paralysed and who are now slowly dying in Makronisos and other concentration camps, about the tens of thousands of high-ranking officers, leaders of political parties and trade unions, men of science, children, old people, women with nursing babies, who are being subjected to ghastly tortures in this hell.

In reading our appeal, concentrate your thoughts for a minute on this Aeschylean tragedy which is now being enacted in Greece. Listen to the suffering voices of those thousands of people who dreamed of and fought for a world where there would be no place for Oswaldism, Buchenwalds, Dachaus and Maidaneks, and now are being persecuted for this in every possible way.

In face of this drama of tens of thousands of victims and heroes who are daily confronted with death, in face of this drama of hundreds of thousands of members of their families, in face of this drama of the entire Greek people, all political differences must be laid aside. Not one democrat can remain indifferent to the cynical outrage of human dignity and human rights. The stand taken with regard to the Greek tragedy is a criterion of democratic public opinion and respect for human rights.

Under the most difficult conditions our people are fighting for peace in our country, and at the last elections they condemned the sanguinary regime of Makronisos and the terror and demanded a general unconditional amnesty.

Help our people in this struggle. This is the sacred duty of every free and honest person. Demand the abolition of Makronisos, the liberation of political prisoners and the carrying out of a general amnesty in Greece. Demand that an international commission come to Greece to investigate crimes with regard to the imprisoned on the spot - in Makronisos, Corfu, Akronauplia, Giura and other concentration camps.

Each day brings these heroes nearer to death. If each one, and all of us together, discharge our duty toward the Greek people, toward the cause of right and humanity, we shall be able to win.

The appeal is signed by: Petros Kokkalis, Professor of Athens University; Kostas Toos, Greek Confederation of Labour; Rula Kukulu, Union of Democratic Women of Greece; Nikos Akritidis, United Youth League of Greece; Apostolos Grozos, Tobacco Workers Union of Greece; Takis Dimitriadis, Railwaymen's Union of Greece; Stefanos Sabidis, Union of Agricultural Cooperatives of Greece; Miltiadis Porfirogenis, International Association of Democratic Lawyers; Stavros Katsopoulos, People's Front of Liberation (Macedonia); Zisis Zagraphos, Union of Former Political Prisoners under Nazism; Apostolos Spiliotis, Union of Editors of the National Resistance Press; Eli Alexiu, teacher and writer, member of the Greek Children's Relief Committee; Kostas Karaiorgius, publicist and journalist.

SCIENTIFIC FREEDOM

From "RTN"

The International Conference of Astronomers recently met in Paris and discussed preparations for the International Astronomical Conference to be held in Leningrad in August 1951. The Paris meeting was attended by astronomers from France, Great Britain, Holland, the U.S.A. and USSR.

Behind this bald announcement lies a story of the real iron curtain that is descending upon American science. We are indebted for it to the well-known scientific writer Dyson Carter, who writes:

"Daily newspapers have hushed up a remarkable decision by America's leading scientists. Early in January the top astronomers of the United States had to admit the Iron Curtain has slammed shut around their country.

"In the same official decision of the American Astronomical Society, those world-famed experts who study the stars also admitted that the Soviet Union gives scientists widest freedom of thought. They said that the Soviets raise no barriers against foreign men of science who may be anti-Communist in their political thinking.

"The American scientists were not simply making a statement. Meeting in conversation in Tucson, Arizona, the astronomers had to decide where to hold the next gathering of the world's leading authorities on the heavens. They had originally planned to welcome, to some United States centre, the 1951 Congress of the International Astronomical Union. But they found that real freedom of science no longer exists in the land of Ben Franklin and Abe Lincoln.

"Bitter experiences were reported by the scholars. The American Government has many times stopped famous foreign scientists from entering America. During the war, Washington was very glad to get men like Dr. Joliot-Curie, who helped develop the atom bomb. But now no scientist can get into the United States, even for a visit to fellow scientists, unless he is known to be an outspoken enemy of the USSR.

"What is worse, scientists are barred by Washington if they have given support to the movement for world peace. The Truman Government considers them to be 'undesirable visitors'. Since many of the world's greatest astronomers are vigorous supporters of peace, they could not gain entry to the United States.

"So the American astronomers had to let their international body know that America could not bestow the 1951 convention. At the same time they had to find some other country where the convention could be held. After some deliberation they chose the Soviet Union and it was decided to hold the 1951 meeting in Leningrad. Dr. A.M. Mikhaïlov, dean of Soviet astronomers, confirmed that all astronomers, regardless of their race, religion or political belief, are welcome.

"No one will be humiliated by being stopped at the border. There will be no 'immigration tests' and no police grilling. The scientists will not have to sign statements for or against anything. Jewish and Protestant delegates will mingle with Catholics, Negroes, and Chinese. Tories will sit beside Communists.

"In short - in the Soviet Union they will enjoy what America once promised the world - the Four Freedoms: Freedom of speech and thought, freedom of religion, freedom from fear.

"And the other freedom, too - freedom from want. It turns out that some of the astronomers in the Marshall Plan countries are today close to poverty. They would have to make heavy sacrifices to live for a week or so in the Land of the Dollar, with its high living costs. The USSR guarantees that all the visiting scientists will be provided with the best rooms, food and services, regardless of how much money they have.

USSR STATE LOAN OVER-SUBSCRIBED

From "SN"

The following statement has been issued by the Ministry of Finance of the USSR:-

The Fifth State Loan for the restoration and development of the national economy of the USSR, issued on May 3rd, 1950, to the amount of 20,000 million rubles, had obtained subscriptions to the amount of 27,003,608,000 rubles by the end of May 8th, having been over-subscribed by 7,0003,608,000 roubles.

In view of the substantial amount subscribed in excess of the sum fixed for the Loan, the Ministry of Finance has issued an instruction for further subscription to cease everywhere as from May 10, 1950.

TANNU TUVA

From "SRT"

In the wild mountain border country between southern Siberia and the top of Outer Mongolia lies the little shophords' socialist land of Tannu Tuva. It is the newest Soviet autonomous region and recently celebrated the fifth anniversary of its admission to the USSR.

The Tuvinians appear in written history - set down by Chinese historians - as early as the seventh century; and at the beginning of the 13th century their land became a part of the kingdom of Genghis Khan.

The land was rich but the people were miserably poor and travellers who penetrated this land believed that some of the tribes were doomed to extinction. A class of feudal lords and the powerful lamas, or Buddhist priests, held the best grazing lands. Nomad herdsmen, living in felt yurts or tents when they could afford them found it increasingly difficult to find pasture for their herds. Chinese warlords and later tsarist officials and merchants, preyed on the people, taking most of the little left by the feudal lords and lamaseries. Hunters had to pay enormous annual tribute - the cream of the valuable furs they gathered. There were about 12,000 Russian merchants and colonists in the country - not a single school or hospital. As late as 1927, the lamaseries still held 10 per cent of the male population.

After the Soviet revolution of 1917, Russia immediately recognised the independence of Tannu Tuva. For several years, however, Tuvinian partisan fighters had to meet the attacks of Kolchak, Ungorn and other white-guard bands as well as the Chinese occupation troops.

In 1921, the Tuva Constitutional Congress declared the country an independent People's Republic; in 1924 the end of the feudal lords was officially proclaimed; in 1931 their economic power was finally ended and their lands confiscated.

Following the taking over of their country by the people, and especially in the past five years, every phase of Tuvinian life has advanced at a great rate. Symbol of progress might be remaining yurt settlements from the days of Genghis Khan, right near a modern town like Kyzyl, Tuvinian capital.

The Tuvinians, of Turkic and Mongol origin, had no written language until, with the aid of Soviet scientists, one was created in the early 1930's. Some of the lamas could read their Buddhist works, but the language was Tibetan. Today Tuva has not only translations, but its own literature, journals, newspapers, theatres, libraries.

Till a couple of years ago grain had to be brought into the country, now it raises enough for its own needs, and some to sell. Then fodder for cattle was gone, the herdsmen had to move on to other grazing grounds. Now fodder is being cultivated, the yield steadily increased, cattle houses built, the level of cattle breeding raised.

The city has three technical schools, two theatres, a publishing house, an Institute of History, Languages and Literature, hospitals, electric station. The problem of changing from a nomadic way of life to farm settlements and towns, is also being successfully tackled. Already about 90 per cent of the people can read and write. Homes are being equipped with radios, farms with machines, and electric power stations are being built in a recently completely primitive land.

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