

NOTES FROM THE SOVIET PROVINCIAL PRESS

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LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

B.R. Bakinskiy Rabochiy (Azerbaidzhan SSR)
K. Kommunist (Armenian SSR)
K.P. Kazakhstanskaya Pravda (Kazakh SSR)
K.T. Kommunist Tadzhikistana (Tadzhik SSR)
P.U. Pravda Ukrainy (Ukrainian SSR)
P.V. Pravda Vostoka (Uzbek SSR)
S.B. Sovetskaya Belorussiya (Belorussian SSR)
S.E. Sovetskaya Estoniya (Estonian SSR)
S.K. Sovetskaya Kirghiziya (Kirghiz SSR)
S.L. Sovetskaya Latviya (Latvian SSR)
S.Li. Sovetskaya Litva (Lithuanian SSR)
S.M. Sovetskaya Moldaviya (Moldavian SSR)
S.R. Sovetskaya Rossiya (Russian SFSR)
T.I. Turkmenskaya Iskra (Turkmen SSR)

DOMESTIC AFFAIRS

The results of elections to local soviets, held on March 3 and 10, were reported by the Soviet press: More than 99 per cent of the voters cast ballots, and more than 99 per cent voted for the candidates presented to them. A large propaganda campaign was carried out by hundreds of thousands of agitators assigned to the task and controlled by the Communist Party organizations, and meticulous care was taken to assure the participation of all voters, including the disabled and hospitalized. All provincial newspapers participated in the campaign by publishing articles, items, statements, pictures of candidates, etc.

The present policy of increasing the numerical, although not the political, role of workers and peasants, thus creating the impression that "the masses" are the supreme political force, was reflected in the fact that 50 to 60 per cent of the newly elected deputies belonged to these two groups. Thus, among the deputies elected in Lithuania, 58.84 per cent are workers or peasants, 32.14 per cent are Party members, and 36.9 per cent are women (S.Li., Mar. 7). In Kirghizia, of 15,345 deputies, 9,328 are workers or peasants; 40 per cent of the total are women (S.K., Mar. 16). In Azerbaidzhan, of 28,054 elected deputies, 58.4 per cent are workers or peasants, 54.5 per cent are Party members, and 34.6 per cent are women (B.R., Mar. 14).

Lately there have been indications that the old policy of aggrandizement of kolkhozes (of which Khrushchev was the main advocate, especially in connection with his plan for "agro-cities") is now being modified. The leadership seems to have recognized that over-size kolkhozes, created in part to reduce further individual farming, are economically inefficient and should be broken up. A rare statement to this effect is made by the Lithuanian paper: "We still have excessively large kolkhozes which, because of their size, have difficulties in developing production and strengthening their economy. Practice has shown that the breaking up (razukrupnenie) of excessively large kolkhozes improves the organization of labor, increases the kolkhozniks' efficiency, and raises the economic indices" (S.Li., Mar. 23).

THE COMMUNIST PARTY

The present trend toward the rehabilitation of Stalin is illustrated by an article published in three provincial papers, which declares that "while overcoming the results of the cult of personality our Party wages a struggle against those who, under the guise of criticism of the cult of personality, try to revise the program of Marxism-Leninism, to slander Soviet reality and to distort Stalin's role in our country and in the international workers movement. Stalin's name is inseparable from Marxism-Leninism. He devoted his entire life to the triumph of Marxist-Leninist ideas." The article stresses that "rebuffing the expanding activity of imperialist reactionaries and their overt and covert stooges is assuming exceptional importance (K.T., Mar. 29; S.Li., Mar. 29; S.L., Mar. 27).

In the process of expanding the role of the Party, now taking place in the USSR, the "instructors" (that is, contact men between the Party organizations and individual enterprises, schools, etc.) have recently increased in number and importance. Lack of personnel qualified for this task is beginning to be felt. Thus, as of January 1, 1957, 42 vacancies in the roster of instructors could not be filled in Moldavian town and rayon Party committees, and of the available instructors only 29 per cent were Moldavians (S.M., Mar. 6).

At a Party meeting in a Latvian sovkhos a Party member criticized the sovkhos management for inefficiency, malfeasance, and using public property for their own advantage. The enraged officials accused their critic of "undermining the authority" of the management, and the Party organization delivered a sharp reprimand (S.L., Mar. 23).

The Ukrainian paper praises the recently published memoirs of V.A. Antonov-Ovseenko, who played a leading part in the Soviet revolution of 1917 and in the Spanish civil war (P.U., Mar. 6). The paper did not mention, however, that the author was executed in the Stalin purges and was only recently officially rehabilitated.

Party members were reprimanded for slackness in combatting "hostile" ideology. "We are living under conditions in which the ideological struggle reflecting the class contrast between the two world systems, the socialist and the capitalist, has been greatly exacerbated." Worse still, "the reactionary ideology of the West infiltrates into our country through various channels

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and influences unstable persons." Thus, some Soviet historians and writers "have tried to cast doubt on some of the most important principles of our revolutionary world outlook." At a Party meeting at the University of Tomsk "demagogic" statements were made to which the Party Secretary offered no interference. "Low-grade plays by bourgeois authors propagating bourgeois ideology have recently appeared on the stages of some Moscow and Leningrad theaters" with the silent connivance of Communists working in the theater (S.R., Mar. 27).

On March 12 all provincial newspapers commemorated the fortieth anniversary of the February (old style) Revolution of 1917. The Bolshevik Party was [incorrectly] described as the leader of the revolution which overthrew Tsarism, by statements such as the following: "The February Revolution was headed by the working class.... The revolutionary movement in this country was led by the Communist Party," and in the overthrow of Tsarism the Bolsheviks "inspired and led" the masses (S.E., Mar. 12). "The main, decisive role in the overthrow of Tsarism was played by the many millions-strong masses of workers, peasants and soldiers headed by the Communist Party created by V.I. Lenin" (K.P., Mar. 12). "The armed uprising headed by the revolutionary working class under the leadership of the Bolshevik Party was victorious. The [Tsarist] autocracy was overthrown" (K., Mar. 8). In the February Revolution "the revolutionary struggle of the masses was headed by the Bolshevik Party" (S.Li., Mar. 12).

The Provisional Government of 1917 was also [again, incorrectly] represented as reactionary. While Pravda (March 12) took a more cautious attitude on this question, quoting Lenin's statement that under the Provisional Government Russia was the freest of all the warring nations, the Kazakhstan paper and most others said on March 12: "Having come to power [in 1917] the bourgeois actually carried out the predatory foreign policy and the antipopular domestic policy of Tsarism." An exception among the provincial papers was the Lithuanian paper (March 12), which also quoted Lenin's words on the Provisional Government.

WOMEN AND NATIONAL MINORITIES

At a Congress of Azerbaidzhan women the main report was made by the woman Deputy Premier of the Republic. Stressing the great improvement in the status of women under the Soviets, she stated that whereas in 1926 women constituted 11 per cent of workers and employees in the republic economy, today the percentage is 38.

Women now account for about 40 per cent of the specialists with higher or middle education, she said. There are 17,400 women teachers in Azerbaidzhan schools, that is, 45.5 per cent of all teachers. On the other hand, she pointed out, instances of "feudal" attitudes toward women still appear in the Republic; and some Party and Soviet organizations try not to interfere in such cases. Moreover, some local leaders bar women from responsible positions in medical, educational and economic organizations (B.R., Mar. 29).

On the occasion of Women's Day (March 8) the Uzbekistan paper stated that the Soviet regime had liberated women, raised her social status, and given her an opportunity to play an important role in the economy, politics and the professions. "In no capitalist country is so much care given to the mother and child as in the Soviet Union." By contrast, under capitalism women suffer "under the yoke of increasing exploitation and decreasing standards of living caused by the armaments race" (P.V., Mar. 8).

In other reports regarding the status of women, a chauffeur in Tadzhikistan who was living, according to oriental custom, with two women was sentenced by a court to three years' deprivation of liberty; the same punishment was meted out to a man who had married a minor; a third man was punished for beating his wife (K.T., Mar.22).

A periodical published in Moldavia devoted a special issue to the minority problem. Under the banner headline "For Us There Are Neither Black Nor Colored People," the paper hailed the "equality" of Soviet minorities and contrasted it with the "deprivation of rights" of American Negroes and the "freedom-loving" Cypriots (S.M., Mar. 14).

EDUCATION

The Lithuanian paper states that at present there are 24,000 students in Lithuanian higher educational institutions, six times more than in the pre-Soviet period. The paper stresses that the purpose of these institutions is by no means confined to imparting knowledge to students. "Soviet higher institutions of learning are called upon to breed not only highly skilled specialists but also politically trained people with profound Communist convictions and active fighters for the construction of a new society." Yet vestiges of capitalist ideology, according to the paper, still persist in the minds of some students. What causes this? "The Party teaches that wherever the influence of Communist ideology weakens, favorable conditions are created for the infiltration of hostile

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ideology." The article demands more effective control over lectures and seminars in the humanities by Komsomol organizations, and more efforts in developing "socialist attitudes" toward work, since some students "permit themselves to look down on workers and peasants" (S.Li., Mar. 28).

The Rector of the Turkmenistan University states that the quality of lectures, especially in the humanities, has recently been improving but that there are still many shortcomings. Because of lack of space in the University classes are held in three shifts, from 8:30 a.m. until midnight. For the same reason, there is a shortage of laboratories, and students from the provinces are unable to find space in dormitories. Many textbooks, for instance in mathematics, physics, and biology, are not available in the Turkmen language. Because of inadequate printing facilities even the best student theses cannot be published, while the lack of special type hampers the printing of books on mathematics and physics (T.I., Mar. 1).

The first secretary of the Turkmenistan Communist Party declared that there were now 1,200 high schools with 225,500 pupils in the Republic, a twenty-fold increase over 1925. While 30 years ago there was not a single higher educational institution in Turkmenistan, today there are six such institutions, numerous research institutes, and an Academy of Science. At present 15,500 trained specialists are employed in the Turkmen Republic's economy. The Republic now has five theaters and an opera house (T.I., Mar. 30).

An Armenian university professor describes a local students' dormitory as follows: "We enter a semi-dark room (the electric bulb is small and the current weak). The room is, to put it mildly, cool. The following picture meets our eyes: the time is 9:30 p.m., but the beds have not been made and dirty towels are strewn around. In the middle of the room stands a bare table at which a young man, wearing a cap, is sitting and writing on music paper. Four young men are sitting on a bed, talking. Dirt is everywhere, on the floor, in the cupboards, in the beds." The Komsomol organization, the professor says, pays no attention to the "ugly" conditions of life of future intellectuals (K., Mar. 2).

A French journalist who recently visited the USSR published an article extolling Soviet scientific achievements, asserting that complete freedom of scientific discussion exists in the Soviet Union, and praising the hospitality and freedom of movement that he enjoyed during his stay there. The tenor of the article is reflected in the headline: "The Hospitable Motherland of Contemporary Science" (S.R., Mar. 2).

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LITERATURE

The emphasis on negative characters, which has recently appeared in Soviet literature, for instance in V. Dudintsev's now famous novel, Not by Bread Alone, and which has been strongly denounced by official critics, seems also to have made inroads into the literature of national minorities. Thus, an article in the Moldavian paper criticizes a new novel by a native writer who portrays a high Party official as an objectionable character who applies the methods of the period of "the cult of personality" (S.M., Mar. 6).

A review of last year's issues of a Latvian literary magazine points out the following shortcomings in its contents. First, with a single exception, the short stories and plays deal with the past and avoid contemporary subjects. Second, a story about a peasant who joined a kolkhoz has clear overtones of sympathy for private property. Third, the authors show undue interest in the purely personal problems of the protagonists, especially the family problems (S.Li., Mar. 14).

The Belorussian paper complains editorially about Soviet writers' disinclination to write about workers. "This reticence in regard to urban working people obviously cannot last much longer. The problem of education of the young generation has assumed new acuteness. Yet nobody gets so little treatment from the writers as our youth (S.B., Mar. 21).

LABOR

Collective agreements for the current year are almost completed, and trade unions should avoid last year's mistake of dodging supervision of the fulfillment of the agreements by management, the Estonian paper says editorially. But in outlining the duties of trade unions the editorial repeats the old line: "The primary duty of a trade union organization in an industrial enterprise is mobilization of the working people for the successful accomplishment of the objectives of the Sixth present Five-Year Plan and the broad development of socialist competition" (S.E., Mar. 1).

At a Moldavian brick factory some provisions of the collective agreement are being violated by the management. Payment of wages is sometimes delayed up to six weeks. In 1955 the management committed itself to install electric lighting in the workers' apartments; but up to now this has not been done, allegedly because the ten poles needed for the wiring could not be obtained (S.M., Mar. 1).

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According to the chairman of the republic trade union committee of construction workers in Turkmenistan, some managers disregard laws relating to working hours and rest periods and introduce overtime work even on what should be days off. Though the Deputy Minister of Urban and Rural Construction has been aware of these practices, he supported them until the trade union finally intervened. In some construction projects labor safety devices have not been installed; in others, wages have been arbitrarily reduced or not paid on time, and workers are fired without valid reason, while trade unions, the responsible Ministry and the state prosecutors, especially in the capital, Ashkhabad, remain inactive (T.I., Mar. 29).

In a Tadzhiik textile factory workers suffer from "terrible overcrowding and cold." A representative of the Ministry of State Control told the management that such working conditions could not be tolerated, but nothing has been done to remedy the situation (K.T., Mar. 12).

CORRUPTION AND CRIME

The housing situation in the Stalinabad State Pedagogical Institute is highly unsatisfactory. Classrooms are not heated, student dormitories are dilapidated, and in the teachers' apartments the roofs leak, the floors are rotted, etc. This is due to the corruption of the staff. The chief of the supply section, who was appointed to this position even though he had previously been accused of extortion, has appropriated building material purchased by the Institute for repairs. Having thus obtained timber, iron, cement and bricks, the chief, within a period of three months, built himself a spacious residence. Acting in collusion with him were the chief bookkeeper, the latter's deputy and other officials, who also built their own homes with material belonging to the Institute. To protect themselves against prosecution they tried to establish influential contacts. Having learned that a high official of the Ministry of Education was building a home, they supplied him with building materials; they "loaned" materials to a former Deputy Minister, involved the present Deputy Minister in their operations, etc. As a result, while the operators earned hundreds of thousands of rubles, the repairs urgently needed by the Institute were not made. "But the most remarkable thing in this chain of abuses is that the culprits were not punished." After the facts had been published in the press, the operators' protectors in the Ministry of Education tried to absolve them from responsibility. Upon the demand of the Party organization [not of the proper state agency!] two of them were dismissed; the other, however, continue their criminal activities, and those dismissed were soon appointed to other posts (K.T., Mar. 20).

Leading officials of a Kazakhstan kolkhoz engaged in large-scale corruption. The chairman, the chief bookkeeper, the secretary of the Party organization and other officials would use kolkhoz money to buy expensive articles in the local consumer cooperative and record the transactions as expenditures harness, rope and other articles needed by the kolkhoz. The officials also appropriated sheep, horses, cows and poultry belonging to the collective. In 1955 alone the "gang" damaged the kolkhoz to the extent of 64,915 rubles (K.P., Mar. 6).

Four 19 to 20 year-old youths in Tadzhikistan assaulted a girl with the intention of raping her. In the brawl they knifed one of her two young escorts, the girl's brother, to death. Last December three youths were sentenced in Tadzhikistan for robbery (K.T., Mar. 10).

A Latvian woman without any medical background performed illegal abortions under unsanitary conditions. She was sentenced by a people's court to eight years' deprivation of liberty (S.L., Mar. 13).

Four youths, 17 to 19, were tried in Moldavia for assaults on several persons for the purpose of robbing them of wristwatches. Two of the juvenile criminals were locksmiths and one was a student at the Pedagogical Institute; one was the son of a Party member, another was a Komsomol. They were sentenced to terms varying from two to 10 years' deprivation of liberty (S.M., Mar. 7).

ROUTINE OF SOVIET LIFE

A drunken man refused to show his ticket to the train conductor. He declared that he was not in the habit of buying tickets and abused the conductor, using profane language. At the next station the conductor went to summon a militia man. Meanwhile, the passenger, with his secretary, settled down in a compartment and began to interrogate a man traveling under guard who was charged with "petty hooliganism." The passenger, who turned out to be a people's judge, proceeded to sentence the "hooligan" to five days' detention, and then asked the flabbergasted conductor, "Do you understand now?" (S.R., Mar. 17).

A coal mine in Kirghizia has an ambulance which the managers, especially the chief engineer, use as their private car. The ambulance hauls vegetables, apples, milk and other products for them, takes them on picnics, and when they throw parties, it is used for hauling vodka, beer, etc. The least of the ambulance's uses is for transportation of the sick. All protests by the medical personnel have been rudely rejected by the chief engineer (S.K., Mar. 24).

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Truck drivers arriving in Moscow can find no accommodations for rest. Hotels are either too expensive or full. Drivers therefore have to spend a night or two in the truck cab, trying to warm themselves in winter by using kerosene stoves (S.R., Mar. 8).

The Central Committee of the Kirghiz Republic's Communist Party and the Council of Ministers adopted a resolution on the construction of apartment houses which states that the "extremely unsatisfactory" work of construction agencies has resulted in a "very grave situation" in housing, especially in Frunze, the capital of the Republic. As of January 1, 1956, the average living space of a resident of Frunze was 4.2 square meters. In the period from 1951 through 1955 only 14.7 per cent of funds allocated for apartment construction were used (S.K., Mar. 16).

A new apartment house has been built by the Moldavian Furniture Combine for its workers. Distribution of the apartments was handled by the Party and trade union committees at the combine. "Only one worker family received an apartment in the house, while the rest were given to the higher personnel and to people not engaged in the enterprise" (S.M., Mar. 28).

A report on communal services in the town of Ulianovsk describes the work of local bathhouses. Washing up is a "headache" because no bathhouses have been built in the town since 1939, although the population has increased considerably. In an industrial suburb with several tens of thousands of residents there is only one bathhouse, which can accommodate 84 persons. In another new suburb with 20,000 inhabitants, there is no bathhouse. In the center of the town there are four bathhouses, but they are dirty and dilapidated. Long lines form in the street when hot water is lacking. In neighboring towns the building of bathhouses proceeds very slowly: construction was started in one in 1952, and in another in 1954, but neither has yet been completed (S.R., Mar. 7).

There are 19 drug stores in Tallin, capital of Estonia, but in only four of them can absorbent cotton be bought without a doctor's prescription. When a man asked in a drug store for absorbent cotton so that he could put something on his badly aching tooth, he was told to go and see a doctor first (S.E., Mar. 21).

The Latvian fishery office recently bought 20 chairs at 150 rubles each (\$37.50 at the official rate of exchange), but the chairs immediately began to break down, even with nobody sitting in them. A week after the purchase only six of the 20 chairs were still usable (S.L., Mar. 14).

ANTI-AMERICAN PROPAGANDA

Provincial press articles devoted to anti-American propaganda declined in number though not in virulence during March (compared to January and February). The points most frequently commented upon were the Eisenhower doctrine, NATO, and Vice President Nixon's trip to the Middle East.

In a series of articles and letters to the editor, allegedly written by outraged readers, the Ukrainian paper violently assailed the appointment to a commanding post in NATO of General Hans Speidel, a commander of German troops in the USSR during World War II. One article stated that 16 mutilated bodies of persons tortured to death by Ukrainian nationalist groups fighting with the Germans were found in a well in a Ukrainian village. The Ukrainian nationalists under Bandera, Melnik and others had been trained by German generals. They were defeated by Soviet patriots and would have perished, cursed by the Ukrainian people, except that "there has appeared a new customer for /the services of/ the stinking bourgeois-nationalist offal.... After the defeat of Hitlerism they hid under the American flag.... It is the hissing of these venal Judases that resounds in the broadcasts of the Voice of America." Recently 15 detachments of them were used in Hungary: "With American arms in their hands /they/ went to Hungary to shed the blood of working people in that country" (P.U., Mar. 20).

The next issue of the paper published several letters to the editor. One of them said: "Speidel, who in 1939-1945 did not succeed in accomplishing his black design, has now gone back to his old handicraft. The Krupps and Morgans could not have found a better servant. We would not be surprised if from some secure place (podvorotnia) in Washington, Hitler himself made an appearance. The Atlantic strategists would probably welcome nobody more than him." A woman wounded at the front by the Germans wrote: "On my body there still are scars from wounds inflicted by the fascists. Can this be forgotten? Hans Speidel's hands are stained with my blood too. And the American bosses of the bloody dog advertize him as a fighter for peace" (P.U., Mar. 21).

An article on Speidel in a subsequent issue stated that "Soviet people know him as the butcher of Kharkov, butcher of Voronezh, butcher of the Donbass." Together with other German generals he plotted the abortive attempt on Hitler's life in 1944 in order to make a separate peace with America, the article declares, but "the crushing offensive of the Soviet armies destroyed the budding alliance between the swastika and the dollar" (P.U., Mar. 23).

An article published in two provincial newspapers states that nations fighting for independence have now realized who their real enemy is. "The enemy is the USA, which has now become the main pillar of the colonial system of imperialism." Though American propaganda poses as anti-colonialist, "the USA is the greatest colonial power, which has subjected tremendous regions to its rule and its perfected mechanism of colonial exploitation." In the various nations dependent on the USA reactionary and semifeudal governments have been installed which are "Washington's humble agents." The article describes the American "colonial regime" as extending to South Korea, South Vietnam, Taiwan, the Philippines, Latin America, North Africa, and the Near East. It says that all attempts to reduce the antagonism between the USA on the one hand and Britain and France on the other have been unsuccessful (S.K., Mar. 5; T.I., Mar. 5).

A TASS telegram reported that the "oil magnate" Rockefeller had taken an active part in the preparation of the Hungarian revolt. It states that Rockefeller, posing as a State Department official, visited Munich in November, 1955, met there with Hungarian refugees and offered them U.S. assistance. Two days earlier he had met the American Ambassador Conant and some West German cabinet ministers, and then proceeded to Vienna, nearer Hungary.

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ELECTIONS TO LOCAL SOVIETS

A large propaganda campaign was launched in preparation for elections to local soviets, which were to take place in March in all fifteen Soviet republics. Throughout February, election propaganda was foremost in the provincial press, supporting every stage of the elections in which the total number of nominees ran into the millions.

In the Russian Republic, 843,000 deputies were to be elected to oblast, rayon, town and village soviets. This time, it was reported, the percentage of workers and peasants among the nominees in the RSFSR was higher than in previous elections (S.R., Feb. 5). [This was a result not of free nominations, but of the present policy line to increase the numerical though not the political role of workers. A similar policy prevails within the Party.] In the Ukraine, 336,800 deputies were to be elected (P.U., Feb. 12), and in Moldavia, 22,866 persons are members of 46 rayon, 15 town and 687 village soviets. Of the deputies to local soviets in Moldavia elected in February 1955, 35.6 per cent were Communists, 64.4 per cent non-Party persons, and 39.8 per cent women (S.M., Feb. 7).

The first stage of Soviet elections consists of nominating candidates who are [supposed to be] representatives of the "bloc of Communists and non-Party persons." [Apparently nominated at meetings of the voters, the nominees actually are designated by local Party organizations which carefully include a large number of reliable persons not affiliated with the Party, so as to support the pretense that the soviets are representative of the entire population and not only of the Party.] According to numerous reports on the nominees, one of their most important qualifications is efficiency on the job, and overfulfillment of production norms.

The second stage consists in canvassing the voters at home and in specially set up "agitation points" (agitpunkt), where lectures are mixed with dancing, music and other entertainment. A large army of agitators, who were being trained during the campaign in seminars and refresher courses, was assigned to this work. The electioneering lasted for about a month and a half preceding the last stage, the balloting.

The extent of these activities can be seen from some figures published in the provincial press. In Yerevan, capital of Armenia, there were 8,000 agitators active under the constant control of the Party organizations, which also tried to raise their qualifications (K., Feb. 15). In the Leninabad oblast, 402 "agitation points"--351 of them in rural districts--were set up; and more than 13,000 specially trained agitators worked there. In the town of Stalinabad alone there were 6,500 agitators (K., Feb. 6 and 12). In Tallin, capital of Estonia, 9,000 agitators worked in 117 "agitation points." [This was a result not of free nominations, but of the present policy line to increase the numerical though not the political role of workers. A similar policy prevails within the Party.]

paper warned them: "It should not be overlooked that some persons try to use our still existing difficulties and shortcomings for spreading all kinds of provocative rumors and slander against the Soviet regime, trying to cover their activities by false words about criticism and self-criticism, and by catchwords about struggle for 'democracy'" (S.E., Feb. 17). 2.

Complaints were made in many regions that voters were given no chance to examine the lists, and that there were inaccuracies in the lists of voters. For instance, in a number of Moldavian rayons some names and birth dates were wrong (S.M., Feb. 15).

PARTY PROPAGANDA

On February 13-14 a plenary session of the Central Committee of the Moldavian Komsomol was held in Kishinev. The main item of discussion was antireligious propaganda. The secretary of the Central Committee said in his report: "Many rayon committees of the Komsomol have not yet become real organizers of ideological struggle against religion; Komsomol chiefs frequently do not know the prerequisites of atheistic propaganda, do not realize to what extent religious ideas are alien to science and to the materialistic world outlook, and do not study the revolutionary theory of Marx-Lenin. Moreover, some Komsomols observe religious rites." He said that schools should play an important role in atheistic propaganda, yet "the poor state of anti-religious education of children in many schools of the Republic is alarming." Stressing the importance of school activities in this field, a speaker from the floor said that "the materialistic world outlook must be implanted in school children beginning in the second or third grade." A rayon Party secretary complained that in his rayon "many young men and girls go to church and some are under the influence of religious sects" (S.M., Feb. 16).

The first secretary of the Tadzhikistan Party, reporting to the Central Committee on the ideological work of the Republic Party Organization, stated that antireligious propaganda must continue to occupy an important place in Party activities since "religious survivals among working people in the Republic are strong and every slackness in this respect is used by the clergy for spreading religious instruction." This goes so far that some youths educated in Soviet schools go to Moslem religious schools to complete their education.

The secretary further stated that town Party organizations have slackened lately in their activities among unemployed persons, such as housewives and pensioners. "It must be admitted that as a result of the indifference of town Party organizations to the political education of these people, many of them fall under the influence of the clergy and of persons who spread all kinds of rumors and gossip which not infrequently assumes an anti-Soviet nature." This, he said, is due partly to the

fact that though the number of propagandists is great, their quality is often poor. "Party organizations must be constantly concerned with the selection and education of propagandists."

The secretary then criticized the Tadzhikistan Academy of Science. He denounced the Academy's institutes of philosophy, archeology, ethnology, linguistics and economics for inadequate work, and found faults in their training of young scientists (T.I., Feb. 27).

Reports from the Ukraine illustrate the Party's attempts to control art. Referring to a movie theater at Dorogobych where there is a floor show and an orchestra, an article notes that works of Western composers are played most frequently, Russian pieces rarely, and Ukrainian music even more seldom. Do the artists really think that the frivolous foreign music they play is better than the Russian or Ukrainian, the paper asks (P.U., Feb. 6.)

On rare occasions a shipment of foreign records arrives in Kiev from abroad. Most of them are light music--which is in great demand. Reporting that a thousand such records, only three of which were classical works, were sold within two hours, an article warned: "Many persons have somehow forgotten that music is a form of ideology, and that here, as in philosophy, politics and literature, the sharpest class struggle is carried on. Initial positions must be taken in advance." Worse still the article continued, recording of native music in the Ukraine is neglected: of 142 pieces recorded in 1956, only 8 were Ukrainian music. Partial blame for this is attributed to the fact that recording enterprises are under the jurisdiction of the Ministry of Local Industry and Fuel, which sticks to old stereotypes (P.U., Feb. 10).

In a pedagogical institute in Moldavia lecturing in Russian rather than in the Moldavian language has become a common practice (S.M., Feb. 27).

Dozens of young graduates of the Azerbaidzhan Medical and Pedagogical Institutes refuse, on numerous pretexts, to work in villages. Some of them do not want to do the simpler type of medical work, display "unhealthy moods," and disregard "the norms of Communist morals." Moreover, "a low cultural level, the influence of bad examples from Western bourgeois countries, is manifested in the behavior of some students, in their low degree of literary and musical tastes" [i.e., in their appreciation of Western art].

4.

The Latvian paper published a glowing life story of the old Bolshevik and associate of Lenin, Robert Eiche, who was executed during Stalin's Great Purges. The dramatic story of the NKVD's frame-up of Eiche was revealed by Khrushchev in his well-known secret speech at the 20th Party Congress. This enabled the paper to praise the purged man and to say that "the Latvian people can be proud of their glorious son Robert Eiche." The article devotes a single sentence to his purge: "In 1937 he was slandered by enemies and fell at the hands of Beria's contemptible gang" (S.L., Feb. 14).

HOUSING

Special measures are being used in the recently stepped up Soviet efforts to relieve the acute housing shortage. Private persons who can afford it are now permitted to build their own homes, and groups of workers employed in an enterprise can join in building apartment houses for their own use. Both categories of home builders receive land and bank credit. Some newspaper reports imply that the quality of the homes built by such groups of workers is not always satisfactory.

In 1950 the amount of living space per Soviet citizen was estimated to be 41 square feet, and in 1955, 46 square feet. In this connection it is of interest to note that the minimum space requirement of the United States Federal Bureau of Prisons is 60 square feet for each prisoner.⁷

An additional means recently introduced for obtaining living space is reduction of office space, especially in the luxurious offices occupied by agency chiefs, and conversion of it into apartments. In the last two months reports on such efforts have come from several Soviet towns. In Yerevan, capital of Armenia, 11,000 square meters i.e., about 105,000 square feet⁷ of office space is to be converted into apartments (K., Feb. 20). In Gomel, Belorussia, 1,300 square meters of floor space are to be made available by contracting offices. Commissions of representatives of Party organizations, local soviets and trade unions have been set up to find such space (S.B., Feb. 3).

In the oblast center of Molotov, violations of construction regulations were found in 45 per cent of the apartment houses built in the last three years. In the town of Kurgan tenants were permitted to move into a 36-apartment building, although 200 serious construction defects had been registered (S.R., Feb. 7).

The building of one-family homes by private owners is assuming considerable importance. Thus, during the last two years, in the towns and workers' settlements of Kazakhstan, private homes containing about a million square meters of living space have

been built with state credit (K.P., Feb. 20). In Tbilisi, capital of Georgia, "individual houses" with space totaling 18,000 square meters were built last year (T.I., Feb. 13).

A 16-apartment building was recently built in Kishinev, Moldavia, for the workers and employees of a furniture combine. High administration personnel, such as the director and chief engineer, started a rush for the new apartments, though some of them had apartments in old houses. "As a result of these machinations only one worker, a member of the plant committee, received an apartment. The other apartments were obtained by persons not connected with the combine--mainly by administration and technical personnel who would resort to any means to live in the center of the town" (S.M., Feb. 5).

LABOR

In Riga, capital of Latvia, "there has been an alarming increase of cases of injury and sickness" caused by accumulation of trash and dirt in factories, violations of rules of labor safety, poor technical control and violations of sanitary regulations. In textile factories the temperature is very high and ventilation is poor; in plants producing building materials the ventilation system is outdated, dirt and air pollution "greatly exceed" the prescribed limits. Even in recently built factories, regulations concerning safety devices are not observed. In a new brick factory sanitary inspectors found "flagrant infractions" and ordered their elimination within two months, but four months later nothing had been done. Recently the inspectors refused to approve 20 new factories because of failure to observe "elementary sanitary rules," yet the factories are operating. "Impunity has resulted in utter disregard by many managers of demands presented by the sanitary control agencies" (S.L., Feb. 6).

In Armenia "numerous cases of crude violation of labor laws in enterprises, offices and construction agencies" have been discovered. Thus, a saleswoman was dismissed from a bookstore on the pretext that the store was to be closed. Workers and employees are sometimes fired for a single breach of labor discipline. The law granting protection against dismissal to persons disabled in World War II and to families of persons who died in the war is not always observed. In the last four months 20 complaints were filed in a single district of the town of Yerevan against illegal deductions from wages; most of these complaints have been found valid. In some enterprises payments of wages are delayed "as a rule." The probationary period for new employees, which may not exceed six days, is sometimes extended up to a month. For minors between 15 and 18 years of age, the law stipulates a working day of four to six hours, a month's vacation, and the prohibition of night work, yet "in some enterprises in the Republic these laws

are crudely violated." Workers and employees are "frequently" unable to take their vacation on time, and sometimes are ordered back to work before the vacation time has expired (K., Feb. 6).

At a Lithuanian brick factory "the management frequently imposes overtime work and violates the law concerning working hours on the eves of holidays and days off. Overtime is not paid for." Last June four teamsters were engaged by the factory to transport turf, but up to the present they have received no wages. "Crude violations" are committed in connection with vacations due foremen and heads of shops. When one of the latter protested to the director, he was demoted to a lower position (S.Li., Feb. 20).

Infringements of labor laws are reported from various Estonian enterprises. Thus, in the Tallin bus terminal, 108,000 illegal overtime hours were introduced during a nine-month period in 1956. Some managers make arbitrary deductions from wages; in an MTS, for instance, rent arrears were deducted from the wages of three workers. A sovkhos manager withheld 15 per cent of a stableman's wages for having failed to wash the horses (S.E., Feb. 15).

CRIME

The Deputy Chief of the Turkmenistan militia demands more public support in combatting crime. Various voluntary organizations have been formed for this purpose, among them civil "assistance brigades" in militia precincts, and Komsomol groups which guard schools, hostels, theaters, etc. "Yet the militia needs more assistance from the public." People are often afraid of being involved in combatting crime. A pickpocket who took 100 rubles from a student was arrested, but the student refused to testify against him so that the thief had to be released. A medical student killed two people, in the presence of other students; but out of fear only one of the students who had witnessed the crime reported it--two days after it was committed (T.I., Feb. 6). [The need for public assistance indicates the extent of criminal activities and the militia's inability to cope with them.]

A high official in the Tadzhik Ministry of Justice gives a summary of the application of the new law against "petty hooliganism." The law imposes detention of from five to 20 days for disturbance of public order, insult, the use of foul language, etc. This law, the article states, is applied also in much more serious cases of rowdism--[an application which amounts to connivance on the part of state agencies]. For instance, a Ministry of Finance inspector broke into a woman's room, insulted her and her sisters, tore the sister's blouse, and used unprintable language in arguing with militia men and witnesses who arrested him; he was arraigned

under the law and received only 12 days' detention. A chauffeur assaulted a woman and her daughter, tried to strangle the daughter, and pushed the mother, who was trying to protect her daughter, into a pit full of water, where she almost drowned. The case was tried in a people's court as petty hooliganism. Three rowdies insulted a woman and beat her up; they were sentenced to 15 to 20 days' detention. A rowdy who badly wounded a man by hitting him on the head with a shovel, and another hooligan who came to a Social Security office and turned over tables, chairs and a hot stove, almost causing a fire, were also tried as petty hooligans. On the other hand, there have been instances in which the law was applied in cases where accusations were false and denunciations unsubstantiated (K.T., Feb. 10).

In an article on "Socialist Legality," the Chairman of the Tadzhik Supreme Court states that in the USSR "violations of law is nothing but a vestige of capitalism in the minds of the people," and crimes in the USSR decrease from year to year. The proportion of youth among the criminals, he says, is high. Some of the youths are the offspring of well-off families. Thus, a 17-year-old boy whose mother is an agronomist and whose father is a Party secretary has been sentenced to five years in jail for burglary. "For our youth, conditions of life have been created which do not exist in any capitalist country. Parks, clubs, theaters and libraries have been made available to them. But instead of spending time in a cultured and reasonable manner, minors of 14 to 17 years of age not infrequently prefer restaurants, drinking bouts and debauches" (K.T., Feb. 20).

The inability of state agencies to cope with crime and rowdiness is attested to in an article signed by the Ukrainian Deputy Minister of the Interior. Strong and courageous men are employed by the militia, he states, yet "they could not completely fulfill their duties without the extensive and reliable assistance of the citizens." In the Ukraine, he says, there are 16,000 so-called "brigades for assistance to the militia." Until recently many inhabitants of the town of Zhdanov avoided visiting the local Palace of Culture because it was pervaded by hooligans. Thanks to the "brigades," the situation has now improved. Another form of assistance to the militia are staffs, posts and groups of Komsomols. "Public assistance to the militia is an important element in combatting ugly facts in our lives, a proof of the profound democratization of the Soviet socialist system," the Minister believes (P.U., Feb. 8).

A group of beggars was arrested in Moscow. One of them used to walk through train cars pretending to be a war invalid with one arm. Actually he was a worker, a member of the Komsomol, who had never been in the war and sported an empty sleeve, hiding his arm

behind his back. One of his colleagues, unemployed, made 3,000 rubles a month by begging. The article denounced people who give money to beggars instead of realizing that in the USSR, with its absence of unemployment and its social security, begging is out of place (S.R., Feb. 26).

A woman manager of a store in Siberia reported to the militia that the store had been looted. An investigation disclosed that this was not true and that in reality the manager herself, in league with a speculator and several employees of the store, had stolen merchandise worth 50,000 rubles. She was sentenced to 15 years' deprivation of liberty (S.R., Feb. 2).

A thief with a long criminal record picked the pocket of a streetcar rider. The people's judge who tried the case found him not guilty--"for unknown reasons." Upon protest by the state prosecutor the case was tried again by another judge, who sentenced the thief to five years in jail. But here again "something strange happened." The judge ordered the thief released. Thus, "because of this strange protection on the part of the judge" the thief remained free for seven months. (S.B., Feb. 16).

ROUTINE OF SOVIET LIFE

The Kirghiz Minister of State Security states that there are irregularities in granting pensions to the aged and disabled on the basis of the new law, and also in the work of the expert medical-labor commissions which determine the degree of disability of pensioners. In Frunze, the capital of the Republic, 50 per cent of the applications for pensions are not processed within the period prescribed by law. Complaints about these irregularities filed with rayon soviets are sent for investigation to the very offices about which the complaints were made (S.K., Feb. 26).

A unique case of "bourgeois" property being claimed by heirs and of the claim being recognized by a Soviet court occurred in Uzbekistan. A house belonging to a resident of Tashkent was expropriated 35 years ago and turned over to the municipal housing agency. Since 1940, 12 families of workers and employees have lived in the house. In 1954 two sons of the former owner filed a suit demanding recognition of themselves as heirs and the eviction of the 12 families. The people's court made "the surprising decision" to return the house to the heirs. The Supreme Court of Uzbekistan rescinded the decision and returned the case to the court for reexamination, but the court, "with incomprehensible stubbornness," confirmed its decision. The state prosecutor protested the decision and the case will now be tried by the Tashkent oblast court (P.V., Feb. 8).

At an agricultural school in Tadzhikistan there is a canteen for 200 students. In winter the room is cold and in summer dusty because there is no glass in the windows. Tablecloths and plates are dirty. At night the dining room is turned into a bedroom in which the kitchen personnel sleep. Last September six official charges were made about the inferior quality of food. The meals are so unpalatable that students sometimes walk out hungry, and when the cook is drunk there are no meals at all. All complaints have remained unsatisfied (K.T., Feb. 16).

New streets in the Ukraine are often numbered and designated as "New." The trouble is that the numbers are not consecutive, so that after New 45th Street may come New 372nd Street, while New 46th Street may be in another section of the town. This causes much confusion (P.U., Feb. 7).

In Georgia there are for each 10,000 inhabitants 18 graduates of higher educational institutions, among them three medical doctors, and 14 graduates of middle technical schools (B.R., Feb. 24).

Savings banks in Lithuania have 120,000 depositors and deposits of 290,000,000 rubles, five times more than in 1950. Last year 70 new savings banks were opened in the Republic (S.Li., Feb. 14). [Increased deposits need not indicate increased prosperity. In part they may indicate only a shortage of consumer goods for sale.]

ANTI-AMERICAN PROPAGANDA

Throughout February the provincial press carried on extensive anti-American propaganda which was centered mainly on the Eisenhower doctrine and disarmament. Typical examples follow.

"The Eisenhower doctrine is a new U.S. aggressive plan aimed at the establishment of American colonial domination in the Near and Middle East.... Behind its [the doctrine's] anti-Communist slogans, American politicians are trying to hide its colonialist nature and also its anti-British and anti-French edge." The doctrine proves that "the ruling circles of the USA continue to aspire to world domination." This, the article says, reveals the bluff of American anti-colonialism: "By proclaiming the Eisenhower doctrine, the USA has openly set forth the program of colonial conquest as the objective of its policy. It tries to foist American protection on Arab nations without bothering to ask them if they want it" (S.K., Feb. 8).

Western nations have not only refused to follow the Soviet example and reduce their armed forces, but they are expanding their military strength, the Belorussian paper declares. "As a result of the aggression against Egypt and the serious provocation in Hungary, where international reactionaries organized a counterrevolutionary plot, there has appeared the so-called Eisenhower doctrine, which envisages American military intervention in the Near and Middle East" (S.B., Feb. 3).

Five papers published an article declaring that American support of disarmament is only a screen "behind which plans for speeding the armaments race are put into effect." These plans are stimulated by the present slump in the U.S. economy. "American monopolies need an increase of tension in order to justify new measures for further militarization of the nation's economy and for the increase of military expenditures." At the last session of NATO, American plans for "the preparation of an atomic adventure against the USSR and the lands of people's democracy, and for the use of American military bases in Europe for this purpose" won the upper hand (S.K., Feb. 12; T.I., Feb. 12; P.V., Feb. 10; K.P., Feb. 12; S.M., Feb. 10).

According to the Moldavian paper, "In America the program of further expansion and not reduction of armaments has now become the official line of both the ruling parties" (S.M., Feb. 17). In speaking of "both ruling parties" the article tries to depreciate democracy based on the two-party system.

The U.S. Government cannot be called democratic, the Armenian paper declares, because in 1953 it included 17 millionaires and not a single worker or peasant. "The fate of the American people is determined by the largest U.S. union of capitalists, the National Association of Manufacturers." The Association "bribes Senators and Congressmen, organizes the defeat of progressive candidates in elections, sponsors fascist organizations, and has subjected teacher, church and other organizations" to its influence (K., Feb. 24).

The Belorussian paper's special correspondent in New York, I. Novikov, wrote two long reports on New York which represent a curious concoction of falsehood and ignorance. He starts by stating that "we Soviet people are not permitted to move freely all over New York. For this purpose special sectors are designated. We cannot contact simple Americans without risk to them." [No proscribed sectors were specified.] He then describes Wall Street, where "blood, sweat, tears and wrecked nerves" of generations are stored in bank cellars. He has even discovered that in drug stores around Wall Street there are telephone booths "which are adapted to serve Stock Exchange speculators."

11.

The reporter meditates in front of the George Washington Bridge and admits that it is a product of high engineering skill, but adds: "There are state bridges [in the U.S.A.] that are free, but there are many bridges belonging to private companies" which charge the driver 25 cents and earn high profits. He is outraged by the "no parking" signs in New York City streets, which are put up because "the land is private and the owner does not want anybody to park near his home," as well as by parking meters from which money is collected by the state or private persons, depending on who owns the land on which the meter is installed.

Describing American advertising, the reporter has found that "Dodge, owner of an automobile plant," has "bought" entire orchestras to advertise his cars and that the Sunday edition of The New York Times contains a tremendous number of ads, among which "the main place is taken by announcements of the prices of shares of various firms" (S.B., Feb. 20-21).