

Editorial

This issue should reach our readers a little earlier than usual. This will make possible the production of the following issue in mid-December to mark the Fiftieth Anniversary of the formation of the Soviet Union.

This issue will mark the first anniversary, and one hopes the last, of the tragic sequence of events that started this unhappy year of Anglo-Soviet relations. At the time of going to press there are some encouraging signs of change. Conversations between Foreign Ministers and with Ambassadors have been reported in the press as 'ranging over the whole field of Anglo-Soviet relations' and indicating a 'return to a normal working basis'. The principal catalyst in these developments has been the growth of support for the European Security Conference that looks like being realised in 1973. Cultural relations have been running at a low level during this time and one may now confidently hope that they too will now 'return to a normal working basis'.

The British press has maintained, with few exceptions, a sour note on almost every aspect of Anglo-Soviet relations. We commented in the last editorial on the heartening signs that trade was recovering and in this editorial we mention a warmer note in the British press that has relevance to the Fiftieth Anniversary. *The Times Literary Supplement* printed a substantial review of the Byelorussian Soviet Encyclopedia on 30th June. It noted that the Byelorussians became an autonomous national entity only after the October Revolution and that the Byelorussian language has become the vehicle for the expression of a vigorous culture by a Byelorussian intelligentsia. This idea is then extended to apply to all the republics; 'despite the dominant position of the Russian language in administrative, economic, scientific and even cultural life, the status of the national republics within the Soviet Union continues to grow'.

Byelorussia was in the 1930's, of all the republics, the one most sensitively placed in relations between the Soviet Union and the rest of Europe. The reviewer notes that the purges of 1936-1938 could, and indeed have usually been interpreted as arising from the negative policy of the destruction of all opposition to Moscow. He argues, on the contrary, that twenty years after the Revolution a new leadership emerged from the lower strata of this new nation and the purges merely marked the transfer of power from the old to the new. The Fiftieth Anniversary celebrations will no doubt throw a great deal of new light on this and other questions con-

nected with the Soviet community of nations. Cultural relations between the republics and the pivotal importance of Russian as the lingua franca clearly played most important roles in the development of national cultures and economies, as is argued both in the review and in the article included in this issue on the Kazakh republic.

The appreciation shown by our readers of translations of short stories and poems in recent issues has encouraged us to include a rather long 'short' story in this issue together with two very short poems. The two latter were originally written in the Byelorussian language. We would be glad to hear from our readers whether this is to their liking. Some comment was aroused by the inclusion in our last issue of the translation of an article by Efroimson on the bases of moral values. Some suggested that this did not appear to have much to do with Anglo-Soviet relations; we hope to return in some future issue with discussion of it from both English and Soviet writers.

Members of the Society will no doubt expect to find in this issue a note from a worthy pen on the sad death of our President, Mr. D. N. Pritt, on 23rd May, at the age of 84. To write about the work he continued to do almost to his last hour for nearly forty years to strengthen the cultural ties between this country and the Soviet Union would be to write the history of our Society. On the occasion of the 30th anniversary of the SCR in 1954, the then Secretary of the Society wrote in the Journal a note of appreciation of the 'wonderful work of our chairman, Mr. Pritt'. He went on: 'For nearly twenty years, despite numerous other commitments all over the globe, Mr. Pritt has been an unfailing source of inspiration, wit and wise leadership'. Those of us who heard him address the Annual General Meeting of the Society in April of this year will know how he continued to serve it with these three qualities for nearly two more decades. When the Society came to celebrate its 35th Anniversary it was Mr. Pritt who wrote the note in the Journal telling the story of those 35 years. While he was addressing the last Annual General Meeting I decided to write and ask him at an early date to draw on his still lively memory for the composition of a fuller note for the Journal to mark the 50th anniversary of the Society in two years time. He was such a youthful 84, yet he warned us in his closing words that one never knows at that age when one's heart will suddenly cease to beat. His great heart has stopped beating but the work of the Society will go on as part of a great living memorial to so much that he helped to create during his long life.

In the obituary notices in the press there were references to his role 'in almost every left wing cause from the Russian revolution to Vietnam and from the Hunger Marchers to the pay freeze', and

to 'the contribution he made in an astonishing variety of fields'. Unfortunately in not one of these notices was there a reference to the very great contribution he made to the work of the SCR. He first visited the Soviet Union in 1932 and every year after that saw a number of major contributions he made to the work of developing cultural ties between the two countries. In 1954 he was awarded a Stalin Peace Prize.

The SCR has suffered a further loss of one of its most valued long serving officers with the death of Lady Simon of Wythenshawe. For many years she inspired the work of the Education Section.

The reference in the Moscow Diary to the film *Degree of Risk* provokes us to mention that the novel of the film, *Mysli i Serdtse* by Amosov, is available in the SCR library. Can anyone encourage a publisher to bring out an English translation of it?

An attentive reader may have noticed an odd lapse from the editorial 'we' above. This is not altogether accidental. The editorial board has decided that the editorial should in future be signed by 'The Editor' as an indication that it contains his remarks for which he is responsible to the board. This leaves him free to interpret the general policy of the board and he will remain subject to its discipline if he is held to have departed from it substantially. This is consistent with the attitude of the board to articles and reviews published in the Journal as expressions of the views of the authors, which are not necessarily shared by members of the editorial board.

The Editor.

SUBSCRIPTIONS

At the Annual General Meeting of the Society in May, it was decided to increase members' subscriptions which have been unchanged since June 1966, despite the burden of ever-increasing costs which the Society has had to bear. Affiliation fees remain unchanged in order to encourage more educational establishments to join.

The new subscription rates are as follows :

Greater London & Surrounding Counties ...	£3.00
Husband and Wife ...	£4.00
Other Areas ...	£1.50
Husband and Wife ...	£2.00
Students and Pensioners ...	75p

We are sure you will understand that we are reluctant to do this but there is no alternative.

We request your co-operation by paying your subscription promptly to avoid further expense in postal charges.

On The Steamer

Yaroslav Golovanov

(translated and abbreviated from *Novy Mir*, No. 12, 1971,
by Dora Simmonds)

At the harbour there were no tickets for the *Vernadsky*, neither first nor third class, and when Sergey had pushed up to the ticket window and explained quietly and impressively (which was the best way to get results) that he was neither a tourist nor a holiday maker but was on official business, it turned out that there were not even any special places. He came away from the harbour sweaty and bad tempered. There must have been tickets of some sort. They were supposed to keep some in reserve; they couldn't do otherwise. Now he would have to go to the City Committee and show his little red pass 'Solodov, Sergey Dmitrievich, special correspondent'. They would then phone the steamship office. 'This comrade is our guest, so to speak. You have to help a comrade . . .' 'What a hateful, bureaucratic waste of time', thought Sergey. 'That's what one should be writing about.'

Then he drank a glass of cold, cloudy wine in a wine cellar and felt better. He wouldn't stay here at all events. Of course he would get away on a boat. He had thought it all out in Moscow: no aeroplanes, nothing but a boat would do: a blue sky, a white steamer, the wind blowing the light curtains in the cabin. And now you are here, there are no tickets to be had.

However, everything worked out all right. The people at the City Committee rang the right number, and he was asked to call in after dinner. 'We don't promise good ones', boomed a voice in his ear. 'I don't care a damn provided they're not for a seat on the deck', agreed Sergey. He decided to leave the next day.

The *Vernadsky* was due to leave at noon. It lay at the far pier, rather small and dirty, with only one deck. It had probably been built before the war and had a faded sun-bleached awning at the stern. When the passengers were allowed aboard those with deck tickets ran to grab benches and deck chairs. Sergey had a second class ticket but he also hurried along, taking great strides, leaping over railway lines and cables and hawsers. There was, of course, a crush at the gangway, with a lot of pushing and shoving. Those who had already got on to the steamer were shouting to those who were working their way towards them from the landing stage, and they were throwing parcels and bags back and forth. There