

Radio—The Whip Lash for Sovietism

(Continued from page 17.)

Russian committee in White Russian, Polish and Esperanto; the Trans-Caucasian committee in Georgian, Armenian and Turk; and so on.

Russian programmes a year or so ago were "high-brow," and, in the con-

centration on "culture" and "instruction," humour, "light" music, fashion and sports were neglected. Under a recent programme reorganisation this "Reithian" spirit was exorcised. Much of the "technical propaganda" was eliminated, and political and "cultural" talks shortened. More popular entertainment, with a pronounced musical bias, is now the thing.

Soviet radio was started by Radio-

peredatcha (a special joint stock company) in 1924; the Narkomviaz, now the People's Commissariat of Communications, took over in 1928; and in 1933 was created the All-Union Radio Committee for Radiofication and Broadcasting with the Council of People's Commissars. This "brains trust" is split into three executive departments dealing respectively with the provision and maintenance of stations and the radio industry, the supervision of the 67 regional committees, and the construction of programmes. The number of employees, including permanent salaried artists, is about 1000.

The network comprises about 66 transmitters ranging from the 500-k.w. Komintern "giant," Moscow—the largest in Europe and built entirely of Soviet material—to stations of 5 k.w. and less. The total power of these stations proper is about 1,600 k.w., compared with the B.B.C.'s 600 k.w. The listening system is vastly different from ours. Only about 1,000,000 listeners possess private receivers, another 1,500,000 hear per medium of State-operated wireless exchanges, and the mass of the 12,000,000 is reached by "collective" listening.

"Sub-stations" of one kilowatt and less are installed in "kolkhozes" (non-State collective farms), industrial centres and rural villages, and midget plants of about 30 watts are established in factories, State institutions, schools, army barracks, "correction houses" (prisons), and so on. These "sub-stations" relay about 75 per cent. of the State's programmes, and the other 25 per cent. is provided by the group listeners themselves who have their own choirs and orchestras. A special workers' choir of 80 voices broadcasts from the Moscow stations in non-factory hours. The inmates of "correction houses"—who also have their own wall newspapers—have the right of five minutes before the microphone to ventilate complaints, advance suggestions, and so on.

I found Russian radio to be very "go-ahead" in television, two-way communication, and other experiments. Considerable success, in particular, has been made with aircraft radio. The Radio Committee told me that they hoped by the extension of sub-stations and exchanges to "cover" practically the whole of Russia. The world is loth to give credit to the Soviet Union; its failures may be many; nevertheless it bids fair to achieve something monumental in radio broadcasting.



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DR. R. S. THATCHER, formerly Director of Music at Harrow School, who said, "I hate crooning with all my heart" at a conference of British and Canadian organists, in London, has been made Deputy Director of Music at Broadcasting House, London, "to deal with wider and more general aspects of broadcast music to which Dr. Boulton, because of his symphony orchestra duties, can no longer find time to attend." Dr. Thatcher also "strongly condemns 'certain types of exotic dance music,' which, he says, have a 'pernicious effect on the immature minds of children.'"