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A Broad Hint

It was taken for granted by everyone that no idle curiosity prompted President Roosevelt to appoint a commission to investigate industrial relations in Great Britain. If he were merely interested in finding out how labor disputes were settled in England, his labor experts could have furnished him with that information very easily.

The theory was generally accepted that his purpose in sending a commission to Great Britain was to prepare the ground for a revision of the Wagner Labor Relations Act. Recently the C.I.O. has charged that the whole idea was conceived by Tom Girdler. John L. Lewis ostentatiously refused to participate in naming a member of the commission.

With the publication of the report of the Commission the suspicion that the purpose of the commission was to point to the necessity of amending the Wagner Act has been strengthened. While it made no recommendation for new legislation or for amending the Wagner Act, the general tenor of the report justifies the conclusion that it will ultimately be used to enact legislation which will be detrimental to the interests of the workers.

The report speaks very highly of the Trades Dispute Act of 1927 which prohibits sympathetic strikes; it comments very favorably on the government machinery for arbitration and conciliation; above all it seems to approve of the system whereby union officials and representatives of employers, who are not directly connected with any dispute, are the ones to undertake a settlement.

No American worker is opposed to learning from the experiences of their fellow-workers of other countries. But from their own experiences they know enough to permit as little intervention from government boards as possible.

There are already movements in existence having as their purpose the incorporation of unions and the establishment of compulsory arbitration. The American workers should guard jealously their freedom of action and should not permit any kind of a report to lessen their opposition to interference by the government.

When Roosevelt, in commenting on the report, praised "the cooperative spirit, coupled with restraint, which is shown by those who represent both employers and employes in Great Britain" there was to be detected a broad hint that the workers should be "reasonable" in their demands and refrain from militant action to achieve them.

We are certain that the workers will disregard the hint. If anything they have been far too reasonable and have permitted their leaders to stifle their militancy. They are entitled to much more than they have and the more militant they are the more will they get.

Expropriate the Railroads

The railroads of this country are in a desperate plight. Most of the companies are in the hands of receivers; there are more miles of road now in bankruptcy than at any previous time.

What shall be done? The operators have a simple solution. Reduce the wages of the workers by fifteen per cent.

Are the workers to blame for the condition of the roads? All they did was to work; they had no voice in the management of the industry; they had nothing to say about the methods of operating, the financial arrangements, the payment of interest. When times were good and the owners of railroad bonds and stocks received tremendous amounts as interest on their investments, the workers did not share in the huge profits. They were only there to do the work.

But when the dividends on stocks and interest on bonds are not received regularly, the bosses can see no other solution than to lower the standards of the workers.

Let no one think that the workers of the industry have received very high wages. The

OPERATORS SIGN 11-STATE PACT

(Continued from page 1)
 by a practical working agreement. As many companies are being organized for the first time, and even the unions are unaccustomed to working on such a vast scale, it is to be expected that many details will have to be handled as the problems appear.

The task of securing the North Central Area contract took well

over a year's work. It took organizational form at the St. Paul conference of the North Central District Drivers Council on January 8, 1938, with Minnesota, Iowa, North and South Dakota, Nebraska and Kansas City, Missouri, actively participating, and Tulsa, Oklahoma, cooperating.

More Unions Join
 In the latter part of the same month, there was a conference in Minneapolis with a committee of Wisconsin locals, resulting in Wisconsin's adherence to the program and a meeting projected for March 1 in Chicago. The Chicago meeting represented an organizational expansion beyond

the confines of the old North Central Drivers District Council, becoming a provisional over-the-road conference. That meeting formulated contract proposals and submitted them to the Labor Relations Board of the American Trucking Association.

On the basis of the contract proposals, the unions in Ohio, Indiana and Michigan joined the union group. The next entry was that of the St. Louis, Missouri, teamsters and with them the balance of the Missouri locals. The final entry into the North Central Area Negotiating Committee was that of the Louisville, Kentucky, Local.

average annual earning last year was \$1,115.00. Approximately 750,000 workers received less than \$750.00 a year. The bosses, of course, are not in the least worried about the low standard of living which the workers are compelled to endure.

It is no wonder that even the conservative leaders of the railway unions rejected the proposal to arbitrate the dispute. After the 15% cut is put into effect and after a strike is threatened a fact-finding commission will be appointed by the President and not until the commission reports will the unions have the right to go on strike.

The whole cumbersome machinery, created by the Railroad Labor Act of 1920 for the express purpose of paralyzing the initiative of the workers, will undoubtedly be used to compel a compromise, which will mean a substantial reduction in workers' wages. If the workers force their leaders to act decisively, nothing in the world could make them accept any reduction in wages.

If the attempt on the part of the railway operators to reduce wages has done anything, it has proved that they are absolutely incapable of running an industry that is so vital to the interests of the workers in the industry and to the life of the whole country. The railway barons are in the first ranks of those who robbed and despoiled the wealth of this country. And now that they have run the industry to the ground they have the effrontery to ask that the loss be shifted to the workers.

The Roosevelt Government has been pouring millions of dollars to help extricate the owners from their difficulties. Those millions could have easily been used to buy the railroads. What is necessary now is to take the industry away from the capitalists and to let the workers operate the railroads.

Mexico's Real Allies

Re-affirming its right to determine those steps necessary for its own national welfare, the Mexican Government, in a note given to the press last Sunday, replied to the latest provocations of U. S. Secretary of State Cordell Hull. At the same time, however, the Mexican note attempts to gain time by agreeing to one form of partial arbitration, whereby the U. S. valuation claims on the land seizures would be submitted for examination to a joint committee.

The Mexican note submits to analysis Hull's "eternal laws of property," and has no difficulty in showing that these are mere fictitious creatures of the Secretary's imagination. Among other precedents for expropriation in the national welfare, without "full compensation," the note makes an ironic indirect reference to the abrogation of gold payment clauses by the Roosevelt Administration—a prime and unmistakable example of expropriations without any compensation whatever, even though in that instance the expropriation was carried out for the sake of saving capitalism and not for the welfare of the people.

Meanwhile, it becomes clearer than ever that the issue between the two governments is not going to be settled by these elaborate exchanges of diplomatic correspondence. The real question is not at all one of the alleged dictates of "international law," which is for that matter a law which exists only in the minds of international jurists. What is at stake is the interests of imperialism against those whom imperialism oppresses.

This was recognized implicitly by Cardenas when he violated diplomatic precedent by stating the content of his latest reply in a speech to the Mexican Congress before it was embodied in the official note. It is to be regretted, however, that Cardenas does not act similarly with respect to the workers of the United States. For him to rely on maneuvering with the Roosevelt Administration condemns him in advance to defeat. It is to be hoped that in the future he will put less energy into the composition of the elaborate communications to the U. S. State Department, and will address himself to the U. S. workers and farmers, the victims, jointly with the Mexican people, of the exactions of U. S. imperialism for which Hull speaks.

What the Army Is For

"Surprising to most U. S. citizens would be the contents of the General Staff 'White Paper'—a thorough plan for suppressing civil disorder in the U. S. In it every large city is divided into possible battle zones. Paved highway intersections throughout the U. S. are marked down for airplane runways. That U. S. officers mull their 'White Paper' a great deal of the time and talk about it none of the time, is due of course to the fact that no U. S. citizen would like to think about it any of the time."

—From a feature story on operations of the U. S. Army in *Time* magazine, August 22.

**"In Stalin's Realm"
 "The Russian Workers'
 Own Story"**

Reviewed by JOE HANSEN

V. I. LENIN



Years of Stalin Rule Have Not Crushed His Ideas in Soviet Union.

When Boris Silver visited "Stalin's Realm," as he calls the present U.S.S.R., his memories of Czarist Russia gave steadiness to his vision and coolness to his judgment. He visited cities he had not seen for 30 years, observed their changes, renewed old acquaintances and heard their estimates of what had happened since 1905, lived on kolhozes (collective farms) and in villages where tourists are not permitted, dwelt on intimate terms with the common people of Russia, listened to their arguments, their hopes for the future, their confidential discussions among themselves.

The workers, the peasants, the rank and file members of the Communist Party in Russia, the small bureaucrats, even informers of the G.P.U. and not a few rascals in positions of power told their own life stories to Boris Silver and he presents these thumb-nail biographies as well as significant anecdotes in his book as simply and sincerely as they were told to him.

A TRUE WITNESS SPEAKS

Boris Silver himself, although now a Belgian Socialist, spent his childhood in Russia, learning the language fluently and becoming a member of the Bolshevik wing of the Social Democratic party prior to 1905 (leaving it after the 1905 revolution when he was forced to flee Russia because of his revolutionary activity.) This early acquaintance with Russia enabled him upon his return in 1933-34 to travel freely, to have workers confide without fear their real opinions so that he gained information utterly impossible to anyone without such advantages. It also enabled him to see the political forces on a broad scale, a quality entirely lacking in such authors as Eugene Lyons who in his *Assignment in Utopia* confuses his own rather sordid personal problem of whether to work for Stalin or to work for capitalist democracy with the major political issues confronting the working class of Russia, molding himself and his small problem into the heroic proportions of a true-hearted youth seeking after Utopia who permitted a vulgar materialism called "Bolshevism" to sully his spotless ideals. Even after rejecting Stalin, Lyons still bases his entire concept of Bolshevism upon Stalin's theoretical formulation of Socialism in one country. Lyons prefers imperialism. The actual issue facing the Russian working class Lyons does not even pose in his book—rebirth of Bolshevism or reversion to capitalism.

Silver, on the contrary, is not a dewy-eyed sentimentalist struggling to choose between a petty-bourgeois Utopia and the "human values" over which float the Stars and Stripes of imperialism. He is not a professional hack of the Duranty type, nor a non-political specialist like Tchernavin who can report only a single phase of what is happening in Russia and that completely disconnected from a large view of the class forces in struggle. Silver is a careful observer with an intimate knowledge of Czarist Russia and an intelligent conception of what socialism signifies against which to measure the things he comes across in "Stalin's Realm."

A FIRST ENCOUNTER

No sooner does he settle down in the train after crossing the border than Boris Silver encounters his first experience with the seething undercurrent of unrest and dissatisfaction among the common people. When she is sure that the ticket collector has left and that they are alone, the daughter of a middle-aged workman with whom Silver has been talking asks him in a low voice:

"Do you believe in Trotsky or Stalin? . . . who in your opinion is the better man of the two? Speak in a low voice, we can hear you all right."

This question after years of Trotsky's exile and Stalin's bloody repressions constitutes, together with the warning to speak in a low voice, one of the major topics among all the people with whom Silver talks. Trotsky to them still symbolizes the revolution and the struggle for socialism, Stalin the reaction. After one of the carefully staged street "demonstrations" which constitute part of Stalin's propaganda machine, one of the workers confides his sentiments to Silver. First he tells a very disheartening story of the miserable conditions under the G.P.U. regime, the scarcity of food, the lack of freedom, the constant spying, the difficulty in smashing the bureaucracy. Silver asks the worker if he isn't painting too gloomy a picture of the future.

L. D. TROTSKY



He Symbolizes Revolution to Soviet Workers.

"STALIN CAME A LITTLE LATE"

"Oh, no," replies the worker. "No Socialist should despair of the future. Stalin, I hope, came just a little bit too late. There is a generation growing up which has had the benefit of a sound socialist education under Lenin, and many young men and women are still being so educated, though with great difficulty. All the peasantry, by mere instinct, hate the very name of Stalin. In the south he's liked just about as much as the czar was, and he's less feared. It won't be long before all the people will begin to see the light."

That Stalin's propaganda falls far short of convincing those against whom it is directed is graphically shown by a conversation between a woman member of the Communist Party and a worker in a restaurant. Stalin's 3 1/2 hour speech had been rebroadcast upon every radio program steadily for three weeks. It had been translated into all languages of the Soviet Union as well as all European languages and reprinted in countless editions of the press, in millions of leaflets, and recited by professional readers at all social gatherings as part of the "entertainment."

After listening to the woman's eulogies on the genius of Stalin, the worker bursts out, "Stalin, Stalin, Stalin again! I guess things must be wrong somewhere or that the Kremlin crowd is smitten by some nervous disease. I will ask you a question, my fair and enlightened comrade, does your party believe that people will except any animal as a lion because thousands of asses—I exclude you, of course—go braying 'Lion Lion'? I think they would rather suspect an ass in a lion's skin. Was it ever found necessary to run about proclaiming Lenin a lion? People merely had to understand Lenin and they admired him automatically."

Even members of the Communist Party itself hold Stalin in contempt. Silver records the following statement from an argument between two party members: "Our children who have to become the embodiment of Communism are not only prevented from reading Trotsky; they must, I say again must, believe that Stalin is all that he pretends to be, while we all know that, judging by the standard of the people whom he drove out of the Communist movement, he is only at best a mediocrity . . ."

"DOWN WITH THE GEORGIAN SWINE!"

While Silver is visiting a kolhoz, a representative of the Communist Party arrives and draws the manager aside for conversation. Say the workers upon the arrival of the official: "We'll see that he is well watched; maybe he's a Communist sent by that Gruzinskai swinia ('Georgian swine')."

The manager of the kolhoz is suspected of "being a bit of a Trotskyist" by a member of the Communist Party loyal to Stalin because the kolhoz is run on sound lines and the manager is very popular with the workers and peasants of the kolhoz. But he does not report his suspicions to the G.P.U. In the evening when more than a thousand gather to hear speeches by Silver and two members of the Communist Party, the following incident occurs: Grisha an Old Bolshevik begins speaking, "Comrades, I bring you greetings and a message from the proletariat who conquered and now hold power in the Soviet Union . . ." He is interrupted by a baritone voice: "Doloi Gruzinskai swinia! ('Down with the Georgian swine'). Several voices shout, "Shut up, Peter, he's not going to speak about Stalin."

The chairman restores order and Grisha gives a short speech without once mentioning Stalin. He gets a great ovation.

Later the manager of the kolhoz in pointing out with local pride the humane rules and well-ordered condition of the kolhoz and justifying the fact that against the Soviet law he had hired a homeless worker who had been unjustly deprived of his passport by the G.P.U. (a sentence equivalent to death by starvation) says: "Even Stalin would be safe and properly treated here as long as he only claimed the rights of any ordinary man."

(Continued in the next issue.)

THE RUSSIAN WORKERS' OWN STORY, By Boris Silver, 251 pp. London, George Allen & Unwin, Ltd. 7s. 6d. 1938.

Pinning 'em Down

By JAMES CASEY

WAYCROSS, Ga.—This little city of 14,000 is a typical Georgia community, embracing all the traditional prejudices against the North coupled with a show of reverence for organized religion, and exemplifying the political development of the vast majority of the State's population.

It is here that Senator Walter F. George came to answer President Roosevelt's appeal to the voters to have him retired from the Upper Chamber in favor of Federal District Attorney Lawrence Camp.

Georgia, with its 4,000,000 population, has just passed through one of its bitterest primary campaigns in its history. Staff correspondents of Northern metropolitan dailies have written columns upon columns about the battle of the candidates, but none of the articles gave more than a superficial account of what had occurred. There were several reasons for this inadequate coverage, the most important of which is that none of the capitalist papers would print the true stories behind the distorted facts.

A political study of Waycross, even within the limited space of this column, not only affords a picture of the temper of Georgia's masses, outside the principal cities of Atlanta, Macon, Savannah and Augusta; it offers a better understanding of the moving political forces in this as well as other States of the agricultural South.

For many generations, Georgia was dominated in its northern and southern districts by Democratic party chiefs, whose main function was to serve the State's banking and public utility interests. These leaders made deals among themselves in the naming of State legislators, U. S. senators and governors. (As is well known, a Democratic primary selection in Georgia is equivalent to election.)

Those were the heydays of Major Cohen, the late "Hoke" Smith, Thomas W. Hardwick, the late Tom Watson, Volney Williams and several others. Then came the capitalist crisis.

HUNGER SHATTERS NEW DEAL ILLUSIONS

Hunger and destitution stalked the farming and urban sections. Hundreds of tenant farmers lost their homes and flocks, with their families, to the cities to join the growing army of unemployed. The workers and farmers listened to the false promises of the New Deal first, with great hopes, then with skepticism, increased bitterness and disgust. With the disillusionment in the New Deal, the State's political bosses also fell from grace and lost their hold on the masses of the people.

But although the big political bosses and the interests they represented lost their power to deceive, the toilers had not become sufficiently class-conscious to act independently, nor even to free themselves completely from machine politics. What transpired was a steady drift of political power from state to county political cliques.

Like most of the other Georgia cities and villages Waycross, the principal community of Ware County, is controlled by a political clique, whose members are all installed in public office at comfortable salaries. The Waycross clique represents the city bank, the Atlantic Coast Line Railroad, which gives industrial life to the county, the tobacco curing plants, the canning plants, the three blocks of retail stores and the daily newspapers. The clergy has as one of its jobs the rallying of the congregations behind the ruling clique.

These office-holders are, on the whole, a greedy, bigoted, deceitful, reactionary and ignorant lot. The county school superintendent, for example, cannot write a simple letter in grammatical English, while the sheriff is a boastful advocate of white supremacy.

RECOUNT STORY OF LYNCHING

An insight into the mentality of the office-holders can be gained by recounting their "choice" story as they gather to reminisce of the olden days. This story centers around the exploits of a Ware county sheriff who, some twenty years ago, turned his jail keys over to a mob that dragged a Negro from his cell to a tree, tied him to its branches and burned him at the stake. The officials joke and laugh, as they recite the gruesome tale, finishing off proudly with a description of the tree, which now stands as a shining landmark on the outskirts of Waycross.

Besides this unsavory collection of slyster politicians, Waycross has other dubious distinctions.

It is the gateway to Okefenokee Swamp, with its flora and fauna and wild life, of which thousands of glowing essays have been published. In all this Chamber of Commerce propaganda there is not a line of mention of the colony of living dead that exists at the southern end of the swamp.

No one dares to enter the swamp without a veteran guide. To reach the swamp colony, one must take a "donkey train" (a locomotive with a freight car attached running on a single track and ride two hours through the scorching marshlands which are infested with all kinds of insects.

The hundred or more families of the colony are housed in tiny one and two-room huts, owned by a lumber company which also controls turpentine lands in the area. The company also owns the one-room wooden schoolhouse, the general store, the little wooden church and all the streets and sidewalks, built entirely out of boards. The men and boys, needless to say, work for the company and the families are constantly in debt to the concern for food, clothing and rent.

Few of the parents can write even their names, while most of the children have never seen a street car or train and haven't the faintest idea of what a talkie is like.

VOTE FOR COUNTY POLITICIANS

The turpentine toilers together with railroad workers, store clerks, factory employes and farmers in the Waycross area follow, almost religiously, the county political bosses at the polls. (Negroes, of course, are barred from voting except in presidential years). Tollers of Valdosta, Dublin, Rome, Thomaston and other small Georgia cities give similar support to their county bosses.

Consequently the arguments aired over the Reorganization Bill, Supreme Court changes and other New Deal policies by Senator Georgia, Camp and former Governor Talmadge were of little moment to the tenant farmers and workers in most sections of Georgia. For this reason, it was difficult for staff correspondents to prophesy the primary winner.

Georgia's masses are distrustful and tired of the big-time politicians. They are disillusioned; they feel that things are not as they should be, but they are groping in the dark.

What is true of Georgia also applies to North Carolina, South Carolina and Alabama. The farmers and workers of these States are ripe for militant leadership and a militant working class program.

SAVE THE 16 FROM JAIL!
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