

REPORT ON THE RUSSIANS.....



W. L. White

INSTALLMENT THREE

But now for the Stormovik factory itself. It is, first of all, poorly lit and unbelievably dirty. It has no production line in the American sense but rather a series of connected piles between bottlenecks, with women waiting idle at their machines for the line to start moving again.

It is jammed full of the best American machine tools, but seems to lack proper organization. At one point, the assembly belt is a makeshift canvas affair. The floors throughout are uneven with holes in the concrete. Piles of metal shavings are everywhere. No one bothers to clean up. Many of the girls wear gunny sacks tied around their feet. Others have crude wooden sandals with a nail sticking up between the great and second toes. In these, they scramble around in the dim light. Here they are moving (by wheelbarrow) a load of unfinished parts which spill at a bump on the floor. The girls must stop to pick them up.

There is an elaborate banquet in the director's dining room at the end of the inspection. There again are the red wine, white wine, champagne, and vodka glasses, the tremendous array of cold hors d'oeuvres, starting with caviar and pastry. Standing behind the table, I see a familiar face. It is the smiling steward who presided over the banquet at the Tschaikovsky Theater.

He was, it developed, the chief caterer for Intourist, and everywhere we were entertained we were to find his beaming smile whether the scene was a factory, a railway diner, or a picnic near abandoned German trenches on the Karelian Isthmus.

Between toasts Johnston whispers to me: "That director's a good man. He could hold an important job in the States. Maybe not quite the job he has here, not president of the company."

"And you'll notice that on all such policy questions, this guy didn't know. Obviously, the Kremlin decides. Like any plant manager he does the best he can with what they give him."

"We're talking to production men. The planning brains of this thing are in the Kremlin, not in the factories."

The Russians around the table are familiar—serious, orthodox, industrious young men anxious to get on in the world—the same type you might find at a junior executives' lunch in an American factory. There they would be registered Republicans without having given it too much thought, but because the boss was a Republican and because it was the party of respectability and its hallmark would be helpful to a young man anxious to get on in the world.

Here their prototypes are Communists for the same reason. These men would average thirty-two years old. In 1917, when Communism was a revolutionary party in Russia (sometimes it still is abroad, but only when it is helpful to Russian foreign policy), these men were boys of five. When Lenin died they were twelve years old.

The Revolution was over and those young men most likely to succeed followed the Communist Party because it represented authority, power, and wealth, as has the Republican party to a lesser extent in America.

The next morning Kirilov arrives to take us to another factory, one of the most important in Russia. For here they make the Soviet Union's automobiles. In America a dozen major companies turn out a hundred models. In this classless society one company makes one model, and its entire output goes to its single privileged class—the top communists, factory directors, and government officials.

It looks rather like a 1935 model sedan of American manufacture with the difference that it is a sloppy engineering job. Its name, pronounced, "Zees" in English, comes from three Russian words meaning "Factory in the name of Stalin."

The director of the Zees plant, Ivan Likhatchov, is a stumpy, serious little man of forty-eight who carefully cultivates a slight resemblance to Stalin. He wears a cap, grows a soup-strainer mustache, and receives us in riding trousers and high black Russian boots.

First, he gives us an over-all picture of the plant. It employs 40,000 workers, and has 12,000 more youngsters in its factory school. Formerly, it made trucks (the Soviet Union, with over 200,000,000 people, made 200,000 motor vehicles per year at the peak compared with America's 1941 production of 4,800,000 for its 130,000,000 people). Now it produces trucks, half-tracks and munitions for the Red Army.

The Komosols (young communists) in the factory school started making Tommy guns for the Red Army when the Germans were only 35 kilometers from Moscow, and

went into production in only three weeks.

The Zees plant now has four daughter plants turning out army trucks and munitions in the Urals. Their directors were formerly shop chiefs in this plant.

Automobile production started here in 1924, the car being designed around a Soviet adaptation of the famous American Hercules Engine made in Canton, Ohio.

The director tells us with quiet pride that he has visited American factories at Detroit, Flint, Buffalo, Saginaw, Pittsburgh and Chicago, that he is a member of the Society of Automotive Engineers.

A worker who is ill, he tells us, goes to the plant doctor to get a leave of absence. If the case is serious, in this plant his social insurance would pay 90 per cent of his wages for three months. If he is still not recovered, he gets either a temporary invalid's status or maybe lighter work. A pregnant woman gets several weeks' leave of absence before her baby, and after it, the average family, he tells us, is five children for the city worker and about eight for farmers.

But Eric wants to know about the problem of absenteeism. The director seems amazed that such a question should even be asked, because he says, of course, they have no such cases here. Lazy or tardy workers are rebuked by the wall newspaper or denounced over the shop public address system. If it happens two or three times the matter is taken up with him by the union. We gather it is a grim proceeding.

It is hard for our capitalist minds to grasp the idea that under socialism, possibly the factory belongs to the workers but certainly the worker belongs to his factory; without it he has nothing to eat and no place to sleep.

Now we tour the plant. Again it seems to have no smooth-running assembly line but a series of linked



Reviews Red Army

bottlenecks and connected piles. The workers look up, but they seem to have no fear of the bosses. They look him straight in the eye as an American worker would.

The Zees trucks and half-tracks look sturdy by American peacetime standards, but they can't compare with the rugged giants which Detroit pours out for our armies and those of our allies. The workers are about half women, and the rest very old men or boys in their middle teens.

Wages here, including the director's salary, are exactly what they were at the other plant—and at most of the others we are to visit.

We go in to the usual banquet at about four in the afternoon.

The next day we are herded into our Zees and tear across town to another dingy square, flanked by barracks—like concrete workers' apartment houses, where flapping Red banners and huge portraits of Marx, Lenin, Engels and Stalin announce the entrance to the ball-bearing works.

It is crammed full of the newest and best American machinery but its floors again are cluttered and the lighting bad. However, the product seems to be a good, precision-made job, although we guess that by American standards, production per worker must be low.

At the regular afternoon banquet there are many toasts to Soviet-American friendship and the second front. Then Eric tries to find out something about business competition in the Soviet Union. The director of the factory insists that there is great competition—particularly to get raw materials. But who gets the most? The plant with the highest production record.

We pile back into our cars to be taken to what Kirilov describes as a rubber factory; actually it produces not rubber but tires, from rubber made (usually from alcohol) in the Soviet Union, whose scientists pioneered in this important field.

Its director, introduced as Vladimir Chesnikov, is a pleasant young man of thirty-three and under him

are about 1,500 workers. In answer to our questions he explains that he gets the basic monthly salary of 3,000 roubles (\$240 without the usual production bonuses because the plant isn't yet operating). They started building it only in December and began setting the machinery only six weeks ago.

Back in the director's office, Eric wants to know what percentage of their wages Soviet workers give to the war. Chesnikov tells us proudly that Soviet Union workers sometimes give as much as two or three months' salary.

We attended a performance of Tschaikovsky's "Nut Cracker Ballet" at the Bolshoi Theater, the Grand Opera house of Moscow. It is a magnificent old czarist building decorated with a restrained lavishness rare in Russia under any regime. And the performance is beautiful beyond anything I have seen on any stage in any country—dancing, costumes, acting and scenery are done with sweeping imagination. These people have a genius for the theater.

The theater is the only thing in the Soviet Union which can boast of an uninterrupted growth and tradition. The Bolsheviks were proud of the ballet and in both Moscow and Leningrad they kept going continuously all during the revolution. The Bolsheviks did not liquidate their actors, stage designers, directors, and artists as they did most of the upper classes in 1917 and in the ensuing Civil War.

Today, a visit to a motor factory which used to make tractor engines. Both factory and product have been redesigned and the plant now turns out dive bomber motors largely for the Stormovik—a 1700-horsepower job.

Its director is only thirty-four years old and seated next to him at the table is a dark-haired woman of forty who is assistant director, and who has charge of wages, working conditions, health and vacations.

He tells us he has 15,000 workers and most of them eat their meals in one building. The food is cheap and good because the factory owns and operates two farms. There are permanent operating staffs on each, but the factory workers rotate to furnish most of the labor.

We glance into a workers' lunch room. The meal consists of a porridge with kasha (buckwheat), black bread and borsch—a rich meat and beet soup. It looks and smells good.

Beyond is the foremen's dining room. They get the same dishes plus black pressed caviar. Farther on is the engineers' dining room. They eat like the foremen except they may have white bread as well as black, butter, and their caviar is the more expensive, loose, unsalted kind.

Now we proceed to the director's dining room, where I jot down the menu's main items: vodka, red wine, white wine, champagne, caviar, butter, smoked sturgeon, salted cucumbers (which are delicious), coleslaw, cold veal, salami, smoked beef tongue and for dessert, pastry and fine-textured chocolate layer cake.

We learn (not from our Russian hosts) the caste system we have seen in the dining rooms goes all through their factories. They have developed enormous white-collar clerical and engineering staffs. Once a man becomes an engineer, he loses face and prestige should he slip into a suit of cover-alls, as American engineers do, and go down to a factory bench to show workers how it should be done.

Until the 1917 Revolution, Russia for a thousand years was a caste-ridden feudal state. Twenty-five years can no more wipe this out than it can abolish Russian food habits or Russian verbs. So this new socialist bureaucracy, raised up out of the proletariat, instinctively stratifies itself into castes.

Slowly I am beginning to understand this place and its people. Suppose you had been born and spent all your life in a moderately well run penitentiary, which kept you working hard and provided a bunk to sleep in, three daily meals and enough clothes to keep you warm.

Suppose it was explained that the warden and the guards were there largely to protect you from the palevolent outside world.

Needless to say, if anyone tried to release you or menaced you with a parole, you would fight like a tiger.

There is, however, one marked difference between inmates of the Soviet Union and of the Kansas State penitentiary at Lansing, where I have often visited an old friend. Food and clothing in both places are about the same, maybe a little better in Lansing. But should my Kansas friend decide his penitentiary was not well run, and express the hope that there might be a change of wardens, he would run no danger of being shot were he overheard by a stool pigeon. I concede, however, that in Russia a talented inmate can work himself up to be warden, which would be impossible in Lansing.

(TO BE CONTINUED)

HOUSEHOLD MEMOS... by Lynn Chambers



Follow Rules for Melt-in-Your-Mouth Muffins
(See Recipes Below)

Quick Hot Breads

Taste-tempting hot breads add a flavorful touch to any meal. Golden-crust muffins or fluffy biscuits are the perfect accompaniment to meat and salads and go equally well with a glass of milk for a snack or with coffee or tea for breakfast.

Don't shy away from making muffins because you fear only fair results. Quick breads are the most easily mixed of all baked goods and you need to bear in mind only a few simple rules to have success.

The most important point to remember is not to "over-mix." Muffin batter, for example, should be "bumpy"—stirred only until the dry ingredients are dampened by the liquid. Biscuits should not be worked to death—they will be far more flaky and tender if the cook is not too ambitious.

Quick hot breads are an easy way to put appetite appeal into the simplest meal. Served with butter and jam, they will really give the family something to look forward to even if the main dish is hash from left-over roast or soup and salad from an accumulation of dabs of food in the refrigerator.

Cheese adds flavor as well as protein to a meal when made with muffins like the following:

***Cheese Muffins.**

- (Makes 12 medium-sized muffins)
- 2 1/4 cups sifted all-purpose flour
- 3 teaspoons baking powder
- 1/2 teaspoon salt
- 3/4 cup grated American cheese
- 1 egg
- 1 cup milk
- 1/4 cup melted butter

Sift flour once, measure; sift into mixing bowl with baking powder and salt. Add grated cheese and mix thoroughly. Beat egg, add milk and melted butter, and pour into the center of the dry ingredients. Stir quickly until dry ingredients are just dampened. Batter should not be smooth. Fill greased muffin pans about 3/4 full. Bake in a moderately hot oven (425 degrees) for 15 or 20 minutes until golden brown. Serve hot with butter and jam.

If you want to do other unusual things with muffins you might like them with a prune or a spice flavor. Both of these will add extra enjoyment to meals.

Prune Muffins.

- 3 1/2 cups flour
- 1/2 teaspoon salt
- 4 teaspoons baking powder
- 1/2 teaspoon nutmeg
- 1/2 cup shortening
- 1 cup brown sugar
- 2 eggs
- 1 1/2 cup milk
- 1/4 cup cut, cooked prunes, well drained

Prunes and nuts for decoration. Sift together first four ingredients. Cream shortening and add sugar

Lynn Says:

Here are tips on egg cookery: Beads on a meringue come from too much sugar. Frothy meringue comes from too little sugar. Two tablespoons of sugar to one egg white is a good rule to follow.

Eggs keep better if they are not washed before refrigerating. Never place meringue on a hot pie filling. It will form syrup between filling and meringue and "skid." Pile the meringue in the center of the pie and anchor to the crust on the edges after spreading.

To open eggs evenly without breaking the shell, crack with a knife that is not too sharp.

The volume of the egg white may be increased slightly when 1 1/2 teaspoons of water are added to white before whipping. This applies particularly if the eggs are not as fresh as possible.

Lynn Chambers' Menus.

- Calves' Liver with Onions
- Scalloped Potatoes Green Beans
- Jellied Fruit Salad
- *Cheese Muffins Beverage
- Steamed Pudding
- *Recipe given.

- 2 cups sifted flour
- 1 egg
- 1/2 cup sugar
- 1 cup milk
- 1/2 cup melted shortening
- 1 teaspoon ginger
- 1 teaspoon nutmeg
- 1 teaspoon cinnamon
- 3 teaspoons baking powder
- 1 teaspoon salt

Sift together all dry ingredients. Combine egg, sugar, shortening and milk. Add dry ingredients and stir until smooth. Fill greased muffin pans 3/4 full and bake in a moderately hot oven (400 to 425 degrees) until done, 25 to 30 minutes.

What are our standards for making biscuits? Perfect biscuits are light and fluffed, fairly straight and even on the sides, level on top, well shaped and regular. Their tender crust is golden brown and rather smooth. When broken open, they show a creamy white, fluffy crumb which is even and fine-grained.

Over-mixing, or too long kneading of the dough makes biscuits tough with a pale crust. Speed and light handling are essential for flakiness.

Under-mixing, on the other hand, causes lack of flakiness in biscuits. These biscuits also lack in volume. The fat needs to be well distributed for a flaky texture.

The proportions for plain biscuit are as follows: 2 cups of flour, 2 teaspoons baking powder, 1/2 teaspoon salt, 5 tablespoons shortening and 1/2 cup milk. The dry ingredients are mixed; the fat cut in, and enough milk added to make the dough. Knead the dough for about 30 seconds, then roll and cut. Use a hot oven (450 degrees) and bake biscuits for 12 to 15 minutes.

Apple Sauce Biscuits.

- 2 cups flour
- 3 teaspoons baking powder
- 1/2 teaspoon soda
- 1 teaspoon salt
- 3 tablespoons fat
- 1 egg
- 1/2 cup tart apple sauce
- 1/4 cup thick sour cream

Sift dry ingredients. Cut in fat. Beat egg and add to apple sauce and sour cream. Add to first mixture. Turn on a floured board and knead for 20 seconds. Roll to 1/2 inch thickness and cut into 2-inch biscuits. Place on an oiled cookie sheet, sprinkle with grated cheese and bake.

Buttermilk Biscuits.

- 2 cups pastry flour
- 1 teaspoon salt
- 4 teaspoons baking powder
- 1/2 teaspoon baking soda
- 4 tablespoons shortening
- 1/2 cup buttermilk

Sift dry ingredients and cut in shortening. Add buttermilk and quickly mix to a soft dough. Turn out on floured board and knead for 30 seconds. Pat to desired thickness and cut with a small cutter. Place on oiled sheet and bake in a hot (425 to 450 degrees) oven for 10 to 12 minutes.

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Due to an unusually large demand and current conditions, slightly more time is

Household Hints

To keep suede or kid gloves in good condition in a damp climate, put them in a dry mason jar and seal.

Place a piece of wax paper directly beneath the dresser scarf. Then should you spill perfume—nothing serious.

Soak such things as greasy overalls in a good soap solution and thereby make it easier for the washer to do its job.

If pickles are to be used as a garnish for meats or salads, try this way of cutting: Slice in fine strips lengthwise down to the stem, and then spread like a fan.

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