
Bill Haywood in Moscow.

by Lewis Gannett

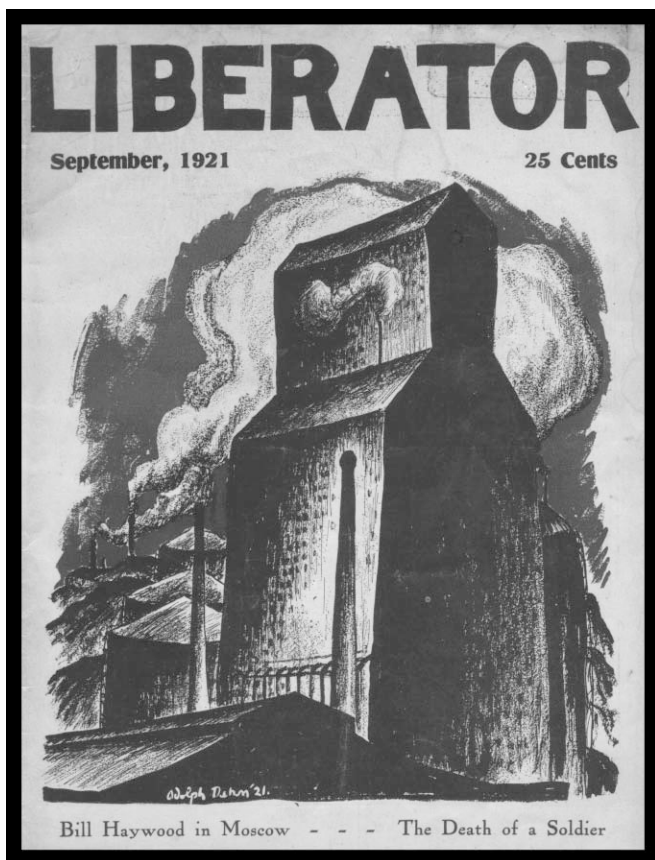
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I finally isolated Bill Haywood about one o'clock in the morning. His room, most of the time a sort of gangway for all the Americans and half the other folk in Moscow, was relatively empty. Lifshitz, Bill's super-secretary, a sort of walking encyclopedia of the Far East, and Yoshihara, a Japanese Wobbly, were settling the Nikolaiev affair on one corner of the room; Crosby was studying a Russian grammar in another; a New York Wobbly was reading *The Liberator* in a third corner; and I detached Bill from his Russian dictionary in the fourth corner and started firing questions at him.

Bill is pretty good at Russian. He can call numbers on the telephone, establish connections with the hotel cook, and make himself thoroughly understood by the small boy delegation from the Third International Boys' Club of Nizhni Novgorod; but he wants more. He would like to know enough Russian to be able to say and do real organization work in Russia. That is why he is studying Russian day and night, and why his primary interest at the present moment is a plan to colonize a rich coal, iron, and copper region south of Tomsk with American Wobblies — “just to show what the I-Won't-Works can really do.” A delegation headed by Jack Beyer leaves this week to study the ground. The first real job will be for a bunch of lumberjacks to clear the site and put up workers' houses.

I don't think Bill himself is sure whether he will stay in Russia or go back. It depends partly on what he can do in Russia. He has no enthusiasm for Leavenworth. “I can't do anything there, can I?” he said. “A man in the penitentiary is practically dead, and there's not one chance in a hundred of Harding granting a general amnesty. If they think I'm coming back to spend the rest of my life in a pen they're crazy with the heat.”

Some people say that Bill Haywood's escape from the land of the free may make it harder for other political prisoners to get bail. “It might make it harder to raise bonds — unless the bondsmen can get protection,” Bill said when I suggested this. “I happen myself to have the remarkably good fortune to have friends who will see that my bonds-



men lose nothing — and I don't owe a thing to the government. They got all they exacted for my release, and instead of being indebted to them they are much indebted to me — but that they have yet to learn." Bill worked for his fellow Wobblies up to the last moment, and then Russia.

Russia is a highly centralized state controlled and operated by the Russian Communist party, and the I.W.W. have in the past objected to highly centralized states and to political parties. Half the talk in Moscow today is about the new Trade Union International which is being launched under the auspices of the Communist Third International. Bill Haywood is strong for it.

"Will the I.W.W. join?" I ask

"Oh, yes," he answered confidently.

I suggested that there might be opposition to alliance with a political party among the American I.W.W. and mentioned one or two American Wobblies in Moscow who do not like the system.

Bill answered to the point.

"If they could feel the heartbeat of things here, and understand that this is not a political party in the sense of American parties, there'd be no question. This is really an industrial movement. You may differentiate if you will between Communism and the Communist Party — I'm not going to. Communism is based on the theory of Marx, which means that labor produces all wealth and that all wealth belongs to the producers thereof — and that's economic, not political, philosophy. If you have half an eye open here in Russia you realize the necessity of a political party for those economic ends.

"We don't always use the exact terms we find here, but we used to talk about the dictatorship of the proletariat in the I.W.W. even before the war. The boys expressed the idea not only in their conversations; they sang it in songs like 'Putting the Boss in Overalls.' And they emphasized that the boss must make the overalls he wears. Now during the transitory period, just to keep him at the particular job, there must be a certain control of

things political. Here in Russia they've had nineteen battlefronts to fight on. They've had to recruit, discipline, and provide for a tremendous army. They have had a lot of unscrupulous nations — most of them as bad as the United States — to deal with. An upheaval means change in the life of the people; adjustments must be made, certain commodities exchanged abroad — and that requires the dictatorship of the proletariat. But every communist in every country must be educated to see the end, the final revolution, and to know that the political state is going to exhaust itself and find no further function. The thing that takes its place is industrial - industry including art and science and agriculture, all human activity summed up in economic life, and in all those fields Russia is coming out in the forefront of the world. Here the revolution is an accomplished fact, and other nations must follow. I've learned that here."

Moscow is chock-full of talk about "tactics." In some countries the Reds are being urged to work inside the old trade unions rather than from outside organizations, and many would like to make a definite policy of the Red Trade Union International to oppose dual union organizations such as the I.W.W. I asked Bill what he thought of this talk.

"Don't amount to a pinch of snuff," he answered. "Not in the United States, anyway. I see in this Red International the culmination of the aims and aspirations of the I.W.W., but I can't see it through anything except the I.W.W. For fifteen years the I.W.W. has carried on the most vigorous kind of campaign in the United States. We haven't overlooked any part of the A.F. of L. We're not going to. But we're not going to try to save the A.F. of L. or anything it stands for. We want to educate the members of the A.F. of L., or as many of them as can be reached, to take up their work in a revolutionary way. There are some fellows around here who say that there are 159,000 good Reds in the A.F. of L. Anybody who says that is a damned fool. A revolutionary is a real person. He's

a man who has an economic foundation, a knowledge of where he's working from and what he's working toward. He's not a MacNamara, nor even a West Virginia coal miner, though a West Virginia coal miner is a thousand per cent more a revolutionist than the sluggers of Chicago. Out of the coal miners we can make revolutionists — by God, they're fighting for their lives, their jobs, for the mines, for a place in the mines — which can grow into control of the mines. And that means association of industries, which can grow into the overthrow of capitalism. But the Chicago gang have no other thought than a gambler's stakes."

I recalled to Bill that he told Max Eastman before he left America that Russia had done four big things any one of which was worth a revolution by itself — expropriation of industry, education of children, relief to women in motherhood, and transfer of land to the peasant.

"That's it," said Bill. "What is there to add to it? What more do we want in America? Expropriation of industries. Here it has been complete. The stock exchange and its nest of gamblers has been wiped out, the Duma and the Tsar's Council extinguished, the banks closed and liquidated, the factories and railroads appropriated — in a word, everything's in the hands of the workers. The bourgeoisie who haven't accepted the new conditions have either left the country, or are in concentration camps, or are down there on the market selling the family jewels, silk socks, silver cigarette cases and picture frames; some of them have died. Everything is done for the children — education for industry, for art, their own theaters and libraries, everything. The children of Russia have a tremendous advantage over the children of America; they are not being taught with their heads, but their

hands and feet and bodies are being taught to express what their heads get. They've got the Montessori System backed off the map. In a few years the children of Russia will be so far advanced over the children of the rest of the world that people coming here, when they meet a child in the street, will say: Why what a precocious child. But the truth will be that the visitor is undeveloped.

"And there's more to the peasant population than I realized. The peasants form 85 per cent of Russia, and today they are absolutely free of domination by capitalist or monarch, and they are crawling from under the cover of religion — which is really a fifth gain worth two or three revolutions; to release a nation of people from what they call in Russia the opiate of religion.

"I haven't changed my mind; the things I heard about in New York I've seen here, and they're real; they're worth the revolution. I'm more enthusiastic every day; I've been in Moscow two months and I haven't heard of a death by starvation, of a murder, a raid on an illicit still, on a saloon, a gambling den, or a house of prostitution, and I haven't seen a drunk or a prostitute. By God, boy, this is the most wonderful city in the world."

It was half past two. Crosby was half asleep over the grammar; Lifshitz and Yoshihara had exhausted Nikolaiev and were swapping American yarns; the New York Wobbly had disappeared with the *Liberator*. I beat it, and walked home through the dark streets of Moscow. Others, too, were tranquilly strolling homeward. Not a policeman was in sight; the only visible agents of law and order, or of Red Revolution, were the street sweepers of the Moscow Soviet.

Edited by Mitch Abidor.

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