



SHIVERING
AT THE SIGHT OF
A SHIRT



By W. B. RILEY, D.D.

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The recent series of articles in *The Minneapolis Journal* by reporter Sevareid on "The Silver Shirts" doubtless had a wide reading. They were so conspicuously placed as to invite attention.

In view of *The Journal's* recent custom of giving opposing sides on debatable subjects, we hoped for the privilege of a reply through the same columns employed by Sevareid; but these articles were proffered to *The Journal* and rejected by them for reasons that seemed to them sufficient. Hence this leaflet form.

First of all let us remind the public that we do not belong to The Silver Shirts, nor to any secret organization; neither are we in the Sevareid class of Cub Reporters, but express convictions seasoned by many summers. Those who know us will hardly suspect us of belonging to the Capitalist class. We were born in poverty, bred in hardship, and have only reached the point of comfort; the luxuries of the rich are unknown to us.

This series of articles is not in defense of Capitalism, nor is it written in defense of the Silver Shirts. We speak because we have noted of late a disposition to attack immediately and almost mercilessly any company of men who are known to stand four-square for the Constitution of our land, and vigorously against Communism. That is why we speak now of "shirts." Recently colored shirts have claimed world-wide attention.

The Bloody Shirt

The bloody shirt used to be much to the fore. In the fight between the Democratic and Republican Parties, succeeding the Civil War, whenever a spokesman attempted to convert that unhappy American experience into a political appeal, he was immediately charged with "waving the bloody shirt." They waved it so often that they must have worn it out, for in recent years the phrase itself is fading from campaign literature. But the end of "the bloody shirt" did not leave us shirtless. We now have—

The Colored Shirts

Black, Brown, Blue, Silver and Red. It must be admitted that the shirt has become an economic symbol.

The Black shirt in Italy typifies dominant rulership, as does the Brown shirt in Germany. So completely have these colors triumphed against Communism in both countries, that Communists in all countries get the jitters when they see a shirt of any other color than red.

There are two ways of meeting real or imaginary foes. The first is to say to one's shaking knees, "Be calm now; there is no danger"; and the second is to grapple with the opponent and whip him in a fair fight.

Arnold Severeid adopts the first. He denies the foe's existence, not to the extent of saying there is no man in the Silver Shirt, but by painting him as a jibbering idiot whose mysticism is an evidence of his madness; whose concern for his country is a species of insanity, as one who has no better basis for his opinions than the soundless voice of the Pyramids. It is the custom of a man who has a special grudge against a party or an institution to quote the words of its weakest member, or call attention to its most vulnerable point. It is like the atheist who, when he would discredit Christianity, forgets its millions of the world's most brainy Christians and its glorious Christian institutions, and quotes from the lips of some unfortunate church-member who has landed in an insane asylum.

And yet it might not be well to despise the wearing of a shirt, for the Black shirt has triumphed in Italy, the Brown one in Germany, and the Blue one in Portugal.

The Bulletin of Glasgow employed a cartoon a while ago. It represented each of these by a very well dressed gentleman—the dark shirt, neat belt, knee trousers, rubber boots and national cap was his clothing; while the English taxpayer was presented with a whiskey barrel about his body held in position by one prong of a pair of suspenders, and the taxpayer was saying: "When it comes to a matter of shirts, I have nothing to worry about."

The cartoon is quite appropriate to the American taxpayers at the present moment; for, after all, people look better and must be more comfortable in a shirt than in a barrel, and especially if that barrel represents intemperance, and that shirt represents power and progress.

We are not pleading for the adoption of "The Silver Shirt" in America, but we are saying in this first article what we shall abundantly prove in succeeding ones, namely, that whether a shirt of some definite color,

representing national loyalty, shall become popular, rests entirely with the Red-shirted company. If there are 52,000 emissaries already at work in America, as propagandists of Communism, Silver Shirts will increase. If the mistaken recognition of Russia is not rectified by our nation, it is sure to favor the Shirt-makers; and if the foreign element in America is to remain in favor in this country, the popularity of the particular nation represented by it, or its unpopularity, will necessarily be in proportion to that people's loyalty to our Democratic and Constitutional government.

For instance: if Swedes should turn Communists, even against these prized citizens there would rise growing antipathy to all people from that country. If Italians shall demonstrate the same tendency to the point where they favor the demolition of American Democracy, they can hardly object if genuine Americans would like to see their immigration restricted and their deportation accomplished. The same principle will apply to any people—Israel not excepted.

Russia is the one country where Communism is in complete triumph. Strangely enough, there is not the slightest bitterness on the part of loyal Americans against a Russian. On the contrary, he is the subject of our deepest sympathy, and we grieve the circumstance that he is not permitted by the hundreds of thousands to quit his country and come under the protecting folds of the American flag, seeing that he is a suffering slave of triumphant aliens.

But, since these remarks require proofs, we ask:

Is Russia the most accursed country of the world today? If so, who brought this condition about?

Shall We Adopt the "Red" Shirt?

We ask—"Is Russia the most accursed country of the world today? If so, who brought it about?" We propose to answer the first of these questions tonight; related question later.

In order to intelligently understand our subject, some things should be known. Russia comprises about one-seventh of the entire earth surface. When the late War began, Russia had thirty to forty million more people than did the United States. In recent years it claims to have increased its population amazingly. There is every reason to believe that this claim, like the claim of progress at other points, is purely fictitious.

The destruction of the home, the abrogation of morals, the practice of free love, would tend temporarily to an increase in birth rate; but that result has been far more than off-set by disease bred by immorality, the starvation resulting from mal-administration of government, and, above all, by murder "liquidation" and banishment to Siberian Concentration Camps, where hard labor and miserable rations soon end the life.

We seriously doubt if the population of the U. S. S. R. would equal, by actual count, that of our own favored country. Russia is now the land of

The Red Shirt

"Red" is as distinctly its choice as was "Black" the choice of Italy, "Brown" the choice of Germany, and "Blue" the choice of Portugal. Communists have sought to carry this color to the ends of the earth, and in America it appears in the form of the Red Flag, which flag—while it is perfectly understood to oppose all for which the Stars and Stripes stand—is strangely permitted in our streets and parks, and flaunted in Communist parades.

This flag symbolizes Bolshevism! Many people imagine that *Bolshevik* refers to the majority of the Russian country. On the contrary, it is a very contemptible minority, but secured its name by a single occasion when it happened to get a majority vote, on which it rode into power; and, not content with its acquisition in Russia, it now reaches out avidly to conquer the United States of America.

It has its official organ "The Daily Worker," mistakenly perused by many Americans; and at least twelve other daily papers published in this country—most of them in foreign languages; then a score and a half of monthly magazines, big and little; and possibly the circulation of all combined is a million and a half. Its attempt is to reach the youth of America and, if possible, prejudice them against their own country—the world's most prospered and blessed one!

The red color, selected, is symbolical! It symbolizes battle and bloodshed, to both of which Communism is willingly committed. Its Peace propaganda in America has no kinship whatever with its War preparations in Russia. It has the largest army that any nation of the world has ever assembled, and boasts, at least, the largest fighting air force. The shedding of the blood

of its own citizens is justified on the ground that it makes no difference how many millions perish, if the Bolsheviki idea survive. Dictator Stalin says: "It cannot be otherwise."

The blunder of President Roosevelt in recognizing the Soviet Union resulted in opening the flood gates of propaganda, notwithstanding the agreement that such use was not to be made of this friendly gesture. The Russian rulers have no more respect for truth in that matter than they entertain for human life when it disputes their pathway!

So much for the "Red Shirt" in America.

The Shirtless Russian

The "red" shirt is for the rulers and their favorites only. The reason why men of the Sherwood Eddy type tell us nice things about Russia is due solely to the circumstance that they have seen and mingled with its rulers only. The temporary tourist, whose opportunities of audience in America are known to be large, is carefully cultivated. That those impressions are false to a thousand detractive and destructive facts is being increasingly demonstrated. We have this from sources so multitudinous and so dependable that only the unwilling can question it.

A Russian barber in North Minneapolis, when asked what he thinks of Bolshevism, thanks God he escaped the country before escape was rendered impossible, but adds with tear-filled eyes: "My father and mother were Christians and would not deny God, and they took their commissary cards away from them and starved them to death!"

A student from Russia, in a Minneapolis theological school, says: "My relatives in that country are dying from starvation, and some of them banished to cold Siberia because of their Christian Faith. My heart aches because I cannot have any assurance that help sent them by any sacrifice that I can make would ever reach them."

Sixty miles away from Minneapolis there is a man who spent three years in expert husbandry as a hog raiser in Russia. He had 70,000 acres of land and 32,000 hogs under his direction by government appointment. His picture of Russia is that of a land where alien rulers starve, crush and kill the enslaved natives.

In a few days there will appear in Minneapolis and

in this pulpit a son of a Baptist minister. His father was a Socialist and came to America because of a conflict with the Greek church and the Russian Czar; but when the Revolution took place he picked up his family and rushed back, happy at the thought that now he would be accorded perfect freedom to proclaim what he regarded as the saving truths of Scripture. He organized and became the head of 2,000 Baptist ministers, but when Stalin came into power he was at first imprisoned and then banished to Siberia. His sick wife followed the same procedure, but was not even privileged to share the same prison with her husband, nor the same detention camp. Today this young man, whose American citizenship made possible his escape, is traveling America over to try to arouse her citizens to the danger of the serpent that is sliming this land.

“Red Shirts” for rulers; “No shirts” for working Russians!

This is Communism!

Andrew Smith's article in the magazine *The Nation's Business* of September, 1936, states these facts in such a way that only men blinded by prejudice and false teaching can call them into question. He was an American Communist. In addition to personal propaganda, his enthusiasm was such that he sold his possessions and goods and gave the \$5,000.00 of his life's savings to the Communist Party, and set out for a visit to the Soviet Union. Because of his activity in America, and his gift especially, he was received with open arms, and was shown the same beauty spots that our transient tourist professors and Y. M. C. A. secretaries see. Delighted with what his own eyes had beheld, he came back to America, wound up his affairs, and made a bee-line for the land of the Bolsheviki. But now, being a worker instead of a guest, he was shortly face to face with facts, and he tells what he calls “the unvarnished truth” about the conditions. It would be hard to varnish it because rotten things take varnish poorly.

This Communist worker found “liberty, free speech, freedom of press and public assembly” banished. He found most of the workers without a shirt to their backs, clad in rags only. He found the food provided them was such as would “turn one's stomach by the mere smell of the same.” “The fish cooked, entrails,

scales and all, and black, sour bread, tasting more like clay than food, was greedily gulped down by swarms of ragged men, wretchedly clad women, and practically nude children," who fell upon it as carrion crows fall upon a decaying carcass. Little wonder that he declares, as a converted Communist:

"I swore that I would never rest until I had revealed to every one what is really going on in the huge slave pen which Russia actually is today. I felt that I owed this as a sacred duty to the oppressed Russian workers and peasants whose sufferings I had witnessed. Furthermore, I felt it my duty to my fellow workers in America to tell the unvarnished truth about conditions in the widely advertised Communist paradise, so that they might not be deceived by Communist propagandists who live in comfort in the United States while the workers starve in the Communist Utopia."

Next Sunday we will discuss this question, "Is America Really in Danger?"

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