



Behind The Urals: An American Worker In Russia's City Of Steel

John Scott

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John Scott left the University of Wisconsin for the Soviet Union in 1931. Appalled by the depression and attracted by what he had heard concerning the effort to create a “new society” in the Soviet Union, he obtained training as a welder and went abroad to join the great crusade. Assigned to construction of the new “Soviet Pittsburgh,” Magnitogorsk, on the eastern slopes of the Ural Mountains, the twenty-year-old was first an electric welder and then a foreman and chemist in a coke and chemicals by-products plant. He lived in a barracks, suffered cold and privation, studied evenings, married a Russian girl—in short, lived for five years as a Russian among Russians.

No other description of life in a new steel city provides such a graphic description of the life of workers under the First Five Year Plan. Scott had a clear eye for detail and produced a chronicle that includes the ugliness and squalor as well as the endurance and dedication. Behind the Urals stands as a unique and revealing description of an iron age in an iron country.—Print ed.

“Students reading Scott have come away with a real appreciation of the hardships under which these workers built Magnitogorsk and of the nearly incredible enthusiasm with which many of them worked.”—Ronald Grigor Suny

“A genuine grassroots account of Soviet life- a type of book of which there have been far too few.”—William Henry Chamberlin, New York Times, 1943

“...a rich portrait of daily life under Stalin.”—New York Times Book Review

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