2.

ESTABLISHMENT OF THE SCHOOL

by Gormly Miller and Emmet O'Brien

The formal establishment of the New York State School of Industrial and Labor Relations grew out of the thoughtful and vigorous action of a unique group of practical politicians who firmly believed, as they stated in their first report, that "Though we may legislate to the end of time, there will never be industrial peace and harmony without good faith, integrity, a high degree of responsibility, and a real desire to cooperate on the part of all parties concerned." [Joint Legislative Committee 1940: 72.]

This group, formally constituted in 1938 as the Joint Legislative Committee on Industrial and Labor Conditions (JLC), was from its inception firmly nonpartisan in all its actions and consistently unanimous in all its recommendations. Acting within an unusual political framework, it reflected in its own procedures and arrangements the principles it proposed for the conduct of industrial and labor relations throughout the state and in the school it was to establish:

> The chief function of government [in industrial relations] should be to promote goodwill, to encourage cooperation, and where resort to intervention is made, to be impartial and just, demanding obedience to all law by both parties concerned. (Ives 1944: 4.)

After spending three years examining the conduct of industrial and labor relations in both the United States and abroad, the committee was convinced that most difficulties in industrial and labor relations arose from a lack of education (particularly in labor law), a lack of facilities for the settlement of disputes, and a modicum of understanding by both employers and employees of their rights, obligations, and responsibilities under the law. The committee concluded that as of the date it prepared its 1940 report, there existed in New York State,

> an urgent need for development of facilities devoted to educating all parties concerned in industrial relations as to [among other matters] the use of agencies established for the mediation and arbitration of labor disputes and the mutual responsibilities of employers and employees in the general field of labor relations. [Joint Legislative Committee 1940: 44]

Focusing next on the educational aspects of industrial relations, the committee conducted an extensive examination of the needs of the state and of

the experiences in institutions of higher education across the nation while forecasting how these educational needs and adaptation to them would be affected by the postwar industrial readjustment.

Extended correspondence and direct discussions took place between the committee chairman, Irving M. Ives, and Edmund Ezra Day, president of Cornell University, during 1941 and 1942, which reflected a general interest among influential Cornell trustees and administrators in establishing a state-supported school of industrial and labor relations at Cornell. A proposal to create such a school was recommended by the committee in its report for 1942 although formal action was deferred because of the war. (Joint Legislative Committee 1942: 56-57.)

Despite some opposition to the notion of locating the school at Cornell, the enabling legislation firmly established it there, using the pattern of administration and control already in place for other state-supported Cornell colleges. [Chapter 162, Laws of 1944, as amended, 1945.] The legislation also created a Board of Temporary Trustees (BTT) whose 1945 report outlined the plans for the school, including its on-campus instructional program, detailed expectations and goals both for research activities and a far-reaching extension program, and the establishment and maintenance of a specialized library. (Board of Temporary Trustees 1945.)

Many individuals were associated in significant ways with the school's early foundation. Most easily identifiable are those who formed the school, conceived its purpose and scope, established the principles by which it would be guided, and formulated the basic program that remains clearly recognizable in what goes on there 50 years later. Among these are Irving M. Ives, Edmund Ezra Day, and William B. Groat. As majority leader of the state assembly, chairman of the Joint Legislative Committee, member of the school's Board of Temporary Trustees, and first dean of the school, Irving M. Ives contributed much of the leadership and vision that made the school a major academic institution from its beginning. Edmund Ezra Day, president of Cornell, guided and certified the school's academic credibility, and Judge William B. Groat, as counsel to the committee, helped organize the political support and practical groundwork necessary in both planning and development.

One other individual who played a key role in the work of the JT Committee and helped it capitalize the plan for a school dealing with industrial and labor relations was Phillips Bradley. Just how he became co-director of education for the committee is interesting:

> Dr. Bradley's introduction to Ives was unique. He was in Albany in 1941 to attend a conference and one evening was assigned to a panel dealing with a fair employment practices law. Assemblyman Ives and some state officials also were speakers. The meeting dragged on dully, and the audience began to slip out. Finally it became Dr. Bradley's turn to

speak, and the chairman, anxious to bring things to a close, barely introduced him.

"So I had to introduce myself," Dr. Bradley chuckled. "I said, 'Since I am a teacher at City College, you know that I am, by definition, either 110% Communist or 110% Fascist, or both.' That woke up half of them and I made my remarks." [The political reference in Bradley's opening was to the running controversies over Communism and Fascism in City College.]

"After the meeting, Mr. Ives left the dais and came directly to me. 'You are the answer to a maiden's prayer,'" he told the rather startled professor.

Three Key Players

by Emmet O'Brien

George Meany, the president of the New York State Federation of Labor, was walking in the long capitol corridor between the assembly and the senate chambers about 11 p.m. on January 18, 1937, pondering what the 1937 session would produce. In most sessions, the assembly had been a place of horror for him, controlled by the big manufacturers of the state.

The stocky, blunt-spoken product of New York City observed a man walking toward him, the new majority leader, Irving M. Ives. Ives had never been regarded as a friend of organized labor, so Meany was a bit startled when Ives stopped him.

"You're Mr. Meany, are you not?"
"Yes."
"I am Assemblyman Ives."
"Yes, I know who you are."
"I would like to visit with you sometime."
"Fine. When?"

They agreed on the next afternoon in Ives's office. "I remember that meeting very well," Meany observed years later, "because of the expression he used. 'I would like to visit with you.' That is what we used to call an up-country expression."

When Meany showed up, Ives wasted no time. "I want you to know that I know nothing about labor," Ives began. He recounted his background in Chenango County and in Norwich, which had only one big plant, the pharmaceutical firm headed by state Republican Party chairman Mel Eaton. "I've been following the Republican Party policy, but I would like to know more about labor's problems. I would like to learn something. I don't know why I should automatically be against labor."

He went to the right man as a teacher. "It was the beginning of a friendship," the AFL-CIO president recalled. "I won't say he became a flaming liberal overnight but he became a liberal, a genuine liberal."

Later that year, Ives again sought out Meany. He wanted an appropriation for a joint legislative committee. He could get it through the legislature, but was uncertain that Governor Lehman would sign it. Meany agreed to intercede with the governor after he learned that a Union College professor, whose work he knew, would head the committee's research group.

"Do you think Mr. Ives really wants to do a job?" Governor Lehman asked the labor leader. The governor was cautious because of the dubious history of many joint legislative committees. "Yes, I think Mr. Ives is sincere and wants to do a job," Meany replied. The appropriation went through.

Another new influence on Ives came from William B. Groat, a young lawyer from Queens. Groat was a solidly built, square-jawed, tough-talking New Yorker who was destined to play a major role in Ives's future. Having risen through the Queens County organization when it amounted to something, Groat knew politics intimately. He also had a good legal mind and the instincts of a political promoter.

Groat first met Irving Ives in 1920 at the founding convention of the American Legion in New York State. The two did not appear to have much contact right after that, even though Groat may have been in Albany sometimes on political missions. They did meet again in 1935, though, when the caravan Ives had formed for the assembly district elections wound up its cross-state run in the Statler Hotel in Buffalo. The campaign run ended on a big note, with top party leaders present, and Groat, who very early saw in Ives a piece of hot political property, helped give birth to Ives the progressive.

Ives Connects with Day

by Emmet O'Brien

Ives and Edmund Ezra Day had unquestionably met before but one particular meeting in New York's Hotel Roosevelt is frequently cited as strong evidence of the contribution each was capable of making for the public good. Ives called the meeting to deal with job discrimination, a very touchy subject with both labor and management. Ives laid the issue squarely on the table before the representatives of labor and management and listened to the opposition.

Then, very skillfully and delicately, he went over the objections, fragmenting them until he obtained agreement from a strong labor mind and a strong management mind that a particular comparatively insignificant item was agreeable to both. Then he moved to another point with similar results. After a very long meeting, the sum of all his agreed parts added up to the desired objective.

Day, who was in attendance, was greatly impressed. At one point he whispered to Mrs. Marion Crane, Ives's secretary, "He knows how to run a meeting." Then, without advance notice, Ives asked Day to sum up the meeting. He did so, brilliantly, to the wide-eyed admiration of the labor leaders, who were seeing a side of academe that was somewhat unknown to them. Both Day and the labor and management people left the meeting mutually impressed.

The Vision Becomes a Reality

by Emmet O'Brien

The concept of a state school had been stirring in Ives for some time. As of late 1942 there was also a general agreement among the committee on the type of school it was to be, but the location was a problem. Ives and Groat agreed on one point: The school was *not* to be located in New York City. It did not seem feasible that the ideal of calm, reasoned study and research in this highly volatile field could ever be achieved in a metropolis that was a center for big unions, big business agitators, radicals, malcontents, and others who would turn out with a picket sign on the slightest provocation. Although several other institutions were lobbying to house the proposed school, the more Ives and Groat considered the problem, the more their thinking centered on that lovely campus on Cayuga Lake at Ithaca.

The ongoing specter of World War II and its impact on Cornell were demanding some attention, but Ives still urged Day to prepare a plan and budget for the ILR School in 1943. The result was a "Proposal for the Establishment of a School of Industrial and Labor Relations." Copies went to Ives, chairman of the Cornell trustees Howard E. Babcock, and Cornell provost F. F. Hill. Ives assured Day that the analysis of a proposed school at Cornell was receiving "serious and hopeful consideration."

The legislative session of 1944 was to be the showdown. Knowing that important action had to be taken at both ends of this operation, Ives and Day were both ready. Assemblyman Ives introduced his bill creating the school and, most importantly, selecting by categories the temporary board of trustees to get it started. Assemblyman George Parsons of Syracuse countered, however, with the introduction of a bill to establish the college at Syracuse University and an appropriation of $10,000 for initial studies. Commerce commissioner Martin P. Catherwood, a Cornell professor on leave of absence, informed Day that although Syracuse and Union were pushing for the school, Cornell would get it. He said Parsons's bill would not get out of committee.

What happened next is a classic example of how bills Governor Dewey favored slid through the legislature. Ives introduced his bill in the Assembly on March 1, 1944. It was reported out the next day, March 2, and had aged

sufficiently to meet the constitutional requirements to be advanced to third, or final, reading on March 7. It was passed March 8. In the meantime, a companion bill in the Senate was on the third reading calendar and the Ives bill was substituted for it. The Ives bill passed the Senate on March 14 and was signed by the governor the same day. It was Chapter 162 of the Laws of 1944.

But its troubles were not over yet. Some Cornell trustees remained rattled by the idea of having a school in labor techniques on their campus. Some of them probably were afraid of the idea. Thus, while President Day was encouraging development of the industrial and labor relations school in Albany's political and educational circles, he was fighting a substantial rear guard battle on his own campus. Any college president less resolute, or less willing to face a controversy, might readily have given up the whole idea when he listened to the complaints of some trustees.

The minutes of the Cornell University trustees and of their committees reveal clearly the problem of organized labor coming on the campus. It must be remembered that the sit-down strikes of the 1930s were still fresh in mind and that the great split between the American Federation of Labor and the Congress of Industrial Unions had given business and industry fits. These reactions were somewhat offset by the excellent war production effort of unions, but deep down there was uneasiness.

Upon retirement as president of Cornell University in 1950, Day had this to say about the New York State School of Industrial and Labor Relations: "It was moving education into a sphere of hot controversy. I argue that controversy should be regarded as an invitation to move in, not a warning to keep out. Education should be brought to bear where there is a pressing public need. A high controversy is a sign of need." (Stillwell 1957).

The issue cropped up on October 10, 1943 at a meeting of the Planning and Development Committee of the Board of Temporary Trustees. There it was pointed out that if the school were established at Cornell, the setup would have to be explained to the state's farmers, who as a group did not favor organized labor.

Extensive discussion and debate among the vigorous proponents of the school, members of the industrial leadership of the state, and trustees of Cornell resulted in settlement of two significant issues: the inclusion in the Cornell Board of Trustees of three members associated with the interests of labor and the control of the school's program and educational policies to be firmly within the responsibility of Cornell University. Thus, misgivings were overcome and solutions were incorporated in the basic documents establishing the school under the statute enacted by the legislature of the state of New York in 1944.

Between 1938 and 1944, therefore, Irving M. Ives and William B. Groat, his alter-ego, had conceived the idea of the school. Chapter 162 of the Laws of 1944

had established the school and provided for its Board of Temporary Trustees. The school's purpose was set as: "improving industrial and labor conditions in the State through provision for instruction on and off the campus, the conduct of research, and the dissemination of all aspects of industrial, labor, and public relations affecting employees and employers." (Report of the Dean 1946: 1.) It was left up to those who followed to discover the means to fulfill this mission.

Another Perspective on the Ives-Day Partnership

by Milton R. Konvitz

I find these partnerships full of tantalizing antinomies. White and Day were the scholars, the philosophers, the highbrows, the eggheads. Cornell and Ives were men from the marketplace, the kings, the practical men. One might naturally have looked to White and Day for the ideas, and to Cornell and Ives for the practical implementation. But we know that precisely the opposite happened. The grand ideas, the far-reaching designs, the lofty and splendid dreams came to Cornell and Ives. It was they who were the philosophers, who spoke as if they had fed on locust and wild honey. It was the so-called practical men who brought their dreams to the so-called scholars and philosophers; and in the partnerships that were formed, the conventional roles of these men lost their significance. The practical men had their heads in the heaven of Platonic Ideals, and the philosophers lived and worked in the cave.