

WILLIAM Z. FOSTER



IN SOVIET RUSSIA



(Editor's Note: The following is the eighth of a series of special articles on Russia which Mr. Foster was commissioned by The Federated Press to write. He already has told of the growth of the Russian trade unions, which he says play a leading part in the administration of the soviets, from an insignificant membership of 1,385 in January, 1917, to 8,000,000 in May, 1921.)

By **WILLIAM Z. FOSTER**, Federated Press Staff Writer.
Copyright, 1921, by The Federated Press.)

Moscow.—The Russian trade union movement is based upon the industrial principle. That is, all the workers engaged in a given enterprise (from the highest officials to the laborers) belong to one organization. There are no craft unions consisting of certain trades working in many industries. For example, the steam engineers working in the metal industries, instead of belonging to a craft union as is the case in the United States, are part of the industrial union of metal workers. The electrical workers in the textile industry do not belong to a craft union of electrical workers, but to the industrial union of textile workers. This principle holds throughout the entire trade union structure. Craft unionism, which American leaders boast so much of, is looked upon by the Russians (in common with all progressive unionists) as a very primitive type of organization unfitted for modern industrial conditions.

At present the labor movement consists of 23 industrial unions, as follows: Medical and sanitary workers; transport workers (railroad men, sailors, longshoremen, etc.); miners; carpenters and joiners; agricultural and forest workers; theatrical employes; provisioning and housing workers; leather workers; metal workers; municipal employes; teachers; communication workers (telephone, post, telegraph); printers; paper makers; food workers; building trades; sugar workers; employes of co-operatives; tobacco workers; textile workers; chemical workers; clothing trades, and employes in taxation, finance and central departments.

Compare these 23 closely-knit, homogenous Russian industrial unions with the 120 disjointed criss-crossing American craft unions and you will get an inkling of the degree of structural development achieved by the movements in the two countries. As for the comparative understanding of the two movements concerning the problems they are confronted with, perhaps the less said the better for our conceit—so far does the American labor movement stand behind that of Russia in this respect.

The industrial unionism prevailing in the Russian movement is not due to the sudden realization of a beautiful scheme worked out in some intel-

lectual's study chamber. On the contrary, it is the result of the every day experiences of the movement, the culmination of a constant structural evolution to meet the needs of the workers.

To begin with the Russian trade union movement developed many craft union characteristics, although of course these were not so marked as in the labor movements of western countries. Much of the usual craft pride and narrowness had to be broken down. This was done by the idealists, who, intensely active in the unions, set about systematically eradicating abuses and introducing betterments. They brought about many amalgamations of craft organizations into industrial unions—during the congress of 1920 nine such fusions were completed. Those reactionary officials who stood in the way of the movement's betterment were swept aside and "sent down the road talking to themselves." Nor is the evolution yet complete. Still other amalgamations are contemplated to reduce the number of industrial unions to 15 or 18 and thus to bring about greater unity of the workers.

How different it all is in the United States. With us the industrial unionists, instead of sticking in the basic organization and fighting for the gradual realization of the new type, pull out of them, and, setting up some fine-spun industrial Utopia, waste their efforts vainly to attract the masses to it. The industrial union idea will make no substantial headway in America until its advocates give up their present nonsensical separatist tactics and adopt the horse-sense methods of the Russians (which are also those of the English, French and German), by staying with the mass organizations of the workers and inducing them to adopt the newer forms of organization through the remodelling of the old ones.

(Continued next week.)

The Petrograd Provincial soviet has published statistics showing that the population of Petrograd at the last census was 720,000. The statistics show a notable increase in the number of marriages in Petrograd, which is explainable by the economic equality which women have achieved.