

WILLIAM Z. FOSTER IN SOVIET RUSSIA.

(Editor's Note—This is the second of Mr. Foster's specially-written articles for The Federated Press. The first, published in our last issue, told of the false conceptions the workers in the United States have of the Russian republic as a result of lies told about that country by the American press.)

By WILLIAM Z. FOSTER, Federated Press Staff Writer.
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What has happened in Russia amounts in substance to this: The organized workers and peasants have overthrown the exploiting capitalists and landlords and have seized their industries and land. They are now operating them for their own benefit, paying no interest, rent or profit to anybody. They are keeping all the fruits of their labor, and to defend this communistic system of production and distribution they have set up a workers' state, backed by a workers' army. Both these they control to the last detail.

Flowing from these basic political and economic changes come a whole series of abolitions, modifications and re-creations, touching every institution in Russia, and amounting in all to a profound social revolution. Many American trade unionists, bred and nurtured in capitalistic conservatism, are repelled by the thought of driving off the capitalists and landlords and taking over their property as the Russian workers have done. They can see no similarity between such a procedure and the everyday struggle of their own union organizations. Yet at heart the two processes are essentially the same. Our trade unions pit their organized intelligence and power against the employers and wrest from them every concession they are able to take, regardless of how extensive or profound they may be. The Russian labor organizations, working upon identical principles, but with incomparably better understanding, determination, discipline and power than our unions have so far been able to develop, have finally and completely defeated their erstwhile masters. But instead of contenting themselves by taking petty concessions, as we do, they have gone the whole way and make the exploiters yield all their privileges at one blow. That is the situation in a nutshell. Between the Russian and American labor movements it is only a question of the degree of development. In essence both are alike, and he is a shallow trade unionist indeed who disavows kinship with his more advanced Russian brothers.

It is not my intention to make

labored, detailed statistical reports upon the state of things here; rather my purpose is to deal with the A, B, C of the situation. I want to point out how the new and remodeled institutions of Soviet society strike the average person. I want to tell American workers how the Russian working-class, now in power, has handled the problems of food, clothing, shelter, entertainment, education, government, management of industry, labor organization, national defense, etc.

Perhaps an easy approach to the wonderful and complicated new Russian Communist society will be to start at the border of the country as a visitor, and relate what happens to one. Russia is now in the throes of revolution, and to enter the country is very difficult, so earnest and necessary are the precautions against spies and counter-revolutionaries.

The applicant for admission must wait at the principal town of entry until his case has been laid before the government office in Moscow. Then, if his mission has been deemed valid and important, he is allowed to come in. This accomplished, he at once becomes a guest of the Russian Socialistic Federated Soviet Republic. So long as he remains in Russia he is fed, clothed, housed, entertained, instructed, and generally extended hospitality without the cost of a penny. It makes no difference who the man is or what his errand; whether he be a diplomat, a correspondent, a capitalist in search of concessions, a rebel worker come to see the new society, or what-not, in every case the procedure is the same. He is the guest of the Russian government.

To workers living in capitalist countries this may seem a strange method, but it flows naturally from the prevailing Communist society. In Soviet Russia there are only two practical ways of procuring the necessities of life; by work or by gift, and of course the government does not expect temporary sojourners in the country to become part of the working force.

(To be continued.)

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