

# THE SOVIET UNION AND AMERICAN WORKERS

By WM. Z. FOSTER.  
(Written in Jail.)

THE rise of the Soviet Union, which means the birth of a new world system of Soviet society, is profoundly affecting the viewpoint of every class in the capitalist world. Even as it fills the hearts of the ruling exploiting class with dismay and foreboding, it also gives the workers new hope and understanding and inspires them to fresh and more determined struggle.

The popularization of the wonderful achievement of the Five-Year Plan now constitutes the greatest single ideological weapon we have in winning leadership of the workers. Its persuasive powers are tremendous, but they are still largely underestimated by considerable numbers of our Party members.

The workers learn their great revolutionary lesson in various ways—by their own practical experience, by systematic theoretical education, and by lessons from the struggle of other workers; all these ways are interlaced together. The Soviet Union is a great revolutionary object lesson, an overwhelmingly convincing practical demonstration of the correctness of the Communist program.

## Russian Workers Are Advance Guard.

The Russian workers are the advance guard of the world's working class. They lead the international struggle directly, aiding and invigorating every phase of it. But aside from this active leadership, the very existence of the Soviet Union, by the force of its example, educates, organizes and enthuses the workers with decisive force. In this sense it is a most powerful lesson.

In the first days of the Russian revolution, its stimulating force was very great. But this weakened later when the revolution was fighting through its most difficult years. While the toilers were suffering bitter hardships, it was easy for the social fascists to deceive large masses into believing the cause lost. But now the power of the great Russian revolutionary object lesson becomes stronger than ever.

The world's workers, pressed by the crisis of the decaying capitalist system and seeing the tremendous success of the Five-Year Plan, are penetrating the lies of the capitalists and their social fascist allies about the Soviet Union. Consequently they turn in ever greater masses and with renewed hope towards the Soviet Union for inspiration.

## Soviets Spur World Proletariat.

They take up more determinedly and clearly their own immediate battles and leadership, and in the next few years, with the progress in socialist construction, this power of the Soviet Union to stimulate the world proletariat to revolutionary struggle will be enormously increased. It will finally become irresistible.

American workers, not merely the members of our Party feel the revolutionary urge from the Soviet Union, just as workers in other countries do. Despite the immense flood of capitalist lies about the Russian workers, the toilers in this country are beginning to sense the meaning of the great events in the Soviet Union. They are consumed with interest as to what is actually taking place there. In increasing degree they are beginning to understand the basic contrast between decaying capitalism and rising socialism.

The terrific unemployment, wage cuts, etc.,

with living and working conditions constantly worsening in the United States, make them all the more responsive to the growth of socialism in the Soviet Union. Anyone in real contact with the workers must, if he be at all awake, be struck by the growing sympathy and understanding of American industrial workers for the developing Russian revolution.

## U. S. Farmers Enmeshed in Crisis.

The agricultural workers and poor farmers must be similarly affected. Enmeshed in the chronic agricultural crisis and confronted with ruin, they must take note of and be enormously stirred by the great revolutionary changes in Russian agriculture, the immense collectivization movement, the building of 1,000,000 acre farms, etc. They must see its vast superiority over the bankrupt capitalist farming system and act accordingly.

In all this, the thing that we must realize most is that as the toilers understand and indorse the developing Russian revolution they will at the same time tend to accept the whole Communist program for this country. The great success in the Soviet Union, they will rightly understand as decisive proof of the correctness of the Communist line generally.

They will become much more receptive to all our propaganda. By the light of the great torch of the Russian revolution they will begin to see the way out of the capitalist jungle.

## Achievements Must Be Popularized.

Too much stress cannot be laid on the revolutionizing effect of the Soviet Union upon the workers. Popularization of the revolutionary achievements of the Russian workers is an effective way of winning the masses.

We must use it to the utmost without, of course, slackening in our general propaganda. The living realities of the Soviet Union give us crushing arguments against the social fascists—and such tangible object lessons are always very decisive with the masses. It makes the workers sympathetic to our Party and more responsive to effort at mobilizing them with the T.U.U.L. against war, against unemployment, against wage cuts, for the rights of Negroes and especially for the defense of the Soviet Union.

For these undeniable facts we must draw the conclusion that it is absolutely necessary to acquaint American workers with the progress of socialism in the Soviet Union. We must saturate every one of our mass movements with this propaganda—our unemployment work, election campaign, T.U.U.L. 50,000 membership drive, etc. It must be linked up with every struggle of the workers.

We must flood the country with concise, clear-cut reading matter on the Soviet Union that the workers can understand. And in this period no mass speech of a revolutionist is complete without reference in this sense to the Soviet Union.

## Build Friends of Soviet Union.

Let us build the Friends of the Soviet Union into a mass organization. But we must not assign to it alone the task of popularizing the success of the Russian revolution. That is also a great central task of the Party, the T.U.U.L., the I.L.D. and every other revolutionary organization.

Let us make the greatest possible use of this splendid revolutionary weapon for the inspiration of the workers and for the demoralization of our class enemies.