

# WILLIAM Z. FOSTER IN SOVIET RUSSIA.

(Editor's Note:—The following is the third of Mr. Foster's specially-written articles for The Federated Press. In previous dispatches he told of the similarity between the American trade unions and the revolutionary aims of the more determined and better disciplined Russian peasants and workers.)

By WILLIAM Z. FOSTER, Federated Press Staff Writer.  
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Moscow.—A visitor to Russia, even though rich, would find it almost impossible to live by his own resources. This is because all the industries of the country are nationalized, and only those people who work (or who have been extended hospitality by the government) are permitted to use them. This is a workers' republic and the open sesame to everything is to be credentialed as a producer. Without that one is lost. Money is practically valueless, not because people have lost faith in the government, but because money has little or no function under Communism. You cannot buy anything substantial with it. A visitor trying to get along alone would be unable to go to a hotel because they are all owned and controlled by the government. Nor could he eat at a restaurant, since there are none; all the workers and visitors being assigned to the eating-places in their factories, homes and hotels. He could not buy himself clothes—and making of garments has been nationalized and the apportionment is in the hands of the workers' government. He would be unable to buy a newspaper, as they are given only to the workers in the shops. He could not go to a theatre, because the seats are not for sale. In Russia in order to go to a show one gets his ticket from the secretary of his labor union, each secretary being allotted a pro-rata share of seats from all the theatres.

It is conceivable, of course, that our rich visitor might be able to beat the communistic system temporarily in these days of revolution by dealing with the speculators in foodstuffs and other necessities and sleeping wherever he could. But at best he would lead a precarious existence and would probably find it convenient to go to some other country where the workers pluck more easily than they do in Russia. The government does not say that you have to work; it merely says that if you do not work you cannot have the benefit of the industries.

With the workers' government controlling all the principal necessities of life the reason for existence of retail stores has departed and practically all of them have closed their doors. To see the thousands of stores of every description nailed up tight is one of the sights of Russia. The famous Nevsky Prospect of Petrográd, with its hundreds of formerly rich shops, now boarded up, is a spectacle to make a petty-bourgeois weep tears of anguish. Almost the only stores open are those controlled by the state; although, by virtue of a recent law, small trading is allowed and one may purchase at fabulous prices, odds and ends from the peddlers and speculators.

Just now Russia is suffering from a tremendous shortage of necessities, because of the terrible imperialist and civil wars. But such as the stores and services are they are placed absolutely free at the disposal of the workers. If you want to take a railroad journey you apply to the secretary of your union, who not only arranges for the necessary lay-off but also for the ticket, which is free. To ride on the street-cars all that is necessary is to show your working card. There are no fares, nor can non-workers ride. To mail a letter you just drop it in the box, no stamp being required.

In such a social system of applied Communism, where all the luxuries and necessities are equitably divided among the workers, money, as I said above, is virtually useless. In fact, many of the workers here go for months without a bit in their pockets. Nor do they need it, except for such articles as the government does not handle yet. If there are any quantities of substantial products to be had the government deals them out free, anyhow. On the train with me coming into Russia were several revolutionary refugees from Esthonia. They threw their money away on crossing the border, saying that in free Russia they had no further use for it. I have been in Moscow a week and have not had a cent in Russian money, and yet I have been to the theatre several times and otherwise comported myself in an extravagant manner.

There is a degenerate paper currency in circulation here, but all the active spirits of the new society hate it. They look upon it as the sign-manual of the enemy, Capitalism, and one of the most insidious weapons ever forged by human ingenuity to keep the workers in slavery. Curious to know what would happen to the counterfeiters of such a despised currency, I inquired of a very active militant. He answered: "Oh, of course when caught they are punished; but then, after all, they do a sort of service by relieving the strain on the government printing-presses." So has the god, Money, fallen in Russia!

The money here is really only a hangover from Capitalism. It may be confidently expected that when the new society gets thoroughly established, and, being fully recovered from the havoc of wars, is able to furnish the workers an abundance of supplies, all need for petty trading of every sort will disappear and the entire monetary system will be abolished.

(To be continued.)

Why Communists  
Are Silent In  
England.