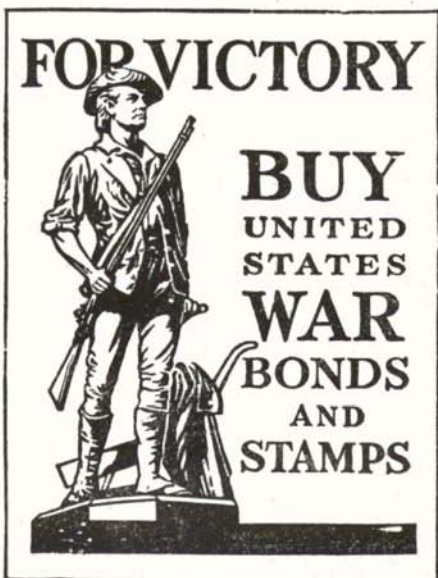


**SOVIET
DEMOCRACY
AND THE
WAR**

WILLIAM Z. FOSTER



SOVIET DEMOCRACY AND THE WAR

By WILLIAM Z. FOSTER

1. THE SOVIET UNION ACCOMPLISHES THE "IMPOSSIBLE"

FOR MORE THAN two years the capitalist world has watched in profound amazement and admiration the tremendous fight of the Soviet people against the gigantic Hitler war machine. The whole development was totally unexpected in the capitalist countries, where, almost universally, the Soviet Union was believed to be a mere pushover for the Nazi conquerors, who had just knocked over the armies of Western Europe like so many tenpins.

In his famous telegram of greeting to the Red Army, General Douglas MacArthur struck a true note when he declared that the big 1941 winter offensive of the Red Army, coming after several months of unparalleled assault by the huge Nazi Wehrmacht, was the greatest achievement in the whole course of world military history. Since MacArthur made this famous statement, the Red Army has accomplished even greater military marvels. The crushing defeat of the Germans at Stalingrad and their expulsion from vast portions of the occupied sections of the U.S.S.R. during the winter of 1942 clearly topped even the great achievements of the winter of 1941. And so now also in its big 1943 summer and fall offensive, the Red Army is reaching a

still higher level of struggle than during either of the two preceding winters. For not only has the Red Army stopped Hitler's widely advertised summer offensive, something it was quite unable to do in the summers of 1941 and 1942, but it has also inflicted stupendous losses upon the German Army, driven it back beyond the Dnieper, reconquering territory as large as Germany. And the biggest Red Army advances are obviously now just beginning to loom ahead.

Triumph Over Disaster

In order to appreciate the unequalled quality and magnitude of these military achievements we must remember that all these months and years the U.S.S.R. has been fighting in the face of great odds in men, munitions, and industrial capacity. Nazi Germany, with the entire industries and manpower of Europe to draw upon, at the beginning of the war outnumbered the U.S.S.R. in soldiers by about three to two, and in productive capacity by about three to one. And the Nazis' decided superiority in human and material resources over the U.S.S.R. was very far from being counterbalanced by the lend-lease aid sent to the U.S.S.R. from this country, by the bombings of German cities, and by the very small military attacks the Anglo-American powers have as yet made upon Hitler's armed forces.

Increasing the already great odds against the U.S.S.R. still more, the Nazi armies managed to seize a large section of that country's natural resources during the first year of the war. How terrible were the Russians' human and industrial losses may be gauged from a few general figures. The seven Soviet republics that were overrun by Hitler's troops normally contained no less than 77,000,000 people, or almost 40 per cent of the total population of the U.S.S.R. In the loss of the Donbas

industrial area the Soviet Union was deprived of 54 per cent of its coal production and also an estimated 50 per cent of its steel output, or the equivalent of the steel producing capacity of Japan and Italy combined. By the Nazis' seizure of the Ukrainian agricultural regions the U.S.S.R., according to Helen Fuller (*New Republic*, Sept. 13, 1943), lost "almost 40 per cent of all her cultivated land, 40 per cent of the land which produced her grain, 85 per cent of her sugar beet territory, 43 per cent of her potato lands, 54 per cent of her vegetable oil capacity, 56 per cent of hogs, 35 per cent of cattle and some of her most productive sources of fish." Also dozens of the U.S.S.R.'s biggest cities, as well as the whole railway system in the occupied areas, were largely destroyed by the retreating Nazi vandals. To all these losses are to be added also the devastation caused by the Nazis at Moscow, Leningrad, Stalingrad and many other industrial centers by air bombing.

That the U.S.S.R. could suffer all these stupendous losses and still survive and go over to a victorious offensive literally staggers the imagination, and doubly so because of the great odds that were against her at the start of the war. Facing a similar situation, any other nation in the world would have been long since defeated and thrown in the sponge. But the Soviet Union went right on fighting, actually increasing its military strength, with the spectacular battle results which have so long held the world spellbound in surprise and admiration.

Some Valuable Lessons of the Past

Before undertaking to explain the basic reasons for the unparalleled fighting capacities of the Soviet nation, it will be well for us to realize that the present "impossible" military accomplishments of the Red Army

are quite in line with the Soviet tempo of life, effort and development generally, as exemplified by the extraordinary achievements, economic, political and military, of the Soviet people during the whole life of the Soviet Government.

High among these great accomplishments may be cited the overthrow of the Tsarist-capitalist regime in 1917 and the establishment of the Soviet Government. The idea of securing the victory of socialism in a backward agricultural country such as old Russia, where the workers constituted only 15 per cent of the population, had long been pronounced utterly impossible by the bigwig leaders of the Second International, as well as by capitalist writers and thinkers generally. But the "impossible" was accomplished by the Russian Communist Party, led by the great Lenin and, in the face of every obstacle, the world's first socialist country was organized.

Next, there was the task of defending the revolution against world reaction, a task which the Social-Democrats also called impossible. And at one time it almost looked as though they were right, for during the civil war about 90 per cent of the country fell into the hands of the French, American, British, Japanese, Polish, Czech, German, White Guard and various other counter-revolutionary armies that ringed the besieged Soviet Government on all sides. Reorganizing the demoralized and defeated Russian armies, and by a military achievement unparalleled in history (General MacArthur please take note) the Soviet people scattered all their enemies and drove them beyond the borders of the U.S.S.R. The "impossible" was accomplished once again.

To mention just one more "miracle" of Soviet achievement—there was the great task of building the industries and agriculture. When Stalin in 1928 pro-

mulgated his huge plan of development in the First Five-Year Plan, the whole capitalist world sneered and guffawed. What fantastic nonsense was this, snickeringly asked the learned economists, industrialists, and politicians. Surely nothing, they declared, but a Communist propaganda stunt; something to breathe the breath of life for a few more months into the collapsing Soviet regime. Instead of five years, said a leading German industrialist, it would take even German engineers fifty years to realize in Russia the far-reaching industrial projects of the First Five-Year Plan, and as for the Communists themselves, they could never do it, in a full half century. Especially were the capitalist and Social-Democratic wiseacres scornful of the proposals to reorganize the medieval Russian agriculture into broad collective farms. But the Soviet people, led by their great Communist Party, with Stalin now at its head, accomplished and double-accomplished these "impossibilities."

Unable to borrow capital abroad, with but a handful of engineers and only a small body of skilled workers, and with their country devastated by seven years of imperialist and civil wars, they nevertheless carried not only the first but also the second and third Five-Year Plans to overwhelming success. They built Soviet industry and agriculture of a quality and at a rate that have never been equaled in any country, not even the United States in its days of stormiest economic growth. All of which was an indication of the extreme speed with which the Soviet people will rebuild their ravaged country once this war has been won.

The current "incredible" military achievements of the Red Army are consequently based upon and cut from the same material as the many other "impossibilities" accomplished by the Soviet people during the building and defense of their socialist fatherland. Therefore, let

us look a bit at the national organization that has produced these many spectacular successes, of which the profound victories of the Red Army are the present-day example.

II. WHY THE SOVIET UNION SUCCEEDS

THE BASIC EXPLANATION for the tremendous effort of the U.S.S.R., which for two years has amazed the whole world, lies in the socialist character of its regime, in its fundamentally democratic system. That the economic resources of the country are owned by the entire people, that the government is profoundly democratic, and that all sections of the population have economic and political interests in common, combine to give the U.S.S.R. a military striking power unequaled, resource for resource, by any other country on either side of the war. The greater tempo and intensity of the Soviet Union's war effort are exemplified by that country's much firmer national unity, the higher morale of its people and army, its more complete industrial mobilization, and its more resolute and powerful military activities.

The fact that the Russians are fighting to defend their native land against history's most ruthless invaders lends great strength to their arms, but it is the socialist character of their country that fires them with unbreakable solidarity and enables them to strike the terrific military blows that have shattered Hitler's, Tojo's and Mussolini's plans of world conquest. It is a curious paradox of this war that the most profoundly peace-loving country, the one that led the world fight for collective security to prevent the war, the U.S.S.R., turned out to be the most effective warrior nation once the war was thrust upon it. And fortunate, indeed, it is for

the world that this is so, else the war would have long since been won by the fascists.

Firm National Unity

The high quality of the war effort of the U.S.S.R. is shown, first of all, by the incomparable solidarity of its people. Workers, peasants, intellectuals, united by the doubly effective bonds of patriotism and socialism, are standing together in an unbreakable bloc and they are giving unequaled examples of sacrifice, work and courage in the factories and on the field of battle. Neither England nor the United States has achieved anything approaching the high solidarity of the Soviet people. The struggle that great groups of American industrialists and at least 90 per cent of the press are carrying on against our Commander-in-Chief, against the workers, against the labor movement, and the defeatist maneuverings of fifth column politicians in Congress, all of which have paralyzing effects upon the national war effort, would be quite unthinkable in the thoroughly united U.S.S.R., and so would the less open but nonetheless dangerous defeatist opposition in Great Britain.

Germany and Japan, on the other side of the struggle, make a great show of national unity; but this is very largely only on the surface. The so-called national unity of the fascist countries in no sense compares with the firm national unity of the Soviet people. In reality, in Germany and Japan there is much political opposition to the war on the part of workers, farmers and intellectuals, and even some sections of the capitalists, although all this is repressed by the iron fascist tyranny. When the war ends and we get a more exact picture of what has been happening in Germany and Japan, undoubtedly we shall be amazed to learn the extent to which political disunity slowed up the war effort of these two nations. Soviet national unity, which stands

far above that of any other country, is the very foundation of its great military successes.

Another basic source of the Soviet people's remarkable fighting power is the complete mobilization of their country's economic resources. This, also, is quite without a rival anywhere. Factories, farms, mines, railroads, banks—the entire industrial and economic resources—all work together, combined with a complete organization of manpower, as one great machine to turn out war munitions and civilian necessities. No less than the Soviet people's national unity and military prowess, their great industrial achievements have surprised the world, including Hitler, during this war. The transference of war factories far into the interior in the face of the invaders, the rebuilding of railroads destroyed by the enemy, the sheer heroism of the workers in the war plants, the achievement of record-breaking production despite the loss of many resources and vital production areas—are only a few items of the “miracle” of Soviet wartime production.

In the United States and Great Britain, although grace to their big industrial plant they have achieved unparalleled industrial output, they nevertheless have nothing to compare with the intensity of war production in the U.S.S.R., with that country's utilization of the very last bit of its resources. After his recent trip to the U.S.S.R., our great production expert, Donald Nelson, stated that he had never realized what all-out war meant until he visited the Soviet Union. The improvised methods of the Anglo-American governments, designed to centralize and speed up production, have only very partially overcome the inherent capitalist competitive-monopoly chaos, with all its great loss of efficiency, in contrast with the great socialist industrial machine in the U.S.S.R. In both Anglo-Saxon countries, especially the United States, maximum production is seriously

hindered by the lack of government controls, by want of national planning, by defeatist sabotage of economic stabilization, by capitalist profiteering at the expense of the people, by business-as-usual methods, by monopoly concerns grabbing up war contracts and squeezing smaller companies out of business, by attempts to undermine the trade unions, by the waste and hoarding of manpower, by resistance to incentive wage systems—all of which crippling influences are totally unknown in the U.S.S.R.

In Germany and Japan it is made to appear as though the industries and resources have been pretty well centralized. But, actually, very much of the chaos and lost motion inseparable from capitalism still exist in both these countries. Moreover, the slave labor in the Axis and Axis-controlled lands has a relatively low productivity, which is one of the basic factors that is causing Hitler to lose the war. Productivity, in the warring industrial countries, is least intense in those controlled by the fascists, next highest in the capitalist democracies, and highest of all in the Soviet Union.

That Soviet production is qualitatively far superior to that of the Nazis is glaringly demonstrated by the fact that although Germany, with its conquered countries, outweighs the U.S.S.R. in industrial plant capacity by about two to one (which is offset to only a fractional extent by American lend-lease shipments), nevertheless, on the field of battle, where production counts as heavily as soldiers, the Red Army is driving back the Nazis and cutting their army to pieces.

The superior national unity of the Soviet people and the great concentration of their industrial mechanism are quite matched by their resulting tremendous military striking power and achievements. Today there are probably few experts who would deny that the U.S.S.R. has made a more resolute and effective military fight

than any country on either side of the war. And it has done this despite the fact that it has less men and materials than its allies, Great Britain and the United States, and it is also outweighed in these respects by its enemies, Germany and its satellite powers.

The U.S.S.R. goes all-out in the military sense as no other country has done. Its great winter offensives in 1941 and 1942, and its present summer and fall offensive, testify eloquently to this. That the Anglo-Saxon powers are proceeding more leisurely with the war is shown by the fact that they have not yet launched the second front, although they undoubtedly enjoy a huge superiority of men, planes and guns over anything that Hitler could bring to bear against them in western Europe. The hindrance to the military pace of the United States in its struggle against Hitler, for example, is understood when one notes the sabotaging efforts of defeatist attempts to switch the war away from Germany and against Japan, the continuance, for political reasons, of antiquated harmful seniority systems in the Army and Navy, demagogic agitation on the home front against drafting fathers, etc.—none of which would be tolerated in the fighting U.S.S.R.

As for the Nazi army, it built up a frightening reputation of invincibility by smashing badly armed, taught and led armies. But its triumphant march was halted when it collided with the Red Army, despite the Soviet Union's lesser manpower and productive capacity. The physically and intellectually enslaved soldiers of the Nazi Wehrmacht have suffered one defeat after another at the hands of the free, brave and intelligent soldiers of the Soviet Union. The defense of Sevastopol, Leningrad, Moscow and Stalingrad, and the three great Russian offensives represent all-out fighting on a more intense scale than anything ever achieved by the German army, or any other army.

Two great lessons from the mighty war effort of the U.S.S.R. the Anglo-Saxon powers would do well to learn.

The first of these is that, also under the capitalist system, there is room for fundamental improvement in their war effort—in the strengthening of national unity, in the better centralization of production, in the more determined prosecution of military campaigns.

The second lesson is that when the Soviet military leaders urge the Anglo-American forces to launch the second front they are not proposing something which they, were the task up to them, would not themselves go through with. Any of the Soviet Union's three great offensives represented a greater effort for that country than the opening of the second front would for Great Britain and the United States.

III. SOVIET DEMOCRACY AS A WAR FACTOR

IN THIS PEOPLE'S WAR of national liberation the best fighters, whether on the home front or the battle front, are those who have the deepest, most complete democracy in their own countries, or who are definitely fighting for such democratic principles. Of course, as we have seen in the case of Nazi Germany, soldiers can be poisoned with fascist imperialist propaganda and made to fight with courage, at least for a time. We have also learned in this war that democratic soldiers and peoples nevertheless have the most resolute fighting spirit.

The fascist soldiers fight well on the offensive, when they are being fed with easy victories, but, once forced onto the defensive, they will never stand such pressure as the Spanish Loyalists, the Chinese, the Russians, and the British have done so unflinchingly in this war, and as American soldiers will do if they have to. The recent

collapse of Italy, while not to be taken too immediately as a forecast of the fate of the much more powerful Germany, is nevertheless indicative of the rottenness common to every fascist state and its **basic weakness**.

In this matter of fighting morale, bred of democracy, the U.S.S.R. has a very special and powerful advantage. This is because it is, with its socialist system, the most profoundly democratic of all states. Its democracy is not one with the "freedom of private capitalist enterprise," as its objective; it is a real people's democracy. The great toiling masses of workers and farmers have in the U.S.S.R. acquired a greater stake in their country than the corresponding working masses have in any other land. They own the industries and the land; they have abolished human exploitation; they possess a government which completely reflects their interests; they have the unequaled Stalin Constitution; they are safeguarded by a body of social laws that have no parallel anywhere else; in short, they are the masters of their social fate. And they would not allow themselves to be robbed of these hard-won liberties, short of the fiercest struggle ever made by man in all his history. The Russians fight doubly well; to defend their beloved homeland and to protect their high level of socialist liberty.

One of the greatest morale-building effects of the Soviet regime is the profound realization among the people that their democratic system will remain true to itself in wartime. The Soviet masses know that there are no profiteers on the home front to exploit their hard work and sacrifices; the trade unionist has no fear whatever that sinister forces will take advantage of wartime disciplines to undermine his union and working conditions, as is done in capitalist countries. The Soviet soldier, unlike the British and American, has not the slightest doubt but that as soon as the war is ended he can walk right into a steady job in industry or agricul-

ture; the peasants who have had their farms devastated in carrying out the Red Army's scorched earth policy understand fully that the Government will rebuild and restore them; the people as a whole take it perfectly for granted that their Government, true to its socialist principles, will always be found, in the occupied or liberated countries and in the councils of the United Nations, working to advance a truly democratic foreign policy.

All this democratic stability makes far more for an all-out war effort than, for example, the situation in the United States, where the workers and other win-the-war elements constantly have to wage an intensive political struggle in order to balk the defeatists, to push through an active war policy, and to maintain our national democracy, or where the Negro people have to fight for the most elementary rights of citizenship.

The socialist Soviet regime also inevitably produces popular democratic education as to the meaning and aims of the war, with consequent strengthening effects upon the masses. With no reactionary classes to represent or contend with at home, it is perfectly natural for the Soviet Government to educate its people about the realities of the war, which it is doing far more clearly and effectively than any other government. This mass education enormously stiffens the fighting morale of Soviet soldiers and civilians. How far behind the capitalist countries in the United Nations lag in this respect is especially to be noted in the United States. Here the press, largely in the hands of reactionary and often outright defeatist elements, pours a steady stream of poisonous confusion into the minds of our workers, farmers and soldiers. In such a situation, faced by reactionary pressure, the Government has not undertaken fully to educate the soldiers or workers about the basic meaning of the war. This failure not only greatly depresses our national morale on all fronts, but also leaves both

our army and our civilians dangerously exposed to reactionary demagogues, who are now so strong that they are threatening to take over the Government in the 1944 elections.

Capitalist writers, politicians and military leaders scoff at any suggestion that democracy in the Soviet Union is a powerful factor in the great fight that the Red Army is now making against Hitler's hordes. Such people, with rare exceptions, are quite sure there is no democracy whatever in the U.S.S.R., even as they were very positive that the Soviet people would not fight to defend their country and Government, that Soviet industry could never stand up under war conditions, and that the Red Army would be smashed in six weeks by Hitler's "invincible" legions. The Hearsts, Howards, McCormicks, Eastmans, Chamberlains, Utleys and similar professional Soviet-baiters, by their twenty-five years of misrepresentation, have almost completely blinded the American people as to the profoundly democratic character of Soviet society.

But our nation is in for an eye-opening experience in this whole matter. It is on the way to getting an understanding of the true nature of Soviet democracy. And it will be pleasantly amazed, even more so than it is by the current revelation of the fighting power of the Soviet people. Already Roosevelt and Wallace have let in at least a pinpoint of light by their remarks upon Soviet democracy. The war is shattering the wall of prejudice so long and carefully built up by the Soviet-baiters, and the process of getting acquainted with the Soviet people will go on apace. And Americans, in the main, will be both surprised and gratified when they finally discover the truth about Soviet democracy. Especially will the uniquely democratic character of Soviet society become manifest at the conclusion of the war, when the Soviet people, upon the establishment of a sane peace, will be

able to relax the strong wartime disciplines under which they have been living for the past decade or more, and which have done much to veil the profoundly democratic character of Soviet life. Then the world will be able to see that the Stalin Constitution is indeed the most democratic in all the world, and capitalist military authorities will also come to understand the fundamental role that Soviet socialist democracy played in building up the present marvelous fighting morale of the Russian soldiers, workers and farmers.

The Communist Party of U.S.S.R.

Especially are the mass of the American people in for a big and pleasant surprise when, in getting acquainted with Soviet democracy, they really come to know and understand the Communist Party of the U.S.S.R. This great organization is the most effective and most progressive organization ever built by mankind in its entire history. It is this unequalled party, containing in its ranks millions of the most advanced and militant elements of the Soviet people, and with its ramifications extending directly into every Soviet institution, that is the very backbone of the whole war effort of the U.S.S.R. Its members, bravest of the brave, have died in hundreds of thousands in the forefront of the most desperate battles in the war. The party is fighting this war with the same whole-hearted spirit as when it was the heart and soul of all the other great struggles of the Soviet people in establishing socialism in their country.

The Communist Party of the U.S.S.R., living and functioning in a socialist nation, presents many aspects that are new and strange to people living in capitalist countries. One of these is that it is the only party in the U.S.S.R., a situation which exists because, unlike in capitalist countries, the economic and

political interests of all the Soviet people being identical, this makes necessary and possible only one political organization, the Communist Party. Another feature unfamiliar to most Americans is the Communist Party's high degree of discipline and unity. This arises naturally out of the Soviet people's solid national unity, and out of the resolute manner in which they undertake the tremendous tasks they have had to accomplish in the twenty-six years since they founded their Socialist Republic, including their great part in the war.

IV. A REPLY TO TWO SOVIET-BAITERS

THE SOVIET-BAITERS are now taking a new tack. After the United Nations' unity achieved at the Moscow Conference these disruptive elements had to find new arguments in their efforts to drive wedges between the U.S.S.R. and the U.S.A. G. E. Sokolsky and Mark Sullivan of the *Sun* and *Herald Tribune*, respectively, (Nov. 5) are now telling us that there is a contradiction between the democratic import of the decision of the Moscow Conference regarding Italy and the "undemocratic" character of the U.S.S.R. Mr. Sullivan says the contradiction is "extraordinary" and suggests that Mr. Hull or Mr. Eden proposed the democratic guarantees for Italy and that the U.S.S.R. assented to them. "Russia's acceptance of the guarantees must have been in the spirit of making a concession for the sake of cooperation," he says. He says he is hopeful this indicates that the U.S.S.R. is finally turning toward democracy.

This absurd and dangerous line of reasoning is contradicted by all the facts. Firstly, the foreign policy of the U.S.S.R. has always been one friendly to democratic principles and policies throughout the world; as exemplified by its pre-war efforts to line up the democratic

powers for a stand against advancing Hitlerism, by its sympathetic attitude toward the Spanish Loyalist government, by its support of Ethiopia and China, by its present-day cooperative spirit toward the French National Committee and the democratic forces in Germany, Poland, Yugoslavia, and by its stand in the war. The Moscow Conference's insistence upon democracy for Italy, therefore, is fully in line with the long-established foreign policy of the U.S.S.R.

Secondly the argumentation of Sullivan and Sokolsky also falls flat because the U.S.S.R., far from needing to be converted to democracy by Mr. Hull, has always been a democracy, in fact the most advanced one anywhere. The socialist democracy of the Soviet Union operates upon an altogether higher plane than that of any capitalist country. During the past couple of years the American people have learned a lot about the U.S.S.R. that was previously hidden by the clouds of lies of the Soviet-baiters. They have found out that the Soviet people are united solidly behind their Government, that the Red Army is very powerful and capably led, that Soviet industry is extremely strong. With the development of friendly relations with the U.S.S.R. the American people are in for the biggest surprise of all—a discovery of the high quality of Soviet democracy—which will contradict all the slanders they have had dinned into their ears for the past quarter century, to the effect that the U.S.S.R. is a totalitarian country and that Stalin is a dictator.

Economic and Political Foundations of Soviet Democracy

The character of Soviet democracy is made clear by the national Constitution of the U.S.S.R. Article 1 says "The Union of Soviet Socialist Republics is a socialist

state of workers and peasants." Article 3 states that "all power belongs to the working people of town and country." Article 4 provides for the "socialist ownership of the means and instruments of production... the abrogation of private ownership of the means and instruments of production and the abolition of the exploitation of man by man." Article 12 lays it down that "work is a duty and a matter of honor for every able-bodied citizen, in accordance with the principle: 'He who does not work, neither shall he eat.'"

On the basis of these general constitutional provisions, in the U.S.S.R. the land, minerals, forests, factories, mines, railroads, banks, etc., are all owned by the people as a whole; the Government is entirely in the hands of the workers, farmers and professional classes; there are no parasitic idlers living from the labor of the toilers; there are no extremes of rich and poor. Contrast this fundamental Soviet democracy with the situation in the capitalist countries, where the industries and natural resources are almost entirely privately owned, where the governments are controlled by the owning, ruling capitalist classes, and where large numbers of useless loafers live on the fat of the land, exploiting the poverty-stricken toilers.

The Rights of the Soviet People

In harmony with the general economic and political base of Soviet socialist democracy, the people of the U.S.S.R. enjoy a whole series of rights, written into the national constitution and realized in practice, such as are equaled by no other nation. The most important of these rights are to be found from Article 118 to 133 of the Constitution, and they include:

"... the right to work": which is realized in life by the the complete abolition of unemployment long before

present war and positive assurance of a job to everyone.

"... the right to rest and leisure": realized by the constitutional establishment of the seven-hour day and the right to annual vacations with full pay, the development of rest homes, etc.

"... the right to maintenance in old age and also in case of sickness or loss of capacity to work"; realized by the most extensive system of social insurance in the world.

"... the right to education": realized by the most tremendous mass educational development in the history of mankind.

"Women in the U.S.S.R. are accorded equal rights with men in all spheres of economic, state, cultural, social and political life": realized by the unparalleled advance of Soviet women in all phases of activity.

"Equality of rights of citizens of the U.S.S.R., irrespective of their nationality or race": realized by the complete unity of the scores of nationalities making up the Soviet nation, by the severe punishment of anti-Semitism, anti-Negroism, etc., as crimes.

"... the right to unite in public organizations—trade unions, cooperative associations, youth organizations, sport and defense organizations," etc., realized in the fact that, with their maze of vast popular organizations, the Soviet people are the best organized nation in the world.

"... the right of asylum": realized, among other facts, by the hundreds of thousands of Jewish refugees who fled into the U.S.S.R. in the face of the advancing Hitler armies.

Religious Liberty and Free Speech

"Freedom of religious worship and freedom of anti-religious propaganda is recognized for all citizens" says the Stalin Constitution. This is realized in a full exer-

cise of these rights by the citizenry. That the Greek Orthodox Church is now on better terms with the Soviet Government is not because the Government under pressure of the democracies (as Mark Sullivan implies) has changed its policy toward religion, but because the Church, breaking with its anti-Soviet traditions of the past, is giving loyal support to the government in winning the war.

"In conformity with the interests of the working people, and in order to strengthen the socialist system, the citizens of the U.S.S.R. are guaranteed by law—(a) freedom of speech; (b) freedom of the press; (c) freedom of assembly, including the holding of mass meetings; (d) freedom of street processions and demonstrations," says the Stalin Constitution. These civil liberties are realized by a "grass roots" democracy in the U.S.S.R., such as is altogether unequalled in any other country. The eminent British labor historians, Sidney and Beatrice Webb, who are not Communists but moderate Social-Democrats, characterized the workings of Soviet civil liberties in pre-war days as follows: (*Soviet Communism*, p. 773):

"Nowhere in the world outside of the U.S.S.R. is there such a volume of pitiless criticism of every branch of government, every industrial enterprise, and every cultural establishment. This perpetual campaign of exposure, which finds expression in every public utterance of the leading statesmen, in every issue of the press and in every trade union and cooperative meeting is not only officially tolerated but also deliberately instigated as a powerful incentive to improvement alike in direction and execution."

For the past dozen years, since the advance of fascism, the Soviet people have been living under a highly centralized regime. They have been compelled to adopt a strong national discipline in order to enable them to

drive ahead with the completion of their industries, to wipe out the organized Trotsky-Zinoviev-Bukharin gangs of fifth columnists, to build up their armed forces, and, now, to carry through the war victoriously. These necessary strong controls have tended to obscure the profoundly democratic character of Soviet life. All of this should be understandable to us now that we have had to adopt a strong wartime centralization, economic and political. But once victory over the fascists is won and peace in the world assured, a relaxation of the Soviet people's present high state of discipline will become possible. Then we shall see the blossoming forth of the most profound and all-inclusive democracy in the history of the world.

Sullivan and Sokolsky should not be so disturbed that the U.S.S.R. might be a holdback force on the growth of world democracy. They may rest quite content that in meeting the post-war world tasks of democracy the U.S.S.R., with its high type of socialist democracy, will do its full and constructive share, even as it is now doing in the great task of winning the war. The U.S.S.R. is the most valuable friend of the American nation, and it is one of the proudest achievements of the Communist Party of the U.S.A. that it fought for twenty-five years for close and friendly relations between the U.S.A. and the U.S.S.R. If the two columnists in question really wish to advance world democracy they would do far better to turn their literary guns against fascist-minded, monopolistic capitalist influences within the United States, Great Britain and other capitalist countries. These are the real enemies of world democracy, not the first Socialist Republic of workers and farmers. It is they who have busily sabotaged the war effort thus far and who will also be the main stumbling block to the development of democracy in the post-war period. The U.S.S.R. is a solid foundation of world freedom.

MORE ON THE SOVIET UNION

The Secret of Soviet Strength

By Hewlett Johnson, Dean of Canterbury

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