

**SOVIET
DEMOCRACY
AND THE
WAR**

WILLIAM Z. FOSTER

FOR VICTORY



**BUY
UNITED
STATES
WAR
BONDS
AND
STAMPS**

SOVIET DEMOCRACY AND THE WAR

By WILLIAM Z. FOSTER

I. 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 unequalled, 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 unequalled 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

