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## Foster Admits Bridgman Meet Held Secretly. Radical Chieftain Declares “Power and Cash” to Decide Issue.

Unsigned reportage in the *St. Joseph [MI] Herald-Press*, February 20, 1923, pg. 1.

“Power will win the issue,” declared William Z. Foster, secretary of the Trade Union Educational League and secretary of the committee which organized the nationwide steel strike, in commenting on the impending trial here of the 22 alleged Communists seized in a raid on their convention at Bridgman last summer. Foster, it is believed, will be the first of the radicals to go on trial. He is the most prominent of those arrested.

Foster’s remark was made during an address in Grand Rapids, a part of his statewide tour to seek financial and moral support for the Reds. He got \$84.72 in the furniture city.

Foster likened “brother” Communists to early Christians hunted in Rome’s catacombs, drew applause in reciting the Herrin, Ill. “victory,” boasted a bit about “busting up the Colorado state police” after his recent deportation from Denver, and pleaded that free speech be protected from the “enemies of Communism.”

### Will Not “Crawfish.”

Avoiding personal reminiscences of the Bridgman meeting last August, Foster said there would be no “crawfishing,” however, if he and other defendants were sent to prison, but that he believed “power will win the issue.”

“Do you think merits will decide the case?” asked Foster in referring to the prosecution brought by O.L.

Smith, assistant state’s attorney general in Berrien County. “Not on your life! Power will win and we need thousands upon thousands of dollars for defense.”

Foster said he knew little about Albert Bailin, alias Balanow, star witness for the defense, and his reported assertion that the Bridgman convention was planned by “double-crossing” operatives of private detective agencies and then “raided” for the effect on employers.

### Admits Meeting Secret.

“That convention at Bridgman was held secretly, ‘underground,’” Foster frankly admitted. “The average American has the idea that if anything is secret, there’s something fundamentally wrong with it. The ‘capitalists’ wish to stress that. But the Communist Party in January 1920 was subjected to the heaviest persecution ever experienced by the movement when 5,000 persons were thrown into jail after raids.

“Was it going to walk into the lion’s mouth like the Christians in the arena? It now is only for the public to assume a more tolerant attitude. Then it will come out in broad daylight with its message. You can’t kill living ideas with terrorism. If the Communist Party can’t function legally, it will function secretly.”

In making his plea for funds, Foster emphasized the necessity of his audience handing in freely the “good old proletarian dollar.”

*Edited by Tim Davenport.*

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