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WILLIAM Z. FOSTER

70th Birthday Issue

A Magazine Devoted to the Theory and Practice of Marxism-Leninism

Editor: V. J. JEROME

FOSTER 70th BIRTHDAY ISSUE

POLITICAL AFFAIRS warmly dedicates this issue to Comrade William Z. Foster, National Chairman of the Communist Party, U.S.A., and its foremost political and theoretical leader, on the happy occasion of his seventieth birthday, February 26, 1951.

V. J. JEROME, *Editor*

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Wm. Z. Foster—Foremost Leader of Our Party

A Tribute by the National Committee, C.P.U.S.A.

WILLIAM Z. FOSTER is 70 years of age. The seventieth birthday of the foremost leader and teacher of our Party is an event of major significance for the entire working class, for all America's exploited and oppressed, for the Negro people, for all who strive for peace and democracy, for social progress, for a better world. This seventieth birthday is for our Party an occasion of joyous celebration. For on this day we render homage to our beloved Comrade and leader, William Z. Foster, that great Communist stalwart whose half-century of battle-years have been devoted militantly and clear-sightedly to the noble cause of the working class, to the cause of its emancipation.

Comrade Foster's life-work of over fifty years has been, more than that of any other American in the annals of the nation, intimately connected and historically linked with the life, struggle and progress of the American working class. As youthful fighter in its ranks, as bold organizer of its trade unions, and as builder and leader of its

vanguard Party, Comrade Foster has left his imprint on all the major struggles of the workers in the course of this century. His high contributions are identified with their great advance in organization in the trustified industries, with the significant break-through in the unionization of Negro workers, with the achievement of unemployment and social insurance. His contributions are identified with the militant conduct of strike struggles, with the efforts to bring about labor's independent political action and to advance its leadership in coalition movements for peace and democracy. His contributions are identified with the strengthening of the solidarity of the working class and the liberation movement of the Negro people.

In hailing our National Chairman, we are deeply mindful of the great leadership he has given in raising the alertness of the entire Party, and of all whom our Party can influence, to the aggressive war policy of U.S. imperialism. By his timely warnings of the actuality of the war danger, of the war char-

acter of Wall Street's policy directed at world domination, Comrade Foster has helped to sharpen the understanding that the issue of peace is the central mass political task of our Party. He has thus contributed to raising the struggle for peace to the political height demanded by the unfolding of historical events. He has guided our Party toward helping the peace-desiring masses of our country to understand that war is not inevitable. With the full ardor of his being he has spoken out to the people that no danger confronts our country from the Soviet Union. For the U.S.S.R. is committed by the Socialist nature of its system to a policy of peace and of amity with all nations, and that between the states of capitalism and Socialism there is both possible and necessary, as Lenin and Stalin have repeatedly made clear, a peaceful co-existence.

* * *

Comrade Foster has simultaneously and unremittingly sounded the warning against the growing danger of fascism as the domestic accompaniment of the war-bent foreign policy of the bi-partisan Truman Administration. This warning holds vital meaning for our country, where the myth of "It can't happen here" all too widely paralyzes the will to struggle against the peril of fascism. This clarion call to the struggle against fascism which is encroaching upon

the people's rights under the cloak of "Americanism" and "safeguarding the American Constitution" must be registered as a signal contribution of Comrade Foster to the defense of the hard-won democratic rights and gains of labor. He has spoken out to the people the warning against allowing the Communist Party to become the target of the attack of the fascist-minded warmakers. With cogent logic, and with evidence from recent history, he has demonstrated that the attacks upon the Communists are but the opening guns of fascist destruction intended for the working class, the Negro people, and the American people as a whole. With his eye ever on the objective of working-class unity and unity of the popular forces, Comrade Foster has in this struggle striven to bring about the widest possible coalition of the democratic forces in the land, including the Communists, the most steadfast in the fight against fascism and war.

* * *

Comrade Foster is a living embodiment and inspiration of the class consciousness of labor—the beacon-light to the ever-forward movement of the working class. It is his supreme confidence in the working class that enables him, as the Communist leader and tribune, to chart the course and formulate the strategy of the American working class, from strug-

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gle to struggle, ever-more conscious, ever-more united, ever-more strengthened in its position as the leading force in the nation in the fight for peace and progress, ever-more consciously advancing toward the direct struggle for Socialism, that final emancipation which will also emancipate all of society.

Comrade Foster is the greatest symbol of the American working class in the whole range of its existence and struggle. He represents a towering figure rising rock-hewn out of the masses of the American workers. There have been other great leaders of the American labor movement before him; but he transcends all with his Marxist-Leninist science, with his dialectical materialist method, with his Communist strategy and tactics, with his Socialist perspective, It is this which has enabled Comrade Foster to come forward as a titan in the American trade-union movement in the struggle against pure-and-simple trade unionism and "economism," against De Leonist sectarianism, against reformism and class collaborationism, in the historic fight to imbue the working class with the consciousness of its class position and class direction in history.

Comrade Foster has guided our Party with the Marxist-Leninist understanding that the strength of the working class is measured by its capacity to forge its alliance

in struggle. He has steered the course of our Party along the path of avoiding sectarian isolation of the working class from its allies, as well as any tendencies toward Right-opportunist abdication of the leading role of the working class and its vanguard. Thus, Comrade Foster has consistently emphasized that the struggle for peace, the struggle against fascism, the struggle for Negro rights, the struggle to maintain and advance the gains of the labor movement, is the struggle to build the alliance of the working class with the Negro people, the farming masses, and the oppressed city middle classes, against the monopolies, against the warmakers.

* * *

Comrade Foster has shown great concern for translating into life the Lenin-Stalin teachings on the national and colonial question. As a principal feature of his struggle against Browder revisionism, he has guided our Party in fortifying itself with the Marxist-Leninist understanding of the national character of the Negro question in the United States which has its historical source in the special status of the subject Negro nation in the Black Belt. He has by his contribution strengthened our Party's role of championing the economic, political and social equality of the Negro people; of helping to advance the

alliance of the working class and the Negro people's movement; of sharpening the Party's weapon of struggle against white chauvinism.

Comrade Foster's leadership is identified prominently with his work of promoting proletarian internationalism. He has guided our Party by his writings, as well as by example, by his direct and unflagging personal participation, in cementing the solidarity of the American working class with the struggles of the peoples of the colonies and semi-colonies in both hemispheres for freedom from the yoke of oppression and super-exploitation by Wall Street imperialism. His life-long devotion to the anti-imperialist struggle is now crowned by his new, monumental work, *Outline Political History of the Americas*, which makes the independence and freedom of all nations and peoples in the Americas its underlying theme.

In the person of William Z. Foster the American working class has given its best son to the Communist vanguard, to the leadership of the Communist Party. William Z. Foster symbolizes the living refutation of the "foreign agent" libel with which the bourgeoisie desperately strives to undermine the confidence of the American working class in its vanguard Party. Sprung from the loins of the American working class, Comrade Foster has never swerved from affirming

the working-class character of our Party, its proletarian essence, its inseverable link with the working class, its bed-rock faith in the working class.

This was the basis of Comrade Foster's truly epic struggle against revisionism. He fought against the pro-imperialist ideology of Lovestone, who tried to hold back the struggle of the working class and to paralyze the Party's vanguard role with visions of a "Victorian Age" for American capitalism.

This was the basis of Comrade Foster's magnificent struggle to defeat the revisionism and liquidationism of Browder. He fought and exposed the gospel of "enlightened" and "progressive" American imperialism which Browder advanced with the view to perpetuate class collaboration, to chain the working class to the chariot of imperialism, to arrest the Negro people's liberation movement with false notions about an achieved "integration" in the American nation, to negate the Socialist perspective, and to liquidate and destroy the Communist Party.

This was the basis of Comrade Foster's struggle against counter-revolutionary Trotskyism, as it is today of his struggle against Titoite hirelings of Wall Street. This has been the basis of his struggle against all alien class manifestations and tendencies that would swerve the Party from the main

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Comrade Foster has led in remoulding our Party along the lines of Marxist-Leninist theory and practice. As the theoretical and political leader and organizer of our Party, Comrade Foster has constantly striven to direct the Party's course toward becoming in the true sense "a Party of the new type," a Party truly Marxist-Leninist in theory, organization and methods of work. Comrade Foster's great stress has been on the need to turn the face of the Party to the masses, to the workers in the key industries, to root the Party in the factories and to build it into a mass Party of the American working class. Comrade Foster has sought to infuse into our ranks the high attributes of the Party of a new type—Bolshevik zeal, revolutionary enthusiasm, concern for the rearing of proletarian cadres, constant contact with the masses, unshatterable confidence in the working class and in the inevitable victory of Socialism.

Comrade Foster has constantly sought to safeguard the unity of theory and practice, to promote theoretical clarity and to defend the purity of Marxist-Leninist principle. His leadership in this field has manifested itself in vig-

orous struggle against all ideological attacks and pressures of the class enemy. Thus, he has trained the guns of Marxist-Leninist theory against such harmful bourgeois ideologies as American "exceptionalism," pragmatism, technocracy, Keynesian economics, national chauvinism, white chauvinism and all expressions of racism, male "superiority," cultural obscurantism, and various other general bourgeois and specifically American bourgeois reactionary ideologies. His constant labors as fighter for Marxist-Leninist theory, his unflagging concern for guarding the purity of Marxist-Leninist theory, should serve to inspire our Party on all levels.

By his own work, by his own rich and copious productions, by his own Communist style of work, Comrade Foster summarizes in his personality and achievements an exemplar for our Party. His energy and vigor in the face of persecution and impaired health, themselves symbolize the unconquerable vitality of Marxism-Leninism.

We wish you, our dear Comrade Foster, our Bill, many years of continued fruitful work at the head of the Party which you have built. May you together with us all, with our class, with the people, go forward to the victory of peace, to the victory of the working class, to the realization of Socialism in your lifetime.

Greetings From Behind Prison Bars

[FROM A LETTER TO ELIZABETH GURLEY FLYNN]

by Eugene Dennis

February 15, 1951

Dear Elizabeth:

I am certainly glad that you have written a booklet on Bill Foster. Let us hope that this is the first of several and that these will be read and studied far and wide. I hope, too, that the birthday celebrations this month are broad in scope and become events worthy of the occasion.

For, in celebrating Bill's 70th birthday we pay tribute to a man who symbolizes the best achievements, the noblest traditions and the highest qualities of the American working class and its Communist vanguard.

All his life W.Z.F. has been an implacable foe of capitalism, reaction and unjust wars, and a resolute champion of Socialism, democracy and peace. As co-founder and stalwart leader of the Communist Party; as master strike leader and pioneer organizer of industrial unions in the trustified industries; as crusader for peace and vigilant

and staunch opponent of imperialist war and fascism, especially of Wall Street's frenzied preparations for a third world war; as steadfast defender of the rights of the Negro people and all oppressed; as uncompromising enemy of chauvinism, class collaboration and social-betrayal; of Lovestonism and Browderism; as consistent fighter for proletarian internationalism, especially for American-Soviet friendship, and for the anti-imperialist solidarity of the people of the Americas; as a leading Marxist analyst and writer in the field of politics and theory, organization and tactics, economics and culture—Bill's contributions are legion.

No matter what the difficulties or odds, Bill has always demonstrated great courage; abiding loyalty and devotion to the working class, to the cause of Marxism-Leninism, to the cause of Communism and unshakable confidence in ultimate victory. Truly Bill's life and sterling record bear eloquent testimony to the fact that our Party

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is flesh and blood of the American working class and people, the champion of their rights and interests, of their glorious future. Equally Bill's life-work underscores the fact that to check and defeat the warmongers, the monopolists, to achieve a lasting peace, and to advance the struggle for Socialism, America needs the Communist Party whose foremost leader is Bill

Foster—the finest son of the American working class.

I would deeply appreciate it, Elizabeth, if you would convey to Bill my thoughts and best wishes for many more years of activity and better health. Also tell him that I am looking forward to drinking a toast to him in the nearest future.

Salute and warmest regards to you, Kathy and all.

GENE

Truman's "State of National Emergency"

by William Z. Foster

[*A communication to Comrade Gus Hall, National Secretary of the Communist Party, U.S.A., under date of January 20, 1951.—Ed.*]

Dear Gus:

Inasmuch as the National Committee is putting the question of the "state of national emergency" on the order of business for a discussion at its coming meeting, may I take this means of saying a few words on the matter? It is very important that the National Committee is to hear and discuss a report on the question of the so-called state of national emergency. This question presents a number of important angles, both regarding analysis and policy, to which we should give close and careful attention. I would suggest that, among other phases, the following should be given consideration:

The proclamation of the state of national emergency flows basically out of the increasing difficulties and desperation in which American imperialism finds itself, out of the growing bankruptcy of United States foreign policy. It is, there-

fore, fundamentally a manifestation of American imperialism's political weakness, not of its strength.

The proclamation of the state of national emergency is, above all, a device for speeding up the drive toward war. It is a highly provocative semi-mobilization of the armed forces of the United States, a further stage in the warlike program of American imperialism, the next planned stage of which would be full mobilization and outright war against the Soviet Union and the People's Democracies. By declaring the country to be in danger, the Wall Street warmongers, of whom President Truman is the political chief, are enabled to intensify greatly every current leading toward world war. The general political aims of the proclamation are to intimidate the anti-war opposition, and, by setting up a war hysteria, to facilitate the driving through of all phases of the war program. Its consequences in this general respect are graphically illustrated by the fact that since Truman proclaimed the national emergency the direct Federal bud-

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get for war has been tripled—that is, raised from about 15 billions to about 45 billions—and it is still soaring. All the armed forces are now being built at a feverish rate, and the war spirit is being whipped into a flame. Among the worst of the many bad ideological effects of the proclaimed state of national emergency is that it especially cultivates among the masses fatalistic ideas that a world war is both inevitable and imminent. In carrying out the fight for peace, we must understand that the proclamation of the state of national emergency is in itself the most sweeping of all pro-war measures yet adopted by the government in this country.

The emergency proclamation sets up a new economic and political situation in the United States. We have not yet a full-fledged war economy—for such an economy, in the full sense of the word, could only exist in the event of a major war. Perhaps the most exact term for the present situation is that it is a developing war economy. By its huge stress on munitions production, by its very nature, if the masses allow it to go on, the proclamation of the state of national emergency implies a big reduction in the living standards, working conditions, and civil liberties of the people.

The proclamation of the state of national emergency especially constitutes an enormous strength-

ening of the Executive at the expense of the powers of Congress and the democratic liberties of the people. One of its most sinister features is that President Truman, under flimsy pretexts of legality, seized these powers himself, without asking Congress even for formal consent. Monopoly capitalism, of which Truman is the faithful servant, is tightening up its centralization in preparation for war. Meanwhile, the President is creating a whole series of sub-despots under his personal command and controlling various vital areas of our national life. Among them are General MacArthur, general-Mikado of the Far East; General Eisenhower, Governor-General of Western Europe; General Marshall, boss of the United Nations Armed Forces; C. E. Wilson, general economic dictator; Eric Johnston, Michael di Salle, and Cyrus Ching, dictators in the realm of natural resources, prices, and wages. And there is Admiral Chester W. Nimitz, dictator of the Presidential Commission on Internal Security and Individual Rights. Nearly all of these sub-dictators have been recruited from the most reactionary ranks of the Republican Party. Significantly, Governor Dewey, taking the tip from Truman, is also preparing for an unprecedented "state of emergency" in New York. Other Governors will doubtless soon follow suit. Even abroad, in Mexico,

President Aleman has proclaimed a state of national emergency similar to that of Truman.

Under his arbitrary proclamation Truman now possesses centralized powers entirely without precedent in American history. He is the boss in the vital sphere of American diplomacy. He is establishing price and wage controls and can set up rationing; he can call off strikes, and lengthen working hours; he can allocate materials and determine the general course of production; he has full charge of spending almost 50 billions yearly for arms production. And he is creating a vast machinery of agencies, under his personal control, to operate the developing war economy. At the same time, with the aid of the Taft-Hartley, Smith, and McCarran Acts, as well as the "loyalty" tests, and other thought-control legislation, the President is in a position to bring greater governmental pressure than ever against the Left and the peace-loving masses. It is in line with these dictatorial tendencies that Truman is arrogantly demanding the right to send American troops as he pleases all over the world without the consent of Congress. In the present tense international situation and in view of Truman's demonstrated war-making proclivities, this demand for arbitrary control of movements of the military forces amounts to nothing short of a demand for the

power to initiate war wherever and whenever he sees fit—and all without consulting Congress or the people. Truman's single-handed launching of the Korean war should be a sufficient warning to us that he would also, if given the opportunity, launch a third world war by hook or crook. This is a malignant danger which we must fight vigorously.

President Truman's synthetic state of national emergency does not signify the establishment of fascism in this country. It is, however, a long step in that general direction. It is part and parcel of the general trend which has produced such ultra-reactionary measures as the Taft-Hartley, Smith, and McCarran Acts, the growing attacks upon the Negro people, the jailing of Gene Dennis and other Left and progressive leaders, the vicious attempts to outlaw the Communist Party, the multiplication of loyalty tests of all sorts, and the like. Of all these fascist outcroppings, the most sinister is Truman's new powers under the state of national emergency. Without drawing mechanical conclusions from the comparison, it is well for us to remember that Chancellor Bruening's emergency decrees immediately preceded the establishment of Nazi fascism in Germany.

In fighting against the war drive and for the defense of world peace, a most vital thing that we have to

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understand clearly is that the proclamation of the state of national emergency, and the great speeding up of the war program that goes with it, have aroused deep fears of war among the masses of the people, in the United States, as well as in Europe; and therefore, have greatly broadened the basis for the peace movement. The disillusioning effects of the Korean war have also fed this growing American peace sentiment among the masses. It is largely to corral this developing peace spirit among the people that the aggressively imperialist Hoovers, Tafts, Kennedys, *et al.* are carrying on their demagogic isolationist maneuvers. In all our peace work we must be especially conscious of the much greater breadth and depth of peace sentiment developed lately among the workers and other democratic strata of the people.

In developing our struggle for peace, and concretely against the so-called state of national emergency, we must carefully avoid both the Right and "Left" dangers. That is, we must guard against the Right danger which would see nothing new or particularly alarming in the so-called state of national emergency, and would tend to accept this great war stimulus and provocation as a matter-of-course development of the cold war—which is precisely what the warmongers are trying to have the American people

conclude. On the other hand, we should also guard against the "Left" danger, which would tend to conclude that war is now inevitable and that fascism is already upon us, which is obviously not the case.

We must understand clearly, in fighting for peace and the people's general welfare, that the proclaimed state of national emergency is designed to hamper and make more difficult every phase of this peace struggle. Thus, barriers have been erected to block the fight against the whole gigantic program of militarization. Definite restrictions have been placed upon the right of the workers to strike. The so-called emergency has also served as a convenient pretext for ditching once more Truman's so-called program for civil rights for the Negro people. The other reforms in the President's demagogic Fair Deal program have also been unceremoniously dumped, in the name of the national emergency. The threat against our Party and all other progressive organizations has, by the same token, also been made more acute. The national emergency, so-called, has likewise resulted in intensifying the class-collaboration of the reactionary top trade-union officials, who have now, more than ever, become an integral part of Wall Street's war machine. Thus, the state of national emergency has seriously hampered the whole struggle of the working class

and of the peace-loving masses generally.

From all this it is clear that in prosecuting our struggles, the center of which is the fight for peace, we must, in each instance, conduct them with regard to the special limitations and handicaps placed upon them by Truman's emergency proclamation. But doing this, although vitally important, is not enough. We must also condemn in general, root and branch, the whole concept and workings of the so-called national emergency, as such. We must challenge the contention that the country is in danger and show that it is not being threatened by anyone except its Wall Street masters. We must demonstrate the great damage being done by the synthetic state of emergency to the workers' living standards, and democratic liberties. We must condemn Truman's emergency as a dangerous war provocation, and particularly point out that the tremendous impetus that it has given to war production and the development of war hysteria will make it all the more difficult to halt it short of an actual outbreak of war. We must

resolutely fight the whole concept of the inevitability and imminence of war. We must more energetically than ever champion the feasibility of the U.S.A. and U.S.S.R. co-existing peacefully in the world. All of which, finally, makes it imperative upon us to demand the liquidation of Truman's manufactured state of national emergency, not only as utterly needless, but also as a grave injury to the people's living standards, to democratic freedoms, and to world peace.

In conclusion, let me remark that I consider the whole question of the proclaimed state of national emergency presents a series of specifically new problems. These are characteristic of this general period of wars and revolutions, of the decline of capitalism and the rise of Socialism. The question of the national emergency constitutes another serious test of our Marxist-Leninist ability, both to work out our theoretical analysis of it, and to develop effective policies for peace, in the situation set up by the President's arbitrary proclamation.

Comradely yours,
WILLIAM Z. FOSTER

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William Z. Foster, Leader in the Struggle For Peace

by Gus Hall

WILLIAM Z. FOSTER, the National Chairman of the Communist Party, U.S.A., proud son of the American working class, leader of trade unions, strike leader, union organizer and the foremost Marxist leader and theoretician of our Party, has reached his 70th birthday. It testifies and adds to the greatness of the American working class that it has given birth to and molded such a stalwart leader of the working class and people as Comrade Foster.

Foster has grown to his present height because he has not only absorbed the experiences of the working class of the United States, much of it at first hand as a leader of its struggles, but also because he has assimilated and mastered the generalized experience of the working class of the world in his studies of scientific Socialism, of the writings of Marx, Engels, Lenin and Stalin.

There is no other American whose life so symbolizes and who so admirably embodies the experiences, the traditions and the history of our working class as does Comrade Foster.

William Z. Foster has given inspiration and leadership to the working class of the United States for over 50 years. No American has done as much as Foster toward organizing the unorganized. The 14 million members of the trade unions today are a tribute to these efforts. More than any other, the name Foster is closely tied to the struggles for a shorter work day, higher wages, against speed-up, for union conditions. Foster sparked the militant struggles of the unemployed for relief, unemployment insurance and jobs in the years of the great crisis. Foster is a veteran campaigner for independent political action of the working class, and a veteran fighter against the policies of oppression, segregation and discrimination practiced against the Negro people and for the unity of the working class and the Negro people.

Foster's is truly a lifetime of service and militant leadership to the working class and the people of the United States.

Comrade Foster is not only a towering, inspiring Marxist leader,

but a model Communist worker. He sets a high standard of work by example to the whole leadership and membership. Foster, in bold Leninist fashion, tackles new problems and projects solutions. He is an enemy of all sloppy methods of work, of phrase-mongering, and of covering up of weaknesses by generalities. Foster's method of work sets an example of discipline, system and organization.

Foster is a theoretician in the best Leninist sense. His theoretical writings and discussions are not abstract, not timeless, but closely tied to the developments and experiences of the day.

Robert Minor, an old co-worker of Foster, observed this side of his leadership very well: "Many people like to speak of him as a paragon of 'pure practice,' separate and apart from theory. But that is not and could not be true. Foster has fulfilled great practical tasks, it is true, but the real quality of leadership that he brought to our party was precisely the combination of practical knowledge with the most advanced generalizations of the experience of the labor movement over the whole world, especially as those generalizations are made by Lenin."

WARNED THE WORLD OF WALL STREET PLANS

Symbolic of William Z. Foster's

leadership in the struggle to defeat the aggressive war plans of Wall Street and of his efforts for world peace was his trip to Europe in 1947. This was of special significance because Wall Street in that period did not as openly prepare for world war and resort to armed aggression as it does today. Following V-J Day, and for some time after, the monopolies and the bipartisan war-coalition government, while unleashing the cold war, were busy gathering up the riches, raw materials and markets that were shaken loose by the Second World War. They were busy especially gathering the loot resulting from the defeat of the competitive trusts in Germany, Italy and Japan; and there was also booty to be taken from England and France, which had become weakened by the long World War II years. Wall Street wanted some time in which to gather in this loot quietly while preparing for military aggression. United States imperialism wanted very much for the world to believe that it was only interested in helping put the war-torn world on its feet again. By threats, by buying off government officials, the war-enriched United States capitalists were able very often quietly to force "concessions" from the capitalist countries weakened by the ravages of war. But while doing so, they quietly also built their naval and air bases and land armies in

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every corner of the world. Wall Street not only wanted to hide these preparations from the world, but also from the American people. Foster traveled to England, France, Italy, and the New Democracies to warn the world of these criminal war plans of Wall Street, war plans directed as much against the best interests of the American people as against the great majority of mankind. This was a great service to the camp of world peace. This was of great service to the American people, especially since in 1947 many were skeptical and did not fully agree with Comrade Foster that American capitalism was moving rapidly toward war behind a policy of world conquest.

Foster's keen Marxist analysis made possible the exposure of Wall Street's plans very early in the game. In 1945, after V-E Day, and before the defeat of Japanese militarism, Foster already raised the question of the danger of war and pointed to the signs that indicated this direction of American imperialist policy. In May 1945, Comrade Foster wrote:

"Hard-bitten reactionaries continue to try to resolve their capitalist contradictions along the lines that Hitler did through plans leading to fascism, imperialist aggression and war. . . .

"The more militantly imperialist sections of the capitalists, who are

immensely powerful and have at their disposal the bulk of the nation's press, as well as strong representation in Congress, believe, however, that the present world situation presents an unequalled opportunity for the United States to acquire domination internationally. They are out to achieve this at all costs. These reactionaries see on the one hand, that the great imperialist powers of Germany, Japan and Italy, which formed the Axis, are ruined, and that the rest of the capitalist countries including France, Belgium and Holland and even Great Britain herself have been greatly weakened by the war; while on the other hand, the United States, little damaged by the war, is emerging incomparably the strongest capitalist power, industrially, financially, and militarily. Hence, they are determined to register this strength in imperialist world domination."*

The above is the clear, farsighted thinking of a Marxist. Compare this with the trash of the bourgeois apologist, Earl Browder, while still in the ranks of the Communist movement, in fact at that time the national President of the Communist Political Association, who in the same month came forward with the following:

"The alignment apparently taking place of Britain and America

* *Political Affairs*, June 1945, p. 495.

against the Soviet Union expresses *a conflict of mood and opinion but not a conflict of interest.*" (Emphasis, mine, G.H.)

This sounds very much like the analysis of a psychoanalyst, like the Freudian theory of the causes of wars. Foster's foresight was based on his Marxist understanding of class forces and his clear insight into the laws of motion of classes and of the class struggle. Foster's outlook was based on the Marxist-Leninist concept of the character of imperialism—the last stage of capitalism. Foster never for a moment believed that American capitalism could be an exception to these laws.

EXPOSED THE SOURCE OF THE WAR DANGER

Many people gave many answers why the American ruling class took to the present path. While Browder spoke about "moods," the open propagandists of the ruling class started hammering into the minds of the people that it was due to the "aggressive policies" of the Soviet Union. This has remained the main propaganda line of the war camp until this very day. The fact that every day developments completely contradict this big lie does not bother the war propagandists. American armed forces are in Korea 5,000 miles from our shores, but the kept press keeps on talking about

the "Soviet forces of aggression." There are U.S. war bases in every corner of the earth; Eisenhower starts on his task of building an armed force in Europe based on rearming of the Nazis of Germany, but the radio keeps raving about "Soviet aggression." All this, of course, is not new. The American war-makers have only added to the propaganda line developed by Hitler during his short but bloody existence.

Some of the liberal apologists said it was the unfortunate death of Franklin D. Roosevelt that changed the course of United States imperialism. This, of course, is a superficial answer. While it is true that Roosevelt possibly would have resisted our country's moving on the road to war with such speed, there are more fundamental causes for this imperialist policy than the characteristics of a President. The Republicans, who attempt demagogically to use the peace sentiments of the people say, of course, that the reason we are on this path of war and aggression is President Truman. While it is true that President Truman speaks for, and wholeheartedly pushes the aggressive imperialist policies, the fact is that he is a necessary figurehead for the real masters of this policy.

In the center of his analyses, Comrade Foster has always placed the basic causes of the danger of war as inherent in the system of

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capitalism itself. United States capitalism, like all capitalism, has ever-increasing profits as its goal. This is the foundation of its policy at home and this is the basis of its foreign policy. The war-like character of capitalism, especially in its imperialist stage, flows from its inner laws and contradictions over which, as a system, it has no control. Therefore, under capitalism the danger of war is ever present. In meeting difficulties, whether due to competition on the world market or to economic crisis, it can only think of wars of aggression as the way out, as the means for continuing its devastating policy of profit and exploitation. Feeling their greater relative strength as compared to the rest of the capitalist world resulting from their favorable position in two world wars, the monopolies of Wall Street concluded that they are in a better position to squeeze enormous profits from all parts of the world.

Before the birth of the first Socialist country, the Soviet Union, and before there came into being a world-wide organized peace camp, it was only possible to describe and rally the masses against the war-like character of capitalism in a general way. But because of these new forces—the organized forces of Socialism, democracy and peace—we must now add something new, namely, that capitalism can no longer have its own way and that

the possibility exists of stopping the outbreak of a new war. It was on the basis of such a sound and rounded-out analysis that Foster in 1945 was able to see the path that U.S. capitalism would follow, but also the difficulty it would encounter along its path.

FOSTER'S HISTORIC ROLE IN RE-CONSTITUTING THE PARTY

One can now, looking backward, begin to see the full meaning of the tremendous and historic role of Comrade Foster in leading our Party back from Browder revisionism to the path of Marxism-Leninism. That was indeed a heavy blow to the warmakers. What benefit and use Wall Street could have made in its war drive of a Communist Party based on, and led along anti-Marxist, revisionist lines! This would have been worth many divisions and numerous A-bombs in the plans of Wall Street. One has only to examine how United States imperialism did use the writings of Browder in its earlier post-war period of conquest. In a period when the peoples of the world are moving towards Socialism, what better opening wedge for its ideology could the capitalist class of America have asked for than that of Browderism, which was covered with Marxist phrases and put forward under the name of "Com-

munist Party." The State Department and the O.S.S. used Browder's writings abroad to soften up the ideological armor of weak elements in the working class and Communist Parties and thus started a number of them on the road of betrayal. American imperialism wanted very much to put over its policy of enslaving the world under the smoke-screen that it is pursuing a policy of "progressive capitalism" as testified to by none other than the leader at the time of the Communist movement in the U.S.A., Earl Browder. The discarding of the policies of Browder revisionism by the Communist Party under the leadership of William Z. Foster was a big blow against the war policy of Wall Street. It is no wonder then that the central charge against the leaders of our Party at the Foley Square trial was the discarding of the revisionist policies of Browder. How much it would have meant for Wall Street to palm off its plans of aggression as "plans for defense," its moves of enslaving peoples, its Point Four program as only "bringing industry and enlightenment to the peoples" of Asia and Africa, and its continued domination of Latin America as "a good neighbor policy," without anyone exposing their real goal. How much easier it would have been to "explain" the higher taxes, the speed-up, the higher prices, the

cutting of social services as "necessary sacrifices for the defense of our country," without exposing the plundering of the people by the war profiteers.

The rising American peace front and its growing understanding of the imperialist character of United States foreign policy can in great measure be credited to the work of the Communist Party, and it was equipped to serve the cause of peace when, under the leadership of Comrade Foster, it again took the path of vanguard party of the working class.

Since the end of World War II, Foster has at every turn of events pointed to the two-sided development in world affairs. He has correctly shown the growth of the war danger, but has never for a minute lost confidence in the ability of the world peace camp, together with the American people, to block the outbreak of world war. Under the leadership of William Z. Foster and Eugene Dennis, our Party was without hesitation able to expose the war aims and meaning of the Truman Doctrine, the Marshall Plan, etc.—all put forward behind slogans of "peaceful assistance to a war-torn world." Our Party reacted instantaneously to the aggressive imperialist character of the attack on Korea and the invasion of the territory of the People's Republic of China.

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CENTRAL FEATURES OF THE PARTY'S PEACE POLICY

What are some of the central features of our Party's policy and outlook for peace to which Foster, together with Dennis, have been giving leadership?

1. The peace policy of our Party flows from our understanding of Marxism as a social science, a science which is partisan against all injustices inflicted on humanity by the evils of a class society. A fundamental cornerstone of the Marxist indictment of capitalism is its war-breeding character. As long as we have capitalism, the danger of war will be ever present. On the other hand, one of the greatest points of attraction to the system of Socialism is that with the abolition of capitalism the causes of wars are thereby discarded; and with Socialism there opens up a new era, an era free from the danger of wars. As the danger of wars is inseparable from capitalism, so world peace is inseparable from Socialism. Socialism is unthinkable without world peace.

2. The present policy of the bipartisan government dictated by Wall Street monopolists is a policy of imperialist aggression, a policy aimed at enslaving the peoples and robbing the resources of the world for the benefit of these same trusts. It is a policy of aggressions and

unjust wars and does not deserve the support of any honest man or woman. It is unjust to the peoples of the U.S.A. It is unjust to the peoples of the world. It is unjust because there is nothing good that can come as a result of the present policies of the warmakers. It is unjust because it is a policy of aggression against the independence of nations, big and small, in the first place against the millions of colored peoples of Asia fighting for national liberation.

3. In the present-day relationship of forces, world peace can best rest on the cornerstone of friendship between the two foremost world powers, the United States and the Soviet Union. To this we must add the absolute need of friendly relations between the U.S.A. and the great People's Republic of China and the European People's Democracies. Such friendly relations are possible today on the basis of the peaceful co-existence of two different social systems of society—capitalism and Socialism. We Marxists in the United States fully adhere to this concept of peaceful co-existence, not because we are giving up the struggle for Socialism in America; not because we have any doubts about the advantages of Socialism to our people, or because we feel that Socialism is necessarily a question only for the future generations of Americans, but because it is our firm conviction that as

long as the system of capitalism remains, it is to the best interests of the peoples of the world to achieve the co-existence and peaceful competition of the two systems. Contrary to the slanders and lies directed against our Party, we do not believe that the victory of Socialism is dependent upon the outbreak of wars. The profit-mad war-makers should not, however, draw any wrong conclusions from this. The victory of Socialism is not necessarily attached to the outbreak of war, but the death of capitalism is very closely tied to the outbreak of any new world war. An outmoded, decaying and dying system like capitalism needs wars to stay on the stage for a while longer—but this at the expense of misery, suffering and the lives of millions.

4. We are firmly convinced that peace can be won, because of the strength of the world camp of peace, democracy and Socialism, led by the Soviet Union, and the growing weaknesses and differences in the world camp of war, led by United States capital. Prevention of World War III is in the cards. But to achieve this, we, the working class and the people of the United States, have a special and a great responsibility. In the shortest possible time we must find the path that leads to a crystallization of a broad mass peace front. The present tremendous peace upsurge, if given leadership, will lead to such a crystallization. It will also find

ways of breaking through the present two-party system and of moving into a new political realignment of forces which will bring in its wake a movement for a new people's party. The first step of such a development will be the launching of an independent peace ticket in 1952. But as long as the peace front is not organized and consolidated the danger exists that the peace loving people will be at the mercy of the demagogy of the Tafts Hoovers and Kennedys.

5. We are against all the war measures, measures that drastically reduce the living standards of our people, that destroy our Constitution and the rights guaranteed by it because we do not believe that the U.S.A. is in any danger of being attacked from any quarter or by any force, because we believe that the danger to the independence of peoples and nations arises only because of the expansionist, aggressive, imperialist policies of Wall Street. We are unalterably opposed to the wage-freeze and we are for drastic cuts in prices. We are against giving the President the dangerous dictatorial powers he now has. We are against the militarization of our youth. We will unite with all who will work to put an end to the barbaric, inhuman and disgraceful treatment of the Negro people, as was again so brutally shown with the wholesale murder of seven innocent young Negro men in Martinsville, Va.

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6. We are for the peaceful settlement and negotiation of all world problems and conflicts because we believe it is feasible. We are for a United Nations that is a vehicle for peace and not for aggression. We are for withdrawing our troops from Korea and Taiwan (Formosa). We are for the rightful representatives of the Republic of China sitting in the United Nations. We are for peaceful, friendly relations with China.

The above are some of the basic considerations and thoughts from which flow our outlook in the struggle for world peace. We Communists do not make agreement on all these fundamental questions a condition for united action. We are ready to join hands with anyone who sincerely wants to work for world peace. We will give our full support to anyone, to any project or movement that moves in the direction of the struggle for peace.

HIS CAUSE IS JUST AND VICTORIOUS

The cause to which William Z. Foster has dedicated and devoted his entire life is a victorious and a just cause. It is the cause of a higher standard of living, of democracy, and of equal rights of the Negro people. It is the cause of world peace; it is the cause of the final establishment of Socialism, that make yearnings and aspirations

of the people the very fibre of their function and existence. Foster has lived to see 800 million people of the world support and live under governments either building, or laying the foundation for the building of Socialism. Foster's life-work is not done. He continues to give leadership to the working class and people of the United States, and will live to see many more giant strides the people of the world are taking toward the next higher stage of civilization, Socialism and Communism, in the struggle for which William Z. Foster is the outstanding leader, representative and theoretician in the United States. Foster's world outlook was best stated to the 15th National Convention of our Party in the following words:

"Capitalism with its sickening mess of exploitation, destitution, illiteracy, and war, is in foul crisis, and the new order of Socialism, under which men will flourish as never before, is taking its place. The intense crises and storms of the present period signify the death agony of capitalism and the birth-pangs of oncoming Socialism. The peoples of the world are making a gigantic leap forward. We Communists are fighting on the side of history. This is why we face the situation calmly, clear-headedly, and unafraid, amidst all the capitalist storm of frenzy, despair, and degeneration."

An American Labor Leader Without Peer

by John Williamson

THE TRADE-UNION MOVEMENT of the United States can record several outstanding class-conscious leaders of great stature. They include William Sylvis, Eugene Debs, William Haywood and Daniel De Leon. But in relation to all of them the stature of Comrade William Z. Foster stands out as distinct and the quality of his contribution to the working class is of a special kind.

In Comrade Foster is symbolized the rounded-out leader of the working class and not merely of trade unions—a leader with whom no one bears comparison in the American labor movement. This is attested to by his entire life:

Foster the industrial worker—Throughout his life to this moment of his 70th birthday, Foster has always retained a firm working-class approach. Through self-development, active participation and leadership in the class struggle and through deep study of scientific Socialism, he is today the most popular working-class propagandist and agitator, as well as the foremost leader of our Party. He is the author of several major books, includ-

ing his latest, *Outline Political History of the Americas*, written in the course of his present illness. Never to be forgotten by millions of workers are the hundreds of pamphlets and booklets written by Foster, and the thousands of articles, all on subjects close to the heart and mind of American trade unionists.

Foster the fighter—At every stage of his life, Foster has been a fighter with, and for, the workers and common people of our country. This fighting quality has expressed itself in innumerable strikes and organizing activities; in struggles for democratic rights, starting way back in the Spokane, Washington, free speech fight in 1909. Above all Foster's fighting qualities were proved in such political struggles as the fight against the Right opportunism of the old Socialist Party and the sectarianism of the Socialist Labor Party. He fought the pure and-simple trade unionism of Gompers, the anti-political action attitude of the I.W.W., and the class collaboration and "business unionism" of the A. F. of L. in a later period. Today Foster leads the

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struggle against the pro-war labor agents of American imperialism. The same fighting quality has also expressed itself inside the Communist Party itself in his struggle against Lovestoneism and Browderism.

Foster the organizer—Millions of American workers can truthfully say, "We are better off today because of Foster's organizing activities and militant policies." His great contributions to the organization of the unorganized began with the packinghouse workers' strike of 1918, followed by his leadership of the steel workers strike of 1919. Foster organized the Trade Union Educational League (T.U.E.L.), minority movements in the A. F. of L. He participated in leading the struggles, hunger marches and organization of the unemployed in the 1930's, and built the Trade Union Unity League (T.U.U.L.) which pioneered in organizing the unorganized among coal miners and metal workers, among textile, needle trades, maritime and food workers. All of these campaigns contributed to the subsequent organizing drives of the C.I.O.

Foster the Communist leader and theoretician—His firm grasp of the theory and practice of Marxism-Leninism enables him at all times to see the "line of march" that lies ahead for the working class. He has always been guided by the words of

the *Communist Manifesto*, that the Communists,

"being in advance of the general mass of the proletariat, have come to understand the determinants of the proletarian movement and how to foresee its course. . . ."

His life experience as an industrial worker and militant working-class organizer, coupled with his grasp of scientific Socialism, has brought Foster forward as an outstanding world Communist leader and theoretician.

Guided by his Marxist understanding, Comrade Foster holds high the following two main concepts as guides in all of these struggles: 1) constant concern with the day-to-day grievances and issues before the workers and the political and economic struggles to defend and advance the interests of the workers—whether in a shop, a city or an entire industry; 2) the need for influencing the workers to see the relationship between such individual struggles and the advancement of the movement of the working class as a class, toward the only basic and final remedy for its grievances arising from its exploitation in capitalist society—Socialism.

Adherence to these basic concepts has entailed a constant and simultaneous struggle on two fronts in

the course of the development of working-class organizations. One is the struggle *against* sectarianism, a tendency which would belittle the day-to-day struggles, which strives to set up "pure" unions or conduct activity solely among the Left-wing workers, separated from the decisive masses of the workers. Sectarianism would isolate the Left and militant workers from the broad masses by imposing a policy or program of action that does not take into account the actual state of development of the workers concerned. Throughout Foster's long experience in the Party there have been many such tendencies against which he has led the fight. Among the better known of these were the strong sectarian dual-union policies of the first years of the Party, the dual-union policy of the I.W.W. and a resurgence of such tendencies even in the T.U.U.L. Other evidences of sectarianism were the programs of some of the T.U.U.L. unions, which were premature for the time; the continued neglect of work among A. F. of L. workers; and a dangerous extension of this tendency to all Right-led unions, as well as resistance and fear of united labor action with workers or officials in Right-led unions.

The second front is the struggle against the various forms of Right opportunism, whether expressed in the numerous and varied class-collaboration schemes, or in the sub-

stitution of arbitration, umpires, escalator clauses, etc., for workers' struggle and direct negotiation. The Right opportunist danger is expressed in all policies that hold back the workers from boldly projecting their demands and engaging in militant struggles. It is expressed in limiting the workers' outlook and activities to immediate economic demands without connecting them with struggles against the political arm of the employers (government, courts, two old parties, etc.). All these opportunist tendencies are predicated upon the acceptance of the workers' status as wage slaves for eternity.

The entry of Comrade Foster into the Communist Party in 1921 symbolized in his personality the confluence of the best and most militant class-conscious section of the trade-union movement with the stream of revolutionary Socialist forces. Comrades Foster himself describes this by saying, "Becoming a Communist meant for me to put the logical capstone upon my whole previous life experience."

For it must never be forgotten that Foster, even before joining the Communist Party, was a militant fighter and trade-union leader during the first two decades of the century—being associated in turn with the I.W.W., the Socialist Party, the Syndicalists and the A. F. of L.—and participating in some of the largest and most historic workers'

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struggles of the century. That is why throughout his entire lifetime his activities have been opposed and slandered by the spokesmen of American capitalism, including their agents in the labor movement while on the other hand, they have been loved and respected by millions of workers.

Comrade Foster's grasp of Marxism-Leninism and its application to the American scene, through his outstanding contributions, has not only strengthened and advanced our Party, but because of this it has made a tremendous contribution in advancing the interests of the entire working class. In his person is dramatized the best example of how Marxism-Leninism elevates the trade-union leader to the stature of political leader of the entire class. While there is only one Foster, all progressive trade-union leaders can draw lessons from his life and leadership with regard to the indispensable role of the Communist Party.

Progressive trade union leaders will learn from Foster that the knowledge of Marxism-Leninism enables the trade unionist to understand the leading role of the Party as distinguished from that of the union; although both are vitally necessary forms of working-class organization. They will learn that its knowledge of Marxism-Leninism enables the Party alone to help the working class understand its

position in present-day society, and to see that its struggles are directed, not alone against a single employer or a single trust, but against the capitalist class as a whole—against the system of capitalist exploitation.

They will learn that the knowledge of Marxism-Leninism enables the Communist trade unionist to see the intimate connection between the problems of the individual worker or of an individual shop with that of the entire labor movement, with the problems of the entire nation. They will learn to see the connection between the drive of monopoly capitalism against the workers' demands and the democratic rights of the people with its war of intervention in Korea and China and its drive to war against the Soviet Union, the Peoples Democracies of Eastern Europe and the masses of the people in all colonial lands.

They will learn that the knowledge of Marxism-Leninism, received through membership and activity in the Communist Party, helps the trade-unionist to function more effectively in defense of the interests, not only of the workers in any specific shop or industry, but of the whole working class. For the Communist trade unionist knows that as long as capitalism exists the workers will have to fight again and again to maintain their conditions and avoid being driven down to the level of paupers. That is

why Communists fight vigilantly to maintain and strengthen the unions, to organize the unorganized, to extend trade-union activities to all spheres of domestic and foreign affairs.

They will learn from the knowledge of Marxism-Leninism that the trade-union movement cannot by itself eliminate capitalist exploitation. The whole history of the rise and development of the working class and of the class struggle emphasizes that the working class through its unions and economic struggles alone can at best but ease the grip of exploitation, but cannot eliminate the system of capitalist exploitation itself. That can be accomplished by the working class only under the leadership of the Communist Party, a Party armed with the science of the class struggle and therefore able to unify all actions and organizations of the working class and direct them against the class of exploiters as a whole.

During these past thirty years the contributions and leadership of our Party and Comrade Foster—which are one—in the field of trade-union work are indelibly written in the lives of men and women, in the record of mass struggles and the existence of a trade-union movement which is today 15 million strong, and in some of the greatest working-class struggles in the entire history of American labor.

The aim of the Communist Party in its trade-union work throughout these thirty years has been the organization of the tens of millions of American workers into powerful industrial unions following a policy of class struggle and united into one all-inclusive trade-union movement. The purpose of this was to strengthen the capacity of the working class in the United States to struggle for its immediate demands, to advance its role as the leader of all progressive forces in the struggle for peace and against fascism, and to prepare it ideologically to fight for a Socialist America.

Throughout all these thirty years, irrespective of internal Party situations, Comrade Foster has been the recognized authority on the trade-union work of the Party. He has been identified with the fight to realize the basic aims of our Party in the trade-union field through the struggle for such fundamental concepts and activities as:

- a) Unionization of the millions of unorganized workers into industrial unions, especially in the mass production industries;
- b) Realization of maximum trade-union unity, either through amalgamation, organic unity or united labor action;
- c) Unity of Negro and white workers in all unions in the fight to open up all skilled trades to Negro workers, to abolish lily-white

shops and employment, for unrestricted promotion and election of Negroes to all posts of leadership in the trade unions, and for influencing the labor movement to place itself in the forefront of the struggle for all demands of the Negro people for equal rights;

d) Full and unrestricted practice of rank-and-file democracy — from top to bottom—in all unions, with autonomous rights of each union in regard to its political policies and leadership, while maintaining maximum unity of the trade-union movement;

e) The promotion of labor's understanding that its interests demand a break with the old two-party system and to fight for a policy of independent labor political action, and to assume the leadership in building a new, anti-monopoly, anti-war *mass people's united-front political party* representing the interests of the majority of Americans;

f) The rejection by the workers of all policies of class collaboration and the ending of all support of the policies and ideas of the bourgeoisie, brought into the labor movement by the reformist and Social-Democratic labor leaders, and to be in the forefront of the struggle for peace and democracy;

g) The harnessing of the militant fighting spirit of the working class and helping the workers, on the basis of their own experiences, to

cut loose ideologically from capitalist influence and to develop real working-class consciousness and a Socialist outlook.

Certain contributions of a fundamental character, largely connected with the name of Comrade Foster, merit special emphasis. Among them are his contributions to the Party's strategy and tactics.

STRATEGY AND TACTICS OF THE TRADE-UNION MOVEMENT

A study of Comrade Foster's leadership in many workers' battles emphasizes his grasp of Leninist tactics. This was especially seen in the meat-packing strikes, in the steel strike, in his contributions to the big C.I.O. steel organizing drive of 1936-7, and in many other big struggles and movements.

A further concretization of Foster's contributions to the mastery of strategy and tactics was his struggle against dual unionism. Already in 1922 you will find Foster writing,

"The American labor movement is in its present deplorable backward condition [primarily because of] the fatal policy of dual unionism which has been practiced religiously for a generation by American radicals and progressives. . . . This destroyed the very foundations of progress and condemned every branch of the labor movement—po-

litical, industrial, cooperative—to stagnation and impotency. Dual unionism, so to speak, severed the head from the body of American labor.”

This fatal strategy of dual unionism for which De Leon was ideologically more responsible than anyone else, devitalized the labor movement, left the masses of trade-union members at the mercy of the reactionary leaders. It encouraged secessions at the slightest provocation of the reactionaries, which meant running away from the fight for the workers, and withdrew tens of thousands of the most conscious and militant workers from the mass unions into small “pure” unions. Foster aptly wrote in 1922 with reference to these thousands of militant workers that, “The parched Sahara of dual industrial unionism swallowed up their efforts and left hardly a trace behind.”

However, being a master of strategy and tactics, Foster never turned his back on, or branded as “dual” a new union movement of mass proportions, especially if it was the motive force behind new mass organizing activities that were being held back by reactionary policies and practices of the old union leaders. In such situations he always emphasized the need of common action of the members of the old and new unions against the employers; and he stressed the need of

healing the breach on a proper basis as soon as possible. Examples of this correct strategy were Foster's attitude toward the organizations of the Amalgamated Clothing Workers in 1913, to the rise of various T.U.U.L. unions, and above all to the organizing of the C.I.O. itself.

The strategy outlined by Foster at that time (1922) was for the Communists and the Left to stay in the main stream of the working-class movement. On the basis of the lessons of the packinghouse and steel workers' strikes and his firm opposition to dual unionism, Foster took the lead in organizing the T.U.E.L. The theory behind the T.U.E.L. was the establishment of an organized force of all revolutionaries and Left-wingers in all the trade unions in opposition to class collaboration programs and autocratic machines of the Gompers type of leadership. Foster himself wrote that “The heart of the League's tactical program is that under no circumstances shall the militants allow themselves to become detached from the unionized section of the working class.” In its statement of principles adopted in 1922, the T.U.E.L. stated that it “proposes to develop the trade unions from their present antiquated and stagnant condition into modern powerful labor organizations, capable of waging successful warfare against capital.”

The Party gave its full support to the newly organized T.U.E.L. which began its activities in the midst of a fierce employers' offensive against the trade unions. It participated in a major way in some of the principal strikes of that period (coal, railroad shopmen, machinists, building trades).

The T.U.E.L. program centered around five main slogans: for amalgamation, for a Labor party, for organizing the unorganized, for unemployment insurance, and for recognition of Soviet Russia. By 1923, three of these slogans became central issues in the labor movement. The amalgamation resolution sponsored by the T.U.E.L. was endorsed by nine International Unions, 17 State Federations of Labor, scores of central labor councils and thousands of local unions. The Farmer-Labor Party campaign was spearheaded by the Chicago Federation of Labor and received wide support among A. F. of L. and R.R. unions. The movement for recognizing Soviet Russia gained such support that at one time it was estimated that locals and internationals representing a majority of A. F. of L. members had gone on record for it.

To emphasize further the correctness of the strategy of "staying in the main stream" of the labor movement, T.U.E.L.-endorsed candidates actually polled a majority of votes for national officers in refer-

endums in the United Mine Workers of America (Brophy against Lewis) and in the International Association of Machinists (Anderson against Johnson). Outstanding strikes where the T.U.E.L. played a decisive role were the Pennsylvania-Ohio coal miners' strike, the New York needle and fur workers' strikes, and textile workers' strikes in Passaic, New Bedford and Gastonia.

The records of our Party and of Comrade Foster's leadership show a generally consistent effort to adhere to the slogan of 1922, "Keep the militants in the organized labor movement." Many additional rich examples of adherence to that policy could be cited throughout the years, right up to the present 15th Convention Resolution, which states:

"We must face the fact that the overwhelming bulk of the organized workers are in the A. F. of L., C.I.O., and independent Right-led unions. It is this which must determine the main direction of all of the Party's work. . . ."

An imperative need for Communist trade unionists is to know when to seize a favorable moment in the class struggle in order to help the workers drive ahead to new positions and to consolidate their gains. Several examples associated with the leadership of Comrade Foster illustrate this point. During the

economic crisis of the late '20s, and early '30s, with over 15 million unemployed, the T.U.U.L. and the Party seized the moment to raise the demand for Federal unemployment insurance at government expense, and to initiate and lead tremendous demonstrations of the unemployed, under such slogans as "Don't Starve, Fight!" and "Work or Wages!" The National Unemployed Councils were built and played the decisive role in organizing the unemployed and in giving leadership to millions in their struggle for relief, against evictions, and for unemployment insurance. During this period the Negro workers were actively involved and the first mass movements for uniting Negro and white workers swept the country through the unemployed struggles. Outstanding were the historic national demonstrations of the unemployed on March 6, 1930 (when Comrade Foster was arrested in New York City), the several subsequent State and national hunger marches and conventions, and the more than 3,000 A. F. of L. union endorsements of the Workers Unemployment Insurance Bill.

This ability to seize hold of the favorable moment for the workers to move forward boldly and rapidly was also seen in the organization of the C.I.O. and in the preparations for the steel workers' organizing campaign in 1937. Foster wrote then:

"These elements of strike strategy—a firm, ideological solidarity of the workers, a high morale in the strike, a strike that proceeds upon the principle of the offensive—must be constantly borne in mind in developing every stage of the coming struggle. . . .

"The strategy must be based on the offensive, and animated by a spirit of daring and indomitability. The stage is all set for a great labor victory, provided only that the trade-union leadership rises to the occasion, to the height of its tasks."*

Equally necessary in a mastery of strategy and tactics is to know when to retreat without a rout, the better to prepare one's forces for the future. An example of this was the dissolution of the T.U.U.L. unions in 1934 and their merging into the A. F. of L. unions. In 1929 the T.U.U.L., as distinct from the T.U.E.L., had been organized as an essentially new center of the newly organized industrial unions. The reasons for its founding were: the narrowed base of the old unions as a result of the blows of the open shop drive and the conservative policy followed by the leadership; the saturation of the top leadership of the A. F. of L. with class collaboration policies which paralyzed the members' ability to fight back. Fur-

* William Z. Foster, *American Trade Unionism: Selected Writings*, International Publishers, 1947, pp. 220, 242-3.

thermore, sections of the unorganized were beginning to demand unionization, and large numbers of T.U.E.L.-led workers had been expelled.

The main T.U.U.L. industrial unions were those organized in the coal, textile, needle, metal, maritime, auto, food and shoe industries. They led the majority of the strikes in that period, including many that were important and bitterly fought.

However, by the end of 1933, a new situation had developed. There was a tremendous upsurge of militancy and strike struggles among the workers; the struggles and strikes took on new and bigger proportions and a substantial trend developed among the workers to join trade unions, especially those of the A. F. of L. The A. F. of L. was forced to organize the unorganized into so-called Federal locals, after the workers demonstratively refused to join the craft unions and allow themselves to be split up along narrow craft lines in the mass production industries.

In this situation, the Party did not hesitate to take what might be regarded as a step backward, and advocated the dissolution of the smaller T.U.U.L. unions and their merger with the A. F. of L., toward which new masses were moving.

This entire chapter of work, covering a decade, in the T.U.E.L. and the T.U.U.L. had in reality laid

the foundation for what Foster called "The Renaissance of the American Trade-Union Movement" with the organizing of millions of mass production workers into the C.I.O. and the stimulus this gave to the entire trade-union movement. The co-workers and followers of Foster were in the lead in building the C.I.O. and hundreds of the best Communist organizers were placed on the C.I.O. staff to do this herculean job.

THE FIGHT FOR PROLETARIAN INTERNATIONALISM AND NEGRO-WHITE UNITY IN THE U.S.A.

From the time of the *Communist Manifesto*, with its ringing conclusion "Proletarians of All Lands—Unite!," until today, one's attitude toward proletarian internationalism remains a touchstone of basic class consciousness and understanding.

Comrade Foster in the early years of his trade-union activities showed his profound concern with this question by visiting France, Germany and Hungary in 1910 in order to study the trade-union movements of these countries. Later, in 1921, he was invited to attend the first Congress of the Red International of Labor Unions (R.I.L.U.) in Moscow and remained one of its leaders until its dissolution. Al-

ready in 1922 the first statement of principles of the T.U.E.L. said:

"The League also aims to put the workers of America in contact with the fighting trade unionists of the rest of the world. It is flatly opposed to our present pitiful policy of isolation, and it advocates affiliation to the militant international trade union movement. . . ."

The unions of the T.U.U.L. maintained international fraternal relations with similarly-minded trade unionists in other countries through the R.I.L.U. Simultaneously Foster and the Communists gave encouragement to the sending of numerous delegations of American trade unionists to visit the trade unions of the Soviet Union.

The long striving of Foster and others for real world trade-union unity and organization reached its highest point of realization with the organization of the World Federation of Trade Unions in 1945, of which the C.I.O. was an affiliate and active participant, although the A. F. of L., of all the major trade union federations in the world, remained alone and aloof. In writing about the W.F.T.U. in 1945, Foster called it "the most decisive step in labor history to unify the international labor movement and to make its influence count on a world scale." Since then, the C.I.O. top leadership, in accord with its full

and abject support of the war policies of Wall Street imperialism, tried together with the British Trade Union Congress to split the W.F.T.U. All that happened, however, was their own withdrawal, but the W.F.T.U. has grown numerically larger with the influx of the rising trade-union movements of China and other countries of the Far East.

Throughout this whole period Foster has maintained close ties with the workers and trade unions of Central and South America—especially with Cuba, Puerto Rico and Mexico—and fought for a policy of support by the trade unions of the United States to the struggles of the Latin-American workers against Wall Street imperialism.

With the same consciousness, Comrade Foster has fought consistently to end the neglect by the trade unions of our country of the problems, demands and aspirations of the Negro people. Even before he joined the Party, when he was organizing and leading the strikes and unionizing drives in the packing and steel industries, he was keenly aware of the decisive role of the Negro workers and the need for Negro-white unity. However, it must be said that the T.U.E.L. and T.U.U.L. adopted a limited, class approach to the Negro question, not going beyond the emphasis on unionizing of Negro workers and the fight for full eco-

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In the last 15 years, Comrade Foster has helped the entire Party to clarify its stand on the Negro question and to adopt, with reference to the trade unions, a clear-cut policy of combining a class approach to the Negro workers, with an understanding of the national character of the Negro question. While advancing the slogans of jobs, equal pay for equal work, for upgrading and opening all skilled trades to Negroes, for the abolition of lily-white shops and the promotion and election of Negro workers to positions of leadership, the Party stresses the need of the trade unions to fight outside the shops for full social, political and economic equality for the Negro people and for the establishment of an alliance of labor and the Negro people to realize peace, to safeguard democratic rights and promote equality and the liberation of the Negro people.

Many other distinctive contributions of Comrade Foster could be singled out for elaboration on this, his 70th birthday. These would have to include his constant fight against class collaboration, his never-ceasing concern for building the Party and for rooting it in the basic industries, as well as his great contribution in helping rid our Party of Lovestoneism and Trotskyism in 1928 and 1929. What particularly stands out is his initiative, and for a time almost singlehanded

struggle, against Browder revisionism. That struggle represented a great contribution to the working class of our country in re-establishing the Communist Party as a Marxist-Leninist organization.

In everything Foster has done, he has been motivated by one central and dominant thought—how to strengthen the workers as a class by developing and heightening their class consciousness. His unwavering objective has been to influence them to become better fighters in today's political and economic battles, while at the same time preparing for the ultimate fight for a Socialist United States.

In sharp contrast are the long train of labor lieutenants of the capitalist class from Gompers to Green, Murray, Dubinsky and Reuther, whose leadership is directed to gaining sops from the bourgeoisie so that they can then use them to slow down, impede and betray the struggles and development of the workers.

On this joyous occasion of the 70th birthday of Comrade Foster, we should help the tens of thousands of progressive-minded trade unionists in all trade unions to learn from his rich life and experience. Militant trade unionists will profit enormously from paying special attention to his teachings, contributions and direct leadership of the trade-union movement as well as to his more fundamental

political and theoretical contributions as the foremost leader of our Party. Comrade Foster's activities are directed to the ideological and organizational strengthening of the working class to fulfill its role today: a) in the struggle for peace and democracy, which is inseparable from the defense of its economic conditions and the free existence of trade unions; and b) in the struggle against monopoly capitalism, its political representatives in government, and reformist and Social-Democratic agents in the labor movement.

Comrade Foster's activities are directed toward helping the working class, through such struggles, to enhance its class consciousness and strength as the leader of the people in the common fight against the war makers and pro-fascist forces of Wall Street and Washington.

Comrade Foster's activities are directed toward rallying the American working class to the banner of Socialism, toward winning the advanced sections of the workers into the ranks of the Communist Party.

On an occasion like this I think it is not amiss to recall one's own working relations with Comrade Bill Foster. Sometimes in the latter part of 1920 I first heard Comrade Foster speak at the Seattle Labor Temple about the Great Steel Strike. Neither of us was then in the Communist Party. I myself was still in the Socialist Labor Party

from which I was expelled in 1922, for advocating united-front action with the Communists. But from 1924, when I came to Chicago to work in the leadership of the Young Workers League, there began a friendship and comradeship between us which has passed the quarter of a century mark. In these days of the '20s, Comrade Foster was always concerned with the activity of the Young Communists, especially concerning their participation in the workers' struggles. When the Young Workers League secured a meeting with Sam Gompers on the question of the trade unions and the youth, and later when we started issuing pamphlets addressed to certain "youth shops," Foster gave us much guidance and inspiration.

In serving for a half year, in 1929, as assistant to Comrade Foster in the T.U.E.L., I learned much from his methods of practical and thorough leadership. In the following years of great mass struggles against unemployment, for Negro rights, in the organizing drives in the auto, steel and rubber industries, Foster's rich experiences guided me, as it did hundreds more of our Party cadres.

I was present with him when the first cruel blow of sickness struck him in 1932. He was on a national tour as the Presidential candidate of our Party, scheduled to speak at an election rally in the Chicago

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Coliseum at which I was to be chairman. The previous days he was taken sick in Moline and travelled on to Chicago, where the doctors told him and us that he could not speak at the meeting that night. What happened then is indicative of the feeling of the Chicago workers for Foster. When I carried through the difficult job of announcing that Foster was sick and would not be able to speak, and proceeded to introduce the substitute speaker, who had just been rushed in from New York, literally one third of the audience arose shouting, "We Want Foster," and most of them made for the door and never heard the substitute speaker. Only later did they realize that they had not been told a story, but the hard cruel fact of the heart attack Comrade Foster had suffered the previous day.

The half century of Foster's working-class experience, training and leadership, moulded and developed by his never-ending study and grasp of the science of Marxism-Leninism, rose to a new height in Comrade Foster's guidance of the Party through the difficult and historic 1945 Emergency Convention, where Browder revisionism was rejected and the Communist Party reconstituted. Although I had already been in our Party for 23 years, working

closely with Comrade Foster during that period taught me many things I never before experienced. I learned from Comrade Foster particularly how to combine a ruthless fight against an alien ideology and at the same time guarantee the unity of the Party. It was at that Convention, in the struggle to root out and destroy Browder revisionism, that there was cemented the bond of leadership between Comrades Foster and Eugene Dennis, whom Foster later nominated for the General Secretary of our Party in 1946. Under their leadership our Party has fought a valiant fight against the warmakers and pro-fascist forces of Wall Street and Washington, these last years.

Comrade Foster's boundless confidence in the future is nowhere better expressed than in his book *Twilight of World Capitalism*. As you open the book, it is dedicated "To My Great-Grandson . . . Who Will Live in a Communist United States," and when you reach its last page it closes with the statement, "Before very long the capitalist system, with all its organized greed and violence, will only be a dark memory to man as he travels into a future that will realize the very best of which our species is capable."

Happy Birthday—Comrade Bill.

Foster's Contributions To the Cause of National and Colonial Liberation

by Benjamin J. Davis

THE CONTRIBUTIONS of William Z. Foster to the question of national and colonial liberation is one of the principal hallmarks that stamp him as the pre-eminent leader of the American working class.

Comrade Foster is the foremost theoretician, leader and teacher of the American Communist Party. He is a Marxist of international caliber and stature. His contributions are marked by simplicity and modesty. In all of his works Comrade Foster is guided by the rich treasury of mankind—the science of Marx, Engels, Lenin and Stalin. His approach to the use of Marxism-Leninism is not that of the timid and dogmatic scholastic. Comrade Foster's approach is challenging, bold, creative and original. It is the approach of an active participant on the firing lines of the big class battles now taking place in our country; it is the approach of one who regards Marxism as a "guide to action," not as a dogma, and who carries that recognition into life.

It is in this spirit that our Party celebrates the 70th birthday of Comrade Foster, and proudly claims him as its own. A proper

understanding of the role and contributions of Foster, and of his leadership of our Party, can only result in the heightening of the struggle for peace—the central issue before the American working class. Secondly, it will result in strengthening the ties of the working class with colonial, semi-colonial and oppressed nations and peoples fighting for freedom from imperialist enslavement.

This article will draw attention to only three main areas in which Foster has made basic contributions to the national and colonial liberation movements: his role as labor organizer and trade-union leader; his leadership in our Party's re-establishment of the character of the Negro question as a national question in the United States; and his creation of the monumental and original Marxist work, the *Outline Political History of the Americas*.

Happy the Marxist to whom it is granted to participate in one such achievement. But Foster faced up to them all, and with flying colors. Most recently he did this despite constant hounding by Truman's F.B.I. secret police, and notwith-

standing the handicap of a serious and complicated heart ailment.

To grasp fully the true worth of Comrade Foster's contributions on the question of national and colonial liberation, it is necessary to consider them against the background of the unprecedented struggles of the more than a billion people of Asia for their freedom and independence from Western imperialism—led by the American monopolies and their colonial, land-owning General MacArthur. As Foster stated:

"The vast continent of Asia, containing over half the human race, is in full tide of revolution. . . . It is the most gigantic national colonial revolution in history. . . . It is all a vast struggle for peace, democracy, industrialization — and eventually Socialism."*

WEAKNESSES ON THE COLONIAL QUESTION

Despite the fact that the American working class has shown its fighting capacity and has achieved many political successes (although it is considerably short of political maturity), it has grievously lagged in grasping the significance of the national and colonial question, particularly as it reflects itself today in the Far Eastern colonial liberation revolutions.

There are at least four main

reasons for this unsatisfactory state of affairs: first, under-estimation of the struggle for peace; second, the tenacious hold which the illusions of "American exceptionalism" have upon the majority of American workers; third, the insidious effects of capitalist white chauvinism and national chauvinism, both being heightened by Wall Street's gangster war against the colored peoples of the Far East; and fourth, the disdain of large sections of the American workers for theory, their tendency to rely upon pragmatic and narrow "practical" standards of activity without long-range perspectives.

Due to the corrupting influences of the labor aristocracy and the pro-imperialist demoralizing policies of the labor reformists and Social-Democrats, these shortcomings are prevalent among the great mass of American workers. They also infect, to a considerable degree, the most advanced sections of the working class.

The Wall Street capitalists—the main would-be destroyer of world peace—with their maniacal desire to unleash an atomic world war, have received their biggest military setback in history from the Korean and Chinese peoples. This setback has far-reaching consequences. It was the pressure of the great colored peoples of India, with their natural sense of solidarity with the Chinese and the Koreans and with their hatred of Anglo-Saxon imperialism,

* William Z. Foster, *Daily Worker*, Sept. 26, 1950.

which caused the Indian representative in the U.N. to put serious obstacles for a time in the path of the State Department's designs to spread the Korean war.

The American ruling class places a high premium upon the special potential of the Negro people in the struggle for peace. It was striking at that potential by its passport ban and virtual house-imprisonment of Paul Robeson, the superb artist and winner of a peace award from the historic Second World Peace Congress, attended by representatives of 80 nations.

One of the new notes struck at the Second World Peace Congress was point three of its appeal to the U.N. This point stated in effect that the forcible subjection of colonial peoples fighting for their freedom and independence, and "racial discrimination" are both dangers to world peace. The basic significance of this has not been sufficiently understood by the peace forces of our country.

The failure to develop a big mass campaign against Robeson's passport ban and "protective imprisonment" (considering that Robeson is a foremost symbol of the Negro people's aspirations, as well as the embodiment of internationalism and understanding of the Soviet Union), must be attributed in large measure to an underestimation of the great reserves of power for peace that lie in the national and colonial struggles, in the struggles of the

Negro people. Great victories here can be wrested from the Wall Street-Truman war-makers and would-be fascist dictators.

The majority of the American workers have not historically regarded the United States as an imperialist power. This has been due to many unique features—geographical, economic and political—of the development and growth of the United States. But it has been due also in no small part to the anti-Marxist, bourgeois "theories of American exceptionalism" systematically pumped into the workers by Wall Street through such proponents of "progressive capitalism" as Wallace, and through such renegades as Cannon, Lovestone and Browder.*

The illusions concerning the so-called angelic, selfless character of American capitalism reached their height during the period of the Roosevelt "Good Neighbor policy." But as Foster points out, in a basic re-evaluation of this highly misconstrued policy in his book, *Outline Political History of the Americas*:

". . . in reality, the Good Neighbor policy was simply a reformulation of the old imperialism in order for it to counter more effectively the growing nationalism and democratic spirit of the Latin-American peoples, as well as to offset the increased imperialist com-

* William Z. Foster, "Cannon, Lovestone and Browder," *Political Affairs*, September 1949.

petition. It was the adoption of more efficient methods of imperialist penetration."^{*}

America has long been a colonial, an imperialist power. The attitude of the pro-fascist monopolists toward their colonial and semi-colonial possessions and toward the victims of their imperialist oppression is demonstrated in their notorious lynch oppression of the Negro people, especially in the Black Belt, and by their discrimination against Mexicans, Indians and Asian minorities, and against the masses of the Jewish people on the mainland. Four months before American imperialism ruthlessly attacked the Korean people, Foster wrote prophetically in a message to the March 1950 plenum of our Party:

"The new element in this basic question [the Negro question], besides its great sharpening on the national scene, is that it has now become a major international issue. The brutal repression of the Negro people in this country is now being rightly taken in many parts of the world as the measure of capitalist democracy in the United States. For their shameful treatment of the Negro people, the capitalist reactionaries are now paying dearly in the colonial world."^{**}

American imperialism is rapidly

replacing England as the dominant colonial power of the world, although it is exercising that dominance through many new forms. This is evident from its aggressive war to throttle the peoples of the Far East, its grab for Africa (for example, its recent shameful dole to the fascist Malan regime of South Africa in the form of an \$80,000,000 Wall Street bank loan), its Marshall Plan, its imperialist Point 4, the rearmament of its European satellites, etc. This new development was first theoretically generalized by Foster in an article entitled, "The Domination of the Capitalist World by the United States."^{*}

In the peace upsurge now taking place among the American workers—Negro and white—and among the people generally, the first signs are appearing that the people are beginning to learn of the brutal nature and extent of American imperialism's role as a colonial power.

The most authoritative Marxist statement of the historical roots of the malignant evil of white chauvinism in our country is to be found in Foster's *Outline Political History of the Americas*, in which the following is stated:

"The brutal enslavement of the Negro peoples constitutes the deepest shame in the whole history of the Americas. Modern capitalism, says Marx, dates from the sixteenth century, and slavery had much to

^{*} William Z. Foster, *Outline Political History of the Americas*, International Publishers, p. 431.

^{**} William Z. Foster, *Political Affairs*, May 1950, p. 10.

^{*} *Political Affairs*, December, 1950.

do with its growth. Capitalism fattened on the slave trade and upon slavery itself. This was glaringly true of industry in England and it was no less true of New England. Yankee shipping and textile mills had direct foundations in the slave system of the South."*

ROOTS OF THE WHITE SUPREMACY MYTH

The capitalist ideology and practice of white supremacy directed against the Negro people is scarcely paralleled in barbarism anywhere in the world. It had its roots in the slave system. It extends, in various forms and degrees, to all minorities and, indeed, to the American people as a whole in all aspects of American life. It is one of the main impediments to the fulfillment of its historic mission by the American working class, and to the development of the necessary people's coalition to frustrate Wall Street's drive to fascism and war.

White chauvinism has heightened in consequence of the savage war of United States imperialism against the colored peoples of the Far East, and today merges with Wall Street's reactionary national chauvinism and cosmopolitanism. However, increasing sections of the American proletariat, under the stimulus of their progressive and Communist fellow-workers, have

shown a strong desire to come to grips with this evil in defense of their own interests. But the struggle against white chauvinism will become a dominant class issue in the labor movement only as the American working class secures a deeper ideological and theoretical grasp of the national and colonial question. A far sharper campaign by American Marxists against the contempt for theory that saturates the American working class has to be undertaken than in the past.

Foster received his earliest training in the fundamentals of the Negro question from his experiences as labor leader and organizer. During the imperialist World War I, in 1917, Foster led the first big organizing campaign in the packinghouse industry. He was then Secretary of the Stockyards Labor Council in Chicago. Against the strenuous opposition of a clique of top A. F. of L. bureaucrats, he based the campaign upon the foreign-born and Negro workers, who made up the majority of the workers in the industry. The Negroes alone constituted 12,000 of the 60,000 Chicago packinghouse workers. From the outset of this struggle he came face to face with the special character of the Negro question. As Foster describes it:

"Many of the skilled crafts, despite our best efforts, barred them [the Negro workers], although the main union, the Butcher Work-

* William Z. Foster, *Outline Political History of the Americas*, pp. 76-77.

men, admitted them. To complicate matters we faced the open hostility of the Negro intelligentsia, embittered by A. F. of L. discrimination. When we began our organization work, we proceeded upon the policy of taking the Negroes into the big mass Butcher Workmen local unions, and we thought that we had thereby solved the problems."

Foster proceeds to relate how certain Negro mis-leaders "raised a shout that we were placing the Negroes into white unions where they would be a helpless minority and they demanded separate Negro unions. We naively agreed to this demand, whereupon, almost overnight, the cry of 'Jim Crow' went along State Street with devastating effect. We eventually found a solution, however, by adopting the neighborhood principle, that is, by building mass unions in both Negro and white districts and having them open alike to Negroes and whites. This killed the Jim Crow issue and forced the corrupt elements among the Negro intelligentsia, agents of the packers, to come out openly against our organizing campaign generally. . . . Such a proposal was easy for us to beat, however, and the sequel showed that we finally won over the majority of the Negroes and built up the largest Negro trade union membership ever organized in any American city."*

At that time, this was the largest group of unionized Negro workers in the world.

No sooner did the Negroes become members of the union than the packing bosses turned their attention to driving them out through all sorts of devious means. Foster, along with his closest co-worker, Jack Johnstone (the late Communist leader) and other militants, set up a strong grievance machinery to counter the union-busting, splitting tactics of the packers. The latter played the white workers against the Negroes particularly in handling grievances. But the newly organized union, under Foster's leadership, struck back with the position that the grievances of the Negro workers should be satisfied first, and being the toughest, their solution would ease the settlement of the white workers' grievances. This policy won support of the union as a whole and saved the day.

Taking advantage of the possibilities opened up by the victory in the packing industry Foster extended the organizing campaign into the heart of American trustified industry. He led the first big steel organizing campaign and strike in 1919, against the bloody opposition of U.S. Steel, and against the ignominious treachery of the A. F. of L. top bureaucrats, led by Gompers. Again he spearheaded the fight against the discrimination practiced upon Negro workers. In effect, his position was: no organ-

* From *Byran to Stalin*, International Publishers, no. 92-3.

ization of the Negro workers on the basis of equality—no union!

In the course of the strike, Foster raised two questions in relation to the campaign in Birmingham, Alabama, where a large section of the steel workers were Negroes: "will you organize the Negro workers?" and secondly, "will you organize them into the same unions with the white workers?"

The majority of the white steel workers, after a struggle, answered both these questions in the affirmative. In the very process of resolving this question, under Foster's leadership, the Negro and white workers broke down the rigid white supremacy laws and ordinances of Alabama and met together, in violation of the segregation laws of Birmingham.

By this time Foster's leadership of the packing and steel campaigns—especially his militant position for the equality of the Negro workers—had become somewhat legendary. Among large sections of the Negro people he enjoyed tremendous support. In Pittsburgh, during the great steel strike, where Foster had support from the Negro weekly, *The Pittsburgh Courier* (not the *Courier* of 1951, which is a key instrument of Wall Street's war policy among the Negro people), a Negro minister gave his church for a meeting of the steel organizing committee. When this meeting was finished the Negro minister told Foster:

"There goes several thousand dol-

lars for our church right out the window." U.S. Steel, not only used anti-union terror against the Negro workers, but systematically subsidized any Negro churches or organizations it could buy out. It was an act of highest courage and consciousness on the part of the Negro minister, and reflected the strong pro-union sentiment among the Negro workers and church-goers of that period.

Even in 1915-16 in the railroad industry, where Foster first got his start in the labor movement, he demonstrated determined and militant opposition to the Jim-Crow policies of the leadership of the railroad unions. As District Organizer of the railroad unions in Chicago, his influence among the workers was so strong that he boldly organized the Negro workers into the railroad unions in open defiance of the clause in the union constitution barring them from membership. In 1937, Foster, still hammering away at the anti-Negro discrimination in this industry, thus placed the question of eliminating Jim Crow as the first necessity for the railroad unions in order to strengthen and democratize themselves:

"The shameful discrimination against the large body of Negro railroad workers must be discontinued. There are more than 125,000 Negroes employed in the railroad industry. They are grossly abused by the companies, being forced to accept the worst jobs and

the lowest pay. In time of unemployment, they are the first fired and the last hired. Many railroad unions condone and assist this outrageous Jim-Crow system by refusing to allow the Negroes to become union members and to give them organized protection. This condition is a disgrace to the labor movement and a grievous injury to both white and Negro railroad workers. It must be ended, and the hand of democratic union fellowship extended to the doubly-oppressed Negro workers."*

As leader of the Trade Union Educational League, which did an heroic educational job on the role of the Negro workers in the American labor movement, Foster wrote, among other things, this passage in 1929:

"The Negro workers are good fighters. This they have proved in innumerable strikes in the coal, steel, packing, building and other industries, despite systematic betrayal by white trade-union leaders and the presence of an all too prevalent chauvinism among the masses of white workers. They are a tremendous source of potential revolutionary strength and vigor. They have a double oppression as workers and as Negroes, to fill them with fighting spirit and resentment against capitalism. It has been one of the most serious

errors of the Left wing to underestimate and to neglect the development of this great proletarian fighting force."*

These words are as valuable as if written in 1951, twenty-two years after they were first published! They throw into bold relief the necessity for a Southern organizing drive, not only in the interest of the Negro nation in the Black Belt, but to add strength to the embattled ranks of the American trade unions.

Foster pioneered in the labor movement of this country in his militant leadership and practical work for the unionization and equality of the Negro workers. This was manifest not alone in the role he played in the packing, steel, and railroad industries, but also in his long fight for the concept of industrial unionism, with which the packing campaign was infused. In doing so he was touching the heart of the national question. The Negro workers in the South where the Negro nation is imprisoned by the capitalist-plantation owner alliance, and in the North, where the Negroes are a doubly-oppressed national minority, must today give leadership to the struggle for the national liberation of the Negro people. Foster's activities in the labor movement undoubtedly exerted a lasting influence upon the American working class, in particular with regard to the Negro question, and over the years has helped

* William Z. Foster, *American Trade Unionism*, International Publishers, 1947, p. 273.

* *Ibid.*, p. 183.

to bring into being a large group of progressive unionists who have continued to battle for Negro equality, and for Negro-white unity.

His early militant labor leadership on this question, together with his deep thirst for theory, afforded the basic conditions for Foster's sound grasp of the national question. It was a main factor in causing him to become an outstanding leader of the American Communist Party. His leadership has been, to this day, key in the development of the sound policies of our Party in the trade-union movement, in bringing into being a new type of trade-union consciousness, aware of its basic responsibility to the modern national-liberation phenomena.

FOSTER'S LEADERSHIP IN RE-ESTABLISHING THE PARTY'S POSITION ON THE NEGRO QUESTION

The re-constitution of our Party in 1945, under Foster's leadership, as a Marxist-Leninist Party dedicated to the ultimate establishment of Socialism, laid down the overall guarantee both that the American working class will fulfill its responsibility on the national and colonial question, and that the Negro people will attain their liberation and freedom.

Browder's reversal of the Party's recognition of the national character of the Negro question was inseparably bound up with his liquidation of the Communist Party it-

self. The re-constitution of the Communist Party, under Foster's leadership, established the fundamental pre-condition for the Party's resumption of its uncompromising, Marxist-Leninist role as leader of the struggle for the full liberation of the Negro people.

Foster gave his personal guidance to the re-establishment, in 1946, of the Party's position on the character of the Negro question as a national question in our country, carrying with it the slogan for the right of self-determination of the majority Negro nation in the Black Belt. This position is the foundation of our Party's struggle for the full political, economic, and especially, social equality of the Negro people, nationally, and in all spheres of American life.

In the article "On Self-Determination for the Negro People,"* Foster charted the theoretical and political course which guided our Party in arriving at a correct perspective on this matter. He applied Marxist principles self-critically to this complex question, and in such a way as to avoid "Leftist" schematism and sectarianism on the one hand, and Right opportunism on the other. With exceptional sensitivity to the trends among the Negro masses, he applied Marxist principles to this subject. He asked, for example:

"Where are the Negro people going? What are they doing to solve

* *Political Affairs*, June 1946.

the problem of repression? What is the route they are taking in their forward march? These are some of the major questions to which we must find answers. And we can find them, not in wishful thinking as to what the Negroes should or should not do, but in studying what the Negroes are actually thinking and doing about these matters. . . .”*

Foster's ability to play this theoretical and political role in re-establishing the Party's position on the Negro question arose from his clear understanding of the fundamental importance and relation of the national and colonial question to the working class in establishing Socialism, and in winning its crucial immediate battles.

The re-establishment by the December 1946 Plenum of the Party's position that the Negro question in the United States is a national question, laid the scientific basis for our program of struggle for Negro rights and for complete liberation. It established a Marxist theoretical perspective for the advanced forces of the working class, and for the militant forces of liberation within the Negro people's movement. Yet, having guided our Party to a sound perspective, Foster has declared that this question has not yet been fully elaborated in all its many rich theoretical aspects.

One of the principal reasons the labor reformists and Social-Demo-

crats have been able to betray the oppressed nations and colonial peoples today is that the masses of the American working class have not yet grasped the full significance to themselves of the struggle for the liberation of the Negro nation in the Black Belt. A wider working-class acceptance and implementation of the Leninist-Stalinist position on this question would today greatly assist the American working class in discharging also its proletarian internationalist responsibilities toward the colonial revolutions in the Far East. A corresponding mass national liberation upsurge among the Negro people—signs of which are everywhere apparent—would be far more advanced, if the American working class grasped the vital need to support such an upsurge.

Ideologists of the capitalist class are attempting to dissolve the concept of the Negro question as a national question, and to remove it from its Black Belt anchor. They sail under the banner of so-called “integration.” But full participation, integration and equality of the Negro people in American life go side by side with the struggle for national self-determination in the Black Belt, and the development of the national consciousness of the Negro people. Comrade Foster makes this point clear:

“. . . It is impossible for the Negro people to achieve their full economic, political and social equal-

* *Political Affairs*, June 1950, pp. 51-52.

ity as Americans . . . unless they forward the slogan of self-determination for the Black Belt of the South."*

These two streams of struggle—the struggle for equal rights and for national self determination in the Black Belt—harmonize. Since 1945-6, our Party has fulfilled its vanguard role for Negro liberation with increasing effectiveness, in the fight against the sharpening national oppression of the Negro people, and for the Negro-labor alliance—that is, for Negro-white unity—under the new conditions created by American imperialism's going over to outright war against the national-colonial movements. A weakness, however, is that it has lagged in grasping the essential unity of these two streams, especially in the direction of fully recognizing the trend of the developing national consciousness of the Negro people. This trend is manifest most acutely and healthily by Negro trade unionists, as demonstrated in the 1950 Chicago Negro-labor conference, and in the rising Negro Labor Councils. In this period, the Negro workers alone can provide the revolutionary leadership for the national liberation of the Negro people. The founding of the new anti-imperialist, peace-promoting monthly people's journal *Freedom*, and the role of the Council on African Affairs—both show the vitality of the grow-

ing national consciousness of the Negro people. The Negro people, North and South, are fighting for the unification of their ranks in the struggle for peace and national liberation, despite the treacherous, splitting tactics of the Right-wing Negro reformist and Social-Democratic agents of the white ruling class. One of our "major tasks," Foster has emphasized, is the "awakening of the Negro people's consciousness of nationhood."

Comrade Foster's characterization of the "relation of the national minority of Negroes in the North to the main body of the Negro nation in the South" is an exceedingly helpful guide to the unfoldment of the Negro people's movement today.

"The connection between these two sections of the Negro people is a very close and very vital one. We must pay very close attention to the material inter-relationships of one with the other, not the least because the leadership of the Negro people as a whole is developing chiefly among the national minority in the North. This is not to ignore the very striking new development that the Negro people in the South are courageously beginning to develop real leadership right in the heart of the Black Belt itself."*

Likewise, these words of Foster have special application to the role of Negro Marxists within the ranks of the Negro people:

* *Communist Position on the Negro Question*, New Century Publishers, New York, p. 16.

* *Ibid.*, p. 17.

"We must more concretely connect the question of Socialism with the fight of the Negro people against racial and national oppression. We must show them that while their present fight for economic, political and social equality, and their eventual struggle for self-determination, are indispensable for their welfare and freedom, it will only be under Socialism that they together with the white toiling masses, will finally achieve full liberty, equality and prosperity."*

Especially in the period of the "twilight of world capitalism" this revolutionary content must infuse all our work for Negro liberation among the militant Negro people.

FOSTER'S NEW MONUMENTAL WORK

Neither the serious heart ailment contracted from more than 50 years of passionate leadership of struggle against the American capitalists, nor the Wall Street-Truman frame-up and harassment of the 12 Communist leaders has succeeded in stilling Foster's voice. Quite the contrary. These ruling-class persecutions only whetted his working class zeal. For above all, Foster is a revolutionary endowed with an unquenchable fire of devotion to the working class, and to its Communist vanguard—with an unshak-

able confidence in the victory of Socialism.

When the bourgeoisie thought it had him down, he painstakingly produced the monumental work, *Outline Political History of the Americas*, for which he had been gathering material over his entire span of years. This book is a colossal and creative Marxist achievement of historic and international proportions. It is perhaps the greatest theoretical and ideological accomplishment by a single contemporary Marxist in the Western Hemisphere. It is Foster's chief theoretical work, and crowns his rich and challenging contributions on the Marxist theoretical front. It arms the working class and its Communist vanguard with a weapon for peace, freedom and human progress. American imperialism suffering from the stench of its own ideological bankruptcy will feel the effects of this ideological blow. It is a lever for national liberation in the hands of the Negro, of the colonial and semi-colonial peoples of the Western Hemisphere, as they confront the clay-footed Wall Street colossus which stands astride Latin and South America, the Carribean countries and the American Black Belt.

In one respect Foster's new book takes on the character of a discovery. Especially is this true when applied to its treatment of the large proportion of Negro, Indian and other darker peoples who comprise the Western Hemisphere. These

* *Political Affairs*, June 1946, p. 554.

peoples, who formed such a predominant part of the economic structure of Western Hemispheric society, have been virtually buried by the pseudo-historians of American imperialism under the malignant rubbish of white chauvinism and under the myth of anti-scientific "racial inferiority." Foster's book re-discovers these, roughly, 100,000,000 colored peoples—re-discovers them in their true historical and dialectical relationship to all other forces in the Western Hemisphere and the world. They are a proud, democratic-minded and peace-loving people, constituting one of the basic guarantees of the inevitability of Socialism in the Western Hemisphere.

Many times in the past our Party—as well as others—has dealt with the history of the Negro people in a limited manner. In his new book Foster for the first time treated the history of the Negro people from their first appearance in the Western Hemisphere. Moreover, Foster is the first American Marxist to deal substantially with the Indian question. In his book, he elaborates comprehensively on this complicated question giving it a deserved, basic attention in accordance with its high importance.

The ideological henchmen of American capitalism, steeped in white chauvinism, have never produced a work of this scope. With all their vaunted "brains," with all their Walter Lippmanns, they could never get further than the

bits and pieces—the mishmash—of eclecticism. In sharp contrast, it is noteworthy that Foster's principal theoretical achievement should deal in such a large measure with the restoration of the honor, democratic contributions, and potential Socialist strength of the colored peoples of the Western Hemisphere.

Bourgeois historians would have American school children believe that the Negro people were enslaved because of the so-called "innate inferiority" of darker peoples as compared to white. But Foster's Marxist work tears this slanderous canard to shreds:

"The basic explanation of why it was possible to enslave and transport such large numbers of Negroes from Africa was the existence of tribal disunity and internecine war among the Negroes in their homeland. The slavers, Negro and white, were able to play upon these differences, with disastrous results for all the Negro peoples."*

Foster's book convincingly shows that the 321 million peoples of the Western Hemisphere—215 million white, 45 million Negroes, 30 million Indians and 30 million Mestizos—are a powerful force for peace and freedom. Herbert Hoover, haunted by the specter of the rising strength of the camp of peace, democracy and Socialism led by the

* *Outline Political History of the Americas*, pp. 77-78.

Soviet Union, expounds his imperialist warmongering by urging his uneasy Wall Street cronies to sit comfortably on the supposedly docile peoples of the Western Hemisphere. But it is clear that Wall Street is perched on a powder keg, the most explosive aspect of which is the aspirations of the national, colonial and semi-colonial peoples of this Hemisphere for liberation from the iron heel of American imperialism. These peoples are essentially anti-imperialist and anti-war, with the colored peoples of the Americas in the forefront.

Of the many important proposals made by Foster in his new book, none is more timely than that the Negro peoples—the most oppressed within the Americas—should pool their great strength.

"There is great need for a hemisphere-wide conference of the various Negro peoples, at which they could evaluate their general position and work out their policies and course of action."*

This text book literally abounds with lessons, theoretical and political, for study on the Negro question in the United States—especially on the problem of self-determination for the Black Belt. In *Political Affairs* (June 1946), Foster refers to the development of national consciousness of nations in Central America, in connection with the discussion of the national consciousness of the Negro people. He comprehensively elaborates

upon the inter-relationships of these questions in the new work.

The *Outline Political History of the Americas* is a beacon light to national and colonial liberation. In the hands of the revolutionary Negro proletariat—let alone the working class as a whole—it can add further to the mounting woes of the atomaniacs and potential Hitlers who infest Wall Street and Washington.

For many years, as a member of the Political Committee of our Party, Foster's keen interest in the problems of the Latin and South American peoples resulted in his heading this phase of our Party's work, in addition to his other responsibilities. A catalogue of a few of his articles demonstrate his ideological contributions on this question. He wrote "Win the Western Hemisphere for Democracy and Peace," July, 1938; "Building the Western Hemisphere Democratic Front," July, '39; "The Pan-American Conference in Havana," Sept., '40; "Yankee Imperialism Grabs for the Western Hemisphere," July, '41; "The Congress of the Communist Party of Cuba," March, '39; and others. His popular pamphlet, *The Crime of El Fanguito*, was a classic and moving exposure of the degradation imposed upon the Puerto Rican people by the millionaire sugar hogs of Wall Street. His article, "The Danger of American Imperialism in the Post-War Period," written in June 1945 drew attention to the developing revolution

* *Ibid.*, p. 581.

in China. American imperialism's "conception of China," Foster said, "is that of a golden field for American exploitation."

THE INSPIRER OF PARTY CADRES

In addition to leading our Party on to the Leninist-Stalinist tracks on the national-colonial question, Foster's leadership has stimulated the flowering of the many excellent younger Negro cadres in our Party, both as leaders of the American working class and as leaders of the Negro people's struggles.

In commenting upon the discussion of the slogan of self-determination for the Negro people in the Black Belt, held in December 1946 Foster said warmly:

"I, for one, have no doubt that before very long, when we find the way of advancing the slogan more skillfully, the Negro people will begin to accept it. Especially I felt this when I listened to our brilliant young Negro Marxists discuss this question at this National Committee meeting."*

Under Foster's chairmanship, Henry Winston, outstanding young Negro leader of our Party, became the Party's National Administrative Secretary. The growth of Negro cadres in the Party is symbolized by Claudia Jones, Ed Strong,

Claude Lightfoot, James Jackson, Howard Johnson and others.

The recent intensive and fruitful campaign of our Party against white chauvinism—under the leadership of our National Committee—was conducted by Comrade Pettis Perry, Negro Communist leader. This campaign flowed from the reconstitution of our Party politically, particularly our position on the Negro question, under Foster's leadership. All of these major accomplishments of our Party on this front of struggle—although still a beginning—were impossible under Browder's anti-Marxist, white-chauvinist revisionism.

Foster's fidelity to the principles of Lenin and Stalin has been the source of his inspiring contributions to the cause of national and colonial liberation, to the freedom of the Negro people in the United States. This accounts as well for the tremendous breadth as well as depth of his theoretical, political and practical leadership. Our tribute to Foster must be to emulate his steadfast Marxist example.

His 70th birthday celebrations should be marked by renewed determination to grasp the Marxist-Leninist weapons he has provided for our Party and the American working class in the struggle for peace, democracy and Socialism. They are the weapons of freedom for all oppressed peoples. We must master them and spread them far and wide among our class and our people.

* *Communist Position on the Negro Question*, p. 18.

The Early Years of Bill Foster

by Elizabeth G. Flynn

SEVENTY YEARS AGO a baby was born in an already overcrowded household of a poor Irish-American working class family in Taunton, Massachusetts. Elizabeth and James Foster were immigrants from an impoverished and enslaved homeland. The ideal of human freedom came early to this child, Bill Foster, in the sad Irish lullabies his mother sang, and the glowing tales of struggle told by his father, who had been forced to flee from Ireland after one of the ever-recurring uprisings against British rule. He learned early of segregation and discrimination which made life hard for Irish families in New England. They were discriminated against in employment and housing and because of their religion. Signs "No Irish need apply," appeared openly on factories and empty houses. They were driven into back alleys and vilified as "ignorant, dirty, quarrelsome, superstitious" and what not.

Engulfed "in a sea of poverty," the family moved when Bill was six to a slum area in Philadelphia. He has few recollections of his birthplace, but when he wrote of

it years later he recalled that here "The flag of revolution was first raised in the United States. It was a red flag and was hoisted upon the town 'green' or public square."* The departed family was forgotten in Taunton, which awoke years later to a realization that William Z. Foster, Chairman of the Communist Party, U.S.A., was a native son. Workers began to say: "What do you know? Bill Foster was born here!" A local newspaper carefully checked and grudgingly headlined the news. Someday soon the historic little "green," which is still there, will most likely be renamed for this native-born, Irish-American worker—a "Red"—like the early revolutionary flag.

A terrible depression hit this country in the '90's. Bill's father, an unskilled laborer, could find no work. His mother was worn out with excessive child-bearing and household drudgery, the knowledge of which gave Bill Foster a deep and abiding sympathy and understanding of the lot of working-class mothers. At the age of seven he

* William Z. Foster, *From Bryan to Stalin*, International Publishers, p. 12.

sold newspapers. At ten he was forced to leave school permanently and go to work. Denied an education (which he secured later by wide and systematic reading and individual study), and living in a poverty-stricken home, "I early felt the iron of the class-struggle sink into my heart," he said.

His first strike experience came at the age of fifteen. The Philadelphia carmen fought a bitter struggle. "I was all for the workers," is how he described his youthful response to that strike. Class consciousness, a strong sense of solidarity and a keen desire for knowledge gripped this thin, poorly clad, under-fed youth in his early teens. He recalls that degradation, drunkenness, gangsterism, and crime flourished in the slum area. But Bill Foster escaped all this; he sought and found the labor movement. Their home was a center for Irish patriots, some of whom were "Molly Maguires" who had fled bloody persecution by the coal barons in the anthracite mining area. Early Bill Foster learned of frame-ups against union labor—how nineteen young Irish-American coal miners were hanged by the anthracite coal barons in the '70's. He hung around bulletin boards to read eagerly of the march of Coxey's army of the unemployed. He went to political meetings and heard Bryan speak; when he was fifteen he marched in a torchlight parade. He read of

the hanging of the Haymarket martyrs in Chicago, who had led the eight-hour day movement in the '80's. He followed the hard-fought Homestead steel strike and the railroad strike led by Debs in the '90's. Ideas were germinating in this serious youth that subsequently made him the organizer and leader at 38 of the greatest steel strike, in 1919, which this country has ever seen and later a militant leader of the unemployed.

* * *

By the opening year of the twentieth century, he was nineteen and a seasoned worker. He had worked in a fertilizer plant, a lumber camp, as a steamfitter, fireman, engineer and as a street-car conductor on the Third Avenue street car line in New York City. Here he joined his first union and tried his hand at organizing the car barns. The demands were for seats, airbrakes and vestibules. He lost his job in a few days, was blacklisted, and returned to Philadelphia. He was a natural student, reading incessantly, especially history and science. Up to this time he had never seen a Socialist book or pamphlet. He had read Tom Paine, he had read Darwin and other writers on evolution, and half a dozen histories of the French Revolution by the time he was thirteen. Through his early experiences and

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knowledge as a worker and his scientific reading he had become disillusioned with capitalist economics and government and with religion. His awareness of the needs of the workers and his probing mind, determined to find the answer to *what's to be done?* prepared him for the next step, that of becoming a Socialist. He describes in *From Bryan to Stalin* how it came with dramatic suddenness:

"One night, in the summer of 1900 I was walking along at Broad and South Streets [Philadelphia] and, noticing a street speaker, I stopped to listen. He was a Socialist . . . his name I never learned. I listened entranced by what the speaker said . . . I found myself in complete agreement with him. His argument and analysis seemed to give real meaning to all my experiences in the class struggle. *His proposals for the workers to take over the government and the industries and to abolish the profit system appealed to me as the only real solution of the workers' problem and my 35 years of later experience in life have only confirmed this opinion.* The speaker was a good one and I drank in his words eagerly. I left the meeting in great enthusiasm, later eagerly reading a couple of pamphlets I had bought at the time. Although with as yet only an inkling of the great world outlook comprised under the term

Socialism, *I began to count myself, from that time on, a Socialist. That street meeting indeed marked a great turning point in my life.*"*

Now he began to read all the Socialist literature he could lay his hands on. The habits of intensive reading, of systematic studying, of thoroughly mastering a subject, have remained and deepened with Bill Foster to this very day. In preparation of his newly published book, *Outline Political History of the Americas*, he recently read over 300 books in both English and Spanish. He has mastered a number of languages during his lifetime. During two long illnesses which necessitated periods of inactivity, he reorganized his life and resolutely turned to study and writing, producing articles, pamphlets and books, of which this latest is the crowning achievement.

Since his earliest youth as a rail-roader he has had a keen sense of the value of time, and he has organized his life so that none is wasted. He is punctual to the minute, systematic and orderly in all his work, simple in his tastes and manner of life, considerate with those with whom he works, modest and unassuming in relations with people. He has not changed in basic quality nor earnestness from the young worker of 1900, who became a Socialist. He is never discouraged, although he can blaze

* *Ibid.*, p. 23.

out in the just wrath of a patient man, especially at laziness, cowardice, lack of unity, against sectarianism, against inactivity. He has a will power to get things done like the steel they make in the big plants.

Before he could vote, he already went off to sea as an able-bodied, deep-water seaman. Working in a fertilizer plant had given him a touch of tuberculosis. He covered 50,000 miles in "square riggers"—the last of the sailing ships. His fascinating sea stories of the "Pegasus" rounding Cape Horn, the "Black Prince" and others and of their trips to Africa, Australia and South America, are comparable to any written by Jack London. They are a lively chapter in his book *Pages from a Worker's Life*. Hunger, hardship, danger, low wages, the most callous and brutal exploitation of homeless, wandering men—the sailors of yesterday—are pictured. All this showed young Bill Foster the need of militant unions for seafaring men. On his return he became a member of his second union—the Atlantic Coast Seamen's Union. He refers to this period as "my most interesting and unforgettable experience as a worker," when he travelled one and a half times around the world.

But the lure of the West was also strong among adventurous Eastern youths then, and in 1904 he made his first hobo trip across the con-

continent. (In the next 16 years he beat his way over 35,000 miles of railroads, in seven such trips, on one of which he froze his feet.) At 23 years of age he arrived at Portland, Oregon, in time to cast his first vote for Eugene V. Debs, Socialist candidate for President.

For the next three years Bill was an Oregonian, taking an active part in the Socialist Party. He "homesteaded" a piece of land, which he later sold for \$100—the only property he ever possessed. Here he read for the first time *The Communist Manifesto*, *Wage Labor and Capital*, *Value, Price and Profit*, and the first volume of Marx's *Capital*, which was published in this country about that time. He was an ardent supporter of the phenomenal Socialist paper, the *Appeal to Reason*, and a member of its "army" of sub-getters. This paper soared into a circulation of millions during the trial, in 1907, of William D. Haywood, whose acquittal was hailed by all workers as a tremendous victory.

• • •

It was while Foster was in the North-West that the Left wing emerged in the Socialist Party. Bill Foster, animated by a strong working-class consciousness, in common with many other workers, rebelled against the official domination of the Socialist Party by ultra-vocal lawyers, preachers, small manufac-

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turers, with an occasional "millionaire Socialist" thrown in. He felt that workers must be the dominant element in the membership and leadership of a real working-class party. The maximum program of these "middle-class intellectuals" was described by him as "a thin gruel of government-owned industries duly bought from the capitalists and called Socialism," much like what they have in England today.

It was in revolt against such policies and later against pro-war policies in 1917, that the Left-wing movement began to shape up, in the West among the native-born unorganized migratory workers and in the East among the foreign-born, unskilled, unorganized workers in mass production industry. Its struggle within the Socialist Party resulted in the expulsion in 1909 of members grouped around the *Seattle Socialist* in the North-West for "Left opposition." William Z. Foster was one of those expelled. In 1912 William D. Haywood and other workers grouped around the *International Socialist Review* in Chicago were similarly expelled. Seven years later the Left wing was the overwhelming majority of the Socialist Party, and founded the Communist Party.

* * *

I met Bill Foster first in Spokane, Washington, in 1909, while he was

reporting the I.W.W. free speech fight for the Left-wing Socialist paper of Seattle. It was here, at the age of 28, that he was first arrested for defending the Bill of Rights. When he was arrested in 1948, one of the twelve indicted Communist leaders, it was the nineteenth time he had been arrested for free speech!

Such were the early years of Bill Foster, when he became a worker and a Socialist—a fighter for human freedom—the formative period out of which he grew to be a great labor organizer, strike and mass leader, a profound student, a teacher of the science of Marxism-Leninism—the best theoretical leader the American revolutionary movement has produced. Flesh and blood of the American working class, with supreme confidence in the fighting ability and ultimate victory of that class, he glories in the vast changes that have taken place since he was born. "The world capitalist system has passed its zenith and has fallen a prey to corroding decay."

Let me conclude with the following quotation from Foster's writing:

"My life in the labor, Left wing, and Communist movement has been a very happy one. It has given me the opportunity to do the thing closest to my heart and mind—to fight against reactionary capitalism and for progressive Socialism. From

my earliest youth I have always felt a great pride in being a worker, and it has ever been a matter of the deepest satisfaction to me to be able to identify myself so closely with the struggles of the working class. If I were starting out my life all over again, I would take the same course as I have done. . . . One thing I would surely do, despite the press of practical work, would be better to organize my time so as to enable me to indulge more than I have in the reading of the science and history that I love so much. This is one thing that the

youth in the labor and Communist movement should most resolutely, strive to accomplish—to combine the theoretical with the practical, to find time for lots of solid reading, notwithstanding the most urgent demands of the day-to-day struggle.”*

A great warrior for the working class is Bill Foster, our beloved leader, comrade and friend. May he live to see Socialism in his native land!

* William Z. Foster, *The Twilight of World Capitalism*, International Publishers.

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Foster—The Leader of Our Party

by Alexander Bittelman

THE HISTORY of Bill Foster's life for the last three decades and the history of our Party are inseparable. It is the same great story. It tells how the class-conscious and militant workers of the United States, led by their most gifted and greatest representative, have been building the vanguard party of their class—the Communist Party. It tells how the American Communists, led by Foster, have been organizing and leading significant detachments of the working class and its allies in historic battles against the enemies of the people—Wall Street, its government, its labor lieutenants. It tells how the American Marxist-Leninists, led by Foster, have been wrestling with and solving major political and theoretical problems for the defense of the daily interests of the American working class and people, for the advancement of the American working class toward leadership in the nation, toward the Socialist revolution and Socialism.

Bill Foster himself speaks very rarely, if at all, of his own role in the history of the modern American labor movement. Yet the fact is

that no one can grasp the full meaning of this history without understanding the pioneering and leading role of Bill Foster, whose life and struggles in the labor movement cover more than half a century. It is the same with Foster and our Party. In all his rich and voluminous writings, historical, political, theoretical, including his autobiographical writings, there is virtually nothing about his own contributions and leadership except a few bare facts. And this, too, is Bill Foster—the greatest American proletarian fighter and leader of our time and the most modest.

Take, for example, Chapter XVI of his book *From Bryan to Stalin*. This chapter is devoted to the Communist Party, one of the richest and most significant chapters in Foster's own life as it is in the history of the modern American labor movement. But of his own role, this is all he tells us:

“Let me cover this angle by stating simply that I have been a member of the Central Committee ever since I joined the Party in 1921, that I have been its Chairman

twice, that I was its Presidential candidate in 1924, 1928 and 1932, that I was candidate for Governor of New York in 1930 and that I have been in the thick of the Party work from 1921 on. I have also been honored for a number of years past with membership in the Executive Committees of the Communist International and of the Red International of Labor Unions.”*

That he has been “in the thick of the Party work from 1921 on” is so, of course. But behind these modest words stand three decades now (it was 16 years when these words were written in 1937) of wonderful achievements for the progress of the American working class, for the growth and development of its Communist Party.

Bill Foster brought to the Communist Party the most advanced and militant sections of the American trade unionists; and he brought the young Communist Party into intimate contact and relationship with the problems, tasks and struggles of the trade unionists, of the organized American workers. This was a historic event of far-reaching significance. It brought together Communism and the advanced American labor movement, a union which Foster himself expresses and symbolizes so

brilliantly and profoundly. This union, in the realization of which the late Charles E. Ruthenberg, leader of the Socialist Party Left wing and the first General Secretary of our Party, worked hand in hand with Foster, accomplished two things. It placed the young Communist Party in the very thick of the class struggle of the American proletariat for the first time since the birth of the Party in 1919. It opened for the Party the road to its natural and main base—the industrial proletariat. This was one aspect of the union between Communism and the labor movement which had a most profound and far-reaching effect upon the subsequent development of our Party into a true vanguard Party of the American working class. The other aspect of the union was that it enriched and strengthened the class struggle of the American workers and their allies with the leadership — political, organizational and theoretical — of a vanguard Party of a new type, of a Marxist-Leninist party.

This union gave deeper class consciousness, a clearer perspective and correct political leadership to the struggles which were led by the Left and progressive forces in the labor movement. The ideological influences of Marxism-Leninism and of the Communist Party have played a decisive role in the progress and consolidation of the Left

* William Z. Foster, *From Bryan to Stalin*, p. 282.

and progressive forces in the American labor movement as against the influences of the reformist and reactionary trade-union bureaucracy. And here Foster's theoretical, political and organizational leadership was of tremendous importance.

This was only natural. Foster's great and many-sided gifts, and his active, revolutionary role in the American labor movement, since the beginning of the century, fitted him splendidly for the Marxist-Leninist leadership in the trade-union struggles and developments which he exercised from 1921 on.

Of his role in the American labor movement before 1921, Foster has this to say in his book, *The Twilight of World Capitalism*:

"The modern American trade union movement, arising out of the big industrial expansion and labor struggles that increasingly developed after the Civil War, was organized the same year that I was born, the A. F. of L. having been formed in Pittsburgh on November 15, 1881. All my active life, in fact since I was 14, I have been deeply and closely connected with American labor unionism. At one time, from 1917 to 1920, I was head A. F. of L. organizer in the meat-packing and steel industries. We organized 200,000 in packing and 367,000 in steel, the first modern trustified mass production indus-

tries ever organized by the American labor movement."*

Again, only a few bare facts of his own personal role, but facts that are milestones of labor history. For example, the organization of the steel industry and the great steel strike in 1919 are almost epochal events in the life of American labor and of the American people as a whole. For they represented one of the major economic battles of American labor against Wall Street, against monopoly capital, against the strongest capitalist monopoly of that time—the Steel Trust and the House of Morgan. It was one of the major labor battles of the imperialist era which opened with the beginning of this century. The steel strike was lost, but only in the immediate sense—the workers did not win their demands. But in the long run—and this can now be seen by everybody—the steel strike led by Foster in 1919 has had the effect of seriously breaching the open-shop fortress of the monopolies in the basic industries, and of laying the groundwork for later organizing drives and successful economic struggles. It was the steel organizing drive and strike of 1919 that made possible the emergence of the United Steel Workers Union of the C.I.O.

* William Z. Foster, *The Twilight of World Capitalism*, p. 60.

More than that: It was the self-sacrificing and unremitting struggle of the Left and progressive forces in the trade unions, headed by the Communists and led by Foster, for the organization of the basic industries into industrial unions, that made possible the subsequent organization of these industries and the emergence of the C.I.O.

It is necessary to see also the broad political and ideological consequences of the 1919 steel organizing drive and strike. As a great lesson in the American class struggle, and specifically against the trusts and monopolies, the steel strike contributed greatly to stimulating the growth of people's anti-monopoly movements and struggles in many fields, including the electoral and political fields and the growth of farmer-labor parties. For the more advanced and class-conscious workers—Left trade unionists, Left Socialists, anarcho-syndicalists—the lessons of the steel strike were also lessons in the nature of the capitalist state as the dictatorship of the capitalist class, dominated by the monopolies, which must be supplanted by the dictatorship of the working class in order to abolish capitalist exploitation and establish Socialism in the United States. They were lessons in the nature of monopoly capitalism, the economic base of imperialism, which brings mounting

political reaction, greater capitalist exploitation and oppression, national oppression and imperialist wars. They were lessons in the paramount importance of working-class unity, of the need of working-class political independence from the capitalist parties, of the need of building working-class alliances with other progressive and anti-monopoly strata and groups. They were lessons to the more advanced American workers of the need of a vanguard party, a Marxist-Leninist party in the United States.

To the more advanced and class-conscious workers of the United States, the lessons of the organizing drives and great strikes led by Foster between 1917 and 1920 became interlinked with the lessons of the greatest event of that time, the greatest in human history, the victory of the Great October Socialist Revolution. The interlinking of lessons has led large numbers of revolutionary-minded American workers to begin to approach Marxism-Leninism, to begin to move toward Communism, and to affiliate with the Communist Party of the United States of America.

Speaking of his own development as a Communist, Foster has these illuminating lines in *The Twilight of World Capitalism*:

"My next big ideological advance, after getting rid of my religious, capitalistic and Social-

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Democratic illusions, was my gradual development as a Communist. This was no simple matter and it took me about a dozen years more to accomplish. During most of this interim time I was a syndicalist, believing that the unions alone could bring about socialism. I joined the Communist Party early in 1921, about 18 months after it was organized. The major factor that decided me to take this big step was the stupendous reality of the Russian revolution, together with an intensive reading of the works of Lenin. Becoming a Communist meant for me to put the logical capstone upon my whole previous life experience. I had reached my political destination."*

It is significant that in the main this was also the path of ideological development of most class-conscious and militant American workers. Like Foster, these workers naturally came into the Communist Party. In doing so, they greatly accelerated the process which was bringing the Party into the thick of the class struggle. Consequently, Foster began to exercise a decisive influence in the life of the Party from the very first day of his membership. And considering Foster's great talents as organizer, political leader and Marxist theoretician, it was natural that Foster should become the leader of our Party.

THREE DECADES OF MARXIST-LENINIST LEADERSHIP

We speak rightly of the Communist Party as a "party of a new type." By this we mean, in the words of Stalin, "a militant party, a revolutionary party, one bold enough to lead the proletarians to the struggle for power, sufficiently experienced to find its bearings amidst the complex conditions of a revolutionary situation, and sufficiently flexible to steer clear of all submerged rocks on the way to its goal."* And we justly consider it our main task to develop our own party into that kind of party. This naturally has its effects upon the type of leaders which the Communist Party produces. As it grows and matures into a true party of a new type, it produces leaders of a new type. It produces a new type of American working-class leader. And Bill Foster is their greatest and most talented representative.

For three decades Foster has given the American working class and its vanguard party—the Communist Party — Marxist-Leninist leadership. The Party was maturing and growing with him and he and his leadership were growing with the Party. That is why the advanced detachment of the American working class is able to face

* *Ibid.*, pp. 161-162.

* Joseph Stalin, *Foundations of Leninism*, International Publishers, p. 108.

and meet its present historic responsibilities in the fight of the American people for peace, democracy, the preservation of our living standards, and for the equal rights of the Negro people. That is why the advanced detachment of the American working class, organized in the Communist Party, looks confidently into the future, to the fulfillment of its role of leadership in the advance of the American working class and all exploited to the Socialist revolution and the establishment of Socialism in the United States.

Leninism is the Marxism of the era of imperialism and of the Socialist revolution. Foster's role in the American class struggle and his three decades of Marxist-Leninist leadership are the product of the same era. This is how Foster himself characterized the era in which he grew to Marxist-Leninist leadership:

"The decline of the capitalist system that set in at the end of the nineteenth century was of the most profound importance. This tremendous fact, the growing decay of the long-dominant regime of world capitalism, is manifesting itself in far-reaching changes in every phase of our life: economic, political, scientific, religious, intellectual, artistic, social. The ever-speeding decline of international capitalism, together with its great

concomitant fact, the rise of world Socialism, is the all-decisive development in the general period in which we are living."*

This was the epoch in which Foster came to Marxism-Leninism and to the leadership of the American Marxist-Leninists. It was the epoch which saw the beginning of the general crisis of the world system of capitalism, the victory of the Great October Socialist Revolution, the birth and triumph of Lenin's teachings, the victory of Socialism in the Soviet Union, the rise of the Communist movement in all parts of the world, and the world leadership of Stalin—the Lenin of our time. It is the epoch which saw the titanic struggle against Hitler-fascism and the "Anti-Comintern" axis, a struggle headed by the Soviet Union and led by Stalin. It is the epoch of the military defeat of the Axis in World War II by the anti-Hitler coalition, in which the Soviet Union played a decisive role, which saved humanity from fascist slavery. It is the epoch of the rise of the new People's Democracies in Europe and of the great People's Republic of China. It is the epoch which marks the beginning of the end of world capitalism.

It is also the epoch which sees the growth of new fascist and war dangers. These dangers have their

* *The Twilight of World Capitalism*, p. 7.

main source in American imperialism, in the drive of Wall Street to world domination abroad and to fascist rule at home. And it is Foster's Marxist-Leninist leadership of the Communist Party that is illuminating the path of the advancing forces of peace and democracy in the United States. It is the guidance of Foster, leading the Communist Party, that is showing the American working class and its allies the way of struggle against the growing dangers of war and fascism, the way of meeting and defeating these dangers.

PROMOTING THE CLASS STRUGGLE AND BUILDING THE PARTY

In the three decades of Bill Foster's Marxist-Leninist leadership, covering the economic, political and theoretical sides of the class struggle, several aspects of his leadership are especially significant for the American working class and its allies.

First and most fundamental has been Foster's leadership in the struggle to develop the class consciousness of the American workers, to deepen the class struggle, to promote the political independence of the American working class, to infuse its struggles with a Socialist consciousness. This is one aspect of Foster's leadership which is having a profound effect upon the realization of what must be considered the

major task and duty of the class-conscious workers of America at the present time. It is the task of promoting labor's initiative, activity and leadership in the fight for peace, in the fight for the creation of a powerful American peace front able to paralyze the Wall Street warmongers and to save the American people from national disaster.

Class struggle, class independence and working-class leadership of the American people's struggles against their oppressors and exploiters, against the monopolies, against Wall Street—this is the life and substance of Bill Foster's Marxist-Leninist leadership. This is the flaming spirit of William Z. Foster's leadership that lights the way toward great actions for the advancement of the American working class, for the progress of the American people. Whether on the field of economic struggles and trade-union work, or on the field of political struggle and elections, representing the Communist Party in historic national elections as its Presidential candidate; whether in the field of struggle for Negro rights and against all forms of national oppression and discrimination, or in the field of ideological and theoretical struggle against the influences of the bourgeoisie and of the reactionary trade-union bureaucracy and Social-Democratic leaders, as well as against Lovestoneism, Trotskyism and Browderism; in all these fields of the class struggle of the Amer-

ican proletariat, Foster's leadership was always pressing toward promoting and deepening the class struggle, crystallizing working-class political independence and developing working-class leadership in the progressive movements and struggles of the people.

Secondly, and equally fundamental, has been Foster's leadership in the struggle for the vanguard role of the Communist Party. The effects of this struggle are far-reaching. They will make themselves felt powerfully in days to come when significant sections of the American working class will begin to exercise their leadership in the historic struggles for peace and democracy with the *Communist Party at their head*.

Build the Party—this has been the categorical imperative in Foster's leadership. There is not an aspect or phase of Foster's work in which building the Communist Party—ideologically, politically and organizationally—did not occupy the central and dominant place. Foster's leadership never lost sight of the first and most important lesson from the experiences of the Bolshevik Party—the party of Lenin and Stalin. It is the lesson dealing with the role of the vanguard Party of the working class, which is formulated as follows in the *History of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union*:

"The history of the Party teaches us, first of all, that the victory of the proletarian revolution, the victory of the dictatorship of the proletariat, is impossible without a revolutionary party of the proletariat, a party free from opportunism, irreconcilable toward compromisers and capitulators, and revolutionary in its attitude toward the bourgeoisie and its state power.

"The history of the Party teaches us that to leave the proletariat without such a party means to leave it without revolutionary leadership; and to leave it without revolutionary leadership means to ruin the cause of the proletarian revolution."*

In Foster's leadership there was no room for contradiction between building the Party and fighting to win the masses — contradictions which always plague the Right opportunists and the "Left" sectarians. The Right opportunists in our midst go on the false assumption that in order to win the masses we must play down and hide the vanguard role of the Party while the "Left" sectarians go on another false assumption, that in order to build the Party and bring forth its vanguard role we must keep away from and leave alone the masses who follow the reformists and reactionaries. Foster's lead-

* *History of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union (Bolsheviks)*, International Publishers, 1939, p. 353.

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* *Ibid*

ership wages merciless war against both opportunist tendencies. Foster's guidance has never lost sight of another great lesson from the experiences of the Bolshevik Party. It is this:

"The history of the Party teaches us that unless it has wide connections with the masses, unless it constantly strengthens these connections, unless it knows how to hearken to the voice of the masses and understand their urgent needs, unless it is prepared not only to teach the masses but to learn from the masses, a party of the working class cannot be a real mass party capable of leading the working class millions and all the laboring people."*

Foster's Marxist-Leninist struggle for the vanguard role of the Communist Party, his unremitting battles for building the strength and authority of the Party—ideologically, politically and organizationally—is playing today a major role in equipping our Party for the great and serious tasks facing it in the present world situation. It is showing itself in the vanguard role which the Party is playing in the historic, world-wide struggle against American imperialism and its drive for world domination. It is showing itself in the vanguard role in which the Party is now fighting the

major battle of the present period—the fight for peace, for the defeat of Wall Street's drive to a new world war, against Wall Street aggressions in Korea and China. It is showing itself in the Party's vanguard role in the fight against Wall Street's drive to fascist rule in the United States, and for the civil liberties and democratic rights of the masses. It is showing itself in the vanguard role which the Party is playing in the fight for the equal rights of the Negro people and for the defense of the living standards of the American people. Finally, and most importantly, it is showing itself in the determined way in which the Party is now meeting the liquidationist danger in our midst and in organizing the struggle against it.

One of the most important aspects of Foster's leadership is its consistent and militant working-class internationalism. Some of the most beautiful pages in the history of Foster's work is his leadership for the support of the working-class and progressive struggles all over the world, especially support for the building of Socialism in the Soviet Union, for the national liberation movements of oppressed colonial and dependent countries, against the fascist and war dangers everywhere. Of great significance is Foster's leadership in the struggle against all imperialist and fascist ideologies of race supremacy,

* *Ibid.*, p. 362.

white chauvinism, anti-Semitism, etc.

A chapter of exceptional importance is Foster's leadership in the fight for Negro rights, for active support to the national liberation movement of the Negro people. A major aspect here is Foster's leadership in the fight for the alliance of the American working class with the national-liberation movements of the Negro people in common struggle against American imperialism, for the democratic rights of the masses, for the right of self-determination of the Negro nation in the Black Belt of the South.

Foster's leadership has contributed most powerfully toward advancing the progressive struggles of the American youth and of American women, especially among the working class and other toiling groups in America. Foster's guidance has been a major factor in promoting the Party's influence and vanguard role in these fields.

Bill Foster's leadership derives its main strength from the fact that it is Marxist-Leninist leadership, the leadership of a Marxist-Leninist party. Here is how Foster himself puts it in his beautifully simple and modest way:

"Since joining the Communist Party it has been a never ending effort on my part, with such diligence and self-criticism as I can command, to master the revolution-

ary principles of Marx, Engels, Lenin and Stalin, and to apply them effectively in the class struggle."*

This is how and why Bill Foster led the historic ideological struggles for the principles and the ideology of Marxism-Leninism in the United States. The milestones of these struggles will illuminate the path of American Communists for years and years to come. It was the fight against Lovestoneism, the opportunist theory of American "exceptionalism" combined with the negation in fact of working-class internationalism and of the vanguard role of the Communist Party. It was the fight against Trotskyism, which started as a Leftist opportunist current and became a spying and wrecking agency of the fascists. It was the fight against Browderism, revisionist opportunism and liquidationism.

Applying the principles of Marxism-Leninism in the American class struggle, Foster has led in the formulation and solution of major theoretical and political problems in the three decades of his leadership. These were problems of economic theory (the fight against Keynesism), the nature of American imperialism (the fight against the theory of American "exceptionalism"), the character of the Negro national liberation struggles, prob-

* *The Twilight of World Capitalism*, p. 16.

lems of history, the broad problem etc.

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blems of American history and the history of the Western Hemisphere, the broad field of trade-union work, problems of women's work, culture, etc.

Under Foster's guidance and influence, younger generations of Communist leaders grew up to take their places in the direction of the Party's affairs together with the older ones—a fact well expressed and symbolized by the National Committee. Outstanding among our younger leaders is the General Secretary of the Party, Eugene Dennis (still in jail at this writing), a close co-worker of Foster. Of a still younger generation of our leaders are the National Secretary, Gus Hall, and the Organization Secretary, Henry Winston, who together with the Labor Secretary, John Williamson, composes the

Secretariat of the National Committee.

On Foster's seventieth birthday, a major event in the American as well as international working-class movements, we are deeply mindful of Foster's inspiring leadership. We are mindful of his influence and guidance which impart confidence to the Communists and to all consistent fighters for peace and democracy in the United States, in the final victory of the people. We are intensely proud of being Foster's contemporaries, his comrades, friends and co-workers. May he continue for many more years to inspire the work of the Party, to lend his influence and wisdom to the struggles of the American working class and its allies for peace, democracy and Socialism.

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Foster's Political and Theoretical Guidance To Our Work Among Women

by Claudia Jones

IT IS NO ACCIDENT that William Z. Foster, in his more than 50 years of devotion and leadership to the emancipation of the American working class and the oppressed Negro people, should likewise have manifested throughout his life an active and special concern for oppressed womanhood. No stranger to the hard lot and double exploitation daily experienced by working-class wives and mothers in present-day society, this foremost Marxist theoretician and leader of the American working class and its vanguard Communist Party was from early childhood conversant with women's special oppression.

In the figure of his overburdened mother, "*whose political activities,*" he observed, "*were nil, although she was quite intelligent,*" was summed up for Bill Foster the status of women and their inferior position in capitalist society. Reflecting on his mother's lot, which mirrored the special obstacles to women's political participation in our society, due to their burdensome responsibilities of home, he wrote in his autobiographical study, *From Bryan to Stalin*, 14 years ago:

"My mother lived a life of hardship and drudgery, made worse by excessive childbearing. Her political activities were nil, although she was quite intelligent. Like my father who told us many times that he had gone to school only one day and that day school did not keep, my mother had little or no formal education. Her life was one long struggle against the sea of poverty in which we nearly always lived. She died at the age of 53."^{*}

As a witness to these conditions, as expressed in his mother's lot, Bill Foster was filled with more than personal rebellion. For Foster, as we will show later, this experience was a vivid example of the inseparable connection between the social position of women in present-day society and private property in the means of production.

Nothing so illustrates Foster's profound understanding of the shameful humiliation of women under capitalism than his description of the barbarous indignities

^{*} William Z. Foster, *From Bryan to Stalin*, p. 12.

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suffered by Negro women in the United States and in Latin America. Describing the brutality of slavery, he thus writes in his magnificent new book, *Outline Political History of the Americas*:

"Negro women especially suffered from slavery. In addition to all the hardships of life and work common to both sexes, they had to suffer every indignity from the masters and their agents. In the Spanish colonies, says Williams, 'The slave had no legal rights: if the male was in most instances denied the privilege of marrying, the female was denied the right of refusing access to her bed on the part of the owner or of the overseer. The refusal of sexual intercourse with a white overseer was equivalent to mutiny. It was no uncommon thing for a planter to line up his girls before his guest, who was invited to take his choice for the night.' In many slave areas, due largely to the attitude of the Negro woman, the birth rate was so low that the only way the number of slaves could be maintained was by the constant importation of fresh slaves from Africa. Plenn says that in the cases where women refused to bear children, in resistance to slavery, and there were many, their masters often put iron collars on them until they gave up this practice. On the United States slave plantations, Negro women

were treated no less barbarously by the white masters."*

Again, referring to the inhuman status and treatment of women in the development of capitalist society in Latin America and in our own country Foster writes:

"The ruling autocrats helped themselves freely to the Negro and Indian slave women in the Spanish colonies. . . . They kept the women in almost complete ignorance, going on the old Moslem proverb that 'to educate a woman was like putting a knife into the hands of a monkey.' In the Southern United States, also, the slave women were the personal property of the masters not only to be worked at will, but also to cater to their sexual appetites. In all the colonies, French, Spanish, Portuguese, Dutch, and English, woman, especially the Indian and Negro woman, was at the very bottom of the social scale."**

Foster's profound understanding of the women's question is reflected in numerous ways. Hardly any of his books fails to refer to the role and status of subjected woman-kind. Practically all of his books are dedicated to his wife and comrade, Esther Abramowitz Foster,

* William Z. Foster, *Outline History of the Americas*, International Publishers, New York, p. 83.

** *Ibid.*, p. 171.

of whom he wrote in *From Bryan to Stalin*: "She is one of those to whom the worker's struggle is the breadth of life. An intelligent and devoted comrade, she has been my constant companion and a tower of strength to me in my labor activities for these many years."

HIS CONCERN WITH WORKING WOMEN'S PLIGHT

Still another index of Foster's unique qualities as a rounded Communist leader is his concern for the elementary needs of the workers and all oppressed humanity. A story illustrating this basic Communist trait is told by Foster himself in *Pages From a Worker's Life*. Following the organization, for the first time in the nation's history, of the mass production packinghouse industry, it seems, the arrogant meat corporations decided to call arbitration hearings. Not daunted, and recognizing this as an employer effort to sidetrack the developing struggles of the workers, Foster and his co-workers prepared a first-class exposé of the frightful conditions experienced by these workers.

"Most of the workers who testified were immigrants and many were Negroes," he then wrote. "Many said they had never been to a theater or moving picture house in the U.S., nor to the near-

by Chicago beaches or parks. I especially remember a Polish woman worker who told the same harrowing story. She wore no hat, her head being covered with a kerchief, old country, peasant fashion. Walsh [the union attorney, C.J.] noticing this, asked her: 'Where is your hat?' 'I haven't any,' she answered. 'Did you ever have a hat?' 'Yes,' she said, 'once in Poland, but since I came to America, it got worn out and I've never been able to buy another!'"*

How typical is this concern of Foster's, not only with the general economic plight of a woman worker, but with the feelings of a working woman who did not have enough money to buy a hat, and with workers whose lives were so impoverished that ordinary cultural and recreational satisfactions were beyond their reach. He felt the impact of such examples of proletarian poverty. He was deeply moved by the toll it takes of working women—who, carrying the brunt of household burdens and of child-bearing, become prematurely old and worn out beyond their years. It was this poignant realization that later led the chairman of the Communist Party to probe for the cause of women's special oppression in capitalist society.

With keen perception, even in

* William Z. Foster, *Pages From A Worker's Life*, pp. 154-155.

his early years, Foster realized that women were victims of class exploitation, as are all workers. But he also understood that women faced additional social, economic and ideological barriers deriving from their position in the family and society, from their economic dependence on men, which seriously hampers their struggle for equality and for social progress.

FIRST TO WARN AGAINST NEGLECT OF WORK AMONG WOMEN

In the tradition of all great Communist thinkers, recognizing that the fight against women's inequalities is connected with the fight against capitalist property relations, Foster was the first in our Party to call for a sharp turn in what he characterized as a widespread "*underestimation and general neglect*" of work among women. Typical of his unflagging interest in all phases of our Party's theoretical and practical work, despite his busy schedule and ill health, was his emphatic statement in his basic article, "On Improving the Party's Work Among Women."

"One of the gravest weaknesses of the Communist movement in the various capitalist countries, including our own, is its relative failure to win the active support of the decisive masses of women. It is a fact which we dare not ignore that

the forces of reaction still have a strong hold on womankind, including proletarian women. . . . This shortcoming of the Communist Parties becomes even more manifest today in view of the huge and increasing part that women are taking in all walks of life. This shortcoming must be quickly overcome, inasmuch as the parties spearheading the drive to fascism and war hold the affiliation of large masses of women. Obviously, therefore, a drastic improvement in their work among women is very much on the order of business for the Communist Parties of the capitalist world, especially our Party here in the United States."*

Pointing to the "basic cause" of this general weakness of our Party, Foster stressed that "inadequacy of practical work implies inadequate grasp of theory." In broad outline, his article set a number of tasks for our Party, especially as regards a struggle against the bourgeois ideological concept of male supremacy, which hampers woman in her struggle for equality at every turn.

In this approach, Foster was literally a trail-blazer for our Party, in shaking it from its past lethargy on this question. To underscore the impact Foster's emphasis had on our Party, it is necessary to reflect on the prevailing attitudes which generally existed in regard

* *Political Affairs*, November 1948, p. 984.

to our Party's work among women. Despite excellent past examples of mass work among women throughout our Party's history, and outstanding contributions of women comrades to general Party and mass work, on all levels, the Browder-revisionist period had seriously harmed our Party's consciousness as regards the importance of work in this field. Little or no importance was attached by our Party leadership and membership to this work. Particularly absent was the urgent present-day task of mass work among women which Lenin once declared "was indeed, a half of general Party work." Most Party districts relegated work among women to Party Women's Commissions, if they existed, and those that did exist were unintegrated to key policy-making Party committees and departments. Still other districts left the problem up to the women comrades themselves.

During the anti-fascist-war years, a majority of our women comrades staffed the main county, state, section and club Party apparatus. But to use the apt formulation of Gus Hall, "the worst symptom of male superiority tendencies in our ranks" in this period, was "the speed with which we released the bulk of our leading women comrades after World War II and our slowness to correct this error."*

* Gus Hall, *Peace Can Be Won!*, main report, 15th National Convention, C.P.U.S.A.

HE SPURRED THE STRUGGLE AGAINST MALE-SUPREMACY

Coupled with this was widespread infection of our Party and the labor and progressive movement with male supremacist bourgeois notions, which accompanied general neglect of our work among women in industry and in their mass organizations. Many of our women comrades, facing this situation, fell prey to bourgeois feminist notions, in their effort to combat this state of affairs in the Party and as expressed in their personal lives. It was not until two years following the reconstitution of our Party in 1915, under Foster's leadership, that the National Women's Commission was reconstituted.

It is fitting, self-critically, to ask on the occasion of the 70th birthday of our beloved Comrade Foster, how has our Party met this charge posed to us by Foster, to overcome these serious weaknesses in our work among women? We must first record that under pressure of work and growing reactionary attacks on our Party, a serious error was made in the failure of the Theoretical Commission and the sub-commission on theoretical aspects of work among women to function consistently as proposed by Comrade Foster. The result was that on the theoretical front not much progress has as yet been made. How-

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ever, it would be wrong to ignore the change in the level of our Party's approach to this field of work, following Foster's political and theoretical initiative on this question.

Foster's personal attention and interest in the work of the National Women's Commission was invaluable to whatever progress was made in our work. It was his discussions with us, prior to finalization of the aforementioned article, that helped to lend confidence to our Commission to fight for such an approach in our Party. In over nine Party districts, conferences on work among women, participated in by district leaderships, followed; and there was a general improvement in the organization of classes on the woman's question by state educational departments as well as its integration in general Party schools.

Foster's political and theoretical contributions led to a new appreciation of the tasks in our work among women throughout the Party. Indicative of this is the new awareness of the importance of women's work registered at our recent 15th National Convention. In all main reports at the National Convention, as in numerous state conventions, a new stress was given to this work particularly as a result of the unprecedented upsurge of peace sentiment among the masses of women and their significant ac-

tions for peace. Representing a sharp change in the extent of their participation, in comparison with our last Party Convention, our Negro and white women comrades who attended this Convention reflected in rich experiences their growing ties with masses and in general, the political growth of our women cadres. Particularly outstanding were the contributions of Negro women comrades, especially from the South.

Foster's contributions to our Party's understanding of the woman question likewise helped to combat blatant male-supremacist attitudes in our Party and progressive circles. More than over-caution, however, is still prevalent among many men comrades when this question arises, in relation to their own weaknesses. This situation has, however, led to a growing self-criticism of many of our male comrades and Party leaderships as regards the woman question. An important derivative of Foster's contribution was his help in allaying the passivity of many of our women comrades, who, up to now, had likewise not grasped their special responsibility to the masses of women. They had not understood the Leninist concept that Communist women must "themselves be part of the mass movement of women." As so clearly demonstrated in the upsurge of peace sentiment among millions of American women, Foster's contri-

butions served to strengthen our Party's understanding that in the all-decisive struggle for peace, the women's movement, as Lenin observed long ago, "can be at times the decisive part of the mass movement."

One need only refer within the confines of this article to the impassioned cry of mothers and wives who are increasingly questioning the involvement of American boys in the aggressive Korean adventure. One can only mention their growing demands to end the Korean war, to bring the boys home, and their alarm at the use of the nation's schools for terror-striking "survival drills" to which young children are subjected.

HE URGED THE DEEPENING OF OUR THEORETICAL KNOWLEDGE

Opposition to atomic war is growing among women of all classes in our country. Particularly is the concern of working women linked with the bitter worries now facing them in relation to the future of their children and that of their families. Negro women are expressing ever-greater bitterness over courtmartial sentences for their Jim-Crowed sons and husbands in Korea, the police murder of Negro veterans, and the growing lynch terror at home. As in the case of the foul murder of the men of Martinsville,

Virginia, the list of Negro "lynch widows" is growing apace.

To provide the answers to these and other complex questions it is necessary, as Foster stresses, to deepen the theoretical knowledge of our entire Party. It requires also strengthening the general theoretical knowledge of our women comrades and arming them ideologically so that they can raise the political consciousness of the masses of toiling women in the process of strengthening their ties with them.

It is in this light that the following stress, contained in the Main Resolution of the 15th National Convention of the Communist Party, U.S.A., should be brought to our entire Party and to the labor and progressive movement:

"There continues an underestimation of the role and importance of women in general and our women members in particular who constitute a large and active core of the Party.

"The women comrades have made signal contributions during the past period to the struggle for peace, against fascist tendencies in the schools, against the militarization of our youth and in the fight to maintain living standards. There must be waged a conscious fight for increased integration of our women membership in the leadership of the Party on all levels, particularly working-class and Negro comrades who can and do give able leader-

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ship in mass struggles. There must be an increasing awareness of the growth of the false and reactionary ideas of 'male superiority' in this period of developing fascist reaction, and a resistance to its expression in our Party in any form, with a determined struggle to place our Party in the forefront of the struggle for the rights of women in the unions, in shops and in political life.

"We must at all times remember that the fight against 'male superiority' ideas is a fight which must be waged in the first place by the Communist men, must have as its objective the mass participation of women in the struggle for peace, security and Socialism. This fight, to be successful, must include the determination to remove all obstacles preventing participation of women en masse in the struggle."*

Particularly should the experiences of European women, stressed in Foster's writings, serve as a guide to our work among women. Terming as "one of the great advances of democratic Europe" the involvement of large masses of women in the fight for peace, security and defense of their children, Foster, following his 1947 visit to the New European Democracies wrote, "Today as never before, democratic Europe is astir with the activity

of great women's movements."

Contrasting the vastly changed status of women of the New Europe to that which they occupied under fascism, when women were "special targets of fascist persecution," Foster emphasized the heroic struggle of European women against fascist enslavement when they "joined the men in a common effort to drive out the fascist invaders." He underscored that their struggle against fascism "constitutes one of its most glorious pages in the whole history of woman." The experiences of women under fascism and the terrible plight of women in the impoverished colonial and nationally oppressed countries filled women with a determination never again to allow the rise of fascism, or tolerate imperialist and semi-feudal slavery. In formerly Nazi-occupied Europe women resolved never again to return to the time when they were held to be merely breeders of warriors and objects of pleasure, according to the old reactionary motto: *Kinder, Kirche, Küche* (children, church and kitchen). Foster's emphasis on the great new status of women of Europe, which is now true of New China, should serve to emphasize our proletarian internationalist responsibilities to our sisters the world over.

The Wall Street monopoly capitalists in their drive to aggressive world domination, atomic war and domestic fascism are seeking to

* Main Resolution—15th National Convention, C.P.U.S.A., *Political Affairs*, Jan. 1951.

align the masses of women with the war camp. As occurred under Hitler's regime, the American bourgeoisie, in its reactionary drive, is contemptuous of women's sensibilities and of the fate of the family. This is evidenced in the fascist-like McCarran Act deportation hysteria which threatens the separation of families; of mothers and fathers from children, of wives from husbands, in aping the Hitler pattern.

THE URGENT FIGHT FOR THE NEEDS OF WOMEN WORKERS

It becomes ever more urgent therefore for our Party to heed the sound political and theoretical advice of Comrade Foster as we go forward to improve our work among women. Particularly important is the need to fight for the needs of women workers and to root all our united-front activities among working-class and Negro women, as we go forward in our work to win women in the struggle for peace, democratic rights, and economic security.

Projected in Truman's national emergency decree is the Wall Street plan to draft millions of women for war production. **Under the fine-sounding slogan, "Modern warfare knows no sex differences,"** W. Stuart Symington of the National Securities Resources Board, recently proclaimed:

"One of the greatest discoveries of the past was that women are able to do practically anything men can do!"

Of course, Symington's discovery only exposes the irony of women's lot in capitalist society as regards their participation in the nation's economic life. For the capitalists, the thesis seems to be that in peacetime women have no right to work, whereas in wartime they have a duty to work.

Ignoring the fact that women work out of dire necessity to support their families, neither government spokesmen nor bourgeois ideologists, who are pumping for women's recruitment in industrial jobs, armed services, medical corps, "home guards," etc., project programs for solving the child care problems of working mothers. Typical of ruling-class cynicism is a bourgeois male writer who had the brass to propose "a wide advertisement of new uniforms such as the ones Hattie Carnegie has recently designed for the WACS," as a means of accomplishing the rapid recruitment of women for Wall Street's war program.

Clearly, in contrast to the entry of women into industry during the anti-fascist war, such participation of women in the nation's economic life will represent not the increased right of women to work, but militarization of women. Already the worsening economic status of Negro

women, the most oppressed category of women in the United States, shows that they represent 48 percent of our country's labor force. But in this case they are largely employed of course in domestic and other menial jobs. These new problems and additional hardships facing 18½ million women workers (two million more than two years ago) makes it incumbent on labor progressives to fight for the special demands and rights of Negro working women, for their organization into trade unions, and for all of their other special grievances and needs.

These and other new developments make it imperative for our Party to strengthen its program of work among women. As Foster emphasized, it is necessary also to establish the pre-conditions for effective struggle on the ideological front. Foster emphasized the need for a deeper theoretical mastery of this question because, "a sharpening-up of our theoretical analysis of, and ideological struggle against, male supremacy will help all our day-to-day work among women." In the realization of this task, our entire Party membership and leadership must be involved.

SOCIALISM, THE FINAL SOLUTION

We know that emancipation of woman is possible only under So-

cialism. A guide for the Party in winning advanced sections of women for a Socialist perspective are the following words of Comrade Foster in relation to the emancipated woman of the Soviet Union:

"One of the greatest of socialist freedoms is the freedom of women. Socialism establishes sex equality in the fullest sense of the word. It does away completely with many of the disgusting bourgeois sex distortions and inhibitions and makes of sex a truly free beautiful and artistic expression of man and woman. For a long time the succeeding systems of the exploiters have forced woman into an artificial position of alleged inferiority to man. Capitalism has done more than its share to maintain and extend this monstrous oppression. The capitalists exploit woman doubly, both as workers and women. Woman has to face special oppression in every field in capitalist society—as a worker—a wife, a homebuilder and a citizen. Whichever way she turns she is confronted with subtle and often crudely brutal manifestations of 'male supremacy' chauvinism. These cripple her in every respect.

"But Socialism deals a shattering blow to this whole outrageous persecution system. It opens every door to woman, on the basis of the fullest freedom and equality.

"One of the very greatest achievements of Socialism in the U.S.S.R.

is the way it has extended real equality to woman. The Soviet woman is truly a new human being. She has learned altogether new capacities and rights and has amazed the world with her ability to do superlatively well anything she turns her hand to. The tremendous added power that emancipated woman gives to the Soviet economy and political life is one of Socialism's greatest advantages over capitalism. The Soviet woman is incomparably the freest woman in the world. If anyone wants to know whether Socialism cultivates personality and individuality, a powerful answer is found in the progress made by Soviet woman."*

Millions of American women, will one day come to understand that Foster's bright Socialist vision is in their own fundamental interests and that of the family. For equal rights in the Socialist U.S.S.R., are not just formal legal rights, which under bourgeois democracy, are, at best, only extended on paper, but are denied in reality by the very nature of capitalist exploitation. Under Socialism, full enjoyment of equal rights by women is *guaranteed* by the very nature of a society in which classes and exploitation are abolished.

* *The Twilight of World Capitalism*, p. 146.

Our Party can pay no greater tribute to our beloved Comrade Foster on the occasion of his 70th birthday than by helping to further an understanding of its tasks in relation to work among women. Utilization of Comrade Foster's profound writings to deepen the theoretical understanding of our Party and to strengthen it in its practical tasks should be a major objective as we prepare to celebrate International Women's Day, on March 8. Our application to the tasks set us by Comrade Foster for theoretical work, in the spirit of persistence, until it is accomplished, should be another of our resolves.

In the course of this development, paying close heed to Foster's political and theoretical advice, our Party, as it performs its vanguard tasks especially in relation to work among the broad masses of women, will help advanced sections of Negro and white working women to attain the level of Socialist consciousness. Armed by Foster's towering leadership of our Party, they will win millions of women to the scientific conviction that the final guarantee of peace, bread and freedom and the full emancipation of oppressed womanhood will be achieved only in a Socialist America.

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Foster—Leader of the Great Historic Struggles of the Unemployed

by Israel Amter

THE NAME OF Comrade Foster will always loom large as the main inspirer, organizer and leader of the great historic struggles of the unemployed and unorganized millions in the 1930's.

It was the summer of 1929. Rumbles were coming from Wall Street, gathering in volume and reaching a climactic crash in the Fall of that year. Hoover was in the White House. But this vaunted representative of American imperialism, who predicted an unbroken golden age for United States economy, could not stop the decline of industrial production. One of the periodical economic crises in capitalist America was beginning.

Industrial production declined sharply. Wall Street tried to conceal these facts—but to no avail. The Communist Party laid bare the developing situation. Yes, the Communist Party and the *Daily Worker* predicted that a deep-going crisis was developing.

In October came the big smash. Wall Street—the Stock Exchange—went down in a crash.

Hoover and the renegade Love-

stone called this only a slight "recession." Hoover predicted that prosperity was just around the corner, that there would soon be a chicken in every pot. But reality was of a different sort. The workers, unemployed and destitute, were evicted by the thousands and built the notorious, shameful Hoovervilles. Hoover expressed his "sympathy" for the unemployed, and particularly for the unemployed veterans of World War I, and recommended that they establish an income through the sale of apples. Instead of jobs, he gave the veterans bullets at Anacostia Flats.

The whole working class and the poor farmers were affected by the crisis. The worst sufferers were the Negro people, who got—as they always get—the least pay for the hardest work. The youth in that period became known as the "lost generation." The workers were unable to buy food, and as a result farmers could not sell. Their farms were foreclosed and sold out in tens of thousands of auction sales.

Out of this situation was born the Council of the Unemployed,

made up of the rank and file of American labor and the poor farmers.

It was the merit particularly of Comrade Foster, the brilliant strategist, that he pointed out that the unions could be defeated and destroyed if each section were allowed to carry on the struggle by itself, and if the employed disregarded the demands of the unemployed. The workers saw the correctness of Foster's program; and the mobilization of the trade unions and the organization of the unemployed finally resulted in victory of the workers in obtaining unemployment and social insurance.

The first to offer the unorganized and unemployed workers a comprehensive program of demands and struggle were the Communists. Following the initiative of Comrade Foster in the packing and steel industries, the Party called for the organization of the unorganized as a basic task of the American working class. With the development of the crisis, the Party was the first to adopt the demand for Federal unemployment and social insurance. The Communist Party called for unity of action of the employed and unemployed workers, of the organized and unorganized workers, and gave the workers a program with which to face the great crisis and the slump that followed.

The organized workers after the First World War numbered slightly

more than two million. Out of the ranks of the organized workers there sprang the Trade Union Educational League (T.U.E.L.), built under the leadership and with the intense personal activity of Comrade Foster and his immediate associates. The Trade Union Educational League was a powerful weapon in the struggle against the government strike-breaking open-shop offensive after World War I.

With the onset of the economic crisis of 1929-1933, Comrade Foster threw his great experience and vast energies into the struggle against the effects of the crisis upon the masses.

What are these economic crises that follow each other periodically? They are the result of the capitalist exploitation of the masses, which manifests itself in "over-production," in periodic, vast accumulations of goods which the workers do not earn enough to buy back. The result is that the workers are kicked out of their jobs and become the objects of "charity." This is the way of life of capitalism. Social insurance can ease the situation, but only Socialism can cure it.

In this situation, the Communists and the progressive trade unionists had a serious obligation to fulfill. The Communist Party issued a call for a general nation-wide demonstration on March 6, 1930. A united front of the Communist Party, the Trade Union Unity League (which

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had developed out of the T.U.E.L.) and the Unemployed Councils organized these demonstrations. The Councils had been set up on the initiative and with the active support of the Communist Party. The Councils carried on the struggle for relief, against evictions, for work projects to be organized by the Government. The unemployed had to resist the brutal violence of the police in militant battles. They issued leaflets, pamphlets, and newspapers in various parts of the country. All of this formed the basis for giant demonstrations in behalf of the unemployed. The Negroes, the women, the "lost generation" of the youth, Negro and white, and the poor farmers, merged their united strength in these demonstrations.

Here was manifested the strongest bond of unity between employed and unemployed, men and women, but above all, the unity of Negroes and whites. This spirit of unity permeated the whole movement and no one in the struggles dared to oppose it.

THE EPIC MARCH 6 DEMONSTRATIONS

March 6, 1930, saw the converging of the working-class forces in tremendous demonstrations throughout the country. These demonstrations were powerful: 110,000 in New York; 100,000 in Detroit; tens of thousands in other

cities. They showed clearly to Hoover and the state and local governmental authorities that the desperate needs of the unemployed could not be ignored. The outstanding leader and heroic figure in the New York demonstration was William Z. Foster.

Comrades Bob Minor, Harry Raymond and myself had the great privilege of serving with Comrade Foster as the spokesmen for the unemployed. Never shall I forget the dramatic moment when Bill Foster replied to the unlawful prohibition by Chief of Police Commissioner Grover Whalen of the right of the unemployed to march to City Hall. He put the question to the tens of thousands of unemployed who, overwhelmingly, insisted on the right to petition the City Administration. It was then that Foster, pointing in the direction of City Hall, said "Let's go!" It was for this fearless devotion and heroic defiance of the army of police that William Z. Foster and the rest of us on the delegation were imprisoned and served six months.

Historic March 6 was the forerunner of militant national Hunger Marches: destination Washington, D.C., one in December 1931 (1,800 delegates) and the second in 1932 (3,000 delegates). These represented the development of a higher stage of the struggle for unemployment and social insurance, and for work projects.

But the battle had to be continued. The chief strategist and leader of the movement to rally the trade unions behind the struggle for unemployment insurance was again Comrade Foster. William Green, President of the A. F. of L., at that time opposed unemployment insurance and declared that the American workers would not accept the "dole."

TRADE UNIONS SUPPORT UNEMPLOYMENT INSURANCE

The organized rank and file thought otherwise. Three thousand local unions of the A. F. of L. threw their support to the Trade Union Committee for Unemployment Insurance led by Louis Weinstock, against the will of William Green and the other autocratic leaders of the A. F. of L. These organized workers were influenced by the line of the T.U.E.L., and later the T.U.-U.L. and recognized the correctness of the program for support of the unemployed.

An unemployment insurance bill was introduced into the U.S. Congress in 1934 (known as H.R. 2827). This was done under the initiative of the Unemployed Councils. But the movement was not yet big or strong enough to force Congress to act. A second bill was introduced in Congress by Senator Wagner, known as the Social Security Bill

No. 7598. In August, 1935, it was adopted by Congress and signed by President Roosevelt.

The Hunger Marches to Washington, strengthened by local and state marches, were militant demonstrations of workers whose vitality in the struggle remained for a long time unduplicated in the U.S.

These workers played a leading part in the struggles for the release of Tom Mooney, the Scottsboro Boys, Angelo Herndon, and other victims of class justice. Police-men's clubs and rifles did not deter the unemployed. They fought on—whole families of them—until that day in 1935 when F.D.R. signed the bill. This means that billions of dollars helped to ease somewhat the lot of the unemployed, for which credit is due, first of all, to the Communist Party.

As a result of the education and training the workers received in the struggle for unemployment insurance and relief, members of the Unemployed Councils became the best organizers of the trade unions. They also furnished a natural foundation for the building of a third party movement. They participated in elections, throwing their votes and support to progressive candidates.

Is it any wonder, therefore, that large numbers of these militant workers joined the Communist Party? There was no other political organization that merited their sup-

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port. Yes, they joined the Communist Party in large numbers—many of them as rank-and-file members, while others were mass leaders and are today leaders of the Party.

It required a leader like Foster to help weld into one body the diverse elements, reaching from the I.W.W. to members of A. F. of L. craft unions, the bulk of them, however, belonging to no organization. The victory was brought about also by the unity of the unemployed workers themselves. The Unemployed Councils took the initiative in bringing about unity with other organizations of the unemployed, which was finally achieved under the name of the Workers Alliance.

All of this reflected the strategy of Foster, the man behind the desk, the man in the field, the man who led a hunger march in behalf of the

workers. These are some of the qualifications of a real leader. We all can learn from Comrade Foster.

We are in the midst of an aggravated capitalist world crisis. The economic crisis of overproduction in the United States cannot be eliminated by war economy. It can only retard it somewhat while impoverishing the masses, dislocating the economy and creating conditions for a more devastating crisis.

Today, even with a developing war economy, there are two million permanently unemployed, with several million working part-time. The lessons that we have learned in the great economic crisis of 1929-33 will be a guide to the activity of our Party and the masses in the crisis that is sure to develop out of the war economy itself.

"One Hand For the Ship and One For Myself"

by Al Lannon

IN THE 50-odd years of his activity in the American labor movement, Bill Foster has left his mark on the basic and decisive sections of the American working class—in the steel, packing, and railroad industries, to mention a few.

Some of his most important and lasting contributions, however, were made in connection with the struggles of the maritime workers, whose problems and hardships Foster knew from first-hand experience.

Bill Foster put in three years sailing the old square-riggers back in the early 1900's, and he chronicled his experiences in his book *Pages From A Worker's Life*, which found its way aboard many a ship and into many a union hall throughout the country.

The book expressed what the old-timers in the industry who had known Bill were well aware of, the down-to-earth quality he possessed, which was closely linked to a warm feeling for people and their problems.

Bill Foster is the kind of man workers warm up to, just reading about him. Basically, this follows from the whole pattern of his life,

in which any worker, reading about it, can see his own struggles and problems reflected.

When Foster told about using one arm for the ship and one arm for himself, while working aloft, it registered as just as much a part of the everyday life of the American seamen of today as it did for those whose experience went back to the days of the old sailing ships.

And American maritime workers are more than ever in need of applying that slogan today, in the face of the all-out attack on the wages, conditions, rotary hiring and democratic unionism which is being carried through by the shipowner-Truman Administration combination and its labor agents. The desperate attempt of the Wall Street warmongers to mobilize the nation for all-out aggressive war has dealt especially sharp blows at the maritime workers, whose resistance to the war drive it feels it must destroy.

These attacks have been launched through the medium of a comprehensive screening program—in addition to the large-scale raiding of the progressive-led unions—directe

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mainly at militant seamen and dockworkers. By this means Wall Street and its agents hope to wipe out the militant elements and traditions which have for so many years featured the existence of maritime unionism.

HE HAMMERED HOME
THE NEED OF UNITY
FROM BELOW

It was in the earlier struggles of the maritime workers that Bill Foster made an especially vital contribution in hammering home the point that unity of all maritime workers was essential for winning any important improvement in their conditions.

In the late '20's and early '30's, the unions in existence on both coasts were small, weak and largely company-dominated. The need for unity from below was the cardinal point Foster drove home, and this helped to orient the small Left-led Marine Workers Industrial Union to strive for broader unity with the rank and file of the old International Seamen's Union; and led eventually, after several militant, hard-fought strikes, to the birth of the powerful, militant National Maritime Union in the middle '30's.

It was this same hard-hitting policy of unity from below, which Foster helped drive home, that contributed so much to the victory of

the West Coast longshoremen in the '34 strike and the establishment of the International Longshoremen's and Warehousemen's Union.

In the period following the great victories of the maritime workers in the 1934 and 1936-37 strikes, Foster lost no time in warning against complacency and false security. He stressed the need of organizational unity between the 12 or more maritime unions.

Though there were some attempts at such organizational unity in the Maritime Federations of the Pacific and Gulf Coasts in 1937, these were short-lived. It was not until 10 years later, with the formation of the Committee for Maritime Unity, that the next major step to national unity of maritime workers was taken.

The C.M.U. embraced seven national maritime unions on both coasts, and was able to achieve substantial gains against Truman's strike-breaking maneuvers. Had the C.M.U. been able to consolidate its base and to broaden it by establishing unity with the A. F. of L. maritime workers, more than 200,000 workers in one of the most highly trustified industries in the U.S. would have been brought under one banner.

It was at this point, in September 1946, after the victory of the C.M.U., that Foster addressed a powerful appeal to the maritime

workers, which appeared in the form of an article in the *Daily Worker*, titled: "The Need for Unity of Maritime Workers," and was later reprinted in pamphlet form and distributed widely.

The article very clearly and sharply pointed to the dangers inherent in the continued lack of organizational unity among maritime workers and their unions, and spelled out where this was playing directly into the hands of the shipowners.

It concluded with a minimum program of action, listing specific steps which could be taken within the existing difficult situation and which would have laid the basis for development of more permanent all-embracing unity.

The programmatic appeal of Foster was well-received, and widely read by maritime workers of all unions, in ports throughout the country. The development and fulfillment of that program, however, was put off by the intrigues of N.M.U. President Joe Curran, who was fast turning into the shipowners' main organizer and propagandist of disunity and disruption within the ranks of the maritime labor movement.

Curran's role in striving to destroy the militant and progressive role and traditions of the N.M.U. and the unity of the maritime workers generally is now displayed in his shipowner-inspired raid on

the Marine Cooks and Steward Union, whose 6,000 members have achieved the best working conditions and wages in the entire industry.

In combatting Curran's attack on the unity of the maritime workers, the Communist forces in the N.M.U. and in the industry as a whole were severely handicapped by the effects of the Browderite revisionism, which had considerably undermined their fighting morale and allowed confusion to set in which in turn affected the outlook and activity of the progressives in the union.

The aid rendered to the Party on the waterfront by Comrade Foster, in his writings as well as with his personal advice, criticisms, and proposals, in the overcoming of the enemy ideology which Browderism had injected into the Party, was of incalculable value.

Browder was never able to "find time" to meet with the maritime workers, even when 500 striking seamen were gathered to hear him at the height of the bitter strike in 1937.

A FIGHTER WHO SPEAKS THEIR LANGUAGE

Bill Foster, however, is known to thousands of seamen and longshoremen on all coasts, not only as a name or a photograph, but as a living, fighting figure whom the

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have heard speak their language, their thoughts, and their hopes and dreams for a better America and a better world. His fighting history, his deep devotion to the working class and the Communist Party, and his demonstrating in his own life the indissoluble one-ness of working-class theory and practice, have served and are serving as inspiration to maritime fighters for peace, progress, democracy and Socialism in every port, and on every ocean.

In past years, maritime workers

have always taken special note of Bill Foster's birthday, and marked the occasion with gifts, recruits, greetings from ships at sea, and from hundreds of maritime workers on the beach. On this, the celebration of Comrade Foster's 70th birthday, plans are afoot for the mass sale of his new monumental work, *Outline History of the Americas*, which it is intended shall be a weapon of ideological clarification and education for thousands in the maritime industry.

Foster's Early Struggles Against the Labor Misleaders

by S. T. Hammersmark

TIME HAS fogged my memory as to where William Z. Foster was working when he sent me a twelve-page, hand-written constitution of the Syndicalist League of North America. Anyway, Clarence Darrow was in Tacoma, Washington, where I was working. I went over to the Tacoma Hotel to see Darrow before he delivered his lecture, and I took a copy of Foster's document with me. When I pulled it out of my pocket and gave it to Darrow he said cynically, "What, another constitution?"

The next day Darrow called me for lunch and over our coffee he said, "I read that constitution. That man Foster is a dreamer, but a very real one. He should have been a poet. He writes well, has plenty of imagination and he will go far in getting things done. I agree with most of what he says."

Darrow is gone now and so is the Syndicalist League, but it is significant to me that a man of Darrow's stature could predict Foster's future, even while Bill and I—like many others—still saw Syndicalism as the answer. All of us, including Darrow, were searching for

the answer then, but it remained for Foster to fulfill Darrow's prophecy of "going far in getting things done." By becoming a Marxist, Foster has earned the undying hate of the same bosses who once used the weaknesses of "Wobbly" theory to smash the Syndicalist League of North America.

It was shortly after this that I received a letter from Foster to hurry to Chicago as we were getting ready to start a Left-wing paper and there was a real chance in the Central body of the Chicago Federation of Labor to do a lot of good work.

Soon we were busy with the Trade Union Educational League. Foster's advice and leadership made possible the adoption of a resolution in the Chicago Federation of Labor (A. F. of L.) calling for amalgamation—the issue that stirred the labor movement of America. But Samuel Gompers, seeing the danger of amalgamation cutting down the number of internationals—with their rich per capita tax and the growing rank-and-file leadership—hurried to Chicago, called a large meeting in the Morrison Hotel

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grand ball room and threatened Fitzpatrick, head of the Chicago Federation of Labor, with revocation of the charter.

Foster was not invited or wanted in the meeting; and when he came, Tim Murphy, a notorious A. F. of L. gangster, was sitting in front of me. When Foster warmed up to the task of smashing Sam Gompers' arguments for craft unionism, Murphy exclaimed, "We'll get that red s. . . of a b. . . yet." They—the gangsters and the bosses—are still trying. But Tim Murphy is six feet under a beautiful tombstone, sent there by another of Chicago's Madison Street goons, in a dispute over graft.

Stool-pigeons, gangsters, labor grafters and reactionary labor leaders could not scare or stop Foster; and when he wrote *Misleaders of Labor*, he told me, "They can all try their damndest, but we will eventually win. You know some of these fellows here, and I hope to get all the information I can to expose them." I did my best, and as usual Foster gave me more credit than I deserved.

Being a Marxist-Leninist, Foster knew how and where to use a good quotation, and on the last page of *Misleaders of Labor*, he appropriately quotes Lenin:

"The American working class will not follow the lead of its bourgeoisie. . . . The whole history of the working people gives me this

confidence, this conviction."

I often marveled how and when Foster could find time to read and write so much. Not only I, but practically all active Communists have learned much of the value of the Communist classics through him. He has not only read but has applied his Marxist understanding.

Today's task of mobilizing the people to defeat the war makers and smash their war program will be doomed to failure unless the Negro people are organized to play a leading role in the people's peace front. Foster understood this years ago in the great stockyard and steel strikes after World War I.

* * *

I was in charge of the Youngstown, Ohio, area in the steel strike and quite often went to Pittsburgh to report and talk over my work with Foster. On one of my visits, Foster raised the question of the employers' attempt to import Negro workers from the South. Together we worked out what we should do—a meeting of Negro workers and a letter of solidarity from the Negro and white strikers.

"It will be a hard job," Foster said, "but one that must be done. The way the steel companies are able to use some Negro workers is a punishment on the strikers for the chauvinism of the labor fakers who preach Jim Crow in the name of the American Federation of Labor.

"But remember this, we can't have a labor movement in America without the help of the Negro workers."

The class struggle and a world free from exploitation have always been Foster's message. He has not only talked about it, but has done more to help others to see the need of education and activity, not only in the trade-union movement, but also in the political field, and for the growth of our Party. He is a man who knows what is needed and also how to get others to grow and help build a free world.

His forthcoming book is anxiously awaited and I feel sure that it will reach many thousands in our

own country and undoubtedly be read and translated into many languages.

His visits to the U.S.S.R. enabled him to do more than anyone in our country to show the way ultimately to reach the same goal here. Like Moses of old he has led his people out of the wilderness of doubts and foggy thinking. The promised land is so near that he may live to see the result of his many years of struggle and labor in a free America.

This is an electronic age—we are moving so fast that soon all he has worked for will come to pass. May he live to see that day here.

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Foster's Leadership to the Needle Trades Workers

by Rose Wortis

I FIRST MET and heard Comrade Foster at a meeting in 1921 at Webster Hall. He had just returned from a trip to Europe, including the Soviet Union. He spoke of the problems of the European labor movement, the sharp differences between the class collaboration policies of the Social-Democrats and the class struggle policies of the Communists. And he stressed the urgent need for unity in the labor movement, on the basis of militant policies in the interests of the working class.

In his warm, intimate, conversational tone, in language familiar to the average American worker, he spoke of the world-shaking events which brought the Socialist Soviet Union into existence as only one could speak who had not only tasted the full measure of capitalist exploitation, but had acquired a deep insight into the class basis of that exploitation. All misrepresentations of events in the Soviet Union seemed to have faded away. It also seemed so simple. The workers had overthrown the Czar's regime and the corrupt Kerensky government.

They had taken power and were learning to run their country in the interests of the people.

What impressed me most were the lessons he drew from his experiences for the American labor movement. He pictured the paradise that our country with its highly developed industries could be if run in the interests of the common people. He spoke with great concern about the fallacies of the reactionary craft union policies of the A. F. of L., which were eating at the very vitals of the trade-union movement, leaving millions of workers in the mass production industries a prey to ruthless exploitation.

His concluding remarks dealt with the militancy of the American workers and the need for organizing and consolidating the progressive forces around a common program to lead the trade unions out of the morass they were in. This hit home. I had been active in the International Ladies Garment Workers Union for a number of years, both as a rank and filer and as an officer. Our union as well as other needle trade unions had been

born in sharp struggle against the sweat shop system. In the '20's however, the Social-Democratic leaders in their efforts to achieve "respectability" had through various class collaboration schemes, such as the "protocol" and the "governor's commission," gradually frittered away the workers' gains and substituted the policy of class peace for the policy of class struggle.

There was mass dissatisfaction with the leadership and policies of the union. However, the movement was not well organized, and had no definite program. Besides including some Communists, the leadership was in the hands of anarchists, syndicalists, and Social-Democrats. The movement was pulled in different directions. As a result, the spontaneous revolts which developed from time to time were either dissipated because of lack of leadership or put down by the ruling machine and its leaders bought over.

The Webster Hall meeting addressed by Comrade Foster marked a turning point in the work of the Left elements in the needle trades. We found common ground with workers in other industries in our struggle for clean, militant unions. With the organization of the Trade Union Educational League under Foster's leadership, the rank-and-file movement in our industries took on an organized character and evolved a comprehensive program based on the needs of the workers.

Our movement won mass support among the needle trade workers, at times reaching as high as 75 percent of the union membership (the 1925 convention of the I.L.G.W.U. in Philadelphia).

What was Comrade Foster's role in these momentous struggles which left their mark, not only on the needle trade unions, but on the general labor movement, exemplified especially by the International Fur and Leather Workers' Union, which is today playing a leading role as the outstanding progressive union in the country?

The fundamental lesson we learned from Comrade Foster was his confidence in the workers, confidence that when issues are clearly presented by the Party to the workers, and the rank and file is given an opportunity of formulating and executing union policies, the class-struggle character of the unions will be guaranteed and the support will go to those leaders and to that program which best represent their interests.

It was this confidence in the power and judgment of the rank and file, inspired by Comrade Foster, that gave the struggles in the needle trades their dramatic mass character. It enabled us to undertake unprecedented actions, such as the great Bronx Coliseum meeting in 1923 attended by 50 thousand workers, and the stoppage in the cloak and dress industry in

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1925, which brought tens of thousands of workers out into the streets in support of the militant Joint Action Committee. It enabled us to introduce mass picket lines to battle and defeat the professional gangsters hired by the employers and the reactionary union officials, and to achieve such victories as the agreement with the Sigman Administration in 1925, which brought the re-instatement of the expelled members, officers and locals, and substantial concessions on our program such as more adequate representation at the union bodies, etc. It helped the furriers to defeat the joint conspiracy of the Right-wing officials, employers and William Green to sell out the strike of 1925, with the result that the workers won their justified demands.

Even in those unions, as in the I.L.G.W.U., where the Left wing was later defeated, this was achieved only when the Right leadership demagogically adopted some of the basic planks of the Left-wing program. In the I.L.G.W.U. to this day the Left wing has retained the support of a considerable part of the membership, particularly in the larger centers.

* * *

Another thing we learned from Comrade Foster was flexibility in tactics, but not at the expense of basic principles. To cite but one example during one period in the struggles of the needle trades work-

ers, when the terror of the bureaucracy against the rank and file became widespread, some of the militants began to think in terms of seeking the aid of the capitalist courts. Comrade Foster's advice was against such a course of action, in view of the strong tradition of the labor movement against intervention of capitalist courts in the internal affairs of trade unions. The only way to break the terror, said Comrade Foster, is to mobilize the rank and file. To win us to his position, he related some of his rich experiences in the labor movement and the role of the capitalist courts. The answer was obvious. We then proceeded to mobilize the workers and succeeded in driving the professional gangsters from the garment center.

To the needle trades workers, Foster was more than a progressive trade-union leader. To us he was champion of the unemployed, of the Negro people, of the Jewish people, of all minority groups. To us, he represented the most advanced leader of our class, the true proponent of Socialism in our country.

Their confidence in the Communist Party was greatly strengthened when Foster returned to his proper place at the helm of the Party. Thousands of progressive needle trade workers, together with others, will join in celebrating his 70th birthday. Today, when the forces

of reaction and fascism are preparing for a new war, when the reactionary trade-union leaders, betraying the interests of the workers are making common cause with the Wall Street warmongers and Nazi generals for a war against the Soviet Union and the People's Democracies, the clear, far-sighted leadership of Comrade Foster and the Party which he leads is needed more than ever before. It is the

only guarantee that the aspiration of the American people for peace and friendship with the people of the Soviet Union, China and other countries will be realized in a world free from the scourge of war.

Long life and good health to you, Comrade Foster, true son of the American working class and its leader in the struggle for peace, security, and Socialism.

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"To Him I Owe Very Much"

by Theodore Dreiser

[We re-publish below the memorable greeting of Theodore Dreiser to William Z. Foster rendered on the occasion of his sixtieth birthday. We know that were Dreiser alive today, that titan of American literature who crowned his life with membership in the Communist Party would have desired to join with us in paying tribute to Comrade Foster on his seventieth birthday. Editor.]

TO KNOW WILLIAM Z. FOSTER is to be granted a great favor. The simplicity of his personality is matched by his intellectual keenness—the quick, sharp cutting through the fog of current confusion which marks his analysis of events. To me he is a Saint—my first and only contact with one.

To him I owe much—very much. It was ten years ago in San Francisco that I got to know him well. That was at the time when the "end of the rainbow," as promised by Coolidge and Hoover, had come to its drab finale in "Hoovervilles" and hunger. Foster was then in the lead, as he is always in the lead, in the battle for the unemployed

workers and farmers. The forgotten man has never been forgotten by William Foster.

So it is with particular appreciation that I greet this splendid leader of the working class on his sixtieth birthday. It is also his forty-sixth year of activity in the labor movement.

Foster was born when the mammoth corporations were beginning to arrive on the American scene. The Standard Oil Company was beginning to throttle the small man through its secret railroad rebates, and to spin a web of financial control over the lives of Americans. The labor movement—since the giant monopolies create their own gravediggers in the working people—was also beginning to gain greater proportions.

To this labor movement Foster has made one of the greatest contributions. Wherever men and women have been oppressed by company "unions" or labor spies, he has been an inspiration to them to rid themselves of these tyrants. Foster's organizational genius led the Great Steel Strike of 1919, where, perhaps for the first time,

America began to see itself clearly.

Contrast this man's devotion to the common people—his building of trade unions and his call for independent political action—with the time-serving careers of the leaders of the American Federation of Labor. It is a contrast which stamps him as a man among men, a leader among leaders, who has always kept faith with the common man.

He has done a very great deal to

make America more conscious of the value of friendly relations with the great Soviet nation. Only those who are afraid of more democracy are afraid of closer relations with the Soviet Union. To Foster we all owe deep thanks for having helped us to understand what friendship with the Soviet Union means to the welfare of the American people.

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