

# Steel: the Great Battlefield

Foster Gives the C. I. O. An Indispensable Handbook

UNIONIZING STEEL, by William Z. Foster. Workers' Library Publishers, P. O. Box 148, Station D, New York. 5 cents.

By John Meldon

"UNIONIZING STEEL" was written by the man who knows more about the subject than any living person—William Z. Foster, master organizer and brilliant strike strategist.

Foster's pamphlet can be described as a manual on organizational problems—a handbook of advice and guidance to the organizers of the present steel campaign being carried through by the Steel Workers Organizing Committee.

No contribution from any source to the present steel drive can compare with this invaluable booklet written by the leader of the gigantic 1919 steel strike. It should be printed in the hundreds of thousands, and its distribution should become one of the main tasks of all Party units in steel towns and allied industrial territories.

Writing with a simplicity that makes the reading of Foster's work a delight—he makes a keen analysis of all factors involved in the present steel organization drive while at the same time drawing an analogy between the tasks facing the SWOC today and those carried through by the National Committee for Organizing Iron and Steel Workers in 1919.

FOSTER'S pamphlet, within its forty-five pages, deals with all principal factors involved in the organization drive to build a powerful industrial union in the industry.

He begins with a general analysis of the situation today—and proves that, providing the right strategy and tactics are employed by the SWOC, the campaign will succeed. He next deals with the economic and political situation—and shows how everything points favorably for the steel drive.

Foster's next point deals with industrial unionism, the type of union into which the Amalgamated Association of Iron, Steel and Tin Workers is being built—pointing to the tremendous advantages this gives the steel workers over the loose federation of craft unions who conducted the 1919 campaign.

Foster proceeds then, in "Unionizing Steel," to deal with burning organization questions—how they must be applied today, and how they were handled in 1919. Among these problems which he writes upon in detail are—extending the scope of support for the steel drive among other unions; the raising and distribution of campaign finances; the necessary national character of the steel drive; the dangers emanating from the reactionary leadership in the American Federation of Labor—and methods to combat these dangers; measures for insuring mass discipline (particularly the avoiding of abortive local strikes before the national front is ready)—the language problem, the Farmer Labor Party and the role of the Communists in the steel drive.

NOT only is "Unionizing Steel" an important booklet written by the man who accomplished the biggest organizing job ever undertaken in the history of the American Federation of Labor—it is also so completely permeated with confidence for the chances of success for the present drive, that it will serve as an inspiration for every organizer and worker in steel who reads it.

The question of paramount importance is, therefore, that the pamphlet must be put into the hands of those Foster intended it for—the steel workers. During the next few weeks, no task facing any unit in a steel town is more important, whatever its nature, than distributing "Unionizing Steel."

"Unionizing Steel" will probably become a classic in the trade union

movement, as did Foster's other and more lengthy book, "The Great Steel Strike," which he wrote shortly after the smoke of battle cleared in the steel strike of 1919.

THE principal features of the strategy used by Foster in organizing the steel industry seventeen years ago, can be applied in the present campaign, he says in "Unionizing Steel."

Today's steel drive, however, Foster points out, has every possible advantage in its favor, whereas in 1919 the organizers were faced with herculean obstacles, not only from the Steel Trust, but from within the bureaucratic Gompers leadership of the A. F. of L. Sabotage, hesitancy and pessimism reigned supreme, and the drive was almost crippled at its inception in 1919, when only a few thousand dollars were given the National Organizing Committee by the craft unions involved in the drive.

Again, Foster says in "Unionizing Steel," the postwar reaction was setting in. Terror reigned in a white heat in the Trust-dominated steel towns. The union movement itself was on the decline. The steel market was collapsing from its abnormal war boom level. In brief, one is amazed that the job was done at all in 1919—and yet it was done in a manner that will go down for all time in the annals of trade union history as the most ably conducted organizing campaign ever conducted in this country. The 1919 steel drive blasted forever the widespread illusion among the leaders of the A. F. of L. that steel, because of the ultra-reactionary nature of the mill owners, because of the tremendous wealth and high degree of industrial concentration, because of the Steel Trust's reputation in defeating previous organizing drives and strikes, could not be organized.

The drive of today, conducted by the SWOC, has, therefore, this double advantage. "The job was done before, and it can be done again," Foster declares.

"UNIONIZING STEEL" takes up and discusses in detail every conceivable problem that will face the SWOC in steel today—and gives the answers to those problems. At the same time, the writer emphasizes the dangers of certain pitfalls that must be avoided to insure bringing forward the splendid potential fighting and organizing ability in the ranks of the steel workers.

One of the principal features of the 1919 campaign, and one that is vitally important for the steel drive now under way, is in democratizing the drive, applying in the fullest manner the practice of trade union democracy.

"In the present campaign," Foster writes in "Unionizing Steel," "to organize the steel industry, the C. I. O. organizers would do well to pay close attention to the lessons of trade union democracy that the 1919 strike has to teach. This is all the more necessary because one of the weaknesses of the C. I. O. leadership is the lack of trade union democracy in their unions. There is also the tendency toward over-centralization in the leadership of the steel drive that should be corrected. A whole series of rank-and-file committees, activities, etc., should be developed which actually draw in large masses of workers as practical organizers. Besides, these local committees and organizers should be

linked up with the national directing committee. Such measure would increase the workers' confidence in the movement and would enable them to utilize their boundless energy and militancy for its up-building."

FOSTER speaks firmly against the dangers of allowing the steel drive to become "the tail to the political kite of capitalist politicians." At the same time, however, every connection and political institution should be utilized—but as they were in 1919—in the interests of the steel workers, and not in an opportunist manner, which is one of the prime dangers inherent in the present steel drive.

"Although the steel workers must not surrender their movement into the hands of capitalist politicians, this does not mean in any sense that organized political action is not necessary for them," Foster writes. "On the contrary, they have the most urgent need, in combination with other workers, to give their movement the highest political character and to utilize it to entrench workers' representatives in all branches of government."

The only effective way to do this, writes Foster, is through a Farmer-Labor Party.



WILLIAM Z. FOSTER  
Drawing by Morris J. KalleM

phlet in the hands of the SWOC and the steel workers will have a profound effect upon the entire steel drive—and will be one of the strongest guarantees of the success of the movement. It is the job of the Communist Party to see that this is done, without delay. Our Party is a strong factor in the steel industry. It can become a stronger force once "Unionizing Steel," by William Z. Foster, reaches the steel workers.

"LAST, but by no means least," Foster writes, "the C. I. O. organizers of today have a great advantage over the organizers of 1919 in the fact that today there is in existence a strong Communist Party to lend its active assistance. In 1919 the Communist Party was just being born and was in no position to give material aid. But now matters are vastly different. The Communist Party is well established and has a large following in steel as well as other industries. Its members are militant workers and fighters and they will use the last ounce of their energy, resources and courage to make the present organization drive a success."

And, this reviewer might add, the C. I. O. organizers have the added advantage of having a genius on trade unionism write such a pamphlet as "Unionizing Steel" as a beacon light pointing the correct path that the steel organizing campaign of today must travel for final success.

"UNIONIZING STEEL" is shot through from beginning to end with carefully weighed advice, based on the experiences of a specialist in unionism in steel. A hundred thousand copies of this invaluable pam-

phlet in the hands of the SWOC and the steel workers will have a profound effect upon the entire steel drive—and will be one of the strongest guarantees of the success of the movement. It is the job of the Communist Party to see that this is done, without delay. Our Party is a strong factor in the steel industry. It can become a stronger force once "Unionizing Steel," by William Z. Foster, reaches the steel workers.

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## MOVIE NOTES

By LOUIS NORDEN

News of the Week

BOTH NBC and CBS gave a full hour on the air to a program entitled "Salute to Warners," as acknowledgement that the music war between Warner Brothers and the American Society of Composers, Artists and Publishers (ASCAP) had ended. For this week, after six months of legal strife, Warner Brothers applied for reentrance into the society. Their petition was granted, seniority in distribution of ASCAP royalties included. The fight cost the film company more than \$1,000,000 in legal fees, royalties, and a 30 per cent drop in the box-office return on all musicals...

ANTON LITVAK, French director, will make the Bronte novel "Wuthering Heights" for Walter Wanger with Sylvia Sydney and Charles Boyer in leading roles... The next Dick Powell picture for Warner Brothers will be "The Singing Marine," being the only branch of the service which has not been covered by past Warner Brothers-Hearst films... MGM may hold up "The Good Earth" with Paul Muni and Luis Rainer for next season...

Robert E. Sherwood's play, "Idiot's Delight," if made into a motion picture, will be banned in Italy, according to an announcement this week by the Los Angeles Italian consul. Italy's warning is intended to stop an American film company from purchasing the play. Warner Brothers are negotiating for the purchase of Alex Munthe's "The Story of San Michele"... John Ford is now directing Sean O'Casey's "The Plough and the Stars" for RKO from the screen play written by John Ford...

## Salaries

SIDNEY KENT, head of Twentieth Century-Fox sales organization, gets \$180,000 a year, plus the right to buy 10,000 shares of common stock annually at a price that guarantees a profit. In addition, another \$10,000 yearly is guaranteed for expenses, plus \$25,000 more for his duties as president of subsidiary National Theatres. Famous Darryl F. Zanuck rates \$5,000 weekly while Joseph M. Schenck gets \$2,500 weekly. All three are under seven-year contracts.

Previous to Fox merger with Twentieth Century last year, Kent got \$191,146 while W. C. Michel took \$36,618, Sidney Towell rated \$21,890 and Winfield R. Sheehan, \$300,000. The top eleven employees at that time earned salaries and bonuses amounting to \$493,518 annually, while the next twenty-four, including actors and directors, got \$4,527,198...

## All Right, All Right...

PROTESTS against the activities of Major Bowes are beginning to increase in number. This week from Broadway itself and one of its columnists came a snarling, but justified slam at the Amateur Hour impresario. The source, Irving Hoffman, of the Hollywood Reporter. He says:

"Many a pipe dreamer in kicking the gong around talks in terms of five figures, but it is reliably reported that Major Edward Bowes soon will be earning in the vicinity of \$40,000 a week for kicking his gong around on an idea which he did not originate. The records show that Perry Charles of radio station WHN originated the Amateur Hour idea and conducted it on that station for six weeks before the Major stepped in and took it and the station over..."

"In the second place, the Major has cashed in on the amateurs

## Another Defender of Slavery

THE SON OF THUNDER. AN EPIC OF THE SOUTH. by William W. Brewton. Garrett and Mable, Richmond, Virginia. \$3.00.

By ELIZABETH LAWSON

"THE SON OF THUNDER" is another of that seemingly endless series of books dedicated to the dis-

tradition of "The Clansman" and "The Leopard's Spots." Its attacks upon the Negro vie with any passage Thomas Dixon has written. Fortunately, however, it is not a dangerous book. Ill-constructed and wordy, it is so dull that probably none but reviewers will have the

intrigue on the part of a handful of the wealthiest slave-owners. The true story of the anti-slavery and pro-Union sentiment of the masses of the South has not yet been told in detail; it is a story worthy of the best efforts of working-class historians. The tone of the Georgia press