path would save much precious force for our
movement.

One night I was arrested on 39th St. and
Broadway, by an apologetic policeman, bailed out
by a saloon keeper and given some fatherly advice
by the Irish magistrate on the futility of preach-
ing Socialism to Broadway. Of course this was
a dreadful shock at high school and eventually
resulted in my enlisting actively in the labor
movement.

It must have been about this time that I heard
Debs and DeLeon speak together on “Industrial
Unionism.” It was immediately after the launch-
ing of the I. W. W. and it certainly worked a
turning point for me. I really began to place
my feet on the ground and tread a definite path.
Out of the first flush of youthful emotion, I
passed into a second stage—based on a firm
conviction which I still hold to, that the union
movement is the real and lasting labor move-
ment. I saw a new society built by the organ-
ized workers—not along geographical but indus-
trial lines. Regardless of differences of
opinions on forms, methods, and tactics, the fact
remains that it is the movement of power, it is
at grips with capitalism in the strategic place, the
point of production. It speaks the worker’s
language. I have no faith elsewhere than in the
industrial organization of the workers, and I
have unlimited faith in the promise of life and
liberty it holds out for the future and the eventual
ability of the workers to put it across. So I
remain like my Irish ancestors, a rebel!

By James H. Maurer

I AM asked to tell how I became a rebel. This,
I fear, is not any easy question to answer.
I am descendent of old, conservative Penn-
sylvania stock, was born in a shanty during the
stormiest period of the Civil War, reared among
very poor and superstitious people, left fatherless
at the age of seven. I became a news boy first and
a factory worker before my tenth birthday. I
was a machinists’ apprentice at fifteen and a
member of the Knights of Labor at sixteen. Less
than thirteen months of my life were spent in
school. What education I did secure, I got, not
on account of the State, but in spite of it.

Handicapped, of course, on account of being
illiterate, yet a greater handicap was the misfor-
tune of having a step-father who knew less than
I did and who never tired of gloating about his
superior wisdom. The one outstanding asset of
my life was my dear, little mother, to whom not
one of her four sons ever spoke an angry or un-
kind word. She was lovable, gentle and yet,
when roused, knew no fear. She was ever ready
to share her last crumb with the unfortunate,
fight an evil or defend the under dog.

This may answer the question as to how I be-
came a rebel or perhaps I should say why Moth-
er’s four sons turned rebels before any of them
turned twenty-one.

It was not from what I read, because I was
active in radical circles long before I could read.
It came from what I lived.

Before I was eighteen years of age, I joined
hands with the “Green-Backers,” at twenty, I
read, “Progress and Poverty” and, became a
“Single-Taxer.” Later I joined the “Populists
Party” but, through it all remained active in the
Organized Labor Movement; studying and read-
ing, of course, added fuel to the fire. In my
search for good pamphlets and books, I came
across the “Communist Manifesto.” This, of
course, helped weld still more closely my inherent
rebel spirit. Twenty-four years ago, I joined
the Socialist Labor Party and, four years later,
the Socialist Party where I have remained ever
since.

So, the question as to just how I became a rebel
is still unanswered. I guess dear, little Mother
could have answered the question better than I.

By Wm. Z. Foster

FOR me to become a rebel was an easy, natur-
al course. My father was an Irishman and an
ardent patriot. He was driven from Ireland
in the latter ’60’s, because he was implicated in
a plot to overthrow all the English garrisons in
the country. Upon its exposure he had to flee
post haste to escape jail. In later years, as his
family grew up in the United States, he fed us
on hatred for the oppresor England. It was
the intellectual meat and drink of our early lives.
I was raised with the burning ambition of one
day taking an active part in the liberation of Ire-
lard. As I grew older and began to notice what
was going on about me I was quick to realize that
everything was not as it should be. The wrongs
of the workers made a ready appeal to me. It
seemed as natural to hate capitalistic tyranny in
the United States as English Tyranny in Ireland.
From my earliest recollection I was militantly
partial to striking workers. Particularly was I
impressed by the many strikes in the nearby an-
thracite coal fields—I was raised in Philadelphia.
To my boyish conception the coal operators were
inhuman monsters, and after all, I was not far
Wm. Z. Foster
wrong. The free silver agitation in the the '90's
attracted me greatly.

But I never got by bearings until one Saturday night in the summer of 1900, when I was 19 years old. Walking along South street I ran into a Socialist soap box at the corner of Broad street. He was the first Socialist I had ever heard speak and I listened amazed. The whole thing was a revelation. Whatever prejudice I had been taught to have against Socialism melted away like snow before a summer sun.

The thing was clear at last. My rebellious spirit saw the broad way to its goal. Though I said nothing to the men conducting the meeting—I have often wondered since who they were—I left a convinced Socialist. After that the rest was easy. I plunged head over heels into revolutionary literature, reading everything indiscriminately and gradually swinging from right to left in my conception. I was "made" that Saturday night in Philadelphia. That's how I became a rebel.

By Robert Minor

By A childhood of poverty I was moulded for life membership in the working class.

When I left school at fourteen to work in a sign painter's shop my love of picture making developed to a fierce passion. It may seem incredible that this had a great deal to do with making me a rebel, but I say seriously that even the scant, pitiful art possibilities of a sign shop gave me an impression of conflict between every artistic impulse and the needs of commercial life. Few outsiders know that sign painting shops cover many really talented young workers, but my kid eyes saw and understood the conflict between young workers' instinct for beauty and the need of the shop to drive for money.

The smallness of the wages of a sign painter's apprentice drove me from that small Temple of Art, to start learning the carpenter's trade. Here I contracted the peculiar pride of the craftsman. Carpentry seemed to have a relation to art, and I maintain to this day that it has. My relatives got me out of this and into a "nice clean" job in a railroad office, with a chance to work up to be president of the railroad. But I couldn't stand it. I was already branded with a different iron; I quit and went off to wander on freight trains as a hobo laborer. Fifteen hours a day on a farm, at fifty cents a day, soon gave me my fill of agriculture; and I drifted into easier jobs at ten hours a day with pick and shovel. This was the serious beginning of the opening of my eyes. One day an old mule-freight teamster caught up with me on a lonely Texas road and told me I could ride if I was a working man. On the wagon he gave me a long tirade on the wrongs of the working people and the need of the working class to stick together and make a revolution. His words sunk into my memory to stay.

At camp fires in railroad construction camps and on the freight trains and in the "jungles," the conversation of wandering laborers from all quarters of the earth gave me my "cosmopolitan culture." Here I learned the indescribable beauty of that spiritual fraternity of communism which was poured a few years later into the songs and the deeds of the old-time I. W. W. And I learned the dreadful curse of God upon a scab.

When I returned to my native town to work at the carpenter trade and joined the United Brotherhood of Carpenters and Joiners, my rather crude working class loyalty got a slightly more definite form. Two members of the Union puzzled me by endlessly talking Socialism; of their hifalutin words I couldn't remember a thing except the constant repetition, "Carrol D. Wright to the contrary notwithstanding." But I learned more definitely what a scab is. The order came for all hands to make a stand for the Union scale of wages, which was not being paid. I was the only Union member on my building job, and I walked out on strike alone. I never got another job at the carpenter trade.

I wandered about Texas and New Mexico on freight trains, looking for work living by handouts, learning the peculiarly bitter lesson of the unemployed man sleeping on the open ground in Winter.

Unable to get work at carpentering or sign painting, I found a job as cartoonist for a small daily newspaper. This was my entrance to a trade that has taught many a man what a rotten core is inside of the social system. I didn't notice it at first, but was for some time absorbed in the rapid ambitions of the newspaper life. I got a better job on a big St. Louis newspaper. But about this time the trial of William D. Haywood at Boise, Idaho, came to disturb me—to awaken all of the old-time dreams—the call of my class. Simultaneously I met a Russian Jew, the first one that I had ever known. The strange talk of this man changed my understanding of what life is for. He filled me full of the fever to learn and feel. At first this merely stimulated my work and brought me some of the petty newspaper success that I had thought I wanted. Now that it came, I didn't want it. About 1908 I