



*In  
Defense  
of*

# COMMUNISM

Against W. Z. Foster's

"NEW ROUTE TO SOCIALISM"

*Earl Browder*

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## IN DEFENSE OF COMMUNISM.

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"New Route to Socialism".

### I. INTRODUCTION

The indictment of the Communist Party of America and its leaders by the Federal Government on the charge of conspiracy to advocate the violent overthrow of the Government, and the trial on this indictment which began in January, 1949, and continues as this is written, mark an extraordinary boldness in the reactionary camp.

Never since 1919 has this reactionary camp relaxed its direct offensive against the Communists by any and all means which it considered expedient — but never before did the reactionaries venture a major effort to outlaw the Communist Party by action in the Federal Courts, but carefully avoided this step even when the Communist Party itself challenged them for a legal showdown. For example, in the Schneiderman case in the early 1940s, the Supreme Court refused to pass on the legal status of the Communist Party, although requested to do so, and although the Court admitted that a prima facie case for this legality had been introduced. But now this former hesitation has vanished, and the reactionary camp considers the moment has arrived most favorable to their long-cherished demand for the outlawing of Communism in America.

Formally considered, these court proceedings are directed against a small Party, whose membership is

but a fraction of one per-cent of the population; in reality, however, it is an act of repression against the majority of Americans, aimed to deprive them of their fundamental democratic right to pass judgement upon all political parties and programs. That is the broadest issue of principle involved in this case, which demands from every adherent of democracy, whatever his party, to oppose this prosecution in every way, and to help secure the dismissal of the indictment. Failure to defeat the prosecution in this case has the practical meaning that a serious step will have been taken to break down the foundations of American democracy and to erect an absolutist bourgeois State power in its place.

This is not, however, the only issue involved in this trial. In terms of the practical political life of the world today, this trial is another aspect of the "cold war" conducted since the end of 1946 by the American Government against the USSR and against those countries turning toward Socialism. The political motive of the prosecution, from this phase of its background, is to push the ideological war from the diplomatic and economic stage another step toward its logical end in a shooting war. Therefore all adherents of peace have a vital interest in defeating the indictment, because this will help to curb the war party in America.

The third major issue in this trial is the political question of the relation of democracy to Communism, and the practical and historical significance of Communism and its program for America and the world. The defense and all its supporters, in every walk of life, have the duty to make clear for the

broad public that basic fact of the post-war world that democracy cannot survive a general crusade for the destruction of Communism, that non-communist democracy needs peaceful and cooperative relations with Communist democracy for its very existence, and that the grounds for such cooperative relations exist.

And finally, for all adherents of Marxism there is the supreme issue that in connection with this trial there should be made available to the broad public, and especially to the workingclass, a clear and straightforward exposition of the scientific theories and the practical program of Communism, combating the lies of the prosecution and its stool-pigeon witnesses with the simple truth.

It is a matter of course, in the nature of things, that the prosecution will exert all efforts to confuse and hide these basic issues in the conduct of the trial. Only those who think leopards can change their spots could expect otherwise. It is in the nature of the Court that it will try by all means to exclude the exposition of political issues, in a case which is supremely political, and to narrow the trial down to the pettiest legalistic levels. These are natural obstacles to the defense, which must be overcome, first of all in the Courtroom itself, but also and above all in the Court of Public Opinion, outside among the masses, where the final appeal must be taken and the final decision made.

The defendants themselves have the first, and natural, responsibility for properly placing these major issues before the Court and before the masses.

Unfortunately, however, seven months experience in the progress of the trial indicate that none of the major issues are being clearly and correctly met, that indescribable confusion is arising as a result, and that as a consequence the reactionary camp is gaining advantages to which it is in no sense entitled, while the Democratic and Communist camp suffers setbacks which could have been avoided by foresight and clarity.

The ineptness of the conduct of the defense in Court could be criticized in great detail. But there is little point in this, because the chief leader of the Party, William Z. Foster, has written and published a book about the issues of the trial, which exposes with pitiless clarity the fountain-head and source of all the failures of the defense.

This book of Foster's, entitled "In Defense of the Communist Party and the Indicted Leaders", was first published in the Daily Worker of May 23, 1949, and later in a 96-page pamphlet. It is an outstanding example of the truth of Lenin's aphorism that "without a revolutionary theory there can be no revolutionary practice." For Foster's book represents a fundamental departure from Marxist theory, it is profoundly revisionist, and since it represents the thinking of the man who unconditionally dominates all the defendants, it was inevitable therefore that the defense should take an anti-Marxist (that is, an unscientific, wrong, opportunistic) line of development.

I have been told by some of my friends that it would be unwise for me to utter any public words of criticism of the conduct of the defense in the Communist Trial,



that this would only bring down upon my head new and even more vicious slanders and lies, that I would be accused of helping the prosecution, that criticism from outside the Party could not change the course of events. I have given consideration to these arguments, to the extent of refraining hitherto from any criticism, from the hope that if self-criticism within the defense itself failed to correct the line of development, then at least there would be some criticism and advice from Communists in other lands which would improve the situation. But there has been no change, only an intensification of the basic errors, and no sign of critical help from abroad.

Communism cannot be defended by anti-communist theories. To remain silent in the face of Foster's attempt to reshape the fundamental theories of Marxism, would mean to become an accomplice of his revisionism. Criticism is required, it cannot be avoided; and since no one else appears to be ready, willing or able to do this thankless job, I take the burden upon myself. I am alone responsible for this pamphlet, but it reflects the general views of a large and growing proportion of the Party members, as expressed in current discussions.

## II. FOSTER'S REVISIONIST THEORY ON "VIOLENCE".

Marxism, the theoretical foundation of the Communist movement, is the scientific understanding of history and of the forces which move history. It therefore gives a thorough explanation of the role of violence in historical changes; and it is the first and only explanation of history which shatters

and refutes all conceptions of violence as the main and decisive factor in historical change.

Marxism was not called upon, however, to produce new and distinctive theoretical principles governing the practical application of violence in the establishment of democratic and progressive governments to replace undemocratic and reactionary ones. Such principles were already established in the teachings and practice of the best representatives of democracy in the 18th century, and not least in the American Revolution and the writings of Jefferson.

Marxism agrees fully with the doctrine which Jefferson wrote into the Declaration of Independence that Governments derive their just powers from the consent of the governed; that whenever any Government comes into collision with the will of the majority, "it is the right of the people to alter or abolish it, and to institute Government, laying its foundations on such principles and organizing its powers in such form, as to them shall seem most likely to effect their safety and happiness." When the people make such a decision, but are violently resisted by the old rejected Government, then it is the right and duty of the people to violently overthrow the old in order to establish the new. Marxism added nothing new in principle to this Jeffersonian doctrine; it only deepened the understanding of the historical process which gives rise to violent revolutions, and added Socialism to the democratic movement as its goal.

The minimum task which is required of the defense in the current Communist Trial is, therefore, to refute the indictment of the prosecution in terms of

American experience, which is incorporated in the American democratic tradition, in the Jeffersonian doctrine; to add to this as much of the Marxist deepening of this question as the exigencies of the Trial permit, for purposes of education; and to state publicly what is the fact, that the Communists do not judge that immediate revolution, peaceful or violent, is on the political order of business in America today, although a major economic crisis or war would quickly change this condition. In such defense it is impermissible to cross either of two lines, either to enter into any defense of violence "in general" and the violence of conspiratorial minorities in particular (the doctrines of anarcho-syndicalism and Trotskyism) on the one hand, or to surrender any ground of the Jeffersonian "right of revolution" with all its potentialities of violent struggles. It is further entirely impermissible (always, that is, from the viewpoint of Marxism!) to base the defense in any degree upon the claim that Marxists have changed their classic views on the question of violence, for that is a retreat even from Jefferson's teaching. Marxism has not changed in this question for 100 years, and anyone who tries to "improve" the classic Marxist position is in reality departing from Marxism, is taking the road of vulgar opportunism.

Unfortunately, Foster has tried to "improve" upon the classic Marxist position on violence.

I cite, first of all, a series of Foster's statements which must be rejected by any Marxist. Foster writes:

"It is of the most profound importance... that the prosecution, in order to find examples of alleged advocacy of force

and violence by Communists, has been compelled to go back for many years for its quotations...10, 25, 50 or even 100 years ago."

"The real explanation for the absence of the so-called force and violence formulations in current Communist writings is that...since the 7th World Congress of the Comintern in 1935, the Communist movement in this country as well as abroad, has been going along on the practical working theory that in this period, because of the broad mass struggle against fascism and war, it had become possible in a whole number of democratic countries, including the United States, legally to elect democratic governments which could, by curbing and defeating capitalist violence, orientate in the direction of building Socialism." (pp. 24, 25, 26)

Foster claims that it is such a supposed new position of the Communists, since 1935, "which completely explodes the Prosecution's phony "force and violence" charge." At the same time he goes on to say that this "in no sense weakens or invalidates what Marx, Lenin, Stalin...have said on the question."

We will have to return later to an examination of Foster's claim that the 7th World Congress changed the Communist position on force and violence, or if its changes were not in an entirely different field. At this point in our analysis, we concentrate on the

single question: Has there really been a change in the Marxist (the Communist) programmatic position on force and violence since 1935, or even at any time since Marx wrote the Communist Manifesto?

The answer must be: No, there has been no such change. The charges of "force and violence" directed against the Communists, insofar as such charges are based (as are the charges of the present Trial) on the general teachings of Marxism, were exploded almost 100 years ago by Marx himself before a German Court, have been exploded again and again since then in almost every modern country, throughout the intervening period, on the same principles Marx then expressed. It requires nothing new in the Communist position, introduced in 1935 or any other time, to "explode" the Prosecution's charges today.

Such reliance upon something "new", implies that the "old" was not fully adequate for the purpose. Foster has weakened, not strengthened, the defense by emphasizing the "profound importance" of a supposed change in the Communist position in refuting the ancient and moth-eaten "force and violence" myth, even if there had been such a change, and there has not.

This method, in which Foster thinks up new arguments supposedly to strengthen the defense against the "force and violence" charge, is a characteristic weakness of Foster, as of all non-Marxists. He always tries to prove too much, and to prove irrelevant points. And by making irrelevant arguments, which have no possible bearing on the issue, and by emphasizing how terrifically important they are, Foster inevitably weakens the defense.

Another example of this method is to be seen in Section 3 of Foster's pamphlet, entitled "The Uneven Development of the Struggle for Socialism". We will discuss later the nature of this section as an attempt to revise Marxist theory. At this moment we confine ourselves to Foster's claim that this new theory of his will refute basically the Prosecution's charge."

Regardless of whether Foster's theory is correct or incorrect, Marxist or anti-Marxist, it has no relevance to the Prosecution's charge. Even if it is entirely false (as it is) Foster has, of course, every right as a citizen to argue for it any place he can get a hearing, even in the Court trying the charges against Communism. But he has no right to put it forth as the "basic refutation" of the indictment, and he has no right to put it forth as an expression of Marxism-Leninism, which it emphatically is not. No one ever heard of the theory before, it is Foster's peculiar private property, invented by him for this occasion. To drag it into this trial as the "basic" defense, simply means that one hundred years of Communist theory and practice mean less to Foster than his own latest private theoretical invention, his theory of "correspondence" between the uneven development of capitalism and the struggle for Socialism. The significance of this theory as a revision of Marxism will be discussed later. Here we note that it is used to evade the issue of violence, and is therefore a weakening of the defense.

The chief reliance of Foster in handling the violence issue is, however, the great climax of his "theoretical" work, his so-called "New Route to Socialism".

In this complicated construction of ideas, the violence issue disappears, dissolved into thin air, by a complete avoidance of the problem of the transfer of power from one class to another. Foster has invented an entirely "original" theory, according to which the task of introducing Socialism is no longer undertaken by the Communist Party, but is handed over to the Progressive Party headed by Henry Wallace. This Progressive Party is going to win control of the Government, says Foster, by the established electoral processes and on a simple democratic platform, but once in office, and under attack by the reactionary camp, it will turn to Socialism in order to survive; its decisions will be law, and opposition to them will be outlawed. Therefore, any force and violence that appears will be the illegal revolt of the reactionaries and its legal suppression by the Progressives-turned-Communists. "Obviously", concludes Foster, "this policy does not advocate the forceful overthrow of the Government of the United States."

Yes, it is indeed obvious that Foster's new theory does not advocate violent overthrow. But it is also obvious that it is a violent departure from Marxism as it has been known from 1848 until the appearance of Foster's pamphlet. And by relying upon this new theory to disprove the indictment, the defense by inference admits that the theories of Marx, before Foster's latest amendment, were at least unsatisfactory, were vulnerable, and more open to the Government's indictment. The result is that of weakening and undermining the defense, especially when, as it is certain to happen before long, Foster's "New Route to Socialism" is rejected by Communists all over the world as a major departure from Marxism-Leninism.

Foster has led the defense of the Communist Party before the Court, as well as before the American working class and the world, into the false and anti-Marxist position of equivocation and evasion. Foster's position is a characteristic mingling of bluster and cringing, in which slogans of defiance to the bourgeoisie decorate a program which has retreated to the most primitive philistine "legalism" and parliamentary cretinism, of submission in fact before the bourgeoisie.

Neither the bluster nor the cringing belongs with a Marxist defense of Communism and of the Communist Party, which must be dignified and bold.

### III. WHAT IS THE REVISIONIST "NEW ROUTE TO SOCIALISM"?

We have already noted that Foster's new theory concerning a "New Route to Socialism" was produced by him, as he himself says, to furnish "an irrefutable answer to the charges of force and violence that have been levelled against us by the Prosecution."

The very fact that Foster considers that a new theory is necessary in order to give "an irrefutable answer" to the ancient charge of "force and violence", shows that Foster does not agree that the old answers, those given by Marx himself and all his best disciples, were sufficiently irrefutable, but that they required Foster's improvement and correction. That is, Foster's whole approach is revisionist in character, and is contemptuous of theory, thinking theory is something a bright mind like his own can produce in new versions overnight for any contingency.



And what is the substance of this new theory, produced with such speed and ceremony, for so important an occasion?

Before Foster discovered the "new route", the old Marxist road to Socialism, according to Foster's description, consisted in "fighting directly for the proletarian dictatorship and Socialism" under conditions in which "it was impossible for workers to secure legally elected governmental majorities in the face of the employers' violence." (p.39) We will postpone until later pages an examination of the distortions of this too-simplified restatement of the classic Marxist road to power for Socialism.

In the early 1930s, Foster explains, coinciding with and resulting from the rise of fascism, "a new situation" emerged, "essentially a new phenomenon", (p.37) in which a peaceful shift of governmental power from the bourgeoisie to the workingclass became possible, with a resultant peaceful transition to Socialism. The specific factor introducing this tremendous change was "the growth of a tremendous peoples' anti-monopolist, anti-fascist, anti-war movement", (p. 37), says Foster.

"While generally not yet ready to fight for Socialism", (p.38) Foster continues his argument, this movement made it possible "legally to elect peoples' front governments on anti-fascist programs." (p.39) Such are viciously attacked by the reactionaries and fascists, and they are able to survive only by introducing Socialism.

"With the state power in their hands", says Foster, they are "able legally to initiate these socialist transition measures", (p.39) and the new Socialist State finds itself in power without ever having had to fight for power. Opposition to the new system of Socialism is made illegal, and if necessary is legally suppressed by the established government. This is, says Foster, "what has been called a new route to Socialism." (p.39) "With its perspective of legally elected peoples' front governments", Foster concludes..."it is simply absurd to charge, as the Prosecution is doing here, that the Communist program was one of advocating force and violence." (p.40)

Thus far the new theory is formulated by Foster on the basis of his understanding of how the "new democracies" in Eastern Europe came into being. The new theory will be understood by Americans with greater clarity, however, when we come to Foster's specific application to America.

Foster introduces its American application in the form of the broadest kind of "united front" that includes even the Truman forces. He says:

"We propose the election of a democratic government based on a broad united front coalition...The outcome of the November elections" (that is, the 1948 election of Truman! EB) "demonstrated that the great masses of our nation favor more or less this general type of progressive program...The old Roosevelt coalition.. had features of this general composition." (p.6)

In its program and composition, thus, Foster's projected "democratic government" would be essentially similar to the regimes of Roosevelt and Truman. How would it differ? The essential difference, Foster explains, is that it is realized through a new party organization. He says:

"The aim of the new Progressive Party, led by Henry A. Wallace, is for a re-organization of the bulk of the old Roosevelt forces on the basis of the struggle against fascism and war... (p.89) The main objective...must be to defeat the candidates and program of the reactionaries and pro-fascists." (p.89)

Having proceeded thus far, elected Henry Wallace as President of the United States with a supporting Progressive Party Congress, Foster arrives at the decisive step of his "new route to Socialism". First, he quotes Dennis, with approval, to the effect that:

"Such a peoples' front government would not be of the level of development of the new peoples' democracies in Europe.. ...its political level would not yet present it with the task of breaking the rule of the monopolies and thereby effecting the transition to socialism." (p.90)

After approving this formulation by Dennis, Foster then follows with a different formula of his own,

which seems to say exactly the opposite. He writes;

"Such a coalition, once in political office, would be compelled to move forward and take effective measures to curb and break the power of the monopolies...The economic, political, military and social strongholds of monopoly capital would have to be destroyed." (p.90)

Apparently there is a direct contradiction between the formulations of Dennis and Foster. The first says the task of the new government is not that of breaking the power of monopoly and transition to socialism. The second says that it is the task, and that this is the only significance of such a government.

The contradiction is not an example of the Marxist dialectical "unity of opposites". It is primitive opportunistic double-talk, it is a playing with "semantics", with multiple meanings for words; it is political sleight-of-hand. The key which reconciles the contradiction between Dennis and Foster, lies in the fact that Dennis was talking about the electoral program upon which the new government is to win office while Foster was talking about what must happen after such electoral victory, despite the program. Foster carefully says "once in political office", Henry Wallace and his Progressive Party "would be compelled to introduce Socialism, not that the new party would win office on a Socialist program. The two contradictory statements are thus both essential features of

Foster's "new route to Socialism". From all of which we must draw the following general characteristics of Foster's new theory:

(1) The introduction of Socialism in America is no longer to be considered the task of the Communist Party, but is handed over to the new Progressive Party.

(2) The new Progressive Party will not campaign for election to office on a platform of Socialism, but, on the contrary, will specifically declare that Socialism is not its task. Its electoral struggles will not, therefore, be a mobilization of the masses for Socialism.

(3) "Once in office", however, Wallace and the Progressive Party are expected, for purposes of survival, to transform the government into a specific American form of the dictatorship of the proletariat, to break the power of monopoly capital, and introduce Socialism into America.

(4) The process of transition to Socialism is a spontaneous product of meeting and solving problems from moment to moment, and any honest democratic body of men, such as Wallace and the Progressive Party, must inevitably evolve into Socialism, regardless of their ideology and the program under which they gained office, and must become practically indistinguishable from Communists. Thus the problem of electoral struggle is purely and simply one of electing honest men.

(5) The apparatus of government (President, Congress, Courts, Armed Forces, police, administrative departments, etc.) constitutes such a completely independent power that it can undertake, (when occupied by Progressives) on its own account, a complete and

...change in the social and economic system, for motives of its own survival, and without winning the masses in a struggle for power against the old ruling class.

(6) The decisive role in bringing Socialism is, therefore, not played by the workingclass, which is called upon only to elect a non-Socialist petty-bourgeois government, and then to support it unconditionally when that government decides to turn Socialist. The decisive role falls, consequently, to a small minority of exceptionally clever men who can foresee and manipulate this complicated indirect process.

(7) The direct mass struggle for socialism has become unnecessary and outmoded, since Foster has discovered a way to smuggle Socialism into existence, through the processes of bourgeois legality, thereby avoiding all the difficult and painful processes and problems to which Marx and his great disciples gave most of their attention.

Foster's new theory, his "new route to Socialism", is thus seen to be the most primitive, and most complete system of revision of Marxism in the name of Marx, that has ever been presented in the history of Socialist thought.

#### IV. FOSTER'S NEW THEORY OF "CORRESPONDENCE" BETWEEN CAPITALISM AND SOCIALISM.

While we proceed to the detailed criticism of Foster's new theoretical system in its political aspects, it will be necessary to go deeper into its many ramifications. The "new route", it will be seen, requires new laws of historical development, which have hitherto been overlooked and neglected, and even a new philosophy. We must, no matter how unrewarding is the effort, dig deeper into Foster's message to the workingclass and to the world Communist movement. We turn to Section 3 of Foster's pamphlet, which he entitled "The Uneven Development of the Struggle for Socialism."

Foster considered this point of basic importance, giving it the place of honor in his pamphlet, as Point 3 immediately following (1) the statement of the occasion for his pamphlet, and (2) presentation of his own credentials as a major Marxist theoretician, in the form of a review of the 1945 Emergency Convention in which he seized control of the Communist Party of America. The point is, indeed, fundamental for Foster's whole system of thought, and goes to the very basis of all political theory.

The central thought of Section 3, in Foster's own words, is contained in the following phrase:

"The uneven development of capitalism  
brings about a corresponding uneven  
development of the struggle for  
Socialism." (p.18)

Thus, Foster is stating a law of historical development, a "corollary" of Lenin's discovery of the law of uneven development of capitalism. Lenin's law had the most deep-going consequences in the further development of all socialist thought, and there can be no doubt that an acceptance of Foster's "corollary" to that law would also have the most profound consequences — even if of an entirely different sort.

Introducing Section 3 and his new "law", Foster declares:

"Now I will refute basically the Prosecution's charge that we American Communists are trying to bring about in the United States a fac-simile of the Russian Revolution." (p.17)

It is, of course, important to refute the charge that American Communists are only trying blindly to copy the Russian Revolution. But it is unfortunate that this worthy aim has been tied up to Foster's new "law", so that if one rejects the validity of the "law" he will be charged by Foster with joining hands with the Prosecution, and if one accepts the validity of Foster's new "law" then one must abandon everything he ever learned from Marx and Lenin. That is, indeed, a horrible dilemma, and one may only pray that one can escape both its sharp horns. I, for one, must unequivocally oppose both the Prosecution and Foster's "basic refutation" in the form of his "law" of "uneven development."



Is there an uneven development of capitalism? Yes, there is, and Lenin showed that this is a law of capitalism, that is, that it results from the inherent and inescapable nature of capitalist economy.

Is there an uneven development of the struggle for Socialism? Yes, there is, and it has been noted, studied, and discussed by Communist thinkers since the time of Marx and Engels.

Never, until Foster's present work, however, has the theory ever been put forward openly that the uneven development of the struggle for Socialism is brought about by, and corresponds to, the uneven development of capitalism. This "law of correspondence" is the unique discovery of Foster, and if it is valid, makes of him a greater thinker than either Marx or Lenin who never observed such an integral connection between these two phenomena.

Unfortunately for Foster's claim to fame, however, a serious examination of his theory will show that he has discovered a "new law" only in the fashion that Dr. Cook discovered the North Pole or Herr Duehring discovered the "eternal principles of True Socialism."

Foster, in a miserly manner, furnishes us with but a meagre four-page development of his new law, which is hardly commensurate with its importance. Little as it is, however, it is sufficient to fix its place in Socialist thought.

Foster elucidates his theory as follows: "This uneven development of capitalism naturally conditions

the development of the fight for Socialism, which is born out of the womb of capitalism everywhere...(p.17) One manifestation of this unevenly developed struggle for Socialism is that Socialism is not achieved by the workers in all countries simultaneously. Thus it was that Socialism was established first in old Russia...(pp. 17, 18) Even a novice...should be able to see that the experience of the masses in this great industrial country of ours, in their relatively slow movement toward Socialism, is greatly different from that of the Russian workers, who fairly leaped from semi-feudalism to Socialism." (p.18)

This fixes for us the direction in which Foster's "law of correspondence" is supposed, in his conception, to move. That is, the correspondence of the struggle for socialism to the development of capitalism is not direct, but is an inverse relationship, the more developed is capitalism, the less developed consequently is the struggle for socialism, while the less developed is capitalism then consequently the more highly developed is the struggle for Socialism. The masses move slowly toward Socialism in America because capitalism is so highly developed here; they "fairly leaped" into Socialism in Russia because that country was semi-feudal and very backward in capitalist economic development. Such is the burden of Foster's new theory of "correspondence".

It must be admitted that the theory has a use-value for Foster. It furnishes the Communist leader in America with an immediate and automatic explanation for all the defeats and setbacks which the movement suffers under his leadership, and proves

that in the broad historical view these are merely the result of the high development of American capitalism, and not at all of the stupidity and mistakes of the Communist leader.

The demerits of the theory are more serious. Besides the inextricable confusion to which it leads those who accept it (since it is obviously contradicted by the facts), it constitutes a denial of the very foundations of Marxism in the field of theory and practice, it is a reversion to the old opportunist theory of spontaneity.

Before the Russian Revolution there was current in many Marxist circles of Europe and America a theory approximating to Foster's "law". This differed, however, in assuming that the highest development of capitalism would naturally produce the highest development of the struggle for socialism. Lenin's teaching on the law of uneven development of capitalism, backed up by the world-shaking fact of the Russian Revolution, exploded that old theory and rendered it untenable.

It would seem that Foster aims to restore that old theory of correspondence by changing its foundation from an "even" to an "uneven" one. He doubtless does not know that Lenin, in shattering the old theory of "correspondence" equally made it impossible to restore it on a new basis. The Leninist development of Marxism destroys any and all conceivable theories of "correspondence" between the struggle for socialism and the stage of capitalist development in particular countries.

It is, of course, a basic principle of Marxism that Socialism follows capitalism historically, that it does not precede capitalism, that capitalism creates the material and social pre-conditions necessary for the rise of Socialism. This general principle, however, does not validate Foster's law of correspondence between the two systems for particular countries. This Marxist principle applies to capitalism as a world system, and to socialism on the same world scale, but furnishes no regularity of relationship of the struggle between the two systems in particular countries.

One of the chief objective reasons why there is not, and cannot be, any regularity of relationship between the development of capitalism and socialism, lies in the circumstance that modern imperialism, while incorporating into the capitalist world system more and more countries of pre-capitalist economic development, at the same time less and less permitted them to find an independent capitalist development of their own, reducing them to appendages to the capitalist great powers, condemning them to permanent economic and social backwardness. Such was the nature of Great Power relationships not only toward the colonial and semi-colonial areas, but even among themselves; thus, it was the semi-colonial exploitative relationship of the Western Powers toward pre-revolutionary Russia, which was a contributing factor in bringing about there the first Socialist Revolution in history.

All objective factors, however, taken as a whole, fail to explain the uneven development of the struggle

for Socialism, which is determined by the subjective factor, the degree of scientific clarity in Socialist ideology and the degree it has won mass support.

The development of capitalism does have the result of maturing the material and social pre-conditions for the realization of Socialism. From this point of view it can be stated as a law that every country that has not already entered upon the construction of Socialism possesses the material pre-conditions for Socialism in approximately direct proportion to the development of capitalism. Thus, America has a very high development of the material and social pre-conditions for Socialism, - but a low development of the struggle for Socialism. The struggle for Socialism does not arise spontaneously from these material pre-conditions, and cannot be measured thereby. The intensity of the class struggle may be said, allowing for other varying factors, to rise with the development of capitalism; but here again, the struggle for Socialism does not arise spontaneously from the intensifying class struggle, and cannot be measured thereby.

Foster's theory of "correspondence", and all other forms of the same fundamental idea, reduce the Socialist movement to an automatic and spontaneous reflection of capitalism. It denies the intervention of human consciousness, intelligence, and will, which, developed beyond the individual to the mass, to the workingclass and its natural allies, is the decisive factor in the development of the struggle for Socialism. And class-consciousness, class-intelligence, and class-will can in no way be measured by, or made to

correspond to, the stage of capitalist development in particular countries.

Marxism does not, in asserting the primacy of matter and the derivative nature of ideas, set the objective factor, the material stage of development in particular countries, as master over the subjective factor, human consciousness, understanding and will to Socialism in those same particular countries. Neither does it affirm the free determining power of the subjective factor. It does not set either one above or against the other, but instead emphasizes their inter-relation and interaction as two aspects of a single reality, the process of history on a world scale.

Marxism begins by asserting the subordination of human consciousness to objective, material, reality, in order thereby to proceed to the goal of the control by human consciousness over the material world. "Man makes his own history, but he does not make it out of whole cloth." He can work only with materials provided by the past, over which he has no control. But by studying the past, by understanding the forces and direction of history, by learning the science of history, he can introduce elements of control into the present which can be extended into the full Socialist control of the future.

The instrument by which mankind secures control over the material world is science, is theory. "Theory," said Marx, "becomes a material force as soon as it has gripped the masses." And science is international; it flows over national boundaries despite all attempts to isolate it.

Foster's new theories, the "new route to Socialism", the "law of correspondence between capitalism and socialism," and all the rest, are flatly contradictory to Marxism in all its aspects, from practical politics to philosophy. They express the theory of spontaneity, which begins with the unconditional assertion of the power of the individual human will (expressed by Foster in grandiose boasting, and the assertion of his personal authority into the broadest fields, in which he is woefully lacking in preparation) but it ends up, always and inevitably, in the most servile abasement before "objective conditions" - - in politics as a tail to the kite of the bourgeoisie, even when most loudly mouthing verbal defiance, as in the present Trial, and in philosophy as a retreat even behind the mechanical materialism of the 18th century, to the fatalism of the middle ages.

#### V. THE THEORY OF SPONTANEITY Vs. MARXISM-LENINISM.

In the foregoing pages we have shown that implicit in Foster's "new route to Socialism" and his other theoretical inventions is the theory of spontaneity.

It must now be noted that Foster also gives direct and explicit expression to the theory of spontaneity, the theory that the movement toward Socialism spontaneously and automatically emerges from material conditions and the class struggle.

It is not a justification for these basic theoretical errors to point out that they are brought forward in an attempt to refute anti-Communist lies.

When the reactionaries accuse Communism of being a foreign importation, Foster gives the answer: "The Communist movement is spontaneous and is native to all countries."

Listing the many Communist Parties in the world, with their millions of members, Foster defends them against the lie that they are "Soviet fifth columns", by describing them as "great spontaneous mass movements." (p.77-78, my emphasis, EB)

Finally, Foster shows that this is not a chance error by changing the classical formula: "Only the class struggle of the proletariat, only the victory of the proletariat over the bourgeoisie, would rid humanity of capitalism and exploitation." (Short History of CPSU, p.9), giving it the quite different form that follows:

"The progress of the class struggle... can only lead...to the establishment of Socialism." (p.84, my emphasis, EB)

The difference between these two formulations has historically marked the difference between the theory of Marxism and the theory of spontaneity.

There is no doubt that these explicit statements of the theory of spontaneity by Foster, and the implicit presence of the same theory as the under-



lying foundation of his "new route to Socialism" and his "law of correspondence", accurately give the measure of Foster's understanding of the development of Socialism. 1

Almost 50 years ago a spokesman for Marxism, criticizing a draft program which put forward the theory of spontaneity, wrote a refutation of it which became a Marxist classic. Here are a few extended quotations from it:

"In the draft program it is stated: 'The more capitalism increases the numbers of the proletariat, the more the proletariat is compelled and becomes fit to fight against capitalism. The proletariat becomes conscious' of the possibility of and the necessity for Socialism. In this connection Socialist consciousness is represented as a necessary and direct result of the proletarian class struggle. But this is absolutely untrue. Of course, Socialism, as a theory, has its roots in modern economic relationships just as the class struggle of the proletariat has, and just as the latter emerges from the struggle against the capitalist-created poverty and misery of the masses. But Socialism and the class struggle arise side by side and not one out of the other;

each arises under different conditions. Modern Socialist consciousness can arise only on the basis of profound scientific knowledge. Indeed, modern economic science is as much a condition for Socialist production as, say, modern technology and the proletariat can create neither the one nor the other, no matter how much it may desire to do so; both arise out of the modern social process. The vehicles of science are not the proletariat, but the bourgeois intelligentsia: It was in the minds of some members of this stratum that modern Socialism originated, and it was they who communicated it to the more intellectually developed proletarians who, in their turn, introduced it into the proletarian class struggle where conditions allow that to be done. Thus, Socialist consciousness is something introduced into the proletarian class struggle from without, and not something that arose within it spontaneously. Accordingly, the old Hainfeld program quite rightly stated that the task of Social-Democracy is to imbue the proletariat (literally: saturate the proletariat) with the consciousness of its position and the consciousness of its tasks. There would be no need for this if consciousness emerged of itself from the class struggle. The new draft copied this proposition from the old program,

and attached it to the proposition mentioned above. But this completely broke the line of thought..."

Who was the writer who thus, almost half a century ago, attacked the theory of spontaneity, which Foster now tries to revive? Foster will be happy to be informed that it was Karl Kautsky! Well, well, he will exclaim, so it was Kautsky the Renegade! To be criticized by such an historical figure is a compliment and a recommendation of correctness!

Before Foster becomes too happy about the identity of the critic of his theory, however, he should be further informed that the quotation is taken from Lenin's work, "What Is To Be Done", published in 1902, in which Lenin comments upon it as "profoundly true and important."

It was this booklet of Lenin's which marked the appearance of the Bolsheviki as a defined group and political tendency representing Marxism in irreconcilable struggle against its revisionists. And the burden of its thesis, from beginning to end, was the struggle against the theory of spontaneity.

In "History of the CPSU", edited under the direction of Stalin, it is said of "What Is To Be Done?"

"The historic significance of this celebrated book lies in the fact that in it Lenin;

1) For the first time in the history of Marxist thought, laid bare the ideological roots of opportunism, showing that they primarily consisted in worshipping the spontaneous working-class movement and belittling the role of Socialist consciousness in the working-class movement;

2) Brought out the great importance of theory, of consciousness, and of the Party as a revolutionizing and guiding force of the spontaneous working-class movement;

3) Brilliantly substantiated the fundamental Marxist thesis that a Marxist party is a union of the working-class with Socialism;

4) Gave a brilliant exposition of the ideological foundations of a Marxist party.

The theoretical theses expounded in "What Is To Be Done?" later became the foundation for the ideology of the Bolshevik Party." (p. 38).

The "History" summarizes Lenin's teaching on this point as follows:

"Lenin showed that the 'Economists' were deceiving the working class when they asserted that a Socialist ideology could arise from the spontaneous movement of

the working class, for in reality the Socialist ideology arises not from the spontaneous movement, but from science." (p. 37).

A simple re-reading of Lenin's great polemic against the theory of spontaneity will make clear the anti-Marxist character of Foster's "new route to Socialism" which transfers the task of introducing Socialism to the Progressive Party and its spontaneous change to Socialism "once in office", as a spontaneous response to the need of survival.

Support to the Progressive Party because of the advisability and need of achieving some practical task or several of them before the transition to Socialism has become the immediate order of the day, (as the Communists supported Roosevelt), can be defended within the framework of Marxist theory. Whether it is correct or not, depends not upon theory, but upon the practical judgement whether such tasks are necessary and such support will achieve its goal.

But Foster's denial that the Progressive Party can achieve any desirable ends short of the transition to Socialism, and his support of the Progressive Party with the expressed aim of making it the vehicle for the achievement of Socialism, constitutes a fundamental rupture with Marxism. It is a peculiar hybrid combination of two types of opportunism, that of Bernstein and "parliamentary cretinism", the worship of legalism, on the one hand, and the anarcho-syndicalist theory of the "militant minority" and "boring from within" on the otherhand. It enables Foster

to pose as the super-revolutionist and simultaneously as the most "practical" opportunist; the leader who breathes forth the fire-and-brimstone of quick "destruction of all the strongholds of monopoly capital" - - but all within the narrow confines of bourgeois legality, through the instrumentality of Henry Wallace (who does not agree to the role assigned to him!), without a struggle for power, and without even an electoral struggle on the open issue of Socialism!

But Marxism requires consciousness, it is science, not spontaneous reaction to environment. In the long evolution from barbarism to capitalism, man has worked blindly, knowing and caring little for the great pattern of history which he was weaving. But in modern times when history approaches the task of leaping from capitalism to socialism, the factor of consciousness assumes a new and more decisive role; the new socialist system cannot simply grow, blindly and in spontaneous response to immediate problems, as capitalism grew.

Socialism requires consciousness, not merely the consciousness of the individual, but mass consciousness, class consciousness, the planned activity of masses with the scientific goal of Socialism as its guiding factor; not merely the consciousness of leaders but the consciousness of the great mass.

It is this fundamental scientific, conscious character of the struggle for Socialism, which reduces to nonsense all theories of spontaneity, such as Foster's, with its consequent illiterate theories such as the "new route to Socialism", and the "law

of correspondence" between capitalist development which is the product of blind, automatic processes, and the struggle for Socialism, which must be conscious.

Foster's pitiful effort to "improve" and "extend" the theories of Marx and Lenin with his own improved theories, is an expression of his own helplessness and incapacity in face of the great historical tasks of the working class in America. Having no scientific understanding to guide him, he turns instinctively to blind reliance on spontaneity, and all failures which it brings to him and the Party he dominates he ascribes, not to his own lack of understanding of Marxism and consequent ineptness of leadership, but to "unfavorable objective conditions." Foster's ideology is not that of Marx and Lenin; it is that of Bakunin, Most, and Sorel, mixed up with that of Bernstein and the later Kautsky.

## VI. FOSTER'S REVISIONIST THEORY OF STATE POWER.

One of the primary tests of the Marxist quality of a workingclass party leadership is its understanding of and attitude toward, the bourgeois state power. No matter how extremely "revolutionary" may be its attitude in words and phrases, it is not revolutionary in reality unless it fully grasps and applies the Marxist understanding of State power. If that were not so, then the Anarchists would be the best revolutionists of all, for no one rants against the State louder than they, and no one else can compete

with their demand for the immediate and unconditional abolition of the State. Yet it is an established historical fact that the Anarchist attitude toward the State of the bourgeoisie does not weaken that State, nor lead toward its abolition, but on the contrary, it ends up in the most servile subjection to that State. Only the Marxist doctrine of State power is revolutionary -- that is, leads toward a different and new kind of State, expressing a new and more progressive stage of social development.

One of the clearest characteristics of Foster's new pamphlet, "In Defense of the Communist Party", is its anti-Marxist, revisionist, theory of State power.

What is the meaning, in relation to the theory of State power, when Foster, developing his "New Route to Socialism", assigns to the Progressive Party the task of introducing Socialism in America, which task it is expected to assume only after it has won office in elections, and only as an expedient for its own survival?

It means that Foster's theory of State power considers either; (a) that the State power inheres in the small body of men who occupy government offices, who may at will dispose of this power to the service of the bourgeoisie or of the workingclass; or (b) that the State power is something standing above classes, evolving according to its own internal laws, without organic relation to the play of class forces in society, and only affecting these classes from without. There is a third alternative, that Foster holds both these views simultaneously (or shifts from one to the other), in



the same way that philosophically he clings to both "free will" and fatalism, or shifts back and forth between them. Either or both these doctrines of State power, which are inherent in Foster's "new route to Socialism", entirely and completely contradict the Marxist doctrine of State power.

Stating the same problem from a different angle, Foster's theory of the State holds that the normal processes of legality of the bourgeois State may produce, spontaneously, the transition to Socialism, that is, that the dictatorship of the bourgeoisie may evolve into the dictatorship of the proletariat. A possible variation of this, consistent with Foster's "new route", is that the Progressive Party government which begins the transition represents an intermediate type, neither bourgeois nor proletarian, and later gives way voluntarily to the proletarian.

If we wish to evaluate Foster's theory by comparison with similar concepts in the past history of the Socialist movement, we would probably find that it most closely resembles the program demand for the "free people's State" of the German Social-Democrats in the 1870s, against which Marx and Engels conducted an unrelenting ideological struggle, and of which Lenin said that "the only political content of this slogan is a pompous philistine description of the concept democracy."

We previously noted (p.13) how Foster, contrasting his "new route" with previous Marxist theory on the transition to Socialism, described the latter as being formulated for the condition in which "it was

impossible for workers to secure legally elected governmental majorities in the face of employers' violence." In this phrase Foster discloses that it is not only his "new route", but also his previous understanding of the problem, which reduced the whole problem of replacing bourgeois with workingclass rule to one of securing "legally elected governmental majorities." This was, indeed, the concept given its foremost expression by Karl Kautsky, when he had become a revisionist, and which is quoted by Lenin ("State and Revolution", near end of Chap. VI) as follows;

"The aim of our political struggle remains, as hitherto, the conquest of state power by winning a majority in parliament and by converting parliament into the master of the government."

This is the concept which Lenin described as

"nothing but the purest and most vulgar opportunism: a repudiation of revolution in deed, while accepting it in word...which keeps everything within the framework of bourgeois parliamentary republic."

Lenin denounced Kautsky's theory as "the purest and most vulgar opportunism". But Kautsky was at least talking about securing a legally elected governmental majority of Socialists - - while Foster, whose former understanding of the road to Socialism was in agreement with Kautsky's, has now, in his "new route" to Socialism, gone further than Kautsky ever dared and replaced his

legally elected Socialist majority with a majority of Progressives, who are not Socialists, but whom Foster expects will turn into Socialists after they are elected! One wonders what words remain to characterize the "new route" theory!

It is, of course, quite true that Marx and Engels, and after them Lenin and Stalin, always spoke of special circumstances which might make possible a peaceful transition to Socialism in some countries, and Marx mentioned America in this connection. But it is absolutely untrue that any of these great teachers ever at any time taught that a majority in Parliament was sufficient to secure this result under any conditions. Foster appeals to Marx, however, for support of his "parliamentary majority" theory, with the following quotation:

"Thus Marx, estimating the situation three generations ago in Great Britain and the United States, said: 'If, for example, the working class in England and in the United States should win a majority in Parliament, in Congress, it could legally abolish those laws and institutions which obstruct its development.'" (Foster's pamphlet, p.22)

In these words of Marx, however, there is no reference whatever to the concept that a working class majority in Parliament is sufficient to secure the transition to Socialism. He says only that it is sufficient to legally abolish those laws and institutions which obstruct working class development;

and experience under Roosevelt in the 1930s showed that this can even be partially accomplished under a 100% bourgeois parliamentary majority.

It is typical revisionist political fraud, when Foster pretends that his quotation from Marx gives even a shadow of support to his "new route" theory; and it is of minor consequence whether Foster commits the fraud with deliberation or out of ignorance -- it is probably the latter.

In a previously cited quotation from Foster, he speaks of the obstacle to electing workers' majorities as being "employers' violence". This is not an accidental phrase, for Foster habitually speaks and thinks of all questions, including State power and its transfer from one class to another, exclusively within the framework of the worker-employer relationship. Thus, in another place, he says "the employers, faced by a working class trying en masse to establish Socialism by electing a majority in the parliament,....would use open violence." (p.22) Even in speaking of China, Foster says: "Such capitalist violence is further illustrated by the Chiang Kai-shek government's attempts to stamp out Chinese Communism by force". Foster cannot understand that in China the capitalists, in their main body, long turned against Chiang, and even welcome the Communists as "a lesser evil that Chiang is militantly feudal and anti-capitalist; this simply does not fit into the extremely simple categories in which he thinks. Innumerable other examples may be seen in the book under review, and in all of Foster's writings.

This could easily be forgiven in a simple trade unionist who made no pretense to being one of the leading Marxists of the world. But from the head of the Communist Party of America it is inexcusable ignorance, displaying a complete lack of Marxist fundamental understanding.

It was against precisely such limited views that Lenin wrote so sharply in his pamphlet "What Is To Be Done?", which marked the foundation of the Bolsheviks, and Lenin considered that without smashing this limitation in the minds of the workers there could be no possible progress toward Socialism. Here is a characteristic example of the Leninist (that is, the only consistently Marxist) approach to the subject:

"Class political consciousness can be brought to the workers only from without (*italics in the original*), that is, only outside of the economic struggle, outside of the sphere of relations between workers and employers (my emphasis, EB). The sphere from which alone it is possible to obtain this knowledge is the sphere of relationships between all the various classes and strata and the state and the government - - the sphere of the interrelations between all the various classes."

Foster cannot understand the Marxian doctrine of State power because his mind is so narrowly limited within the confines of the class struggle between employer and worker, which is his horizon beyond

which he sees nothing. In his own view, this constitutes his greatest virtue, his chief credential as a "Marxist". From this limitation arises his primitive idea that Socialism springs spontaneously from the class struggle, and all the other anti-Marxist theories which we have been examining. For Foster, the heart and soul, the beginning and end, of Marxism is the class struggle in its narrowest sense.

Foster has never understood the following words of Lenin, which repeat what Marx and Engels often stated:

"It is often said and written that the core of Marx's theory is the class struggle; but this is not true. And from this error very often springs the opportunist distortion of Marxism, its falsification to make it acceptable to the bourgeoisie. For the doctrine of the class struggle was created not by Marx, but by the bourgeoisie before Marx, and generally speaking it is acceptable to the bourgeoisie. Those who recognize only the class struggle are not yet Marxists; they may be found to be still within the boundaries of bourgeois reasoning and bourgeois politics..."

Foster's entire conception of State power, and of the historical process whereby that State power passes from one class to another, falls entirely within the framework of bourgeois reasoning. That is why he, under the illusion that he is making world-shaping advances in the field of Marxist theory, in reality re-

surrects in their most primitive form all the revisionist theories that had been demolished by Marx and his disciples over a period of 100 years, from Bakunin through Duehring, Bernstein, Kautsky, Trotsky, et al.

Foster boasts that he leads and speaks for the vanguard. But as Lenin reminded us nearly a half-century ago, to really be the vanguard a party must master Marxist theory, and that

"much persistent and stubborn work is required to raise our own consciousness, initiative, and energy. For this, it is not sufficient to stick the label 'vanguard' on rearguard theory and practice."

#### VII. DID FOSTER'S REVISIONISM ORIGINATE IN THE COMINTERN'S SEVENTH WORLD CONGRESS?

Either from an excess of modesty (which is unusual for him), or from canny caution (which is more in character), Foster has disclaimed for himself the sole and exclusive authorship of the new theories now expounded by him. He says they were first developed in embryo at the Seventh World Congress of the Comintern; that they were experimentally developed further by the New Democracies in Eastern Europe after the War; and that it remained only for Foster to give them their clear and definite theoretical formulation,

and their application to America, the sole remaining stronghold of imperialism.

Did Foster's new theories really originate in the Seventh World Congress?

No, they did not. On the contrary, the Seventh Congress in advance repudiated Foster's interpretation of its work, foreseeing such tendencies would appear.

Permit me, since I was spokesman for the American Delegation to the Seventh Congress, to quote from my report to the American Party membership, October 3, 1935, in Madison Square Garden, New York City:

"The Seventh Congress declared that 'at the present historical stage it is the main, immediate task of the international labor movement to establish the united fighting front of the working class'.

"The whole work of the Seventh Congress was directed toward speeding up the accomplishment of this aim. It is for this reason that the Congress declared it to be the duty of every Communist Party to take into consideration the changed circumstances and to apply the united front tactics in a new manner, to seek to reach agreements with the organizations of toilers of all political trends for joint action on factory, local, district, national and international scale.



"In this the Seventh Congress was answering the question being asked by millions throughout the world: 'How can fascism be prevented from coming to power, and how can fascism be overthrown where it has been victorious?!...'

"It is entirely probable that such a united mass movement will face the problem of power before it is convinced of the full Communist program...

"The masses will ask: Will we fight for a majority, for control of the government, can we take control of government with such a party, what could such a government do?

"We clearly answer: Yes, we will fight together with such united fronts for a majority in all elected bodies, local, state and national. We will support such a party wherever and whenever it wins a majority, in taking over the administrative power, so long as it really uses those powers to protect and extend democratic liberties and advance the demands of the masses.

"When we are asked: Will we, Communists, act merely as critics in such a movement, while we advocate Soviet Power for which the masses are not yet ready to fight, we answer: The Communists are even prepared for practical participation in

such a government. We openly declare that such a government will not be able to introduce socialism, which is possible only with a really revolutionary government...

"It is clear that here we are speaking of a transitional form of government before the victory of the proletarian revolution. Such government should not be confused with the possible Soviet government, formed on the basis of a bloc with Communists, Left Socialists, etc., which had jointly participated in a victorious revolution. We speak of the possible formation of the united front government before such a victory."

(Pamphlet, "New Steps in the United Front", Report on the Seventh World Congress, Workers Library Publishers, Nov. 1935, pp. 11, 14, 15).

Some of the points of the main political resolution of the Seventh Congress which directly refute Foster's re-interpretation, are the following:

"It is imperative that unity of action be established between all sections of the working class... even before the majority of the working-class unites on a common fighting

platform for the overthrow of capitalism and the victory of the proletarian revolution." (p.26)

However, "the toilers must be shown the impossibility of bringing about socialism so long as power remains in the hands of the bourgeoisie." (p.28)

The Seventh Congress "charges every Communist Party to wage an irreconcilable struggle against any tendency to gloss over the differences in principles between Communism and reformism, against weakening the criticism of Social Democracy as the ideology and practice of class collaboration with the bourgeoisie, against the illusion that it is possible to bring about socialism by peaceful, legal methods, against any reliance on AUTONOMISM or SPONTANEITY, whether in the liquidation of fascism or in the realization of the united front, against belittling the role of the Party and against the slightest vacillation at the MOMENT OF DECISIVE ACTION." (p.37)

Unity with the Social-Democratic Parties is to be sought "under the condition... that the necessity of the revolutionary overthrow of the rule of the bourgeoisie and the establishment of the dictatorship of the proletariat in the form of Soviets be recognized..." (p.37)

(Pamphlet, "Resolutions of the Seventh World Congress", Workers Library Pub., Nov.1935).

And finally, George Dimitroff, in his report to the Seventh Congress, said the following:

"Fifteen years ago Lenin called upon us to focus all our attention on 'searching out forms of transition or approach to the proletarian revolution'. It may be that in a number of countries the united front government will prove to be one of the most important transitional forms. 'Left' doctrinaires always avoided this precept of Lenin's. Like the limited propagandists that they were, they spoke only of 'aims', without ever worrying about 'forms of transition'. The Right opportunists, on the other hand, tried to establish a special 'democratic intermediate stage' lying between the dictatorship of the bourgeoisie and the dictatorship of the proletariat, for the purpose of instilling into the workers the illusion of a peaceful parliamentary passage from one

dictatorship to the other. This fictitious 'intermediate stage' they also called 'transitional form', and even quoted Lenin's words! But this piece of swindling was not difficult to expose; for Lenin spoke of the form of transition and approach to the 'proletarian revolution', i.e., to the overthrow of the bourgeois dictatorship, and not of some transitional form between the bourgeois and proletarian dictatorships.

"Why did Lenin attach such exceptionally great importance to the form of transition to the proletarian revolution? Because he had in mind 'the fundamental law of all great revolutions', the law that for the masses propaganda and agitation alone cannot take the place of their own political experience, when it is a question of attracting really wide masses of the working people to the side of the revolutionary vanguard, without which a victorious struggle for power is impossible."

(G.Dimitroff, "The United Front", Internat'l. Publ., 1938, p.75)

In Foster's book it is asserted that "a new situation" arose in Europe in the early 1930s, more favor-

able to the peaceful transition to socialism, that this fact was recognized by the Seventh World Congress, and that thereafter the world Communist movement based itself upon this new perspective. This is sufficiently and completely refuted by the above quotations from the Seventh Congress. Foster is misrepresenting the Seventh World Congress, it lends no support whatever to his new theories.

It is also important to note that Foster is equally in collision with the hard facts. "A new situation" there was, in truth, with the rise of a barbarous and cannibalistic fascism to power in Central Europe, with the policy of "appeasement" of this fascism on the part of Britain, France and America. But this, far from opening up any perspective of peaceful transition to socialism in Europe, on the contrary really closed the door to all progress of any kind, even of reform within the framework of capitalism, except through the most violent and costly struggles.

Why does Foster try to fix the rise of fascism in 1933-1935, as the source of such a "new situation" which made it possible "legally to elect" peoples' governments and thereby secure a peaceful transition to socialism? Why does Foster choose the rise of fascism, not its destruction, as the opening of his "peaceful period"? Why does he develop at such great length, in Section 6 of his book, that "during the pre-fascist period" the legal and peaceful transition to socialism was impossible, but with the rise of fascism "a new situation" was created that made legal and peaceful transition possible? And why does Foster try to saddle this fantastic theory upon the Seventh World Congress?

The reason is, first, that Foster absolutely requires the mantle of authority of the leaders of the world Communist movement to drape about his shoulders, for he has no authority in his own right before the American workers. Therefore his assignment to the Seventh Congress of the authorship of the theories which are peculiarly his own invention. And this required that he invent also the occasion for this in the events of those days.

The reason is, secondly, that Foster finds it logically necessary, in order to support his whole system of new theories, to date their beginning with the rise of fascism. Foster's "new route to Socialism" is a theory that the peoples' of Europe were "generally not yet ready to fight for Socialism"; that the rise of fascism created the possibility to smuggle socialism into the anti-fascist movement, that the introduction of Socialism came about as a legal fait accompli, not as a conscious mass struggle for Socialism.

Foster's re-writing of the political history of the Seventh World Congress was thus only a preliminary to his re-interpretation of the history of the New Democracies and their inauguration of the transition to Socialism. And both are equally false, opportunist, and revisionist.

### VIII. FOSTER'S REVISIONIST EXPLANATION OF THE NEW DEMOCRACIES.

In the previous chapter we have proved conclusively that Foster misinterprets and misrepresents the Seventh World Congress and the nature of its new tactical orientation, giving it a revisionist twist against which the Congress itself had specifically warned. It is now necessary to show that Foster equally misrepresents the character and course of development of the New Democracies and that his new theories find no more support there than in the Seventh Congress.

First of all, we should take note of those matters in which the New Democracies, in their rise, did in fact modify the political line which was charted for them in the Seventh World Congress.

These factual modifications were, in major issues involving theory, two in number. First, the new governments formed on the program of introduction of Socialism did not take the form of Soviet governments, as the Seventh Congress had insisted was necessary, but of peoples' democratic republics, in form not sharply distinguished from that of bourgeois democratic republics. Secondly, the new governments were not formed under the slogan of dictatorship of the proletariat, and it was only after they were firmly established that it was explained that the new power performed the functions of the dictatorship of the proletariat, that is, that they contained the essence without the name or particular form. These modifications of the Seventh Congress line were serious and important matters of form and tactics, but they did not involve any fundamental issues of theory.



They were based upon the experience that the unification of the masses, the united front with other parties, and the fusion of Socialist and Communist Parties into a single party of the workingclass, all upon a commonly-agreed program of immediate transition to Socialism, were facilitated and strengthened by concessions in these formal matters to the non-Communists, while they did not endanger the substantial realization of the program.

Those are the facts. And what a distorted picture of them we receive in Foster's pamphlet "In Defense of the Communist Party"! They are interpreted as expressions of that fundamentally revisionist theory of the "new route to Socialism" which Foster is trying to establish in America!

Foster's distorted interpretation would lead us to believe that the governments of the New Democracies were set up as non-socialist governments, and that they evolved into socialist governments after achieving power ("once in office" is Foster's classic phrase!) on a non-socialist platform. That is stuff and nonsense! Every one of them was socialist in specific declaration of intention from the beginning, and their evolution related not at all to aim, but only as to the issue of the tempo of transition. (And by the way, even the first post-war governments of Italy and France were socialist by declaration of their platforms, but were subverted and changed by conspiracy between American reaction and the hidden national enemies of socialism.)

The new governments were not created by peaceful, parliamentary means; they arose from victory in

a violent and bloody struggle, waged not only against the invading Nazis and fascists, but also against their quislings, who included the bulk of the national big bourgeoisie and landlords in each country. The new democracies represent "the peaceful transition to Socialism", therefore, only in the special sense that when the new governments were finally established this guaranteed the possibility of immediate transition to Socialism without civil war, because the enemies of Socialism no longer had strength to wage civil war. What a contrast this is with the picture Foster draws, which has only the most superficial relation to reality!

The socialist character of the new governments was not determined, as Foster maintains, as an expedient to maintain themselves in power. It is not true, as Foster says, that "these united front, or peoples' front movements, while generally not yet ready to fight for Socialism (my emphasis, EB), were determined to fight for the establishment of anti-fascist, anti-war governments." (p.38) Not only were the workers, and the masses in general, ready to fight for Socialism, but they conducted this fight so militantly that all parties which wished to maintain mass influence (even the Catholic parties, under control of the Vatican!) were compelled to pay lip service to Socialism, and commit themselves to Socialist programs in order not to find themselves isolated and powerless. It was only after they received aid from America, that these lip-service "Socialists" gained the courage to come out openly against Socialism. The Socialist character of the new governments was established by the masses and imposed by them. It was the mass struggle for Socialism, not palace conspiracies, parliamentary combinations, or "evolution" for reasons of expediency of non-socialists,

that made the decision for Socialism in the new Democracies. It was not a "new route" in Foster's sense, it was in all essential features the same road which had been charted by Marxism for a hundred years.

Of course the transition to Socialism now going on in the New Democracies presents a rich and varied experience, and is in no way a mere repetition of the Russian experience, no matter how much these peoples had learned from Russia. No country goes on to the road of Socialism except with her own internal forces, and in her own way. And in every new experience, there are new lessons to be learned. But they are not the lessons Foster has plucked out of the air, lessons of "new routes" which fundamentally revise the theories of Marx and Lenin.

There is not the slightest foundation in the experiences of Europe for Foster's new theories. On the contrary, this experience once again proves that such theories, "new" only as new forms of old opportunism, are intrusions into the Communist movement of bourgeois ideology.

#### IX. THE IMPENDING CATASTROPHE and HOW TO COMBAT IT.

If Foster's new theories have no foundation in the realities of Europe, it must be said that they equally find no validation in the tremendously different realities of America.

Catastrophes are impending for America, but the

age of the Jeremiah-type of prophets, who cry "Woe, woe, woe", who call on the people to repent their sins, prepare for the Millenium and the coming of the Savior, is long past; the Jeremiahs are obsolete, the people have no use for them, not even if they call themselves Communists.

The people, and first of all the workingclass, are aware of threatening catastrophes looming ahead. They want to know how to combat the threat, what can be done practically, now, to fend off the economic crisis already pinching at their dinners, and to strengthen the forces of peace.

The Communist Party should be in the forefront in the practical instruction of the masses, and their practical leadership in action, beginning with and emphasizing what can be done now, today, under the existing system, and leading toward the fundamental solution which can come only with Socialism in America. That should have been the main body, and the moving spirit, of the defense in the Communist Trial, and in Foster's book which directs the Trial and the whole work of the Communist Party. Instead, there is only the incoherence of Foster's revisionist theories, a welter of words and legal technicalities, out of which no worker can gather anything but confusion, practical as well as theoretical.

The threat to peace today is contained in the "cold war" that has divided the world into two camps, in American armaments and the arming of satellites, and in the imminent economic crisis which is hastened and deepened by the cold war. The workers, and people generally, must be told the fact that growth of unemployment, the rise in the cost of living, the whole threatening economic crisis, is the direct result of the cold war. They must

be told that economic crisis, and the war scare, can be fended off, pushed away, only by making peace and restoring world trade to a normal basis.

What does Foster tell the workers? Something quite different. Whenever he gets away from vague and general slogans, down to daily realities, he points in another direction. The following quotations from his pamphlet give the practical instructions from Foster which reach the workers - - though the workers listen less and less! Foster says:

The threatening economic crisis arises from "first, the tremendous, unhealthy expansion of American industry during the war." (p. 55)

"Without the current armaments expenditures our economy would explode overnight into a devastating crisis." (p.56)

"Wall Street imperialist policy produces world economic chaos."

"All these policies...can only have disastrous long-run effects upon capitalist world trade and industry." (p.57)

"The Party's three present-day central issues are...first, to protect the workers, by social insurance and other measures, against the ravages of the developing economic crisis..." (p.73)

"...We are surely in for such crisis unless our Wall Street warmongers in the meantime succeed in flinging our country into an atomic war that would smash us altogether." (p.81)

"They know that if the war-scare should die down and they were no longer able to get billions and billions in munitions orders from the Government, then their sick industrial system would collapse overnight into a terrific economic crisis." (p.82)

The cumulative effect of the constant repetition of such formulations, in Foster's pamphlet and in the Party press generally, plus the complete absence of any economic program to combat the crisis ("social insurance" and similar measures do not combat the crisis, but only slightly cushion it), results in this: That the workers understand that cold war policies do save them from immediate catastrophe, even if it prepares greater long-run collapse, that Foster offers no immediate way whatever to combat the crisis, but only the introduction of Socialism in America, and that to abandon the cold war and militarism without immediately going to Socialism would inevitably plunge America into a devastating crisis.

What is the present stage of political thought of these workers to whom Foster presents this ultimatum? He himself describes it as follows:

"Americans, as yet, are not inclined to think that Socialism is much of an American question, except indirectly. It is

true that when looking out over the war-shattered world, many Americans realize that the capitalist system in other countries is in a bad way, and they can admit reasons for the advance of Socialism in Europe.

But, when it comes to advocating Socialism in the United States that is a horse of an altogether different color...They believe that American capitalism is fundamentally different from these stricken capitalist systems." (pp.80,81)\*

Completely forgotten, in Foster's pamphlet and in the work of the Party, is Franklin D. Roosevelt's program for the postwar period, of collaboration with the USSR as equals, for peace and the rapid economic reconstruction of the world. Dennis had mentioned it, early in the Trial, to call it the "Great Design", but what the design consists of, in practical terms, was not mentioned. It has never come up again (either in the Trial or in Party agi-

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\* Foster also believes that the American bourgeoisie has a unique strength never before held by human beings. He says that possession of the atomic bomb by the American bourgeoisie gives them the power to "even threaten the very existence of our planet."

We put aside the temptation to comment at length upon Foster's spontaneous reproduction of this anti-scientific, obscurantist myth of the most reactionary bourgeoisie. Anyone who needs comment to clarify its significance is not prepared to take part in a serious Marxist discussion.

tation generally) and Foster has excluded it from his pamphlet which is the official statement of the Party, "a full Statement of Communism" and "the working elements of Communist policy in action, and in propaganda, in the United States". (p.71)

American Communist policy "in action, and in propaganda", has excluded the only practical program to combat the crisis, short of the transition to Socialism - and even Socialism it assigns to Henry Wallace and the Progressive Party to introduce in America! A program for peaceful expansion of markets for American surplus production? Heaven forbid, exclaims Foster, that would make us agents of American imperialism, revisionists of Marxism! No, not even if it lightens the burdens of the Socialist half of the world!

But in the meantime Foster copies the revisionist formulas of Karl Kautsky, falls into the most primitive parliamentary cretinism, vulgarizes the Marxist doctrine of State power and the role of violence in history, surrenders even the position of Jefferson, and propounds the most far-reaching theories of spontaneity, - - all under the illusion that he is writing Marxism.

Foster's flat refusal to have anything to do with Roosevelt's proposals for peace and markets for American industry, is based explicitly on the ground that markets would hasten the development of monopoly capital, and he says Communists must resolutely oppose all measures which would have this result. He says Communists must demand the break-up of the trusts. This is the direct opposite of the position taken by Marx and Engels, and by Lenin. In his famous and history-shaping pamphlet



in October, 1917, "The Impending Catastrophe and How to Combat It", Lenin lays down the most thorough and practical daily program for combatting the crisis in Russia. In the course of it, Lenin makes clear what is the significance, historically and in immediate political consequences, of measures which hasten the development of monopoly capital. He says:

"The dialectics of history is such that the war, by extraordinarily expediting the transformation of monopoly capitalism into state monopoly capitalism, has thereby extraordinarily advanced mankind toward Socialism."

Engels, in Section 3 of "Socialism; Utopian and Scientific", explained the revolutionary significance of the development of monopoly capital, as the necessary pre-condition for Socialism. He said:

"But the transformation, either into joint-stock companies and trusts, or into state ownership, does not do away with the capitalistic nature of the productive forces. In the joint-stock companies and trusts this is obvious. And the modern state, again, is only the organization that bourgeois society takes on in order to support the external conditions of the capitalist mode of production against the encroachments, as well of the workers as of individual

capitalists. The modern state, no matter what its form, is essentially a capitalist machine, the state of the capitalists, the ideal personification of the total national capital. The more it proceeds to the taking over of productive forces, the more does it actually become the national capitalist, the more citizens does it exploit. The workers remain wage workers - - proletarians. The capitalist relation is not done away with. It is rather brought to a head. But brought to a head, it topples over. State ownership of the productive forces is not the solution of the conflict, but concealed within it are the technical conditions that form the elements of that solution."

Or again, as Lenin formulated the question:

"Now, try to substitute for the...landlord-capitalist state, a revolutionary-democratic state, i.e., a state which in a revolutionary way destroys all privileges and does not fear to introduce the fullest democracy in a revolutionary way, and you will find that, given a really revolutionary-democratic state, state monopoly capitalism inevitably and unavoidably implies a step, or several steps, toward Socialism!"

It is such objective steps toward Socialism in America which Foster opposes, when he rejects the market program of Roosevelt, because, forsooth, it would

strengthen the development of monopoly capital in American economy as a whole.

Of course, while the Marxist teaching on this question excludes all tendencies in the direction of a trust-busting program (which is the petty-bourgeois form of anti-imperialism), it does not follow therefrom that the Marxists must support any and every measure that hastens the development of monopoly capital. In fact, it may be necessary to oppose some or most of them, especially where they have a clearly defined reactionary character, or because of their surrounding circumstances. But, where, as in America today, the country is confronted with two possible economic policies (within the framework of capitalism), one of which is boldly and flagrantly reactionary (the cold war) and the other would advance peace and combat economic crisis with serious effect, (the Roosevelt policy), then, to refuse to fight for the more progressive policy against its alternative, merely because it also (and even more effectively) hastens the development of monopoly capital, constitutes an abandonment of Marxism for petty-bourgeois, Utopian Socialism, or even goes back to the Populism of Bryan. And that is exactly what Foster does.

Some years ago, Foster wrote a book which he called "From Bryan to Stalin". His present work could appropriately be entitled "From Stalin to Bryan" - - except for the fact that Foster never understood the theories of Marx, Engels, Lenin and Stalin. Since Foster was never a Marxist except by "profession of faith", he cannot be accused of "departing" from Marxism; with him personally the matter has always been one of his more or less open non-Marxist or

anti-Marxist opinions, and his egoistic striving for personal dominance in the Marxist movement.

But with regard to the Party which Foster is now leading, the case is different. It was a Marxist party. But if it now accepts Foster's new theories, which are only a new version of a very old opportunism, the Party thereby ceases to be Marxist, and becomes Kautskyist - with a strong admixture of anarcho-syndicalism.

Foster's degradation of American Marxism to the level of vulgar opportunism is well described by a phrase of Engels' description of how Hegel's followers degraded his teachings:

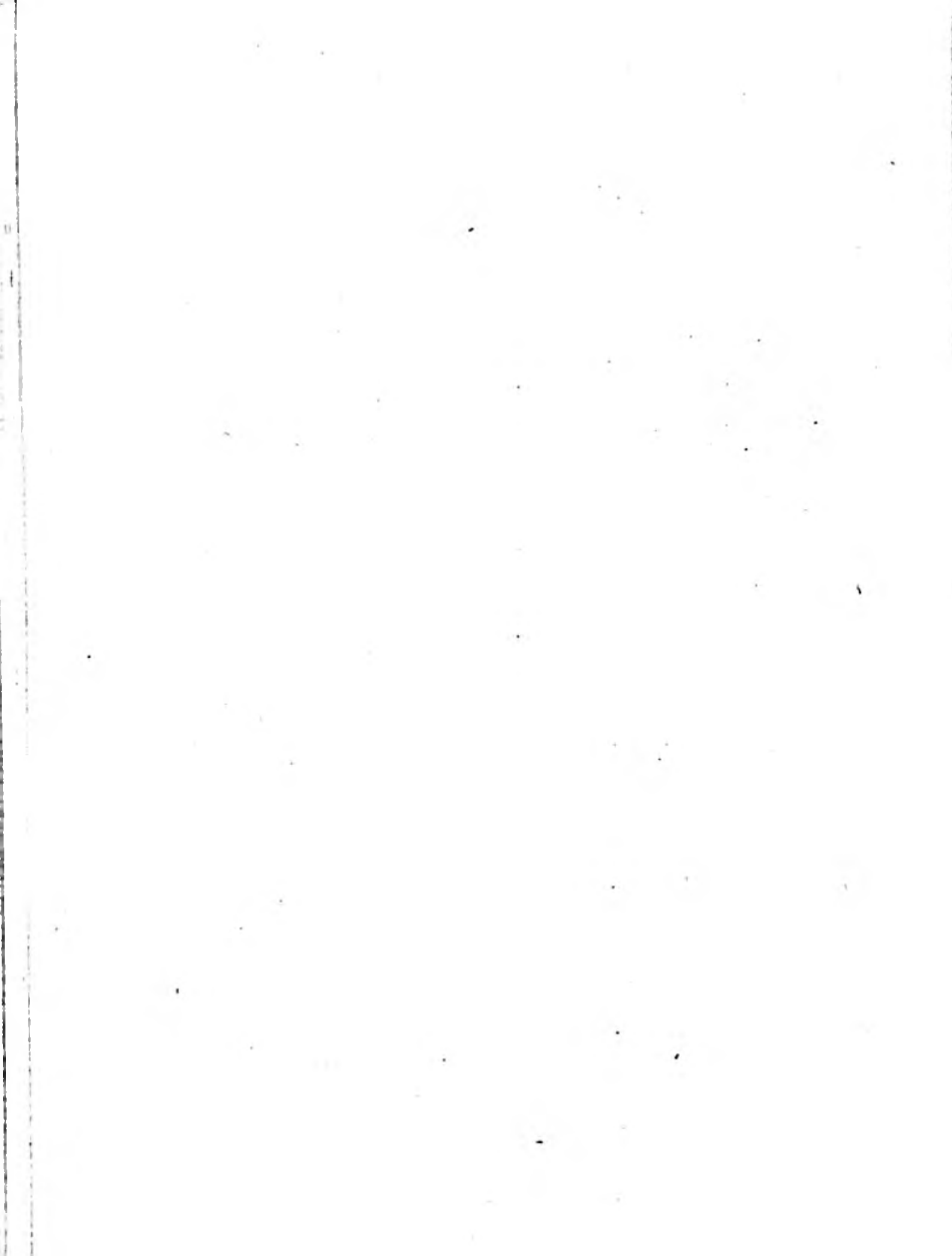
Foster has appropriated from Marxism only the manipulation of the simplest tricks, which he applies to anything and everything, often with ludicrous clumsiness. For him the whole inheritance of Marxism is limited to a mere pattern by the help of which every theme can be correctly devised, and to a compilation of words and turns of speech which have no other purpose than to be inserted at the right time when thought and positive knowledge fails him. Thus it comes about that Foster who knows little of anything, writes at length about everything.

The road of struggle for Socialism in America is not contradictory to the road of struggle for immediate measures to combat the threatening crisis. The two roads, indeed, coincide.

One can fight for the Roosevelt anti-crisis program without being a Socialist, for there is nothing of Socialism in it. But it is - - as every progressive measure is - - a step toward Socialism, both in the sense of further maturing the objective material preconditions for Socialism and, much more important, in the sense of accelerating the subjective preparation of the working class, its understanding of the need and the possibility of achieving a more profound and stable solution of its problems. Therefore, so long as the Roosevelt anti-crisis program still represents a step forward in the consciousness of the masses, and in the objective economic and social situation, just so long no Marxist can reject it as the goal of immediate struggle and as a next step toward the ultimate goal.

The winning of the masses for Socialism is a process of consciousness, and not an act of faith, of conversion, like the old mass conversion to religion. The process of the penetration of Socialist consciousness among the masses is an intellectual awakening, for the masses as for the individual; it is the victory of science which leads to the future, not of blind faith which can only result in retrogression.

The Party, while it is controlled and directed by Foster's confused anti-scientific opportunist theories, cannot lead the masses either in their immediate struggles or in their education in Socialism. The repudiation of the "New Route to Socialism" is the first necessary step to restore a party of Marxism in America.



A LETTER

To the National Committee, Communist Party U.S.A.

New York City, March 23, 1949.

In the New York Post of March 22, an unidentified member of your legal staff is quoted as saying that you expect the U.S. Government to introduce Earl Browder as a witness against the Party in the reactionary and obscurantist attempt to outlaw it.

This is a particularly stupid libel against me. Immediately after the indictment I offered my services to the defense, in any capacity in which I could be used, including that of defense witness. You therefore know quite well that if the U.S. Government called me to the stand, it would be in the full knowledge that I would testify as a defense witness, opposing the indictment in every way.

Why do you, knowing these facts, give circulation to such falsehood as that given to the New York Post? It is not only a violation of the truth and an offense against public decency, but it is also harmful to the defense. I have learned to expect such slanders from reactionary sources, and when it comes from them I consider it pointless even to protest. But when the Communist Party joins in such slanders, I must enter my public protest.

I would again urge for your consideration my proposal that I should be called by the defense as their witness. Due to the peculiar historical situation, no one more forcefully than I could give testimony supporting the defense's position that no change what-

ever, pertinent to the charges of the indictment, were made in the Communist organization in the Convention of 1945. No one more forcefully than I could sustain the contention of the defense, that the Party Constitution's repudiation of all advocacy of forcible and violent overthrow of government is an adequate and effective answer to the indictment, since I personally wrote that section of the Constitution, moved its adoption in the 1938 Convention, and administered its terms until 1945. In view of the fact that the defense is, quite properly, making this section of the Party Constitution a main point in rebutting the Government's case, my testimony should be valuable.

I hope that you will consider this suggestion, and that you will put a stop to Party sponsorship of such slanders as that in yesterday's Post and the gutter-journalism of underwriting the absurd "report" of Winchell that I am preparing to enter the Roman-Catholic Church, printed in the Daily Worker of March 21.

Sincerely,

(Signed) Earl Browder.



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