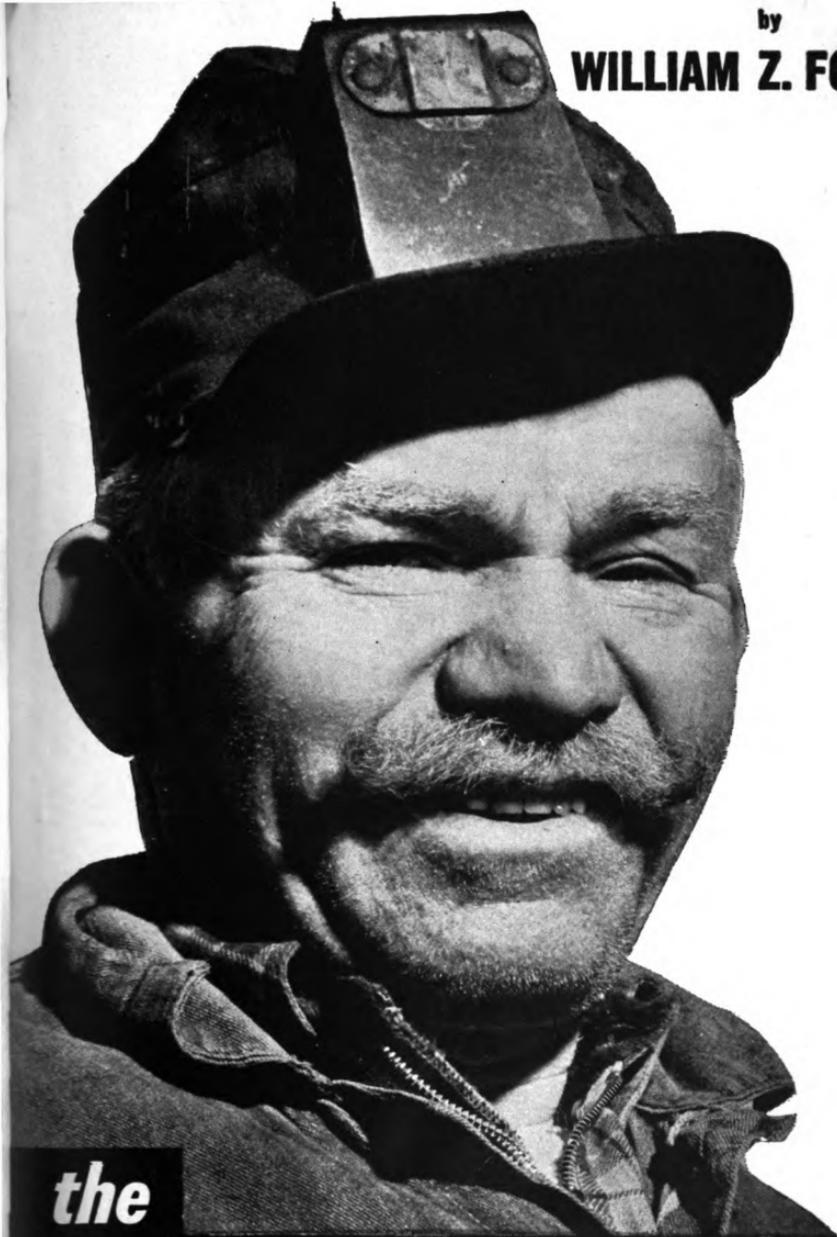


by
WILLIAM Z. FOSTER



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COAL MINERS

Their Problems in War and Peace

THE COAL MINERS

THEIR PROBLEMS IN WAR AND PEACE

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ABOUT THE AUTHOR

William Z. Foster, the author of this pamphlet, is a Vice-President of the Communist Political Association, and a veteran leader of the American labor movement. He led the great steel strike of 1919 which helped to pave the way to industrial organization of the basic industries. He is the author of several books, including *Pages From a Worker's Life* and *From Bryan to Stalin*, as well as scores of pamphlets on American political and labor problems. This year marks the 50th anniversary of the author's activity and leadership in the American trade union movement.

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So they went down the street to Frank's place and Tony, a wide-awake young fellow of about 30, lined up two miners and a steel worker for the proposed talk. They were Mike McGuire, Secretary of the Miners Local and a member of the U.M.W.A. for 35 years; Bob Morgan, a former member of the District Board, and Tom Harrison, Secretary of the Steel Workers Union at a nearby plant. They all seated themselves at a convenient table and ordered a glass of beer apiece.

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The Miners and the War

BILL: The biggest question confronting our country is to win an early and complete victory in the war. What do you men have to say about the record of the miners in strengthening our nation's war effort?

BOB MORGAN: I think the Miners have a very good war record.

TONY: That's right, the Miners do have a fine war record, but not John L. Lewis and the weak-kneed officials around him. There are 137,000 union members in the armed services and probably that many more youths from coal towns who never worked in the mines. The miners, according to the latest figures I have seen, also have bought \$170,000,000 in war bonds and have given \$3,600,000 to various war agencies. Besides this, 500,000 working miners are breaking all records digging coal. They are now turning out more coal than all the miners in the rest of the world put together. Total coal production in 1944 was 684,500,000



tons. Yes, and in doing it, 5,450 miners lost their lives and about 275,000 have been injured since the war began in 1939. A very fine record of national service, I'll say.

MIKE McGUIRE: Yes, indeed, but with Lewis it's something else again. The miners in their patriotic services have followed the lead of Roosevelt, not of Lewis. As for Lewis, he has been all along a violent enemy of the war policies of the government. He has done his best to smear Roosevelt and to weaken his standing here and abroad. He fought against all attempts to control prices and to stabilize our economy. He has also been a close friend of the isolationists and reactionaries. If Lewis' war policies had been followed the war would have been lost long ago and Hitler would now be ruling the world. Lewis' policy would be clearly for a negotiated peace with our enemies which would mean the loss of the war for us.

TONY: And let me put in a word about the *U.M.W.A. Journal*, with K. C. Adams as editor. Why, that paper stinks like the *Chicago Tribune*. It is full of propaganda hot from the griddle of Goebbels. To read that rag one would get the idea that not Hitler, but Roosevelt is the enemy the American people must fight. If the *Journal*, by accident, says a few words against Hitler, it quickly makes up for it by printing a thousand words against Roosevelt.

TOM HARRISON: And then there's the very important question of Lewis' policy of strikes in wartime. We steel workers think Lewis' unpatriotic course is a disgrace and has done a great damage to the war effort and the labor movement. The national miners' strikes were unnecessary. Lewis never would have dared to put them across if he didn't know he had the backing of the powerful reactionary forces that made such a strong showing in the Presidential elections. The strikes were not necessary to support the miners' justified demands, but were a part of Lewis' and Hoover's fight against the Roosevelt Administration. Their motto is "Any stick to beat Roosevelt with."

Does Lewis Defend the Miners' Interests?

BOB: I think you guys are all wrong there. When its a case of politics I am for Roosevelt, but when it comes to the demands of the miners I am for Lewis. And believe me lots of miners think like I do. If Lewis hadn't struck the miners we would have just got a run-around from the War Labor Board.

BILL: You say that Lewis is a good defender of the miners' interests, but what would have happened to the miners' wages and their union if Lewis had succeeded in his plan of putting our government into the hands of the Hoover-Dewey gang of reactionaries? That would have been a disaster to the miners in every sense. The operators would have had a free hand again in the industry, with the backing of Mr. Dewey, wages would have been slashed and the union undermined. When Lewis called upon the miners to support Dewey he asked them to vote for the miners' worst enemies.

TONY: I agree completely with Tom, our steel worker friend, that the four national coal strikes and the many local strikes were unnecessary and that they were harmful both to the workers and to the national war effort. We miners didn't get a thing by Lewis' strike policy that we couldn't have gotten better through friendly negotiations with the Government. The best proof of this is the ruling just handed down by the War Labor Board in the steel workers' case. While so far, the main hourly wage demands have not been passed upon, as they have been referred to the President, the decisions already made regarding differentials, carry wage increases for the second and third shifts, with two-week paid vacations, with six paid holidays a year, with elimination of plant inequalities, etc. The steel workers have got more out of it than we miners did, with all our strikes. And the steel workers' main wage decision is yet to

come. Philip Murray could well call the decision "a great victory."

TOM: No matter how you figure it, the Government has to decide all major wage questions during wartime, and that being so, I think it is stupid of Lewis to weaken the miners' position before every government board and department, as well as in the eyes of the public and the soldiers. It only makes our fight harder. The Steel Workers' policy of cooperation is giving much better results.

MIKE: Yes, and look at the portal-to-portal demand which Lewis is claiming as such a big victory for his policy. Everybody knows that the principle of portal-to-portal pay had been won by the Mine, Mill and Smelter Workers Union, C.I.O., long before. The coal miners could also have gotten it without all the hell that Lewis raised with his strikes. Why, not long ago, I read in the U.M.W.A. *Journal* itself that the U.S. District Court of Virginia had just upheld the legality of portal-to-portal pay on the grounds of the U.S. Supreme Court's decision in the metal miners' case. Which proves that it was not John L. Lewis, but the C.I.O. metal miners union which really won the demand for portal-to-portal pay.

BILL: It was bad enough for Lewis to injure the interests of the miners with his reckless and unpatriotic strike policy, but consider also the damage he has done to the whole labor movement. His strikes played right into the hands of the reactionaries, with the result that Congress adopted the notorious Smith-Connally Act, one of the worst pieces of anti-labor legislation enacted for many years past. But what is still worse, Lewis, with his policies of organizing strikes and thus interfering with production while American soldiers are fighting the enemy all over the world, has done much to antagonize the servicemen against the trade unions. After this war if there is one thing necessary for the welfare of our country it is exactly that the ex-service-

men's organizations and the trade unions should work shoulder-to-shoulder to realize at home the prosperity and democracy that this war is being fought for. The worst tragedy that could happen to our country after the war would be for a split to develop between the ex-servicemen and the labor unions. Every reactionary is working to accomplish just this by discrediting the unions in the eyes of the soldiers, by claiming that the unions are unpatriotic and thinking only of their own interests. And no reactionary has done more to encourage this filthy lie than Lewis himself with his irresponsible policy of wartime strikes. Dewey, Hoover and that gang are doing their best to drive a wedge between the soldiers and the organized workers, and it is no surprise, therefore, that their close political associate, John L. Lewis, is following a policy that leads to the same disastrous end.

BOB: I think you people give too much importance to the question of coal strikes. After all, the war is just about won.

TONY: What do you mean, "the war is just about won?" Why, look at the fierce offensive the Germans have been making in Belgium. Only a short while ago I read in the



papers that the Government was going to spend \$500,000,000 more in building new war plants to increase the supply of ammunition. Military leaders are also saying that the war against Germany may possibly last many months longer. And after we've got Hitler licked there will still be Japan to take care of. Which will also be quite a job, it seems to me. So, instead of shouting that the war is just about over, I think we ought to realize that we've got a big task ahead of us yet, and, that all strikes must be strictly avoided until victory is in the bag. Labor must continue to stand loyally by its no-strike pledge.

MIKE: Talking about Lewis' unpatriotic attitude towards the war, there's a few more matters I would like to speak about. For one thing, when John L. Lewis sneered at Sidney Hillman during the election campaign as a "Russian pants maker" even a blind man could see that he was guilty of anti-Semitism. To me that whole statement stunk of fascism. And so does the constant campaign of Lewis and the U.M.W. *Journal* against the "Reds." This is the Hitler line of propaganda. What Lewis means by a "Red" is anyone who disagrees with his policies and those of his friends Hoover and Dewey, and it includes such people as Phil Murray and President Roosevelt. And as for the Lewis slander campaign against the Soviet Union, which is kept up constantly in our official *Journal*, this is an outrage altogether. Imagine, right in the middle of the war, to treacherously attack a loyal ally of our country, and one that has sacrificed several million soldiers in the common cause. The coal miners should not allow such fascist anti-Semitism, Red-baiting, and Soviet slandering to be carried on by their top leaders.

TONY: And while we're on these subjects, I'd like to say that I don't like Lewis' attitude towards the Negro question, either. It used to be that the U.M.W.A. was the most advanced union in this country regarding Negro workers. But today the C.I.O. unions are way ahead of us with their

enlightened policies. In our industry there are lots of coal mines that don't hire Negroes and many coal towns that are rotten with Jim Crow discrimination. But the upper union leadership does nothing about it. Our union has to wake up on the Negro question.

TOM: Don't you think it is about time that we wet our whistles all around? I am dry, myself.

Everybody agreed, and after old Frank, the saloonkeeper, had dealt them out a beer apiece, they resumed their discussion.

BOB: Now, let's get back to the big question of wages: As for myself, I think that when next April 1st rolls around our Scale Committee should have stiff demands before the operators and the Government and be prepared to strike for them if necessary.

How to Improve the Miners' Wages

BILL: Bob is correct so far as a solid wage increase for the miners is concerned. The cost of living has far outrun the 15 per cent advance provided for by the Little Steel formula. Every worker in the country should back up the miners in their wage demands. And let us not think that it is only the W.L.B. that has to be convinced to give the miners more wages. The coal operators are at the bottom of the opposition to improving conditions in the mines, just as it was the steel companies who fought hardest against better wages for the steel workers. But to try to put through your demands by a strike policy would be folly. Even a threat of a strike would play into the hands of our enemies. And let us not forget that with all the miners' high production of coal the government says we are still short 40,000,000 tons of coal this year.

TONY: In my opinion such a strike policy would be plain crazy. Every miner agrees that in order to keep up with the rising cost of living there has to be a big increase in wages

all around. The Little Steel Formula is completely out of date and must be scrapped. The problem before the miners, however, is how to win our demands. In my opinion the very worst thing for us to do would be to threaten to tie up the coal industry if we don't get what we ask. What we ought to do is to adopt a no-strike pledge, as both the A. F. of L. and the C.I.O. have done, and then get a solid front of organized labor to support our demands upon the Government and the coal operators. That's the way to win the nation's support and to get what we must have in order to live.

TOM: Correct! That's how the steel workers are going about it, and that's how you should handle your case, too. Now, let us see where the strike policy would bring you to. Lewis is looking for a fight against Roosevelt, just like his Republican friends in Congress are doing, and he will try to create a deadlock with the War Labor Board and bring about a strike situation. Then, if the mines are closed down, we could expect the Government to step in and take them over. So, where would you miners go from there? Carry on a strike against the Government during wartime, when it is fighting for our country's existence against the fascist enemy? No, I don't think you would do that. Instead, you would soon find yourselves back in the mines again and your case once more in the hands of the Government for settlement. It would be a crime to carry on a strike policy during this national crisis.

BILL: The no-strike pledge is just as much in the interest of the miners as it is of the Government, for this is our war, as well as that of the rest of the people. The other day President Roosevelt said, "The Government of the United States cannot and will not tolerate any interference with war production in this critical hour." The miners and all other workers have every reason to back up the President to the limit in this stand.

TONY: Absolutely right! If the miners were to allow Lewis

to force them out on strike they would not only have to take their case back again to the Government for adjustment, but their strike would have badly discredited them in the meantime. During strikes, not only would war production be interfered with, but the reactionaries would grab every opportunity to lie to the public and to the soldiers about the demands and purposes of the miners. From every point of view the miners' fight would be made more difficult. I think, therefore, that it is just plain common sense to recognize from the beginning that the Administration is going to settle the miners' demands. So then why not proceed along the lines I proposed of uniting the whole of organized labor behind the miners' demands, in order that a favorable decision can be secured from the Government?

BILL: The coal miners, like other workers, stand second to no section of our people in patriotism. Working loyally in the most dangerous of all industries and with a great number of their fellow workers in the armed services, they are for maximum production and want to use every patriotic means to secure adjustment of their grievances. But Lewis is one of the President's bitterest enemies and he would not hesitate, even if it comes to forcing a disastrous national coal strike, to use the miners' grievances as a means to take a crack at Roosevelt. That's where the strike menace lies in the coal industry. There, and in the agitation of a small minority of Trotskyites and similar unpatriotic elements.

Lewis' War Against Roosevelt

BILL: What do you men think about Lewis' stand against Roosevelt in the Presidential elections?

TONY: I think it was a damned outrage. You'll find very few miners around here or anywhere else who didn't vote for Roosevelt. Behind Dewey were the worst reactionaries in

the country, the very same people the U.M.W.A. has been fighting against for years. At least 85 per cent of the miners went for Roosevelt, but John L. Lewis had the gall to support Dewey. Why, if Dewey had been elected, the United States would have had the most reactionary government in its history. The miners didn't overlook the fact that the mine operators all through the coal fields were lined up shoulder to shoulder with Lewis, supporting Dewey.

MIKE: That's right. As a life-long member of the Union, I often wonder why we pay Lewis \$25,000 a year as President, besides the \$15,000 or \$20,000 more he gets as expense money? Why, that's the income of a millionaire. Lewis also has the Union payroll loaded up with his brother, Denny, and his daughter, Katherine, who pull down many more thousands yearly.

TONY: Yes, and the high-priced advice we got from Lewis was to vote for Dewey, the candidate of reaction. But then, what else could you expect? Wasn't Lewis for many years a member of the Republican National Committee? Didn't he play ball with the America First Committee? And isn't he a very good friend of Herbert Hoover?

BOB: It was not only Lewis, but the International Union Convention that criticized Roosevelt and gave Dewey a vote of praise.

MIKE: Sure, as an old-time Lewis man, you would say that. But we know how Lewis organizes his conventions. Hand-picked delegates, corrupted officials, a terrorized opposition, and steam-roller methods. That's how it's done. That's the reason the big convention of 2,800 delegates last September in Cincinnati adopted a statement condemning Roosevelt, in spite of the fact that the overwhelming majority of the Union membership were solidly behind Roosevelt. Also, I believe that if an honest vote could have been taken, a majority even of the delegates at the convention would have been in favor of Roosevelt.

BILL: It seems to me that Lewis had a big crust when he said that "the record of the Roosevelt Administration is one of studied disruption of the U.M.W.A.!" Why, everybody knows that when Roosevelt came into office in 1933 the Miner's Union was flat on its back, due to Lewis' misleadership. It didn't have 150,000 dues-paying members all told, and its control was broken in the districts. Those were the days of the Coal and Iron police and when every mining town was about like a concentration camp. The U.M.W.A. today has some 600,000 members but the credit for it belongs to Roosevelt 100 times more than it does to Lewis. And not only the Miners Union, but every other trade union has prospered under Roosevelt, to the tune of a total increase of trade union membership from about 3,000,000 to over 13,000,000. To call such an Administration an enemy of the U.M.W.A., or of the labor movement, is an insult to the intelligence of the workers.

MIKE: Correct! Don't I remember plenty well how smashed up the Union was when Roosevelt took office. It was wrecked in every soft coal district in the country. Yes, and wages and working conditions were ruined also. In many places the miners' families were actually starving. It was only after the Roosevelt Administration got in that the mine operators were checked and the miners were able to rebuild the Union that Lewis had allowed to go to pieces under the administration of his friend, President Hoover. What do you think of all this, Tom, as a steel worker?

TOM: What I don't understand is why you coal miners permit Lewis to rule your Union like a Czar. I remember that when I was a kid the U.M.W.A. was known as the most progressive Union in this country. Every struggle of the workers, and every progressive cause could depend upon the U.M.W.A. for powerful help. But now look at your Union. John L. Lewis, with his policies of supporting Dewey, of carrying on strikes in wartime, of suppression of trade union democracy, is disgracing the splendid tradi-

tions of the U.M.W.A. Why don't you reestablish democracy in your Union, like we have in the C.I.O.? What about this autonomy movement that I have been hearing so much about? That should be the beginning of some real democracy in the U.M.W.A.

The Question of Trade Union Democracy

TONY: Tom, you've hit the nail on the head. The main reason why the leadership of the U.M.W.A. doesn't represent the rank and file is because John L. Lewis has choked democracy in the Union. Lewis appoints the leadership in 21 of the 31 districts, covering at least 75 per cent of the whole organization. He also appoints the International Organizers. Of course, these appointments have to be ok'd by the Board, but the whole country knows that Lewis carries the rubber-stamp International Executive Board in his pocket. The 16 Board members that he appoints have 287½ votes against 72½ votes held by the elected members of the Board; Lewis' so-called "provisional governments" in the districts are really permanent dictatorships. Except for one district, the "provisional governments" have been in existence for from 10 to 25 years, and there isn't a chance in the world of their getting autonomy until the rank and file throughout the Union rise up on their hind legs and demand it.

BOB: Here's where I would like to ask a point of information. Why don't the provisional districts make use of the resolutions adopted by the International conventions of 1938, 1940 and 1942? They provide a means to get autonomy if the miners in a district want it. Lewis says they can have autonomy if they ask for it and show they are ready for it?

TONY: That's all a fake. The proof of the pudding is in the eating. While the resolutions you mention spin a lot of words about how to get autonomy, the fact is that when a district tries to secure autonomy it meets with endless

delays and opposition. The result is that Lewis' provisional government system is now more widely in force than ever. The local, of which I am the head, is completely opposed to the provisional system, and so are a big majority of the miners everywhere. Lewis' argument that the autonomy movement is a dual union is a deliberate misrepresentation.

MIKE: Right, 100 per cent! The U.M.W. of A. is the most boss-ruled Union in the United States. It has completely lost the democratic character that it had when I joined up 35 years ago in this very district.

TOM: As an outsider, a steel worker, what burns me up are the arguments that Lewis uses to justify his provisional governments in the districts. At the conventions he has the brass to say that the districts are incompetent to elect their own officers and that only he and his hand-picked International Board can be trusted to name the districts' leadership. On such a theory the membership would also be incapable of running the International Union. Indeed, Lewis seems to be moving to take over his job as President for life, as Joe Ryan of the Longshoremen has already done.

TONY: Yes, and he tightened his hold on the U.M.W.A. by ruling Ray Edmundson off the ballot as a candidate against Lewis for President. What a shameful farce that was. For many years Edmundson had been a member of the U.M.W.A. For 12 years he was Provisional President of District 12 (Illinois), appointed by Lewis, but no sooner did he announce that he was going to run as a candidate against the dictator, Lewis, then all of a sudden the Lewis hand-picked committee discovered that Edmundson was not a member of the U.M.W.A. in good standing and could not run for office. That's a pretty good imitation of Hitler's methods. In this war we are fighting to establish world democracy and I think we'd make a good start by setting up a little bit of democracy in our own Union.

MIKE: Lewis' argument that if there was district autonomy we would have district agreements again is a fake. Nobody is asking for the right to make separate district agreements. We must have national agreements, of course, but that's no reason why the districts should not have the right to run their own local affairs.



BOB: What are you fellows always talking so much against Lewis for? After all, he ain't the whole Union.

TONY: Right, he isn't the whole Union, but it is impossible to discuss the policies of the U.M.W.A. without speaking of Lewis, because he dictates them all.

Post-War Problems

TONY: John L. Lewis is fighting against the Administration's policy on every front and he is trying to use our union for his reactionary purposes. Take, for example, the question of our Government's foreign policy. It is a matter of life and death for our nation and for world civilization that every effort be made to set up a post-war world organiza-

tion of democratic peoples to preserve the peace and to re-build the ruined countries after the fascist powers are defeated. But Lewis has only sneers for all this program. The *U.M.W. Journal* is full of attacks upon every practical step being taken in this direction—the Teheran conference, the Bretton Woods conference, the Dumbarton Oaks conference, and all the rest, Lewis' line is the same as that of Hoover, Dewey, Taft, Hearst and other reactionaries. It is a so-called isolationism, which means a program of irresponsible American imperialist expansion. The end of such a policy would be to open the way for World War III. Our Union, and certainly this is the view of the local of which Mike and I are the leading officials, must repudiate Lewis' dangerous ideas of foreign policy and give all-out support to the President's program of a world peace organization.

MIKE: Right! And Lewis is just as wrong on post-war job policies for the United States as he is on foreign policies in general. What is Lewis' economic program for the after-war period? Well, it is just about like that of the big coal operators and the National Association of Manufacturers. The idea of these reactionaries is that as soon as the war is over, if not before, the Government should take its hands off the economic situation completely and "let nature take its course" so far as the industries are concerned. This is the old Hoover program of rugged individualism all over again. We can all remember where this policy led to in 1929 and the millions of unemployed it created. It would have even worse results this time if the people were foolish enough to follow the advice of Lewis and other reactionaries. What a fake this "hands-off-industry-by-the-government" policy is is illustrated by the fact that Lewis himself is calling for government intervention in the coal industry by demanding a National Coal Stabilization Act.

BILL: We are entering into a new situation in this country and the world. Our Government cannot possibly just stand

aside and let reactionary employers run industry as they see fit. If it did, the whole country would soon be on the bread-line again after the war had ended. On the contrary, the Government, while encouraging privately owned enterprise to keep going at full speed, must also take on the responsibility of seeing to it that full production is maintained and that there is a job for everyone willing and able to work. We have the national resources, we have the industrial equipment, we have the skilled workers; therefore, we must not permit our industries to stand idle. If we can accomplish such great miracles of production as we have during wartime, we must also learn to do the same in peacetime. But this can only be done if the Government assumes responsibility for full production, and also if organized labor sees to it that this responsibility is carried out. President Roosevelt struck the proper keynote when in his campaign speech in Chicago he promised that his Administration in the post-war period would provide 60,000,000 jobs for American workers and returned veterans. In his speech at the opening of Congress the President made further proposals for putting this needful economic program into effect.

TOM: I think that the C.I.O. convention, held a few weeks ago in Chicago, gave a very fine lead on how to accomplish the full production program. Our convention outlined a seven-point program which provided for higher wages to increase the purchasing power of the workers, for the systematic development of foreign trade by the Government, for the rehabilitation and modernization of our whole transportation system, for the carrying through of a tremendous housing and city reconstruction program, for a great project of developing our nation's rivers and valleys along the line of the seven T.V.A.'s proposed by the President, for the development of an all-inclusive program of health, education and social security, and for the setting up of a National Production Council, composed of repre-

sentatives of labor, industry, agriculture and Government, to supervise the question of this full production program.

BOB: O.K., but I want to take exception to the "seven T.V.A.'s" angle of it. We miners must oppose that. Because, if these big electrical power dams are built it means that steam-operated plants will be shut down and lots of coal miners will be thrown out of work.

BILL: That's Lewis' and the power companies' line of argument, but it is entirely false. The great river and valley developments proposed by Roosevelt are absolutely necessary if full production and full employment are to be maintained. The general effect of the river and valley projects would be greatly to expand industry everywhere and to increase the volume of transportation. This would mean that more coal, not less, would have to be used in industry and on the railroads, and that more miners would be employed. Lewis' fight against the St. Lawrence Seaway and the "seven T.V.A.'s" plan (which is part of his and the great monopolies' general war against Roosevelt), therefore, does not protect the jobs of the miners, but sacrifices them. The miners, in their own interest, should go all-out in support of the river and valley development projects. The best proof that this argument is true is the experience with the Tennessee Valley project, the original "T.V.A." Before that great project was built the states concerned used only 540,000 tons yearly to generate electricity; now, six years later, they use 1,891,000 tons, an increase of almost 250 per cent in coal consumption. And this does not include the great increase of coal used by the railroads in this area, due to the much greater freight traffic.

TONY: According to my opinion, the seven-point full production program of the C.I.O. is swell, and our union and the whole labor movement should get behind it. I want to add, too, that as a step in this general direction we must

give full support to the Flannegan Bill now in Congress for stabilization of the coal industry.

MIKE: Lewis has no program to meet the great post-war job problems of the miners. Proof of this are the pessimistic howls that he is putting 'up all the time in the U.M.W. *Journal* about the unavoidable mass unemployment there will be after the war. Certainly if Dewey, Taft and the rest of the reactionary friends of his could have their way, there would surely be even worse unemployment than we had under Hoover, but with Roosevelt in office there can be quite a different story. I don't know if you younger fellows recall Lewis' slogan during the hard times in the coal industry after World War I, but I remember it plenty good. Lewis said then that "250,000 miners must get out of the coal industry," and they got out, too. It now looks as if he is figuring that a couple of hundred thousand more will have to be driven out after this war is over. The only way this can be prevented is to see to it that the Roosevelt full production program, which Lewis is so bitterly fighting, is put into effect.

Some Lessons to Learn

BILL: The hour is getting late. Now where does all our discussion bring us to? I think it has been made clear that the policies of the Lewis leadership do not correspond to the needs of the miners or of the labor movement, not to speak of our nation as a whole. It has been made clear that Lewis is dominating the U.M.W.A. in two ways; one, through the stranglehold he has upon the organization funds and machinery, and, two, through the slick pretense he is making that the fight against the Roosevelt Administration (which only serves the interests of the Hoovers and Deweys) is actually necessary to protect the miners' interests.

MIKE: Well, my idea of it is that the miners should take a

more active part in the control of the union. Then they will get leaders and policies that they want. Lewis, with millions of dollars of the union funds under his control and with a lot of hand-picked officials to carry out his orders, is very powerful, a small-time autocrat, in fact. But he will very soon learn that he can't dictate to the union if the mass of miners will only pay more attention to attending union meetings, to the election of convention delegates, to picking out union officials, and to expressing their opinions on all issues before the union and the public.

TOM: One thing you miners should speak out on is international trade union unity. Now it is extremely important that the unions of the world get together to lend their support to solving the great problems of the war and the peace. There is a world trade union conference to be held in London, England, next February. The C.I.O. is sending delegates. Of course, Lewis is against this progressive conference, but you miners certainly should let the conference know that you are in favor of it. Every local should support it.

TONY: That's right! And the biggest job ahead of us, I think, is to become more and more active politically. True, the Roosevelt progressive forces won the Presidential elections, but that don't mean we can just stand around with our hands folded and "let Roosevelt do the work." He must be backed up by organized labor, and no union in the country can be more influential and powerful in this than our U.M.W.A. But we must unite our strength politically. It's not a question of organizing a third party, as there is no basis for that. What we have to do is to mobilize our supporters along the same lines as we did during the recent elections with our "Miners For Roosevelt Committees," and as the A. F. of L. and C.I.O. did with their political action committees. We must watch carefully the legislation before the city, state and national governments and

let our opinions be heard on it. We must also strengthen our forces to take part in all the local, state and national elections as they come along. Labor must begin to play its part politically. That's the only way we can defend our interests. Every trade union issue—wages, hours, working conditions, social security, industrial reconversion, etc.—is a political question.

MIKE: And to do these things we have to unite our forces with other sections of the labor movement. Lewis, with his reactionary policies and his greed for personal power, has separated us from the rest of the trade unions. We should have stayed where we belonged, in the C.I.O. But Lewis, with his phony excuse of a bill of \$1,665,000, owed us by the C.I.O., split us off from that body. Now, there is talk that he is going to take us back into the A. F. of L., if he can make a deal regarding that grab-bag that he has tied on to our union, District 50. What Lewis has in mind in trying to get back into the A. F. of L. is not to strengthen trade union unity, but to unite with Woll, Hutcheson and other reactionaries in the Executive Council, so that he can fight all the harder against the C.I.O. and the Roosevelt Administration. We should oppose this whole move on his part.

TOM: True, Lewis has isolated the miners from the great body of the organized workers in this country, still the workers everywhere feel the greatest sense of solidarity with the coal miners. If you miners will follow policies of political cooperation with the unions of the A. F. of L., the C.I.O. and the Railroad Brotherhoods, then I am sure that, in spite of Lewis' reactionary attitude, the U.M.W.A. will quickly prove to be a great power in the democratic progressive movement and the Miners Union will regain the prestige it has lost through Lewis' misleadership.

TONY: I think the main needs for the U.M.W.A. can be summed up about as follows: (a) to re-establish democracy

in the union, especially with regard to the holding of honest national elections and the setting up of district autonomy; (b) to put an end to Lewis' war against Roosevelt and instead give the present administration constructive support; (c) to establish a close working agreement with all other labor unions and progressive forces to achieve the democratic program of the people, including the economic demands of the miners; (d) to adopt a post-war economic program along the lines of that of the Roosevelt Administration and the C.I.O., and then see to it that it gets the U.M.W.A.'s full support; (e) to disconnect Lewis and other U.M.W.A. officials from their present Dewey-Hoover affiliations, and to insist that the union go all-out in every community and nationally, behind the Administration for the winning of the war and the building of a democratic and lasting peace.

BILL: Well, it's already late and I suppose we must call it off for tonight. Let's hope that our long discussion has given us a better picture of the main problems that confront the union and also a clearer idea of what to do about them. So, let me say thanks and so long.

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