

A LETTER TO CONGRESS:

*Defeat the  
Anti-Labor  
Smith Bill!*

by **WILLIAM Z. FOSTER**

## ABOUT THE AUTHOR

WILLIAM Z. FOSTER, outstanding leader of the great steel strike of 1919, is a veteran of many of the most bitterly fought class battles in U.S. labor history. He is regarded in the labor movement as a master strategist and tactician of the strike struggle. Presently chairman of the Communist Party, he is not only revered as a mass leader of mass struggles, but as a brilliant Marxist theoretician. His books, pamphlets, magazine articles, speeches and reports, have guided the advanced section of the trade union movement for more than four decades.

While eleven of his associates on the National Committee of the Communist Party have been sentenced to jail for the "crime" of "conspiring to advocate and teach Marxism-Leninism," Mr. Foster, whose case was severed because of illness, continues to pamphleteer in the best American tradition. He is the author of *Outline Political History of the Americas*, published last year, and the *History of the Communist Party of the United States*, a June publication of International Publishers.

He is also the author of *Pages From a Worker's Life*, *American Trade Unionism*, *The Twilight of World Capitalism*, and literally scores of shorter pamphlets.

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209

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HOUSE COMMITTEE ON THE ARMED SERVICES  
WASHINGTON, D. C.

SIRS:

The Communist Party herewith expresses its most emphatic condemnation of the Smith bill (H.R. 7647). This bill, sponsored by Howard W. Smith of Virginia, author of the notorious earlier anti-trade union and thought-control Smith Acts, is undoubtedly the most dangerous anti-labor measure ever submitted to either branch of Congress. It is doubly dangerous now, with the warmongers and reactionaries on the march in the United States. It must be defeated at all costs.

The Smith bill aims to strip the workers of their basic right to strike, which was established by 150 years of hard struggle in the face of hostile courts, reactionary legislation, and pro-employer Administrations. The workers won this right, despite every measure of terrorization used against them—troops, police, scabs, gunmen, starvation. The first purpose of the Smith bill is to make the workers helpless under the ruthless exploitation of the monopolists, who are already grabbing off fabulous profits, never before equalled in this or any other country. The bill aims a blow at the vitals of the trade union movement, and, therefore, also at the entire structure of democracy in this country.

The enthusiasm of the reactionaries at the introduction of this pro-fascist bill will prove to be quite premature

and ill-founded. For only fools can believe that the working class will tamely submit to being robbed of its right to strike, the most important democratic right possessed by the workers under capitalism. The A. F. of L., C.I.O., and other branches of the labor and progressive movement, have already roundly denounced the reactionary Smith bill. And these are only advance signals of the storm of protest soon to come.

### ***Disastrous to the trade unions***

The Smith bill teems with provisions which, if enacted into law, would be disastrous to the trade unions. The arbitrary pronouncement by the Government of "a state of national emergency" during big strikes, would of itself put the workers at a great disadvantage by making it much more difficult, if not impossible, to strike successfully. Also, the seizure and placing of the unions under Government receivership during a labor dispute would not only wipe out the bargaining power of the workers, but would threaten the disintegration of the unions involved. "National emergencies," and with them crippling union receiverships, might last for many years. The impounding of the unions' funds during the receivership periods would paralyze the functioning of the organizations and the Smith bill's provisions calling for an equal sharing between the companies and unions of all expenses incurred during the Government seizure, would bankrupt the unions. The increased use of the injunction against the unions, also authorized by the bill, would confront the workers with the further handicap of the arbitrary use

of the state power against them, the evil effects of which the workers have learned through decades of bitter anti-injunction struggle. To climax its many strike-breaking, union-smashing features, the Smith bill, by making all strikes and slowdowns illegal during the Government receivership, would have the effect of conscripting the workers, by forcing them to work against their will. Adolf Hitler himself would have welcomed such anti-labor legislation.

That the Smith bill provides, in the event of important strikes, also to put the companies concerned into a Government receivership, would in no sense mitigate the danger it holds for organized labor. Experience has already sharply demonstrated the fact that big corporations have nothing whatever to fear from being "controlled" by a Government which their agents operate; whereas such a seizure of the unions, by placing them in hostile hands, would threaten their very existence.

### ***Trend to fascize the trade unions***

The Morse bill (S-2999), like the rest of the mass of anti-strike legislation now pending before both branches of Congress, is cut from the same cloth as the Smith bill. It, too, is designed to cripple the unions and to put them under the domination of reactionary politicians. Organized labor and all progressive bodies should unitedly oppose all such no-strike projects, fight them relentlessly, and make no compromise whatever with them.

The substance of the proposals of the Smith bill, as of similar anti-strike legislation before Congress at this time, is to transform the existing trade unions, which still retain

some degree of independence, into government-company controlled organizations of the Hitler-Mussolini type. This fascist trend to directly subordinate the trade unions to Government control, which would eventually mean to kill them as real labor organizations, has been developing increasingly over a number of years. This was the main purpose of the Taft-Hartley slave labor act, passed by a Republican Congress, and it was also the central aim behind the strike-breaking seizure of the railroad, coal, and steel industries by a Democratic President, Mr. Truman. The bi-partisan trend to fascize the trade unions has reached a new climax in the Smith bill.

The Smith bill, aiming to gut the trade unions, is doubly dangerous because it is part of the general and growing tendency towards transforming the United States into a police state. It is another deadly blow against already enfeebled American democracy. The bill is part and parcel of the mind-crippling thought-control legislation and loyalty tests that have been fastened upon the Government services, upon the educational systems, and upon large sections of industry. It is blood kin with the expulsion of progressive teachers, writers, commentators, and actors from the colleges, newspapers, radio, movies, and television, and with the development of the worst wave of ideological terrorism in the entire history of the United States. The bill dovetails right in, too, with the building of the F.B.I. into a monstrous secret police with its agents snooping everywhere and making files and dossiers of everyone. It is part of the reactionary offensive which has produced the rank growth of McCarthyism, McCar-ranism and MacArthurism.

### *A Jim Crow bill, too*

The spirit of the Smith bill is the spirit of Jim Crow, of the Ku Klux Klan. It stems from the same reactionary circles who, by the barbarous oppression of the Negro masses, not only shamefully abuse this oppressed people, but are also thereby deeply discrediting American democracy in all parts of the world. The forces that produced the Smith bill are the same white supremacist elements who have long blocked the adoption of national anti-lynching and anti-poll tax laws, and who have resisted the enactment of Federal Fair Employment Practices legislation. The country is indeed in a critical state when it accepts leadership in key political matters from such pro-fascist sources.

Behind the Smith anti-trade union bill is also the reactionary spirit of the Smith Act of 1940, under which the Communists are now being convicted and railroaded off to jail in large numbers. The same Mr. Smith wrote both of these measures, and for the same general purpose: namely, to clear the way for organized reaction in the United States. The Communists are being victimized under the Smith Act because they are the most valiant and clear-headed fighters for peace and in the defense of democracy. It is a monstrous lie, put across by an unholy collection of informers, turncoats, stoolpigeons, and perjurers, that the Communist Party teaches and advocates the overthrow of the United States Government by force and violence.

Mr. Smith and other reactionaries behind the anti-Communist drive have learned from Hitler and Mussolini

that when they develop a frantic campaign against the Communists, this violent "Red"-baiting creates such an atmosphere of general intimidation that organized reaction can freely assail everything democratic and progressive. This is precisely what is happening now in the United States. The attacks by the Smith bill upon the trade unions and by the Smith Act upon the Communist Party are two aspects of the one reactionary drive of monopoly capital to degrade the United States into a police state.

### ***To further war aims of Wall Street***

The most fundamental significance of the Smith anti-labor bill, and of the whole complex of police state legislation and intensified exploitation practices, of which it is a key phase, is that it is cunningly calculated to further the war aims of Wall Street imperialism. The big monopolists, masters of the industries and dictators to our national government, have set out to conquer the world. They are moved to this insane folly by various related reasons because:

- a) the United States, under monopoly control, is an imperialist country, and naturally strives to seize upon all possible international resources and political power;
- b) the monopolists fear that the world capitalist system is falling to pieces and believe that only if they grab control of it can it be saved;
- c) they are making enormous profits out of the frantic munitions race, which inevitably accompanies their imperialist war program;
- d) they pretend that only by a huge production of

military weapons can the oncoming economic crisis be averted; and

e) they are in mortal dread of the example of the healthy economic and political system of the U.S.S.R. and the People's Democracy of Europe and Asia and are determined, at all costs, to destroy them. They foolishly believe that the 800,000,000 people now either living under Socialism or marching towards this system of society, can be turned back by force and made to again submit to capitalism. Such stupidity ignores the basic historical trend of our times, which has already caused a third of the world's population to break with capitalism during the past generation and which will surely cause hundreds of millions more to join them soon on the road to Socialism. It is a route that the United States, too, will eventually follow.

### ***Anti-war spirit of people***

The great mass of the American people are democratic and peace-loving. They have no taste for Wall Street's war adventures and imperialist aggressions. They correctly believe that the American and Russian peoples should and can live in harmony together. This anti-war spirit the masses in this country have shown time and again by their irresistible demand for the dismantling of U.S. armed forces upon the end of World War II; by their long resistance to universal military training; by their condemnation, according to the Gallup poll, of the Korean war as "utterly useless"; by their earnest desire to bring this needless slaughter to an early end; by their

opposition to the growing Government influence of the Pentagon military clique; by their resistance to the use of the A-bomb in Korea; by their opposition to General MacArthur's hare-brained scheme of invading China, etc., etc. War is not inevitable, but it will take powerful action by the democratic masses of our people to prevent it, by curbing the capitalist warmongers, headquarters Wall Street.

### ***Deluded into tolerating present war drive***

The monopolists base their policies upon the assumption that the reluctant, peace-loving American people must and can be forced, by demagogic trickery and ideological intimidation, into accepting monopoly capital's program of intensified exploitation, fascist-like reaction, imperialist aggression, and world war. This is the basic purpose of such legislation as the Smith anti-strike bill, the Smith thought-control law, the Taft-Hartley slave labor Act, the McCarran concentration camp law, and the like. It is also the objective of such disgraceful groups as the House Committee on Un-American Activities and the McCarran sub-committee of the Senate, with their wild "Red"-baiting, witch-hunting, character assassination, and intimidation of everything and everybody democratic and peace-loving. It is the purpose, too, of the present totally unjustified status of "national emergency," under which every reactionary current in our country has taken on added strength.

It is by such sinister means and methods that the American people are being deluded, regimented, and forced into

accepting or tolerating the present great war drive of Wall Street imperialism, with its false pretenses that it is all for peace and national defense, with its atomic diplomacy and get-tough-with-Russia policies, with its squandering of untold billions for the creation of an enormous army, navy, and air force, and with its military bases all over the world. This is the path to Armageddon, to catastrophic war and national ruin.

The proponents of the Smith bill and of similar fascist-like legislation declare that it is necessary in order to curb the workers. They claim that the unions, in the present alleged national emergency, must of necessity be deprived of the right to strike. But this is a monstrous lie, a grave distortion of reality. The truth is that the working class is the most responsible, democratic, and patriotic force in our nation. It can be fully trusted by the whole people, at any and all times, to act in the most patriotic manner in using its right to strike. Its whole life justifies this statement. The workers demonstrated fully their sense of national responsibility during World War II, when the country really was in critical danger, by adopting and carrying out faithfully a general no-strike pledge. The fault of organized labor is not that it strikes against the national interests, but that it and its political allies do not come forward sufficiently active as the natural leaders of the nation. And if the workers thus fail to move swiftly and effectively towards fulfilling this constructive and inevitable political leadership of the nation, it is primarily because most of the top trade union officials, the Greens, Murrays, Wolls, Reuthers, Dubinskys, Harrisons, *et al*, who are themselves advocates and supporters of capitalism,

have actually become working parts of the war-machine of American imperialism. It is on this basis that these mis-leaders are striving to keep the working class tied to the apron strings of the reactionary, pro-war, Democratic Party.

### ***To throw burden of war program on workers***

If the workers are now showing strong strike willingness, this is primarily because of the intolerable economic burdens placed upon them by rising living costs under inflation. This inflation is being deliberately cultivated by Congress and the Administration, in order to throw the burden of the war program upon the masses by slashing their living standards. The present strike militancy of the workers also indicates that they correctly realize that this country is in no danger whatever from military attack and that there is no genuine "national emergency."

The elements in this country who need curbing are not the workers, but the big monopolists who own the nation's industries and dominate its government. It is the latter who have plunged our country into its present mess both at home and abroad, who are blocking peace in Korea, and who are now heading our nation and the world toward overwhelming disaster. The moguls of industry must be bridled and their power finally broken, if the United States is to prosper and to avoid general catastrophe.

A generation ago President Wilson signified the menace of monopolist control of this country. Declaring that the national government had long been dominated by captains of industry, he said: "The government of the United

States at present is a foster-child of the special interests." This monopoly control has been greatly intensified with the passage of the years. President Franklin D. Roosevelt, in striving to pull the country out of the great crisis of 1929-33, which was brought about by the working of monopoly capitalism, also lashed out against domination by the "economic royalists" and he promised to "drive the money changers out of the temple."

But the capitalist statesmen, Wilson and Roosevelt, did not and could not curb the power of the monopolists, much less "drive them out of the temple." These are the historic tasks of the workers and their political allies. And they will get around to accomplishing them all in good time—much sooner, indeed, than the industrial kings of today can possibly imagine.

### ***The workers want peace***

The workers, the Negro people, the poorer farmers, and the smaller middle class elements, comprise the democratic, peace-loving forces of the United States. They constitute an overwhelming majority of our people, and they have the potential power to elect a truly democratic people's government. Such a government, dedicated to peace, democracy, and the well-being of the people, would quickly put an end to the present tendencies toward a police state and world war. It would wipe out the disgraceful Jim Crow system; it would adopt an effective economic and political program of higher wages, shorter hours; it would develop greatly broadened systems of social insurance, health and education, and public works.

Above all, it would arrive at a friendly and democratic peace agreement with the U.S.S.R. and the People's Democracies of Europe and Asia. Its aim, too, would be to transform the United Nations into a peace organization, instead of what it is now rapidly becoming, an American-dominated war alliance.

The imperative political need in these critical times for the United States is the formation of a great independent coalition of the organizations of the workers, Negro people, poorer farmers, lower city middle class, and other democratic strata. This combination, upon which the fate of the United States depends, is definitely on the political agenda in this country. Its eventual crystallization is evidenced by the growing militancy of the workers, the progressive struggle of the Negro people, and the broad and deep currents of discontent among all the people at the way they are being exploited and abused by arrogant employers and crooked politicians. Unwittingly, the reactionaries are hastening the political awakening of these masses by insulting and enraging them with such outrageous measures as the Smith Act. Whom the gods would destroy they first make mad.

### ***Unite to defeat the Smith bill!***

In the developing Presidential election campaign, in which the people are to be given the choice in November between two bi-partisan reactionaries and warmongers, the workers should give special attention to the defeat of the Smith anti-labor bill. Every candidate ought to be made to state his position regarding it. The workers should de-

feat every one of them who supports this bill. Under no circumstances should the reactionaries be permitted to make this pro-fascist bill into law. Its rejection will be a major victory for democracy and peace.

There must be the fullest hearings on this bill, so that its reactionary character may be exposed and understood by the people. The fight against this pro-fascist legislation and the powerful forces behind it, calls for united action of organized labor, the Negro people, and all other democratic elements.

Defeat the Smith Bill! Repeal the Smith and McCarran and Taft-Hartley Acts! For a happier, freer, more democratic United States, and for a world at peace.

WILLIAM Z. FOSTER, *National Chairman*  
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