

## ***History of Communists in the Labor Movement***

Throughout history communists have been at the forefront of labor struggles. When there were abuses of the workers in factory towns of the early 1920's, communists were there to fight for the people. When the teamsters and the farmers were under threat from the bosses, communists were there to organize and rally with them. Communist leaders brought new meaning to grassroots organizing and led rallies across the country leading to the organizing of the **United Steel Workers (USW)** and the creation of the **Congress of Industrial Organizations (CIO)**. Communists fought for the rights of all people no matter their race, gender, age or ability. When a worker struggles, a communist is there to support them.



“Unity must be won, and only the workers,  
the class-conscious workers themselves  
can win it – by stubborn and persistent effort.”  
– V.I. Lenin



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# **LABOR COMMISSION**



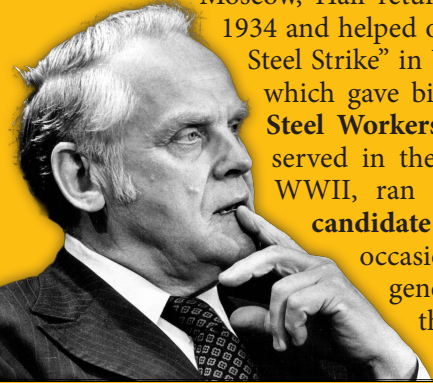
## **Party of Communists USA**



## Gus Hall

“Just as feudalism was an advance over slavery, and capitalism was the next step after feudalism, socialism is the next step after capitalism.” Born 1910 in Iron, Minnesota, Gus Hall was a major leader in organizing American labor. His parents were part of the IWW and helped recruit him to the CPUSA in 1927. After studying at the V.I. Lenin Institute in

Moscow, Hall returned to the US in 1934 and helped organize the “Little Steel Strike” in Youngstown, Ohio which gave birth to the **United Steel Workers (USW)**. He also served in the US Navy during WWII, ran as a **presidential candidate** on five different occasions and served as general secretary of the CPUSA for over four decades.

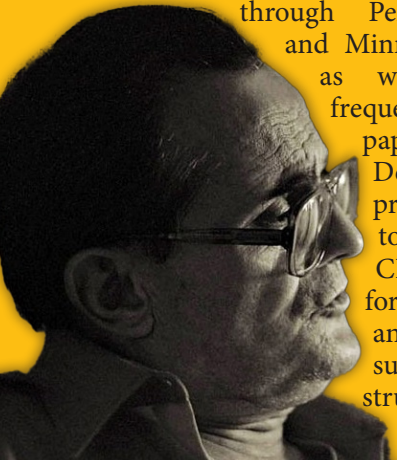


## Ernest DeMaio

“We had taken on the major industries in the country, the huge corporate centers of wealth and power in this country that dominated the economic and political life of the nation, and we organized over their opposition.” Born 1908 in Hartford, Connecticut, DeMaio was the son of Italian immigrants and worked as a machinist. His main talent, however, was organizing and in 1936 he founded the **United Electrical, Radio and Machine Workers of America (UE)**. As he traveled west

through Pennsylvania, Illinois, and Minnesota, he organized as well as became a frequent contributor to the paper *Midwest Labor*.

DeMaio often stood in principled opposition to anti-communist CIO leadership, fought for workers' rights and achieved many successes in his labor struggles.



Rose Wortis (ILGWU Local 22), William Z. Foster, Elizabeth Gurley Flynn

## Rose Wortis

Born in 1895, Wortis served as an elected official of the **International Ladies Garment Workers' Union (ILGWU)** at Local 25 in the complaints department. She was also a key member in organizing the **Needle Trades Workers Industrial Union (NTWIU)**. Even against heavy opposition from anti-communist movements, she continued her work in labor organizing and supporting communism throughout the 1940s. Rose Wortis stands firmly as a symbol of communist labor organizing and for the lifelong fight against oppression of the workers.

## William Z. Foster

Born in 1881, Foster was a leader in the organization of labor movements. He led the drive to **organize packinghouse workers** during World War I and served as the general secretary of the Communist Party USA from 1945 to 1957. He was also a key figure in organizing the railroad workers and the steel workers during the Steel Strike of 1919. The following year, Foster then founded the **Trade Union Educational League (TUEL)** with the purpose to organize and educate radical trade unionists via the creation and distribution of various pamphlets and a monthly magazine, *The Labor Herald*.

We must be where the people are and we must support workers in every sector of America's industries. By distributing literature, creating periodicals and educating the working class, we strive to bring class consciousness to American workers. Organizing begins with identifying key points of struggle, economic disparity and worker abuse, where we then strive to educate, support and distribute literature to those workers. Through these efforts we can achieve a stronger and more unified working class.

“If you want a fighting union, you need communists in it and you can be one too!”



William Z. Foster