

# Foster Shows T.U.E.L. Makes Big Progress

By J. LOUIS ENGDAHL

The Trade Union Educational League must be moving ahead fast during these stormy days of struggle between the workers and their bosses in these United States.

At least that is the impression I received as I listened to William Z. Foster secretary of the T. U. E. L. and editor of its official publication "The Labor Herald", addressing a New York gathering of workers last Sunday, held under the auspices of "The League".

Foster had come to New York to "talk business". That is what he told his audience. With one sweep of the hand he announced there would be "no oratory", just a plain "man" talk.

It began to look as if the New York militants were in for a drubbing for their failure the past months to get across to the masses. But

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# Foster Tells New York Labor that Trade Union Educational League Is Moving Ahead Fast

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Foster didn't scold. He just warmed up to his subject—the prospects before "The League"—warmed up so enthusiastically, so genuinely, so persuasively, that I concluded this was the most effective kind of oratory.

What Foster had to say to New York's militants went over big to the several hundred who heard him, and the throne of reaction in the labor movement of the nation's metropolis is going to do a lot of shivering as a result in the days just ahead.

Foster feels that the Trade Union Educational League is going so big that it would not surprise him if the Gompers' officialdom of the American Federation of Labor came out with some sort of fake substitute. He showed that was what had been done in the case of the Federated Press.

Instead of supporting the Federated Press, the best labor news service of its kind in the world, the A. F. of L. officialdom sabotages it. It has organized a fake news service. So we may expect a fake T. U. E. L.

In fact, Foster pointed out that a reactionary aggregation of labor officials in St. Louis, Mo., had stolen

the name of the T. U. E. L., and were using it for a local organization.

Foster also attacked the efforts to offer "federation" as a substitute for "amalgamation" in the needle trades. He declared that federation was not a step in the right direction, that "federation" was just a substitute, something palmed off as being "just as good". He urged the needle workers to go after the real thing, pointing out that in the printing trades, especially at the Montreal Convention of the International Typographical Union, federation was shelved for a definite declaration for amalgamation.

"I think we have all learned the lesson of 'Stay in the Union,'" said Foster, announcing that "The League" would have but one program for each industry, whether it dealt with independent unions, or with groups in the A. F. of L.

Foster said that the Trade Union Educational League was not to be allowed to develop local movements, in New York, Chicago, San Francisco, and other cities, but that it was going to develop as a national organization, as a national movement on the railroads, in the metal trades,

the needle trades, and especially the building trades, that would not be split up according to crafts.

One of the things that Foster learned when he came to New York was, the militants were getting restless in the building trades.

Foster said "The League" was planning to hold off organization work among the building workers for a little time yet, but the upsurge of militancy among the carpenters, the painters, and the numerous building trades is forcing the T. U. E. L. to get busy here, too.

Foster told of the strength that had been shown by the railroad militants at their recent Chicago Conference, and by the crystallization of sentiment in the metal industry.

With the progress of the amalgamation movement, with the consolidation, to a reasonable extent, of labor's presently organized forces, Foster promised that "The League" would get busy to help organize the unemployed.

Foster put it in this way: "We'll launch the greatest organization campaign in all the history of the globe."

Yet, that isn't far fetched, when one considers that the unorganized

working men and women in this country may be numbered by the tens of millions. Foster showed how the packinghouse interests are merely storing up trouble for themselves by their war on the craft unions. This will create the sentiment and demand for a huge industrial union in the food industry. Similarly in the steel industry, where Gary's "open shop" still holds sway.

"We're going out after the 25 millions, the 30 millions of unorganized", said Foster, "and we'll bring them into the unions so fast that it'll make the old reactionaries in the unions dizzy."

Foster said there had been a tendency among the militants, in the past, to stand to one side. He charged they felt like outlaws. But that is going to change. The militants are going to get into the fight as the leaders in every struggle.

Foster put in a little circulation talk for "The Labor Herald", official publication of "The League", again showing that he is unsatisfied with little things, that he is pushing for big achievements.

"The Labor Herald hasn't enough circulation", he said. "We don't

want to go along as a half-dead proposition. The Labor Herald has a message to deliver, and we want to get that message to the masses. We want a circulation of from 50,000 to 100,000 during the next few months. Concentrate on the Labor Herald and develop a circulation of at least 10,000 here in New York City. Then we can do big things."

Foster then showed that the T. U. E. L. is an educational and not a legislative organization. He said that legislative matters must not be sponsored by "The League", but must grow out of the unions themselves.

Foster kicked holes in the contention that the conservative is constructive, while the militant must necessarily be impractical.

"That's not so," declared Foster. "There is no fundamental reason why a revolutionist, why a member of the left wing, cannot also be the most practical member of his organization."

He said that that was the triumph of the Russian Communist movement; that men like Lenin, Zinoviev and Trotzky were extremely practical, while at the same time they were not lacking in revolutionary qualities.

"You must know every curve in the psychology of the masses," said Foster. "We now know that we can go among the masses of the workers without tainting or surrendering our revolutionary principles. We know that the militants can get into the practical struggle. We say they can do that without surrendering their revolutionary principles."

Foster then went on to show that officials must not be depended on to fight for amalgamation. He showed that amalgamation is a basic proposition, that it must be supported by a rank and file movement. "Do not put your faith in officials," said Foster. "Officials are followers. All leaders are servants. They do what they are told to do."

"Don't be factionalists," was another point stressed by Foster. "Consider all issues on their merits. Be the soul of the labor movement. Allow your ideas to be tested in the crucible of experience. If you have made mistakes, admit them and resolve to do better."

"I don't care where the membership of the Needle Trades Unions stands now," said Foster. "I promise you that in six months 95 per cent of

them will be for amalgamation. Now is the strategic time to carry on this struggle.

"You must not be oppositionists on principle. Don't carry on an anti-Gompers fight. That was the mistake of the old Socialist Party. All issues must be fought out on the basis of policy, whether the working class will be hurt or helped.

"Fight for the living things. Fight for the living issues."

It developed that three steel strike organizers were on the platform of this meeting. Besides Foster, there was Joseph Manley, eastern organizer of "The League", and S. T. Hammersmark, of Chicago, who is in the East for the Labor Defense Council. Joseph Zack, one of the Michigan raid victims, also spoke for the Labor Defense Council.

Reports were made at the conference by the representatives of numerous local T. U. E. L. groups, showing big progress made.

"If we can get Foster's congratulations on the work we have already done," said Manley, in adjourning the meeting, "then let us strive to have a gathering twice the size of this one when we come together the next time."