

Foster Predicted Campaign of Violence as Next Step in Reactionary War on T. U. E. L.

By J. LOUIS ENGDAL

"Their next step is a campaign of violence."

These prophetic words were spoken by William Z. Foster, secretary of the Trade Union Educational League, at the inspiring demonstration of New York City's needle workers, held at the New Star Casino last Thursday, to protest against the expulsion war launched by the Sigman administration in the International Ladies' Garment Workers' Union against members and sympathizers of the Trade Union Educational League.

Unlike the Chicago gathering, called for the same purpose, Monday night, the New York meeting went off peacefully. Storms of applause repeatedly swept the great auditorium as the 4,000 workers present approved the sentiments expressed by the speakers.

The note of defiance by these militant workers against the campaign of expulsions and terror launched against them, may be summarized in the words of Ben Gitlow, of the Amalgamated Clothing Workers of America, when he said:

"It is one thing to expel and another thing to get rid of the left wing movement in the labor unions."

The propaganda attacks of labor's official bureaucracy against the Trade Union Educational League have invariably been followed by violence. This has been true, to a great extent, in the miners' union, where President John L. Lewis, himself, at the Scranton, Pa., Tri-District Anthracite Coal Miners' Convention, incited some of the delegates to open violence against Joseph Manley, secretary of the International Progressive Miners' Committee. Efforts at similar lynching bees have been made in Western Pennsylvania against the militant miners. Alex Howat, for instance, has borne the brunt of this attack in several states.

Foster, therefore, was not indulging in idle oratory, in New York City, three days before the Chicago gathering, when he predicted that "Their (the officialdom of the International Ladies' Garment Workers' Union) next step is a campaign of violence."

The shooting in Chicago, following upon the expulsion of members of the Trade Union Educational League, involves more than the struggle within the International Ladies' Garment Workers' Union. Its greatest significance lies in the fact that it involves the right of the whole rank and file of the American labor movement to be heard in determining labor's policies.

The purpose of the Trade Union Educational League, its aims and objects, were thoroly presented at the New York meeting, as they were in Chicago, and the official bureaucracy was challenged to show that the T.U.E.L. is a dual union.

"The Trade Union Educational League," said Foster, in New York, "is a movement that has grown up as the result of the stupidity, dishonesty and corruption of the American trade union leadership. The officials of labor, from Sam Gompers to Morris Sigman, are not on the job for

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Charge that T.U.E.L. Is Dual Is Ridiculous Says Rank and File

(Special to "The Worker")

(CHICAGO) - The stand taken, in resolutions, by the great mass meeting here of garment workers, members of the International Ladies' Garment Workers' Union, in the face of official tyranny and the revolver shots of would-be assassins, was as follows:

Whereas, the fundamental principle of labor unions is that the union must include workers of all opinions and be tolerant of the expression of the same, and

Whereas, Vice-President Peristova, is in Chicago conducting a campaign of persecution against several members of the union because of their advocacy of amalgamation, the shop delegate system, independent working class political action, and various other policies distasteful to the administration,

Whereas, the excuse he is offering for these persecutions of loyal members, some of whom have belonged to our organization for as long as 15 years, is ridiculous, namely that the Trade Union Educational League is a dual organization, and

Whereas, the trial committee that heard the evidence showed its disagreement with the prosecution by voting 5 to 1 in favor of acquittal, and only 11 members out of a total of 25 on the Joint Board voted in favor of conviction, 8 voting for acquittal, 8 being disqualified, 7 not voting, and 1 absent, and

Whereas, Vice-President Peristova, claims that he is carrying on this persecution upon direct instructions of the General Executive Board,

Therefore, be it resolved, that we condemn these expulsion proceedings as contrary to the basic principles of trade unionism and bound to bring the most serious disruptions into our organization, and be it further

Resolved, that we request the General Executive Board of the International Ladies' Garment Workers' Union to reverse the decision of expulsion and re-instate these members in good standing in the union, and be it further

Resolved, that a copy of this resolution be forwarded to all local unions and Joint Boards of the International Ladies' Garment Workers' Union, and the General Executive Board.

A general membership meeting to nominate candidates for the coming election will be held Tuesday, Sept. 4, at 8 p. m., at 110 Grand Street, Hoboken, N. J. Members must not fail to attend this meeting.

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labor. If the leaders of labor had been on the job, there would have been no need for the existence of the Trade Union Educational League. They didn't get on the job for labor. That is why we are on the job. That is why we have organized the Trade Union Educational League.

"The League was first greeted by a campaign of silence," continued Foster. "Then it was ridiculed. Now it is being attacked. The old fossilized officialdom is a disgrace to the labor movement. They have not been able to stop the League. Its program is being accepted everywhere. We have taught the rank and file that they have something to say in the union."

Vice-President Meyer Perlstein, of the International Ladies' Garment Workers' Union, is directing the attack on the T. U. E. L. forces in Chicago. He was originally sent to Chicago to carry on an organization drive. Foster told how Perlstein came to him for organization ideas. Foster, who is a member of the organization committee of the Chicago Federation of Labor, said he had given Perlstein all the information he had, that he had co-operated with him in every way possible, to help organize the scattered forces of the ladies' garment workers in Chicago.

Foster then went on to show that where a campaign of silence and vilification fails, the next inevitable step is violence. They can't answer our program. So they slug our members. They beat them up. They disfranchise them.

"We had expected that these expulsions would take place. But we had not even dreamed that they would be started in a union that calls

itself revolutionary. It is a disgrace to the International Ladies' Garment Workers' Union that the expulsion of Trade Union Educational League members should first take place in this union. In no other union has this taken place as yet.

"Today the left wing has got the idea of amalgamation stuck in the craft unions like glue."

Foster then made the charge that Abraham Cahan, and his Jewish Daily Forward, that has inspired the war against the radicals in the labor movement, especially in the needle trades, was back of the present attack on the T. U. E. L. and I. L. G. W. U.

"If Sigman is the man that Abraham Cahan has picked out to carry on this fight, then he has got much to learn. The T. U. E. L. has done more to kill sentiment for dual unionism in the labor movement than any other power. The T. U. E. L. is not even a union. It doesn't sign contracts with the bosses. It doesn't reach agreements about wages and conditions. It is only an educational organization. What is the real issue? I do not believe that even the labor officials seriously kid each other about the T. U. E. L. being a dual organization."

Foster then reviewed the tremendous service rendered the labor movement by those who had been expelled in Chicago, among them Israel Davidson and Dora Lifschitz.

"This attack was devised in the brain of Abe Cahan," Foster charged again. "Cahan learned this stuff from the Yellow Amsterdam International of Trade Unions, that has followed this program as a definite tactic against the lefts, especially in Germany."

Foster then told how he had seen Benjamin Schlesinger, predecessor of Morris Sigman as President of the I. L. G. W. U., degenerate from his early position as a militant trade unionist. Foster expressed the belief that Schlesinger was forced to give way to Sigman in order that a more militant campaign might be carried on against the left wing.

In conclusion Foster said:

"The salvation of the union is the task of the left wing. Therefore we must adopt and carry out the slogan of 'No splits in the union'."

The chairman of the meeting was Elias Marks, of the Cloak Makers' Union, I. L. G. W. U. Other speakers were H. Abrams, Amalgamated Clothing Workers; Ben Gold, Furriers' Union, Henry Gewirtzman, Fancy Leather Goods' Workers, and Ben Lifschitz. Other similar meetings will be held in other sections of the

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movement. The workers in every union have a vital interest at stake in the heroic struggle of their fellow workers in the needle trades. The attempt to take the life of Foster brings the burning issue home to every militant worker.

Militant workers! Take up the fight of the persecuted needle workers. Turn the searchlight of publicity on the needle trades officialdom. Roll up such a mighty wave of working class protest that they will not dare to continue their criminal campaign.

Down with the treacherous leaders who try to split the unions!

Down with the Employers of slugs and Assassins!