

WORKMEN'S ADVOCATE.



Seventh Year, No. 2

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ORGANIZED LABOR.

WEEKLY MEETING OF THE CENTRAL LABOR FEDERATION.

No Back-Down—A Long Debate on Gompers' Letter, Resulting in an Overwhelming Vote in Favor of Retaining the S. L. P. Delegates—Boodle Politicians, "Pure and Simple", Must be Driven Out—Interesting Letters from John B. Rae, President of the Miners, John McBride, Thomas J. Morgan and Others—Trade Matters.

One of the most interesting meetings that were held in recent years by a central body of the Organized Labor of this city was called to order last Sunday by corresponding Sec'y Bohm.

The meeting room was crowded. Delegate Simon Gompers of the Boot and Shoe-workers' Union held the gavel, while delegate Hecker of the Custom Varnishers and Polishers was Vice-Chairman.

Credentials were received from one new Union and the following: Architectural Iron Workers, Paint-makers' Union No. 32, Millwrights and Millers No. 1 and Boot and Shoe-workers. They were all approved.

LETTERS FROM THE MINERS AND OTHERS.

Letters were read by the Cor. Sec'y, as follows:

From Mr. John B. Rae, M. W. and President of the United Mine Workers of America, in which he says: "We feel assured that the stand we took at the Detroit Convention was a just one and that we shall not regret it. We still assure you that any plan for the furtherance of the masses shall always have our hearty and fullest support."

From Mr. John McBride, Commissioner of Labor Statistics of Ohio, member of the Executive Council of the Miners and delegate of the said trade to the Detroit Convention: "Allow me to say that I appreciate the good will of your members, towards whom I simply performed my duty, as I understood it, at the Detroit Convention. The miners have hard task masters to deal with, but they are full of hope and fairly organized, and they feel confident that with the assistance of organized labor, they will succeed in establishing the eight-hour work-day in May 1891."

From Mr. Thomas J. Morgan, of Chicago, acknowledging "the kind recognition" by the C. L. F. of his services to its delegate at the recent convention of the A. F. of L., and announcing that his report to the Chicago Trades Assembly, which occupied 45 minutes in reading, was accepted unanimously, and 5,000 copies thereof were ordered printed without a dissenting vote.

From Max Boehm, Sec'y of the Clothing Cutters' Progressive Union No. 5294, in which he says: "In reply to your communication of Dec. 25, regarding the actions of John J. Zuber, delegate to the D. C. Convention from the Brooklyn Clothing Cutters, we desire to state that the said delegate was not sent by us or in conjunction with us and that he did not represent us in any way."

A communication was also received from the President of the American Federation of Labor, requesting early orders from the unions and persons who desire copies of the official report of the Detroit Convention, as the edition thereof will be limited to the probable demand. Copies of that document, in English or German, as desired, will be sold at ten cents per copy, or \$9 per hundred copies.

SAMUEL GOMPERS' LETTER.

The special order at 4 o'clock was "Action on the communication received last week from President Samuel Gompers" and published in full in these columns.

After reading again the said communication, delegate Bohm moved that the delegates of the American Section, Socialist Labor party, be retained in the C. L. F. An animated discussion followed, of which the following is a synopsis:

THE DEBATE.

Delegate Schleppe, of Typographia No. 7, stated that he was instructed to vote against the S. L. P. being represented in the C. L. F., on the chief ground that it was not a trade-union. He thought the time would come when an independent political movement of labor, necessarily socialistic in its principles and tendencies, would take place, but that the time had not yet come and the presence of S. L. P. delegates in the C. L. F. might now prevent the less advanced organizations from entering the latter body. Again, the S. L. P. delegates might use their influence over

others to force through this body the adoption of resolutions prepared in advance and distasteful to the minority.

Delegate A. Jablonski, of Cigar-makers' No. 90, said that in the opinion of his union the S. L. P. should be represented not only in the C. L. F. but in every central body where they could obtain recognition. Then, and not until then, shall we have an honest labor movement, economic and political, throughout the country.

Delegate Kandler of the United Upholsterers, said that when the American Section of the S. L. P. applied for representation in the C. L. F., he thought it was bad policy and apprehended that discord might be the result. Since then, however, he had seen the C. L. F. grow steadily in numerical strength, intelligent action and legitimate influence, while harmony had never been so perfect in any other central body. Such evidence of progress and of the value of the services rendered by the delegates of the American Section had completely changed his views, and he would vote for the motion.

Delegates Hecker, Blumenberg and others spoke also strongly in favor of the motion, the two delegates of Typographia No. 7 being the only speakers against it.

VOGT'S SPEECH.

Delegate Vogt said that the objection of the Typographical Union did not hold water. If the Socialists had an inclination to form a clique in the C. L. F. and to railroad out and dried resolutions, they could do so as well if they came as delegates from Federal Labor Unions or under some other masks that had been suggested by the "pure-trade-unionists." All the other arguments advanced hitherto were on the ground of tradition. "The Socialist Labor party should not be represented now because it never was represented in a central body." In the first place the premises were false; the party had been in other central bodies; in the second place tradition had no weight in a matter affecting the welfare of the whole movement. The question was whether it was in the interest of the movement to admit the S. L. P. to representation. And the experience of the past twenty years had shown that it was. The absence of close affiliation between the political and the economic branches of labor had led to constant dissensions. The political branch, the Socialist Labor party, had at times fallen into a dogmatic policy and become estranged from the economic movement. The economic branch on the other hand again and again fallen into reactionism and become the victim of plutocratic political schemes. It had only been after serious collisions and disruptions that harmony could be restored for a time between the two branches of organized labor. When the American Section sent delegates to the C. L. F., it was principally with a view to rendering such estrangement impossible, with a view to sound harmony. At the beginning of the trade-union movement it may have been thought advisable to exclude politics; it was to gain the precarious harmony of men who were in their views on public questions thoroughly divided and ready to fly at each others' throats. As soon as the unions acquired strength, their harmony on this point was disturbed, not by the Socialists, but by the capitalist politicians, who could not see such large bodies of voters without attempting to control them. From that moment politics have been a source of discord, which can only be dried up by labor going into its own, independent class politics. That was recognized by the American Federation of Labor itself, when in its convention at Columbus in December 1886, it declared by resolution in favor of independent political action on the very ground that politics have been in the past a source of dissension to the labor movement. The men who now oppose the introduction of politics into the organizations of labor are the enemies of harmony; they are helping the schemes of reactionists who want to reserve the field of organized labor for their own political manipulations. Our three leading opponents at Detroit, Gompers, Geo. K. Foster and George E. McNeill never hesitated to plunge into politics when their own interests could be advanced thereby. Foster had himself nominated Lieutenant Governor of Massachusetts in 1886. George E. McNeill ran in December of the same year as a so-called labor candidate for Mayor in the city of Boston and he endeavored by every means to drag the Central Labor Union of Boston into his campaign, thereby seriously endangering the harmony of that body, because a large portion of its delegates believed the movement was in the interest of the Republican party. Mr. Gompers himself negotiated with the County Democrats and Republicans for a Senatorial nomination, in clear defiance of the resolution of the very organization of which he was President. Such and similar schemes have weakened and demoralized many labor organizations, such as the central bodies in Boston, New York, Philadelphia, Chicago, San Francisco and elsewhere. On the other hand the New York Central Labor Federation has been the most harmonious and best working body during the last campaign, when it had the delegates of the S. L. P. in its midst and

supported the socialist political movement. The presence of S. L. P. delegates is a barrier against the introduction of the worst germs of discord, the schemes of plutocratic politicians.

SANIAL'S REMARKS.

Delegate Sanial said that the excellent and exhaustive speech of his fellow delegate Vogt made it unnecessary for him to enter into any extended remarks. Shortly before coming to the meeting it occurred to him that it would be well if the reply of the C. L. F., through its Corresponding Secretary, were approved in every particular by this body and in order to save time he had in haste made a written draft which embodied what he would otherwise have said, and which he would submit, subj. et to such changes as the C. L. F. might order if the said draft was approved in substance.

Before closing the debate delegate Simon Gompers, chairman, made a statement, to the effect that he had seen Mr. Samuel Gompers a few days ago and learned from him that the representative of the Baltimore Federation of Labor at the Detroit Convention had denied the fact that a Section of the S. L. P. had ever been directly or indirectly represented in that body. This fact, as given in a letter of Mr. Hoehn to Mr. Sanial and embodied in the statement of the latter before the Convention, had been published in the WORKMEN'S ADVOCATE while the contradiction of it had not.

[This, of course, involves the veracity of either Mr. Hoehn or the Baltimore delegate. Mr. Hoehn was very precise and circumstantial in his statement. He said that he himself was a delegate of the S. L. P. to the German C. L. U. and was sent by the latter as one of its delegates to the Baltimore A. F. of L., as the minutes of both bodies would show if produced. The Baltimore representative in Detroit has thus far only made a scrupulous denial without proof. Let him produce the minutes. We know Mr. Hoehn and we believe him implicitly.—Ed.]

THE SOCIALISTS RETAINED.

The motion to retain the S. L. P. section, with the addition relative to the reply, was then put to a vote and adopted almost unanimously by the largest assembly of delegates that has yet come together, only three votes being cast in the negative. Applause followed this result.

The reply sent to President Samuel Gompers by Secretary Ernest Bohm reads as follows:

REPLY OF THE C. L. F. TO GOMPERS.
Mr. Samuel Gompers, Pres. Am. Fed. of Labor.

DEAR SIR AND BROTHER:—Your letter of the 27th ult. was duly considered at a regular meeting of the Central Labor Federation, held last Sunday.

In reply this body has instructed me to say that it does not agree with you in any of the statements therein made, except as to the mere fact that the Detroit Convention, upon those statements and others of the same character, denied a seat to our representative.

In the first place it is not correct to state, as you do, that you referred the C. L. F. matter to the Detroit Convention. This would imply that you had the power to prevent us from submitting our case to the said Convention, but kindly waived it. It would also imply that you made a temperate exercise, in an issue where you had already taken sides, of the power and influence which naturally attach to the functions of President of the A. F. of L.

The fact is, however, that the C. L. F. appealed from your decision to the said Convention, and from the moment its representative appeared before the Committee on Credentials to the time when a vote was taken, all the influence and power you could command as President of the A. F. of L. was exerted against his admission.

1.—By speeches in which passionate appeals to vulgar prejudices took the place of sensible argument;

2.—By statements calculated to mislead the delegates;

3.—By your appointment, on the Special Committee referred to in your letter, of men notoriously opposed to our admission and so evidently selected by you to report as you wanted; that, contrary to all parliamentary precedent, you failed to appoint to that committee the author of the resolution by virtue of which it was created, for no other apparent reason than that he was an able and earnest supporter of our claim.

So far, indeed, were you carried away by your intense desire, not that justice be done to the C. L. F., if you had done it an injustice, but that your unjust decision be sustained at all hazards by the Convention, that you attempted, by personal and unjustifiable attacks, to discredit bona fide delegates of bona fide organizations represented in this body. And while intimating that the credentials of Ernest Bohm as delegate of the National Brewers' Union, and August Waldinger as delegate of the N. Y. United Machinists, would not bear the closest scrutiny, not only you were putting forward as your mouthpiece the representative of a sham organization

styling itself a Federal Union, but you were appointing on the aforesaid special committee a certain Frank K. Foster, boss printer, employer of labor, claiming to represent the Tackmakers' National Union, but whose real business in the councils of wage-workers has been for years, notoriously, that of an agent of the Democratic party. This Foster was the Secretary of your "Special Committee," and its report, which we shall presently consider, was his work.

The two first paragraphs of this report, as quoted in your letter, are for the most part made up of meaningless phrases, such as the professional politician has long been accustomed to use in his public treatment of the labor question. In so far as they contain anything that is at all tangible or comprehensible they are contradictory or untrue, and plainly intended to keep the wage-workers divided by hypocritical appeals to the right of individual opinion, even when such opinion is the product, not of reason, but of race prejudice, individual selfishness and "temperament."

The third paragraph states a flagrant untruth in language calculated to deceive. By the cunning addition of the word "partisan" to the word "politics," it falsely asserts that the A. F. of L. is committed against political action of any sort; whereas, in fact, the A. F. of L., at its Columbus Convention held in December 1886, placed itself on record, by resolution, as unreservedly favoring and recommending independent labor movements of the working class. Again it says: "We cannot logically admit the S. L. P. to representation and shut the door in the face of other political organizations formed to achieve social progress." Everybody knows that there is no such political organization in existence outside of the Socialist Labor party. But it is by depicting "partisan politics" that partisan politicians succeed in excluding the S. L. P. from the councils of Organized Labor, while throwing wide open the doors of its central bodies and conventions to the old plutocratic parties under the borrowed name of "Tackmakers" and the fictitious one of "Federal Unions."

Finally, the conclusions and recommendations of the report ignore all the testimony and arguments presented on the side of the C. L. F. at the meeting held by the special committee.

"We therefore believe that the Detroit Convention had no opportunity of fairly deciding our case. For the injustice done us, we blame you, and you alone. We believe that most of the delegates who were instructed to vote against us would now, in the light that has been cast upon the subject, be instructed to vote otherwise; and we appeal from the Detroit Convention to the various organizations represented therein, with the conviction that they will so instruct their delegates to the Birmingham Convention next year as to admit the delegate that we shall send them and there.

And so long as the S. L. P. remains a pure labor party, having in view the abolition of wage-slavery and the substitution of the cooperative commonwealth under a self-government of free workers, for the competitive system under a despotic government of plutocrats; so long as that party sends us delegates honest representatives of the aspirations of labor, we shall prefer their company and co-operation to that of the Posters and like agents of the boodle parties.

Fraternalty yours,
ERNEST BOHM, Cor. Sec'y.
THE ALABAMA MINERS.

L. Sanial reported that the Special Committee appointed to devise ways and means for the relief of the Alabama miners had issued an appeal, which he read. He then urged the delegates to press its consideration upon their respective unions.

ROUTINE BUSINESS.

Messrs. Christian Pattberg and John Laugman appeared as a committee from the United German Trades of Brooklyn and requested the appointment of a committee for the purpose of aiding the Journeymen Bakers' Unions. The request was granted and a committee appointed, consisting of delegates Carstens, Vogt and Bohm.

The special committee on Leibinger and Oelm reported that in conjunction with the United German Trades of Brooklyn, the Engineers' Union, Brewers' Union and the Local Executive Board of the Brewers, the trouble there had been successfully settled, the firm agreeing to reconstitute the two discharged employees and also engage an assistant engineer. The report was adopted.

The Organization Committee reported that they desired permission to ask the unions for a list of members and addresses, which would enable them to aid the Barbers' Union in organizing the craft into districts. Permission was given.

The Brewers' Union reported that the Passaic Trades Assembly had lifted the special boycott on A. Fink and Sons' pool-table without notifying them or giving any reasons for such action. The corresponding secretary was instructed to protest against the action of that body. (The said Assembly is represented in the American Federation of Labor.)

The Architectural Iron-workers reported that the House-Smiths' Union,

CHICAGO.

THE SOCIALISTS UNITED AND AT WORK.

A "Straight, Strict, and Uncompromising Political Movement"—A Grand Mass Meeting to be Held at Turner Hall.

The following call, printed in large type and in the form of posters, has been issued by the united Socialists of Chicago:

TO THE AMERICAN PEOPLE!

(Men must not be masters and servants, for all men are born to freedom.—ABRAHAM LINCOLN.)

At a public meeting of the Socialists of Chicago, held at Waverly Hall on Sunday, November 23, 1890, the following resolutions were unanimously adopted:

Resolved, That this meeting of Socialists, irrespective of connection with established organizations of a Socialist character, local or national, hereby declare the necessity for a united political party in this city, to work on the lines laid down and so successfully followed by the Socialists of Germany.

Resolved, That we hereby give our sanction and support to such a united Socialist party in Chicago, and recommend the immediate election of a Provisional Committee to lay out a plan of organization, the same to be presented for ratification at a future mass-meeting to be called by the Provisional Committee; such plan of organization to provide for a straight, strict and uncompromising political movement.

At that mass-meeting a committee consisting of sixteen members was at once chosen, and ordered to draft and submit at a future mass-meeting of Socialists a declaration of principles and a plan for the local organization. The second meeting of the committee was held on Wednesday night, December 17, and it was decided to submit the following declaration of principles to the

GRAND MASS MEETING

to be held on Sunday, January 11, at 2:30 p. m., at 12th street, Turner Hall, West 12th street, near Halstead.

[Here follow the Declaration of Principles and the Plan of organization as published in our issue of December 13.]

WORKING PEOPLE AND FELLOW CITIZENS OF CHICAGO:

Remember that the time is not distant when the workingmen and honest thinking citizens of this country will learn that there is only one party which represents the true interests of the people, namely, the Socialist Labor party. Like the Abolitionists we shall continue our agitation until the victory is ours. If you are in favor of ameliorating the horrible condition of the working people, if you are honest advocates of Liberty, Equality and Justice, then it is your duty to examine and to study our Platform, and to join our ranks.

The following speakers will address the meeting in English and German: THOMAS J. MORGAN, B. BEEHYN, EX-ALDERMAN ED. D. CONNOG, A. C. HAN (from New York), JULIUS VAHLTEICH, ROBERT WEBER, and JAMES WINNES.

Child Labor in Quebec.

Several measures in the interest of labor have lately been introduced into the Quebec Provincial Legislature. One of the most important is a Government bill, introduced by Premier Mercier, to amend the Factory Act. It creates two new classes of factories, in regard to which the age at which children can be employed is raised. In unhealthy factories, which include all manufactories of tobacco and cigars, the age is fixed at fourteen for boys and fifteen for girls. In factories classed as both unhealthy and dangerous, which are left to be specified by the Government, the age is put at sixteen for boys and eighteen in the case of girls. There is also a provision that the day of ten hours shall not begin before six in the morning, or end later than nine in the evening.

The usefulness of the measure obviously depends largely upon the action of the Government in fixing the funds of manufactories which come under the head of dangerous and unhealthy, but if carried out fairly, the provision will remedy some of the most glaring evils of child labor.—*Canadian Labor Advo. cald.*

The receipt of a sample copy of this paper is an invitation to subscribe.

AUSTRALIA.

LESSONS AND EFFECTS OF A GREAT STRIKE.

Disgusted with the "Pure and Simple"—The General Council of the Australian Labor Federation Proposes Independent Political Action with a Programme Thoroughly Socialistic.

In commenting on the educating influences of the great Australian strike, which was lost after a wearisome fight of nearly four months, the *Australian Workman* of Sidney observes:

That education has extended to a knowledge that the present system of capitalism is pernicious; that it would be better for the people, the community, the State, if the State owned all the lands, mines and machinery of production and exchange. The wage-earners have commenced to think, nay, to know that it is time the State undertook the production of wealth for use instead of permitting capitalists to produce commodities for profit; that it is to say that it is time the Government commenced to manufacture boots and shoes, trousers, coats, dresses, hats, gloves, food, social wealth of all kinds at the lowest possible price and in the best possible manner, for the use of the people, as against the production of these articles by the capitalists at the highest possible price to the consumer and in the worst possible manner. Our fellows are commencing to learn that if the State had the making of a pair of boots, it would make that pair of boots well and of good material, in order that it might prove of service to its wearer; and not only that, the boots would be supplied at cost price; that under the present system of "private enterprise," the man who sells you a pair of boots gets the highest possible price he can—no matter how small the cost, no matter that the soles are composed of brown paper instead of leather, and he will feel immensely delighted if you wear out the said pair of boots in less than a fortnight. Under the present system of private enterprise, if shopkeepers can palm off their customers "post and rail" tea as prime Pekoe, they will do so with the greatest unctious; if they can get the customers to buy pumpkin and Moreton Bay fig jam, believing the same to be the best strawberry conserve, they will consider themselves awfully clever, and still "take round the plate" in church.

"These are some of the matters which have been discussed during the strike, and there is hardly one man out of the hundreds of thousands of wage-earners in Australia who are affected by the strike who have not become convinced that if we had State bakeries, State farms, State mines, and State factories of all kinds, we should have at cost price, not only pure unadulterated jam and strong, well-made boots, but the fear of starvation being removed, we should live healthier, better, more contented lives; crime, poverty, and prostitution would disappear, and the reconstruction of society on a proper basis would be consummated.

"In conclusion, we would say that we deem it a matter of national gratitude that this strike has taken place. It has been said that the loss to wage-earners by the strike is \$500,000. What is that sum compared to the advantages that will accrue to the strikers from the lesson that has been taught them? What is that sum, compared to the knowledge, hitherto only obtainable by a strike, of the heroic solidarity of all classes of wage-earners, who stood by the strikers in a manner unprecedented in the history of Trades-Unionism, many giving their day's pay per week each long after they knew that it was hopeless to hold out against the combination of Capital and a horde of blacklegs? What is that sum compared to the value of the knowledge that we may save all the necessity for strikes by going to the ballot box and so recording our votes that we may elect a Labor Parliament, who will frame laws that will bring about the time when, "if a man shall not work, neither shall he eat," when rent, interest and profit shall be abolished from the land, and when Labor will get its full reward?"

Such is the talk in Sidney. But the organized labor of Australia is apparently determined this time to do more than talk, and we learn from the *Brisbane Worker* that the General Council of the Australian Labor Federation has issued a call for political action upon a

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