

# THE I. W. W. CONVENTION

Tho the 7th annual convention of the I. W. W., recently held in Chicago, developed no very remarkable features, nevertheless some of its doings deserve special notice. One of these was the strong sentiment aroused at one time in favor of decentralization, a sentiment that ill fits the centralization theory prevalent in the organization.

A motion was made to give the General Executive Board jurisdiction over the calling, conducting and settling of all free speech fights. The profest object of the motion was to limit the number of free speech fights, making it more difficult for locals to get support for such fights.

F. H. Little, a G. E. B. member, made a vigorous onslaught upon the motion, clearly showing the evils of centralization in the craft unions, warning the I. W. W. against them. He concluded by saying: "The G. E. B. be damned! Dont give it any such power."

Thompson (General Organizer) and Speed (G. E. B. member) also made telling arguments against the motion. Thompson declared that if the locals are to maintain their rights of free speech they must be permitted and prepared to fight for it at the drop of the hat, and that the general organization will have to rely on the intelligence of the locals to avoid uselessly squandering their strength in such fights. Speed sensibly urged against the motion saying that if the locals were deprived of the right to declare free speech fights the next thing the G. E. B. would despoil them of would be their right to strike. The motion was lost by an overwhelming vote and thus an important victory was scored for decentralization in the I. W. W.

In the discussion so strong was the sentiment for local autonomy that one was almost led to believe that the I. W. W. had repudiated the centralists theory, which differentiates it so sharply from every other revolutionary labor union in the world, and had accepted the decentralization theory.

The disillusionment came, however, in a later discussion on motions to deprive the G. E. B. of the power to levy special strike assessments (a most dangerous power, as it gives the G. E. B. the power to decide whether or not a union's strike shall be financially supported, and thus, perhaps, even whether a strike shall be called.) and the power to pass on all agreements made between subordinate parts of the I. W. W. and employers. (another dangerous power, as it gives the G. E. B. absolute control of all strikes.)

Both these motions were overwhelmingly defeated. The same men, with the exception of Little and one or two others who had previously fought for local autonomy, in those cases fought against it.

The explanation of this contradiction is simple: The I. W. W. has had great experience in free speech fights and has learned that local autonomy is essential to their success, and it, therefore, endorses the Syndicalists decentralization idea in regard to them.

On the other hand it has had absolutely no experience in collecting national strike assestments and but little in settling strikes. It has not yet learned the danger of allowing a few men to arbitrarily hold the purse strings of the whole organization and thus largely control its strike activities, nor the danger of allowing a small com-



Moloch! rise and gaze with awe;  
 Tho mankind thy worship spurn,  
 Still to God another law  
 Kindles flames where victims burn:  
 Thou knew not the magic art  
 Fire to kindle in the heart.  
 Ha! ha! At the modern shrine  
 Millions kneel; the fires within  
 Forcing, driving, swift to win  
 Doom more merciless than thine!

See them coming, blooming, fresh,  
 Brothers, sisters, husbands, wives;  
 See them leaving, shrunk in flesh,  
 Owning nothing but their lives.  
 Not in forms of wickerwood  
 Burn we now our children's blood.  
 Ha! ha! All thy rites I scorn;  
 Mine the parent, mine his years,  
 Mine his toil, his sweat, his tears,  
 Mine the mother's babe unborn!

Christ! Incarnate, heaven-writ law!  
 Where thy priests once ruled supreme,  
 Where thou stake and fagot saw,  
 Other lights on mankind gleam.  
 Stake and dungeon, rack and screw,  
 Later force hath hid from view.  
 Ha! ha! "Liberty of trade"—  
 Right to jostle, right to crush,  
 Right o'er fallen ones to rush—  
 Hath another's temple made.

Whether wood, or brick, or stone,  
 Temples still, for they enshrine  
 All men love, or hope, or own,  
 All that dotth the soul entwine.  
 Christ, give place! thy days are o'er;  
 Other idols men implore.  
 Ha! ha! Idols shaped from steel,  
 Deaf to all men may endeavor,  
 Crying: "Ever! ever! ever!"  
 Where men breathe thy name and—kneel.

Molock! Christ! Gods of the past!  
 Thou knew man but in the germ;  
 New worlds now with thine contrast,  
 Where my law is progress' term.  
 Soul and body, life and death,  
 All are hazarded for wealth;  
 Ha! ha! Monarch of the globe!  
 Christ's and Moloch's legatee,  
 Heir to their authority,  
 Mine their scepter, mine their robe.  
 —DYER D. LUM.

mittee, which might easily be corrupt, to dictate upon what terms all strike settlements shall be made. Hence in these matters it still strikes to the Socialist centralization theory, foisted upon it at its birth. It's safe to say that when, if ever, the I. W. W. does get experience in these matters it will repudiate the Socialist centralization theory and adopt the Syndicalist decentralization practice even as it has done in the case of free speech fights.

An interesting debate was caused by a motion by Halco (G. E. B. member) to strike out the constitutional clause forbidding I. W. W. members to become officials in craft unions. Tho Halco, assisted by several other delegates, ably defended his motion, citing numerous instances where I. W. W. members could have taken charge of craft union machines and used them to benefit the I. W. W. but refrained from doing so, to the detriment of the I. W. W. The motion was lost. The merits of the proposition, which Halco et al unsuccessfully tried to make the issue, were lost in a blizzard of abuse against the A. F. of L. Halco was called a syndicalist and his motion one to "bore from within" and both were squelched on this basis.

And in truth the experiment would have been a dangerous one for the I. W. W.'s ambitious program. Give I. W. W. members the right to hold offices in craft unions and they will strive to win them. This would lead inevitably to the building of rebel machines and a general campaign of "boring from within." This might lead anywhere. The fear of encouraging "boring from within," tho unexpressed, no doubt lurked in the minds of many of the delegates and influenced their action.

A general air of prosperity, bred of the Lawrence strike and its aftermath, pervaded the convention. All the delegates were enthusiastic and business like. They departed the convention with high hopes for the coming year.

A strong Socialist minority, if not a majority, was present at the convention. Owing to its newness, the general enthusiasm, etc, this minority did not manifest itself

greatly. However part of it could be seen to wince under the "tongue lashings" administered the S. P. by various reports. It's only a matter of time, however until the old quarrel between the politicians and the direct actionists is again unchained in the I. W. W.

WM. Z. FOSTER.

WHAT WE ARE UP AGAINST

The steel corporation, says Collier's has an outstanding capitalization of nearly fifteen hundred million dollars. That amount is very nearly as great as the aggregate value of the great cities of Chicago and St Louis combined, with their 2,876,554 inhabitants. With that huge capital two this single corporation acquired more than two hundred other companies.

Thru these companies it owns the principle iron ore supplies in the United States; it owns strategic transportation systems; it owns a large part of the steel mill of the country. The corporation is in turn controlled by a few men—its directors. These few men are directors also in fifty nine banks and trust and insurance companies, which together hold quick capital, the life blood of business, of more than double the amount of the Steel Corporation's capital.

The few men who control the Steel Corporation are directors also in twenty nine other railroad systems, with 126,000 miles of line, more than half the railroad mileage of the United States, and in steamship companies. These men are also directors in twelve steel-using street railway systems, including some of the largest in the world; they are directors in forty machinery and steel-using companies; in many gas oil and water companies, extensive users of iron products; and in the great wire-using telephone and telegraph companies.

The aggregate assets of these different corporations exceed sixteen billion dollars. Sixteen billion dollars is more than twice the asset value of all the property in all New England. It is more than one-half times the value of the property in the thirteen Southern States. It is larger than the asset value of all the property in the twenty two States, North and South, lying west of the Mississippi River, except only Texas.

POINTED PARAGRAPHS

When we hear rich men singing "My Country, 'tis of Thee," it cause no surprise, but to hear laboring men singing it who don't own enough land to bury them, is very ridiculous to say the least.

Things are turned upside down all right. The richer church members sings "I care not for riches, neither silver nor gold," and the poor one sings "My country 'tis of thee, Sweet land of liberty"—to slave.

Prohibitionists rave over canteens in the army. Horrible example for their dear boys! But it is just lovely and patriotic for those same dear boys to take a rifle and shoot holes through some other dear boys for about \$16 a month—hired to kill. No wonder Jesus said of this class: "Ye hypocrites, ye strain at a gnat and swallow a camel."

The Catholic priests go through an idolatrous act called elevating the host. It would be more to the point, more appropriate, if they were to put a box of cigars, a bottle of whiskey, a deck of cards, a pass to the ball game, a package of chewing tobacco and a ticket to the show on a plate: and elevate this "host" to be adored by their blind followers. They would at least be crooking the knee to something they really love.

We have seen imposing parades in which men carried torches only, others in which muskets were in evidence but now there are great public parades in which men carry copies of the Bible. That surely is an improvement. Mich. Christian Advocate.

Not a particle. It is not so very long ago that a large body of professing christians paraded to Cuba and over to the Phillipines to make war on another professing christian nation, Catholic Spain. And did not the pious Helen Gould God-speed the soldiers on their mission and present each one with a Bible; so the U. S. troops marched upon Spain with a Bible in one hand and a gun in the other.

So it has been down the whole twenty centuries of this dispensation of "Peace on earth and good will to men."  
 C & L. CAVES.

SHALL MORE MURDER BE DONE?

Brothers: In the name of Labor and Liberty we make this last appeal to you in behalf of our brothers now imprisoned at Lake Charles, Louisiana.

Their trial has been set for October 7th, which will be exactly three months from date of the Massacre of Grabow. During these ninety days the Lumber Trust, with millions at its disposal, has been working day and night to fix the "evidence" on which it hopes to hang our fellow-workers. During these ninety days detectives have been everywhere hounding our brothers and their helpless families; they have been in all our homes, all our