THE SYNDICALIST

THE A. F. OF L. CONVENTION

The one phase of the recent A. F. of L. convention worthy of particular remark was the increased strength and militancy of the Socialist minority. A year ago at the Atlantic convention the Socialists controlled but 2,000 votes, and timidly (or diplomatically) arranged their delegation on the assumption that they were not trying to capture the A. F. of L. This year they polled some 6,000 votes against their opponents' 12,000, boldly ran a candidate against Gompers, and let it be distinctly understood that they were out to put the A. F. of L. should their strength increase as much in the coming year as it did in the past one, they will be the majority faction in the A. F. of L. at its next convention.

Gompers, who a year ago defied the Socialists "borners from within," now practically concedes an approaching victory to them when he wails that "when" (not "if") the A. F. of L. changes it will find him unchanged. He specifically denies that he will swing to the Socialists "step by step" if given a chance. He is going to go down fighting, and he seems to consider the going down fighting process a certainty. He is beginning to recognize the patent fact that the days of "pure and simple" trade unionism are numbered.

The seizure of the A. F. of L. by the Socialists will be an excellent opportunity to improve the labor movement. Whether or not it will be greatly beneficial will be largely determined by the attitude of the direct actionists. If they preserve their customary attitude of hostility or indifference to the A. F. of L., the change of control will only produce a fraction of the good results (and a multiplication of the bad results), as though the direct actionists made a vigorous effort to make their influence felt. But, at any rate, regardless of the attitude of the direct actionists, undoubtedly enough symptoms (or should one say changes?) will be made (such, for instance, as the abolition of the harmony of class feeling, the breaking away from the influence of the Civic Federation, and the Catholic Church, the reduction of prohibitory initiation fees, broadening of the scope of the unions so as to take in the unskilled, etc., etc.), as will prevent the realization of the orthodox direct actionist plan of breaking up the A. F. of L. and substituting the I. W. W. for it.

Another obstacle to the realization of this latter phase of direct action is the fact that the A. F. of L. will turn their attention to capturing the I. W. W. if it merits the trouble. After capturing the so-called "impeachable" A. F. of L., the Socialists should have no difficulty in capturing a fluid organization like the I. W. W. This should be the easier, as already a large minority—if not the majority—of the members of the I. W. W.'s existence is composed of Socialists. With the Socialists in control of both the A. F. of L. and the I. W. W., what would the direct actionists do? Start "born from within" and go on starting another national organization?

SUBSCRIBE FOR THE SYNDICALIST

It is worthy of remark that while the Socialists controlled one-third of the votes at the convention, the rebel direct actionists were altogether without representation on the numerous minority committee in the labor movement, they hadn't a single representative or spokesman in this convention representing almost all they had, with the exception of Paul G. see the writer that this state of affairs testifies to the better generalization of the Socialists. As soon as the Industrial Workers are captured the Socialists. The I. W. W. as (originally pointed out by Max Hayes), the bulk of them gradually quit it under one pretext or another, and gathered themselves in the A. F. of L. The I. W. W. meanwhile went on knocking the abuses afflicting the A. F. of L. and creating a considerable reputation in its ranks for industrial unionism. Being a dual organization, it has been unable to exploit this to any great extent. The Socialists, on the other hand, being in a dual and without competition from the direct actionists, have organized the discontent created by the latter. It helped materially to swell their vote at Rochester. Are the direct actionists running a charity propaganda banner? Is it their calling to thus pull chestnuts out of the fire for the Socialists? It's high time that these foolish tactics cease and that the direct actionists take active part in the A. F. of L. The Socialists are doing it. While the old time union machines are breaking up and the new Socialists machines are being formed, will present a golden opportunity for the direct actionists to secure a foothold in the unions if they only "get busy." If, on the contrary, the present policy is pursued and the Socialists allowed a free rein, the direct actionists' task will be a much more difficult one. The Socialists will build up machines, beside which those of the other groups will pale into insignificance. Now is the time for the direct actionists to line up against their greatest enemies of the future—the Socialists. It's idle to suppose that they can escape the fight by trying to be a new labor movement that will be free from them.

WM. Z. FOSTER.

SOME LIVE WIRE.

The following circular letter explains itself. Go, thou, and do likewise.

"Dear Sir and Brother,—At the convention of the International Molders' Union of North America, just closed in Milwaukee, there was one thing that stood out prominently above all things, and that was this—that a large number of delegates advocated and fought for all legislation of an advanced nature and practiced legislative unionism. The result was that the progressive element met and formed an organization, which was named 'The International Foundry Workers' Legislative League.' This body was agreed that the formation of this league should be for educational purposes only, and local leagues will be formed in every city throughout the country. There will be no initiation fee, but a voluntary contribution will be accepted, if offered, and the dues will be 25c a month.

"A small monthly paper will be published from the international headquarters, which will advocate such measures as the referendum, industrial unions, and the inerestances of the National Civic Federation, publish live, interesting shop news from every section of the country dealing with every phase of the foundry, from the handy man right down to the female core maker, and to try to inject a greater fighting spirit into the molders, or, in other words, stand first, last and always for militant unionism. There will be no salaried positions in the league, all work being done voluntarily. (Then follows list of officers.) A local is now being formed in this city, and has been informed that you are one of the progressive members of the I. M. U. of N. A., we extend an invitation to you to join us and become a part of one of its members. Think it over and then act by filling out the blank below.

"Yours fraternally,

"FRANK L. BECKER.

"2353 N. Sacramento Ave., Chicago, III.

SPECIAL NOTICE.

Those leagues that have not already done so are urged to take action upon the proposed national constitution that has been submitted to them. It is high time that we perfect our temporary national constitution and proceed to the regular election of officers, etc.

As the adoption of a national constitution is of prime importance to us, I hope this matter will be given special attention.

WILLIAM Z. FOSTER,
Secretary S. L. of N. A.

VOLTAIRE DE CLEYRE'S WORKS.

As there seems to be some misunderstanding concerning our purpose, we are obliged to call the attention of all those who are interested in the publication of Voltaire de Cleyre's writings to these facts. The editing committee of the authoress is composed of Messrs. Leonard D. Abbott, S. Yanovsky, and Hippolyte Havel. This committee will read and comment on the existing manuscripts. They have also in press the first volume of the new work. Whether the works will be published in one or two volumes will depend on the amount of material, written or printed. As we desire to give a comprehensive view of the literary and propagandistic activity of our late comrade, it is our intention to publish his works in books, speeches and propaganda essays. A short biographical sketch, written by a member of the committee, will introduce the work.

The committee for the publication of works of Voltaire de Cleyre has no private interest in the undertaking. It is a work of love on our part. Any one having manuscripts or letters of general interest written by Voltaire de Cleyre will oblige the committee by forwarding them to Hippolyte Havel, 145 Waverly Place, New York. The original will be returned to the sender.

The funds collected are to remain in the hands of our treasurers, S. Yanovsky and Harry Kelly. Those persons who contribute to the funds are entitled to one or two copies of the work, according to the amount they contribute. The only amount of money has been collected. Are you interested in this undertaking? If so, support us by regular subscription to the new work. All money should be sent to Harry Kelly, care Mother Earth, 35 West 28th Street, New York, or to S. Yanovsky, 30 Canal Street, New York.

(Signed by full committee.)

THE WORKERS' UNIVERSITY.

Books and Pamphlets For Sale by the Syndicalist Publishing Association.

A Physician in the House, Dr. J. H. Greer. $2.00
Ancient Society, Lewis H. Morgan. $1.50
What Is Property? F. Priddle. 50c
Flowers of the Mind, the best poems. 1.00
Life Is a Battle, Peter Kropotkin. 1.00
Anarchist trial. 1.50
Anarchism and Other Essays, Emma Goldman. 1.50
Love's Coming of Age, Edward Carpenter. 1.00
The American Esperanto Book, Arthur Baker. 50c
The Physical Basis of Mind and Morale, Fitch. 1.00
Thoughts of a Fool. 1.00
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HENDERSON BAY ROUTE—Steamer Tydace leaves Commercial Dock, Tacony, for all points on Henderson River. Including Home, week day at 2:30 p.m., returning next morning. Sunday at 8 a.m., returning same day.

NORTH BAY ROUTE—Steamer Tydace leaves Commercial Dock, Tacony, for all points on North Bay every Monday at 10 a.m., returning next morning.

COMMUNICANT LIBRARY—Meets every Thursday night from 8 to 10 o'clock; every Sunday morning from 10 to 12 o'clock. For information write to Harris and Esperanto. Books in any language free. 711 Higgins street, Trenton.

WANTED—Working people for a cooperative colony in Tennessee. Address H. E. Swadow, Harrison, Tenn.