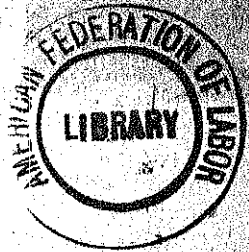


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AN ADDRESS.



To the Western Federation of Miners, in Convention Assembled, Salt Lake City, Utah:

Dear Sirs and Brothers: The subjoined correspondence is of the greatest interest to yourselves, the miners you represent, and the workers of our entire country. As fellow-workers, as fellow-unionists, organized to achieve one common purpose, we feel no hesitancy in addressing you, for we feel assured that after a careful consideration of the matter following, and realizing its full significance, we shall all stand united and present a solid phalanx of labor as strong and enduring as a rock of adamant.

With this brief introduction your attention is respectfully and urgently directed to the following correspondence between Mr. Edward Boyce, President of your organization, and Mr. Samuel Gompers, President of the A. F. of L., and a few comments on the same.

The following letter is from Mr. GOMPERS to Mr. BOYCE:

HEADQUARTERS AMERICAN FEDERATION OF LABOR,
700 Fourteenth Street N. W.

Washington, D. C., March 9, 1897.

Mr. Edward Boyce, President, Western Federation of Miners, Butte, Mont.

Dear Sir and Brother: It is quite some time since I have heard from you in any way connected with our movement, and particularly as to the struggle in which the members of your organization have been so long engaged and so heroically standing for their rights. A few weeks ago the Engineers' Union stated that in a short time from then that a request would be made by the officers of your organization for the Executive Council of the American Federation of Labor to levy an assessment upon the membership in aid of the men of Leadville who are on strike. I am free to say that I have expected that application to reach me any day.

Of course, I am aware that your organization is about to hold its Convention at Salt Lake City, and I shall be pleased to learn that ways and means may be devised by which not only the men who are standing so nobly for their rights may be successful, but also that the Western Federation of Miners may be absolutely and permanently so, that the bond of union existing between the organized workers of our country may be strengthened in the interest of all.

Within the last ten days I am in receipt of a number of letters from different sources, stating that a sentiment has been studiously worked up with a view of having the Western Federation of Miners withdraw from the A. F. of L., upon the plea that financial support was not forthcoming, and that a new organization should be formed for the West, as distinct from all other organizations of the workers of the other sections of the country. I cannot vouchsafe for the absolute accuracy of these statements made to me but coming as they do from so many different sources and places I cannot but believe that either the rumors are founded upon fact, or there is an organized effort to malign the officers of your organization.

I do not wish to assume that the rumors are correct, but would say that even if it is harbored in the mind of any one, it is most unjust, improper, and destructive to the best interests, not only of the miners, but of all labor of our country.

All know that our affiliated organizations pay but one-quarter of a cent for each member per month into the funds of the American Federation of Labor. No one can conceive of the idea that a great fund can be created from such a small contribution, and it is equally known to all that we have no mysterious power by which, touching a rock, great riches can be had and given to our fellow-workers. Even the fact that our fellow-unionists may be engaged in a most just and righteous struggle, does not give us the means by which to create large funds to help them, unless the members in our organization in the first instance are willing to pay their share and bear the burden by which such a fund can be created. Hence, upon this score I am sure there is no fault which can be laid to the door of the American Federation of Labor, but which will reflect upon each and every one of us. Some of us may have the satisfaction of performing our duty in advocating the creation of such funds, but until

we can convince our fellow workers of its necessity, we will all have to bear the blame, and the inconvenience of its absence.

As to the fact of attempting to divide the workers upon sectional lines, it seems to me, if the thought should be harbored by any one, a gross misconception of our duties to ourselves and our fellow-workers. On every hand we see concentration of wealth in corporations, combinations, and trusts; the wealth possessors do not allow themselves to be divided on sectional lines when their interests are at stake; they do not divide their forces; they concentrate, they federate, anything that will make their power and influence more potent is resorted to. How should labor act under such circumstances? Should we not profit by these examples set us? Should we not take advantage of every opportunity which presents itself to us? Should we not recognize that our interests are one and the same? Should we not try to unite, federate and, if possible, concentrate our efforts upon a given line of policy and activity? We all maintain that it is morally wrong for a worker engaged at his trade or calling to remain outside of the union of his trade. It follows that it is morally wrong for a local union of a trade to hold aloof from the national union of that trade, and we maintain that it is equally wrong for any national union of a trade to remain outside of the great family of trade unions of the country.

I am as conscious of the defects in the American Federation of Labor as any one can point them out to me. With some others we have endeavored to remedy these defects; we have tried by all honorable means to organize the workers in their respective unions, to make these organizations in their national unions and in our Federation as effective as possible. That we have not accomplished more is not due to the men who recognize its shortcomings, it is because the great mass of labor have thus far failed to realize their full duty to themselves and to each other. Our unions and our Federation is and can be only that which we make it. If it does not fill the expectations of some of us, it becomes our duty to struggle on and on, in order to make it a most thorough, compact, and perfect organization to fight the battles of labor to-day, and to secure the rights of the toilers for all time. These changes and improvements are not brought about in a day, nor are they accomplished by division in our ranks. Unity is the essential element to success, not only in the West or in any other one particular portion, but in the entire domain of our broad country.

The times require the exercise of the best judgment which we are capable of; conditions are such which should call forth the very best that is within us to stand more firmly together than ever before. There is nothing in this world which so gladdens the gaze of the enemy in battle as to divide the forces with which it is to contend. If you learn of any one believing that division in the ranks of organized labor can or is likely to be of benefit to our cause, I trust your good judgment will lead you to dispel the illusion.

I sincerely hope that your Convention may be entirely successful, and that harmony will prevail, and that success will come to the miners and toilers in general, and that union and solidarity will be the outcome of your Convention, and that it will infuse courage and hope among the toilers of our land to struggle on for the day of emancipation.

Fraternally yours,

SAMUEL GOMPERS,
President A. F. of L.

(Signed.)

MR. BOYCE TO MR. GOMPERS.

Butte, Montana, March 16, 1897.

Samuel Gompers, President, American Federation of Labor, Washington, D. C.

Dear Sir and Brother: Your welcome letter of the 9th inst. is received and contents carefully noted. In answer, I will say that I KNOW NOTHING ABOUT THE WESTERN FEDERATION OF MINERS WITHDRAWING FROM THE A. F. OF L.; whoever wrote you on that point knows more about the future of the organization than I do. In the first place, we could not withdraw until the Convention so decided.

With reference to us making application to the A. F. of L. for financial assistance to carry on the Leadville strike, I wrote you to that effect on the 16th of February, but received no reply. I presume you did not get my letter or I would have received an answer. However, I will say that is of little consequence, THERE IS AN EASIER WAY OF WINNING THE BATTLES OF LABOR; much easier than sitting down in idleness until the capitalist starve us to death in idleness and hunger.

With reference to the organization of union of forces among the laboring men of the West it is something that I have always favored, and am very enthusiastic on that point at all times, for the interest of labor. Do not think me egotistical when I say that I think the laboring men of the West are one hundred years ahead of their brothers in the East. You will remember that I told you in Cincinnati that I had not been East in fifteen years, and I never was so much surprised in my life as I

was at that convention, when I sat and listened to the delegates from the East talking about conservative action when four million idle men and women are tramps upon the highway, made so by a vicious system of government that will continue to grind them further into the dust unless they have the manhood to get out and fight with the sword or use the ballot with intelligence.

You know that I AM NOT A TRADES UNIONIST; I am fully convinced that their day of usefulness is past; and furthermore, since last election there is little sympathy existing between the laboringmen of the West and their Eastern brothers.

I leave for the Black Hills in a few moments, so you will please excuse the brevity of this letter. I will be in Butte about the first of April, and will be delighted to hear from you, when I will have an opportunity of writing you more fully.

Fraternally yours,

ED. BOYCE.

(Signed.)

MR. GOMPERS TO MR. BOYCE.

HEADQUARTERS AMERICAN FEDERATION OF LABOR,
700 Fourteenth Street N. W.

Washington, D. C., March 26, 1897.

Mr Edward Boyce, President, Western Federation of Miners, Butte, Montana.

Dear Sir and Brother: I am in receipt of your favor of the 16th, contents of which I have carefully noted. I beg to assure you that I read its contents with more than ordinary interest, and I am pleased to learn from you that you know nothing about the Western Federation of Miners withdrawing from the American Federation of Labor.

I am frank enough to say to you that there have been people who have done you the injustice of advising me that you had declared your purpose of insisting upon the forthcoming convention of your organization to secede from the American Federation of Labor. If you will re-read my last letter you will note that I refer to this. I could scarcely believe that you, as President of the Western Federation of Miners, an organization that has so recently become affiliated with the A. F. of L., would at a convention so soon after its affiliation advocate separation, withdrawal, and division in the ranks of labor.

If there is anything that experience demonstrates more than another it is the necessity for the combined forces of labor in this country to unite more thoroughly than ever before, to bear with each other's faults, to endeavor to enlighten each other to the best of our ability, and to help those who still fail to see the necessity of organizing, to enter with earnestness and zeal within the ranks; to try and teach those who have not yet recognized this necessity; to teach those who have but a very faint conception of the main purpose and underlying principles of the labor movement; to teach them the first primer in the union of labor.

I am sure you will agree with me that little can be expected upon a higher plan of action from men who, through ignorance or short-sighted greed, fail to register themselves on the side of their fellow-workmen in the cause of labor. It certainly requires a peculiar conception, for anyone to imagine that the working people of our country have a higher aim, when they fail to perform their first duty to themselves and their fellow-workers, when they fail to organize upon a common plain of unionism in defense of their immediate interests. It is as sure as day follows night and night follows day that men who will not defend their immediate interests cannot be relied upon to strive manfully for a future, a better state of society.

I beg to assure you that I did not receive the letter you say you sent on the 16th of February requesting financial assistance. Had I received it the matter would certainly have been referred to the Executive Council, who would, perhaps, have approved ordering an assessment being made, or an appeal made to all labor in favor of the striking workers of Leadville.

It grieves me, however, to learn that you believe that there is an "easier" way of winning the battles of labor than as you describe them "sitting down in idleness until capitalists starve us to death in idleness and hunger." This is not the language of the man I imagined as the hero of the Leadville strike; this is not the language of the man I know you are; it is not the language of men who have fought great battles and have stamped the progress of their struggles on the pages of human history and human progress.

The most victorious armies in the world have at times had their setbacks. The heroes in our revolutionary war were heart-sick, footsore, and hungry. It was then, to arouse their drooping spirits, that a man of the time arose and declared, "now is the time that tries men's souls." In the face of apparent defeat, in spite of all appearances of a hopeless struggle, the men of the revolution took on new courage, and, with words of cheer as substitutes for good food and good clothing and proper equipment, fought on and on until victory was achieved and a new Nation born. The

whole history of the world is replete with evidence of this character, this disposition, this manhood, this heroism. Without it the world would be barren, or barbarism and slavery would be the order of the day, and all hope of future emancipation blotted from the memory and hope of men.

Hunger? Idleness? Yes, even in the struggles of labor they must be sometimes borne in order that right and justice shall prevail, or at least such a protest made against wrong and injustice that shall thrill the world with a new sense of responsibility and determination to struggle more manfully than ever that right shall prevail.

Speaking of an "easier" way of winning the battles of labor: were it not so serious it would be ridiculous to think that the battles of labor can be won "easier." Those who imagine that the road to labor's emancipation is "easier" will have their labor for their pains, and are deluding themselves into a false position and helping divert their fellow-workers from the real struggle which the toilers are of necessity to make, into a channel which secures them nothing but despondency, despair, and real hunger, permanently established as their condition of life, and servility and docility to take the place of a struggling, earnest manhood to establish a greater degree of happiness and a fair standard of life which will enable them to struggle on more manfully still, more persistently, until the day of labor's emancipation shall be achieved.

I do not wish to discuss the proposition that "the men of the East are one hundred years behind their Western brothers." I do not think so, and I think you will admit that the pressure of industrialism and commercialism and the evils resulting from our present false economic conditions are much severer and bear much more heavily upon the workers of the East and the North than in the West.

The men who have not seen the industrial centers for a long time can scarcely form a conception of the great burdens the toilers of these sections have to bear and the manly struggles, too, that they make in order to permit themselves to stand erect and face the contest, bear the brunt of battle, endure sacrifices, and yet never give up the hope of achieving their independence and battling for labor's emancipation. The discussion of whether men of the West and other portions of our country are either in advance or behind each other is not calculated to advance or solidify the interests of labor and for that reason I think we may well afford that to remain without further comment.

Do you think for a moment that the delegates to the Cincinnati convention, or the men in the East, North, or South, sympathize less with what you say, the "four millions of men and women idle who are tramps upon the highway" than do the men of the West? Don't you believe that they would take any action which, in their judgment, would seem wise and best to change such condition of affairs, if the slightest prospect of success presented itself? They realize, however, as all should realize, that words are not actions, that there is a difference between declarations and deeds; that resolutions are not revolutions, and that alleviation and emancipation never yet was secured and never can be secured by an "easy" process, and that all the declarations in the world made by a few men to go forth with, the ballot will not relieve, much less remove the evil of which we complain.

Nor do I wish you for a moment to be deceived into the belief that the men of the other sections of the country, the delegates to the Cincinnati convention, are less impressed than you with the necessity of effective political action and the proper use of the ballot by labor in labor's own interests. Let me assure you that the trade unionists whom you met at Cincinnati are not at all backward or too conservative, they simply desire as a result of their experience and knowledge to couple practical action with their enthusiasm; and immaterial in which way or upon which field the labor cause is contested, they have been, are, and will be shoulder to shoulder with the advance guard of the grand army of labor.

As for your suggestion that the resort must be to the sword, I prefer not to discuss. I only want to call your attention to the fact, however, that force may have changed forms of government but never attained real liberty.

Liberty! the conception of which is a matter of growth, a matter of education, and is a matter of progress, proceeds in the same ratio that the people conceive their rights and will manfully, heroically, and with self-sacrifice, stand for it and which no power in the form of government can withstand. It is the purpose of the trade-union movement to instill this greater manhood, this greater self-reliance, this intelligence, this independence in the hearts and minds of the workers which, when once conceived, can not be driven out by sophistry, poltroonery, or by force.

You say that I know you are "not a trade unionist." No, I did not know this, and I assure you that when I read your statement in the letter I was more than surprised. I have heard quite a number of strange statements in my life, but it was reserved for you to make the strangest of all, that of being President of a great trade union to declare that you are not a trade unionist. I really can not see how you can reconcile your action to your declarations. I know that if I were not a trade unionist I should not

only declare it but should act it. I would not be president of a trade union; I would not even be a member of a trade union. I would, if I were not a trade unionist, if I were an opponent of trade unionism, I would get out of the trade union and out of the trade-union movement, and I would fight it. I would not occupy so questionable a position as being the president and member of a trade union and declare myself an opponent of it.

You say that "there is little sympathy existing between the laboring men of the West and their Eastern brothers." I doubt it. I believe that there is more real sympathy between them than many would have us believe. I think such declarations a great wrong in the face of existing conditions when all the forces antagonistic to labor are united and uniting still more in their effort to hold the workers in check, to suppress their efforts and oppress them in their struggles for emancipation.

The forces of wealth understand the necessity for common concert of action. They do not divide upon theories; nor do they divide upon geographical lines, from some men coming from one portion of our country and others from another, and I regret to see a man of your intelligence, and of your position, and of your influence, declaring that there is little sympathy between the working people of the West and other portions of our common country. We can not overcome the slightest antagonism to our efforts; we can not achieve the slightest advance or progress in our interests; we can not achieve the smallest right which belongs to us by scattering our forces.

I earnestly hope that the convention of the Western Federation of Miners will stand true to the colors of their union, and though they have been defeated in their Leadville strike, they will declare with other men who have fought in the great battles of life that though defeated they are not conquered, and that they will organize more strongly and firmly, more earnestly and aggressively than ever before; and while organizing the men in their own trade or calling and allying themselves with their fellow organized workers from all parts of the country without regard to trade, calling, nationality, religion, or whatever section of the country they may come from. Let us stand united in defeat as well as in victory. It is only by such sterling qualities called forth in defeat which shows our true manhood, our ability to take up the battles of labor and never say "die."

And yet, Brother Boyce, I say it to you in all candor, and all friendliness, and I ask you to consider this matter well; I ask you in the name of the great interests committed to your care, the great influence you wield with your fellow-workers of the Western Federation of Miners that you use that great power to unite and solidify the forces of labor in our country and fight, and fight hard, against any attempt that will seek to force an entering wedge to divide the workers in our movement.

With assurances of my high regard, I am,

Fraternally yours,

SAMUEL GOMPERS,

President A. F. of L.

N. B.—I am writing this to you, not for publication, but what I regard as my highest duty toward you and your organization and towards the workers both East and West, North and South.

S. G.

MR. BOYCE TO MR. GOMPERS.

Butte, Montana, April 7, 1897.

Mr. Samuel Gompers, President American Federation of Labor, Washington, D. C.:

Dear Sir and Brother: Yours of the 28th ult. is received and contents noted with much care and interest. After mature deliberation I am fully convinced that no two men in the labor movement differ so widely in opinion as the President of the A. F. of L. and the writer. If you will show me what good results can accrue from trades union without action we might understand each other? The trades-union movement has been in operation in our country for a number of years, and through all these years the laboring masses are becoming more dependent. In view of these conditions, do you not think it is time to do something different than to meet in annual convention and feed away time in adopting resolutions, indorsing labels and boycotts?

If force never attained real liberty, then your letter is conflicting in its parts. However, that is something unworthy of space at this time.

Well, if I have made the strangest statement you ever heard in your life, in declaring that I am not a trades unionist I hardly see how you could escape strange things so long. I believe I will partially follow your advice and get out of the trades-union movement—but I digress when it comes to fighting it. I may also inform you that I am not the president of a trade union, or a member of one.

I presume we are all striving for the same purpose. That purpose is to elevate the laborer, not to array one against the other, or imitate the present deplorable struggle between the A. F. of L. and K. of L.

I can assure you that, no matter what action the Western Miners take with refer-

ance to the A. F. of L., it will not be hasty, nor calculated to injure the labor movement, but now, as ever, I am strongly in favor of a Western organization.

Fraternally yours,

(Signed)

EDWARD BOYCE

THE COMMENT.

Perhaps it may be true, as Mr. Boyce states, that there are no two men in the labor movement who differ so widely as he and the President of the A. F. of L., but if that be so the one must be right and the other in error. They cannot both be right. While this effort is not to prove Mr. Boyce in error, it is believed that his own letters place him in that position.

It is difficult to understand what Mr. Boyce may mean when he speaks of "trades union without action." As a matter of fact these terms are the very opposites to each other. Trade unionism means action, action consistent, persistent and never ending. In truth trade unionism as contrasted with other forms of organization of labor is action versus declaration, practical results versus a will o' the wisp chase.

Trades union without action? Look at the struggles of the toiling masses throughout the country on trade union lines; see the achievements already wrought; see the rights already secured; see the movement of a number of trades which have secured the universal enforcement of the eight hour work day. Is that trades union without action? Whole industries have maintained their rates of wages, their reduced hours of labor, in spite of the unparalleled four years of industrial, commercial, and financial crisis. Is this trades union without action? While, on the other hand, the workers who have been unorganized were compelled to suffer reduction of wages, one following upon the heels of the other so swiftly as to stagger them almost into a benighted and helpless condition, a condition from which only the assistance of the organized workers on trade union lines will be enabled to lift them.

Trades union without action? The willingness of more than a hundred thousand members of trade unions recently in one city, to risk or make the sacrifice of their employment in order to achieve justice and right for one trade; the almost entire abolition of the sweat shop in many trades. Yes, the struggle of the Leadville miners, so heroically fought out. Are these deeds of valor and successes "trades union without action?" It is true that the object for which the Leadville men went on strike was not achieved, that is the increase in wages they demanded was not accorded, but is there any miner, any delegate to your convention who does not realize that though success was not achieved in securing the increase, that a most potent influence was exerted for good along the whole line in the interest of the miners and of all labor, and that the near future will witness a better opportunity to secure the desired advance? No, just cause has ever been finally defeated. The cause of the miners at Leadville is a just one and the heroism with which it was contended for on trade union lines must inevitably bring success.

One might as well be asked what the achievements of the human race are from unrecorded time, as to inquire what good results accrue from trade unionism. There is not a right which the workers now enjoy either as men, as citizens or as wage-earners, which is not due to the trade unions of our own and other countries.

It may not be generally known, but it is nevertheless a fact, that prior to the organization of the trade unions, men were imprisoned, branded upon the face with hot irons, limbs cut off and thousands hanged to the gibbet, because of their desire to have a humble voice in the regulations of the conditions of their employment. Organizations of labor in any form

were illegal, a conspiracy and a crime punishable with the dungeon, whipping post, the branding iron and death.

There is no purpose to impress you or any one else with the notion that because the right to organize has been secured, because the workers may now stand erect and declare for their rights and proclaim their grievances, and to organize for the achievement of the one and the abolition of the other, that for these reasons the trade unionists are contented or satisfied. On the contrary, the progress made, the achievements secured, the greater manhood which the trade union movement has aided in developing in our workers, has simply given us a taste of that freedom, that justice, to which our whole movement is consecrated, aspires to, and determined to conquer.

It is indeed incomprehensible how an officer or a member of the Western Federation of Miners can declare that HE IS NOT A MEMBER OF A TRADE UNION.

A trade union is the organization of the workers of a given trade or calling, organized for the purpose of protecting, advancing and benefiting the members of that trade or calling and wherever possible to aid all wage-earners to attain the same end, the same purpose—the final establishment of labor's rights.

If the Western Federation of Miners is not such an organization, it is true that it is not a trade union. If, on the other hand, the purposes of the organization are as they have just been briefly stated, then the Western Federation of Miners is a trade union, and it will beyond doubt continue to be a bona fide, aggressive and persistent trade union, standing shoulder to shoulder with the other great trade unions of the country, and battling, struggling, at times making sacrifices to the end that labor shall be finally disenfranchised.

Of course, it is deplorable that there should be any conflict between two organizations of labor as intimated by Brother Boyce, but it is submitted to your calm judgment that dividing labor still further or creating a new organization founded upon sectional lines in our country is not calculated to either heal the breach or restore unity or harmony.

For the past fifteen years there has been a constant effort made by the American labor movement for a clearer conception of our aims and purposes and particularly to instill into the minds of the workers, first, the necessity of organization, secondly, the unity of these organizations so that the weakest of us may feel strengthened by our affiliations and the strongest and most powerful of our unions to recognize the necessity of aiding the weakest members.

It may be true that the fullest success on these lines has not yet been secured, but practically our movement is in its infancy. As a matter of fact your organization only became affiliated with the A. F. of L. July 7th, 1894, less than ten months ago. There are still a large mass of workers unorganized, and quite a number of those who are organized who yet do not realize the necessity for solidarity, which should be the main spring of action among the organized workers. It is therefore easily discernible that though some might wish a shorter route to labor's emancipation, to labor's successes, the surest, the most practical road is that of intelligent trade unionism, making progress and advancing in the same ratio as the workers organize and become more intelligent, broadening their minds and enlarging their sympathy.

The trade union movement is not confined in its sphere of action. It can and does avail itself of any opportunity which presents itself, whether upon the economic or political field. It is as broad as the universe and as wide and high as human aspirations and human understanding. Many of us are im-

patient with the burning desire that it may move faster, but it can only keep pace with the ever widening clearer vision, broadening mind and keener sympathy of the working men and women of the country.

As already stated the Western Federation of Miners became affiliated with the A. F. of L. on July 7th, 1896; it declared the strike of the Leadville miners on June 20th of the same year. One can readily realize in view of the great calls that were made upon the employed union workmen to sustain their fellow-workers during the industrial crisis of the past few years, that voluntary financial assistance could not be very readily given by them in aid of a trade other than their own. However this would not have stood in the way in an earnest effort to assist the Leadville men, had application been received by the A. F. of L.

You are already advised that the A. F. of L. at its last convention at Cincinnati determined to undertake a movement for the purpose of establishing the universal eight-hour work day, on May 1st, 1898. Between now and that date every effort ought to be made to organize the working people of the United States, to thoroughly federate them, to conduct a campaign of agitation and education so that when the time shall arrive all may be prepared to insist upon its absolute enforcement.

The hope may be entertained that the eight-hour work day may be voluntarily conceded, but at least the workers should be organized and prepared to insist upon the establishment of that great boon to labor, should it be refused. We ask you, yes, we appeal to you as one of the great organizations of this family of labor, not to take an action which shall mar the harmony or impede the progress of this truly noble movement. A large number of the toilers of our country are unemployed. We are taking the most available and practical means at our hands to aid them, to find employment for them and to relieve the burdens of those who are over-employed.

Do not part from your brothers of labor, they are flesh of your flesh and blood of your blood. They have the same trials, the same suffering that you bear; they are in sympathy with your every demand, for they are the demands of all labor. They are willing to heroically make sacrifices which will bring success, justice and emancipation to labor; they are with you, eager for the struggles that shall disenthral all mankind.

In the initial step of our movement would not the enemies of labor observe with glee that one of our links in the chain of labor's federation has torn itself asunder and thus to that extent weakened our bond, and presenting a ready opportunity for the enemies of our cause and of our people to rend us wider asunder and make all the easy victims of their voracious greed and avarice? It should not be, it will not be, if you are, which you are generally credited with being, earnest, sincere, aggressive and intelligent workmen, and union men, broad in your sympathies, sterling in character, and determined to do your share in the battles of labor for labor emancipation.

Sincerely hoping that your convention may be entirely successful and harmonious, that the fraternal relations so recently begun between the Western Federation of Miners in the American Federation of Labor with the other organized wage-earners of the country, North, South and East may not be interrupted but more firmly cemented, and that we may carry the banner of labor's rights aloft, maintaining the union of workers within the union of our country, I remain,

Fraternally yours,

SAMUEL GOMPERS,

President American Federation of Labor.

Published by order of the Executive Council of the A. F. of L.
Washington, D. C., May 1st, 1897.