

Editorial

THE CHARLOTTE LABOR JOURNAL AND DIXIE FARM NEWS

Published at Charlotte, North Carolina

OLDEST LABOR PUBLICATION IN THE TWO CAROLINAS

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The Labor Journal will not be responsible for the opinions of correspondents, but any erroneous reflection on the character, standing or reputation of any person, firm or corporation which may appear in the columns of The Labor Journal will be corrected when called to the attention of the publisher. Correspondence and Open Forum opinions solicited, but The Journal reserves the right to reject objectionable reading matter and advertising at all times.

MEMBER SOUTHERN LABOR PRESS ASSOCIATION



OUR "ENDORSEMENT" HAS BEEN "LIFTED"

The "lifting" of the "endorsement" of The Charlotte Labor Journal by the executive board of the North Carolina Federation of Labor last November one year ago came as no surprise to the editor of The Journal, for this unrighteous threat had been hanging over The Journal's head for several years. But the depths to which the president of the North Carolina Federation of Labor has dragged our great organization down into the mire shocked us this week when we received a copy of a circular letter he has sent out, more than a year later, to advertisers and others in North Carolina, telling them that The Charlotte Labor Journal is not endorsed by the North Carolina Federation of Labor, (which The Journal has not claimed), and linking The Journal with a notorious New York labor publication which has been plying its trade down Southland way for several years, soliciting many North Carolina advertisers in its search after business far removed from its field of operations. We have warned against this in this publication many times.

And further, the president of the North Carolina Federation of Labor evidently was so hellbent on destroying all other labor publications besides his precious house organ, the Federationist, that he went so far in his circular letter as to warn the businessmen of North Carolina that a new CIO monthly newspaper which began operation in December, was not endorsed by the North Carolina Federation of Labor. Rather absurd, to be sure! He evidently wants a state-wide monopoly.

For the past 15 months this publication has been the subject of a controversy with the officials of the North Carolina Federation of Labor concerning our "endorsement." In a measure this would be a huge joke, if the activities concerning the controversy were not aimed at restricting the freedom of the press, and attempting to kill off all opposition to the State Federation's own house organ.

When we say it would be a joke, we mean that the CHARLOTTE LABOR JOURNAL should have been THE LAST ONE to incur the wrath of the officials of the N. C. Federation of Labor; because the CHARLOTTE LABOR JOURNAL is the oldest American Federation of Labor publication in the state. Its news content has been strictly A. F. of L. Its columns have been kept clean. It was this newspaper which kept alive the spirit of the A. F. of L. during the darkest days of the depression, from 1931 up through the years, when the expenditure of \$5 for postage was a great problem, and making a living out of the paper was out of the question; and it was The Charlotte Labor Journal, which promoted and protected the interests of A. F. of L. members in this state in every way possible during those desperate years. It is our opinion that the CHARLOTTE LABOR JOURNAL should have been the last name blackened by the officials of the State Federation, because the CHARLOTTE LABOR JOURNAL spearheaded every drive, and every campaign for the A. F. of L. in this state during good times and bad times, during strikes and during terrible, trying times for the working-people. When in 1931 there was a serious threat of Communist infiltration into the ranks of labor in North Carolina, during the turbulent Gastonia mill strike of that year, it was the CHARLOTTE LABOR JOURNAL which kept the threat in the open, printing thousands of additional papers to continue the process of education among the working-people of this area against the dogma of the Soviets.

Many old time workers no doubt will be greatly surprised to hear that the officials of the N. C. Federation of Labor have elected to blacken the name and the business of the CHARLOTTE LABOR JOURNAL in view of the paper's past record, not the least of which was the help of food itself in times of dire need, which the JOURNAL bought and begged for hungry people back in some of the depression years.

What started the trouble in the first place? Our readers and advertisers should know the facts. It is very simple:

Mr. Fink, the president of the N. C. Federation of Labor, his executive board, and Federationist solicitors for many years have objected to the solicitation of advertising by the CHARLOTTE LABOR JOURNAL from business firms outside of Charlotte, a practice which this paper has pursued since its founding 20 years ago, and which practice was necessary to the existence of the paper. Mr. Fink and his executive board were told this four years ago when they first threatened to take the "endorsement" of the Labor Journal and "give a statement to the N. C. press," telling them why they had lifted the "endorsement"—because The Journal publisher would not bow to their demands as to advertising policy.

It all boils down to this:

The N. C. Federation of Labor endorses a magazine, the FEDERATIONIST, and perhaps came to feel that many advertisers, more accustomed to the name CHARLOTTE LABOR JOURNAL (because it was several years older), did not subscribe advertising space for the Federationist because the Charlotte Labor Journal was getting the space.

It was carefully determined by the CHARLOTTE LABOR JOURNAL that it could not agree to the demands of the N. C. Federation of Labor to restrict itself and to in effect destroy itself, because the CHARLOTTE LABOR JOURNAL could not continue publication unless it could pursue its revenue policies in our state in accordance with the American tradition of free enterprise and freedom of movement. Our operating costs require considerably more revenue weekly than that required to operate a peanut stand. Therefore, the North Carolina Federation of Labor, through Mr. Fink, in a letter setting forth the reason for their action as substantially reported above, "withdrew its endorsement."

It withdrew its endorsement from an A. F. of L. newspaper operated by a union man who has spent over 35 years in the A. F. of L. movement.

It withdrew its endorsement from a A. F. of L. newspaper which has continuously borne the union label and is now being printed in a union shop which pays union wages running into hundreds of dollars each week.

To the contrary, it has placed its endorsement on another "labor publication" in the State which does not bear the union printing trades label and which The Journal does not consider to be published under full union conditions, although it is claimed it is owned by a Central Labor union. What consistency!

In recent weeks this attempt on the part of the N. C. Federation officials to deprive an old A. F. of L. newspaper of its right of existence has taken some drastic turns. In the first place, by word of mouth, the solicitors for the FEDERATIONIST have blackened our name to advertisers. In the second place, the N. C. Federation actually sent out a letter to the advertisers which stated that "The Charlotte Labor Journal is not endorsed by the State Federation of Labor," or the American Federation of Labor. This statement is ugly and an un-American blow below the belt. It is an attempt to destroy someone through innuendo. They could easily have said "the New York Times is not endorsed by the N. C. Federation of Labor." They could have added millions of names of places and people that do not have "the endorsement of the North Carolina Federation of Labor."

We are writing this editorial so that the officials of the North Carolina Federation of Labor will know that we acknowledge that we do NOT have the endorsement of the North Carolina Federation of Labor, and have not claimed the "endorsement" for several years. We also would like them to know that any further attempt to blacken our name by innuendo or by letter or word of mouth, by their solicitors for the FEDERATIONIST or their officers aimed to deprive us of our livelihood will result in our taking the action that free citizens of the country may take when they feel that someone is trying to destroy them without due process.

The CHARLOTTE LABOR JOURNAL will continue to operate an INDEPENDENT labor journal for its readers; a labor journal in the interest of the AMERICAN FEDERATION OF LABOR—the national organization headed by Mr. William Green. It will also carry the news of our own union and sponsor, the TYPOGRAPHICAL, and other news and opinions from other AFL unions, together with all the working-people in our State. Our efforts in the future, as in the past, will be devoted toward organizing the unorganized working people.

The American Federation of Labor gives no "endorsements." Fink in the circular letter he recently sent out over his signature tries to imply that it does. That great trade union organization does NOT authorize anyone to speak for it, to solicit advertising in its name or to make any "collections" for it. The AFL does approve labor publications, however. The AFL approves editorial policies, and news content of publications promoting the interests of the American Federation of Labor and affiliated unions.

A FREE weekly paper needs no "endorsement"—it needs only the heart and the mind of a good union man to bring to its readers the truth as he sees the truth, and the CHARLOTTE LABOR JOURNAL in the future as in the past will strive to be the leading weekly paper devoted to the traditions and to the continued growth of the American Federation of Labor, the organization which the editor of the CHARLOTTE LABOR JOURNAL, from the days of Samuel Gompers to the days of Bill Green, has kept closest to his heart and to his mind.

It is our opinion that the North Carolina Federation of Labor officials should be more interested in organizing the unorganized than they are in "lifting" an "endorsement" of a 20-year-old labor publication whose policies have been consistent throughout the years in its attempts to promote the welfare of thousands upon thousands of working men and women.

Fink has never given the Charlotte Labor Journal one bit of co-operation since he assumed office and long ago the editor dropped the idea of trying to solicit his co-operation. He has never furnished the CHARLOTTE LABOR JOURNAL with a single piece of news matter from the North Carolina Federation of Labor office. Neither by innuendo, nor by word of mouth will the CHARLOTTE LABOR JOURNAL use the name of the North Carolina Federation until such time as the present administration and present directors of the FEDERATIONIST will have been changed and a new group of officials come into office who are more conscious of justice and better trained in the Christian spirit of "Live and Let Live," and honest unionism.

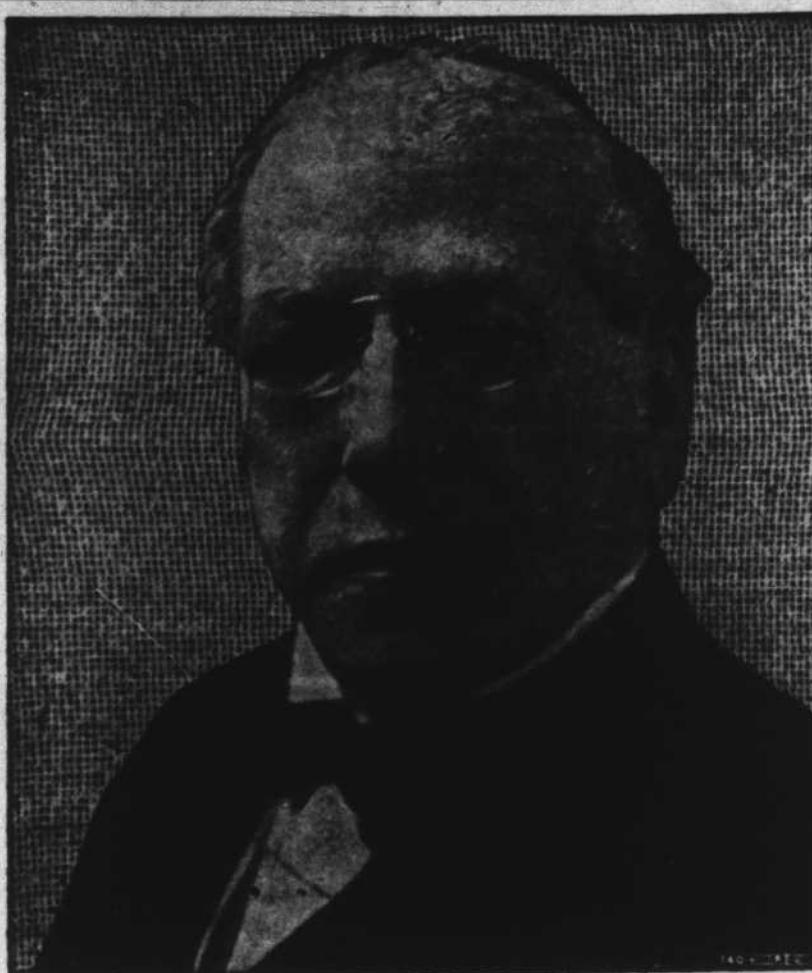
The North Carolina Federationist several years ago violated an agreement to not solicit advertising in Charlotte, provided The CHARLOTTE LABOR JOURNAL would not solicit advertising out in the State. Consequently The Labor Journal did not feel itself obligated to confine its activities to Charlotte.

This is our policy. The editor is going to leave it to the AFL union membership and the public as to who is right and who is wrong in the action of President Fink to cripple the oldest labor publication in the two Carolinas. A matter of principle is deeply involved in the State Federation's action.

"Were it not for the labor press the labor movement would not be what it is today and any man who tries to injure a labor paper is A TRAITOR TO THE CAUSE."

These immortal words were uttered by Samuel Gompers many years ago and during this Centennial organization drive in his honor they are appropriate even to this day. The Labor Journal will do its part in honor of our great first leader, regardless of the "lifting" of our "endorsement" by those men who are unappreciative of the work and the sacrifices The Charlotte Labor Journal has made in its march forward.

Samuel Gompers— His History:



To Samuel Gompers, as to few men, fell the opportunity at a historic time to lead an army of men with a bright torch down a broad highway.

The torch he raised is now held high by 8,000,000 workers and blazes its light around the world. In brief, this is his story:

Samuel Gompers was born in East Side, London, January 27, 1850. He was the son of Solomon and Sarah (Rood) Gompers, both born in Holland. His parents and forebears were wage earners.

After 4 years of schooling, it was necessary for Samuel, then 10 years old, to help bear the burdens of his family. He was apprenticed to learn the shoemakers' trade but found that distasteful and turned to the trade of his father, cigar making. When he was but 13 years of age the Gompers family moved to America.

After learning the cigarmakers' trade under his father's tutelage, the youth became a journeyman worker and joined the English-speaking cigarmakers' union in New York City, old Local Union No. 15.

At first strongly attracted by the humanitarian work of fraternal organizations, young Gompers gave his spare time to lodge work, but as he came to realize the constructive possibilities of the union, he concentrated all of his attention and ability on the promotion of the trade union movement. He first became a leader in his local union and then became prominent in labor affairs of New York City.

Rising to prominence in his international trade organization, the Cigarmakers International Union, he earned a standing and recognition that enabled him to take part in the effort to form a national federation of trade unions in 1881. He was active in the old federation, serving 3 years as president and 2 years as a member of its legislative committee, and after the merging of the older federation with new unions under the name, American Federation of Labor, served continuously with the exception of 1895, as president.

Samuel Gompers continued to work as a cigarmaker until 37 years of age, giving all his spare time to organization work, sacrificing even the little home life that was accorded to the workers of those days. He held card No. 1 in his international union for many years. Although given numerous opportunities to hold political positions and participate in undertakings that would have made him a rich man, Samuel Gompers held

fast to his ideal to make better the lives of the workers.

He became the only full-time representative of the American Federation of Labor in 1886. From then on he gave his full time to the work of developing the economic movement of wage earners for the establishing of higher standards of work and life. Under his purposeful, constructive leadership, gains were made.

It was a cardinal principle of his leadership that the economic organization could serve all the needs of the trade union and hence he advocated the mobilization of the economic power of wage earners along non-partisan political lines. Heading an aggressive, non-partisan political movement by labor in 1906, on behalf of labor he submitted a bill of grievances to responsible political representatives. This policy was followed with increasing success and substantial labor legislation enacted by Congress.

To Samuel Gompers chiefly is due the enactment into law of that fundamental economic principle: the labor of a human being is not a commodity.

By sympathy and training Samuel Gompers was a pacifist. But when this country was confronted with the possibility of war in 1916, he was among the first to pledge whole-hearted support to his country for both himself and the organization he headed.

It was largely due to his influence and determination that the forces of labor were held intact despite subtle and alluring propaganda that might have caused disaster for the cause of the Allies. Labor stood behind the government of the United States and gave its all to the cause of democracy under the leadership of Samuel Gompers. At a possible sacrifice of even life itself, he made several trips across the water during wartime to help cement the loyalty of the workers of allied countries at a critical hour.

He was appointed by President Wilson as a member of the Commission on International Labor Legislation of the Peace Conference at Versailles. At the first meeting of the commission he was unanimously elected president. The commission drafted the Labor Charter of the Peace Treaty guaranteeing to workers of all countries an equal opportunity for better conditions of life and work.

In the year after World War I, he was a dominant figure in helping to tide over a period of unemployment and restlessness which

without his help, might have become influenced by the germs of revolt prevalent the world over.

He was successful in maintaining the morale of his organization and resisting the efforts made toward the disintegration of the forces of labor during the period of readjustment. He was keenly interested in all attempts made to stabilize production and thus guarantee a higher standard of life for wage earners the world over.

The last weeks of his life witnessed a most extraordinary rounding out of plans and activity extending over years, in the thrilling international demonstrations at El Paso, Juarez and Mexico City. He helped to make possible a Mexican Federation of Labor and participated in the celebration of the first constitutional succession to office of a president, and that president was elected by laborers of Mexico.

He had just been unanimously re-elected president of the American Federation of Labor and of the Pan-American Federation of Labor, of which he was founder, and was engaged in most important service when the end came Dec. 13, 1924. His last words were for the republic he loved so dearly:

"God bless our American institutions. May they grow better day by day."

Asks Quick Action

On Social Security

As First AFL Goal

Washington. — AFL President William Green called upon Congress to adopt the new social security amendments as its first order of business.

The amendments were passed by the House last October during the AFL convention.

"While this measure does not provide all the improvements asked by the American Federation of Labor," Mr. Green said, "it contains the most liberal set of provisions that have been before Congress for 10 years. The bill was passed by the House of Representatives last October by an overwhelming vote. We hope and trust the Senate will now approve it without further delay. The shortcomings of the existing Social Security law constitute a national disgrace."

Mr. Green pointed out that the complete legislative program of the American Federation of Labor will be drafted by the AFL Executive Council at its next meeting, Jan. 30. He added:

"While repeal of the Taft-Hartley Act is the primary legislative objective of the American Federation of Labor and will remain our first goal until that obnoxious law is wiped out, the votes taken on this issue at last year's session of this Congress do not augur well for success at the second session about to begin. Labor's best hope is for the election of a new Congress in November that will be committed to Taft-Hartley repeal."

"In the meanwhile, however, labor intends to press for immediate action by Congress on a number of necessary measures which no longer can be considered controversial and which can not be further delayed without danger to the welfare of the American people."

"Foremost on this list is the Social Security bill. It adds 11,000,000 new persons to the coverage of social security protections and it increases benefits materially. For instance, the benefits of 2,500,000 persons currently receiving old-age and survivors insurance benefits average approximately \$26 a month, a shamefully low sum. The bill would increase the social security payments to \$44 a month. Also the benefits to widows and children of insured workers who die after 10 years under the program would be approximately doubled."

"This is the kind of protection the people of our country need—not only because of humanitarian considerations but to bolster our national economy and to maintain purchasing power. Social Security benefits, let me emphasize, do not constitute a handout from the government. They are insurance benefits paid for by payroll taxes upon both employees and employers."

"In these days, when pressure for greater security is mounting among all workers in the nation and when private industry is being besieged with demands for retirement programs because of the utter inadequacy of federal social security benefits, it would be the wise thing for Congress to adopt H. R. 6006 promptly."

GOMPERS MEMORIAL
1,000,000 NEW
MEMBERS IN 1950
American Federation of Labor