

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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Entered as second-class mail matter September 11, 1931, at the Post Office at Charlotte, N. C., under the Act of Congress of March 3, 1879.

Endorsed by Charlotte Typographical Union, Number 338, An Affiliate of Charlotte Central Labor Union and the North Carolina Federation of Labor.

News Services: American Federation of Labor, U. S. and North Carolina Departments of Labor, and Southern Labor Press Association.

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DENHAM CLAIMS T-H REPUDIATED WAGNER

Robert N. Denham, general counsel for the National Labor Relations Board, has laid low for all time to come the fiction that the Taft-Hartley law "preserves the best of the Wagner Act."

Apologists for the one-sided Taft-Hartley law claim they kept all the best things of the Wagner Act but "have added some responsibilities for labor unions."

Mr. Denham, whose advocacy of Taft-Hartley has seemed to embarrass even Senator Robert A. Taft on occasion, says flatly that passage of the Taft-Hartley Act, "repudiated the Wagner Act and its administration."

He said so in an angry speech attacking the National Labor Relations Board's administration of the present law.

"There have been many decisions by the board in recent months to which I have been unable to subscribe as being consonant with the broad purposes and intent of the law," Mr. Denham said.

In bitter vein, he assailed the board:

"When you stop to realize that, beginning with the membership of the National Labor Relations Board itself, and going down through the entire structure of the personnel of the agency, by far the majority of the membership, both of the board and of almost every division of the agency, was made up, in August of 1947, and still consists, of persons who were raised in the climate of the philosophy and, I think I may say, in the religion of the Wagner Act, it is small wonder that there has been difficulty in obtaining a divorce of thinking among these people from their old Wagner Act formulae.

"When you have spent 10 years or so, saturated with the statutory and administrative theory that one segment of our economic society must be protected, no matter what, and that the offsetting segment of that society must be saddled with the blame for everything that happens, even though the actual offender may frequently be found in the protected group, that scheme of thinking and reacting is hard to eradicate. Such eradication can only be accomplished by a firm determination to abandon it when the principle of the theory has been repudiated, as the Wagner Act and its administration was repudiated by the passage of the Taft-Hartley Act."

STAR SAYS GOMPERS INFLUENCE LIVES ON

The Conservative Washington Evening Star said in an editorial that Samuel Gompers' "influence still is felt throughout the nation."

The opinion was expressed in an editorial published on the occasion of the AFL's Gompers Centennial Dinner held Jan. 5 opening a year-long celebration of the 100th birthday of the founder of the American Federation of Labor. Mr. Gompers was born Jan. 27, 1850.

The Star said:

"Mr. Gompers himself appreciated his place in the history of his times. Washingtonians remember him not simply as the head of the AFL, but also as a publicist, a social philosopher, with ideas and opinions on everything under the sun.

"The little Dutch Jewish immigrant boy of 1863 grew to maturity in a world rapidly developing new issues, new conflicts, which claimed his attention and which he rarely if ever, attempted to avoid. Throughout his career, he kept his mind and his heart open to what was going on about him. He was exceptionally sensitive to economic, social and political developments but he likewise was receptive to happenings in such distant fields as music and literature, drama and painting.

"The major enthusiasm of his life, however, was the cause of solidarity among working people. A cobbler and then a cigar maker, he realized that the individual laborer or craftsman was handicapped by his individuality. In order to bargain successfully at all it was necessary to bargain collectively.

"So Mr. Gompers applied himself to the task of discovering competent union leadership wherever it could be found, and he set a personal example for the young lieutenants he discovered. Thus the American Federation of Labor became a reflection of his conceptions, his methods, his objectives."

GREEN ASKS SUPPORT FOR MARCH OF DIMES

AFL President William Green called upon the AFL membership to support the annual March of Dimes drive of the National foundation for Infantile Paralysis beginning Jan. 16.

In a letter sent to all AFL affiliates, Mr. Green urged members "to voluntarily contribute as generously as possible to the financial appeal of the National Foundation for Infantile Paralysis." He pointed out that polio had afflicted "many of the children of working people."

Noting that the number of polio victims had skyrocketed during the past year, the AFL chief called for "increasing financial help." He said the "need is very great" to help the victims of this disease and pointed out that in many instances, polio victims had been saved by expert medical care supplied by the National Foundation.

Mr. Green's appeal came on the heels of an announcement by Basil O'Connor which revealed that some \$31,000,000 had been expended by the National Foundation for medical care alone in 1949 which saw a record polio epidemic sweep the nation. This unprecedented outbreak virtually depleted the National Foundation's resources.

In order to carry on its relentless war against infantile paralysis, the National Foundation, whose burden has become more acute because of the rising tide of polio, has asked everyone to double his contribution to the forthcoming March of Dimes drive.

James J. Herkenham, Jr., Director of Labor Services for the National Foundation, has requested labor unions and union members to make their contributions directly to the local National Foundation chapter in their vicinity.

New on the Air!
News that's Fair!

FRANK EDWARDS
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ON RADIO STATION
WAYS, 10 P. M.

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THE AMERICAN FEDERATION OF LABOR

Urges Congress Enact Housing, Security And Labor Measures

Washington.—President Harry S. Truman asked Congress for \$42,439,000,000 to carry out social security, housing, national defense, foreign aid, and other government commitments for the fiscal year beginning next July 1.

The request followed by a few days his report on the nation's economic health in which he favored higher average family incomes to meet living costs and government taxes.

Mr. Truman and his council of economic advisers foresaw an output of \$300,000,000 annually, 64,000,000 jobs, and an increase in annual income of \$1,000 per family by the end of 1954.

AFL officials said the report was "too rosy" in the face of present conditions and short term prospects. They pointed out there are now 1,500,000 more unemployed persons this year than last and that 530,000 unemployed persons exhausted all of their unemployment benefits during the third quarter of 1949.

A significant fact of Mr. Truman's report, AFL officials said, was the declaration that "the soundest general formula (for increasing purchasing power) is for money wages to increase with productivity trends in the whole economy."

This is an endorsement of the AFL point of view that productivity increases should be distributed in the form of higher wages rather than lower prices.

Economically, Mr. Truman recommended these projects which have AFL support:

Revisions in the tax structure; housing for middle-income families; Columbia River Valley Authority; federal aid to education; extend and liberalize social security and unemployment insurance; extend rent control one year; continue foreign recovery programs; authorize program for technical assistance to underdeveloped countries.

In his budget message, Mr. Truman proposed among other things:

General taxes—Moderate but unspecified increases, excise taxes likely to be cut.

Education—\$300,000,000 for federal aid to local schools.

Labor—Create fair employment

Stress 8 Million Edwards Sponsors

Washington. — "Eight million Americans present Frank Edwards and the news."

Have you heard that greeting every night at 10 o'clock? If not, listen!

Those words open the American Federation of Labor nightly news and commentary by Frank Edwards, nationally-known liberal commentator, broadcasting from Washington.

Mr. Edwards' terse summary of the major news events of the day, his refreshing commentary, and his exclusive reports follow the introduction unbroken by any commercial announcement.

Mr. Edwards' style is friendly and interesting and his voice pleasant.

The program is carried on 147 stations of the Mutual Broadcasting System and 8 stations owned by labor-liberal organizations.

Labor editors are urged to publish the station and time of the Edwards' broadcast in their newspapers as a membership service.

DISCUSS FUTURE

Washington.—AFL education directors discussed the functions and services which the projected AFL Department of Education might be expected to perform when it is established. Establishment of the department was authorized at the St. Paul convention with the Workers Education Bureau, under Director John Connors, as the nucleus.

practices commission, encourage industrial safety, increase unemployment compensation and extend coverage.

Payroll taxes—Asks \$3,000,000,000 boost to finance expanded social security and start of health insurance program.

Truman Program At Glance

Washington.—President Truman asked major legislation to achieve many goals favored by the AFL in his annual state of the union message. Following are highlights:

REPEAL THE TAFT-HARTLEY LAW—Replace it with a fair law. Establish a labor extension service.

SOCIAL SECURITY—Expand the program to provide higher benefits and greater coverage.

HEALTH—Establish a system of medical insurance which will enable all Americans to afford good medical care.

EDUCATION—Provide federal assistance to states for educational purposes.

HOUSING—Extend rent controls another year. Assist cooperatives and other nonprofit groups to build dwellings which middle-income families can afford.

RESOURCES—Approve St. Lawrence seaway and power project and the Columbia Valley Administration.

MILITARY—Continue selective service in this country. Support Atlantic defense plans.

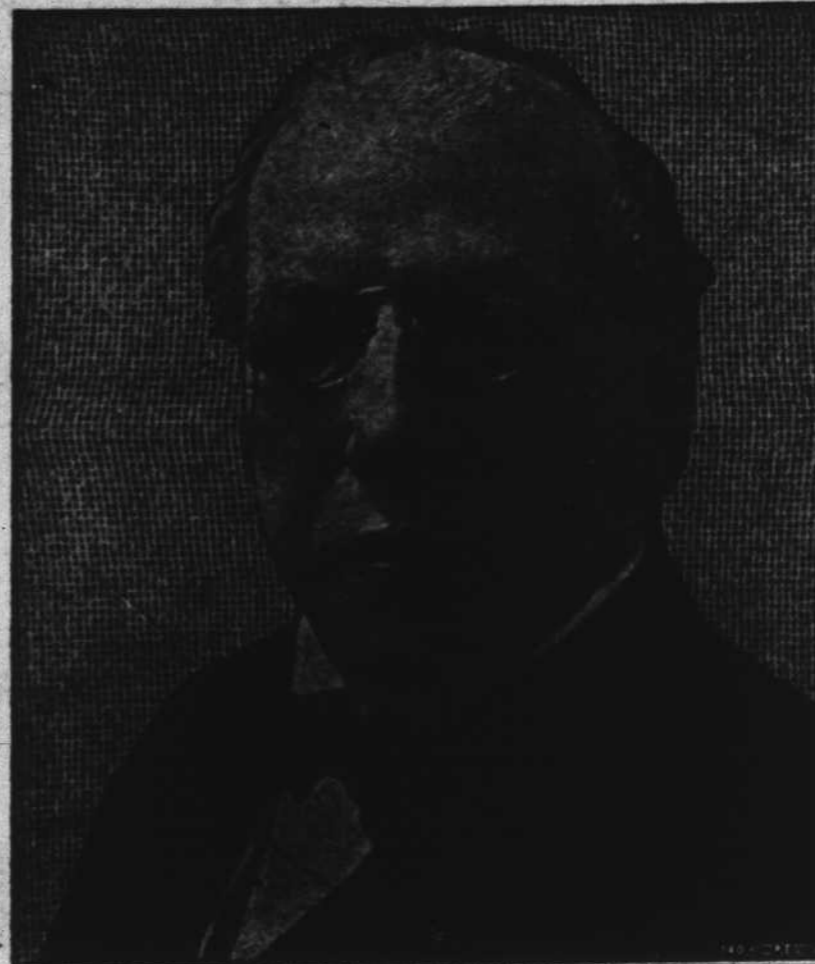
ECONOMIC—Keep the European Recovery Program going without "crippling" cuts in funds. Pass pending measures to put into effect the Point Four program of American technical and financial aid to underdeveloped nations. Approve United States membership in international trade organization.

TAXES—"Make some changes in our tax system which will reduce present inequities, stimulate business activity and yield a moderate amount of additional revenue." Specific suggestions will be made shortly.

BUSINESS—"Close the loopholes" in the antitrust laws so as to bar "monopolistic mergers." Promised proposals to assist small business and encourage new enterprise.

FARM—Pass the Brannan plan with its system of production payments; provide mandatory price supports for products which are major sources of farm income and are not adequately covered.

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 but 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."

Woll to Report On German Tour

Washington.—AFL Vice President Matthew Woll will report on his recent tour of western Germany and visit with trades unionists there at the next meeting of the AFL executive council in Miami.

Mr. Woll said after his visit to Germany that the trade unions had succeeded in rebuilding their organizations in an extremely short period.

"The strength of this great democratic movement (third only to the United States and Great Britain) is reassuring for the future of Germany," Mr. Woll said. "I am convinced that this is the greatest organized force within Germany which is willing to work together with the rest of the world to assure a permanent peace."

Mr. Woll said he is glad dismantling of German plants will come to an early end. He urged the overhaul of the German civil service system to weed out former Nazis and men who will not serve the new democratic republic with honest and sincere loyalty. He said he favored elimination of trade barriers between European countries to put the continent on "a sound economic basis."

The AFL vice president praised "the work that is being done by former U. S. labor officials attached to the U. S. High Commissioner in Germany." Harvey W. Brown, former president of the International Association of Machinists and former AFL executive council member, is director of the commissioner's office of labor affairs at Frankfurt.

Edwards Broadcast Wins Wide Acclaim

Washington.—Frank Edwards, liberal news commentator sponsored by the American Federation of Labor, is winning wide acclaim among radio listeners.

He has already received hundreds of letters of praise for his Monday-through-Friday broadcast over Mutual Broadcasting stations at 10 p. m.

Are you listening? Here are three comments plucked from Mr. Edwards' big stack of fan mail:

New York City—"I find your news comments of an honesty that makes it easier to bear Fulton Lewis and his too numerous stripe."

Ruston, La.—"We are of the opinion that your commentary of the news is the most objective and unbiased report we have had the pleasure of listening to in a long time."

Morgantown, W. Va.—"I feel called upon to congratulate you on the informative and interesting manner in which you present the news. I sat amazed to hear a news commentator giving the suggestive remedy for the evils he criticized. It is wonderful to find at least one person who sounds off about the things that are awry in this confused world of ours, has given enough consideration to what he says that he has devised, or at least some idea of, a better thing to replace the object of his criticism."

