

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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SHOULD FINK STEP ASIDE AND GIVE SOME ONE ELSE A CHANCE?

The Labor Journal has asked this question of AFL men during the past several months and many have been enthusiastic. Some few answered negatively, while others have said "no" with reservations. A few were non-committal.

For several years The Labor Journal has thought that the North Carolina Federation of Labor needs new leadership, leadership divorced from all thought of personal gain and petty selfishness—a complete rejuvenation, if you please, of the executive board, which is responsible for enforcing the laws and convention decisions of our state organization from one annual meeting to the other without injecting personal feelings into their deliberations. Such policy tends to tear the Labor movement asunder and results in lack of proper co-operation and co-ordination of Labor's efforts to accomplish much-desired tasks.

It is the opinion of The Labor Journal that an effective movement to change top officials has long been overdue. It is our studied opinion that the man who has gone into the presidency each year since 1937 was not placed there because of any peculiar fitness or qualification. After careful consideration, The Labor Journal has failed to figure how the North Carolina Federation of Labor has accomplished even little measure of progress under the present leadership. The Journal has come to the conclusion that the delegates to our annual conventions have failed to properly evaluate the qualifications of some of those men who have been elected to the top places of responsibility. The delegates are, therefore responsible for the predicament we find ourselves in each year. They are the ones who cast the ballots.

A man to be president of the North Carolina Federation of Labor, first of all, must be possessed with an inward passion to serve his brother unionists; second, he must be imbued with a spirit to see that all unorganized workers are brought into the ranks of the American Federation of Labor; third, he must be open-minded and otherwise possess the qualifications of good leadership, and avoid setting up cliques and political machines, thereby pitting one group against another. With all of these qualifications he must be a good orator, well educated, and a fair diplomat. Remember, the field for service is fertile, and the man you elect will be called upon to perform many and varied tasks. His ability to think and act intelligently in order that the traditions of our American Labor movement may be preserved and promoted is very important.

Therefore, when you nominate men to fill the highly important posts in the North Carolina Federation of Labor ask yourself the simple question: "Do these men possess the right qualifications?" Otherwise, our State organizations will suffer, many rocking along haphazardly, minus the necessary good leadership, proper love for fellow unionists, prolific organization work, and superb public relations, which includes the promotion of Labor papers, in order that Labor may have mediums to aid in the education of its membership and the public.

There are many phases of apathy in North Carolina American Federation of Labor affairs. The present leadership bogged down completely in the work of the recent political campaign which saw the defeat of Senator Graham. The leadership is completely obsessed with one idea—its own personal perpetuation. Despite the appeals by William Green to work hard for Senator Graham's nomination, the Fink organization remained apathetic except where its own welfare was concerned. That should start American Federation of Labor Unions thinking.

Our candid opinion is:
"NORTH CAROLINA A. F. OF L. NEEDS A CHANGE!
OUR HOUSE NEEDS PURIFYING."

OUR "ENDORSEMENT" HAS BEEN "LIFTED"

(Reprinted from January 4 Issue of The Charlotte Labor Journal)

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 op-

position 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 spear-headed 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 CHAR-

LOTTE 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."

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