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EDITORIAL

## GOMPERS PILLORIED, AND SELF-PILLORIED.

By DANIEL DE LEON

**M**ANY are the charges—damaging, severe—that have been preferred against Mr. Samuel Gompers in these columns:—

He was charged with politically abetting the outragers of the working class. Among the instances, clinching the point, was his endorsement of Jacob Cantor, the Democratic politician. The facts and the argument were given in detail.—In 1892, the Democratic Governor Flower signed a “labor law” forbidding the working of railroaders more than ten hours. The law was ostentatiously ignored by the railroad corporations. The switchmen of Buffalo struck to support the law. Thereupon, the ink of Flower’s signature to that law not yet being dry, he hurled the whole militia of the State into Buffalo, to protect the railroad corporations in their violation of the law and their outraging of the workers. The militia crushed the strike, incidentally murdering a workingman’s son, Broderick. Among the supporters of and barkers for Flower was one Jacob Cantor. In the fall of 1892, this Cantor ran for re-election to the Senate. Opposed to him were two other candidates—Aaron Henry and Moe Levy—both of them members of Mr. Gompers’ Cigarmakers’ Union. Did Mr. Gompers, following his pretence of “no politics in Unions,” turn his back on the election, even if by so doing a Cantor supporter and applauder of a Flower was elected? Or did he realize the necessity of defeating such a fellow as Cantor, and put in a word for either of his opponents. Mr. Gompers did neither. What he did was to go out of his way TO BACK UP CANTOR. Cantor’s “labor record” being assailed, Gompers wrote to him a letter—duly and promptly published, of course, in the Democratic press—declaring that “he who says you are not a friend of Labor, says what is not true”; and that letter, thus endorsing a politician whose hands and lips still reeked with the blood of the Buffalo switchmen, Mr. Gompers signed as

“President of the American Federation of Labor.”

Likewise on the economic field, his particular dung-hill, Mr. Gompers was charged with betraying the cause of the workingman. Among the instances clinching the point on this line, was his doing scab work in behalf of the National Cash Register, and his doing so against his own constituents. The facts and the arguments were here also given in detail.—In 1901, the Metal Polishers’ Union, affiliated with the A.F. of L., struck for better conditions against the National Cash Register Company of Dayton, O. The strike became a boycott. Strike and boycott were reported and announced in big type in the *Journal of Metal Polishers*. Now, then, for months in succession, the spectacle was seen of the *Journal of Metal Polishers* appearing with announcements of the boycott, and simultaneously the *American Federationist*—Samuel Gompers, Editor—, appearing with page-broad advertisements of the identical National Cash Register, announcing it “MADE BY UNION LABOR.” And, as if this were not guilt enough, what was the Gompers’ excuse? “We cannot help it; we have a contract with the firm to insert the adv.” An honorable man takes that money and flings it back into the face of the labor-oppressing and boycotted firm. A Gompers pockets the money.

These and many more charges, documentarily authenticated and cogently argued, have been brought in these columns, nailing Mr. Gompers’ ears to the pillory as a betrayer of the workingman. What answer does the gentleman make? Turn on the lights upon it, that it may be seen in its every filthy feature! In the *American Federationist* for this month Mr. Gompers says:

“It is generally known that the New York *Sun* is supported by the moneyed interests of Wall street, and it is also well known the Socialists’ organ, the New York *People*, has no other visible means of support.”

How rotten must not that cause be, and he who upholds it, that they can meet documents and arguments with no other weapons than those of calumnious insinuation! How powerful must not that cause be, and those who stand on the breach of it, that no weapons are available against them other than the self-stultifying arrows of calumnious insinuation!

Already pilloried by us, Mr. Samuel Gompers now self-pillories himself.

Transcribed and edited by Robert Bills for the official Web site of the Socialist Labor Party of America.  
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