
Powderly and Gompers

by Eugene V. Debs

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The *Journal of the Knights of Labor* of July 3rd devotes twelve columns to an elucidation of the troubles existing between the Order of Knights of Labor and the American Federation of Labor. Of the Knights, Mr. Powderly is Grand Master Workman and of the Federation, Mr. Gompers is President. They are men of ability and acknowledged leaders. As Mr. Powderly has been heard through the columns of the *Journal*, it is to be presumed that Mr. Gompers will also address the public in a similar manner, and the indications all point to a rupture fraught with incalculable harm to labor, without, as we view the situation, any compensations, for let victory settle where it may, labor sustains an injury, and if it is a draw battle its influence must be of a disastrous character. The demand of the times is to harmonize and unify workingmen, but the fight between Messrs. Powderly and Gompers will not have that effect. It will breed discord, asperities, and enmities. Two great labor organizations at war will be accepted by the foes of labor as proof positive that workingmen cannot pull together. The verdict, while apparently true, is nevertheless false. The great mass of organized workingmen, regardless of name, are friends, working for the accomplishment of the same noble and righteous purpose. To estrange them, to array them in hostile attitudes is to inaugurate a calamity far reaching in its results, which will be deplored by the friends of labor everywhere.

We note particularly what is said about the numerical strength of the Federation. If the membership is less than it was thought to be, it is a matter which ought to excite regret, for, if the membership is even all that is claimed, it would still be less than it ought to be. To hear that a labor organization is losing its membership is well calculated to

dampen the ardor of any other organization, and certainly there is nothing in such reports to rejoice over. We hope to see the time when the Knights of Labor can boast of regaining its numerical power, and that the Federation has not been less successful. This magazine, always on record as the friend of organized labor, always glad to hear of the growth of its grand army, would, were it possible to get the ear of Messrs. Gompers and Powderly, suggest that they get together and adjust their difficulties, since the continuance of the internecine conflict cannot possibly benefit anyone except those who pray ceaselessly for the overthrow of organized labor.

Edited by Tim Davenport

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