

EDITORIAL

## GOMPERS AT THE FORKING OF THE ROAD.

By DANIEL DE LEON

**F**ROM many sides, and in increasing volume, the suggestion is rising that Gompers “purge himself of contempt,” whereupon “Executive clemency” may be bestowed upon him.

All that was wanting to draw sharply the line of the road, already amply drawn by Judge Wright’s decision, and which now spreads before Gompers, are these suggestions of “purging” and of “Executive clemency.”

As stated in the article of Gillhaus, the Socialist Labor Party’s candidate for President, published in the *Independent* during the campaign, and reproduced in these columns, “a union that cannot strike or boycott is a weak scarecrow on which the capitalist buzzards may safely roost; it is a fortress without weapons, its walls a hollow mockery.”

The S.L.P. has uniformly condemned Gompers’ policy of presenting Organized Labor in the attitude of leaning upon the capitalist class—of leaning upon the capitalist class economically by preaching the theory of the “Brotherhood of Capitalist and Labor,” and of leaning upon the capitalist class politically by ever endorsing its political candidates, and never standing upon its own feet. Such Organized Labor, the S.L.P. has uniformly pointed out was not a prop to the proletariat, it could only be a prop to capitalism.

The sentence of Judge Wright, supplemented by the insidious whisperings about “purging” and “Executive clemency,” pushes Gompers to the very point where the road forks.

Error, false premises and their litter of false conclusions need not necessarily imply dishonesty. It may be lack of information. While lack of information on Labor issues is unpardonable with a Labor Leader, it is also true that some people’s skulls are so hard that nothing short of a surgical operation will open a passage for

information to enter. Judge Wright's sentence was such a surgical operation.

The forking road before which Gompers now stands leads, on the left, to unquestionable betrayal of the proletariat, and that means self-defilement; on the right, at least to the maintenance of what civilization we have reached, and which is essential for all further progress.

For Gompers to "purge" himself means to endorse, officially endorse, the long string of uncivilized principles that Judge Wright's decision is a reverting to. It means the legislation of "Court-made" Law"; it means the legislation of "ex post facto law." It means the abandonment of solid ground gained by civilization.

Which road will Gompers strike? Will he take the road that will prove that the worst that was ever said and thought of him was not half as bad as he deserved? Will he take the road that will justify the conclusion that he hitherto erred unintentionally, and that there is yet hope in him?

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

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