

Colored Workers of America

Why You Should Join the I. W. W.

Fellow Workers—

There is one question which, more than any other, presses upon the mind of the worker today, regardless of whether he be of one race or another, of one color or another—the question of how he can improve his conditions, raise his wages, shorten his hours of labor and gain something more of freedom from his master—the owners of the industry wherein he labors.

To the black race who, but recently, with the assistance of the white men of the northern states, broke their chains of bondage and ended chattel slavery, a prospect of further freedom, of REAL FREEDOM, should be most appealing.

For it is a fact that the Negro worker is no better off under the freedom he has gained than the slavery from which he has escaped. As chattel slaves we were the property of our masters and, as a piece of valuable property, our masters were considerate of us and careful of our health and welfare. Today, as wage workers, the boss may work us to death at the hardest and most hazardous labor, at the longest hours, at the lowest pay; we may quietly starve when out of work and the boss loses nothing by it and has no interest in us. To him the worker is but a machine for producing profits, and when you, as a slave who sells himself to the master on the installment plan, become old or broken in health or strength, or should you be killed while at work, the master merely gets another wage slave on the same terms.

We who have worked in the south know that conditions in lumber and turpentine camps, in the fields of cane, cotton and tobacco, in the mills and mines of Dixie, are such that the workers suffer a more miserable existence than ever prevailed among the chattel slaves before the great Civil War. Thousands of us have come and are coming northward, crossing the Mason and Dixon line, seeking better conditions. As wage slaves we have run away from the masters in the south only to become the wage slaves of the masters of the north. In the north we find that the hardest work and the poorest pay is our portion. We are driven while on the job and the high cost of living offsets any higher pay we might receive.

The white wage worker is little, if any, better off. He is a slave the same as we are and, like us, he is regarded by the boss only as a means of making profits. The working class as a whole grows poorer and more miserable year by year, while the employing class, who do not work at all, enjoy wealth and luxury beyond the dreams of titled lords and kings.

As we are both wage workers, we have a common interest in improving conditions of the wage work-

ing class. Understanding this, the employing class seeks to engender race hatred between the two. He sets the black worker against the white worker and the white worker against the black, and keeps them divided and enslaved. Our change from chattel slaves to wage slaves has benefited no one but the masters of industry. They have used us as wage slaves to beat down the wages of the white wage slaves, and by a continual talk of "race problems," "Negro questions," "segregation," etc., make an artificial race hatred and division by poisoning the minds of both whites and blacks in an effort to stop any movement of labor that threatens the dividends of the industrial kings. Race prejudice has no place in a labor organization. As Abraham Lincoln has said, "The strongest bond that should bind man to man in human society is that between the working people of all races and of all nations."

The only problem then which the Colored worker should consider as a worker is the problem of organizing with other working men in the labor organization that best expresses the interest of the whole working class against the slavery and oppression of the whole capitalist class. Such an organization is the I. W. W., the INDUSTRIAL WORKERS OF THE WORLD, the only labor union that has never, IN THEORY OR PRACTICE, since its beginning twelve years ago, barred the workers of any race or nation from membership. The following has stood as a principle of the I. W. W., embodied in its official constitution since its formation in 1905:

"By-Laws—Article 1. Section 1. No working man or woman shall be excluded from membership in Unions because of creed or color."

If you are a wage worker you are welcome in the I. W. W. halls, no matter what your color. By this you may see that the I. W. W. is not a white man's union, not a black man's union, not a red or yellow man's union, but A WORKING MAN'S UNION. ALL OF THE WORKING CLASS IN ONE BIG UNION.

In the I. W. W. all wage workers meet on common ground. No matter what language you may speak, whether you were born in Europe, in Asia or in any other part of the world, you will find a welcome as a fellow worker. In the harvest fields where the I. W. W. controls, last summer saw white men, black men and Japanese working together as union men and raising the pay of all who gathered the grain. In the great strikes the I. W. W. has conducted at Lawrence, Mass., in the woolen mills, in the iron mines of Minnesota and elsewhere, the I. W. W. has brought the workers of many races, colors and tongues together in victorious battles for a better life.

Not only does the I. W. W. differ from all organizations in regard to admission of all races, but there is a fundamental difference in form of organization from all other labor unions. You have seen other

and house the world; a world where the words "master" and "slave" shall be forgotten; a world, where peace and happiness shall reign and where the children of men shall live as brothers in a world-wide INDUSTRIAL DEMOCRACY.

The following is the preamble of the I. W. W. constitution, showing the reason and form of its organization, the aims and purposes of its membership:

"The working class and the employing class have nothing in common. There can be no peace so long as hunger and want are found among millions of working people and the few, who make up the employing class, have all the good things of life.

"Between these two classes a struggle must go on until the workers of the world organize as a class, take possession of the earth and machinery of production and abolish the wage system.

"We find that the centering of management of industries into fewer and fewer hands makes the trade unions unable to cope with the ever growing power of the employing class. The trade unions foster a state of affairs which allows one set of workers to be pitted against another set of workers in the same industry, thereby helping defeat one another in wage wars. Moreover, the trade unions aid the employing class to mislead the workers into the belief that the workers have interests in common with their employers.

"These conditions can be changed and the interest of the working class upheld only by an organization formed in such a way that all its members in any industry, or in all industries, if necessary, cease work whenever a strike or lockout is on in any department thereof, thus making an injury to one an injury to all.

"Instead of the conservative motto, 'A fair day's wage for a fair day's work,' we must inscribe on our banner the revolutionary watchword, 'Abolition of the wage system.'

"It is the historic mission of the working class to do away with capitalism. The army of production must be organized, not only for the every day struggle with capitalists, but to carry on production when capitalism shall have been overthrown. By organizing industrially we are forming the structure of the new society within the shell of the old."

The I. W. W. welcomes you as a member, no matter in what industry you may work. The initiation fee is \$2, the dues are 50 cents a month. After you once join you have the right of free transfer into any industry. All that is necessary to continue membership is the payment of dues, regardless of where you go or what your work may be.

For further information write to

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