

Industrial Revolutionists (January 1906)

Such are the Industrial Workers — industrial revolutionists. They stand against the present system of enslaved wage-labor and for the coming system of free cooperative labor.

The Industrial Workers is, therefore, a revolutionary economic organization. It has a stupendous mission. It has come at the right time, and is catching on amazingly.

The very unanimity and concord of bitter opposition of the capitalist class and its press; the politicians and professors and preachers; and, of course, its “labor leaders” has been duly marked by the thinking element among organized workers and has inspired their confidence from the beginning; and their daily accretions to the revolutionary movement are creating consternation and dismay in the ranks of the conservative reactionaries.

The Pittsburgh convention of the American Federation of Laborⁱ incidentally heard of the Industrial Workers, and the principal representatives, although refusing to “dignify” it by mentioning its name, page homage to it in the only compliments they have to bestow.

Wait another year and then watch the performance when the name is mentioned!

The capitalist press of the land, with substantial unanimity, approves and supports the American Federation of Labor — and condemns and opposes the Industrial Workers. This indisputable fact is of immense significance. The capitalist press is the property, and therefore, the representative and defender of the capitalist class — and the capitalist class lives by exploitation of the working class.

With this fact clearly blazoned, how stands the case with the American Federation of Labor, greeted with the “God bless you” — and with the Industrial Workers, spurned with the “God damn you” — of the capitalist press?

Which of these two labor organizations antagonizes the capitalist class and serves the working class? And vice versa?

Every thinking unionist will answer these questions for himself by joining the Industrial Workers. That is what he is doing today.

And that is why the Industrial Workers, the lusty little giant six months of age, already numbers almost, if not quite, 100,000 dues-paying members.

And why the most seasoned trade unionists are everywhere at the head of the advancing columns.

And why applications for charters, for organizers and speakers are pouring in at national headquarters in a continuous stream from every corner of the continent.

There is no parallel to this in all the annals of the working class. It simply means that the workers are arousing from their lethargy; that they have had enough of “leaders” who keep them divided and at war with each other, to display their “leadership,” and, incidentally, keep their names on the salary list and expense account.

Trade autonomy, in the name of which the reactionary unionist makes his case, is insignificantly contemptible compared to the industrial unity, the organized oneness of the working class. The former divides the workers into crafts and groups, more or less weak and isolated, and these foster jealousies, one of the other, each vainly seeking its own petty supremacy, while the capitalist, shrewdly playing them against each other, diligently fleeces them all.

And this accounts, in a nutshell, for the partiality and exceeding deference of the fleecing class and its parasites for the pure and simple trade unionism, or trade union simpletonism, which keeps the army of workers divided into a thousand jealous and impotent squads, an easy prey to their designing and brutal exploiters.

The workers of the world must unite!

A trite saying, it is true, but one that cannot too often be repeated. And though it be worn threadbare, it must be repeated again and again, ten million times ten million times, until at last the cry comes echoing back around the world:

The workers are united.

And this is the mission of the Industrial Workers — to unite the workers of the world for their own emancipation.

And to accomplish this great work of organization the principle means is education — revolutionary education.

The workers must be taught, or, rather, teach themselves, that their industrial interests are one and the same; that unorganized and ignorant, they are a mass of helpless and despised menials; that united and class-

conscious, they are the mightiest power on this planet, and can, with a single breath, extinguish their oppressors and despoilers.

The first thing workers have to do is to teach themselves to think; to think clearly, and then teach others to do the same. Clear thinking is as fatal to ignorance, to superstition and slavery, as the sunlight is to darkness.

The working class must think!

And then the working class will act!

When the working class begin to think they will unite with the Industrial Workers; they will be bound together as with sinews of steel; they will strike together, when required to strike, all of them, not by regiments and detachments, but as a grand army; and on election day they will vote together in the same united fashion and the very earth will then resound with the triumphant tramp of the hosts of Industrial Emancipation.

The workers are an overwhelming majority and have but to act together to conquer the earth and free themselves from every species of servitude.

For a million years the workers have been on the march. Painfully slow, but certain as gravity, they have been pushing toward the heights; toward freedom and the light. The last great battle is drawing near and the Industrial Workers is marshaling the hosts of labor for that historic conflict of the ages which cannot fail.

All greetings to *The Industrial Worker* — tongue of the Industrial Workers of the World — whose clarion appeal rings out today, a new voice which, trumpet-toned, will arouse sleeping labor, bid it to lift its bowed form from the dust and take possession of the earth and the fullness thereof in the name of Emancipated Humanity.

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¹ The 25th Annual Convention of the American Federation of Labor was held at Old City Hall, Pittsburgh, from Nov. 13-25, 1905.