

LABOR AND INDUSTRY
By James Oneal

(Editor's Note: This is the last installment of a new booklet, "The Next Emancipation", written by one of America's foremost historians, James Oneal. It has been published to sell at cost, 10¢ postpaid, by the Negro Labor News Service, P.O. Box 66, College Station, New York City, or 2653 Washington Blvd., Chicago.)

Human labor power is the source of all values produced. The labor power of a Negro worker embodied in a bar of steel, a car of coal or the basement of a building is just as essential as the labor power of a white worker. The color line is not seen in the bar of steel, the car of coal or the basement. Vegetables from a Negro's garden are purchased and eaten by white people. No color line is drawn in the products of the garden or the farm.

Human labor is human labor, whether it is the labor of the Negro or the white, the American or the German, the Italian or the Englishman. To labor one must get the consent of others. We have seen that the factories, mines, shops, railroads and industries in general are owned by the capitalist class. This class has become great in wealth and power. It can give or withhold employment at will.

For example: No capitalist owner of industry is required by law to admit you to the machinery for producing wealth. It is his. The law recognizes it as his. When business becomes bad the capitalist owners can close hundreds of thousands of plants. That means that millions of workers are shut out of the industries. No matter what your needs are you cannot enter the plants.

The Law and Property

Here is the curse of modern society, the fact that a small class of powerful owners have the power to shut out the great class of wage workers. Industry and natural resources are the basis of civilization. This basis is the property of capitalist owners. We are dependents upon the will of this owning class. White and Negro workers are both dependent upon that class.

It is too long a story to tell you how the mills, factories, mines, railroads, oil fields and so on came into the possession of this class. Some were stolen. Others rest on bribery of law-making bodies. Others were obtained by clever manipulation of the law. Many of the great fortunes had their origin in the slavery of whites or blacks. Many had their origin in big land frauds.

But however obtained, the present masters of industry have surrounded their holdings with laws, court decisions, police power and government in general. Behind the enormous industries of the country are these laws. Which means that the ownership of the great industries by a class is lawful. If this ownership is lawful it means that men in State Legislatures and in Congress made the laws that make this ownership lawful.

Workers Outnumber Owners

Now, how could they place men in these bodies to make these laws to legalize their great powers of ownership? Only one way to do

that, and this is by the owners owning a political party that represents their interests. To own the great industries they must also own powerful political parties. These parties nominate candidates pledged to support the control of industry by a class of capitalist owners.

But here the owners are weak. If they depended on their own votes they could not elect a single man. They are very few compared with the great mass of working class voters. They must get the white and Negro voters to vote for the capitalist candidates or their ownership is at an end.

How is it done? It is laughable, when you think of it. The masters of labor own two parties. You see, they figure that you are bound to get tired of any party that represents them. That is natural. They would get tired of any party that represented you. Knowing this, they maintain two great political parties.

When the "Outs" Go "In"

The trick is done! The Democrats were in power. They led us into war after winning an election on the promise that we would not go to war. By 1920 millions of voters were ready to throw out the Democrats. They did throw them out. But the voters did not vote themselves in. They voted the other party of the capitalist owners in and conditions have been as bad, or even worse, than before.

The politicians expect you to vote the "outs" in and the "ins" out, but they will expect you to always stay out!

No matter which one of these parties is supported by the workers, both remain faithful to the interests of the great owners of industry. We have already seen how the Republican party has sacrificed the Negro in the North while it was pretending to protect him in the South. We have seen how the Republican party is now trying to get a standing in the South by following the Democrats in excluding the Negro from elections. We already know that the Democrats are a party with the old traditions of slavery clustering about it.

But white workers have been fooled by these two parties of capitalism as the Negro workers have. It has been a matter of the "ins" coming out and the "outs" going in in every national election.

The Socialist Party

The Socialist party is opposed to the private ownership of the great industries, whether by white or Negro capitalists. We are united in the Socialist party to abolish this ownership.

How? Because Socialists are pledged not to make laws that legalize this ownership. They are pledged to make laws to transfer this ownership to the people and for the masses to master industry for the common good of all.

Now, we cannot take the railroads and give each one a railroad. We cannot take the mines and give each one a mine. We cannot take the industries and give each one a factory. The same thing is true of all other industries. There are not enough to go around, and it would be absurd to do so if there were. If each of us owned an industry who would do the work?

There are only two ways. One is to allow the present powerful owners to continue to own and exploit the masses of wage workers, to shut them out of industry when they want to, and to pay them wages that represent only a fraction of the values produced.

The other way is to transfer the natural resources, mills, mines, railroads and industries in general to the whole people to be the public property of all. Social ownership instead of private ownership. Common ownership instead of capitalist ownership. Mastery of industry by useful labor instead of mastery by a few powerful owners. Democracy in industry instead of autocracy by the petty agents of the capitalist owners.

The Next Emancipation

Instead of industry being managed to enrich a few great owners, we would have industry operated, controlled and directed by the useful workers for the general happiness of all. We get along without slave owners. We can get along without their successors, the capitalist owners and masters of industry today.

This is the great Socialist program that is inspiring millions of workers of all colors, creeds and nationalities in all modern countries. The industries have become too great, too vast, to permit a class to use them as a source of robbing millions of workers. Abolish this class ownership and humanity is free. The race prejudice that is largely rooted in class aristocracy will then disappear. Not immediately, but eventually it will disappear when a few no longer live upon the labor of many others.

The Socialist party admits workingmen and women of all races, colors and creeds into the organization. All have equal rights and privileges in the organization. It fraternizes with the workers of all other countries. It calls upon the workers of the nation to desert the parties of capitalism, to unite under the banner of the Socialist party.

Socialism is the liberator of humanity. Today it inspires the hopes of hundreds of millions of workers in many lands. It has taught these many millions that their interests are not bound up with the interests of the masters of labor. It has taught confidence in our own power. It has given an education to many who had none. It has made martyrs to the modern cause of labor. It is the greatest movement of modern times.

The Future is Yours

The future belongs to the workers of all countries. They are called upon to reorganize the world on another and more human basis. The color line must go. National prejudices must go. Religious hatreds must be wiped out. The ranks must be closed up. Workers must not divide their power between two parties owned by their masters. They must unite in a party of their class.

The Socialist party summons the useful workers, Negro and white, skilled and unskilled, to the struggle for the Next Emancipation. It is a glorious struggle, and for the greatest prize humans ever fought for, the liberation of all humanity from servitude, social degradation, and political impotence!

O.E.A.

THE END

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