
**To Members of the IWW:
Unite Your Forces Upon a Program of
Revolutionary Class Struggle with the
Red International of Labor Unions
for Proletarian Dictatorship!
(Appeal of the Red International Affiliation Committee)
[circa July 1925]**

Leaflet by the Red International Affiliation Committee, Chicago. Specimen in the
Floyd Ramp Papers, Knight Library Special Collections, University of Oregon, Eugene.

The Industrial Workers of the World, once the leading revolutionary organization of America and foremost champion of working class unity and struggle, is today theoretically disintegrating.

The 1923 convention represented 38,828 members in good standing. The 1924 convention represented 30,722; while in March 1925, since the "emergency" split has taken some and allowed thousands to drop out, the membership paying dues for March 1925, is shown by the *General Office Bulletin* (Chicago) to have fallen to only 13,620. The "emergency" split for the same month reports 1,086 members for Industrial Union No. 310 [General Construction Workers] and 1,635 for Industrial Union No. 120 [Lumber Workers], which is practically all the "emergency" split can claim. Thus the whole IWW can show only 16,341 in both factions.

Granting the seasonal gain expected for Industrial Union No. 110 [Agricultural Workers] during the harvest (which will disappear when it is over), and the more healthy growth of the Marine Transport Workers since it has adopted the policy of the united front, still the IWW is losing.

Causes of Present Demoralization.

This has come about largely because the IWW policy has not developed in conformity with changed relations between the world's

working class and the world's capitalist class since the former began its historical ascendancy to power in the Bolshevik revolution and establishment of Soviet power.

Small minds which cannot comprehend historical change that conflicts with or modifies their outgrown theories, chronic oppositionists who seek prominence by fighting the forces and facts of change, self-seeking demagogues, paid spies and disrupters playing upon prejudices, and honest workers whose vision is so distant future society that they do not see nor deal with the hard realities of the long struggle to that desired goal — all have led the IWW into a blind alley of anarcho-syndicalism, sectarianism, pacifism, decentralization, and decay.

Confusion Fertilized Disruption.

This has made a field wherein the “emergency” split has worked. Only such widespread theoretical confusion, however honest it may be, could have made possible the ruin brought in by disruptive elements. Had not it been for this wrong theory, Rowan, Bowerman, Grady, and Raddock would have made no headway at all when they got out injunctions in the capitalist courts, gave stool pigeons testimony before a capitalist judge, and recklessly called for split — a course of disruption which merited their expulsion.

Only such confusion could have lost to the IWW its old position as an advocate of the overthrow of capitalism and lost its conception even of industrial unionism, proof of which is seen in the tendency toward “mass” conventions and the Seattle plan of IU No. 310 [General Construction Workers] to abolish the industrial unions.

When the Misunderstanding Began.

From the famous, fighting, and healthy organization that persisted through all the persecution before and during the war, the IWW began its gradual decline in 1920 and 1921. The issue arose when the General Executive Board, which reported to the 1920 convention that it had decided in favor of affiliation to the Third (Communist) International, gave as its reasons:

“The board believed that in so far as the Third International was the only workers' international that had come into existence throughout history that disagreed with the meek and mild parlia-

mentary programs, that we should show our approval of it as opposed to the opportunism of the Second International, and particularly so, because we were convinced that our Russian fellow workers in Russia are only maintaining the political character of the first Soviet government to hold and gain power temporarily during the transitory period from capitalism to industrial Communism.”
—*Solidarity*, May 15, 1920.

Marxians Naturally Turn to Leninism.

The RIAC [Red International Affiliation Committee] points out this statement of the GEB in 1920 as proof of the natural tendency of the Marxian revolutionary elements to evolve towards Leninism, which is Marxism in the historical epoch of capitalist-imperialism's decline. It was a recognition, clear and unequivocal, of the necessity of some form of organized force, some form of state power, some form of government, political in nature, but wholly devoted to the interests of the proletariat during the long period of transition.

The GEB statement of 1920 and the conscious and friendly response to the Soviet power that arose among the working class of all the world, was a recognition of the fact that the act of seizure of state power did not end, but only began the revolution, that only through and under the protection of the armed workers' government can capitalist resistance be crushed out, the indifferent and ignorant slowly brought up to the level of class consciousness of the revolutionary few, and all ideological and mechanical forces of civilization be put to work to erase the heritage of superstition, selfishness, ignorance, and lack of production due to civil war's ruination and the whole category of the evils of capitalism.

The Great Mis-Step.

The failure of the IWW to proceed upon this path of understanding and harmony with the forces of history, its failure to recognize that the necessity of a revolutionary government requires as a corollary a revolutionary party of disciplined workers devoted to attaining the revolutionary ideal by whatever means necessary, stands in the foreground as one of the great stumbling blocks of theory over which the IWW has shattered its possible strength.

Failing to learn from facts, refusing to acknowledge the error of trying to apply its old criticism of the yellow Socialist Party to the revolutionary party of Communism, and closing its eyes to the international struggle of Communists, the IWW has clung to the dogma of anti-politics and persistently misinterpreted “politics” as “parliamentarism.” Considering its experience with the old socialist parties, this mistake was not unnatural but the fault of the old Socialist Party was not that it used parliamentary action, but that it made election to parliament an end in itself, subordinating everything to winning and keeping office within the capitalist government structure — parliament.

What Is Communist Politics?

The Communists, on the contrary, devoted to winning not office but the revolutionary goal by whatever means are necessary, regard election campaigns and agitational positions in parliament as only one of many, and not always the most important, means of mobilizing the exploited masses for the revolutionary overthrow of bourgeois power, both in government and industry. These facts should cause the IWW officially to revise its attitude toward political parties, as many of its members have revised their individual views and found their place as revolutionary workers in the revolutionary Workers (Communist) Party of America.

Again, it will come as a surprise to many members of the IWW to learn the following question once carried on referendum:

“Resolved, that we endorse the Third International with reservations, as follows: That we take no part in parliamentary action whatsoever and that we reserve the right to develop our own tactics according to conditions.”

Fraudulent Vote Counting in Headquarters

The above question, one of three upon the subject, was carried by general referendum in 1920, reported in *Solidarity* of December 18, 1920; the voting being 1,111 in favor and 994 opposed. But by a vote counting fraud as rotten as any ever pulled off in the AF of L, the ballot committee with the consent of the GEB counted 127

“NO” votes twice, and blandly stated that, “Therefore, the entire referendum on the Third International was defeated.”

The rule of censorship never before known in the IWW and of expulsions of Communists and all other members who, after the organization of the economic international, the RED INTERNATIONAL OF LABOR UNIONS, advocated affiliation of the IWW to the RILU, grew along with anarcho-syndicalist confusion and led directly to the split and loss of membership and spirit.

Red Internationalists Urge Revival.

Today, with several mutually hostile anarcho-syndicalist groups wrangling over petty constitutional quibbles, there exists no group, except the adherents of the Red International, to formulate and advocate a program of action around which the censored, disfranchised rank and file may rally to re-establish the IWW as a vigorous and revolutionary economic organization with a future better than its past.

The preamble, good as it is, does not serve the place of a program of action. If any contend differently, let them explain how it is that the organization has fallen into its present tragic state notwithstanding the excellence of the preamble. Preambles do not make an organization revolutionary. The preamble of the United Mine Workers, an industrial union with a militant membership as well, states that labor is entitled to the value it produces, yet the UMW of A is floundering in the morass of class collaboration and decay. The same goes for the more “revolutionary” preamble of the Amalgamated Clothing Workers, another industrial union which is, take notice, independent of the AF of L.

For a Program of Action.

Just as in these other organizations, so in the IWW, the hope of progress lines in the propagation and adoption by the rank and file of a left wing program of action and the raising of every point of such a program as an issue in every discussion on organization policy; particularly by the demand of the rank and file, whether of individuals or groups, from every nominee for responsible office in the IWW, a statement of his stand upon each point of such a program of action. The habit of nominees for high office hiding out and pretending to

be indifferent while cliques of personal friends are intriguing for their election is “politics” of the worst kind under a mask of pretense that they are not politicians. Members must rout these nominees out of their hiding places and demand that they speak up and say what they stand for.

For this purpose, the Red International Affiliation Committee proposes the following program of action to the membership of the IWW, and urges that each member insist upon discussion of its merits and insist as well that every nominee for any office from top to bottom of the organization, state whether he favors or opposes each issue it raises and explain why.

Unity Within the IWW.

1. Unity on the job against the bosses, to attain common action of all workers, including those rank and filers who have gone “emergency.”

2. Joint meetings of conflicting branches; joint delegate conferences of industrial unions which are split — with the agenda to be limited to the one question of unity.

3. Any general convention of either faction shall be pledged to elect a permanent committee on unity, to formulate and publish its terms for unity with the other faction and to set a date and place for joint meetings to discuss and agree upon terms acceptable to both.

Organize the Unorganized.

In the agriculture industry of the United States there are engaged approximately 2,000,000 wage workers — the IWW has organized only 980 of them (with seasonal variation of the harvest increasing this figure). In the lumber industry there are about 250,000 workers, and the IWW has 5,435 of them (counting the “emergency” split of 1,635); in marine transport there are about 150,000 workers, and the IWW has about 4,000 of them; in metal mining there are approximately 110,000, out of which the IWW has organized only 1,980. In general construction there are tens of thousands the IWW has never touched with its present 660 members belonging in the regular IWW and 1,086 in the “emergency.” These figures were taken from per capita payments for March 1925, published in the *General Office Bulletin* and the “emergency” bulletins.

In the above industries the IWW has little or no competition. That it has best succeeded in these fields is shown by the fact that the five industrial unions covering these industries embraced 88 percent of the whole IWW in 1924, while 24 "paper" industrial unions, which have no industrial union existence but live at the expense of the general organization, lost 65 percent of their membership during 1924 and 21 of them together have only 550 members — or 26 members on an average in each so-called "industrial union."

Therefore, practical organization should proceed upon the following basis:

Concentration on Unorganized Fields.

1. All organizing forces, funds, organizers, propaganda, and delegates shall be mobilized to reach, upon a unified plan, the unorganized workers in agriculture, lumber, general construction, metal mining, and marine transport.

2. In those industries in which the IWW does not function as a union and in which there are other unions, craft or industrial, functioning, the IWW shall function only for what it is: a propaganda body for revolutionary industrial unionism. It should be known that the RIAC does not advocate the "liquidation" even of these "paper" industrial unions, nor require their members to "give up their cards" in the IWW, but it does advocate that such propaganda bodies become constructive factors in uniting the workers and cease their destructive dualist tactics of attacking other unions as unions and of cajoling members to leave existing unions, thus antagonizing the whole labor movement and resulting in no effective organization, as the recent farce of Gas-bag Lindstrom and his costly adventure to break up the Structural Iron Workers' Union shows.

Do Constructive Work.

3. Instead of such fruitless efforts in which the funds of the large industrial unions have been squandered right and left year after year, the unorganized millions should be organized, as recommended above; and in the industries where the IWW is really a propaganda group among workers already organized, such IWW should ally themselves with the revolutionary left wing of the existing unions organized around the Trade Union Industrial League, winning the con-

fidence of the workers by constructive work in and for the existing union, while simultaneously leading them on to industrial unionism by amalgamation and to the goal of proletarian revolution.

4. The goal to attain for every member of the IWW should be one union in each industry, completely organized and revolutionary in action.

Shop Committees.

To appeal to the unorganized masses, definite demands must be proposed which they approve and support and a form of grouping them be set up which the union can use as a recruiting ground. This structure is the shop, job, or ship committee. Such committees are elected by all workers on the job, regardless of craft, color, race, or union affiliation, mobilizing both organized and unorganized for joint action with the union and under its leadership — which it gains by initiating the committee formation and directing its struggles. the job committee connects the unorganized mass with the union.

Immediate Demands.

In order to rally the unorganized around the job committees and finally induct them into the union, the IWW must offer them benefits more pressing and immediately comprehensible to them than the future cooperative commonwealth. Vigorous organization campaigns must be carried on around the following slogans:

1. Resist wage cuts. Instead of lower wages — demand higher wages and action with all workers' organizations which will cooperate on this issue.

2. An immediate fight to shorten the hours of labor in each industry, particularly for the three watch system on ships.

3. A united front with all workers' organizations to release all class war prisoners, repeal all criminal syndicalist laws, and resist anti-labor injunctions.

4. All hiring to be done from union hall, with transportation to job to be furnished through the union and paid for by employers.

5. In migratory industry, employers must furnish, without charge, baths, hot water and dry house, clean bedding, and laundry service in camps.

6. Support all demands formulated by the New Orleans Marine Workers' Conference, and the call for the Havana Conference for next January.

No Substitution for Revolution.

It must be clearly understood that these demands are not intended to be a substitute for revolution. The theory that is held by the so-called "job unionists" that immediate demands are enough and the IWW must exclude consistent revolutionary teaching and the theory held by the sectarian element of the IWW which thinks the union can or should limit its members to revolutionists and its teachings to utopian preachments of the future society, these are both wrong. The union must attract and weld together all workers while permitting the freest right of opinion in order that the revolutionary element which must organize itself definitely as a left bloc, may educate and lead the backward workers and by proposing and fighting for official adoption of militant issues in the daily struggle of the classes, inculcate class consciousness and point the way to revolution. The left wing must lead, not by intrigue, but by best expressing the needs of the wider masses.

Genuine Rank and File Control.

1. All power to the job branches. The job branch must be in practice and not merely in theory, the basic unit of the industrial union; all industrial union and general organization ballots to be valid only when vouched for by the job branch.

2. District and industrial union conventions shall be composed of elected delegates from job branches.

3. Hall branches as now constituted shall have no control in the affairs of the industrial union or the general organization, but shall continue to function in its appropriate sphere through a joint propaganda committee, which shall conduct the halls as a recruiting center, reading room, a place for general and joint meetings, to raise funds, conduct open forums, handle local and routed speakers, and carry out general and special education.

Control of Organization Press.

1. The intolerable censorship which has been disguised as "control by the GEB" must be completely abolished. Members of long standing have been denied expression upon matters purely of policy, not only in *Industrial Solidarity*, but also in the *General Office Bulletin*. This usurpation of power by the GEB must stop.

2. On all matters of general policy, free discussion must be given to members in all organization papers; no one editor or official to be allowed to reject such articles; any rejection to be made by committee, which must record the reason for rejection in its minutes, furnish the contributor a copy, and publish its reason in the same paper to which the rejected article was sent by the member or members.

International Unity.

1. The IWW and its separate industrial unions should endorse the action of the Anglo-Russian Unity Committee in proposing a world congress of all the unions of the world, the delegates of which are to meet without conditions upon this issue, to unite the two great labor union internationals, the Red International of Labor Unions and the International Federation of Trade Unions, together with all other unions, into a new and single giant international based upon the class struggle. Moreover, the net convention of the IWW should instruct its general officers to aid in the movement and stand ready to participate in any general conference.

2. A delegation representative of the large industrial unions of the IWW should attend the next World Congress of the Red International of Labor Unions.

For Committees of Action.

Capitalism in its final imperialist stage is closely organized on an international scale to crush every attempt on the part of any section of the world's workers to emancipate labor or even to gain better conditions. Fascism, war, and murderous counter-revolution are taking the lives of tens of thousands of valiant workers.

This should lead at once to the formation of committees of action in every key industry, especially in every transport center, to unite all

workers for defense of their class brothers and to prevent aggression against workers engaged in struggle.

The need for world unity of labor grows hourly, and the leading position in the movement for unity of the Red International of Labor Unions is well illustrated in the formation and activity of the Anglo-Russian committee for international unity. The IWW must not fail to give its utmost support to the movement, and by its delegate attending and reporting the next RILU World Congress, the members of the IWW may realize that only by affiliation with the RILU can the IWW take its place in the vanguard of the revolutionary unions of the world.

For Responsible Officials.

The officials of the IWW, as in all unions, always exercise an influence and power for good or ill that is beyond control of constitutions and by-laws. Officials must be chosen wisely, but this cannot be done when the candidates do not make known to the members the issues and policies they believe in.

Names and personality mean nothing to the members outside a limited few. Running "John" against "Arthur" in the last election, for instance, was a blind confusion to the member, moreover, it is a craft union fakers' custom which leads to corruption.

Let every candidate for all offices be required to state publicly to the membership the policies which he intends to carry out if elected. Then give him power and respect, so long and only so long as he carries out these policies.

The Red International Affiliation Committee proposes especially to the rank and file members of the IWW that they demand every candidate for legislative and executive office in the IWW to declare himself openly as to his stand for or against every item of the above program of action, and explain why.

Red International Affiliation Committee,
618 South Hermitage Ave., Chicago, Illinois

Edited by Tim Davenport

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