

The People.

VOL. VII, NO. 6

NEW YORK, SUNDAY, MAY 9, 1897

PRICE 3 CENTS

FIRST EDITORIAL

Restiveness Among Colored Workingmen.

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The attitude of the colored population towards the Republican party, as portrayed by their New York organ, *The Age*, illustrates how easy it is for the untutored workers to attribute to false causes the ill-treatment they receive at the hands of their exploiters, the capitalist class, and furnishes, from a fresh source, additional evidence of the importance of the principle of the class struggle to correctly direct the judgment of the proletariat.

The Age complains bitterly of the treatment received by the colored men from the Republican party. It points out how many Southern white men have been appointed to office by the McKinley administration, while colored men are left out in the cold; and it wistfully asks the question: "Are we (the colored people) in politics?"

The complaint proceeds from the belief that neglect of the colored people by McKinley is due to their color. Taking this view of the case, well may our colored fellow wage slaves feel puzzled. If, however, they look more closely at the facts, they will discover that the neglect of which they complain is in no way attributable to their color, but is closely akin to the treatment which the Republican party bestows on the WORKING CLASS, regardless of "race, creed or previous condition of servitude;" and if they follow this train of thought they will presently be able to see quite clearly the trees in the political woods: they will discover that, not only has the Republican party no more regard for the white workingmen than it has for the negro workingman, but that the attitude of the Republican party in the matter is identical with that of the Democratic party. Once arrived so far, our colored brothers will see that it is not as BLACKS that the Republican party turns its back upon them but as PROLETARIANS. And this is the central truth.

The colored men were, until recently, particularly the victims of capitalist deception. Right after the war, the Republican capitalist class needed the negro to serve it as a mask for its own purposes. In those and the immediately following days,

it was necessary to make much of the negro. Accordingly, the negro race received “recognition.” But time passed on, the Republican capitalists grew more powerful, cast more root in Southern soil, and, proportionally, became less dependent upon the good will of the negro, until to-day, when they no longer need him. In the measure that this stage was reached, the class-line—not the color line, THAT cuts no figure—was drawn sharper between the Republicans: the capitalist class of Republicans ceased to need the negro workman as a mask for its aspirations and dropped him—just as it had dropped the other workers.

Time was when the class line between capitalists and workers was so thin that all the workers were “doted” on by the capitalist parties, just as the Republicans recently “doted” on the negro. Now that is all gone by, and, as a result, neither of the old parties has any use for the workingman after election.

Let the colored workers be penetrated with this fact. Then will they wheel in line with their other fellow workers, and, finding that their trials are identical, join in the pursuit of the class aims of their, the working class—the overthrow of the system of wage-slavery.

[Transcribed and edited by Robert Bills for the official Web site of the Socialist Labor Party of America.](#)

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