

Why Belong to the Union? ^[1]

In the first place the union holds out the promise of better life. The man or woman who works for wages in an [unorganized trade](#) or calling works for longer hours or lower wages or has to deal with conditions that eat into both wage compensation and satisfaction in the job. An agency that brings hope to such situations, restores human dignity and purpose in living. Again, the day's work becomes worth while....

The second service of the union which I wish to submit is the protection it affords against irregular employment and various emergencies. Unemployment is the [spectre](#) ^[2] (sic) that [besets](#) ^[3] many a wage earner responsible for obligations and the welfare of others. The union protects its members against unfair discrimination and discharge at the [caprice](#) ^[4] of [foremen](#) ^[5]. Some unions furnish out-of-work or unemployment benefits or insurance. Other unions have helped to regularize production and hence stabilize employment. The union has been a factor in convincing managements that it pays to have a retained, stable force of workers....

The third union service to which I ask you to give attention is opportunities for adult education and continuous personal growth. Every union has a trade journal or literature that presents the news of the trade and helps the members to keep in touch with industrial and social development. The union [constitutes](#) ^[6] the agency through which the American Federation of Labor seeks to provide information and educational opportunity. The union itself can set up its own educational enterprises. By [affiliating](#) ^[7] with the Workers Education Bureau it can have the benefit of specially prepared texts, literature and advisory service. By its collective book purchasing service, the Bureau makes it possible for all its members to purchase practically all books at a considerable discount.

In the fourth place, through the union wage earners can exert collective political influence that gains consideration. Unorganized wage earners as voters are generally the pawns of designing politicians and have little or no influence in political developments. But if organized in a union and following a program determined by the union, you can force politicians to consider your needs and interests and instead of being the pawns of political machines, you can reverse the situation and can bring about a situation in which human welfare is the dominating consideration. Organization, discipline, education, are necessary for intelligent political action through the union.

In the fifth place, through a union wage earners can take effective part in the social problems of community life. If organized in a union you can help provide better schools and better playgrounds for your children; better opportunities for recreation for yourselves, better parks, better community centers, better home environments. Your union may maintain rooms for union headquarters and also use these rooms for club purposes so that it may afford members opportunities to enjoy musical social, literary and educational pleasures as well as meet the business needs of the union.

The [enumeration](#) ^[8] of these possible services indicates the [manifold](#) ^[9] services the union may render. Its possibilities are limited only by the energy, persistence and vision of its members....

Can you, a wage earner, afford not to belong to a union? Through you may not realize the need of this protection now, can you afford to be without the potential protection of a self-dependent organization mindful of the best interests of wage earners in their relation to production and competent to maintain and advance those interests? Can industry itself afford to be without unions competent to take care of this essential group in emergencies and in technical changes inseparable from progress?

The unions can be maintained only through dependable membership. The union needs you and you need the union. Join the union of your trade and perform a constructive part within your group.

User Tags:

[African Americans](#) ^[10]

[history](#) ^[11]

[labor](#) ^[12]

[North Carolina History](#) ^[13]

[Page](#) ^[14]

[Students](#) ^[15]

[Teachers](#) ^[16]

[unions](#) ^[17]

[Creative Commons BY-NC-SA](#) ^[18]

From:

[ANCHOR: A North Carolina History Online Resource](#) ^[19]

Copyright Date:

2009

3 January 2018

Links

[1] <https://ncpedia.org/anchor/why-belong-union> [2] <https://ncpedia.org/glossary/spectre> [3] <https://ncpedia.org/glossary/beset> [4] <https://ncpedia.org/glossary/caprice> [5] <https://ncpedia.org/glossary/foremen> [6] <https://ncpedia.org/glossary/constitute> [7] <https://ncpedia.org/glossary/affiliate> [8] <https://ncpedia.org/glossary/enumeration> [9] <https://ncpedia.org/glossary/manifold> [10] <https://ncpedia.org/category/user-tags/african-american> [11] <https://ncpedia.org/category/user-tags/history> [12] <https://ncpedia.org/category/user-tags/labor> [13] <https://ncpedia.org/category/user-tags/north-carolina-6> [14] <https://ncpedia.org/category/user-tags/page> [15] <https://ncpedia.org/category/user-tags/students> [16] <https://ncpedia.org/category/user-tags/teachers> [17] <https://ncpedia.org/category/user-tags/unions> [18] <https://ncpedia.org/category/user-tags/creative-commons> [19] <https://ncpedia.org/category/entry-source/anchor-north>