

Martin Luther King Day



On Monday, January 15th this nation will celebrate Martin Luther King Jr. Day. We know of Dr. King as the preeminent warrior in the fight against the injustice of racism. Racism however was not his only fight.

Dr. King was also a passionate and powerful ally of labor unions in their fight for workplace justice. Dr. King understood that social and economic injustice in the workplace was born from the same enemy that gave us Jim Crow outside of the workplace. He found that the injustice on the farm was also to be found on the factory floor. In a speech to the AFL-CIO Fourth Constitutional Convention in 1961 Dr. King said " Our needs are identical with labor's needs; decent wages, fair working conditions, livable housing, old age security, health and welfare measures... conditions in which families can grow, have an education for their children, and respect in the community."

Dr. King believed that the forces against racism and the forces against workplace injustice could and should unite in solidarity against a common foe. In the coming years on many occasions they would do just that. The battles that they collectively fought then, paved the way for the victories that we all benefit from today.

The fight however, is not over, nor will it probably ever be. As union brothers and sisters, we must always be vigilant, always stay engaged and always remain steadfast in solidarity. We must do these things to ensure that the same forces that

opposed Dr. King and labor unions then, know and understand now, that we will never, ever take one step back in the fight for equality and justice in the work place or out of it.