

REPORT BY INTERNATIONAL PRESIDENT A. PHILIP RANDOLPH  
TO THE SIXTH TRIENNIAL CONVENTION AND FORTY-THIRD  
ANNIVERSARY OF THE BROTHERHOOD OF SLEEPING CAR PORTERS  
NEW ORLEANS, LOUISIANA, SEPTEMBER 2, 1968

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International Officers and Delegates of the Sixth Triennial Convention and Forty-third Anniversary of the Brotherhood of Sleeping Car Porters: Greetings!

Forty-three years ago, in the Elks' Auditorium at 126 Street and Seventh Avenue, New York City, the first meeting of Pullman porters was held which led to the organization of the Brotherhood of Sleeping Car Porters.

It was the responsibility of your humble servant to plan and preside over that meeting. It was probably one of the strangest and most unorthodox meetings ever held to set up a union or a church or a fraternal society, or for any reason.

As the chairman, I called the meeting to order, gave the prayer, began the singing of Hold the Fort, followed by my address which dealt with the reasons for calling this meeting at the suggestion of some unknown Pullman Porters to form a bona fide labor union of Pullman Porters for Pullman Porters.

But, before beginning my speech, I advised and cautioned the audience which packed the hall that no porter in the meeting should make a speech, or a motion, or ask a question, to avoid being reported by stool pigeons to the Pullman superintendents which, most likely, would result in his being fired.

Before announcing the end of the meeting, I pointed out to the men that this meeting was conducted without porters' participation to avoid their victimization which would play into the hands of Pullman to wreck the movement by throwing some of our



stouthearted men in the streets in the beginning of our crusade. I added that there would not be any future meetings like this one since the porters cannot hope to build a bona fide labor union without their taking the risks of joining the union and fighting for the union. Such is the start of the building of every trade union.

As I looked over that group of silent but stalwart men, I felt, with deep emotion, that there were porters who would become economic martyrs for the cause, yes, the cause, because the Brotherhood of Sleeping Car Porters, phoenix-like, would rise bloodied from its strenuous struggles as a great moral challenge, as well as a powerful economic force, in its victorious march for economic justice as a union and as a cause.

AUGUST 25, 1925

This dramatic, unforgettable meeting was held August 25, 1925, forty-three years ago, seven years after the end of the first World War. The angry winds of reaction were rising. Powerful economic royalists, represented by the United States Chamber of Commerce and the National Association of Manufacturers, had contrived the so-called American Plan which was a euphemism for the Company Union, Yellow Dog Contract, and Right-to-Work laws.

Since William Gibbs McAdoo, son-in-law of President Woodrow Wilson, and a member of his Cabinet and Director of Transportation, had, in the interest of avoiding work stoppages during the war, proclaimed and issued General Orders asserting the right of workers in war production and related industries such as railroads to self-organization, Pullman, one of America's corporate giants, in order to relieve the Pullman porters of the trouble of



organizing a union, promptly set up the famous Plan of Employee Representation, a bona fide company union of the worst stripe.

Phony nationwide elections of officers of the Plan were held periodically. If a porter failed to vote right in the elections he was called in to give the reason why, suggesting some possible contamination by "that Randolph movement." As a rule, some question was raised concerning debts of the porter of which Pullman stool pigeons had informed the Superintendent, hinting to the porter that he might find it necessary to seek a job from Randolph who has no job himself.

#### EMPLOYEE PLAN CONFERENCES

Following the elections, conferences of the Plan, composed of the prearranged elected representatives in the various Pullman districts and agencies in the country, were held, usually in the YMCA in Chicago. It was addressed by one or two important officials of the Pullman Company and some Negro bishop, important preacher or politician.

At the close of the conference, a so-called Agreement, written under Pullman supervision, was read and presented to the delegates for signatures. No porter in the conference, of course, would be so ungentlemanly as to suggest any changes in the Agreement or hesitate to sign on the dotted line.

Strangely enough there was one such instance. The culprit was our distinguished and courageous First International Vice President, Bennie Smith. The occasion scared the porter-delegates to death, shocked, startled and stunned Pullman officials in the headquarters in Chicago and throughout the country. Pullman officials, proud and



powerful, some of whom were scions and Brahmins of the world of industry and finance, were livid with rage, chiefly over the fact that their stool-pigeon system had failed. It just was not understandable how a screened elected company union delegate to the prestigious Plan of Employee Representation conference could fail to sign the Agreement.

Despite the prayers of the stool-pigeon fraternity with Brother Smith, pleading with him, in the name of the future of the porters and the Negro race, to sign the Agreement, he refused. When it was all over he came over to the Vincennes Hotel where Brother Webster and myself, who knew what was going to happen, awaited him. We went out and celebrated the occasion in the nightspots on the Southside. This was one of the great victories of the Brotherhood over Pullman, and it was our major propaganda piece from then on.

Of course Brother Smith was promptly fired. I immediately had him to go South, especially to Jacksonville to direct the organization campaign with Brother Darby who was representing the Brotherhood. Brother Smith Proceeded to the South armed with bundles of the Messenger Magazine for which he sought subscriptions from the porters and the public.

Pullman officials, aroused and troubled over the presence of Bennie Smith in Jacksonville, alerted the police about his activities. The police arrested him and he was charged with selling a magazine which advocated social equality. This was enough. He was hauled before a judge as an agent of a northern union to foment strife and trouble among the colored population. The judge told Brother Smith he would give him a few hours to get out of town or he would send him to the Blue Jay Farm. When he returned north, I assigned him



to supervise the Detroit and Canadian area. He is there now.

#### DISCHARGE OF SOME AGGRESSIVE PORTERS

Recognizing the growing involvement with and commitment of the porters to the Brotherhood of Sleeping Car Porters, Pullman strategists resorted to the age-old weapon of the discharge to halt the march of the union. In St. Louis, Oakland, Chicago and New York City, old porters, nearing pension age and active in the Brotherhood, were struck down for the slightest dereliction of duty. Naturally, this bare-knuckles attack tended to throw the fear of God into the hearts of the porters and their families. But it didn't break their spirit. They continued to attend the meetings of the Brotherhood and joined in singing "Hold the fort for we are coming, union men be strong."

At the end of every year some of the most gallant warriors of the Brotherhood union army had fallen, but the army continued to march on.

#### FEDERAL LOCALS IN AFL

Realizing that the porters needed the sustaining moral consciousness of membership in a wider community of union forces, the Brotherhood secured some ten, more or less, federal union charters from the American Federation of Labor which gave the porters' leadership a voice in the house of organized labor. Thus, in every annual convention of the AFL the voice of the porters was heard demanding in resolutions the abolition of discrimination based upon race, color, religion or national origin in all unions affiliated with the Federation. While the resolutions were consistently rejected, with attacks upon the porters' leaders, they were consistently presented from year to year. We missed only one



convention from 1929. It was the convention which was held in Vancouver, British Columbia. Reason: unable to raise the railroad fare for Brother Webster and myself. It was reported that when it was certain the Brotherhood delegates had not registered, some of the delegates laughingly called upon President Green, in the interest of peace, to hold future conventions in Vancouver.

#### INTERNATIONAL CHARTER

But while President Green at times manifested irritation under bitter attacks of Brotherhood delegates on the Federation, he issued a statement of cooperation of the AFL with the Brotherhood when it set a strike date against Pullman. He counseled with Brotherhood leaders on strategy in handling the strike threat, assuring us of financial help in the event of the strike while advising that it would be an act of trade union wisdom to call it off and resume the building of membership.

And when the Brotherhood Memphis local division was denied the use of the city auditorium for a public labor education rally, President Green, upon being informed about the incident, ordered the Memphis Central Labor Council to call upon Mayor Crump, the powerful Boss of the city, and demand that the use of the city auditorium be granted the Brotherhood. The Mayor refused. President Green then ordered the Central Labor Council officers to cooperate with Brotherhood officials in securing a suitable place and to give the labor rally their full support. This was done. A monster meeting was held in one of the largest Negro churches in Memphis. It was opened by the president of the labor council, followed by your humble servant who paid his respects to Boss Crump, much to the discomfort of the Negro leadership of the city who had



urged the Brotherhood leaders to call the meeting off and leave town, expressing fear lest the city become the victim of racial violence.

In the early 1930's, President Green presented an international charter to the leaders of the Brotherhood at a meeting in a public school in Chicago. The Brotherhood was the first labor union under Negro leadership to be granted an international charter in the history of organized labor in the country. This was not because the AFL had refused to grant such a charter but because there was no bona fide union international in scope under Negro leadership to receive one.

#### REPRESENTATION ELECTION

But this international charter was only available to the Brotherhood after it attained the structural status of an international union. It took the Brotherhood ten long years to achieve this goal. It required that the Brotherhood win a nationwide election against the Pullman company union under the supervision of the National Mediation Board. This was done in 1935.

#### AGREEMENT

Following the certification of the Brotherhood as the duly authorized representative of Pullman porters and attendants, conferences for the negotiation of an agreement covering wages and rules governing working conditions began, and continued over a period of two years. When the Agreement was completed and signed by representatives of Pullman and the Brotherhood, an indeterminate period of the interpretation and application of the rules of the Agreement began.

#### M. P. WEBSTER

The acknowledged master of interpreting and applying the rules



of the Agreement for the settlement of claims and grievances for the members was Brother M. P. Webster. There was nothing he enjoyed more than winning a case involving a claim or grievance against Pullman or a railroad. The international vice presidents and international field representatives of the Brotherhood attained their proficiency in the handling of claims and grievances largely under his tutelage.

Fortunately for the members of the Brotherhood, the international and local officers of the organization, in the United States and Canada, are men of unimpeachable integrity, organizational knowledgeability and expertise.

Be it said to the eternal credit of the Brotherhood that it has lifted the porters and attendants, train and mail porters from a condition of semi-serfs to the status of middle-class wage earners with a sense of greater economic and social security.

#### TASK AHEAD

Since separate statements of significant improvements in wages, working conditions, job protection, vacation, paid holidays, hospital and medical care, pensions and away-from-home expense allowance have been set forth in detail, for the Pullman porters, railroad sleeping car porters, attendants, train and mail porters in the United States and Canada, by International Vice President McNeal and International Field Representative Blanchette, I will not list them in this report.

May I observe, however, that at the termination of the moratorium in 1969 of allowable wage increases for Pullman and railroad employes in the United States represented by the Brotherhood, Section 6 notices for all of the wage increases received by the



nonoperating railway employees during the moratorium will be sent to the Pullman Company and railway carriers for the application of the said increased wages to the employees represented by the Brotherhood.

#### DECLINE OF RAILROAD PASSENGER SERVICE

Because of the continued discontinuance and deterioration of railway and Pullman passenger service, one of the most important and encouraging developments for Pullman and railway porters and attendants in recent years is a report of the Interstate Commerce Commission to the Congress appearing in the New York Times, June 26, 1968, which repeatedly criticised the Federal Government for not promoting rail passenger service and also pointed out that the lack of government promotion encouraged the railroads to allow the quality and quantity of their passenger service to deteriorate.

G. E. Leighty, chairman of the Railway Labor Executives' Association, said: "The report of Interstate Commerce Commission Hearing Examiner John Messer on the plight of the rail passenger service in the United States is indeed a hopeful sign that the Commission may now assume responsible leadership in the field of rail passenger service."

In contrast to the negative attitude of most of the railroad corporations, Mr. Stuart Saunders, chairman of Penn Central Company, on June 6, 1968, declared: "I would like to propose, either as corollary or an alternative to a congressional review, that a National Railroad Passenger Council be created by appropriate governmental action to expedite solution of this (passenger service) problem. This council should be a group representative of the public, the railroads, and the governmental agencies concerned



with transportation policy. It should move promptly, in as brief a time as possible, to study the problem and issue a report as a basis for formulating a railroad passenger service program within the larger context of the national transportation policy. Such a report is fundamental in determining the extent to which the federal government must support rail passenger service."

This statement by Mr. Saunders, who is undoubtedly the most powerful personality in the railway industry today, is the most encouraging ray of hope for the revival of the railway passenger ~~service~~ which has appeared in the last decade. I want to suggest that he left out one of the most important factors, namely, organized railroad labor.

It is difficult to understand, in the light of a population explosion reflected in a continuing congestion of the airways with airplanes, and the highways with automobiles and trucks, how any single mode of existing transportation can be eliminated, and especially railroads that are indispensable in peace and war.

#### THE BROTHERHOOD AND THE BLACK GHETTOS

Now, it is a well-known fact that the Brotherhood was built by the porters - Pullman and railroad porters and attendants in the United States and Canada.

Since the Brotherhood was born in the belly of the black ghettos in the United States and Canada, its life and struggles were naturally influenced and affected by the leadership and institutions, hatreds, poverty and prejudices of the Negro communities. Thus, white labor unions that were universally charged, with some justification, with the sin of having excluded Negro workers from membership were violently roasted as the enemy of the race. White



capitalists, on the other hand, who contributed, though meagerly, financially to Negro colleges were viewed as benefactors of the race. Pullman naturally exploited this windfall of race bias.

BLACK POWER - BLACK MILITANTS

Today the black community is torn and rent by the controversy over Black Power.

The cry of Black Power by Black Militants is based upon the assumption that Negroes are powerless because they are black. Negroes are powerless because they are poor, and they are poor because they are property-less and lack certain types of organization. Thus, it is pertinent in this connection to observe upon the sources of power. They are as follows:

First, the basic source of power is the ownership of property;

Second, the organization of corporate business for the production and sale of goods and services for profit;

Third, the organization of workers into labor unions to bargain collectively with employers for the sale of their labor in the labor market for wages;

Fourth, the organization of consumers' and producers' cooperatives and credit unions to avoid exploitation by high prices;

Fifth, the formation of community organizations to plan for the investment of social capital by private and public agencies for the creation of social, cultural and spiritual values, such as parks, playgrounds, libraries, museums of art and natural history, highways, public schools, colleges and universities, theatres and opera houses, for the improvement and enrichment of the life of the community;

Sixth, the building of political organizations;



Seventh, the organization of the military arm of the government.

Such are the major sources of power.

Of course, organized religion and organized education are forces that exercise a profound influence upon the course of life of every people.

But although Black Militants evince no comprehension of the nature and sources of power their explosive rhetoric of bravado creates a sort of traumatic shock wave which exacts unprecedented public attention and concern about the life and living of the Negro in America.

In fact, if they didn't exist, I would propose, in the interest of the advancement of the Negro and America, that they be created. Not because their position is strategically correct but because in every revolutionary or reform movement three general categories of policy and action emerge; namely, the conservative or right, moderate or center, and radical or left. These are not stable and unchangeable social strata, but rather a complex of processes that go through uninterrupted change of coming into being and passing away as a result of inner impulses to development and modification, and because of the contradiction and conflict of the forces and tendencies at work in the movement. Moreover, historically, dialectically and philosophically, nothing in the social, intellectual or physical world is final, absolute, sacred or omniscient.

Let the Black Militants speak!

This is not to suggest that I am in agreement with all of their tactics, strategy and methodology. Not at all! However, I am persuaded to agree that the Black Militants have been responsible



for deepening the American consciousness of the immediacy, magnitude and danger of the racial crisis in the cities.

They have quickened American concern about opportunity for jobs for Negroes in all areas of American life.

They have challenged and stirred the American mind and conscience about the exclusion of the cultural achievements of Black Americans from the historiography of our American society.

They have vigorously stressed the need of the Negro's interest in self-help.

They have accented the search for identity and the Africans' contribution of an ancient glorious historical cultural heritage and endowment to world civilization.

Such are the assets of the Black Militants.

#### LIABILITIES OF BLACK MILITANTS

A major liability of Black Militants is their worship at the altar of the cult of violence, in obedience to the nihilistic philosophy of Franz Fanon, the French-speaking Negro psychiatrist from Martinique, who became the ideologist of the Algerian National Liberation Front during its long war against France. In his major work, The Wretched of the Earth, he expounds his simplistic philosophy.

While theories of violent revolutionary action may be applicable in a small semi-industrial-agricultural colony such as Algeria, it does not follow that they can explain the socio-political behavior patterns in a highly complex, scientific, technological society such as the United States.

Waving Marx and Lenin aside as revolutionary old-hat, Black Militants, along with their fellow white student revolutionaries,



follow unquestioningly the charismatic Ernesto Che Guevara in his catastrophic guerrilla warfare in the Bolivian mountains of Latin America in quest for identification with the struggles of the Third World to bring down the centers of exploitation of Western capitalist man.

Swayed and intrigued by the legend of the revolutionary story of Regis Debray of Paris, now in prison in Bolivia, who wrote an explosive book, Revolution in the Revolution, black and white militants accept it as a veritable little bible of revolutionary tactics and strategy for the liberation of the oppressed and exploited colored world of Have-nots.

#### VIOLENCE

Thus, leaders of the Student Nonviolent Coordinating Committee go around calling upon Negroes to "get themselves some guns" for protection when trouble comes.

This commitment to violence as the major strategy to effect basic social change is not only an exhibition of the sickness of infantile leftism but a dangerous form of mindless madness. Violence settles nothing. Violence only begets violence. It does not inspire a forward march by the black avant-garde to new fields of racial creativity, but to reaction, frustration and despair.

#### DON'T BLAME BLACK MILITANTS

But it would be a gross miscarriage of justice to blame Black Militants for their psychological delinquencies. Their racial behavior patterns have been formed and shaped by a quarter of a thousand years of slavery and a hundred years of segregation, the most brutalizing form of violence ever visited upon human beings. When you add to this record of oppression and man's inhumanity to



man, decades of lynchings and peonage, it is an act of unspeakable arrogance and stupidity to berate the American black man about violence.

It is a postulate of Holy Writ that if you sow the wind you will reap the whirlwind. America has sown the wind and she is reaping the whirlwind.

#### BLACK AMERICA FIGHTS FOR NEW LIFE

Just as a chick, which is the result of the transformation of an egg exposed to the heat of the body of a hen for twenty-one, or more, days, pecks a hole in the shell, creating a spot of blood and causing it to crack up, thereby releasing it to step forth into the world and stand upon its feet as a new independent life, so the Negro in America has been transformed by a long and tragic experience in the social, economic and political shell of white racism, expressed in the horrible oppression of segregation and discrimination, which was justified by the <sup>FALLACIOUS AND STRICTLY</sup> doctrine of hereditary racial inferiority, and <sup>now</sup> steps forth as a new force in quest of a new life of freedom, equality, racial and social justice for an independent existence, struggle and adventure.

Hence the Black man is now involved in a great historical process, after centuries of environmental, cultural and economic determinism, to take his place as a duly recognized member of the civilized family of mankind.

The nature of the historical preparation of the Negro, who constitute the ghetto underclass, will consist in proceeding dialectically through leaps, catastrophes and revolutions.

While modern medical science can render the birth of a child less painful it cannot stop the birth or eliminate total pain after



the birth process has reached a certain stage.

Thus, the birth of the concept and urge for a new freedom, independence, justice, identity and equality of black Americans will inevitably be attended by racial and social pain, agony, the loss of some battles, frustration, despair, and some bloodshed, for it is set down in Holy Writ that there can be no remission of sin except through blood. Though the struggles of the Negro against second-rate status be attended by blood and tears, it will never be abandoned.

The Black Revolution cannot fail! It will not fail! If it were to fail, America would fail, for the Black Revolution is a continuation of the American nationalist revolution of which the incompleting Civil War Revolution was a basic phase.

In this connection, I do not refer to riots in the streets involving the throwing of bottles and bricks and Molotov cocktails, setting stores and buildings afire. Riots are not a revolution. They may be the by-product of a revolution. They, in fact, are the handiwork of the lumpen-proletariat that may, and often do, become the engine of the counterrevolution.

One has only to note the uncontrollable changing character of the Chinese Cultural Proletarian Revolution for and against Mao Tse-tung. Revolutions tend to turn societies around to develop in a different and new direction which involves organization, education, and dedication of leadership for social justice. Whereas riots are emotional outbursts of a reign of terror by the forgotten, unemployed and unemployable, hopeless, hungry members of the ghetto underclass, black <sup>AND</sup> ~~or~~ <sup>AND THEN</sup> white, to prey upon society regardless of race or color, and <sup>TO</sup> dissipate the black revolutionary determination.



Moreover, one of the great lessons of the ancient medieval and modern world is that when the people are without bread they will break out into insurrectional uprisings against society. Let Negroes beware of the dangerous propaganda that Jews are responsible for their economic ill fortune.

May God help the Black militants, moderates or conservatives never to bear the guilt in their hearts of stirring up the passions of hate in the black masses against the Jews in the black ghettos which could result in their hands becoming incarnadine with the blood of our Jewish brothers, or of <sup>the formation of</sup> ~~going in~~ some black Nazi cabal to make it impossible for Jews to do business in any Negro community.

If Negroes have suffered from unfair prices from some Jewish merchants, they have met a similar fate at the hands of black and white Christian merchants. Who among the consumers of America has not heard the warning "caveat emptor" - let the buyer beware?

#### BLACK ANTI-SEMITISM

Though Negro anti-whiteism is a form of emotional irrationalism, it is a natural response to the conspiracy of white racism which enslaved and oppressed Negroes for <sup>OVER A QUARTER</sup> ~~nearly a half~~ of a thousand years. But Negroes have no such justification for the senseless bigotry of anti-Semitism.

Surely Negroes, who have suffered from lynchings of white Christian Klansmen, will not spit upon the outstretched hand of their Jewish brothers and sisters, some of whom, like young Andy Goodman and Michael Schwerner, gave their lives in the Civil Rights Revolution for the freedom of their black brothers and sisters.

While the Negro lives in a world poisoned by the virus of



Christian hatred of the Jew, they must develop the strength and nobility of the human spirit to resist, resent and reject the degenerate, uncivilized, Christian anti-Semitic hatemongers and develop the moral will, decency and understanding to help free the white Christian world of its anti-Semitism and anti-Negroism.

#### LAW AND ORDER

When the question of violence is raised, the issue of law and order is posed. Because Negroes cannot avoid periods of socio-racial turmoil, trials and troubles, it does not follow that they should not seek to avoid them, just as at certain periods a community which is visited by storms and hurricanes with terror and destruction should out of common sense attempt to escape or mitigate them.

Now while everybody is naturally concerned about preventing riots, lawlessness, looting and the burning of stores and houses from which neither black or white citizens can fully escape, it should be obvious that riots and lawlessness are the effects of a cause and the effects will not disappear until the cause is removed.

What is the cause of riots and lawlessness? The answer is racial and social injustice. Law and order, while desirable and necessary, is not an end. It is not sacred. It is a means to the end which is justice. It must be remembered that chattel slavery existed for three hundred years under law and order. Of course, racial and social justice can only exist within the framework of law and order.

While law and order must be maintained for the protection of life and property, and to prevent the cities from degenerating into anarchy and lawlessness, law and order must not be used as a pretext



for the repression of the Civil Rights Revolution by the billy and gun of the police which, of course, will only pour fuel upon the fires of racial anger, resentment and rebellion and disorder.

Thus, law and order which is not an end but a means to an end; namely, racial and social justice, is a necessary condition to racial and social justice. In very truth, racial and social justice and law and order must go hand in hand.

#### ALL AMERICA RESPONSIBLE FOR RIOTS

All America is responsible for the cities being under a siege of violence, riots and lawlessness because all America constitute the historical cultural and environmental determinism that rendered the catastrophic explosion of violence and disorder in the cities inevitable.

Just as it is impossible to halt the biochemical transformation of the egg under exposure to the heat and development forces of the body of the hen, moving, as it were, to the shattering of the shell by the revolt of the chick for a free, independent life, so the steady, planless, irrational, though natural, trend of the developing socio-civil rights revolution will move ever forward to the breakup of the hard shell of the social-racial imprisonment of the Negro as a fraction of a man and citizen by white racism.

#### BLACK COMMUNITIES

One of the major demands of Black Powerites is the control of the black community, with schools, businesses and various institutions under black control.

There is no sound argument why Negroes should not seek to own and operate businesses in the ghettos, just as the Jews controlled the businesses on the Lower East Side of New York in the early years



of the twentieth century. But, of course, the Jews did not seek to confine the ownership and operation of businesses to the Jewish communities. They owned businesses all over the city. They practically controlled the businesses in the heart of the city, and this is as it should be. <sup>Jews in</sup> Any ethnic group should be free to develop <sup>and own</sup> businesses in any part of any community.

The control of the so-called Black Community is no solution of the employment problem of the masses of black workers. If Negroes owned every business in Harlem and the Bedford-Stuyvesant area, including stores, banks, restaurants and hot-dog stands, it would not constitute a drop in the bucket as a solution of the Negro job problem. Retail stores don't represent large volumes of business transactions. They don't make millionaires. <sup>Only basic</sup> ~~INDUSTRIAL AND FINANCIAL CORPORATIONS~~ <sup>INDUSTRIAL AND FINANCIAL CORPORATIONS</sup> <sup>national in scope can develop</sup> Moreover, there are ghettos packed and jammed with Negroes in every city in this country, many of whom owned beautiful homes, but the businesses are owned and operated by white merchants. <sup>mean</sup> <sup>inff</sup> <sup>ul</sup> <sup>103</sup> <sup>oppor</sup> <sup>Toni</sup> <sup>TIES.</sup>

In the West Indian islands the black population represent some 90 to 98 percent, <sup>of the people</sup> but they don't control the economy. The economy is in the hands of East Indians, Chinese, Englishmen and Jews. Negroes work for these groups on the sugar cane plantations and in the stores and hotels. Of course, some day this might change, but not by driving these various ethnic groups out of the ghettos, or the islands, by violence. Any human being should enjoy the right to own and do business wherever he has the capital and ability to conduct business. The condition for operating a business successfully involves the capacity to compete. Negroes cannot expect to operate a business successfully on a basis of race. Negroes, like other consumers, will buy where they can get the best bargain in price and quality of goods and services. And this is as it should be.



Now, the idea of Negroes developing their own businesses is not the invention of black nationalists. Booker T. Washington was the father of this idea. His motto was: "Let your bucket down where you are."

#### BLACK CAPITALISM

Besides, black capitalism is no solution of Negro poverty anymore than is white capitalism a solution of the white poor. A Negro businessman, like a white businessman, is primarily concerned about operating his business for profit, not to abolish poverty. This is not to suggest that there should not be any Negro capitalists.

#### BLACK UNIONISM

And, of course, black unionism, a cardinal proposal of black militants, is pure fantasy.

Negro workers, like white workers, join unions to fight for higher wages, shorter hours of work, paid holidays, job protection, pensions, health and hospital insurance, not to advance black unionism. Black workers will join unions and fight black business employers just as hard and bitterly as white workers fight white employers for decent wages. And black businessmen will fight black employees to keep from meeting the wage demands of their black employees as white employers fight white workers.

#### BROTHERHOOD BLACK MILITANTS

Now, a word about the Brotherhood Black Militants. We had some, you know, and I am immensely proud of them. They flourished in the early dark days.

Bennie Smith, 1st International Vice President, was one. He stood up against the Pullman power establishment and refused to



sign a Yellow Dog Contract despite the fact every Pullman porter delegate to the conference signed on the dotted line.

There was Ashley L. Totten, our first International Secretary-Treasurer. When I sent out the Call and set the date for the porters' strike against Pullman, I made a brief trip to a number of Brotherhood divisions to make talks and note the state of the spirit of the men.

I found Totten in a little hole in a Negro business building collecting sawed-off shotguns, railroad iron taps, boxes of matches, knives and billies. It scared me. I asked him what was he going to do with the ammunition. He said he wasn't going to let any stool pigeon get into the Pullman yards. I told him he was going to get all of the Brotherhood officials put in jail before we got a chance to strike. I persuaded him to dispense with the hardware.

When the debate on the value of a union to the Pullman porters was planned, to be held in Chicago between a prominent Negro politician and myself, Totten arrived in Chicago on his run the morning of the day of the debate. He asked the Pullman superintendent for permission to lay over until the next day. The superintendent, naturally, knew why he wanted to lay over. He was refused. He laid over anyway and he was fired. The day after the debate Totten was the main speaker at a big Pullman porters' rally. He paced up and down the platform shaking his fists at the stool-pigeon department. Brother Webster whispered in my ear when Totten finished, "That's our man. Take him to the Coast with you." I did, and Totten laid on the stool pigeons at every stop.

When Totten and I got to the Coast we found Dellums and Dad More, two red-hot firebrands on the stool pigeons. The meeting



halls were packed with porters and Dellums called the roll of the stool pigeons and Dad More would cuss 'em out. Dellums was threatening to put the secretary of the Oakland Division in jail for stealing the dues. He got the Brotherhood money from the bonding company.

In the Twin Cities we were met by Frank Boyd, short and fat, who came rocking down the platform cussing out the stool pigeons. He had rounded up a bunch of Wobblies, Communists, Socialists, and Milk Drivers' Union radicals to meet me. During the strike threat, Brother Boyd had planned to poison all the stool pigeons. He chuckled and shook his fists exclaiming that he was going to put the stool pigeons in such a fix they couldn't get on the cars.

When Benny and myself got to Canada we found Blanchette who had the figures on the Canadian officials and labor law. He demanded that everybody be required to toe the mark, Canadian official and delinquent porter alike.

We found another crusader in Canada, Brother <sup>8013</sup> Jones, who never faltered.

#### MENACE OF GOVERNOR GEORGE WALLACE

The Presidential election of 1968 is assuming increasingly alarming orientations comparable to the Hayes-Tilden election of 1876 which, since neither the Republican candidate, Rutherford B. Hayes, or the Democratic candidate, Samuel J. Tilden, received a majority vote in the Electoral College, was thrown into the House of Representatives in which each state, regardless of size, had only one vote. As a result of political manipulations, the Republican candidate, Hayes, though he received a minority popular vote, was declared President. In compliance with a deal which gave him



the election, he promptly withdrew the Federal troops from the South, leaving the black freedmen at the mercy of their former slave masters. Such a tragedy!

Negroes must be ever vigilant that they fall into no such political trap again.

But if Governor George Wallace receives the electoral votes of the Southern and Border states, and this political eventuality is highly probable in view of his propaganda about crimes in the streets and states' rights, Negroes could become the victims of an arch segregationist and champion of know-nothingism with anti-labor and anti-liberal views. How bravely <sup>you must REMEMBER</sup> he stood in the door of Alabama University to bar the entrance of young Negro students!

PRESIDENT LYNDON BAINES JOHNSON

While any American has a right in our democratic society to express disagreement with and criticism of President Johnson's policies on Vietnam, funds for foreign aid to help the "have-not" peoples of Asia, Africa and Latin America, taxation, civil rights, or civil disorders, Negroes should stop and think about what President Johnson has done for them before they join the pack yelping for his blood.

What President in the history of the country has voluntarily refused to stand for renomination for reelection, both of which were possible, if not probable, because of his concern to rebuild the unity of the country which was ~~r~~iven over the war in Vietnam? Besides, although he didn't start the war in Vietnam, and was, and still is, abused as a warmonger, he startled the world when he brought the war into a peace conference.

With respect to the biggest domestic problem; namely, racial



conflict, President Johnson has done more to advance the cause of civil rights in securing the Congressional enactment of the Civil Rights Act of 1964, the Voting Rights Act of 1965, and the Open Occupancy Housing Act of 1968 than any president in the history of the country.

Moreover, he has construed and dealt with racial equality and opportunity in terms of factuality and result, as shown by his appointments of Negroes to public office as American citizens of moral worth and capability, the most significant ever made by any President.

At the top of the list: Thurgood Marshall as a Justice of the Supreme Court; Robert Weaver to a seat in the Cabinet as head of the Housing Department; Andrew Brimmer to a seat on the Federal Banking Reserve Board; Clifford Alexander, chairman of the Fair Employment Opportunity Commission; Constance Baker Motley as a Federal District Court judge, and Patricia Roberts Harris as Ambassador to Luxembourg.

He will go down in history as the President of the war on poverty, the war on white racism, and the father of the broadest and most far-reaching program of education, health and housing ever proposed in the United States or any other country in the world.

For these and other good reasons, the black and white poor, <sup>AND</sup> trade unionists, ~~and the illiterate~~, cannot in good conscience afford to turn their backs on President Johnson.

And, may I add that although I am not a pacifist, I went to jail for opposition to the first World War as <sup>AN IMPERIALIST WAR</sup> ~~imperialist~~, and because of the hypocrisy of the slogan "fighting to make the world safe for democracy" while Negroes were being lynched and disfranchised.

I do not now believe that the United States can or should



attempt to become the policemen of the world. We should stop the bombing of Hanoi and seek to disengage our involvement in the war in Vietnam at the earliest possible date, which I think is the objective of the President. I supported the Allied Forces in the second World War because of the Hitler-Nazi overtones of master white racism, imperialism and anti-Semitism.

GEORGE MEANY

And now permit me to hail and salute my good friend and co-worker, George Meany, distinguished, able and resourceful president of the AFL-CIO, a great labor statesman, a great American, and a great human being.

While the battle for the elimination of racial discrimination in the House of Labor is not yet over, definite and positive progress is being made. Be it said to the great credit of Brother Meany that the AFL-CIO fought side by side with the NAACP and other civil rights organizations in the memorable struggle for the enactment of federal legislation against racial discrimination in public accommodations, voting rights, jobs and housing.

George Meany is wholly committed to the policy that racial bias in labor unions is unsound, indefensible and morally wrong, and must go. The time will come, and soon, when not a single labor union bars a worker from membership or a seat in its policy-making bodies because he is black, and for this we must ever fight. And the time will come, and soon, when no job will be denied a worker because of the color of his skin, and for this we must ever fight.

THE PORTER

And now let me hail and salute the porters on Pullman and railroads in the U. S. and Canada. Let me hail and salute the



distinguished gallant, though fallen, warriors and dauntless leaders of the long, hard, desperate years of the Twenties, Thirties, Forties, Fifties, and onward.

Moneyless, friendless, but not hopeless, the Brotherhood held meetings every day or night in some divisions during the twelve years from its birth to the first day of negotiation with the management of Pullman.

Verily, the handful of porters who weathered the storms of Pullman oppression were the shock troops of Black Labor. They were the first black workers who had openly dared to beard the mighty industrial lion of Pullman in its den.

Yes, Pullman was fierce and cruel. It had brutally battered the railroad workers under the matchless leadership of the great Gene Debs in the celebrated Pullman strike of 1894.

During the bitter, grey and hapless days there was not a single Negro organization which the Brotherhood could call its friend, and only one or two black papers, and not a single nationally known Negro leader. The Brotherhood porters and leaders were the black untouchables. But the small band of militant, weatherbeaten black proletarian brothers of the ghetto never faltered. With heads erect and souls uncurbed, porters who had been fired on account of membership in the union were stirred by the spirit of the labor hymn, Solidarity Forever:

In our hands is placed a power greater than  
their hoarded gold

Greater than the might of armies magnified a  
thousand fold

We can bring to birth a new world from the  
ashes of the old

For the Union makes us strong.



They have taken untold millions that they never  
toiled to earn

But without our brain and muscle not a single  
wheel could turn

We can break their mighty power, gain our  
freedom when we learn

That the Union makes us strong.

The Brotherhood preached this philosophy to the black worker in particular, and the Negro communities in general. The Brotherhood gave the porter, and incidentally the Negro workers as a whole, a sense of racial and class identity and pride. While the Brotherhood fought to break down racial barriers in labor unions, it also fought against Negro workers permitting themselves to be used as scabs against their white brothers on strike.

F.E.P.C.

The Brotherhood is supremely proud of the fact that its ceaseless struggle against race bias in the labor movement brought about the establishment of the Civil Rights Department of the AFL-CIO; the placing of two Negro trade unionists on the Executive Council of the AFL-CIO; the placement of an increasing number of Negro workers on policy-making committees of national, international and local unions, and a continuous increase in the number of black representatives in national, international and local unions.

The concept of fair employment practice was the gift of the Brotherhood to the Negro, union labor, and the country, as a result of a proposed March on Washington of a hundred thousand Negroes for jobs in munitions plants and the government in 1941. Following the issuance of Executive Order 8802 by President Franklin D. Roosevelt, FEPC commissions and agencies were established in numerous states



and cities, placing Negroes in jobs before unheard of.

It was Brother Milton P. Webster, strongman of the Brotherhood, who put the steam behind the federal FEPC set up by President Roosevelt's executive order. In California, Brother C. L. Dellums, International Vice-President, served as chairman of the Fair Employment Practice Commission, and in the legislature of Missouri, Brother T. D. McNeal wrote and secured the enactment of fair employment practice legislation. In Canada, Brother A. R. Blanchette, International Representative, piloted the movement for the enactment of civil rights legislation.

#### ABOLITION OF JIM-CROW IN ARMED SERVICES

Today, Negroes have become high-ranking officers in practically all of the departments of the Armed Service because the Brotherhood led the fight which caused President Harry S. Truman to issue an executive order banning discrimination based upon race or color, religion or national origin in 1949.

William H. Bowe, International Secretary-Treasurer, is the Treasurer of the New York City Central Labor Council, the largest in the country with over a million members.

B. F. McLaurin, Eastern Zone Supervisor, is a member of the Board of Higher Education of New York City, and recently was responsible for the appointment of a Negro educator as President of Bronx Community College, the highest post a Negro occupies in the educational system of New York City.

And there is a long host of aggressive, militant, dedicated rank-and-file porters who gave this great Brotherhood life, not only with their dues, taxes, and contributions but by the grandeur of their spirit. They built a labor movement which brought a new



dimension of self-reliance, hope, strength, courage, faith and integrity which no other organization can ~~claim~~. *surpass.*

Black youth can take the deepest pride in the fact that for almost a half century there never has been a breath of scandal involving the mishandling of a single dollar by a leader or member of this Brotherhood.

And as I take my leave I want to thank every Pullman, train and mail porter and attendant, and our devoted and loyal sisters of the Ladies Auxiliary, in the United States and Canada, for having given me the opportunity to play an humble role in building this mighty movement.

And may God give you strength, faith, <sup>*Vision*</sup> and fortitude that you march on and never falter.



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|------------------------------------|-------------------------------------|
| 1- Res. Comm.<br>Well.<br>Red Oak. | 4 Rules. B. Smith, Skas.            |
| 2- Cred. - <u>Wailley</u>          | 5- Cred. J. Martin                  |
| 3- Org. & Ed. <u>Mac.</u>          | 6- C. C. P. T. - <u>W. Neal</u>     |
|                                    | 7- <u>Gov. &amp; Claims</u><br>Well |
|                                    | 8- <u>Dining Car</u>                |

Fillman